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Covenant & Conversation

Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from

Lord Jonathan Sacks Chief Rabbi

of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth
Bo 5769

The detail in the story of the exodus is highly emphasised in the Torah, yet at first sight it appears almost unintelligible. Here is the command:

“Now the Lord had said to Moses, “I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. After that, he will let you go from here, and when he does, he will drive you out completely. Tell the people that men and women alike are to ask their neighbors for articles of silver and gold.” (11: 1-2)”

And here is its fulfillment:

The Egyptians urged the people to hurry and leave the country. “For otherwise,” they said, “we will all die!” So the people took their dough before the yeast was added, and carried it on their shoulders in kneading troughs wrapped in clothing. The Israelites did as Moses instructed and asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing. The Lord had made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people, and they gave them what they asked for; so they plundered the Egyptians. (12:33-36) Why the silver and gold? The Israelites were in such a hurry to leave, and the Egyptians so hasty in urging their departure, that they did not even have time for the dough to rise. Why then was G-d so insistent that they take the time to ask for these parting gifts? What conceivable use did they have for them in the long journey across the wilderness?

Our perplexity is made all the more acute when we remember what they actually did with the gold. They used it to commit the worst sin of those years: the making of a golden calf. The Talmud (Berakhot 32a) says that Moses referred to this fact in defending Israel. In effect, he said to G-d: Had you not told them to take gold from Egypt, they would not have had the materials with which to make the calf! Yet we cannot doubt that this detail is fundamental to the story, because G-d refers to it in his first encounter with Moses, at the

burning bush, before the exodus had begun – long before Moses had returned to Egypt:

“And I will make the Egyptians favorably disposed toward this people, so that when you leave you will not go empty-handed. Every woman is to ask her neighbor and any woman living in her house for articles of silver and gold and for clothing, which you will put on your sons and daughters. And so you will plunder [venitzaltem] the Egyptians.”

Why was this so important?

It is not until we reach the end of the Mosaic books that we can begin to understand it in retrospect. Two details from the book of Deuteronomy provide the key. The first has to do with the liberation of slaves:

If a fellow Hebrew, a man or a woman, sells himself to you and serves you six years, in the seventh year you must let him go free. And when you release him, do not send him away empty-handed. Supply him liberally from your flock, your threshing floor and your winepress. Give to him as the Lord your G-d has blessed you. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your G-d redeemed you. That is why I give you this command today. (15: 12-15)

The second is one of the most striking commands of all, Moses' insistence:

Do not hate an Edomite, for he is your brother. Do not hate an Egyptian, because you were a stranger in his land. (23: 7)

This is remarkable. The Israelites had been enslaved by the Egyptians. They owed them no debt of gratitude. On the contrary, they were entitled to feel a lingering resentment. Yet Moses insists that they should not do so. They should bear the Egyptians no ill will. Why? In this brief command we have one of the most profound insights into the nature of a free society.

A people driven by hate are not – cannot be – free. Had the people carried with them a burden of hatred and a desire for revenge, Moses would have taken the Israelites out of Egypt, but he would not have taken Egypt out of the Israelites. They would still be there, bound by chains of anger as restricting as any metal. To be free you have to let go of hate.

There is a fundamental difference between living with the past and living in the past. Judaism is a religion of memory. We remember the exodus annually, even daily. But we do so for the sake of the future, not the past. ‘Do not oppress the stranger’, says the Torah, ‘because you know what it feels like to be a stranger.’ In other words: what you suffered, do not inflict. Memory is a moral tutorial. In Santayana's famous words: those who do not remember the past, are destined to repeat it. Israel remembers its past precisely in order not to repeat it. Moses' message is: remember, but not in order to hate. That means drawing a line over the resentments of the past. That is why, when a slave went free, his master had to give him gifts. This was not to compensate for the fact of slavery. There is no way of giving back the years spent in servitude. But there is a way of ensuring that the parting is done with goodwill, with some symbolic compensation. The gifts allow the former slave to reach emotional closure; to feel that a new chapter is beginning; to leave without anger and a sense of humiliation. One who has received gifts finds it hard to hate. That is the significance of the silver and gold taken from the Egyptians by the Israelites at the express command of G-d. The early twentieth century commentator Benno Jacob translated the word venitzaltem in Ex. 3: 22 as ‘You shall save,’ not ‘You shall plunder’ the Egyptians. The gifts they took from their neighbours were intended, Jacob argues, to persuade the Israelites that it was not the Egyptians as a whole, only Pharaoh and the leadership, who were responsible for their enslavement (see the commentary of Chief

Rabbi J. H. Hertz to Ex. 3: 22). They were meant to save the Egyptians from any possible future revenge by Israel. The message could not be more germane to our situation in the early twenty-first century. In an age riven by ethnic and religious conflict, the message of the Torah rings true in our time. To be free, you have to let go of hate. All Faiths Must Stand Together Against Hatred The Times - 27th January 2009

When the Archbishop of Canterbury and I led a mission of leaders of all the faiths in Britain to Auschwitz last November, we did so in the belief that the time has come to strengthen our sense of human solidarity. For the Holocaust was not just a Jewish tragedy but a human one. Nor did it happen in some remote corner of the globe. It happened in the heart of Europe, in the culture that had given the world Goethe and Beethoven, Kant and Hegel. And it can happen again. Not in the same place, not in the same way, but hate still stalks our world.

Nine years ago, when the idea of a National Holocaust Memorial Day was first mooted, Tony Blair asked me for my views. I said that personally I felt the Jewish community did not need such a day. We have our own day, Yom Hashoa, which is for us a grief observed. All of us, literally or metaphorically, lost family in the great destruction. All of us are, in some sense, survivors. To be a Jew is to carry the burden of memory without letting it rob us of hope and faith in the possibility of a world at peace.

But such a day might be valuable to all of us, Jew and non-Jew alike, were two conditions to be satisfied. The first was that, without diminishing the uniqueness of the Holocaust, we might use the occasion to highlight other tragedies: Bosnia, Cambodia, Rwanda and now Darfur. The second was that the day was taken into schools. For it is our children and grandchildren who will have to carry the fight for tolerance into the future, and we must make sure they recognise the first steps along the path to hell.

It was the Holocaust survivors who taught me this. I cannot begin to imagine what they went through. Yet trauma did not turn them inward. It was they, more than anyone, who empathised with the victims of subsequent tragedies, and they who went into schools, teaching children to cherish freedom and be prepared to fight for it. They became, and remain, my role models in turning personal pain into sensitivity to the pain of others.

About one Holocaust Memorial Day, in 2004, I was initially apprehensive. The organisers rightly chose to focus on the massacre in Rwanda ten years before. How, I wondered, would eighty-year-old central Europeans relate to young survivors from Africa? My concerns turned out to be utterly misplaced. I discovered that there is freemasonry of suffering. One survivor instinctively recognizes another across all the barriers of colour, culture, age and creed. Six months later, Mary Kayetesi Blewitt, the remarkable woman who has led the work with the survivors in Rwanda, came round to see me bubbling with excitement. For years, she said, she had been working in obscurity, aided mainly by the Jewish community. Now, because of the prominence given to her work by Holocaust Memorial Day, she had just been voted an international woman of the year. The Queen had invited her to Buckingham Palace. Most important of all, the British government had given a major grant to build AIDs clinics in Kigali.

Hence our decision to go to Auschwitz with leading British Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Zoroastrians and Bahai. Grief has the power to unite. Of the six thousand languages spoken throughout the world today, only one is truly universal: the language of tears. And now, when the tectonic plates on which humanity stands are shifting, leading to violence, conflict and terror throughout the world, we must take a stand against hate – the theme of this year's commemoration.

Never in my lifetime have we needed that message more. All the danger signs are flashing: financial meltdown, economic recession, and a sense that 'things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.' Antisemitism is only a small part of the problem. Instantaneous global communications ensure that conflicts anywhere can light fuses everywhere. The Internet is the most powerful spreader of hate and paranoia ever invented. The world has become more unstable and confusing. At such times people search for certainties. They rally round slogans that simplify, and scapegoats that can be blamed. They resolve complex issues into polarities: us and them, the children of light versus the children of darkness, friends and enemies, the saved and the damned. People lose faith in the long, slow process of conflict resolution. They lose the very precondition of justice: the ability to hear both sides. They see themselves as victims and identify someone else to blame. Academics, who should be guardians of objectivity, become partisan and instigate boycotts. That is how it happened in Germany in the 1930s. The greatest philosopher of his time, Martin Heidegger, was a Nazi. Doctors and scientists administered the Final Solution. Carl Schmitt, an antisemite, a Nazi, and the leading political thinker of his day, was chillingly accurate in his diagnosis. Liberalism, he held, is too weak to sustain passion and conviction at times of crisis. For him, real politics is about identifying an enemy and a cause for which you are willing to die. That is how it is in some parts of the world today. It must not become the way it is in Britain.

We, the religious leaders and faith communities of Britain, must work hard at our friendship, and stand together in this turbulent age. Our visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau was organised by the Holocaust Educational Trust. As we stood together that chill November night, lighting candles and saying prayers, in a place where one and a quarter million people were gassed, burned and turned to ash, we knew to the core of our being where hate, unchecked, can lead. We cannot change the past. We can and must change the future. For the sake of the victims, for the sake of our children, and for the sake of G-d whose image we bear. Holocaust Memorial Day Coventry - 25th January 2009

It's said that if you drop a frog in boiling water it'll jump out. But if you put it in cold water and heat it to boiling point slowly enough it will stay and die. Hate can be like that water. It heats slowly, but it kills. And so it happened in the Holocaust.

First came centuries of prejudice. Jews were said to be different, alien. Then worse. Jews are responsible for the bad things that happen in our world. Then worse again. Jews are lice, vermin that have to be exterminated.

Then came the measures, slowly, gradually. 1933, Nazis boycott Jewish businesses. They prohibit Jews from owning land, being newspaper editors.

1934. Jews are no longer allowed national health insurance. They are banned from law, the arts, the universities. 1935 The Nuremberg Laws. Jews are no longer citizens. Now they have no legal rights. Everything slowly, gradually.

1942, the Wannsee Conference which maps out the Final Solution and the decision to exterminate the entire Jewish population of Europe, an estimated 11 million persons. And still the worst has not yet begun.

And who protested? Almost no one. Jews had friends, neighbours, colleagues, who might have raised their voice. Some did. Most did not. And the tragedy is that had people protested it would have made a difference. Eventually some did protest the euthanasia of the mentally ill, and that programme was stopped.

Martin Luther King was right. 'In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.'

Sometimes hate comes not as boiling water, but as a slow heating of the atmosphere, so gentle you hardly know it's happening, with beginnings so mild that if you take a stand, people think you're paranoid, scared by phantoms that aren't really there. But they are. So when I see antisemitism, which I do, I protest. But I protest too when Muslims are targeted, or Hindus or Sikhs, or other groups in our society, for hate is dangerous, whoever holds it and whoever they hold it against. I go to schools to translate the message of the holocaust for us today. When I broadcast I try to speak about tolerance and the need to be vigilant against hate. We must all take a stand whenever we see hate or prejudice in any form. We can all make a difference.

