

Home Weekly Parsha TZAV
Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

The entire thrust of Torah life lies in the word tzav which informs us as the title of the parsha of this week. Tzav means command, order, instruct. It allows little leeway for individual creativity in the performance of ritual and commandments.

The values of Torah life come with an instruction manual. And just as the wonderful gadgets of technology in our lives require adherence to the manual that accompanies each device, in order for it to operate effectively, so too the Torah in the spiritual realm of Judaism requires adherence to specific instructions.

It is not for naught that any and all of the blessings that were composed by the rabbis to be recited before the performance of a mitzvah contains the word v'tzivanu – and He has commanded us, for the word mitzvah itself, which we usually translate in terms of being a good deed, literally means something which has been commanded.

It is this recognition of being commanded, of following the instruction manual of the Torah in a committed and punctilious fashion that defines Judaism throughout the ages. In today's world there are many who seek to "improve" upon the Torah. They have written a new and ever changing manual of instructions using such sweet sounding terms as "relevant" "progressive" "attractive" to describe prayer services, Torah commandments and Jewish values.

The fault line in Jewish life today remains, as it always has been, this acceptance or rejection of the concept of v'tzivanu. But Jewish history teaches us that none of this tinkering with that concept survives the passage of time and the ever changing mores of human society. It is only the old instructional manual that still stands and preserves us after all else has passed from the scene.

The concept of v'tzivanu rubs us the wrong way. We are by nature rebellious against authority imposed upon us by others. From infancy onward we demand to do it all by ourselves, when and how we wish. We can sense what the rabbis meant when they said that the people of Israel accepted the Torah at Mount Sinai and they felt that the mountain hung over their heads as a terrible and forced burden.

Here they were going to be commanded to do things in certain exact way, to make the Torah's values supreme over their own personal desires, logic and way of life. But they were warned then that abandoning the Torah and not following the instructional manual would bring personal and national problems, tragedies, defections and harsh judgments.

The mountain still hangs over our heads as we are witness to this fact in so many facets of our lives. So again we are brought full circle to the idea of tzav and v'tzivanu. The

concept of tzav as promulgated in this week's parsha is not addressed solely to Aaron and his descendants but it is part of the heritage of Judaism for all Jews and for all who wish to witness Jewish continuity in their families and the Jewish people as a whole.

Shabat shalom.

Rabbi Berel Wein

Why Civilisations Die
Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

In *The Watchman's Rattle*, subtitled *Thinking Our Way Out of Extinction*, Rebecca Costa delivers a fascinating account of how civilisations die. When their problems become too complex, societies reach what she calls a cognitive threshold. They simply can't chart a path from the present to the future.

The example she gives is the Mayans. For a period of three and a half thousand years, between 2,600 BCE and 900 CE, they developed an extraordinary civilisation, spreading over what is today Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Belize, with an estimated population of 15 million people.

Not only were they expert potters, weavers, architects, and farmers, they also developed an intricate cylindrical calendar system, with celestial charts to track the movements of the stars and predict weather patterns. They had their own unique form of writing as well as an advanced mathematical system. Most impressively they developed a water-supply infrastructure involving a complex network of reservoirs, canals, dams, and levees.

Then suddenly, for reasons we still don't fully understand, the entire system collapsed. Sometime between the middle of the eighth and ninth century the majority of the Mayan people simply disappeared. There have been many theories as to why it happened. It may have been a prolonged drought, overpopulation, internecine wars, a devastating epidemic, food shortages, or a combination of these and other factors. One way or another, having survived for 35 centuries, Mayan civilisation failed and became extinct.

Rebecca Costa's argument is that whatever the causes, the Mayan collapse, like the fall of the Roman Empire, and the Khmer Empire of thirteenth century Cambodia, occurred because problems became too many and complicated for the people of that time and place to solve. There was cognitive overload, and systems broke down.

It can happen to any civilisation. It may, she says, be happening to ours. The first sign of breakdown is gridlock. Instead of dealing with what everyone can see are major problems, people continue as usual and simply pass their problems on to the next generation. The second sign is a retreat into irrationality. Since people can no longer cope with the facts, they take refuge in religious consolations.

