



BS"D

To: parsha@groups.io
From: Chaim Shulman
<cshulman@gmail.com>
& Allen Klein
<tradefin@terra.com.br>

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON **METZORA & PESACH** - 5784

parsha@groups.io / www.parsha.net - in our 29th year! To receive this parsha sheet, go to <http://www.parsha.net> and click Subscribe or send a blank e-mail to parsha+subscribe@groups.io Please also copy me at cshulman@gmail.com A complete archive of previous issues is now available at <http://www.parsha.net> It is also fully searchable.

Sponsored in memory of **Chaim Yissachar z"l** ben Yechiel Zaydel Dov

To sponsor a parsha sheet contact cshulman@gmail.com (proceeds to tzedaka) _____

fw from allen.klein@gmail.com
from: Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein
<info@jewishdestiny.com>
reply-to: info@jewishdestiny.com
subject: Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

Home Weekly Parsha METZORA
Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

This week's parsha is truly one of the most difficult subjects for people in our time to contemplate, understand or from which to gain knowledge and inspiration. The entire subject of these mysterious diseases, which manifested themselves on the human body, in clothing and even in houses and buildings is technically discussed in the Mishna and also in various places in the Talmud itself. However, the fact that the subject is discussed does not really reveal the underlying pathology of these diseases nor does it help explain it to us in a purely rational fashion.

We are all aware that the Talmud connects the disease to the sin of slandering others and improper speech. Nevertheless, the mystery of the cause, diagnosis and cure for the condition remains a troubling and hidden matter. It is beyond my ability to add any new insights into this age old discussion by the great scholars of Israel. I think, though, that we simply have to accept that there are physical diseases that manifest themselves because of spiritual failings, whatever those failings may be and however they are interpreted.

We are all aware that there are psychosomatic diseases that can and often do become actually physical. Medical science has not yet been able to determine why such phenomena occur. Well, just as there are, so to speak, mentally caused diseases, the Torah informs us that there are also spiritually caused diseases that actually effect one's body, clothing and even one's home. There are many events and occurrences in life, both personal and national, that defy logic or any form of human understanding.

The Torah does indicate to us the areas of our lives where our human vulnerabilities exist and are apparent. Certainly our bodies, our health, our appearance and our general physical well-being rank as some of the most vulnerable of all human conditions. Our bodies are so delicately formed and perfectly balanced that even the slightest malfunction of any of its parts immediately causes pain and requires our attention.

The Torah expands this idea to include spiritual imbalances and shortcomings. We are usually never conscious of these matters and if, in fact, they are pointed out to us by others, the usual reaction is one of resentment. So, through the mechanism of physical symptoms as described in this week's parsha, the Torah reminds us that we need to examine and purify ourselves spiritually and not merely physically.

Our bodies, our clothing, even our dwelling places require inspection and sanctification. Even though the physical manifestations of these shortcomings are no longer apparent in our time, the underlying lesson is still present in all of our actions and attitudes.

The realization that we can be woefully deficient in behavior, unless we are constantly monitoring our relationship to our unique value system, is essential for living a truly Jewish and observant life. We are responsible for discerning those weaknesses within us even if they are not physically apparent. Perhaps this is the message to us from this week's parsha.

Shabbat shalom
Rabbi Berel Wein

from: The Rabbi Sacks Legacy Trust <info@rabbisacks.org>
subject: Covenant and Conversation
COVENANT & CONVERSATION
Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks zt"l

Is there such a thing as Lashon Tov?

METZORA

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

lashon tov positive words of affirmation constellation relationships communication talking supporting helping friends

The Sages understood tsara'at, the theme of this week's parsha, not as an illness but as a miraculous public exposure of the sin of lashon hara, speaking badly about people. Judaism is a sustained meditation on the power of words to heal or harm, mend or destroy. Just as God created the world with words, He empowered us to create, and destroy, relationships with words. The rabbis said much about lashon hara, but virtually nothing about the corollary, lashon tov, "good speech". The phrase does not appear in either the Babylonian Talmud or the Talmud Yerushalmi. It figures only in two midrashic passages (where it refers to praising God). But lashon hara does not mean speaking badly about God. It means speaking badly about human beings. If it is a sin to speak badly about people, is it a mitzvah to speak well about them? My argument will be that it is, and to show this, let us take a journey through the sources.

In Mishnah Avot we read the following:

Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai had five (pre-eminent) disciples, namely Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, Rabbi Joshua ben Chananya, Rabbi Yose the Priest, Rabbi Shimon ben Netanel, and Rabbi Elazar ben Arach.

He used to recount their praise: Eliezer ben Hyrcanus: a plastered well that never loses a drop. Joshua ben Chananya: happy the one who gave him birth. Yose the Priest: a pious man. Shimon ben Netanel: a man who fears sin. Elazar ben Arach: an ever-flowing spring.

Ethics of the Fathers 2:10-11

However, the practice of Rabban Yochanan in praising his disciples seems to stand in contradiction to a Talmudic principle:

Rav Dimi, brother of Rav Safra said: Let no one ever talk in praise of his neighbour, for praise will lead to criticism.

Arachin 16a

Rashi gives two explanations of this statement. Having delivered excessive praise [yoter midai], the speaker himself will come to qualify his remarks, admitting for the sake of balance that the person of whom he speaks also has faults. Alternatively, others will point out his faults in response to the praise. For Rashi, the crucial consideration is, is the praise judicious, accurate, true, or it is overstated? If the former, it is permitted; if the latter, it is forbidden. Evidently Rabban Yochanan was careful not to exaggerate.

Rambam, however, sees matters differently. He writes:

"Whoever speaks well about his neighbour in the presence of

his enemies is guilty of a secondary form of evil speech [avak lashon hara], since he will provoke them to speak badly about him" (Hilchot Deot 7:4). According to the Rambam the issue is not whether the praise is moderate or excessive, but the context in which it is delivered. If it is done in the presence of friends of the person about whom you are speaking, it is permitted. It is forbidden only when you are among his enemies and detractors. Praise then becomes a provocation, with bad consequences.

Are these merely two opinions, or is there something deeper at stake? There is a famous passage in the Talmud which discusses how one should sing the praises of a bride at her wedding:

Our Rabbis taught: How should you dance before the bride [i.e. what should one sing]?

The disciples of Hillel hold that at a wedding you should sing that the bride is beautiful, whether she is or not. Shammai's disciples disagree. Whatever the occasion, don't tell a lie. "Do you call that a lie?" the Hillel's disciples respond. "In the eyes of the groom at least, the bride is beautiful."

What's really at stake here is not just temperament – puritanical Shammaites versus good-natured Hillelites – but two views about the nature of language. The Shammaites think of language as a way of making statements, which are either true or false. The Hillelites understand that language is about more than making statements. We can use language to encourage, empathise, motivate, and inspire. Or we can use it to discourage, disparage, criticise, and depress. Language does more than convey information. It conveys emotion. It creates or disrupts a mood. The sensitive use of speech involves social and emotional intelligence. Language, in J. L. Austin's famous account, can be performative as well as informative.[1]

The discourse between the disciples of Hillel and Shammai is similar to the argument between Rambam and Rashi. For Rashi, as for Shammai, the key question about praise is: is it true, or is it excessive? For Rambam as for Hillel, the question is: what is the context? Is it being said among enemies or friends? Will it create warmth and esteem or envy and resentment?

We can go one further, for the disagreement between Rashi and Rambam about praise may be related to a more fundamental disagreement about the nature of the command, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Lev. 19:18). Rashi interprets the command to mean: do not do to your neighbour what you would not wish him to do to you (Rashi to Sanhedrin 84b). Rambam, however, says that the command includes the duty "to speak in his praise" (Hilchot Deot 6:3). Rashi evidently sees praise of one's neighbour as optional, while Rambam sees it as falling within the command of love.

We can now answer a question we should have asked at the outset about the Mishnah in Avot that speaks of Yochanan ben Zakkai's disciples. Avot is about ethics, not about history or biography. Why then does it tell us that Rabban Yochanan had disciples? That, surely, is a fact not a value, a piece of information not a guide to how to live.

However, we can now see that the Mishnah is telling us something profound indeed. The very first statement in Avot includes the principle: "Raise up many disciples." But how do you create disciples? How do you inspire people to become what they could become, to reach the full measure of their potential? Answer: By acting as did Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai when he praised his students, showing them their specific strengths.

He did not flatter them. He guided them to see their distinctive talents. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, the "well that never loses a drop", was not creative but he had a remarkable memory – not unimportant in the days before the Oral Torah was written in books. Elazar ben Arach, the "ever-flowing spring," was creative, but needed to be fed by mountain waters (years later he separated from his colleagues and it is said that he forgot all he had learned).

Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai took a Hillel-Rambam view of praise. He used it not so much to describe as to motivate. And that is lashon tov. Evil speech diminishes us, good speech helps us grow. Evil speech puts people down, good speech lifts them up. Focused, targeted praise, informed by considered judgment of individual strengths, and sustained by faith in people and their potentiality, is what makes teachers great and their disciples greater than they would otherwise have been. That is what we learn from Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai.

So there is such a thing as lashon tov. According to Rambam it falls within the command of "Love your neighbour as yourself." According to Avot it is one way of "raising up many disciples." It is as creative as lashon hara is destructive.

Seeing the good in people and telling them so is a way of helping it become real, becoming a midwife to their personal growth. If so, then not only must we praise God. We must praise people too.

[1] See J. L. Austin's *How to Do Things with Words*, Harvard University Press, 1962.

From: **Alan Fisher** <afisherads@yahoo.com>

BS"D April 19, 2024

Potomac Torah Study Center

Vol. 11 #28-29, April 19-20; April 22-30, 2024; 11-22 Nisan 5784; Metzora; HaGadol; Pesach *

Hamas recently announced that it cannot find even 40 of the remaining approximately 130 hostages (alive and presumed dead), including Hersh ben Perel Chana, cousin of very close

friends of ours. We continue our prayers for all our people stuck in Gaza. With the help of Hashem, Israel and a few friendly countries prevented an attack by Iran from causing more than minimal damage. May our people in Israel wipe out the evil of Hamas, protect us from violence by anti-Semites around the world, and restore peace for our people quickly and successfully – with the continued help of Hashem.

During a non-leap year, Pesach normally arrives very close to Vayikra and Tzav, where we read about the korbanot and instructions that the kohanim would follow when performing the sacrifices. The juxtaposition of these Torah portions makes sense as we prepare for the rituals that we may still perform for Pesach since the destruction of the Temple. This year, however, we read Metzora on Shabbat HaGadol. How does the purification process for one who recovers from tzaraat relate to Pesach? Rabbi David Fohrman and his colleagues at alephbeta.org explain that Metzora connects very closely to Pesach.

The Torah discusses tzaraat immediately after the implications of childbirth on tamai and tahara (ritual impurity and purity). The classic case of tzaraat in the Torah is Miriam's condition after she speaks lashon hara about Moshe's wife (Bemidbar ch. 12). Aharon describes Miriam's skin as resembling that of a stillborn baby. Miriam must stay outside the camp and do teshuvah for a week before becoming tahor again.

Rabbi Fohrman observes that the Torah describes tzaraat as a "negah," and the only other use of "negah" is when Hashem tells Moshe that Paro will release the Jews after He brings one more plague, a negah, to the Egyptians. The tenth plague, killing of the first born men and kosher animals of Mitzrayim, is contact with death – a parallel to the near death experience involved with tzaraat. After the tenth plague, the Jews must be waiting by the doors to their homes, with blood covering the doors. The Jews eat the korban Pesach that night, go through the bloody doors, and become reborn as a nation, B'Nai Yisrael, as they set off for the land that Hashem promised to our ancestors.

Rabbi Fohrman observes that the purification process for a metzora is almost identical to the korban Pesach. The ritual involves two birds, one that is killed with its blood mixed with water to turn the water red. The other bird is set free. One bird that is killed reminds us of the first born of Egypt killed, and of the Egyptian army and horses killed in the Sea of Reeds on the seventh day, turning the sea red. The bird set free represents the Jews set free after eating the korban Pesach. The cedar wood dipped in blood (with a hyssop plant) reminds us of the bloody doors of the Jews, painted with hyssop before the korban Pesach. In both cases, there is a seven day period before the Jews cross the sea safely and the Egyptians die in

the sea. The night that Hashem frees the Jews, the Egyptians are stillborn. The purification process for a metzora parallels that for the korban Pesach very closely (ch. 14). Rabbi Fohrman describes the metzora as having encountered a near death experience and a form of social death. The waiting period permits the metzora to perform teshuvah and rid himself of anti-social activities (such as lashon hara), and the purification process initiates his rebirth as a member of the community. This rebirth parallels the birth of the Jews as a distinct nation after leaving Egypt. The connection between the purification process and the korban Pesach illustrates why Metzora is a fitting introduction to Pesach.