Rabbi Goldwicht <rgoldwicht@yutorah.org>
Weekly Insights By **Rav Meir Goldwicht** Jan 25, 2007 10:26 PM
Parashat Bo

The first mitzvah we were commanded in Mitzrayim was the mitzvah of kiddush hachodesh. But why, to review a famous question, was this mitzvah chosen to be the first of the mitzvot? One answer given is that this mitzvah demonstrates our dominion over time; we determine when Rosh Chodesh is. Power over time creates freedom; a slave's schedule is decided by his master. What demonstrates the transition from slavery to freedom is control over our time. There is another interesting explanation. When we look at the Torah, the Navi, and Chazal regarding the mitzvah of kiddush hachodesh, we discover something very interesting. The Torah, discussing Rosh Chodesh, writes: "Uvroshei chodsheichem takrivu," teaching that the observance of Rosh Chodesh involves only one special sacrifice. Moving on to the Navi, we find that Shaul haMelech made a feast on Rosh Chodesh, significant because on that particular day David did not attend. The mishnah in Rosh HaShanah adds that the witnesses that would arrive to testify about the new moon would gather in a courtyard in Yerushalayim, where they would participate in great feasts. In the words of the Navi regarding the future, however, Rosh Chodesh takes on a different character. Yeshayahu reports that in the future Rosh Chodesh will be like the shalosh regalim, and people will make aliyah laregel: "V'hayah midei chodesh b'chodsho yavo kol basar l'hishtachavot l'fanay." This being the case, we see that Rosh Chodesh is the holiday of the future. This is because in the future, after the geulah, the illumination of the moon will once again be as great as that of the sun. This is the explanation behind the Jewish custom of looking at one's tzitzit after kiddush levanah, which we will say this coming motza'ei Shabbat; in the future, the light of the moon will be like that of the sun, and tzitzit will be a nighttime chiyuv as well. Looking at the tzitzit is essentially an expression of our longing for the day when the light of the moon will be like that of the sun. This is also the reason why on Rosh Chodesh we do not recite the complete Hallel; the revelation of this day as a yom tov, as a day of aliyah laregel, will only take place after the geulah. Currently, it is deficient, and consequently our recitation of Hallel must be incomplete as well.

What can we do today in order to hasten the arrival of the day when the moon will shine as brightly as the sun? When we analyze the fourth day of Creation in sefer Bereishit, when HaKadosh Baruch Hu created the two great luminaries, we find an interesting midrash. Chazal teach that the moon complained to HaKadosh Baruch Hu, "Two kings cannot share one crown." HaKadosh Baruch Hu responded, "Okay, if you have difficulty sharing with the sun, move over a bit." As soon as the moon moved away from the sun, its light began to diminish more and more, because, as we know, the moon's light is merely a reflection of that of the sun. As long as the moon

remained opposite the sun, its light was as bright as the sun's light. As soon as the moon moved away from the sun, it lost its light, because the attachment between the sun and moon was severed. This idea is found regarding Moshe and Yehoshua as well. Yehoshua's appointment as Moshe's successor was the only event in the Midbar that was not accompanied by machloket. Yehoshua was the obvious choice, a shoo-in for the position, as he was the student of Moshe, receiving all of his master's light. This was true until Moshe's final day on earth, when he turned to Yehoshua and said, "Ask me anything you want; this is your final opportunity." Yehoshua responded, according to the gemara in Zevachim, "Rebbe, I've already learned everything from you." In that moment, Yehoshua's face changed completely. The entire nation wished to kill him, saying, "Moshe's face is like that of the sun; Yehoshua's face is like that of the moon." Yehoshua's light was essentially a reflection of Moshe's light; the moment he moved away, he began to lose his light, and therefore the nation wished to kill him. We learn from this that when a person grows with Torah and mussar, having studied the ways of his rabbanim, he should never think he is completely independent and can survive on his own. Obviously, this requires some qualification. On the one hand, every individual is unique and bears his own intrinsic light. At the same time, however, he must remain attached to his rabbanim and recognize that a great part of his own inner light is in actuality a reflection of the hard work invested in him by his rabbanim. Via this recognition, the chain that links the generations to one another is strengthened, hastening the geulah in which the light of the moon will shine as brightly as that of the sun.

This is why the first mitzvah given to us in Mitzrayim is that of kiddush hachodesh. The lesson is that one who does whatever he pleases is not in actuality free; only one who remains connected to his parents, his teachers, and the generations before him, recognizing that they have nurtured him and endowed him with the ability to grow, is truly free.

Shabbat Shalom!

Meir Goldwicht

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Thanks to hamelaket@gmail.com for collecting the following items.

From Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein
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Subject Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

**Jerusalem Post :: Friday, January 7, 2011
RIGHTEOUS WOMEN :: Rabbi Berel Wein**

One of the well known statements of Midrash about the Exodus of Israel from Egyptian bondage is that the Jewish people, our ancestors, were redeemed from Egypt in the merit of the righteous Jewish women of the time. We tend to judge Jewish righteousness purely in terms of tradition, ritual and observance and though that is certainly true it is not the entire truth.

Jewish women, then and now, were a source of everyday inspiration and hope for men who in their hard-hearted realism were given to despair and pessimism. Amram, Moshe's father refused to live with

his wife Yocheved any longer after the decree of Pharaoh to cast all Jewish male infants into the crocodile infested waters of the Nile. He despaired of any Jewish future though he was, according to the Talmud, the most righteous person of his generation, completely free of sin.

His daughter Miriam convinced him otherwise and from his reconciliation with Yocheved, Moshe, the savior of Israel was born. The Midrash tells us that the bronze plating for the altar that stood in the Tabernacle came from the mirrors that the women of Israel used to entice their husbands to create a future generation of Jews when all seemed apparently lost and redemption from Egyptian bondage looked to be impossible.

These actions by the women of Israel earned them the title of being righteous. In the eyes of Heaven, righteousness apparently comes in many different forms. Bearing children in a world inimical to Jewish survival is perhaps the highest form of righteousness for such a time and situation.

Bringing children into the world is a statement of faith and hope in the Jewish future. Even in our day every Jewish child that is born in our country or in the Diaspora represents a declaration of faith and hope for the future well-being of our people and the world generally. Children are also a declaration that one does not live only for one's self.

The entire idea of selflessness and responsibility one for another is based on children and family. Parents care for and raise children and children care for and help their parents later in life. The statement of Rabi Akiva that the great rule of the Torah is "to love others as you love yourself" begins with family and children. And it has always been the righteous women of Israel, our wives, mothers and daughters that have epitomized this highest of all standards of human behavior.

In a cold and dark world that is often cruel if not even murderous, the women of Israel in Egypt – the great midwives, Shifra and Puah – stood for humane behavior and Godly virtues. They helped Jewish children live and survive. It is therefore no wonder that Jewish tradition places the credit for our freedom from Egyptian bondage at their feet.

The Torah links its imperative "to choose life" with the other imperative of "reviving, saving and helping children live." Whereas in the animal world the offspring are abandoned by the parents after a period of time, in human culture a child always remains one's child till the end of life itself. Because that child represents all of one's hopes and accomplishments in this world and in immortality as well.

Our society today has made great strides in improving the status of women. There still is a long way to go but there is no comparison in terms of education, professions, mobility and opportunity of women's rights today as what was available even a few short decades ago. This is true in the religious society of the Jewish people today as well.

Our great-grandmothers in Eastern Europe may have been in the main illiterate but our daughters and granddaughters are biblical scholars, physicians, professors and educators. What a boon this has been to Jewish life and its richness of thought and knowledge. Again the righteousness of our women is not only measured in their ritual piety, necessary as that is for Jewish continuity, but in their vast influence and spirit which has so enriched our current society. From the women of Israel in Egypt to Devorah, Hulda, Esther, Dona Gracia Beatrice Mendez, Sarah Schnirer and our own mothers, wives and daughters the spirit of Israel has been nurtured by the optimism and sacrifice of Jewish women. It is they that provide much merit for our ultimate redemption and freedom. So the story of the Exodus from

Egypt repeats itself in this fashion in our days as well. And so may it be.

Shabat shalom.

From Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein

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Subject Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

Weekly Parsha :: BO :: Rabbi Berel Wein

People who are released from bondage or any other type of incarceration usually find their adjustment to freedom difficult if not even very problematic. More often than not the look on their newly freed faces is one of bewilderment – of being in a dazed condition – rather than one of pure joy.

Past unpleasant and painful experiences are not easily forgotten, or sublimated and assigned purely to one's subconscious. When the Exodus from Egypt finally occurs in this week's parsha, the Jewish people leave "with a high hand" but with weakness of spirit. They will despair of their future.

When Pharaoh continues to pursue them to the shores of the Yam Suf sea and throughout their forty year sojourn in the desert of Sinai, they are always on the verge of abandoning their special mission and returning somehow to the accustomed bondage and servitude of Egypt.

In the past generation of our people, many of the survivors of the Holocaust faced enormous challenges after being liberated from Nazi tyranny. The adjustment of most of them to freedom and to their ability to rebuild their lives is a testimony to the greatness and resilience of the Jewish spirit. But it was not an easy journey back to normalcy in a free society.

The Jewish people after leaving Egypt would require forty years and a new generation of Jews before they were ready and able to undertake the task of building a free Jewish society in their own land and under their own rule and sovereignty. As the old paraphrase goes "You can take the Jew out of exile and bondage but it is much more difficult to remove the mentality of exile and bondage from within the Jew."

The Torah seems to indicate to us quite clearly that the Lord has the ability to save us from bondage and destruction. Beginning with the Exodus from Egypt throughout the generations, God has performed this miraculous task for us many times over. But it is also clear from the Torah that once that has been accomplished, the Lord intends for us to take over and finish the task.

He will supply us with food and water, physical sustenance and spiritual and temporal leadership but what we do with those blessings is purely up to us. We are taught that "when the Lord returns the captivity of Zion we will be as dreamers." A dreamer is in a dazed state of being. But once being awakened we are bidden to act and build and accomplish – to be bold and courageous and of optimistic heart.

The great Rav of Ponivezh, Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Kahaneman told me numerous times that "I am a dreamer but I do not allow myself to sleep." The Exodus from Egypt is not the end of the story of the Jewish people or of Moshe. It is only the beginning, for freedom is a never ending challenge fraught with difficulties, naysayers and doomsday pessimists.

The Lord took us out of Egypt forcibly for we would have remained there – as we say every year in the Hagada of the Pesach Seder. But then it was up to us. That remains the same situation in today's Jewish world as well.

Shabat shalom.

From Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalist@shemayisrael.com>
To Peninim <peninim@shemayisrael.com>
Subject Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

**Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum
Parshas Bo**

And so that you may relate in the ears of your son and your son's son that I made a mockery of Egypt... so that you may know that I am Hashem. (10:2)

This pasuk encapsulates Jewish history. The various movements from which our people have collectively suffered throughout the last few hundred years have been successful in alienating a majority of our people from Hashem. How did they do it? How were they able to destroy thousands of years of faith, mesiras nefesh, self-sacrifice, and devotion to Hashem? They did it by breaking with the past, by severing the connection we have with our glorious history. Today's assimilated Jew has no clue concerning Jewish history - its ups and downs - but specifically its Providential weaving of events. He sees the here and now; he perceives only what his myopic vision allows him to see with his colored glasses.