The Mayans took to offering sacrifices. Archaeologists have uncovered gruesome evidence of human sacrifice on a vast scale. It seems that, unable to solve their problems rationally, the Mayans focused on placating the gods by manically making offerings to them. So apparently did the Khmer.

Which makes the case of Jews and Judaism fascinating. They faced two centuries of crisis under Roman rule between Pompey's conquest in 63 BCE and the collapse of the Bar Kochba rebellion in 135 CE. They were hopelessly factionalised. Long before the Great Rebellion against Rome and the destruction of the Second Temple, Jews were expecting some major cataclysm.

What is remarkable is that they did not focus obsessively on sacrifices, like the Mayans and the Khmer. With their Temple destroyed, they instead focused on finding substitutes for sacrifice. One was gemillat chassadim, acts of kindness. Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai comforted Rabbi Joshua, who wondered how Israel would atone for its sins without sacrifices, with the words:

“My son, we have another atonement as effective as this: acts of kindness, as it is written (Hosea 6:6), ‘I desire kindness and not sacrifice.’”

Avot deRabbi Natan 8 Another was Torah study. The Sages interpreted Malachi's words, “In every place offerings are presented to My name,” to refer to scholars who study the laws of sacrifice. (Menachot 100a).

“One who recites the order of sacrifices is as if he had brought them” (Taanit 27b).

Malachi 1:11

Another was prayer. Hosea said, “Take words with you and return to the Lord . . . We will offer our lips as sacrifices of bulls” (Hos. 14:2-3), implying that words could take the place of sacrifice.

He who prays in the house of prayer is as if he brought a pure oblation.

Yerushlami, Perek 5 Halachah 1

Yet another was teshuvah. The Psalm (51:19) says “the sacrifices of God are a contrite spirit.” From this the Sages inferred that “if a person repents it is accounted to him as if he had gone up to Jerusalem and built the Temple and the altar and offered on it all the sacrifices ordained in the Torah” (Vayikra Rabbah 7:2).

A fifth approach was fasting. Since going without food diminished a person's fat and blood, it counted as a substitute for the fat and blood of a sacrifice (Brachot 17a).

A sixth was hospitality. “As long as the Temple stood, the altar atoned for Israel, but now a person's table atones for him” (Brachot 55a). And so on.

What is striking in hindsight is how, rather than clinging obsessively to the past, leaders like Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai thought forward to a worst-case-scenario future. The great question raised by parshat Tzav, which is all about different kinds of sacrifice, is not “Why were sacrifices commanded in the first place?” but rather, “Given how

central they were to the religious life of Israel in Temple times, how did Judaism survive without them?”

The short answer is that overwhelmingly the Prophets, the Sages, and the Jewish thinkers of the Middle Ages realised that sacrifices were symbolic enactments of processes of mind, heart, and deed, that could be expressed in other ways as well. We can encounter the will of God by Torah study, engaging in the service of God by prayer, making financial sacrifice by charity, creating sacred fellowship by hospitality, and so on.

Jews did not abandon the past. We still refer constantly to the sacrifices in our prayers. But they did not cling to the past. Nor did they take refuge in irrationality. They thought through the future and created institutions like the synagogue, house of study, and school. These could be built anywhere, and would sustain Jewish identity even in the most adverse conditions.

That is no small achievement. The world's greatest civilisations have all, in time, become extinct while Judaism has always survived. In one sense that was surely Divine Providence. But in another it was the foresight of people like Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai who resisted cognitive breakdown, created solutions today for the problems of tomorrow, who did not seek refuge in the irrational, and who quietly built the Jewish future.

Surely there is a lesson here for the Jewish people today: Plan generations ahead. Think at least 25 years into the future. Contemplate worst-case scenarios. Ask “What we would do, if...” What saved the Jewish people was their ability, despite their deep and abiding faith, never to let go of rational thought, and despite their loyalty to the past, to keep planning for the future.

Parshat Tzav: Maimonides on Sacrifices, Revisited **Rabbi Dr. Shlomo Riskin is the Founder and Rosh HaYeshiva of Ohr Torah Stone**

“And the Lord spoke to Moses saying: ‘Command Aaron and his sons, saying, this is the law of the burnt offering...’” (Leviticus 6:1-2)

When we first encountered the concept of animal sacrifices in the book of Leviticus, we explored in depth the views of Maimonides and Nahmanides. Maimonides, in his classic work, Guide for the Perplexed, explained that the purpose of these sacrifices was in order to distance the Jewish people from idolatry.