Metzora and Pesach have special meaning for all Jews even today, more than 3330 years after the Exodus. Rabbi Label Lam observes that we must still attend Seders and observe the mitzvot, because there is no expiration date for gratitude. Indeed, with each new generation, we have more descendants from those freed from Egypt – and therefore more reason to express our gratitude to Hashem. Rabbi Marc Angel reminds us that we must each feel a part of the story of our slavery and exodus – exactly what the Sephardim do at their Seders. Rabbi Rhine adds that we must view ourselves as if we were just freed from Mitzrayim, so we must feel Hashem's love and protection personally.

Rabbi Dr. Katriel (Kenneth) Brander brings his message to the situation in 5784, a situation that Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, z"l, also observed during covid a few years ago. This year there are many empty chairs at Seders, especially in Israel. The Seder's recurring theme is that Jewish history starts with shame and evolves to praise. All the Pesach Seder symbols have the dual themes of shame and praise. Grief and hope/redemption are part of the central meaning of the Seder. Israel and all Jews are both a redeemed people and a nation facing difficult, continuous challenges. As Rabbi Sacks observes, during times of isolation and need, our sense of "we" gets stronger. During covid, and again since October 7, neighbors and congregations have been pulling together as never before. Pesach starts with suffering and ends with hope.

All Jews, especially those facing an explosion of anti-Semitism throughout the world, and our fellows in Israel facing danger and attacks, internalize this message. Metzora introduces Pesach, and the Seder introduces our resolve to work together and both hope and expect a better future, one where we can understand God's hand in bringing miracles to protect us, today as He has since the time of Avraham. God's continued protection with miracles was clear only a week ago, when Iran sent countless missiles and drones toward Israel – yet virtually none of them landed, and there was very little damage anywhere in Israel. Jordan joined the defense in shooting down missiles that flew over Jordan's air

space. Egypt joined in condemning Iran, as did the United Kingdom, France, and Germany. Several other Arab countries that might have applauded an attack on Israel shouted out silence – implicitly taking Israel's side against Iran. The United States and U.K. both joined Israel in shooting down missiles. Iran's attack, which could have been a great victory for our enemies, backfired on Iran and other enemies of our people. While Israel's ability to withstand Iran's attack was not a surprise, the magnitude of the victory, the reaction of so many other countries, and the absence of any major harm to Israel all demonstrate Hashem's miracle and continued protection.

I have written before that a basic issue of Purim and Hanukkah was whether God would continue to protect B'Nai Yisrael after the end of prophesy. Many of our people had the same question during the Holocaust. Hashem answered loudly last week that He continues to protect our people. Rabbi Rhine adds the story of Gideon (Shoftim ch. 6-8). When Gideon asked an angel when and whether God would bring a miracle, Hashem's response was that Gideon should go forward and He would give him victory. The lesson from Metzora and from Pesach is that we must observe the mitzvot, keep up our personal relationships with Hashem, and ask Him when we need miracles for our people. God continues to protect us and will do so as long as we do our part. Shabbat Shalom, Hannah and Alan

From: **TorahWeb** <torahweb@torahweb.org>

Date: Apr 18, 2024, 8:26 PM

Subject: Rabbi Hershel Schachter - Our Beloved Hears, Even in Our Silence

Rabbi Hershel Schachter

Our Beloved Hears, Even in Our Silence

The Mishna (Pesachim 116a) records that the Chachomim established that the mitzvah of sippur yetzi'as Mitzrayim which we observe on the night of the seder should be fulfilled in a specific form of talmud Torah: we should recite the pesukim of "Arami oveid avi" (Devarim 26:5-9) and give the commentary of the Torah Sheb'al Peh on each phrase of the pesukim. We combine Torah Sheb'al Peh with the Torah Sheb'ksav. On many occasions in his public shiurim, Rav Soloveitchik repeated the comments of the Ma'aseh Nissim[1] to explain this combination. Each time we give an interpretation of the Torah Sheb'al Peh on each phrase of "Arami oveid avi", we are exposing an addition level of interpretation over and above the simple translation of the words by quoting a different passuk which teaches some additional point. For example, the simple translation of the passuk, "va'nitz'ak el Hashem elokei avoseinu" etc. (ibid 25:7) is that on the occasion of yetzi'as Mitzrayim our ancestors prayed to Hashem, He listened to

their prayers and brought them out of Mitzrayim. The Rabbis who authored the Haggadah interpreted that passuk to mean that our ancestors never really prayed; they did not know how to pray! Rather, Pharaoh died, the masters in Egypt then made the Jews work harder than ever resulting in the Jews crying out in anguish over this burden of slavery, and Hashem in His kindness and love for the Jewish people considered it as if we had prayed and He redeemed us.

Many of the Jews in Eretz Yisroel who suffered in the last half year are secular people who are not in the practice of davening. Because so many strange things were happening this year, they obviously must have felt in their hearts that there is an all-powerful Boreh Olam who is running this world and Hakodosh Boruch Hu certainly has considered their expressions of pain and anguish as if they had offered tefillos.

The Gemara tells us that Chizkiyahu Hamelech acted improperly by not expressing Hallel v'hodoah over the miraculous redemption that the Jewish people experienced from the armies of Sancherev, and he was therefore punished. After such a long and drawn-out war in which so many Jewish soldiers have lost their lives, and after long drawn-out negotiations with Hamas over release of the hostages which led to nothing, the Jewish people experienced a fantastic miracle last motzaei Shabbos. Several hundred missiles and drones were sent by Iran to attack Israel. These weapons of war must have cost Iran billions of dollars, and yet hardly any damage was caused to Israel. The entire Jewish people, all over the world, really ought to sing Hallel v'hodoah over this neis. However, the Jewish nation is so numb and emotionally drained by the atrocities of the pogrom which occurred on Simchas Torah and the losses that we have suffered in the ongoing war that most of us did not even think of offering Hallel v'hoda'ah. Hakodosh Boruch Hu, out of his love and kindness towards his chosen nation, will certainly consider it as if we davened to Him in the most proper fashion and as if we offered the proper hoda'ah al ha'neis, as he did at the time of yetzias Mitzrayim.

Just as the Torah Sheb'al Peh reads in between the lines of the Chumash and exposes additional levels of interpretation, so too Hakodosh Boruch Hu reads in between the lines of what we say and how we act and considers it as if we have davened properly and offered the proper hoda'ah. May He redeem us today just as he redeemed us at the time of yetzi'as Mitzrayim.

[1] The commentary on the Haggadah by the author of Nesivos HaMishpat, Rabbi Yaakov (Lorberbaum) of Lissa.

More divrei Torah from Rabbi Schachter

More divrei Torah on Pesach

© 2024 by TorahWeb Foundation. All Rights Reserved

Copyright © 2024 TorahWeb.org, All rights reserved.

You are receiving this email because you opted in via our website.

Our mailing address is: TorahWeb.org 94 Baker Ave
Bergenfield, NJ 07621-3321

from: Shabbat Shalom shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org

date: Thu, Apr 3, 2014 at 9:15 PM

The Seder Night: Exalted Evening

Excerpted from **'The Seder Night: An Exalted Evening' A Passover Haggadah with a commentary based on the teachings of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik**; Edited by Rabbi Menachem D. Genack

Exalted Evening Haggadah

Seder Hakearah The Talmud (Pesachim 114b) discusses the requirement to place shenei tavshilin, two cooked items, on the Seder plate, commemorating the korban Pesach and the chagigah offering that were eaten when sacrifices were brought in the Temple. Rav Huna says that this requirement may be fulfilled by using beets and rice. According to Rav Yosef, one must use two different types of meat. Rambam (Hilkhos Chametz u-Matzah 8:1) follows the opinion of Rav Yosef, while the popular custom is to place one item of meat and an egg on the Seder plate (see Kesef Mishneh, loc cit.). The presence of the egg at the Seder also has another source. The first day of Passover always occurs on the same day of the week as Tishah be-Av, the day that marks the destruction of the Temple and the exile of the Jews (Orach Chayyim 428:3). Accordingly, the custom is to eat an egg, a symbol of mourning, on the first night of Pesach (see Rama, Orach Chayyim 476:2). The egg, therefore, symbolizes both joy, the chagigah, and mourning, Tish'ah be-Av.

The Beit ha-Levi explains the correlation between the first day of Passover and Tish'ah be-Av as follows. Several midrashic sources indicate that the Exodus from Egypt was premature. The Jews were supposed to have been enslaved in Egypt for 400 years but were redeemed after only 210 years. After 210 years of exile, the Jews were in danger of completely losing their Jewish identity. Had they remained in Egypt any longer, they would have been hopelessly assimilated. The urgent need to redeem them without further delay explains why the Exodus occurred "be-chipazon, in haste" (Deut. 16:3). God, therefore, redeemed them prematurely, and the balance of their term of exile would have to be completed in future exiles. Thus, the redemption from Egypt was not a complete redemption, since it was the cause of the later exiles. It is, therefore, appropriate to eat an egg, an open expression of mourning, on the very night of redemption.

It is interesting to note that the terminology of shenei tavshilin occurs with respect to the laws both of Passover, when one is required to place shenei tavshilin on the plate, and of Tish'ah be-Av, when one may not eat shenei tavshilin in the meal

preceding the Tish'ah be-Av fast. The similar terminology further points to the correlation between Passover and Tish'ah be-Av.

(Reshimot)

Seder Leil Pesach There is a logic and a structure not only to the Maggid section of the Haggadah, but also to the entire Seder. The Gemara emphasizes in several places the necessity of preserving the proper order of performance on Pesach night. For example, the Gemara (Pesachim 114b–115a) asks what blessing should be made if one must eat maror before the Maggid section because there is no other vegetable for karpas. It is evident from the discussion that the fulfillment of the mitzvah of maror would not have occurred the first time it was eaten when it was eaten as karpas, but rather the second. If one could fulfill the mitzvah of maror at the first dipping, the whole discussion of the Gemara would be superfluous. Apparently, one may not eat maror before matzah. According to Rashbam (Pesachim 114a), the sequential order of eating matzah first and then maror is biblically mandated. This is based on the verse “al matzot u-merorim yo'kheluhu, they shall eat it (the korban Pesach) with unleavened bread and bitter herbs” (Num. 9:11), implying that the matzot are eaten first, and then the maror. The requirement to maintain a sequence, however, is also applicable to the entire Seder. In order to explain this, we must understand that each of the mitzvot of Pesach night has two aspects, two kiyumim, two fulfillments. The mitzvah of sipur Yetzi'at Mitzrayim is discharged in a twofold way – through the medium of speech and through symbolic actions. A person who eats the matzah and the maror before saying Maggid fulfills the mitzvah of eating matzah, but does not fulfill the mitzvah of sipur Yetzi'at Mitzrayim by means of eating matzah. That is what the Gemara (Pesachim 115b) means by referring to matzah, lechem oni (Deut. 16:3), as “lechem she-onin alav devarim harbeh, the bread over which we recite many things.” Since eating matzah is also part of sipur, we understand the need for Seder, for a particular order of performance.

(Kol ha-Rav)

The language utilized by Rambam in his introduction to the order of the Pesach Seder is reminiscent of his introduction to the Temple service of Yom Kippur. In Hilchot Chametz u-Matzah (8:1), Rambam begins “Seder, the order, for the performance of the mitzvot on the night of the fifteenth is as follows.” In Hilchot Avodat Yom ha-Kippurim (4:1), Rambam begins, “Seder, the order, for the performances of the day is as follows.” Just as following the order of the Yom Kippur service is essential for the proper performance of the mitzvah, so, too, following the order of the Seder is essential for the proper fulfillment of the mitzvot of this night of the fifteenth of Nisan. By following an order we demonstrate that all the

parts of the Seder are interconnected and only collectively do they properly retell the story of Yetzi'at Mitzrayim. If, for instance, one were to consume the matzah before reciting Maggid, the narrative would be deficient in that one would not have satisfied the facet of lechem oni, bread over which we are to recount the Exodus. Similarly, the karpas is intended to elicit the questions that will enable the Maggid discussion to proceed, and the failure to eat the karpas in its proper sequence would impair or forestall the Maggid section. Only through adherence to the prescribed order can we express the overarching principles and ideas that are intended to emerge from, and which are coordinated with, our actions on the Seder night. (Reshimot)

from: Rabbi Yissocher Frand <ryfrand@torah.org>

reply-to: ryfrand@torah.org,

to: ravfrand@torah.org

subject: Rabbi Frand on Parsha

Rabbi Yissocher Frand

Parshas Metzarah

Does Mussar Help?