Hashem tells Moshe Rabbeinu that the Exodus was to be a seminal event in world history. It would demonstrate Hashem's mastery over nature and His constant Providential guidance of every aspect of the universe, as well as the creations which inhabit it. Hashem toyed with the Egyptians, and He continues to do so with the modern-day Egyptians until this very day. If we do not teach this to our sons and our son's sons, they will never know G-d. They will view the Torah to be "legends" and "tales" or "traditions" - anything but applying it to them. If one has no sense of the past, he does not have a foundation for building a future. There must be a means for l'maan tisaper b'aznei bincha u'ben bincha, "that you relate in the ears of your son and your son's son." The secular movements stole Jewish history; they deprived Jews across the generations, preventing future members of Klal Yisrael from learning the truth, from knowing Hashem. Hence, they deprived us of true freedom.

How are we to understand the meaning of freedom? We celebrate the exodus from Egypt by proclaiming ourselves to be free men. Indeed, halachah demands that one must act as if he had been liberated from Egypt. Are we really free? Were we free in pre-World War II Europe? Were the Jews behind the Iron Curtain free men? Yet, they celebrated the Pesach Seder whenever and wherever they were able to do so - in bunkers, in fields, in basements. How could they recite the Haggadah and call themselves free men when they were being hounded by modern-day oppressors? Does a Jew incarcerated in prison recite the Haggadah? Is it not hypocritical?

Obviously, the recitation of the Haggadah represents not only a historical perspective, but also an affirmation of our faith. Yetzias Mitzrayim is the prototypical liberation from exile. As Hashem redeemed us then, so has He redeemed us throughout the millennia, and so will He lead us out of exile in the future. Egypt set the tone; Egypt was the standard. Egypt imbued us with an unshakeable faith, because Egypt taught us: V'yadatem ki Ani Hashem, "So that you may know that I am Hashem." Egypt set us free, because that liberation enabled us to develop faith.

The key to our survival is the conviction that, despite our physical plight, we have been spiritually and religiously liberated. Mitzrayim is derived from the word metzarim, narrow straits. The Zohar HaKadosh explains that on Pesach we experience liberation from the narrow, agonizing straits in which we find ourselves. Pesach teaches us that just as Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim, Egypt, He will also redeem us from our metzarim, straits. A Jew who has G-d has everything. A Jew who does not acknowledge the Almighty is alone. He has nothing.

The story is told of a Russian Jew who returned home one Shabbos morning after davening to find his house completely destroyed and ransacked by marauding Cossacks - his family scattered all over, without a cover over their heads, without a morsel of food to eat. What is a Jew to do? It was Shabbos HaGadol, the Shabbos preceding Pesach. On this Shabbos, the Rav of the community/shul traditionally delivers a lengthy discourse in the afternoon. The Jew was heartbroken, bereft of food and shelter, not knowing what tomorrow would bring. Yet, he went to shul to listen to the Apter Rebbe, zl, Horav Yehoshua Heschel, speak.

In the midst of the misery and ruin, the Rebbe spoke of Pesach as a time of redemption. The Jews in Egypt had reached rock bottom - physically and spiritually. Yet, Hashem redeemed them and their future immediately changed.

The tzibrochene Yid, the unfortunate, broken Jew, returned to what was left of his worldly possessions, to the desolate remains of what was once his "proud" home. On Motzai Shabbos, he could be seen dancing among the ruins, singing the praises of Hashem. This man had experienced freedom. He "knew" Hashem.

They shall eat the meat during that night, roasted with fire, and unleavened bread; with bitter herbs shall you eat it. (12:8)

The lamb which serves as the Korban Pesach must be roasted directly over fire and eaten with matzoh and marror. Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl, explains the profound symbolism attached to this tradition. The symbolism of the matzoh and marror is obvious. When Klal Yisrael left Egypt, they were not in control. Their oppressors did not permit them sufficient time to allow for their dough to rise. They were, thus, compelled to take it in its unleavened state. This was not rare. Indeed, throughout their enslavement, they were never given the time to allow for their dough to rise properly. Driven by the taskmaster's whip and the unremitting toil to which they were subjected, time was not within their control. They baked and ate in haste. The matzoh became symbolic of the bread of enslavement, the bread of dependence which our ancestors ate in Egypt. Marror, bitter herbs, is clearly an allusion to the manner in which we were treated in Egypt, the misery which was our constant accompaniment. Matzoh and marror symbolize the bondage and torment, the toil and bitterness which reigned over the Jew in Egypt. These two symbols of galus Mitzrayim, the Egyptian exile, are supplemented by lamb roasted over fire, symbolizing the third element, geirus, alienhood of the exile.

The lamb is suspended in mid-air, not roasted in a pot, but suspended on a spit. This personifies geirus: no foundation, floundering, alienhood. We now have the three symbols which remind Klal Yisrael of the avdus, slavery, inui, affliction, and geirus, alienhood, which accompanied them even at the moment of their salvation. They were under Egyptian domination, until Hashem Himself freed them from the clutches of Egyptian oppression.

As stated above, matzoh is the symbol of slavery, of social dependence. Thus, chametz, leavened bread, is its antithesis, implying independence. The day of Pesach is to serve as a "day of remembrance" (ibid 12:14), recalling to us anew each year that special moment when we became free men, when we achieved our independence, so that we never lose sight of the manner in which we were freed. The day that incurs this reminder, the first day of Pesach, introduces a complete cycle of seven days, surprisingly not of the sign of freedom, but rather of the total removal and abnegation of the symbol of independence.

For an entire cycle of seven days, we may not permit ourselves to partake of chametz, the bread of independence. In fact, on the very day that we achieved personal independence and the right to own our own property, symbolized by the command to "take each man a lamb for each household," we must, on our own accord, remove any vestige of social independence from our homes. The prohibition against chametz continues in full force for the seven days that follow. This is to imbue us with the notion that at the moment of our emergence into a life of freedom and independence, we were as far from independence as we had been for the hundreds of years preceding that auspicious moment. We had no freedom, no power, no independence. It was all Hashem Who made this transformation possible. Thus, one who partakes of chametz during this seven-day period denies the Divine origin of our liberation. By doing so, he severs himself from our nations' past, thereby rejecting its future destiny.

Rav Hirsch notes that a cycle spanning seven days always represents a period of time in which we attain a new or revived level. Whenever such a cycle is designated to a specific moed, festival, this means that the ideas and attitudes that are to emerge during, and as a result of, the festival begins with their revival on the first day and achieve the zenith of clarity on the seventh day. Then, after having accomplished this new level of clarity, spiritual elevation and vitality, we are to take it all and return it to the mundane, everyday life in order to put these ideas to practice.

Yetzias Mitzrayim, loosely translated, means "the going out of Egypt." If this is a reference to the Jewish people's liberation from Egypt, it should be referred to as yetziah mi'Mitzrayim, going out from Egypt. Who was going out: Egypt or the Jews? We now are able to say that Egypt was veritably going out from the Jew. The mindset of dependence on Egypt as a way of life was finally taken out from the Jew. With his newly-found freedom, the Jew achieved an independence that had previously eluded him for hundreds of years. He was free. He was socially independent. Egypt had departed from him!

Moshe called to all the elders of Yisrael and said to them, "Draw forth or buy yourselves one of the flock for your families." (12:21)

In a somewhat cryptic statement, the Baal HaTurim says that the gimatria, numerical equivalent, of mishchu u'kechu coincides with the words min aveirah, from a sin. This teaches us that Klal Yisrael was admonished not to offer a sheep that had come into their possession through illegal circumstances. To steal a sheep and offer it as a sacrifice to Hashem defeats the purpose of the Korban Pesach. We wonder why, specifically concerning this mitzvah, Korban Pesach, the Torah would go to lengths to emphasize the need for legal possession of the cheftza d'mitzvah, object used for the mitzvah. It is, after all, a requirement in all mitzvah observance. We do not steal in order to perform a mitzvah.

Horav Chaim Zaitchik, zl, explains that a nation which had recently been informed that they were being liberated from misery and bondage after hundreds of years might react with such adulation, praise and gratitude, that they might forget the rules of the game: no stealing. In their unbridled excitement, they might ignore one of the basic laws of Korban Pesach. Indeed, it is specifically when one is so wrapped-up in performing the mitzvah that he might forget one of the basic principles of the mitzvah.

It happens all of the time. We are so excited about going to shul to daven that: we fly down the street, completely indifferent to speed limits, park anywhere, ignoring the lines that are present to inform us of the appropriate parking spot; run into shul with such enthusiasm and make so much noise that the fellow who is trying to daven with kavanah, proper intention, is blown-out of his mind - and the list goes on. We mean well, but meaning well does not give one license to steal, to disturb, to hurt, to humiliate.

Rav Zaitchik quotes a passage from the Talmud Shabbos 63A, "Whoever performs a mitzvah according to its utterance they will never inform him of evil tidings, as it says in Koheles 8:5, Shomer mitzvah lo yeida ra, 'He who guards a mitzvah shall know no wrong.'" Chazal are teaching us the significance of executing a mitzvah without any deficiency, doing it correctly, with perfection. Rav Zaitchik explains that the idea of "no deficiency" is far-reaching. There are instances during which our mitzvah performance infringes upon another person's honor or affects someone else negatively. The individual who is performing the mitzvah is so bound up in spiritual ecstasy that he has no clue that he is causing pain to another Jew. Hashem, however, knows acutely how this mitzvah affects others. The individual who is performing the mitzvah is filled with joy, but the fellow at the back of the shul is filled with sorrow. Tears are running down his cheeks for a reason, but we are all too busy with our spiritual good fortune to concern ourselves with the feelings of the "guy in the back of the shul." Such a mitzvah is not carried out b'shleimus, to perfection. There is something vital missing from the equation.

In the course of pursuing one mitzvah, we sometimes ignore another mitzvah. At times, we even go beyond ignoring - we trample upon another mitzvah. It is just not that important, and it is in the way of "progress." Under such circumstances, he is informed "bad tidings." This means he is told that his mitzvah is incomplete; it is deficient; it is missing a critical component. These tidings will sadden the person, because he realizes that there is more to mitzvah performance than satisfying his own ego.

Taking great care in the preparation of matzoh is an important hiddur, aspect of beautifying the mitzvah. Meticulous preparation - adherence to every aspect of the mitzvah from the moment the wheat is harvested until the final product - is an intrinsic part of the mitzvah of matzoh. If the preparations are carried out, however, at the expense of the emotional and physical well-being of the widows and orphans who were often those who work long, difficult hours in the matzoh bakery, then it is not being performed to perfection. To save money by squeezing the life out of one's workers is not hiddur mitzvah.

Horav Yisrael Salanter, zl, once spent the night at the home of one of his distinguished students. Early in the morning, his student went to fetch water for netillas yodayim, to wash their hands, upon arising from sleep. This meant traversing a number of apartments and possibly disrupting the sleep of his neighbors. Rav Yisrael did not permit this practice, stating that washing one's hands in the morning is a Rabbinic dictum, while stealing another person's sleep is a Biblical injunction.