After all, having just emerged from Egypt, it was natural that their spirits remained chained to an idolatrous system of sacrificial worship. Hence, Maimonides argues that the Israelites were so accustomed to the practice of animal sacrifices and the burning of incense that when the time arrived to create a new model of worship, out of necessity God based it on the Egyptian system which they had known.

“Because it is impossible to move suddenly from one extreme to the other... divine wisdom... could not

command that [the Israelites] leave all of those ways of worship, depart from them and nullify them. For such [a demand] would have been something that no human mind could expect, given the nature of the human being who is always drawn to that to which he is accustomed. Therefore God retained the sacrificial acts, but transformed them into means rather than ends, declaring that they must become the implements for directing all such energies and activities into the worship of the one true God of the Universe.” (Guide for the Perplexed, Part iii, Chap. 32)

Perhaps another way of interpreting the Maimonidean position can be extracted from a striking Talmudic passage in Tractate Yoma. There we are told how the Jewish people complain to the Almighty that the inclination of idolatry has destroyed the Temple, burned down the Sanctuary, killed all the righteous, exiled the Israelites from their land, and – to add insult to injury – “...it is still dancing amongst us.” They request that it be vanquished. The Almighty accedes to their desire, and after a fast of three days and three nights, God allows them to destroy the evil inclination towards idolatry. And what is the object they destroyed?

“He came forth in the image of a lion of fire emerging from the Holy of Holies.” (Yoma 69b)

What a strange description for the evil inclination of idolatry, “a lion of fire emerging from the Holy of Holies!” The famous interpreter of Aggadot (Talmudic legends) Rabbi Shmuel Eidels (1555–1631), known as the Maharsha, apparently troubled by what appears to be such a positive image of evil idolatry, explains that this refers to the zodiac sign Leo (the lion), which rules the heavens during the Hebrew month of Av, when the holy Temple was destroyed. And indeed, the first Temple was destroyed largely because of the idolatrous practices of the Israelites. The Hassidic master Rabbi Zadok Hakohen of Lublin is likewise surprised by the Talmudic description. After all, the lion is a most respected Jewish symbol, representing the majesty of Judah who is thrice identified with a lion in Jacob’s blessings:

“Judah is a lion’s whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up. He stooped down, he crouched as a lion, and as a lioness; who shall raise him?” (Genesis 49:9)

The lion is also an aspect of the divine merkava (chariot) in the vision of Ezekiel, and is generally depicted on the ark curtains (parokhet) guarding the Torah. Moreover, the Holy of Holies would hardly be a proper home for the evil inclination of idolatry.

And so he suggests that the message of the Talmudic passage is that every aspect of creation – including idolatry – has its roots in sanctity. When we reflect upon the various gods of the ancient world – the Sun and the Moon, Herculean strength, Zeusian power and Aphroditian beauty – they are all aspects of the physical world and the instinctive drives which are fundamental to the world around us even today.

One response to these physical and human drives is the ascetic option, denigrating and attempting to root out all physicality because of the dangers which can follow from uncontrolled addiction to their urges. This, however, has never been the Jewish response.

After all, the Almighty did not create us as disembodied spirits or ethereal intellects. The physical side of our beings must have value if it was created by God. The challenge is to direct – or sublimate – our instinctive drives properly, to see them as means and not ends, not to deny them but to ennoble them, and to utilize them in the service of the divine.

This may well be the true meaning of Maimonides’ words. When the Jews left Egypt, they still carried with them the imprint of Egyptian idolatries, the myriad of gods including manifestations of nature (the sun) and beasts, which they held up as ideals. According to Maimonides, Leviticus is the history of how God redirected these idolatrous energies, teaching the Jews to build a Sanctuary as a means toward divine service, to sanctify sexual energy within the context of marriage and family, to utilize strength and power in order to recreate society in the divine kingship.

The fact of the matter is that what was true at the time when the Jews left Egypt has not necessarily changed to this day, and quite likely may never change. And therefore the Maimonidean position regarding the animal sacrifices – to wean the Israelites away from their previous Egyptian passions – is not a temporary solution for a particular generation; we are still in need of the directed discipline which will enable us to direct and ennoble our drives and passions to the service of the God of compassion and justice.