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: #1288 An Aliyah After Your Wife Gives Birth Revisited. Good Shabbos & Chag Kosher V'somayach!

Towards the end of Parshas Metzarah, the pasuk says: “You shall separate the Children of Israel from their contamination; and they shall not die as a result of their contamination if they contaminate My Mishkan that is among them.” (Vayikra 15:31). The simple reading of this pasuk is that when Bnei Yisrael are tameh (impure), they should not, in a state of impurity, go into the holy places where they are forbidden to enter, lest they die from that impurity. However, homiletically, the sefer Yismach Yehudah cites the following interesting vort from a drasha of Rav Yosef Nechemia Kornitzer (a great grandson of the Chasam Sofer, who was the Chief Rabbi of Cracow, Poland, in the early part of the 20th century): Sometimes we talk to our children or to our students or to our congregants until we are blue in the face. We wonder, does it make an impression? Are our words taken seriously? Do people change? Perhaps this is most relevant for professionals who do this for a living. Do all the things that we say, year after year, really help? Do speeches help? Do drashos help? Does mussar (chastisement) help? Does lecturing to our children really help?

Rav Kornitzer suggests that we need to bear in mind that it may not help now, and it may not help six months from now or a year from now. But, at some point, at some time in the future, maybe the lesson will hit home.

I don't know how Rav Yosef Nechemia Kornitzer explained the mashal that he gave, but today it is easy for us to imagine what this is like. Namely, the "mussar" is in the "cloud." Where is all this data? It is in the "cloud." Where is the "cloud?"? There is not a cloud in the sky! But we know this concept that something can be not in front of us, yet when we need to access it, it is somehow there for us to access. It is the same with mussar and with lecturing our children. It is there. It hasn't penetrated yet, but it can penetrate.

He references the pasuk "And these matters that I command you today shall be upon your heart (al levavecha)." (Devorim 5:6). It does not say b'soch levavecha (within your heart) because sometimes it has not yet penetrated the heart.

However, at least it remains al levavecha – upon your heart. One day, maybe, just perhaps, it will penetrate the heart and will be b'soch levavecha.

This is why the pasuk says "...v'lo yamusu m'tumosam" (Vayikra 15:31), which means you talk to people and you tell them what is right. Even though it might not help now or even ten years from now, they will not die from their impurity. How many people do we know that return at the end of their days? They don't die in their state of impurity because at the end of their days, they in fact realize that what they were told so many years earlier was correct, and they in fact do come back. Ironically, I was recently speaking with someone in Eretz Yisrael who told me the following interesting incident that happened only a few days ago. (This was April 2016.) I believe this story brings home the point that I am trying to make:

A fellow in Eretz Yisrael has a distant relative who was born and raised in a small town in Pennsylvania in the first half of the twentieth century. The relative's father was a rav and a shochet, who tried his best to educate his son in the proper Torah path, including sending him to a yeshiva. The boy only lasted in the yeshiva for two weeks. He hated it. He left the yeshiva and eventually left Yiddishkeit. He never got married. He does not have a wife or children. He is a man alone in the world. From what I gather, he must be in his late sixties or early seventies.

For whatever reason, this relative got an inspiration: I want to go to Israel. I want to daven at the Kosel HaMaaravi. He takes his Bar Mitzvah tefillin, which he has not put on in a half century, and has plans to visit the kosel, put on his tefillin, and daven there. He hooks up with some Federation tour and goes with this tour and their tour guide on the Federation tour to Eretz Yisrael.

The person who is relating the story finds out that his long-lost cousin is coming to Israel and he decides that he will get in touch with him, take him around, and give him a real tour of Eretz Yisrael. They meet in a certain place. The Israeli says to

his American relative, "Have you been to the Kosel yet?" His cousin responds, "No, I have not been to the Kosel yet." The Israeli said, "Great. So let's go now!" The American says "No, not now. Maybe later."

"What's the problem?" his Israeli cousin presses him. "This is why you came. You want to put your tefillin on and daven at the kosel." The cousin is hesitant. Finally he says "I can't go!" "Why can't you go?" The long-lost cousin finally explains "I can't go to the Kosel with a cross."

The Israeli cousin is incredulous: "What are you doing with a cross?" The American explains that while he was on the Federation tour they went through the Armenian Quarter of the Old City. "I have a very good Christian friend back home in America. I wanted to buy him a cross from Israel as a present. I asked the rabbi who is leading the Federation tour if it was okay to buy a cross for my Christian friend in America. He told me it was."

He bought the tselem (cross) and put it in his bag, and is now walking around Jerusalem with a tselem in his bag. He tells his relative "I cannot go to the Kosel with a cross in my bag."

This Israeli cousin told my friend this story and his friend told it to me. He then commented: This fellow has not had any connection to Yiddishkeit in maybe sixty years. He is putting on tefillin now for probably the first time in more than fifty years, or even more! But he still has a sensitivity, a feeling, that a person does not go to the Kosel HaMaaravi with a tselem in his bag.

This is an example of "...You shall not die in your state of impurity." The person left Yiddishkeit, he had a bad experience in yeshiva, he did not want to have anything to do with Judaism, and he has not kept who knows what for all these years, but there is something in the Jewish heart that remains "al levavecha" – upon your heart. It was ON the heart. It was "in the cloud." After all these years, it finally penetrated that you do not go to the Kosel with a tselem in your bag. This is a lesson to all of us, whether you are a rav, a rabbi, a rebbi, a teacher, or even a parent. If you preach and preach and preach and it does not seem to make a difference, yes, it does! "You shall warn... and they shall not die in their state of impurity."

Drasha

By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Parshas Tazria

Gold in them Thar Walls

This week, in reading both Tazria and Metzora, we combine portions that deal with the physio-spiritual plague of tzora'as. Tzora'as is a discoloration that appears in varying forms on human skin, on hair, clothing, and even on the walls of one's home. The afflicted individual must endure a complicated

process of purification in order to rejoin the community. The Talmud explains that tzoraas is a divine punishment for the sins of slander and gossip. In fact, the Talmud in Arachin 16b comments that the reason that the afflicted is sent out of the camp was because “he separated friends and families through his words, and deserves to be separated from his community.” Rashi and the Ramban explain that the first form of tzora’as does not begin on the person. Hashem in His mercy first strikes at inanimate objects — one’s possessions. The discoloration first appears on the walls of a home, forcing the affected stones to be removed and destroyed. If that event does not succeed as a wake-up-call, and the person continues his malevolent activities, then his clothing is affected. If that fails, eventually the flesh is transformed and white lesions appear, forcing the afflicted to leave the Jewish camp until the plague subsides and the Kohen declares him acceptable to return. Rashi tells us that the first stage of tzora’as — the home — is actually a blessing in disguise. Tzora’as on a home can indeed bring fortune to the affected. As the Israelites were approaching the Land of Canaan, the inhabitants, figuring that one day they would re-conquer the land, hid all their gold and silver inside the walls of their homes. When one dislodged the afflicted stones of his home he would find the hidden treasures that were left by the fleeing Canaanites.

It is troubling. Why should the first warning of tzora’as reek of triumph? What message is Hashem sending to the first offender by rewarding his misdeeds with a cache of gold? What spiritual import is gained from the materialistic discovery?

After the end of World War II, the brilliant and flamboyant Torah sage, Rabbi Eliezer Silver visited and aided thousands of survivors in displaced persons camps in Germany and Poland who were waiting to find permanent homes. One day, as he was handing out Siddurim (prayerbooks) and other Torah paraphernalia, a Jewish man flatly refused to accept any.

“After the way I saw Jews act in the camp, I don’t want to have any connection with religion!”

Rabbi Silver asked him to explain what exactly had turned him off from Jewish practice.

“I saw a Jew who had a Siddur, yet he only allowed it to be used by the inmates in exchange for their daily bread ration. Imagine,” he sneered, “a Jew selling the right to daven for bread!”

“And how many customers did this man get?” inquired Rabbi Silver.

“Far too many!” snapped the man.

Rabbi Silver put his hand around the gentlemen and gently explained. “Why are you looking at the bad Jew who sold the right to pray? Why don’t you look at the many good Jews who

were willing to forego their rations and starve, just in order to pray? Isn’t that the lesson you should take with you?”

Perhaps Hashem in His compassion is sending much more to the gossip than a get-rich-quick scheme. He shows the first-time slanderer to look a little deeper at life. On the outside he may see a dirty wall of a former Canaanite home. Dig a little deeper and you will find gold in them thar walls. Next time you look at a person only superficially — think. Dig deeper. There is definitely gold beneath the surface. Sometimes you have to break down your walls to find the gold you never thought it existed.

Rabbi Eliezer Silver (1881-1968) was a prominent figure in the emerging American Torah Community. A powerful, witty and brilliant leader, he came to America as a Rabbi in Harrisburg, PA and ended his career as Rabbi of Cincinnati, OH. He was a founder of the Vaad Hatzalah during World War II. Good Shabbos!

The Bread of Affliction **Rabbi Eli Baruch Shulman** **YU to Go NISSAN 5768**

Each Pesach we begin our Seder with the familiar words: השתא הכא לשנה הבאה בארעא דישראל, השתא עבדי לשנה הבאה בני חורין This year we are here, next year in the land of Israel; this year we are slaves, next year, free men.

The formula is ancient, preserved in its original Aramaic from a time when Aramaic was the vernacular. How many centuries has it been since Jews spoke Aramaic? And yet we continue to say the same words, the same prayer.

Actually, it doesn’t sound like a prayer. A prayer would begin רצון יהי, or the Aramaic equivalent:

רעוא יהא, let it be Your will – to bring us by next year to Jerusalem, to make us free men.

That is not what we say. We don’t begin the Seder with a prayer. We begin with a confident statement of fact: This year we are here; but next year we will be in Jerusalem. This year we are slaves, but next year we will be free men.

And the years roll by, and the decades, and the centuries, and each year we are disappointed, each year our confident expectation fails to materialize. Last year we were here, and here we are still; last year we were slaves, and slaves we remain.

How is it then that we continue to make this confident prediction, year after year? Shouldn’t we at least tone it down, allow for a little uncertainty? This year we are here, perhaps next year we will be in Eretz Yisroel; this year we are slaves, let us hope that next year we will be free men.

Why do we go on year after year, setting ourselves up for disappointment?

Another strange feature of this declaration is its opening: עניא להמא הא, this is the bread of affliction. After all, the Torah describes the matzoh as the bread of redemption, the bread that the Jews baked on their way out of Egypt because they were hurried out of Egypt so quickly that there was no time for their bread to leaven. And later on in the Seder, too, we say: שאנו זו מצה מה שום על אוכלים; what does this matzoh signify? And we answer: עד להחמיץ בציקם הספיק שלא על המלכים מלכי מלך עליהם; because as they left Egypt there was no time for their bread to leaven, until the King of Kings revealed Himself to them.

Why do we begin the Seder by describing the matzo, that symbol of our redemption, as עניא להמא?

A commonly given answer is that the matzo had two historical roles. It was, as the Torah says, and as we say later in the Haggadah, the bread of redemption that we baked on our way out of Egypt. But it was also, for centuries, the bread of affliction, the bread that we were fed as slaves in Egypt when we were not allowed the luxury even of waiting for our bread to leaven before being hurried back to our labors. And so the matzo is both the bread of geulah and the bread of affliction. But this answer, at first glance, seems unsatisfactory. Even if it is true, as a matter of historical fact, that the Jews ate matzo as slaves in Egypt, that is not the reason that we eat matzo at the Seder! The Torah makes clear that the reason we are commanded to eat matzo this first night of Pesach is to commemorate the bread that we ate when we were redeemed. So why do we begin the Seder by emphasizing matzo's other, more melancholy and less important, aspect?