The Torah tells us (ibid 12:43), "This is the decree of the Pesach offering: No alienated person may eat of it." Chazal explain that the term ben neichar, alienated person, refers to two kinds of people: a) a Jewish apostate, one who denies the validity of the Torah or any of its commandments, etc. b) a non-Jew. Neither of these individuals may participate in - or eat from - the Korban Pesach due to their alienation from the Torah. The Torah continues and says, "Every slave of man...you shall circumcise, that he may eat of it." The non-Jewish slave belonging to a Jewish master may eat of the korban because he is the master's possession. However, he must first be circumcised. There is a

dispute among Chazal whether the master may eat if his slave has not yet been circumcised. In any event, one possible position is that as long as one's slave has not been circumcised, the master may not eat from the Korban Pesach. In Hilchos Avadim 1:9, the Rambam explains the reason for this haachah: "No one shall be left at home who does not share in the Korban Pesach. No one should be shamed by his being left out. The joy of the event will be deficient if someone is missing, if someone is not permitted to share in the event. If the slave is deprived of eating from the Korban Pesach due to his not yet having had a Bris Milah, then the master should also be deprived of eating." According to Rabbi Shimon in the Tosefta Pesach, this halachah remained in force throughout the generations in which we brought a Korban Pesach. No Jew may be left behind.

Furthermore, one must be part of a chaburah, group of Jews sharing in the Korban Pesach, that is in his immediate neighborhood. This halachah applies even if he has good friends elsewhere. By leaving, he is hurting his neighbors and inadvertently making them feel unwanted, suggesting they are second-class citizens. . This is not how a Jew performs a mitzvah. It must be carried out to perfection. That means not offending anyone - even remotely!

Draw forth for yourselves one of the flock for your families. (12:21)

Chazal teach us that, although the designated time for redemption had arrived, Klal Yisrael was bereft of mitzvos, merits to make them worthy of this redemption. Hashem had ensured Avraham Avinu that his descendants would not be in Egypt for more than four hundred years from the day of Yitzchak Avinu's birth. The time had come, but the Jewish People were ill-prepared for the transition from slavery to freedom. What could be done to alleviate the problem? Hashem gave Klal Yisrael two mitzvos which, once they performed them, would warrant their liberation. The mitzvos were Bris Milah and Korban Pesach. They both involve shedding blood, symbolizing sacrifice. Is this why Hashem specifically selected these two mitzvos? Horav Shabsi Yudelewitz, zl, explains that these mitzvos exemplify Klal Yisrael's total conviction, their unshakeable faith in Hashem. In order to understand this idea thoroughly, it is essential that one picture in his mind what must have taken place in Egypt at that time and what the Jewish People must have experienced in order to fulfill these mitzvos.

After makkas arov, Pharaoh decided that the multitude of animals was too much for him. He notified Moshe that he would permit the Jewish People to offer sacrifices to Hashem - in Egypt. Moshe replied that it would be insane for the Jews to slaughter sheep, which was the Egyptian godhead, in Egypt. The natives would go into a frenzy, and the Jews would end up replacing the sheep as the sacrifice. In other words, "Pharaoh, no way were the Jews going to slaughter sheep in Egypt."

Hashem proceeded to command the Jewish People to slaughter the Egyptian godhead and use it as a Korban Pesach. That was asking quite a lot from them. Yet, they acquiesced gladly. Moreover, not only were they prepared to carry out the mitzvah, they were even willing to do so quickly. Hashem instructed them to purchase the sheep four days before Pesach. This was giving a message to the Egyptians: Guess what we are about to do. The Egyptians must have wondered why the Jews were suddenly buying sheep. The Jews had nothing to hide: "We are going to slaughter the sheep as a sacrifice to our G-d." There were four days until that auspicious moment. Yet, neither did the Egyptians react, nor did the Jews worry. Hashem told them to do it; they were prepared to do whatever He asked of them.

Why did Hashem do it this way? Why arouse the Egyptians' ire? This is exactly what Hashem sought to convey to Egypt: "The Jews no longer fear you. Furthermore, you are powerless to harm them." This indicated an incredible level of commitment by Klal Yisrael. How did they do it? Emunah, faith - they believed in Hashem. When one believes in the Almighty, the rest is simple. The mitzvah of Bris Milah is similarly connected to Korban Pesach. The Jews had by then enraged the Egyptian people, who were probably waiting for an opportunity to take revenge in order to bring a final end to this mutinous people. One would think that the Jews, fearing an Egyptian onslaught, would fortify themselves and remain behind locked doors in their homes. Hashem had other plans. He insisted that the Jewish men circumcise themselves.

Circumcision is a surgical procedure. It leaves the patient weak and in pain. When the men of Shechem had their circumcisions, they became easy prey for the two young sons of Yaakov, Shimon and Levi. The third day is the most painful. Yet, Klal Yisrael had no problem acquiescing to Hashem's command. They had no fear of the Egyptians, because they had faith in Hashem. He would protect them.

This mitzvah begs elucidation. Why command the Jewish men to have a Bris Milah if it is going to weaken them, especially at a time when they must be

strong? That is the kind of question one who lacks faith asks. Hashem wanted to demonstrate Klal Yisrael's total conviction, their unequivocal faith and commitment. Their emunah in Him that He would protect and redeem them gave them the resolution and fortitude to sacrifice the Korban Pesach and have the Bris Milah. Danger is often in the mind. It is dangerous only if one has no faith. Klal Yisrael believed. That is why they were redeemed.

And it shall be for you a sign on your arm and a reminder between your eyes (13:9)

There are primarily two opinions concerning the sequence of the four parshios placed in the Tefillin. The debate between Rashi and his grandson, Rabbeinu Tam, is long-standing. For that reason, many observant Jews don both sets of Tefillin daily. The point of dispute concerning the placement of the parshios is: Rashi places the parsha of Shema first, followed by v'hayah im shama; kadesh li kol bechor; v'hayah ki yeviacha. Rabbeinu Tam agrees that the Shema is first, followed by v'haya im shama. It is concerning the third and fourth parshios that he feels v'hayah ki yevicha follows the previous v'hayah, with kadesh li kol bechor being last. In other words, Rabbeinu Tam insists that the two v'hayahs be next to one another, in the middle. This is what the Rishonim refer to as havayos b'emtzta, the v'hayahs are in the middle.

Horav Shimshon Pincus, zl, sees in this debate a powerful philosophical lesson.

The commentators say that the parshios of Tefillin coincide with the letters of Hashem's Name: Shema is yud; v'hayah im shama is hay; kadesh is vov; v'hayah ki yeviacha is hay. Hashem's Name is split into two parts - Yud-Kay, Vav-Kay. Both Rashi and Rabbeinu Tam agree that the Yud-Kay, Vav-Kay remain the same. The divergence between them is regarding the Vav-Kay, with Rashi contending that it be Vav-Kay, and Rabbeinu Tam being of the opinion that it be Kay-Vav.

Rav Pincus posits that when one builds a house, he follows a process: architect, blueprint, contractor, builder, foundation, walls, roof, interior, etc. There is a defined procedure from concept to reality. Concerning the Shem Hashem, Name of Hashem, the vav always precedes the hay, since the vav connotes the six attributes of Hashem detailed in the "Va'Yivarech David" tefillah: gedulah, greatness; gevurah, strength; tiferes, beauty; netzach, eternity; hod, glory and ki chol ba'shamayim u'va'aretz, everything in Heaven and earth comes from Hashem. These attributes form the framework, while also serving as the actual inside, essence of the Name. In the Tefillin of Rabbeinu Tam, the sequence is reversed with the "inside" hay preceding the framework - vav. How are we to understand this?

Rabbeinu Tam teaches us that, under certain conditions, the process can be altered. Let us take the following incident. In Auschwitz, in 1944, "dinnertime" consisted of non-kosher meat. One Jew emphatically refused to eat. This bothered the Nazi commandant who immediately came over and said, "Eat!" The Jew said, "No!" The Nazi thought that he had before him an observant Jew who keeps kosher. He was not going to accept a "no" from him. He was, however, mistaken. The Jew who stood before him was totally secular, who had in his "previous" life regularly eaten non-kosher. Yet, he refused to eat the meat. Of all times, when his life was in danger, he refused, on pain of death, to eat non-kosher. He was beaten to within an inch of his life, but he did not eat the non-kosher meat. When asked later why he did this, he responded, "I just realized the severity of the prohibition against eating non-kosher food." What happened to this person?

Rav Pincus explains that while most people are ready and willing to give up their lives to sanctify Hashem's Name, this is the result of a gradual process going back to grade school, a supportive home environment that venerated and promoted faith in Hashem. Their foundation was secure, anchored in generations of faith and commitment. What about the fellow, however, who, experiences an uplifting Shabbos, a stimulating trip to the Kosel, standing at the gates of Auschwitz or any of the other inspirational experiences that suddenly transform one who heretofore had been totally alienated from his heritage to commencing on the road to return? How do they do it? Where is their gradual process? How did the fellow in the concentration camp transform a life of assimilation in one moment?

This is the lesson of Tefillin d'Rabbeinu Tam. The process can be changed. This is especially true in our generation, the generation of Ikvesa d'Mishicha, time of Moshiach, when there is a special spiritual blessing that allows us to "jump" to the front of the line without passing "go." The time for positive change is here. This is truly a change with which we can live.

Va'ani Tefillah

Ashirah La'Hashem ki gaoh gaah. Sus v'rochvo ramah ba'yam.

I shall sing to Hashem for He is exalted above the arrogant, having hurled horse and its rider into the sea.

We note that the Shirah begins with lashon yachid, singular version, ashirah, I will sing. Were they not all singing together? Horav Moshe Leib Shachar, zl, explains that we are being taught that each individual member of Klal Yisrael was worthy of Krias Yam Suf, the Splitting of the Red Sea. It was not a collective z'chus, merit. Thus, each individual Jew sang his own song of praise to Hashem, together with the rest of Klal Yisrael. Likewise, sus v'rochvo ramah ba'yam, "having hurled horse and its rider into the sea," the phrase is said in the singular, implying that Hashem judged each and every individual Egyptian for his singular evil. Each Egyptian was punished for his own sins - not as part of the collective Egypt. Each warranted his own individual punishment. Sponsored l'ilui nishmas Aidel bas R' Yaakov Shimon a"h Keller niftar 13 Shevat 5767 Idu Keller By Perl & Harry M. Brown & Family Marcia & Hymie Keller & Family

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Subject Rabbi Frand on Parsha

Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas Bo

"Asking Their Egyptian Friends For Silver and Gold": Two Insights

This week's parsha contains the following pasukim: "...Yet one more plague will I bring upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go from here...Speak now in the ears of the people, and let them ask every man of his friend and every woman of her friend, jewels of silver and jewels of gold." [Shmos 11:1-2].

The Gerer Rebbe focuses in on the use of the word "v'yishalu" [let them ask]. Usually, the word yishalu connotes borrowing. We all know that in this situation the Jews did not intend to return the items for which they were asking. Why then does the Torah use the word "v'yishalu"? The Gerer Rebbe explains that this is the first time that the Jewish people as a nation were "coming into money". Money, as we know, is a powerful force. On the occasion of the first time that they came into money, G-d instructed the people that it can make people or break them. Therefore, whenever one acquires wealth like this, it they should always consider it "borrow ed money". G-d may allow us to become rich, but we should view ourselves as merely the guardians of the money. We are only the trustees. It is not really ours. We cannot take it with us. It is not permanent.