Textual evidence for this can be found at the end of the Talmudic passage we quoted earlier. The prophet cleverly warns the Israelites, after the evil instinct was given over into their hands: “Remember, if you kill him, the world will be destroyed” (Ibid). And so we read how they imprisoned the evil desire, and after three days not one egg could be found in the Land of Israel; apparently, without the sexual attraction between male and female, creation cannot exist. Indeed, the evil instinct is a “lion of fire” which can destroy or purify, depending upon how this natural force is utilized.

It may very well be that what Maimonides understood about the generation which left Egypt may turn out to be an eternal law of human nature: Our passions are not to be destroyed but are to be directed, are not to be consumed but are to be consecrated.

Shabbat Shalom

In common years, Parshas Tzav falls on Shabbos Hagadol, and the piyutim (and perhaps the drosha) of the day teach about kashering for Pesach. Although this year is a leap year and Shabbos Hagadol is a month from now...

The Confused Image of Glass **By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff**

Question #1: Tevilas keilim

Why is glass the only material other than metal for which Chazal required immersion?

Question #2: Non-Kosher

May I use a non-kosher drinking glass for a hot cup of tea?

Question #3: Chicken soup and milk

After serving chicken soup in a glass, may I pour hot milk into the same glass?

Question #4: Kashering for Pesach

How do I kasher my chometz-dik glasses for Pesach?

Introduction

Moshe Rabbeinu hid the Egyptian that he killed in the sand; for this reason, striking the earth to bring the makeh of kinnim needed to be performed by Aharon (Rashi, Shemos 8:12). Since the world has huge deposits of sand, mankind attempted to use it for useful items, eventually discovering that, by heating sand to a very high temperature, it can be made into glassware, which is the topic of this article.

There is no mention of glassware in the Torah, although there is one reference to glassware in Tanach, in the book of Iyov (28:17). Iyov declares, regarding wisdom, *lo ya'archena zahav uzechuchis*, "Gold and glass do not equal it," meaning that the value of gold or glass comes nowhere near that of wisdom. From this passage we see that, at the time of Tanach, glass was considered an extremely expensive material. As we will see shortly, that glass became less costly with time has halachic ramifications.

Before discussing the halachos of glass, let us note some of its unique chemical and physical properties that affect its halachic status.

Recyclable

Glassware has many uses and can be very beautiful, but at the same time it is fragile and breakable. However, as opposed to pottery, which, when broken, is irreparable and virtually useless, broken glassware can be easily recycled. Glass can be melted down and reused over and over. In this respect, glass shares an important characteristic with metals, which are also recyclable by being melted down. For this reason, Chazal sometimes gave glassware the halachos of metals. For example, germane to the mitzvah of tevilas keilim, the Gemara rules that glass vessels must be *toiveled* before use, as indicated in the Gemara (Avodah Zarah 75b): Rav Ashi said, "Glass utensils, since when broken they can be repaired, are like metal utensils."

Rav Ashi lived at the very end of the period of the Gemara. A much earlier statement of Chazal, in Avos deRabbi Nosson (Chapter 41), provides the following terse statement:

"Three things were said regarding glassware:

- (1) It does not absorb; it does not impart.
- (2) It shows whatever is inside.

(3) If you place it in a hot place, it becomes hot. If you place it in a cold place, it becomes cold."

Avos deRabbi Nosson is not intended to be a scientific work, nor is it a handbook for manufacturers. It is similar to Pirkei Avos, although it contains much more aggadic material, and so it would probably be best classified as an early midrash, similar to Midrash Tanchuma or Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer, or to the much later midrashic collections like Midrash Rabbah or Yalkut Shimoni. So, why is it concerned with categorizing the qualities of glassware?

The answer to this question is that, although Avos deRabbi Nosson is not usually treated as a halachic midrash, in this instance, that is exactly what it is -- providing halachic categorization with which to define the unique qualities of glass. By so doing, it provides a background with which to explain the halachos of glassware.

Does not absorb

Laboratory experiments use glass equipment because it does not absorb, nor does it impart or leach into what is heated or stored inside it. Therefore, it should not affect whatever chemical reaction or research for which it is being used. We will soon discuss the kashrus ramifications of this quality of glass, about which the Avos deRabbi Nosson was presumably concerned.