Matzo is, indeed, the bread of geulah. That is how the Torah characterizes it, that is the reason we eat it at the Seder, that is its essential nature. And therefore when the Jews in Egypt during their long years of slavery, under the lash, ate matzo, they were eating the bread of geulah. With every bite of matzo that they ate, they were celebrating their geulah. Every meal that they ate in Egypt, where they were fed nothing but matzo, was a Seder.

Only they didn't know it yet.

Because the beginning of the process of geulah from Egypt was not the moment when Moshe arrived back from Midian. Nor did it begin when he smote the Egyptian overseer. It did not begin, even, when Moshe was born.

The process of geulah began the minute the Jews arrived in Egypt.

We see this in the beautiful Midrash which relates that Yocheved, Moshe's mother, was born בין החומות, between the gates of the walls of the city when Yaakov and his children first arrived in Egypt. At that moment – the very moment of our entry into Egypt – the geulah began to unfold.

That geulah was a long, drawn out process, and for two centuries it was invisible to human eyes. No one realized the significance of Yocheved's birth. No one knew, for that matter, the significance of Moshe's birth and adoption by Pharaoh's daughter. The beginning of the slavery, its intensification, Pharaoh's decrees, were public knowledge that filled our hearts with dismay. But beneath the surface – far beneath – the geulah had already begun.

The great R' Yaakov of Lisa, the author of the Nesivos haMishpat, in his commentary on the Haggadah, records a beautiful insight. The Haggadah says: Blessed is He who keeps His promise to Israel; for the Holy One, blessed be He, calculated the end, in order to do what He had promised to Avraham

This is a difficult passage. What does the Haggadah mean by saying that He "calculated the end"? Why does He need to calculate?

R' Yaakov explains that all those years in Egypt the עולם של רבונו was busy bringing the geulah about. All those years, when all we saw was misery, He was directing the strands of history towards that end. And the slavery itself, with all its horrors, was a necessary part of that geulah, even if we could not – even if we cannot – understand it. All those year when we were calculating how long we had been slaves, He was calculating how long until we would be free, how much longer the process of redemption would require.

And therefore every bite of עוני להם, the bitter bread of slavery, was a bite of גאולים להם, the bread of redemption. The same matzo that we experienced as the bread of affliction, was really the bread of freedom – but only He knew it.

And that is the lesson that the matzo teaches us, and the lesson with which we begin the Seder. As we sit down to the Seder we take the matzo, that symbol of our freedom which is the centerpiece of our Seder table, over which we will soon recount the story of our miraculous deliverance, and we say: עניא להמא הא; this matzo was for many years the bread of our affliction. We ate it in abject despair, not knowing what it was. And all that time – it was really the symbol of our redemption. All that time – we were being redeemed. The mills of geulah ground slowly but relentlessly on and on.

Only the process was hidden, until that final moment when – המלכים מלכי מלך עליהם שנגלה עד, He revealed Himself to us. Until that time when He showed us that He had been there all the time – being הקץ את מחשב, calculating and counting down and bringing the redemption into being. The גאולה was there all the time, what we waited for was its revelation.

עניא להמא הא, today, too, we eat the bread of affliction. When we read of bombs and mortars, of the shattered lives and bloodthirsty threats that have become our daily fare – then we

eat עוני לחם, the bread of affliction. ולילה יומם לחם דמעתי לי היתה, our tears are our bread, by day and night.

הכא השתא, this year we are here, still eating the bread of affliction – and there is so much affliction for our people today.

And yet we know that הקץ את ה"ה is here too with us, being מקץ, bringing the redemption closer and closer, and this bread, this matzo, is for us today, too – not only עוני לחם but also לחם גאולה, the bread of our redemption, which advances inexorably. And sometimes we are even vouchsafed a glimpse of that advance.

And so with that same faith that our ancestors showed when they first made this declaration, with the same words that they used then, with the same undiminished confidence, we declare: חורין בני, next year in the land of Israel; הבאה לשנה, next year indeed we will be free.

fw from allen.klein@gmail.com

from: Rabbi Yochanan Zweig <genesis@torah.org>

to: rabbizweig@torah.org

subject: Rabbi Zweig

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig

This week's Insights is dedicated in loving memory of Tzipora bas Tzvi.

A Deconstructive Criticism

Hashem spoke to Moshe and Aharon saying: When you arrive in the land of Canaan that I will give you as a possession, and I will place an affliction of tzora'as upon the house [...] (14:33-34).

This week's parsha continues the theme of divine retribution in the form of the punishment tzora'as and the process of purification and recovery from it. Chazal teach us that this affliction came in progressive waves; first tzora'as appeared on one's home and when the person continued to ignore the message it appeared on the person's vessels and finally on the person's skin.

The Talmud (Arachin 16a) says that tzora'as was a heaven sent punishment for seven types of sins, but chief among them loshon hora. In fact, the word מצורע (the name given to a person afflicted with this ailment) is a contraction of the words "מוציא רע — one who brings out evil." As discussed in prior editions of INSIGHTS, the sin of loshon hora is quite serious and thus the punishment quite severe.

Yet Rashi comments on this possuk regarding tzora'as afflicting one's home: "This was good news, because the Amorites hid treasures of gold in the walls of their homes during the forty years that Bnei Yisroel were in the desert and as a result of the tzora'as (in the process of the purification) a person would dismantle the home and find (these treasure hoards)."

One must wonder as to the logic of this punishment. The divine retribution for a heinous sin actually leads to a person finding a treasure of gold? What is the message that Hashem is trying to convey?

Punishment is a message of criticism from Hashem that one is not behaving properly and that one must change his ways. But criticism is very difficult for a person to accept. The knee-jerk reaction upon hearing criticism from someone is to get defensive because the person feels that he is being personally attacked.

In most situations, this analysis of being attacked is actually true. Consider the person who "shushes" someone in shul for speaking loudly or talking during davening; 99% of the time the person who gives the criticism is merely annoyed at being bothered or distracted during davening. Criticizing another person's behavior because you are annoyed by it is almost never effective.

Proper criticism is only to be delivered if a person has a genuine concern for the person he is criticizing – because that is the only way the criticized person could possibly feel that he is not being personally attacked. At that point, the person being criticized can try to dispassionately look at his own behavior and see if corrective measures are in order.

A person who receives tzora'as on his home is getting a very public rebuke from Hashem. After all, it's hard to hide having to dismantle one's home. This is obviously very embarrassing and debilitating to one's psyche.

The reason that a person who gets the first level of rebuke (tzora'as on one's home) receives an almost instantaneous reward is because Hashem is sending him a message: "I love you and care about you; I am rebuking you for your own good, so please change your ways."

In this way, a person is likely to receive the criticism from Hashem in the most positive manner and consider what changes to make in his life in order to correct his errant behavior. The reward showing Hashem's love allows a person to honestly reflect on the message and react in a positive manner to the criticism.

Follow the Leader

And Bnei Yisroel went and did as Hashem had commanded Moshe and Aharon, so they did (Shemos 12:28). This week is known as Shabbos Hagadol. According to Chazal, this was the Shabbos that Bnei Yisroel set aside a lamb to be brought as a Korban Pesach.

Rashi (ad loc) is bothered by the seemingly repetitious conclusion of the possuk. The beginning of the verse clearly states that Bnei Yisroel did as Hashem commanded Moshe and Aharon, therefore why did the Torah find it necessary to conclude with the words "so they did"? Rashi goes on to

explain that the words “so they did” is referring to Moshe and Aharon; they too did the mitzvah of Korban Pesach.

Maharal in the Gur Aryeh (Shemos 12:28) wonders; why is it assumed that Moshe and Aharon would not have had to bring a Korban Pesach and thus the Torah had to tell us otherwise?

Additionally, if the Torah meant to tell us that “so they did” is referring to Moshe and Aharon, why doesn’t it expressly state such, leaving no room for confusion?

Very often, when telling our children to do something that we feel will improve their lives greatly (e.g. they should commit to studying Torah an hour a night), they silently wonder (and sometimes not so silently) why we ourselves are not modeling that very same behavior?

Of course they don’t realize all the obligations that we are under (work, business meetings, school board meetings, home repairs, etc.), so how can they possibly understand why we aren’t able to make that very same commitment to Torah study?

In fact, our kids are actually right. Of course, there are myriads of excuses we can make as to why we ourselves don’t do what we are asking our kids to do, but that’s exactly what they are – excuses. Of course, when one has many responsibilities there are conflicts that cannot be avoided. But our children aren’t fooled, they know when we are serious about an ideal and when we are merely paying lip service to an ideal. Our kids also know that we have unavoidable conflicts, but they will absolutely judge what we consider to be important in our lives by how we choose to spend our free time.

Leadership follows some of the same rules. Obviously a leader has many responsibilities and obligations, after all, that is what leadership is all about – taking responsibility to get things done. Yet some leaders see themselves as above following certain laws that everyone else must adhere to. They forget that they too have a responsibility to follow the rules.

The Torah is teaching us a remarkable lesson about what kind of leaders Moshe and Aharon were. On the night that Bnei Yisroel left Egypt, undoubtedly, there were a multitude of things to do and Moshe and Aharon could easily have been forgiven for not fulfilling the mitzvah of Korban Pesach. But that’s not the type of leaders they were – they did exactly what everyone else did. That’s what the Torah is telling us by not mentioning their names: They fulfilled the Korban Pesach like everyone else – as ordinary members of Bnei Yisroel about to leave Egypt.

Essays for Pessach

Laws Regarding ‘Rich Matzah’ and Medicines on Passover Revivim Rav Eliezer Melamed

‘Rich matzah’ (matzah ashira), meaning dough that was mixed with fruit juices, is forbidden to eat on Passover according to

Ashkenazi custom. For Sephardic Jews as well, it is best to avoid eating it, unless one’s rabbi permits it * Additionally, one who comes from a family that abstained from eating soaked matzah is allowed to eat it today, but if they knew it was a stringency and observed it for several years, it is good for them to receive a formal annulment in front of three people

* Medications without taste do not require kosher certification for Passover, and even medications with taste can be used if one cannot verify whether they are permitted on Passover

Q: Is it permissible to eat cookies on Passover that are made with fruit juices, which are called “rich matzah” (matzah ashira)?

A: The chametz (leavened bread) prohibited by the Torah is created from flour and water, but if the flour is kneaded with fruit juices, even if it sat for a full day until the dough rose, it is not considered chametz, because this rise is different from the rise of chametz prohibited by the Torah. The liquids considered fruit juices are wine, honey, milk, oil, and egg yolk water, as well as all juices squeezed from fruits like apple and strawberry juice. Since fruit juices cannot become ferment, according to the basic law, it is permissible on Passover to knead dough with fruit juices, bake it, and eat it. However, according to Rashi, even though this dough cannot become fully leavened chametz, it is considered chametz nüksheh “hardened chametz,” meaning chametz by rabbinic decree, and therefore it is prohibited to eat it.

All of this applies when the flour was kneaded with fruit juices alone, but if they also mixed in water, the dough can become chametz. And according to many poskim (decisors), water mixed with fruit juices causes faster leavening, and in order not to enter the concern of leavening, our Sages prohibited kneading dough on Passover with fruit juices and water (Shulchan Aruch 458:1-3).

Ashkenazic Custom

According to Ashkenazic custom, it is forbidden to eat on Passover anything kneaded with flour and fruit juices, because they are concerned that water may have become mixed into the fruit juices, and then the dough will leaven quickly and perhaps they will not supervise it properly. Additionally, they are concerned about Rashi’s view that fruit juices alone can cause rabbinically-prohibited leavening. And although according to the basic law one could be lenient like the clear majority of poskim, the Ashkenazic custom is to be stringent, and this should not be changed.

Sephardic Custom

According to Sephardic custom, it is permitted to prepare Passover cookies from flour and fruit juices, but it is forbidden to mix in water, since that can cause faster leavening.

Retroactively, if water was mixed in, one should bake them immediately (Shulchan Aruch 458:2).

In practice, the cookies that receive Passover certification according to Sephardic customs are usually made on a base of fruit juices, taking care that no water is mixed in, but various other ingredients are added. Those who permit them maintain that these other ingredients are not considered like water. This was also the ruling of Rav Ovadia Yosef. In contrast, Rav Mordechai Eliyahu was very stringent about this, due to the concern that the status of the additional ingredients is like water, and it is even possible that the leavening agents are worse than water, so that even if they are produced under special supervision, it would be considered chametz even retroactively (like the law of chametz that became leavened due to another factor, Pesachim 28b). Therefore, in practice, even according to Sephardic customs, it is correct to equate the Ashkenazic and Sephardic customs, and refrain from eating them. However, one who has a rabbi who permits it, may act in accordance with his ruling (Peninei Halakha: Pesach 8:1).