Thus, from the Egyptian perspective, "you shall ask" (v'yishalu) "for money" is not really asking. The Jews were clearly TAKING the money from the Egyptians. However, they were instructed to consider it BORROWED money in relationship to themselves!

The Netziv (Rav Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin) focuses in on the words "from their friends" (me'es rei-ay-hu; me'es re-u-sah). The Netziv points out that we have a very similar pasuk in Parshas Shmos. However, there we read "Let every woman borrow from her neighbor (isha m'shechenta) ...jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment..." [Shmos 3:22]. The Netziv asks why the Torah changes its language. Why is it that in Parshas Shmos, the Torah speaks of borrowing from a neighbor and here in Parshas Bo, the Torah speaks of borrowing from a friend?

The Netziv makes a startling comment. Parshas Shmos was before the plagues began. Who would the Jews go to ask "Could I have that silver tea set that I see in the breakfront?" One can only ask that from someone who is at best, an acquaintance. They did not have any "friends" to ask that from, because there was no friendship between the Egyptians and the Jews. However, in Parshas Bo, something profound happened. Suddenly, the Egyptians are indeed our friends.

What happened? The answer is that the plague of Choshech [Darkness] had just occurred. This plague lasted at least 3 days. This was more than just a "blackout" with the lights turned off. This was a tangible darkness (v'yamesh choshech), such that people were afraid to move. They could not get out of their chairs. They could not get out of their beds.

How then, asks the Netziv, did the Egyptians eat during this period? How did they drink? If people could not move then they could not even "fumble around and find some food in the house". If people would not eat or drink for 3 days, they would die. How is it that there was a whole nation who survived to tell the tale? It must be, says the Netziv, that during this plague, which only affected the Egyptians not the Jews, the Jews went and gave food and water to their Egyptian "friends".

The Netziv is saying that "a friend in need is a friend indeed." That is what changed. In Parshas Shmos, there was no way they could find a friend to go ask

for gold and silver. However, in Parshas Bo, it was a different relationship. The Egyptian neighbors now recognized that these Jewish neighbors saved their lives during the time of the Plague of Darkness. Now they considered themselves "friends"

The fact that the Jews saved the lives of the Egyptians – who after all, were their tormentors, speaks to the unbelievable compassion of the Jewish people. Once they made that gesture, they had an entirely different relationship with the Egyptians. They could now approach them not as "neighbors" but as "friends".

The Priorities In Life Are Never Placed In The Checked Baggage

The Jewish people are about to leave Egypt. Pharaoh is finally willing and indeed anxious to send out everyone – men, women, children, flocks, and cattle. Everyone and everything the Jews wanted to take out of Egypt could now leave with them. The pasuk tells us: "The people picked up their dough when it had not yet become leavened, their leftovers bound up in their garments upon their shoulders" [Shmos 12:34]. Rashi says the term "leftovers" refers to the matzah and maror left over from the previous night's meal. It was this that they carried in their little knapsacks on their shoulders as they left Egypt.

We are all familiar with what our dining room floor looks like after the Seder. It looks like a Matzah factory with pieces of lettuce spread all over the place!

What do we do? We sweep it up and throw it out.

The Jews at that "first Seder" in Egypt did not sweep the leftovers up and throw them out. They swept them up, wrapped them together, and put them in knapsacks, which they carried out of Egypt on their shoulders! Rashi adds that even though they had many animals on which they could have placed these packages, they purposely carried them themselves to show their love of the mitzvos.

A person does not throw the most precious item into the donkey's saddlebag. It can fall out. It can get lost. If something is very special, you take it with you in your "hand luggage". No one ever places valuables into their "checked baggage" on airplanes. People carry their most precious items on themselves. Rav Simcha Zissel asks: The pasuk just stated that they borrowed gold and silver vessels. Where did they put them? Apparently, they put the gold and the silver on the donkeys but the leftover pieces of matzo and maror they carried on their own shoulders.

Klal Yisrael understood what is important and what is not important; what must be a priority in life and what is not a priority in life. The gold and silver was "replaceable". The matzo and maror, which represented the miraculous redemption from Egypt, and which represented their relationship with the Almighty, was "irreplaceable." That was not something that could be entrusted to the donkeys. They carried it on their shoulders.

Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman, Baltimore, MD

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Parsha Parables By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Parsha Parables -Bo 5771

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Nuchshleppers

Concerning the Exodus of the Jews the Torah tells us that they were not the only ones to leave Egypt.

The children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot, the men, besides the young children. And also, a great mixed multitude went up along with them, and flocks and cattle, very much livestock. (Exodus 12:37-38)

The Torah tells us that an eirav rav, a mixed multitude, went up with them. In describing this motley crew, there are two interesting words that I noticed that describes the eirav ravs attachment to the Israelites: The eirav rav, , went up along with them .

The eirav rav, which was a motley medley of straggling wanna-bees left Egypt with the Jews and the Torah uses an interesting word to explain their connection with their guides itam, along with them.

Two items trouble me. First, where did they go up? Going up is usually a reference to going from the Diaspora into Israel per se. Did this eirav rav make it to Israel or did they just leave Egypt with the Jews and suffer the same fate as many of the Israelites -- dying in the desert?

Second, the word that's used to say "with them" is itam (In the pdf version I use the Hebrew word and you can click here to see it.) In Hebrew, there are

two words that mean with them, itam and imam (not to be confused with an Arab theologian). What is the difference between them and why was itam chosen here?

It was during the tumultuous French revolution of the 1830's when Louis-Philippe, the citizen king, rose to power, marking the eclipse of the old aristocracy and the coming to power of the old middle class, the bourgeoisie. One night, Talleyrand, the famed French minister known for his political machinations, was in his Paris home hosting a dinner party. The sounds of gunfire had been erupting all around and shouts and cries were pervading the Paris streets. Suddenly there was a lull and all the church bells in Paris began ringing, as they did on momentous occasions such as the accession of a new monarch.

We have triumphed, he declared. One guest was bold enough to ask, Who are we?

Talleyrand put a finger to his lips and said quietly, "Hush. I shall tell you tomorrow.

The Malbim explains that imam is different than itam. Imo or imam, means together with him or them. It represents a true harmony, used on occasions when there is a true bond between two parties.* It is used when the person coming who's with is just coming along or hanging on, a nuchshlepper, as we say in Yiddish. Indeed, these eirav rav stragglers were not true adherents, they just shlepped along. When Israel was on the rise, they grabbed on to the winners. They "went up" along with them. However, when times were tough, they surely had no need for these Jews.

Throughout history, and most recently with the world's relations with the State of Israel, when the Jews are on the way up, everybody is in the fan section. However as soon as the tide of public opinion turns, they run. They boycott. They condemn. It seems that those who attach themselves in the manner of the eirav rav will only join with us peripherally and only when we are on the way up. © 2011 Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

* When Avraham goes to Egypt with his family and nephew Lot, the Torah tells us that Lot went ito, indeed he followed Avram, but not so willingly. However after Avram emerges wealthy and triumphant Lot travels imo! (See Genesis 12:4 & 13:1)

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The World is Mine

Rabbi Benjamin Yudin (The TorahWeb Foundation)

In parshas Bo (Shemos 12:51), we read with excitement "it happened on that very day, Hashem took the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt." The Exodus is not only at the root of our performance of many mitzvos (tefillin, sukkah, Shabbos), but indeed it is the first of the aseres hadibros (Ten Commandments) wherein we are commanded to believe in G-d "Who has taken you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery" (Shemos 20:2). Rav Nossan Tzvi Finkel zt"l, the Alter of Slabodka, highlights the connection between the Exodus and Hashem as the Creator. The question is asked why Hashem did not introduce Himself as the Creator in the first of the aseres hadibros? Rav Finkel suggests that in fact, He does, as the Exodus sheds new light on creation.

The rabbis inform us that the back-breaking servitude ended months before the actual exodus (Rosh Hashanah 11a). Why, then, were we kept for an additional half year? To learn of the personal relationship that each individual has with Hashem. The nine plagues that preceded the killing of the first-born were not only punitive to the Egyptians (measure for measure), but were also educational for the Jewish nation. The Jews were taught through the plagues which preceded the Exodus that not only there is a G-d Who "plays a role in the midst of the land" (Shemos 8:18), but also that He is the Creator and creates, on an ongoing basis, a personalized creation for each individual.

Rav Finkel cites the following examples of a personalized creation for each individual within the plagues:

Regarding the plague of Blood: not only did Hashem distinguish the Jewish nation by maintaining their water supply as water and transforming the water to blood for the Egyptians, but also if a Jew and Egyptian were drinking from a glass with two straws at the very same moment, the Jew continued to drink

water, and the Egyptian blood. This is a personalized act of creation. That a Jew was able to sell water to an Egyptian showed a personalized act of creation on the part of Hashem for the Jew at that moment.

Regarding the plague of Dever: Moshe warns Pharaoh (Shemos 9:4) "not a thing that belongs to the children of Israel will die". Thus if an Egyptian had one animal that he had stolen from a Jew amidst his hundred animals, ninety-nine died but one survived. Even if the Jew had only part ownership in an animal, it did not die. These were personalized acts of His Hashgacha Pratis-Divine Providence.

The hail, we are taught, was a miracle within a miracle. Not only was the intensity of the hail unprecedented, but fire and water/ice were intermingled, co-existing to perform the will of Hashem (Shemos Rabbah 12:4). Hashem created this new phenomenon to punish the Egyptians, and to teach the Jewish nation that He not only "renews creation on a daily basis" (as we recite every morning at the conclusion of the first blessing before the Shema) but He renews creation at every moment for each individual.

In the plague of darkness, each Egyptian was paralyzed due to the intensity of the darkness, and each Jew had the gift of creation to function in his usual way. Similarly, the splitting of the Red Sea included personalized acts of creation in that it was dry land for each Jew and water for each Egyptian.

Thus, when Hashem mentions the Exodus in the first of the aseres hadibros, He is not only reminding the Jewish People of the favor they owe Him for liberating them from slavery. Rather, He is informing them that He has a personalized relationship with every individual and renews creation constantly for each one personally. The Hakaras Hatov (personal appreciation) that one must have is truly "kol haneshama t'hallel ka" (Psalms 150:6) - al kol nishima v'nishima- for every breath, we owe Him a thank you.

In this same vein, we are taught in Sanhedrin (37A) "that each individual is obligated to say and believe that the world was created for me" and Ben Zoma (Brachos 58A) teaches that a good guest says "how much trouble my Host took for my sake." Just as the Torah states (Braishis 32:32) "the sun rose for him" (Yaakov), each Jew is to feel gratitude daily to Hashem for his sunrise. Indeed, each morning the bracha is in the present "Who spreads out the earth upon the waters" because there is an ongoing creation.

Too often people lack a personalized relationship with Hashem. If we only realized that all day long there is a tailor-made personal creation for each of us, we would connect very differently with prayer.

I believe that this has a very practical lesson for all. Not only in terms of our personal belief and relationship, but in the way we relate to others. Schools open with the promise of personalized attention for each student. Most often the system itself doesn't allow this to occur. Hashem is the exception. Thus the directive, the 611th mitzvah of v'halachta b'drachav- to walk in His ways- is not only to do kindness, but to act to each individual, child, and student, differently, realizing that they are unique. The rule with Hashem is that there is no limiting set of rules.