May be clear or opaque

We are accustomed to most glass being clear, but this is really a function of what other chemicals are in the sand from which the glass is made when it is fired. Even glass that is colored is usually transparent, which is one of the common qualities of glass and is highly uncommon in other materials.

This observation about glassware has much halachic ramification, although this distinction does not affect any "kitchen kashrus" issues. It does, however, have ramifications for the laws of tumah and taharah, which we will not discuss in this article because of space considerations.

It is a conductor

The third statement of the Avos deRabbi Nosson is that if you place glass in a hot place, it becomes hot, and if you place it in a cold place, it becomes cold. In other words, glass is a conductor and not a good insulator. The best insulator used today in the kitchen and in carryout shops is Styrofoam. But on the relative scale of things, glass is closer to metal in its ability to conduct heat.

Having used the Avos deRabbi Nosson as a means of explaining the unique properties of glass, we can now discuss the halachic questions that I raised at the beginning of our article.

Tevilas keilim

Our first question was: Why is glass the only material other than metal for which Chazal required immersion?

Allow me to explain. The laws of tumah and taharah germane to tools, equipment and vessels include many different types of materials. Items manufactured from

metal, wood, cloth, horn, glass, and plants are all susceptible to tumah, as is food, pottery and boneware. Nonetheless, germane to the mitzvah of immersing utensils prior to food use, the requirement min haTorah applies only to metal utensils, and not to utensils, pots or pans made of pottery, wood, cloth, bone, horn or any other materials. Therefore, there is no requirement to toivel a wooden spoon, a ceramic dish, cheesecloth used for food (after all, it is called cheesecloth, and not laundry cloth, for a good reason), or flatware chiseled out of horn or bone. However, why is there a requirement to toivel glass bowls and cups?

Based on the Gemara that we quoted above, we can answer this question: Broken glass utensils can be recycled for new manufacture, just as you can recycle broken metal utensils. Since glass shares this quality with metal, Chazal instituted that glass be treated like metalware, germane to the mitzvah of toiveling food-preparatory vessels prior to using them.

Glass and kashrus

At this point, I am going to combine the next three of our opening questions into one discussion:

May I use a non-kosher drinking glass for a hot cup of tea? After serving chicken soup in a glass, may I pour hot milk into the same glass?

How do I kasher my chometz-dik glasses for Pesach?

There is a tremendous diversity of opinion among the rishonim concerning the kashrus status of glassware. Do we assume, halachically, as does the chemist, that glass never imparts anything that it absorbs? If this is true, it should never require kashering and it may be used interchangeably from treif to kosher, from milchig to fleishig, and from chometz to Pesach without any kashering procedure at all. On the other hand, we have no Talmudic source that expressly permits using any utensil in any of these ways without a kashering procedure in between.

The different opinions that we find among the rishonim on this issue can be categorized loosely as three basic approaches:

1. No need to kasher

Several authorities contend that the nature of glass is that it does not absorb or impart any taste and that, therefore, it does not require any kashering at all (Rabbeinu Tam, quoted by Tosafos, Avodah Zarah 33b s.v. Kunya and Kesubos 107b s.v. Hani, and Rosh, Pesachim 2:8; Rashba, both in Shu"t Harashba 1:233 and in Toras Habayis 5:6; Ran, Pesachim 9a [in the Rif's pages]; Ravyah, quoted by Mordechai, Pesachim #574). Many of these authorities quote the above mentioned Avos deRabbi Nosson as a proof for this ruling.

2. Does not help to kasher

Halacha treats glassware like pottery. Once pottery was used to cook chometz or non-kosher food, the flavor absorbed into its walls can never be fully removed. Rather

than becoming completely extracted when one attempts to kasher pottery, some of the absorbed taste remains and leaches out afterwards with each use, potentially spreading prohibited flavor into all subsequent cooking (Tosafos, Chullin 8a s.v. Shelivna). In other words, once pottery becomes treif, it may be impossible to make kosher again. (There are some circumstances in which it can be kashered, but these unusual situations are beyond the scope of this article.)