Soaked Matzah

Q: Is there room to be stringent and not eat “soaked” matzah, (matzah sheruya, or gebrochts), meaning matzah, or matzah crumbs, that have been soaked in water?

A: After the matzah has been fully baked, the leavening power in the flour is nullified, and even if the matzah is soaked in water for a long time, it will not become chametz. A sign that the matzah has been fully baked is that its surface has become crusted, and if one breaks it, no dough threads will be drawn from it. Since matzah that has been properly baked cannot become chametz, it is permissible to soak it in soup. And an elderly person or sick person who cannot eat dry matzah at the Seder night is permitted to soak the matzah in water and eat it soft (Shulchan Aruch 461:4). Similarly, if the matzah has been ground into flour, it is permissible to knead the matzah flour with water, and there is no concern that it will become chametz, since after being thoroughly baked it can no longer become chametz (Shulchan Aruch 463:3). And this way one can bake Passover cakes from the five grains or cook various types of patties that contain matzah flour (kneidelach and gefilte fish).

Stringency of the Chassidim

However, some have the custom to be stringent and not soak the matzahs, lest some of the flour in the dough was not kneaded properly and remained within the matzah without being baked, and when soaked in water, that remaining flour will become chametz. And they were also concerned that some flour may have stuck to the matzah after baking, and when soaked in water it will become chametz. Regarding matzah flour, there is an additional reason for stringency, lest there be ignorant people who will confuse matzah flour with regular flour, and come to the prohibition of chametz on Passover.

This was the custom of the Hasidic disciples of the Baal Shem Tov, to be stringent and not eat soaked matzah.

The Practical Halakha

However, the opinion of the vast majority of poskim is that there is no need to be stringent about this, because usually the kneading was done properly and no flour remained unblended and unbaked. And this is the custom of Sephardic and non-Chassidic Ashkenazic Jews. The Chassidic Ashkenazim have the custom to be stringent.

The Custom in Chassidic Families

Even among those of Hasidic descent, some are lenient today, because the custom of prohibition was founded at a time when thick matzahs were commonly baked by the multitude of Jews by hand, and there was reason to fear that a particle may have remained un-kneaded and not baked properly. But today, when the kneading is done by machine or by hand with great precision, and the matzahs are thinner, and great care is taken to separate the flour area from the area where the matzahs are removed from the oven, all the concerns have been eliminated. Therefore, even one whose parents refrained from eating soaked matzah is permitted to eat it today, provided that it does not involve disrespecting his father. And if he knew that this was a stringency and practiced it for some years, it is good for him to receive a formal annulment (hatarah) in front of three people for not having said bli neder (“without a vow”) regarding his stringency. And if he thought it was an obligation and now has learned that there is no such obligation, he is permitted to stop without an annulment (Peninei Halakha: Passover 8:2).

Medicines on Passover

The question of medicines on Passover is very common. When it comes to a medicine that has no taste, it does not require kosher certification, because even if chametz was mixed into it in the past when it was edible, since now it is no longer fit even for a dog’s consumption, there is no longer a prohibition of chametz. Although there are those who are stringent about this due to a concern of a rabbinical prohibition. However, the halakha follows the opinion of the majority of poskim who permit swallowing a medication that is unfit for eating (Peninei Halakha: Pesach 8:7).

Therefore, the thick booklets published before Passover are unnecessary, and it would have been sufficient to focus on flavorful medicines. The principle of “you grasped too much, you did not grasp” applies here. Due to the extensive focus on tasteless medicines, efforts are not invested in verifying the composition of the flavorful medicines, which is where the verification is truly important, and in which there is often negligence.

Can a Flavorful Medicine Be Taken Without Kosher Certification?

However, when the medicine is flavorful, such as a syrup or lozenge, it clearly requires Passover certification, lest chametz be mixed into it. Only one who is dangerously ill, and has no good substitute for the medicine, is permitted to consume it, since the imperative of saving a life overrides the prohibition of eating chametz.

However, I previously wrote (in Peninei Halakha 8, end of footnote 9) that in a time of pressing need, when it is impossible to verify if the flavorful medicine is kosher, even not for a life-threatening situation, it is permitted to take it on Passover, since the majority of medicines do not contain chametz, one can be lenient based on the majority, as explained in the Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 110:3).

But now my esteemed friend, Rabbi Shaul David Botchko, has sent me a responsum in which he clarified that there is no concern of chametz even in flavorful medications. Firstly, because only an infinitesimal percentage of them contain starch or alcohol derived from the five grains. And even in those that contain grain-derived starch, there is no concern of chametz, because this starch has been separated from the rest of the wheat components, and alone it cannot become chametz, as Rabbi Shar Yashuv Cohen clarified regarding citric acid (see Peninei Halakha: Passover 8:8). And even if a medication contains alcohol derived from the five grains, it is different from drinking alcohol, since it is intended for a medicinal purpose of dissolution. The alcohol concentration in it is between 95-99%, and such a liquid is unfit for drinking, and therefore even if derived from the five grains, it was disqualified from being edible by a dog before Passover, and thus there is no prohibition of chametz in it.

How Long Should Kaddish Be Said in the Year of Mourning?

Q: How should children properly conduct themselves in saying Kaddish during the year of mourning for their parents? Should they say Kaddish for the entire year, and in a leap year for 13 months, or 12 months, or only 11 months? Are there differences in the customs of Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews?

A: It is a mitzvah for one who is mourning a parent to say Kaddish in the first year for the elevation of the deceased's soul. And this has great benefit for the deceased, for through the son saying Kaddish and sanctifying God's name, the deceased's merits are increased, and if they were sentenced to Gehenna (hell), their punishment is lightened.

However, if they were to say Kaddish for the full twelve months, it would appear as if they are considering the deceased a wicked person who was sentenced to Gehenna. Therefore, only when it is known that the deceased was wicked is Kaddish said for the full twelve months. But when it is not known that they were wicked, in order not to appear as if they are considering the deceased a wicked person, Kaddish is not said for the full twelve months.

There are two customs regarding this:

The first is the custom of most Sephardic Jews. In order to show that they do not consider the parent a wicked person, they do not say Kaddish in the first week of the twelfth month, and then continue saying Kaddish until the end of the twelve months (Rav Pe'alim 3, Yoreh Deah 32). This was the custom in Babylon, Turkey, Persia, Syria, and Egypt.

The second custom is to say Kaddish for eleven months after the passing, and in the twelfth month they do not say it. This is the custom of all Ashkenazic Jews (Rema, Yoreh Deah 376:4), most North African Jews (Otzar HaMichtavim 3:1:2599; Shemesh U'Magen 3:60), and most Yemenite immigrants. Rabbi Eliezer Melamed

THE HAGGADAH OF THE ROSHEI YESHIVA

Hakheh Es Shinav - Proper grammar

There is a humorous anecdote about the **Beis Halevi** that helps to shed light on some of the difficulties that are discussed by the commentators concerning the response to the wicked son. Once a maskil (a proponent of the "Enlightenment" movement, which was known for its antagonism towards the traditional, orthodox establishment) came to the Beis Halevi to request an approbation for a book he was about to have published. The Rabbi began to peruse the manuscript, and after a few minutes notified the maskil of his decision not to provide a written recommendation for the book, on the grounds that the Hebrew in it was full of grammatical errors.

The maskil was nonplused by the Beis Halevi's response.

"Didn't you provide Rabbi So-and-So with an enthusiastic approbation for his book of Torah discussions, which is also written with poor grammar?" he protested.

The Rabbi explained his reaction by referring to the Haggadah.

The wicked son asks, "Of what purpose is this service to you?"

The Haggadah considers his use of the word you to indicate a negative attitude (implying "you," but not "me") and subjects him to considerably harsh rebuke because of it. But if we

consider the words of the wise son we find the exact same expression: "What are the testimonies, decrees, and laws which Hashem, our God, has commanded you?" Why is the same

word considered reprehensible when it is spoken by the wicked son, but not when it comes from the mouth of the wise son?

Nearly all the Haggadah commentators are puzzled by this

seemingly inequitable treatment for the two sons.

The **Beis Halevi** explained the discrepancy as follows. The

wise son spends all of his time and efforts in the pursuit of

Torah and wisdom; we can therefore overlook his occasional

improper syntax. The wicked son, however, who considers

himself to be such an intellectual that he finds religion to be a

superfluous waste of time ("Of what purpose is this service to

you?"), must at least be held responsible for the technical

exactness of his words, for he prides himself with his knowledge of proper grammar. Hence, when it comes to a book dealing with Torah subjects, one may overlook relatively insignificant matters such as grammatical perfection, but in a book which deals specifically with scientific, technical analysis of various non-Torah points, grammatical deficiency is a crucial shortcoming. The maskil, annoyed by the Beis Halevi's comments and its implications, left the house in anger, rather unceremoniously. A short while later the Rabbi summoned him, requesting him to return to his house. The maskil was under the impression that the Rabbi had had a change of heart, and eagerly responded to his request. But to his chagrin, he found that the Beis Halevi had not changed his mind at all. On the contrary, he had summoned him to tell him that he had something to add to his explanation of the Haggadah's treatment of the wicked son. The Rabbi noted a difficulty in the wording of the response that the Haggadah supplies for the wicked son: "It is because of this that Hashem did so for me when I went out of Egypt — for me but not for him — had he been there, he would not have been redeemed." Why, asked the Beis Halevi, do we refer to the wicked son as "him" and "he"? When responding in person to an individual's question, we should use the word "you," not "him"! "Now, after many years of wondering, I understand the answer to this question!" the Beis Halevi exclaimed. "Such is the nature of the wicked son. As soon as one begins to react to the criticisms and objections that he levels against the Torah and to put him in his place, he runs away and disappears. By the time the answer is fully formulated, one must already speak of him in the third person!"

בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים

"It is because of this that Hashem did so for me when I went out of Egypt"

Making mitzvos meaningful

After this verse the Torah writes: "You shall observe this decree at its designated season for all time (Shemos 13:10). Why does the Torah refer to the laws of the pesach sacrifice by the word *nim* (decree), a word which is usually used to describe ritual laws which have no apparent logical rationale? As the Haggadah makes a point of noting later, the pesach sacrifice, as well as the eating of matzah and maror, are all mitzvos based on clear logical reasons. The pesach ("Passover") sacrifice recalls the fact that God "passed over" our houses while punishing the Egyptians. Furthermore, the midrashim explain that the choice of animal for the sacrifice — a lamb or goat — was designed to demonstrate that the Jews were repudiating the idolatrous notions of the Egyptians, who deified these animals. The bones were not to be broken so that the whole bones left over from the sacrifice would lie

conspicuously in the streets of Egypt in order to publicize the "outrage" committed to their gods.

Thus we see that the laws of the pesach sacrifice are replete with symbolic significance and rational themes. Why, then, does the Torah refer to this mitzvah as a decree?

Another question is: What in fact is the answer that we are to give to the wicked "My river (the Nile) is my own, and I have made myself" (Yechezkel 29:3), a country infamous for its idolatry and immorality. There Yaakov and his sons would proclaim the existence and Unity of the Supreme God, fulfilling a mission of spreading the message of the true religion where it was needed most. Throughout the ages, the Jews were charged with this special responsibility of acting as a "light unto the nations." Wherever they went they have always exerted an influence upon men's souls to an extent that was remarkably disproportionate to their small numbers. Even where they and their religion were rejected and scorned, their influence was present, its impression often being made without the conscious recognition of their hostile neighbors. Almost half the world today embraces some sort of religion which was spawned from Judaic principles, although they might passionately deny this association.

But the Jews have never sought to impose their beliefs upon those who come into contact with them. The Talmud tells us: "God exiled the Jewish people so that proselytes from other nations might become added to their number" (Pesachim 87b). This corroborates what we have said above, that Israel's frequent and extensive contact with other nations is deliberate and beneficial. But it is interesting to note that the statement is phrased in the passive — "so that proselytes might become added," not "so that they might add proselytes to their number." The Jews never engaged in crusades or jihads to coerce others to adopt their philosophies, nor did they ever seek to persuade others through evangelism and missionary activity; their "light" was to shine out in much more subtle ways, and anyone who wishes to benefit from it does so.