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Parshat Bo - The Solar System

A Thought for the Week with Rabbi Jay Kelman

Judaism places great emphasis on the proper use of time. For serious students there is practically no greater sin than that of Bitul Torah - the wasting of precious time that could be devoted to Torah study. We know that successful people have effective time management techniques balancing the need to study, earn a living and spend time with their families. It should therefore come as no surprise that the first mitzva given to the Jewish people concerns the fixing of the Jewish calendar. To the slave, time had little relevance. Another day just meant more of the same work with no goals to look forward to. To the free man time represents opportunity.

Interestingly the Jewish calendar works on both a lunar and solar cycle. Our months follow the lunar cycle while our years follow the solar cycle. The 11 day discrepancy between the 2 cycles - which if allowed to continue would eventually lead to Pessach being celebrated in the winter - is rectified by having an extra month 7 out of every 19 years.

Why is it that our calendar follows both the sun and the moon? Would it not be simpler to follow a solar cycle? Our sages have found similarities between the Jewish people and the moon. The moon ranges from being completely invisible to being fully visible. We Jews have had periods when our strength has been visible to all and periods where our presence has been eclipsed.

Whereas the Holocaust represents the period of an invisible moon, with the creation of the State of Israel the moon became visible again. It is interesting to note that many of our holidays - from Pessach, Sukkot, Purim to Tu B'shvat and Tu B'av - fall in the middle of the month when the moon is at its fullest. Just like the hidden moon is always followed by the appearance of the full moon, so periods of tragedy in Jewish history are and will always be followed by periods of glory for the Jewish people.

In Jewish thought the moon is seen as incomplete; a fate which befell it due to its jealousy. The Midrash teaches that the sun and the moon were created equal in size. When the moon complained about sharing its glory with the sun it was "punished" by being made smaller, and instead of emanating its own light it reflects the light of the sun. What is the Midrash driving at? The world can not be properly built if jealousy and the drive for power are rampant. It was Cain's jealousy of Abel which led to murder so soon after creation. Every month, after the appearance of the new moon we say a special prayer known as Kiddush Levana (the sanctification of the moon). In this prayer we ask G-d to heal the "wounded" moon. Of course this wound was of its own making. This serves as a reminder to us that building a community requires that petty power struggles and jealousy be put aside. The Jews were about to embark on their mission to create a community dedicated to the service of G-d and man. In order to do so properly, we must remember the lessons from the moon. Rav Soloveitchik often pointed out that the Jew lives in two worlds simultaneously. We are part of the global village with similar concerns and aspirations as our non Jewish neighbours. Disease, war and peace and scientific discovery are issues that should concern us as Jews. We are enjoined to be loyal to our government and its institutions. On the other hand Judaism espouses a unique way of life with its myriad of rituals, rules, observances and theological beliefs which sets us apart from the world around us.

This dual existence is reflected in our calendar. Jewish history began during the month of Nissan in the spring with the exodus from Egypt. The Hebrew word for month is Chodesh which means renewal symbolising the constant renewal and march forward of the Jewish people despite all of our historical setbacks. We do however commemorate the creation of the world at large by celebrating the new year in Tishrei. We must take our rightful place in dealing with issues which confront the world as a whole.

While there is inevitable tension when we fully participate in both worlds our method of dealing with this tension determines whether the Jew has lived up to his obligations in this world. By breaking the shackles of slavery and being effective users of time we can take our rightful place in both the Jewish and general communities. Shabbat Shalom!

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Rav Kook List

Rav Kook on the Torah Portion

Bo: Memories of the Soul

"Moses told the people: Remember this day that you have left Egypt, the place of slavery." (Ex. 13:3)

The word zachor ('Remember') is not in the imperative tense (z'chor!), but in the infinitive absolute form. This grammatical form indicates that the Torah is not merely commanding us to remember and commemorate the anniversary of the Exodus from Egypt. Rather, zachor implies a state of being. It describes us as a people who always remember this historic date. Why?

Ben-Gurion and the Mayflower

In 1936, the Peel Commission questioned David Ben-Gurion, then head of the Jewish Agency, concerning Jewish rights to the Land of Israel. Ben-Gurion gave the following reply:

"Three hundred years ago, a ship called the Mayflower set sail to the New World. In it were Englishmen unhappy with English society and government, who sought an uninhabited coast to settle and establish a new world. They landed in America, and were among the first pioneers and builders of that land.

"This was a great event in the history of England and America. But I would like to know: Is there a single Englishman who knows the exact date and hour of the Mayflower's launch? How much do American children - or grownups - know about this historic trip? Do they know how many people were in the boat? Their names? What they wore? What they ate? Their path of travel? What happened to them on the way? Where they landed?

"More than 3,300 years before the Mayflower set sail, the Jews left Egypt. Any Jewish child, whether in America or Russia, Yemen or Germany, knows that his forefathers left Egypt at dawn on the 15th of Nisan. What did they wear? Their belts were tied, and their staffs were in their hands. They ate matzot, and arrived at the Red Sea after seven days.

"He knows the path of their journey through the desert and the events of those forty years in the desert. They ate manna and slav birds and drank from Miriam's well. They arrived in Jordan facing Jericho. The child can even quote the family names from the Torah.

"Jews worldwide still eat matzah for seven days from the 15th of Nisan. They retell the story of the Exodus, concluding with the fervent wish, "Next Year in Jerusalem." This is the nature of the Jews." ("The Jewish Case Before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine" (Jerusalem, 1947), p. 63, 65.)

Ingrained in Their Collective Soul

Rav Kook explained that the people were not commanded to remember the 15th of Nisan. That was unnecessary! Rather, Moses was informing them that this date would be forever etched in their collective conscious. On this day, the Jewish people were forever changed. On this day their souls gained eternal freedom.

"This date will be ingrained in the soul of the Jewish people. That is the secret that Moses revealed to the people. They will succeed in understanding the inner nature of their souls. They will know that this day must be remembered. Therefore, the word 'Remember' is in the infinitive absolute form."

(Adapted from Olat Re'iyah vol. I, p. 37)

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Subject Weekly Halacha - Parshas Terumah

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Yoshev Rosh - Vaad HaRabanim of Detroit

Weekly Halacha by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

Shabbos Morning Kiddush in Shul * Part 1 Kiddush

Kiddush is recited over a cup¹ of wine or grape juice which holds a revi'is (3 fl. oz.). At least a "cheek full" (approximately 1.6 fl. oz.) must be drunk.²

There is no requirement for anybody but the person who makes Kiddush to taste the wine. As long as the listener intended to fulfill the mitzvah of Kiddush and heard every word of the blessing, he fulfills the mitzvah. It is, however, desirable (a mitzvah min ha-muvchar) to partake of the Kiddush cup.³ For this reason, many people make certain to drink some wine when attending a kiddush in shul. Doing so, however, can lead to a problematic situation regarding the correct blessing for any other beverage which will be drunk at the kiddush. Let us explain:

The blessing of borei peri ha-gafen automatically includes any beverage which is on the table or which will be brought to the table during the kiddush. No shehakol is recited on soda or juice, etc. that will be drunk during the kiddush.⁴

Even those who did not actually recite borei peri ha-gafen but heard Kiddush from another person do not recite a shehakol on other beverages. This rule applies only if one drank a melo lugmav ("cheek full") of wine or grape juice.

If one drank some wine or grape juice – but less than a melo lugmav – and wishes to drink another beverage, it is questionable⁵ if he needs to recite a shehakol on the other beverages. It follows, therefore, that those who listen to

someone else's Kiddush and partake of the wine and then want to drink another beverage, must do one of the following:⁶

* Drink at least 1.6 fl. oz.;

* Recite a shehakol on a food item;

* Listen to a shehakol recited by another person.

Kiddush on schnapps

It is a common practice to recite Kiddush Shabbos morning over a one-ounce cup of schnapps [or liqueur.⁷] Although many poskim⁸ object, as Kiddush must be recited over a cup which holds at least a revi'is and at least a "cheek full" must be drunk, still there are poskim⁹ who defend this minhag Yisrael.¹⁰ They reason that schnapps is different from wine since it is normally consumed in much smaller quantities and is therefore subject to a different set of measurements.¹¹

Those who rely on this leniency and recite Kiddush over schnapps must also recite a borei nefashos over the schnapps, even though only a small amount was drunk. Although one does not recite a borei nefashos unless he drinks at least 3 fl. oz. of a beverage,¹² schnapps – according to this view – is an exception and requires a borei nefashos even on a much smaller amount.¹³

When no wine or grape juice is available, there is a way of reciting Kiddush over schnapps which will satisfy the opinions of most poskim: Recite Kiddush on a revi'is of schnapps and drink at least a "cheek full", but instead of swallowing it in one shot, sip it slowly, for a period of up to three or four minutes.¹⁴ When even this is not possible, the next best option is to share the "cheek full" amount with others who are listening to the Kiddush.¹⁵ Kiddush b'makom seudah

Kiddush must always be followed by a seudah (meal). Most poskim maintain that baked mezonos items¹⁶ [including noodle-kugel¹⁷] eaten at a kiddush are considered a seudah for this purpose.¹⁸ After making Kiddush, at least a k'zayis (approx. 1 oz.) of a mezonos item should be eaten within three to four minutes. One who did not do so must repeat Kiddush at home.

On Pesach or other times when mezonos items are not available, the preferred method is to eat the seudah immediately after reciting Kiddush. If that is not practical, one should drink an additional revi'is (3 fl. oz.) of wine or grape juice. If one has no other wine or grape juice, he can rely on the revi'is of wine he consumed for Kiddush.¹⁹

Some poskim maintain that even l'chatchilah, one may eat fruit or shehakol items after Kiddush is recited [if there are no mezonos items available]. But then, Kiddush must be repeated at home before the meal.²⁰ Other poskim allow this only under special circumstances, such as the case of a person who is weak and needs to eat and has no mezonos items available.²¹

While there is no obligation to repeat Kiddush at home if mezonos items were eaten after Kiddush [unless there are other people at home who did not yet hear Kiddush], it is praiseworthy to do so.²² One who made Kiddush on schnapps should repeat Kiddush at home over wine or grape juice.^{23`}

1 Some poskim advise against using a disposable cup for Kiddush (Igros Moshe, O.C. 3:39; Minchas Yitzchak 10:23; Rav C. Kanievsky, Ohel Chanoch, pg. 228), while others are not particular (Rav Y.S. Elyashiv, quoted in Ashrei ha-Ish, vol. 2, pg. 62; Tzitz Eliezer 12:23). See also Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 47, note 51, quoting Rav S.Z. Auerbach.

2 Based on the measurements of Rav M. Feinstein. A "cheek full" is a little more than half a revi'is.

3 O.C. 274:14. A minority view (Brisker Rav, quoted in Teshuvos v'Hanhagos 1:264) maintains that on Shabbos morning one must partake of the Kiddush cup in order to fulfill the mitzvah. The poskim, however do not agree with this stringency; see Ma'aseh Ish 5:91, quoting Chazon Ish; Ashrei ha-Ish, vol. 2, pg. 83; Yechaveh Da'as 5:20.

4 O.C. 174:2. Note, however, that Rav Y.S. Elyashiv (Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 267) and Rav S. Wosner (Deror Yikra, pg. 280) are quoted as ruling that only a borei peri ha-gafen over wine exempts all other beverages; when it is recited over grape juice it does not exempt other beverages.