Some early authorities contend that, since glassware is made from sand, it should be treated like sand, or, more accurately, like pottery and cannot be kashered (Mordechai, Pesachim #574, and Avodah Zarah #826; Terumas Hadeshen 1:132, 2:151). Most of these authorities quote the source for this approach as Rabbeinu Yechiel of Paris, one of the baalei Tosafos.

3. Glass is like metal

Some rishonim rule that just as Chazal gave glassware the same halachic status as metal regarding the mitzvah of tevilas keilim, it has the same halacha regarding the laws of kashrus (Bedeck Habayis of the Re'ah, 5:6; Shibbolei Haleket #207).

However, once we rule that glassware is like metal, in practice, it might become stricter than metal. This is because of a rule that, when a particular method of kashering may break an appliance, Chazal prohibited using that method, out of concern that someone will be afraid to kasher it properly (Pesachim 30b). Thus, although metal can be kashered by boiling the appliance (hag'alah), it may not be allowed to kasher glassware this way, because the owner may be afraid that it will crack (Mor Uketzi'ah end of 451). On the other hand, other authorities permit kashering glassware by hag'alah for Pesach and are not concerned that someone might be afraid to kasher it properly (Shu"t Maharsham 1:53 at end).

A major halachic ramification results from the above. Glassware that is meant to be used in the oven, such as Pyrex, should, therefore, be kasherable for Pesach, since presumably the owner will not be afraid to kasher it properly. Although this is not common custom, there are prominent halachic authorities who permit this (She'arim Hametzuyanim Bahalacha 116:11).

Difference between treif and Pesach

There is a dispute among rishonim whether glass that was used for hot chometz may be used for Pesach. Some authorities are more stringent regarding using chometz-dik glassware for Pesach than using it interchangeably between milchig and fleishig. For example, the Hagahos Semaq, a late baal Tosafos, writes: "Universal custom is not to use for Pesach any used pottery vessels (even those coated with metal or glass). Rabbeinu Yechiel prohibited using even used drinking glasses, since the Gemara compares glass to pottery, and sometimes people place bread into drinking glasses, in which instance they absorb the way pottery does." The way this statement is quoted, it implies that

Rabbeinu Yechiel did not permit any form of glassware kashering for Pesach (Hagahos Semaq 222:5).

Similarly, the Issur Vaheter (58:50), an early Ashkenazic posek, quotes the Semaq as ruling that it is prohibited to kasher glass for Pesach and it should be treated lechumra as questionable whether it is considered metal or pottery.

How do we rule?

Among earlier halachic authorities, it appears that there was a big difference between Sefardic and Ashkenazic practice regarding the use of glassware. The Beis Yosef cites most of the halachic sources we quoted above, and concludes, both in Beis Yosef and in Shulchan Aruch, that glassware does not absorb and therefore may be used for Pesach without any kashering procedure at all (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 451:26). Following his approach, it would appear that someone could purchase or rent used glass equipment from a treif source, without any need to kasher it.

On the other hand, early Ashkenazic custom appears to have been closer to the approach of Rabbeinu Yechiel cited above. For example, the Rema rules that chometz-dik glassware should not be used for Pesach and that it is not kasherable for Pesach use, even when it was used only for serving cold beverages and not used ever to store them.

Although most Ashkenazic authorities subsequent to the Rema follow his approach, some rule that Ashkenazim could follow the Sefardic practice and use glassware for Pesach without kashering it first (Mor Uketzi'ah, end of 451).

Other authorities raise a different question regarding the Rema's ruling that glassware may not be used for Pesach. The Rema prohibits using glassware for cold drinks on Pesach, even when the glass is used only for cold beverages the entire year. The reason the Rema is stringent is because of concern that chometz may have fallen into the glass and became kavush, which means that chometz flavor absorbed into the glass.

The difficulty with this ruling is that the Rema himself rules that a vessel, even made of pottery, that stored chometz for a lengthy period of time may be used on Pesach, even when this long-term storage would create kavush (Orach Chayim 451:21; see Mishnah Berurah 451:122). How could the Rema treat glassware more stringently than pottery? The only reason to be stringent regarding glassware is according to the minority opinion that treats glassware as pottery!