<https://ohr.edu/9835>

Insights into Halacha

Seder Insights: Understanding Urchatz, Comprehending Karpas

by Rabbi Yehuda Spitz

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

All About the Children

The answer to these questions might depend on a difference of understanding. The Gemara in Pesachim (114b) asks why at the Pesach Seder we perform two dippings, i.e. Karpas into saltwater and later the Maror into Charose s. The Gemara succinctly answers ‘Ki Heichi D’lehavai Hekeira L’Tinokos, in order that there should a distinction for children.’ Both Rashi and his grandson, the Rashbam, as well as the Rokeach, explain the Gemara’s intent,[1] that this act is performed in order so that the children should ask why we are performing this unusual and uncommon action on Leil Haseder, as this action serves as a ‘hekeira tova’, an excellent distinction. This is one of the ways we ensure that the Seder Night’s Mitzvah of ‘Vehigadta Le’vincha,’ retelling the story of our ancestors’ exile, enslavement, and ultimate redemption and exodus from Egypt, is properly performed.[2]

But a question remains. Which exact action is the one that is meant to evoke the children’s questions? The answer may surprise you. The Bartenura and Tur specify that it is not the seemingly odd act of handwashing for vegetables that is peculiar,[3] but rather the timing of the dipping. They assert that it is unusual to dip food items at the beginning of a seudah. Most other days we also dip, but in the middle of the meal. In other words, the only change we do to evoke children’s questions is to perform the dipping right then. What then of the seemingly atypical handwashing just for vegetables? Isn’t that an uncharacteristic change from the ordinary? ‘No,’ they would respond, ‘one certainly would have to wash his hands before dipping his vegetables.’

Drip and Dip

But in order to properly understand this, we must first digress to a different Gemara in Pesachim (115a). Rabbi Elazer teaches in the name of Rav Oshia “any food item that is dipped in a liquid (davar hateebulo b’ mashkeh) requires handwashing before eating.” On this statement, Rashi and Tosafos (among others) differ as to the correct understanding of his intent. Rashi and the Rashbam maintain that this ruling is still applicable nowadays, as it is similar to the requirement to wash before eating bread, while Tosafos is of the opinion that this law is only relevant during the times of the Beis Hamikdash, as it is conditional to Taharos, Ritual Purity, which in this day and age, is unfortunately non-applicable.[4] Although the Maharam M’Rottenberg, and several later poskim are of the opinion that one may indeed rely on the lenient view,[5] it should be noted that the majority of halachic authorities including the Rambam, Tur, Shulchan Aruch, Rema, Vilna Gaon, Chayei Adam, Shulchan Aruch Harav, Ben Ish Chai, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, Mishnah Berurah, Kaf Hachaim and Chazon Ish,[6] hold that even nowadays one should do his

utmost to be vigilant with this and wash hands before eating a food item dipped in liquid.[7]

The lenient opinion is taken into account, however, and that is the reason why according to the majority of poskim, this washing is performed without the prerequisite blessing, as opposed to the washing before eating bread.[8] This is due to the halachic dictum of “Safek Brachos Lehakel”, meaning that in a case of doubt regarding the topic of brachos, we follow the lenient approach and do not make the blessing, to avoid the possibility of making a blessing in vain.

This all ties in to our Seder. In fact this, explains the Tur and Abudraham, and echoed by later authorities, is the reason why we wash Urchatz prior to dipping the Karpas into saltwater.[9] As this action is classified as a *davar hateebulo b’ mashkeh*, it requires handwashing before eating. Although the Rambam, Tur and Abudraham, as well as the Levush and Vilna Gaon, aver that Urchatz actually necessitates a brachah of Netillas Yadayim,[10] conversely, the vast majority of poskim conclude that we do not make the Netillas Yadayim brachah at this Seder handwashing,[11] but rather exclusively at Rachtzah immediately prior to Motzi-Matzah. This is indeed the common custom.[12]

The Chida’s Chiddush

The Chida, in his *Simchas HaRegel* commentary on the Haggada,[13] explains that this is the background, as well as the reason for the added ‘vav’ by Urchatz at the Pesach Seder, as it is the only one of the Seder Simanim that starts with that conjunction. We find a parallel by the brachah that our patriarch Yitzchok Avinu bestowed on his son Yaakov (Bereishis, Parshas Toldos Ch. 27: verse 28), ‘V’Yitein L’cha’ – ‘And Hashem should give you’. According to Chazal and cited by Rashi,[14] the extra conjunctive ‘vav’ means ‘yitein yachzor v’yitein’ – that Hashem should continually and constantly give.

Likewise, the Chida explains the extra ‘vav’ in Urchatz. The Baal Haggada is transmitting a message to us. Just as during the Seder we all wash before dipping a vegetable in salt water, that extra ‘vav’ is telling us - ‘rachtz yachzor v’rachtz’ – that we should continue to wash our hands, anytime we want to eat a food dipped in liquid, year round.

The Chasam Sofer and his son-in-law, the Chasan Sofer, write in a similar vein in their Haggada, that Urchatz is meant to serve as a *tochacha* (rebuke) and yearly reminder to those who are lackadaisical with the observance of this halacha, in order to remind everyone that this applies year round as well. Indeed, the Taz actually writes similarly, and concludes that at least during the *Aseres Yemei Teshuva* one should be stringent. The Ben Ish Chai remarks comparably when discussing Urchatz, that praiseworthy is one who is careful with this handwashing year round.[15]

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt”l adds that the ‘Vav’ is connecting ‘Urchatz’ to ‘Kadesh’ – meaning ‘Kadesh Urchatz’ – (as a command) that we should be mekadeish ourselves and continue to wash for food items dipped in liquid – even if we were previously generally not stringent with this all year round.[16]

The Medium is the Message

Yet, it is important to note that other poskim take an alternate view. Rav Yaakov Reisher in his Chok Yaakov argues[17] that since the great Maharam M’Rottenberg, as well as the Lechem Chamudos and Magen Avraham among other poskim, ruled leniently with washing before eating a food item dipped in liquid following Tosafos’ precedent, and most people do not follow the opinion mandating it nowadays, this simply cannot be the reason why we perform Urchatz at the Seder.

Rather, he explains that the Gemara’s intent with stating that Urchatz is performed in order that there should a distinction for children to ask, is that the handwashing itself for eating dipped vegetables is what is out of the ordinary, not the timing of the washing. According to this understanding, it is the Urchatz itself that is essentially the “hekker,” highlighting that something different than the norm is occurring, to enable children to ask what is different on Seder night. Meaning, although most do not wash before eating a dipped item year round, at the Seder we do; and that is the atypical action we do to arouse the interest of the children.

Not a Daas Yachid (lone dissenting opinion), this understanding of Urchatz is also given by the Abarbanel, both the Chayei Adam and Aruch Hashulchan seem to favor this explanation, and it is cited by the Mishnah Berurah in his Shaar Hatziyun as well.[18]

Alternate Views

On the other hand, the Levush understands Urchatz somewhat differently. He explains that the dipping of Karpas at the Pesach Seder is due to ‘Chovas (or in some editions ‘Chibas’)HaRegel, extra obligation or devotion for the Yom Tov.’ Ergo, the handwashing is specifically performed at the Seder, as due to its inherent holiness, ‘we go the extra mile’ to strive for an increase in purity, as opposed to year round, when in his opinion, it would not be mandated.[19]

Vayaged Moshe, the renowned classic sefer on the Haggada, after citing several authorities who discuss the extra intrinsic Kedusha of Leil HaSeder, writes that perhaps this can be seen by the ‘Vav’ in ‘Urchatz.’ He explains (in the exact opposite approach of the Chida’s) that the ‘Vav’ is connecting ‘Urchatz’ to ‘Kadesh’ – meaning ‘Kadesh Urchatz’ – (as a command) that specifically at the Seder, due to the added inherent Kedusha of Leil HaSeder, we should be mekadeish ourselves by washing before dipping our vegetables – even though we would not need to the rest of the year.[20] [21]

An alternate, yet somewhat similar, interpretation is offered by the Netziv, Rav Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin zt”l, venerated Rosh Yeshiva of Volozhin.[22] The Seder reminds us of the eating of the Korban Pesach that took place when the Beis Hamikdash stood. Therefore, we follow the same halachic requirements at the Seder that were in place during the Temple era. Everyone agrees that at the time of the Beis Hamikdash there was an obligation to wash hands for dipped food items, and therefore, at the Pesach Seder we do so as well, regardless of whether or not we actually fulfill this year round.

Rav Yishmael Hakohen maintains an analogous distinction.[23] He explains that earlier generations were indeed stringent with Ritual Purity and hence certainly washed their hands before dipping vegetables. Since “Minhag Avoseinu B’Yadeinu” we follow in our ancestors’ footsteps by performing the Seder as accurately as possible as they did. Hence, our mandated washing Urchatz at the Seder irrespective of our actions the rest of the year.

A slightly similar, yet novel explanation is given in the Zichron Nifla’os Haggada.[24] He explains that generally speaking, people are lenient year-round with this pre-dipping handwashing following Tosafos’ understanding, that this washing is intrinsically only relevant during the times of the Beis Hamikdash, as it is conditional to Taharos, Ritual Purity. Yet, he explains, when the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt, we will also be required to offer and eat the Korban Pesach on Seder Night, in addition to our obligation of eating a davar hateebulo b’mashkeh. As such, if we would not be makpid on washing beforehand at the Seder, people may not realize the import of the new situation and not wash before dipping the Karpas. However, at that point, with the Beis Hamikdash standing, the intricacies of Ritual Purity will once again be ‘back in play.’ As such, if one would eat his dipped Karpas without the Urchatz pre-wash, he will have made himself ‘pasul’ (invalidated) from being able to eat Kodshim, including the Korban Pesach. Hence, explains the Zichron Nifla’os, although year-round such washing may be currently deemed unnecessary, it is nonetheless mandated on Leil HaSeder. Another idea, cited by the Rema in his Darchei Moshe,[25] is that the Haggada is akin to a Tefillah, that we relating thanks and praise to Hashem for everything he has done for our ancestors and us. Therefore, immediately prior to the recital of the Haggada we wash our hands in preparation without a brachah similar to the requirement before davening.

One more interesting explanation, suggested by Rav Reuven Margoliyus,[26] is that this washing is performed at the very beginning of the Seder night ‘derech cheirus’, to show that we are doing so as free people and nobility, who are accustomed to washing their hands prior to eating even a small amount. This is opposed to slaves, who do not have the rights or ability

for such extravagance, but rather ‘eat their bread with sweat.’ This ‘nobility’ reasoning would seem to fit well with the minhag many perform of ‘serving’ the Baal Habayis for Urchatz, by bringing him a wash basin and washing his hands.[27]

Divergences of Dipping

Interestingly, Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank zt”l, the former Chief Rabbi of Yerushalayim, opines that the dispute among Rishonim whether only the head of the household is supposed to wash Urchatz or if everyone at the Seder does as well (the most common custom) might be dependent on this debate of why the handwashing at the Seder was instituted.[28]

According to the majority opinion that Urchartz was enacted due to the halacha of *davar hateebulo b’mashkeh*, then everyone would be mandated to wash.

However, according to the opinions that this handwashing is only performed on Pesach at the Seder, it is possible that only the head of the household need wash Urchatz, as that should be deemed sufficient enough to arouse the interest and subsequent questions of the children.

Practically, as mentioned previously, the most common custom is that everyone washes Urchatz.[29] Yet, a notable minority minhag, performed mainly by many of Germanic / Dutch origin, as well as Sanz, Lelov, and Satmar Chassidim, is that only the head of the household wash.[30] So it is remarkable that this modern divergence of minhagim might actually depend on how Poskim understood the brief statement of the Gemara regarding children’s questions.[31]

Finger Food?

Another interesting machlokes that might depend on which *hekker* the Gemara intended is how to dip the Karpas into the saltwater. If the reason Urchatz was mandated is due to the halacha of *davar hateebulo b’mashkeh*, then it stands to reason that if one used a fork or other utensil to dip and not actually getting ‘ones’s hands dirty’ then many poskim would hold that handwashing is technically not required.[32] On the other hand, if the washing prior to dipping is considered the unusual action of Seder night, then we should perform Urchatz regardless of utensil.