5 Derech ha-Chayim rules that it is sufficient, but Be'ur Halachah 174:2 questions that. See Minchas Yitzchak 8:19 and Yechaveh Da'as 5:20.

6 Be'ur Halachah 174:2. [It is not sufficient to have specific intention that the blessing over the wine should only cover the wine itself and not other beverages; Rav Y.S. Elyashiv, quoted in Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 100.]

7 Minchas Yitzchak 10:22.

8 Mishnah Berurah 272:30; Aruch ha-Shulchan 272:13; Minchas Shabbos 79:29; Ketzos ha-Shulchan 89:5.

9 Ketzei ha-Mateh (Mateh Efrayim 625:99); Eishel Avraham 272:6; Maharsham 1:175; Chelkas Yaakov 1:94.

10 Because the practice was defended (in part) due to the scarcity and expense of wine, some poskim suggest that nowadays, Kiddush should be made over wine or grape juice only, see Nimukei Orchos Chayim 273.

11 This explanation is based on the view of the Taz, O.C. 210:1, which is rejected by the later poskim; see Mishnah Berurah 190:14.

12 O.C. 190:3.

13 Har Tzvi, O.C. 159. It follows, therefore, that those who follow the majority view and do not recite Kiddush on schnapps, do not recite a borei nefashos when drinking an amount of schnapps less than a revi'is.

14 Mishnah Berurah 271:68. Talking is not permitted until the minimum amount is drunk.

15 Mishnah Berurah 272:30.

16 Or dates; Peri Megadim 273:11.

17 Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 54:22; Az Nidberu 8:31. See Meor ha-Shabbos, vol. 2, pgs. 576-577.

18 Mishnah Berurah 273:25. [A notable exception is the view of the Gaon of Vilna, who maintains that Kiddush can be made only when a seudah of bread follows. His view is quoted by the Beir Halachah 273:5 without comment. Aruch ha-Shulchan 273:8 considers this to be the preferred method. The general custom, however, follows the view of most poskim.]

19 Mishnah Berurah 273:25, 27 and Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 29.

20 Igros Moshe, O.C. 4:63. See also Ein Yitzchak, O.C. 12 and B'tzeil ha-Chochmah 4:2; 5:115.

21 Mishnah Berurah 273:26.

22 Shalmas Chayim 1:59. See also Igros Moshe, O.C. 4:63 (anaf 8) who implies that Kiddush should be repeated at home before the main meal.

23 To satisfy the view of the majority of the poskim.

Shabbos Morning Kiddush in Shul * Part 2 Cholent

The proper blessing over cholent depends on the ingredients:

A cholent which contains beans, potatoes and small pieces of meat or chicken requires only borei peri ha-adamah. It is considered a "single-entity mixture" since the entire mixture is eaten together in one spoonful. Because the ha-adamah ingredients constitute the majority of the cholent mixture, they determine the blessing for the cholent.¹ Even if the cholent has a soupy consistency, no shehakol blessing is required. The berachah acharonah is borei nefashos.

When kishke is served along with cholent, the kishke requires a blessing of borei minei mezonos. Since the kishke is generally not eaten in the same spoonful as the cholent, its blessing does not exempt the rest of the cholent from the blessing of ha-adamah,² and therefore two blessings are required.

The other type of cholent is the kind which contains barley in addition to potatoes, beans and small pieces of meat or chicken. This kind of cholent requires only a mezonos blessing. Since it is a "single-entity mixture" which contains one of the five species of grain (barley), the barley assumes the halachic status of ikar (a preeminent ingredient), even if there is less barley than beans and potatoes.³ The mezonos said over the barley exempts all the other ingredients in the cholent. In order for the barley to be considered the ikar, however, the following two conditions must be met:

* The barley must be added to the cholent for the purpose of enhancing its taste. If it is added to the cholent just as a binding or thickening agent,⁴ or to give it color or aroma,⁵ a mezonos is not said over the barley [or the cholent].

* The taste of the barley must actually be noticeable in the mixture.⁶

In most cases when barley is added to the cholent, the above two conditions are met. The proper blessing, then, is mezonos. No other blessing should be made over the other ingredients.⁷ If, after reciting a mezonos on the barley, one recites another blessing, such as ha-adamah on the potatoes or shehakol on the meat, he may be reciting a blessing in vain.⁸ If one recites ha-adamah or shehakol before the mezonos, he may be reciting an unnecessary blessing.⁹

An exception to the above rules is when the cholent contains large pieces of meat and chicken which are not eaten together with the rest of the cholent.¹⁰ In that case, a shehakol is said over the meat or chicken after the mezonos has been recited over the cholent.

The berachah acharonah on barley cholent depends on the amount of barley consumed. If one eats a k'zayis of barley in three to four minutes or

less, al ha-michyah is said. No borei nefashos is required.¹¹ If less than that amount of barley is eaten, a borei nefashos is said over the rest of the cholent.

The preferred method when eating a barley cholent at a kiddush is to recite a mezonos over the cake at the beginning of the kiddush while having in mind the cholent as well;¹² this obviates the need for a blessing over the cholent. The al ha-michyah recited over the cake will include the cholent also, thus making it unnecessary to estimate the amount of barley eaten and the time span within which it was consumed.

Note, however, that when barley cholent is served there is no need at all to eat cake, as one may fulfill his obligation of Kiddush b'makom seudah by eating a k'zayis of barley from the cholent.¹³

Beracha Acharona

Al ha-michyah is recited when a k'zayis is eaten within a time-span of no longer than 3-4 minutes.¹⁴ The k'zayis must be composed entirely of flour; the other ingredients do not count towards the minimum.¹⁵ Many people, however, are not accurate in ascertaining the exact amount of flour they ate and some poskim find a source to excuse their inexactitude¹⁶ if at least the majority of the mixture is pure flour.¹⁷ Fillings such as cream in a seven layer cake, apple filling in a pie, or cheese in a cheese cake, are certainly not counted as part of the k'zayis.¹⁸

Note: Washing hands, reciting Al netilas yadayim, and reciting Birkas ha-Mazon are required when eating an amount of baked goods that constitutes kevius seudah, i.e., an amount of food that has the halachic status of eating a regular meal (as opposed to a snack). When one eats such a substantial amount, the baked goods are halachically treated like bread. For the many details of this halachah, see The Weekly Halachah Discussion to Parashas Eikev.

When it comes to liquids, a berachah acharonah is not recited unless at least a revi'is is consumed. For the purpose of hilchos berachos, we follow the view of the poskim that a revi'is is the amount of liquid that fills a cup which holds three fluid oz.

* Borei nefashos [or Al ha-gefen] is recited only after drinking at least 3 oz. However, there are poskim who require a berachah acharonah after drinking as little as 1 oz. To satisfy all opinions, one should not drink an amount between 1 oz. and 3 oz. l'chatchilah.¹⁹

* Many poskim hold that the 3 oz. must be consumed within shiur shesias revi'is,²⁰ which is a very short time period.²¹ L'chatchilah, therefore, the amount required should be drunk in one or two sips. One who took longer to drink the 3 oz., which can happen when drinking piping hot beverages, should not recite Borei nefashos unless he left at least 3 oz. to cool off and drank it within a few seconds.²²

Question: Should one who drank a revi'is of wine or grape juice, but mistakenly said Al ha-michyah v'al ha-kalkalah instead of Al ha-gefen v'al peri ha-gefen, repeat the blessing of Al ha-gefen?

Discussion: No, he should not, since b'diavad Al ha-michyah covers wine too.²³

But the halachah is not as clear in a case when one not only drank wine but also ate a k'zayis of cake and then said Al ha-michyah but forgot to mention Al ha-gefen v'al peri ha-gefen. Some poskim hold that in this case, too, Al ha-gefen need not be repeated, since b'diavad the blessing of Al ha-michyah covers wine as well.²⁴ But other poskim maintain that Al ha-michyah only covers wine when inadvertently one said Al ha-michyah instead of Al ha-gefen. In this case, however, the person apparently forgot about the wine altogether and intended to make a berachah acharonah over the cake only. Thus, no berachah acharonah was said over the wine and Al ha-gefen must be repeated.²⁵

Since a dispute remains as to whether or not one is required to repeat Al ha-gefen in the latter case, we must follow the principle of safek berachos l'hakel; Al ha-gefen, therefore, is not repeated.²⁶

1 O.C. 208:7. Mishnah Berurah 204:57; 207:7; 212:1.

2 Aruch ha-Shulchan 212:2.

3 Mishnah Berurah and Aruch ha-Shulchan 212:1. This is true even if the taste of the barley is not the preferred one.

4 O.C. 208:2.

5 O.C. 204:12.

6 Mishnah Berurah 208:49; Beir Halachah 208:9, s.v. mevarech; Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 212:6; oral ruling from Rav M. Feinstein (quoted in Guide to Practical Halachah, vol. 2, pg. 204).

7 Note that a dissenting opinion (Chayei Adam 51:13; 54:9; Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 54:5; Shevet ha-Levi 7:27) maintains that when each item is recognizable, a separate berachah is made over each. Mishnah Berurah and Aruch ha-Shulchan, however, do not agree, and Rav S.Z. Auerbach (Vezos ha-

Berachah, pg. 94) and Rav Y.S. Elyashiv (Vesein Berachah, pg. 63) rule that one need not concern himself with the dissenting opinion.

8 Mishnah Berurah 168:43.

9 This is based on a disagreement among the poskim; see Sha'arei Teshuvah 212:1; Shulchan Aruch ha-Rav 249:4; Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 212:15.

10 Aruch ha-Shulchan 212:2; Rav Y.S. Elyashiv (quoted in Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 109).

11 O.C. 212:1; Mishnah Berurah 208:48; Igros Moshe, O.C. 1:68.

12 The blessing is valid even though the cholent has not yet been served.

13 See O.C. 639:2, Mishnah Berurah 15 and Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 35.

14 O.C. 208:9.

15 See Igros Moshe, O.C. 1:71; E.H. 1:114; Divrei Yoel 1:13; Rav Y.S. Elyashiv (quoted in Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 46). This is also the ruling of the Brisker Rav (quoted in Teshuvos v'Hanhagos 1:132).

16 Mishnah Berurah 208:48; Chazon Ish, O.C. 26:8.

17 Rav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Vesein Berachah, pg. 530).

18 Minchas Shlomo 1:91-4. See also Halachos of K'zayis, pg. 134 and Yalkut Yosef 3:491.

19 O.C. 190:3 and Mishnah Berurah 9 and 14.

20 See O.C. 612:10 and Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 210:12.

21 See Aruch ha-Shulchan 202:6-8; Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 210:11.

22 Mishnah Berurah 210:1. Many poskim, however, allow reciting Borei nefashos over hot tea or coffee, and one who follows that custom, may continue to do so; see Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 42 and pg. 200, who quotes several contemporary authorities who follow this custom.