Practically, although there are contemporary authorities, including Rav Moshe Sternbuch and Rav Nissim Karelitz,[33] who maintain preference for dipping the Karpas by hand in order that it should satisfy all opinions, nonetheless, due to the other understandings of Urchatz’s role, many poskim rule that even if one used a fork for the dipping, we should still perform the handwashing prior.[34] Just another insight into the seemingly simple and straightforward, yet remarkable Urchatz. How Do You Karpas?

Now that we explained the “Why” and “How” of Karpas, this leaves the “What,” as in which vegetable should be used. It is

interesting that the Mishnah in Pesachim did not tell us a specific vegetable, with the Gemara explaining that if stuck, we may even use the Maror for Karpas as well.[35] Although Rashi, the Rambam, and Tur tell us that any vegetable may be used for Karpas,[36] and conversely the Maharil, Arizal, and seemingly the Shulchan Aruch, understanding “Karpas” to be referring to a specific vegetable with that name,[37] yet, many sefarim cite “Petrozil” or “Petreshka” (presumably parsley, as “Petrozilia” is called in modern Hebrew) as the vegetable of choice, with the Aruch Hashulchan commenting that “we don’t know what it is.”[38] Other popular options used over the generations include onions, radishes, scallions, and even cucumbers.[39] The main point is that its proper brachah be a “*Borei Pri Ha’adama*” so that it should exempt repeating this brachah again when it is time for Maror.[40]

Strictly Celery

However, it seems that the two most prevalent vegetables, at least nowadays, are celery and potatoes. Celery is considered an excellent choice, as the Chasam Sofer relates, his rebbi, Rav Nosson Adler did much research in tracking down the Maharil’s elusive “Karpas” vegetable, and his findings were that it is none other than celery. The Chasam Sofer writes that therefore that is what he used as well for Karpas. The Machatzis Hashekel writes similarly, that he was told by a “Great Man” (presumably Rav Adler) that after much research in Medical books, “Karpas” is truly none other than celery. The word he uses to identify it – “*ipiya*” or “*ipuch*,” is also cited as such in earlier sefarim, including the Bartenura in classifying “Karpas.”[41]

Rav Yechiel Michel Tukachinsky, in his annual *Luach Eretz Yisrael*, writes that in Eretz Yisrael the “*Mehadrin*” use “Karpas” that is known by its Arabic name. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach fills us in that he was referring to celery. The *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* cites a preference for celery as well, and this is the minhag of many, including the *Mareh Yechezkel*, and later, Rav Yisrael Yaakov Fischer.[42]

Pontificating a Perchance for Potatoes

The other common “Karpas”, perhaps the most common, is potatoes. Cited by the Aruch Hashulchan and *Misgeres Hashulchan*, it is the minhag in Belz, Skver, and Spinka, and many Gedolim, including Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, and Rav Moshe Sternbuch, were known to use potatoes as Karpas.[43]

Yet, there are those, including chassidim of Sanz, Bobov, and Kamarna who will not use potatoes for Karpas. This can be traced back to the famed *Yismach Moshe*, Rav Moshe Teitelbaum, rebbi of the *Divrei Chaim* of Sanz.

In his *Tehillah L’Moshe*, the *Yismach Moshe* writes that he used to use potatoes for Karpas, but then heard that the great

Rav Naftali of Ropschitz made a Shehakol brachah on it (and hence would not be fitting for Karpas). He writes that he found that the Aruch, Rav Nosson M'Romi (literally, of Rome; d. 1106), when referring to the proper brachah of mushrooms and other food items that do not actually get their nourishment from the earth and consequentially their brachah being Shehakol, translates them as "Tartuffel." Not familiar with the archaic word, the Yismach Moshe maintained that the Aruch must have been referring to "Kartuffel," colloquially known as the potato.[44]

Although there are different rationales for this,[45] this idea is also found in several other sefarim, and there are prominent authorities who therefore made a Shehakol brachah on potatoes.[46] On the other hand, the facts do not seem to corroborate that potatoes should be classified in the same category of mushrooms, as potatoes not only grow and root in the ground, but they also get their nourishment from the ground, as opposed to mushrooms and their ilk. Several contemporary authorities point out that it is highly unlikely, if not outright impossible, for the Aruch, who lived in Europe in the eleventh century, to have been referring to

"Kartuffel"(potatoes) as the proper translation for mushrooms, as tubers were unknown on that continent until almost five hundred years later![47]

In fact, according to the Tiferes Yisrael, this act of Sir Francis Drake's, of introducing potatoes to the European continent, merited him to be classified as one of the Chassidei Umos Ha'Olam, as over the centuries potatoes have saved countless lives from starvation.[48]

Moreover, in modern Italian, "tartufo" still translates as "truffle," the prized underground fungus,[49] and not a potato. Therefore, the vast majority of authorities rule that the proper blessing on the potato is indeed "Borei Pri Ha'adama," and hence, it is still the preference for many as "Karpas." Urchatz Everyday!

Back to Urchatz, the Chida, in his Simchas HaRegel Haggada, continues that although many are aware of the halacha of davar hateebulo b'mashkeh, they do not realize that it even applies to something as ubiquitous as dipping cake into coffee![50] One might contend that the connection between vegetables in saltwater to tea biscuits in coffee seems tenuous, but actually, according to the majority of authorities, from a halachic perspective they are remarkably similar.

So the next time you get that dunkin' urge, it might be prudent to be conscientious by following the Haggada's hidden exhortation, and head to the sink before diving in to your cup-of-joe.

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

This article is dedicated L'iluy Nishmas Maran Sar HaTorah Harav Shmaryahu Yosef Chaim ben Harav Yaakov Yisrael zt"l (Kanievsky), this author's beloved grandmother, Chana Rus (Spitz) bas Rav Yissachar Dov a"h and uncle Yeruchem ben Rav Yisroel Mendel (Kaplan) zt"l, and l'zechus Shira Yaffa bas Rochel Miriam v'chol yotzei chalatzeha for a yeshua sheleimah teikif u'miyad!

For any questions, comments or for the full Mareh Mekomos / sources, please email the author: yspitz@ohr.edu.

Rabbi Spitz's recent English halacha sefer, "Insights Into Halacha - Food: A Halachic Analysis," (Mosaica/Feldheim) has more than 500 pages and features over 30 comprehensive chapters,

discussing a myriad of halachic issues relating to food. It is now available online and in bookstores everywhere.

[_____]

Essays Rabbi YY Jacobson

Powerful Gems for Your Seder

Seven Meditations to Transform Passover 2020

1. Invite Yourself to the Seder

"Whoever is hungry, let him come and eat; whoever is in need, let him come and conduct the Seder of Passover."

Since when do you invite people to an event, once the event started? And if you want to invite new guests, go outside and invite people. Why are you inviting those that are already here?

And how can we justify these words during the Seder of Passover 2020 when we are not allowed to invite guests?!

Here is one possible perspective.

What happens to you when you are on a plane, before take-off and they play the safety video? While your eyes may be watching it, you aren't. You have seen it 300 times, and it doesn't seem relevant. What are the chances of you needing to inflate your life jacket?

This statement in the beginning of the Seder isn't an invitation to your physical body, it is an invitation to your mind. Invite your entire being to take part in this vulnerable journey, from enslavement, through your personal and collective pain and suffering, all the way out of Egypt, to seeing yourselves differently than the way you entered.

We read the story every year. We already know the story. We know the information. So that's not the reason we are here. It's like the life jacket speech on the airplane. Been there, done that. I know the salt water; I know the mah nishtanah; I know the Avadim Hayuni, the Dayanu, and the ten plagues.

The seder is about revisiting our personal narrative through the lens of our historic Jewish narrative. It is turning your history into your personal biography. We tell our personal story through telling the story of our people.

It's about the evolution of Jewish consciousness. It's about personal evolution. Where were we last year? Where are we today? Where was I last year? Where am I today? And where do I want to be in a year from now? What is the "Jerusalem" I would like to be in next year, and how do I plan on getting there?

So every year, we begin with an invitation. It is a time to reflect on the transformations you have experienced: what experience have you gone through that transformed your life? What awareness has Covid-19 created for you? It is a time to reflect on the areas we are currently stuck in—what feelings and emotions "own" you? What happens to you when you are attacked by a feeling of insecurity? Of not belonging? Of trauma? Of depression? Of anger? Of apathy?

We all go through our ups and downs. We all get stuck, and we are all capable of experiencing emotional and psychological freedom. Tonight we ask: where am I in my relationship with G-d, and do I see how He is walking me through life? (If you would like others to share, begin by sharing something personal. This will take the seder from a nice seder to a life-experience your family may never forget).

Perhaps the seder was the first invention of group therapy. This is the space we are inviting each other to. This is a safe space. We aren't just going to read the words. This isn't an intellectual journey. It's a soulful experience. We are going to live through the exodus. We recline, we will eat the bitter herbs, matzah and drink the wine. We'll laugh, we'll cry and we will sing.

Let us pray that we have the courage to show up for this wonderful opportunity.

2. Tonight We Search for Incompletion

Yachatz:

Why do we break the matzah? And then say the entire haggadah on that broken matzah?

The Jewish community looks for and celebrates what's whole. We want the Shofar with no cracks, the Esrog with no blemishes, and the beautiful menorah that has pure oil. Yet tonight we have the courage to "break out matzah," to discuss and search for the broken pieces.

Because to be free we must profess the courage to stop pretending that all is perfect and we can figure it all out on our own. We must be willing to admit that we are deeply imperfect and need each other to grow and heal. And just like it doesn't humble me to admit that I need oxygen outside of me to survive, and I need those little plants and fruits to nurture me, I should not feel ashamed to accept how much I need.

I can't handle all of life on my own. I need a spiritual nutrient in my life. I need to learn how to pray. I need to learn how to pass my stress to G-d – to rely on something greater than me.

I need to cultivate faith like my ancestors did, and not have to fret if I don't know exactly what I will be doing the rest of my life. It is alright to be broken.

I have to be willing, like my forefathers, to go out of my comfort zone – perhaps all the way out – to a desert, to gain the wisdom of my people and not stay smug with what I know or think I know.

The Flawed Circle

Shel Silverstein, who died in 1999, was a Jewish American poet, singer-songwriter, cartoonist, screenwriter, and author of children's books. Translated into more than 30 languages, his books have sold over 20 million copies. One of his moving tales is about a circle that was missing a piece. A large triangular wedge has been cut out of it. The circle wanted to be whole, with nothing missing, so it went around the world looking for its missing piece.

But because it was incomplete, it could only roll very slowly as it rolled through the world. And as it rolled slowly, it admired the flowers along the way.

It chatted with the butterflies who landed on his back. He chatted with the worms he met along the way and he was warmed by the sunshine.

The circle found lots of pieces, but none of them fit. Some were too big and some were too small. Some too square, some too pointy. So it left them all by the side of the road and kept on searching.

Then one day it found a piece that fit perfectly. It was so happy. Now it could become complete with nothing missing.

The circle incorporated the missing piece into itself and began to roll again. But now that it was a perfect circle, it could roll very fast, too fast to notice the flowers and to talk with the worms. Too fast for the butterflies to land on his back.

When the circle realized how different the world seemed when it rolled through it so quickly, it stopped and left the missing piece by the side of the road.

It decides that it was happier when searching for the missing piece than actually having it. So it gently puts the piece down, and continues searching happily.

In some strange way, we are more whole when we are incomplete. That we can achieve so much more when we realize that we are still far from perfect.

Because a person who thinks to himself that he is perfect, without any loose ends and internal conflicts, becomes too smooth to even attempt to change and grow and realize how much more there is to accomplish. Such a person shuts themselves down from others, from themselves and from G-d. Why is this night different? While every night we search for perfection, tonight we go out and search for the amazing gift of incompleteness, or openness.

3. 3333 Years Later, We Still Remember.

“Now we are slaves; next year in the Land of Israel. Now we are slaves; next year we will be free.”

It was in 1937 when the handwriting was already on the wall regarding the future of European Jewry that David Ben-Gurion, later to become the first Prime Minister of Israel, appeared before the Peel Commission to allow the Jews of Europe to immigrate to Palestine.

The Peel Commission was created during the British Mandate over Palestine. After a series of heinous Arab attacks against the Jews, the British attempted to extricate themselves from this nutcracker of Arab violence and Jewish pressure by establishing a commission to study the problem, appointing the British Lord Peel as its chairman. Under the shadow of Hitler’s rise in Germany, England floated a trial balloon in the form of a partition plan. The proposed Jewish section would have consisted of tiny, barely visible slivers of land and could never become a viable national entity. But while the Jews were displeased by the Peel Commission Report, the Arabs were even more outraged and violence again spread throughout the country. Ben Gurion’s speech was given in the midst of the commission.

This is what he said:

"300 years ago, there came to the New World a boat, and its name was the Mayflower. The Mayflower’s landing on Plymouth Rock was one of the great historical events in the history of England and in the history of America. But I would like to ask any Englishman sitting here on the commission, what day did the Mayflower leave port? What date was it? I’d like to ask the Americans: do they know what date the Mayflower left port in England? How many people were on the boat? Who were their leaders? What kind of food did they eat on the boat?"

"More than 3300 years ago, long before the Mayflower, our people left Egypt, and every Jew in the world, wherever he is, knows what day they left. And he knows what food they ate. And we still eat that food every anniversary. And we know who our leader was. And we know exactly how many Jews left the land! And we sit down and tell the story to our children and grandchildren in order to guarantee that it will never be forgotten. And we say our two slogans: ‘Now we may be enslaved, but next year, we’ll be a free people.’"

"Now we are behind the Soviet Union and their prison. Now, we’re in Germany where Hitler is destroying us. Now we’re scattered throughout the world, but next year, we’ll be in Jerusalem. There’ll come a day that we’ll come home to Zion, to the Land of Israel. That is the nature of the Jewish people." David Ben Gurion was an ardent secularist, but there were certain basics he understood well.

It is always deeply moving for observing a seder. After all the jokes about the boredom, the uncle who gets on our nerves, the

horrible horseradish, and the endless dragging on of the afikoman search—here we are, 3328 years later, coming together on the very same night, retelling the story of our people.

Think about it, it is mind blowing.

We have been through everything—every conceivable challenge and blessing life has to offer. We have touched the heavens and we have been to hell and back. Yet every single year, without interruption, Jews came together around a table, sharing the same story, eating the same food, singing the same songs, and arguing about the same ideas. Ben Gurion was right. There is a reason we are still here, going strong. For each of our children knows the food they ate and the day they left.

4. Our Innate Potential for Transformation
“Avadim Hayenu...”

For centuries the children of Israel were enslaved in Egypt in bondage of body and spirit. They were crushed and beaten, physically and mentally. Spiritually too, they have lost their sense of identity and purpose. When Moses brought them the message of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, they did not listen to him, the Torah states, "because of short breath and crushing labor." They were lost. However, after their liberation from enslavement they attained, in a comparatively short time, the highest spiritual level a man can reach. Every man, woman, and child of Israel experienced Divine Revelation at Mount Sinai, absorbing the highest knowledge and inexhaustible source of wisdom and faith for all generations to come—the only time such a thing ever happened in history.

We often think that if we struggle with a bad habit, a painful emotion, an addiction, a bad relationship, or a difficult childhood, or if we struggle with our Jewish identity, that it has to take a lot of time—perhaps many years—to heal or to change. It might. We don’t know how long it will take. But the story of the Exodus is essentially about the possibility of transformation. When we can look inside and see that who we truly are is beautiful, perfect, capable, full of love; how we are literally part of the Divine. Then in one moment we can transcend, let go of our old identity, and start living who we truly are.

Yet sometimes we are so filled with toxicity that we cannot even understand or feel how free we really are. That is what I want to ask you to do tonight: Start believing in your genuine potential for personal liberation in the profoundest way. Tonight, share with yourself this thought: “I’m not a body with a soul, I’m a soul that has a visible part called the body.”

The Kohen from Pinsk

Yankel from Pinsk arrives in the New Country. In the old shtetl, in the small Lithuanian town of Pinsk, he was a simpleton, a poor schleper; but now he decides he will open a new chapter in his life. He showed up for the first time on

Pesach in shul and he was dressed to kill—a fancy new suit, an elegant tie, a classy hat, and designer shoes.

He sits down in the front row, establishing his reputation as an honorable man.

The rabbi, Rabbi Goldberg, takes a glimpse at the guest. The rabbi, himself a native from Pinsk, recognizes him immediately. He is impressed with Yankel's new look.

Then comes the reading of the Torah. The Gabai asks if there is a Kohen in the synagogue. Yankel thinks to himself: Being a Kohen will give me an opportunity to become a popular member of the shul. After all, a shul always needs a Kohen, and I'd always be getting an Aliya.

Yankel raises his hand. "I am a Kohen," he declares.

They call him up to the Torah, and then he blesses the community.

After the services, the rabbi approaches him, and welcomes him warmly: "Yankel! Yankel from Pinsk! Wow, what a pleasure to have you.

But let me ask you a question: I remember you from Pinsk, I knew your father, I knew your grandfather, and I still remember your great grandfather. None of them were kohanim. How did you suddenly become a kohen?"

To which Yankel from Pinsk responds:

"Hey, this is a new country. This is AMERICA. If you can come here and become a rabbi, I can come here and become a Kohen!"

5. Matzah—the Food of freedom

By the age of fifteen we think we have it all figured out. There is nothing new to learn. The rest of life is simply reaffirming what we already know to be true. "I always knew that we can't trust that guy." "This family is good, and from that family stay away." We have a certain way of seeing the world and we lock into it. As we get older it becomes the "truth."

We are stuck in our perception. We are arrogant. We believe that what we think of life and what we think of ourselves, and others, is true.

The staple food of Passover is Matzah. It represents the food of freedom. Why?

Matzah—as opposed to bread—is a humble food. Lots of care was taken that the dough should not rise. Matzah is the process of humbling ourselves. Not breaking ourselves, rather breaking our misinformed ego. It's the realization that I don't know.

What I think, is simply that—what I think. It's not the truth.

We never know the full truth.

Matzah is the gateway to freedom. The message of matzah is that instead of living in our self-fulfilling prophecy of reality, we let go and become open to a new way of seeing things.

There is always another way to see almost everything.

Who am I beyond what I think of myself? This is food (for thought) of hope. This is food (for thought) of healing.

Dare to let go of the shackles of your intellect. Dare to question what was solid and "true" for you yesterday. This is where you will meet the G-d of Abraham. This is the G-d that took us—and takes us out of our perpetual state—of Egypt. Dare to let go and you will fall into the all-embracing hands of G-d.

The Impressionist artist Pierre-August Renoir (1841–1919) once said: "I am beginning to know how to paint. It has taken me over fifty years to work to achieve this result, which is still far from complete."

Renoir said this in 1913, at the age of seventy-two. By this time, the artist was a master at his craft. He was well established, and considered by many to be the greatest living painter in France.

He knew the secret of not knowing. The secret of freedom. Trapped In Marriage

You're trapped in your marriage. You've said certain things, she's said things, both quite unforgivable, so now you're imprisoned in this cube of tense silence you used to call "home" and the only place to go from here is down. Yes, there is a way out -- just yesterday there was a moment, a fleeting opportunity for reconciliation. But you were too big to squeeze through.

Sometimes, the weather clears enough for you to see the escape hatch set high up in the wall -- the way out to freedom.

But it's so small. Actually, it's not so much that it's small as that you need to make yourself small -- veritably flatten yourself -- to fit through. You need to deflate your false ego. Chametz -- grain that has fermented and bloated -- represents that swelling of ego that enslaves the soul more than any external prison. The flat, unpretentious matzah represents the humility that is the ultimate liberator of the human spirit.

The liberating quality of matzah is also shown in the forms of the Hebrew letters that spell the words "chametz" and "matzah".

The spelling of these two words are very similar (just as a piece of bread and a piece of matzah are made of the same basic ingredients) --chametz is spelled chet, mem, tzadi; matzah is spelled mem, tzadi, hei. So the only difference is the difference between the chet and the hei -- which is also slight.

Both the chet and the hei have the form of a three sided enclosure, open at the bottom; the difference being that the hei has a small "escape hatch" near the top of its left side.

Which is all the difference in the world.

6. No Dialogue, Just Endless Love

"What does the rebellious child say? What is this service you are doing?... You too Blunt/hit his teeth."

Really? Are you kidding me? A call for violence at the Seder table? And toward whom? Toward your own child?

There is, in truth, a deeper message here. It is the source of the expression: "Answer the person, do not answer the question."

Real listening occurs when we are not distracted or diverted by our own thinking. We know that when we quiet down sufficiently, when we are present in the moment, we can reach beyond the content of the spoken word and hear the underlying intent of the other. There is what we see and hear—the behavior of the other person and their words—and there is what we don't see—the inner feeling of the other person.

Now, think about it: When is the last time you were living in the most wonderful feeling, and you mistreated your spouse? It doesn't happen. This isn't an excuse to behave inappropriately; we are always responsible for our behavior. But it does allow us to look beyond the behavior and see what is really going on. When we see someone acting in a destructive manner, we know that they are hurting inside.

Your child may be yelling, throwing things or hitting his sister, he is completely reckless and lacks any form of decency and obedience. He should be disciplined. But what is going on beneath the surface? Is he anxious about something? The more we can go beneath the surface the closer we are to dealing with the root of the problem. In Hebrew, the word used for a bully is the same word used for a mute—אָלֵם. Why? Because bullying is often a result of the child being muted and he has no way of expressing himself.

The bully must always be stopped. Yet it behooves us to look one step deeper so we can mend the inner heart of the bully and cause him to truly stop bullying forever.

When we hear the voice of a rebellious child, we often get carried away in what he says instead of looking beyond the word to what he is truly feeling.

What are his words? "What is this service of yours?" It sounds as if this son is excluding himself, but if you listen beyond his words you will hear the cry of a lonely soul. We all know the feeling of not belonging, of being an outsider. Our troubled and "rebellious" child is doing his or her best to convey that to the ones around him or her: I feel like I don't belong. I have no place, I am an outsider. I am hurting.

How are we to respond? Says the Haggadah: "Break his teeth"—don't enter into a dialogue. Let this not be about teeth vs. teeth—and he who screams louder wins. Forget the words, forget the teeth. Shower him or her with unconditional love. Simply overwhelm him or her with enormous affection and acceptance, until they see that there is no such thing as an outsider; we all already inherently belong.

This is also the way to approach our own feelings of loneliness. Don't engage. Rather look for a feeling of unconditional acceptance. This will always guide you to a place of clarity and perspective.

The Vilna Gaon once said: The Hebrew word שני, his teeth, is numerically equivalent to 366. Now the Hebrew word for Rasha (רשע) is 570. So when we "blunt" his teeth and subtract

366 from 570 what are we left with? 206, which equals the word Tzaddik (צדיק). In other words, when you remove the "teeth," the sharp words, you will see that inside this child is a Tzaddik.

7. Nirtzah—I'm Never Good Enough

We conclude the seder with the final and very strange step of "Nirtzah." We acknowledge that G-d has accepted and is deeply moved and pleased by our service.

This is enigmatic. All the other 14 steps of the seder connote an action of some sort: Kiddish, washing hands, dipping, etc. What is the significance of this 15th step where we do nothing, but believe that G-d was pleased with our seder?

In truth, this is the climax of the seder.

One of our ego's favorite lines is: "Not good enough." You commit to learning Torah twenty minutes a day, your ego comes and says: only twenty minutes? What can you learn already in twenty minutes?

You spend fifteen dollars and buy your wife flowers, your ego says that's all you spend on your wife?!

You gave someone collecting money for charity ten dollars, afterwards your ego says: you are not good enough, why didn't you give him twenty dollars?

You start doing Kiddush Friday night, and your ego says:

That's not called keeping Shabbat!

Any project we do, there is that little voice inside that comes and says: "Not good enough."

Remember this rule: This is the voice of the yetzer hara, of our ego.

You see, it is true that we should always improve, and there is always room for improvement. But this isn't the intention of our ego. It has one intention--to deject us and take the life out of life. For how does it make you feel when you think "not enough"? It makes you a smaller person, it makes you think less of yourself, it makes you think that your actions are worthless. It drains you from your vitality and zest. It makes you feel sad and depressed. And it ultimately causes you to do less, not more.

It has nothing to do with the truth or with G-d; it is a creation of ego.

Once something was done, we surrender and say I have done the best I could have done in the moment. And we trust that our sincerity will be seen, by our spouse, the beggar, G-d and ourselves.

Nirtzah. G-d accepts your offering. Do YOU accept your offering?

(My thanks to Rabbi Yanki Raskin for his assistance in preparing these insights. My thanks to Rabbi Nir Gurevitch (Serfers Paradise, Australia) and Rabbi Zalman Bluming (Duke University) for sharing their insights).