23 Be'er Heitev, O.C. 208:23; Kaf ha-Chayim 108:89, quoting many poskim.

24 Peri Megadim (Pesichah to Hilchos Berachos 10, s.v. merish); Kaf ha-Chayim 108:76.

25 Har Tzvi 1:105; Minchas Shlomo 1:91-6; Cheishev ha-Eifod 3:43.

26 Rav C. Kanievsky (She'elas Rav, pg. 289); Rivevos Efrayim 8:72.

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By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

The Creation of the "Permanent" Calendar By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

In a previous article, we learned that the Torah commands us to establish a calendar using the moon to define the months, thus making our months sometimes 29 days and sometimes 30, and yet to have our year follow the pattern of the sun by having some years consist of 12 months and other years 13. Initially, this was done by having the main Beis Din of the Jewish people, or a Beis Din specially appointed by them, declare Rosh Chodesh by accepting the testimony of witnesses who observed the new moon. However, during the later times of the Gemara, Roman persecution made it impossible to continue declaring Rosh Chodesh based on testimony, and Hillel Hanasi (not to be confused with his more famous ancestor, Hillel, who lived several hundred years earlier. To distinguish between the two, the earlier one is called Hillel Hazakein, and the later one, Hillel Hanasi) created a "permanent" calendar. This calendar kept the same basic structure of 29 and 30-day months and 12- and 13-month years, but it was based purely on calculation and not on observation.

When Hillel Hanasi created the new calendar, he incorporated in its calculations several innovations. The two major changes in this new calendar are:

(1) When is there a leap year

The leap years now occur following a regular pattern of seven leap years and 12 non-leap (usually called "common") years in a 19 year cycle. The third, sixth, eighth, eleventh, fourteenth, seventeenth and nineteenth years of the cycle are always leap years, and the rest are common years. This year is the fourteenth year of the cycle, and thus is a leap year.

(2) The Haves versus the Have-nots

The length of most months is now predetermined. Tishrei, Shvat, Adar Rishon (which exists only in a leap year), Nissan, Sivan, and Av always

have 30 days; whereas Teiveis, regular Adar (in a common, non-leap year), Adar Shenii (in a leap year), Iyar, Tamuz and Elul are always only 29 days long. The two months of Cheshvan and Kislev are the only months whose length varies, sometimes 29 days and sometimes 30. A year in which both Cheshvan and Kislev have only 29 days is called chaseirah, lacking or defective; one in which Cheshvan has 29 days and Kislev has 30 is called kesidrah, as expected or regular; and one in which both Cheshvan and Kislev have 30 days is called sheleimah, full or excessive.

The terms chaseirah, kesidrah, and sheleimah apply in both common and leap years.³ Thus, in the new calendar, all common years are either 353 days (if both Cheshvan and Kislev have 29 days), 354 days (if Cheshvan has 29 days and Kislev has 30) or 355 days (if both Cheshvan and Kislev have 30 days); all leap years are either 383 days (if both Cheshvan and Kislev have 29 days), 384 days (if Cheshvan has 29 days and Kislev has 30) or 385 days (if both Cheshvan and Kislev have 30 days). Since Adar in a common year always has 29 days; Adar Rishon always has 30 days; and Adar Sheini always has 29 days, like the regular Adar, the addition of an extra month of Adar in a leap year always adds exactly thirty days.

(Because the nineteen-year cycle synchronizes the lunar calendar with the solar year, the Hebrew and English dates of births, anniversaries and other occasions usually coincide on the nineteenth anniversary of the event. If yours does not, but is off by a day or two, do not fret. Your record keeping is probably perfectly accurate, but the cycle of nineteen years only relates to whether it is a leap year, not to whether the years are of the exact same length. The lengths of Cheshvan and Kislev are determined by other factors, and this will affect whether your 19th, 38th or 57th birthday or anniversary exactly coincides with its Hebrew/secular counterpart, or whether it is off slightly.)

Hillel Hanasi's calendar bases itself on an estimate; an average time that it takes the moon to revolve around the Earth. This molad calculation is that each new moon appears 29 days, 12 hours, and 793 chalakim (singular: chelek) or 793/1080 of an hour after the previous new moon. Once one knows when we estimate that the new moon occurred, called the molad, on the previous Rosh Hashanah, one could now add either 12 or 13 times this figure and determine the time of the estimated molad in the next year, which is the most important factor in determining the date of the next Rosh Hashanah. (The term chelek, used when announcing when the molad is on Shabbos Mevorchim, equals 1/1080 of an hour, or 3 and 1/3 seconds.)

There is one other factor: Sometimes Rosh Hashanah takes place not on the day of the molad, but the next day, because the molad fell on the afternoon of Rosh Hashanah and would not be visible in Eretz Yisrael until the next day. When Rosh Hashanah was determined by the observation of witnesses, this information was important not only in determining when Rosh Hashanah falls, but also while interrogating potential witnesses testifying to the appearance of the new moon. However, although the new calendar is no longer dependent on witnesses, Rosh Hashanah is still not established on a day when the molad falls on its afternoon, but is postponed. Upon the basis of this information one can determine which day should be Rosh Hashanah in the coming year.

Another major innovation

Did you ever notice that Yom Kippur never falls on Friday or Sunday? If it did, we would observe two consecutive days that both have the stringency of Shabbos. Indeed, when the calendar was based on observation, this could and did happen.⁴

However, Hillel Hanasi's new calendar included some new innovations that were not part of the earlier calendar. Hillel Hanasi's calendar does not allow Yom Kippur to fall on either a Sunday or a Friday, thus avoiding the difficulty of having two Shabbos-like days fall consecutively. Hillel Hanasi's calendar also does not allow Hoshana Rabbah to fall on Shabbos, which would cause the cancellation of the Hoshanos ceremony. As long as the calendar was determined on the basis of eyewitness testimony, it is halachically more important to have Rosh Chodesh fall on its more correct day than to be concerned about having two Shabbos-like days fall consecutively, or about cancelling the Hoshanas ceremony on Hoshana Rabbah.⁵ However, once we are fulfilling the mitzvah with the permanent calendar, keeping Yom Kippur from falling on Friday or Sunday, and Hoshana Rabbah from falling on Shabbos are factors to be included in establishing the calendar.

In order to accommodate these innovations, Rosh Hashanah could only fall on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Shabbos, since if it falls on Sunday, Hoshana Rabbah falls on Shabbos; if Rosh Hashanah falls on Wednesday, Yom Kippur falls on Friday; and if Rosh Hashanah falls on Friday, then Yom Kippur falls on

Sunday. This would mean that when Rosh Hashanah in the coming year would naturally fall on Sunday, Wednesday or Friday, an extra day is added to the calendar to make sure that Rosh Hashanah falls on Monday, Thursday or Shabbos instead.⁶ This calendar concept of guaranteeing that Rosh Hashanah not fall on Sunday, Wednesday or Friday is called "lo adu rosh", meaning that the beginning of the year, Rosh Hashanah, does not fall on Sunday, the first day of the week, Sunday; Wednesday; or Friday. It is predominantly for this reason that there was a need to have Cheshvan and Kislev sometimes 29 days and sometimes 30, in order to make the exact length of the years flexible.

Although the innovation of adding one day to the year so that Rosh Hashanah not fall on a Sunday, Wednesday or Friday seems relatively simple, it sometimes has more complex applications. Sometimes adjusting Rosh Hashanah to avoid these days will create a problem in the year before or the year after. Since Hillel Hanasi's calendar did not allow a common year to be longer than 355 days and a leap year to be shorter than 383 days, the only way to avoid this happening is by planning in advance what will happen in the future years and adjusting the calendar appropriately. In order to accommodate all these various calendar requirements, Hillel Hanasi established four rules, called dechiyos, which together with the molad calculation and the 7 in 19 leap-year rotation form the basis for determining our calendar.⁷

To explain how this works, I will simply use this year's and this coming year's calculation of the molad for Rosh Hashanah. This year's molad calculation for Rosh Hashanah fell on Wednesday evening, and Rosh Hashanah therefore falls on Thursday, which is what we would expect. However, next year's molad falls on Tuesday less than two hours before the end of the day. Although the molad falls on Tuesday, it is too late in the day for this molad to be visible in Eretz Yisrael, and therefore Rosh Hashanah cannot occur before Wednesday. However, since Rosh Hashanah cannot fall on a Wednesday because of the rule of lo adu Rosh, it must be pushed off to Thursday, or two days after the molad. For this reason, this year must have an extra day and be not only a leap year (because it is the fourteenth year of the nineteen year cycle), but a sheleimah when both Cheshvan and Kislev have thirty days, which makes it a year of 385 days, the longest year in our calendar.⁸

As I mentioned above, although the leap years follow an absolute nineteen year cycle, whether the year is chaseirah, kesidrah, or sheleimah is determined by the other factors we have noted, and therefore does not follow the nineteen year pattern. Rather, one first calculates when Rosh Hashanah should fall out based on the molad calculation, checks the rules of the dechiyos to see what adjustments need to be made, and then determines on which day Rosh Hashanah should fall. As a result, whether the year in question needs to be chaseirah, kesidrah, or sheleimah requires calculating not only this year's schedule, but also the coming year's calendar requirements.

A result of all these calculations is that although there are many potential variables used in calculating the years (the day of the week of Rosh Hashanah, whether it is a leap or common year, and whether the year is chaseirah, kesidrah, or sheleimah) which should result in dozens of different calendar schedules, there actually are only seven prototype years for a common year and seven for a leap year that fulfill the calendar rules. Each of these fourteen prototype "years" is called by a three letter acronym in which the first letter identifies the day of the week of the first day of Rosh Hashanah, the second letter denotes whether the year is chaseirah, kesidrah, or sheleimah, and the third letter identifies the day of the week of the first day of Pesach. No letter is used to denote whether the year is common or leap, because this is understood by knowing how many days of the week Pesach follows Rosh Hashanah. In a common year that is kesidrah, Pesach falls two days later in the week than Rosh Hashanah, and in a leap year, it falls four days later, the two additional days being the extra two days that the added month of Adar Rishon, thirty days long, adds to the day of the week count. Of course, these calculations must be adjusted one day in either direction if the year is chaseirah or sheleimah. In any instance, knowing how many days in the week Pesach falls later than Rosh Hashanah tells you automatically whether the year is a leap or common year. Thus, this year 5771 is known as חשג because Rosh Hashanah fell on Thursday (ח), it is a sheleimah (ש) year in which both Cheshvan and Kislev contain 30 days; and, because it is a leap year, the first day of Pesach falls on Tuesday (ג). Next year, when Rosh Hashanah again falls on Thursday, Cheshvan has 29 days and Kislev has 30, making it a kesidrah (כ), and the first day of Pesach falls on Shabbos, is therefore called כזח.

1 Rambam, Hilchos Kiddush HaChodesh 5:2

2 Rambam, Hilchos Kiddush Hachodesh 8:5

3 By the way, because Kislev is sometimes 29 days and sometimes 30, the last day of Chanukah is sometimes on the Second Day of Teiveis, and sometimes on the Third.

4 Rambam, Hilchos Shabbos 5:21; Sheiltos of Rav Acha'ei Geon, #67; Haemek She'ailah ad loc., Note 22.

5 Haemek She'ailah ibid.; Gri"z, Hilchos Kiddush Hachodesh

6 Rambam, Hilchos Kiddush Hachodesh 7:1.

7 Because these dechiyos are extremely technical, I did not explain all of them.

8 Technically, it is one of the longest years. Of the fourteen different year prototypes, three include the combination of being sheleimah leap years of 385 days.