This question is raised by the commentary Beis Meir (Orach Chayim 451:26), who answers that the Ashkenazic minhag to be stringent not to kasher glass was only regarding drinking glasses, since buying new ones for Pesach is not a major expense. However, the Rema ruled leniently regarding large storage vessels that are expensive, even when they are made from pottery, and certainly when they were manufactured from glass. In other words, even the Rema holds that glassware is inherently kasherable;

there is only a custom not to kasher drinking glasses for Pesach since this does not incur a great expense.

There are several ramifications of the Beis Meir's ruling:

An individual who cannot afford to purchase glassware for Pesach may use his regular, chometz-dik glassware. In this situation, he should kasher his drinking glasses. This approach is followed by the Chayei Odom and the Mishnah Berurah (451:156) who rule that, in a place where glassware is relatively unavailable, glass items should be cleaned well and then kashered for Pesach, by a method called miluy ve'iruy. In this kashering method, glasses are submerged completely in a basin or tub full of cold water for at least 24 hours, the water is changed and glasses are submerged again for at least another 24 hours, and then a third time for at least another 24 hours.

The Mishnah Berurah rules that, if someone does not ordinarily use his glassware for hot chometz or to store chometz, and they used their glasses for Pesach without any kashering at all, the food or beverage placed in them remains kosher for Pesach. More so, in a case of major loss, the Mishnah Berurah permits Pesach-dik food, even when it was placed hot into glassware that was previously used for hot chometz. He permits this only if the glassware was not used for chometz within the previous 24 hours. There are other authorities who are even more lenient (Taz; Pri Chodosh; cf. Shaar Hatziyun 451:196).

According to the Beis Meir's conclusion, it is permitted to drink a kosher beverage, even a hot tea or coffee, in a "non-kosher" drinking glass. This opinion is mentioned by many halachic authorities (Keneses Hagedolah, Yoreh Deah 121:25 in Hagahos Tur 25; Darkei Teshuvah 121:2; Aruch Hashulchan, Yoreh Deah 121:2). Thus, if you are in a non-kosher house or hotel, the hot tea or coffee you are served in a glass is still kosher. And, if we refer to one of our opening questions: "After serving chicken soup in a glass, may I pour hot milk into the same glass?" -- the answer, according to these authorities, is that one may. I suggest that, prior to putting this into practice, our readers should ask this question from their own rav or posek.

Conclusion

The Chiddushei Harim notes that pottery vessels become tamei only from their inside and not when something touches their outside. He explains that this is because a pottery vessel, itself, is considered without inherent value – its value is determined by what it contains, whereas vessels made from other materials have inherent value. On this basis, the Sfas Emes, the grandson and successor of the Chiddushei Harim, notes that man's value is also determined by what he contains on the inside, not on his outer projected image.

Rabbi YY Jacobson

[NEW] March 28, 2024

Good Morning Soul

The Only Job Where You Start at the Top Is Digging a Hole

And then the fight started ...

"My wife sat down on the couch next to me as I was flipping channels. She asked, 'What's on TV?'

I said, 'Dust.'

"And then the fight started...

"When I got home last night, my wife demanded that I take her someplace expensive... so, I took her to a gas station.

"And then the fight started...

"My wife and I were sitting at a table at my high school reunion, and I kept staring at a drunken lady swigging her drink as she sat alone at a nearby table.

"My wife asked, 'Do you know her?' 'Yes,' I sighed, 'She's an old friend. I understand she took to drinking right after we split up many years ago, and I hear she hasn't been sober since.'

"My God!' says my wife, 'who would think a person could go on celebrating that long?'

"And then the fight started..."

The Fire

"The fire on the altar shall remain aflame on it, it shall not be extinguished; and the Priest shall kindle wood upon it morning after morning... A constant fire shall burn upon the Altar; it shall never go out." (Leviticus 6:5-6).

With these words the Torah describes, in this week's Torah portion (Tzav), the instruction to continuously maintain a flame on the altar which stood in the Tabernacle (a mobile sanctuary the Jewish people built in the desert to house the divine presence), and then later in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. For this purpose, the priest was required to place new firewood on the altar each morning, in order to feed a flame which must never go out.

As the Torah commentators and the Jewish mystics acutely grasped, each mitzvah (commandment) in the Torah contained, in addition to its concrete and simple meaning, many symbolisms relating to the inner psyche of the human being. This mitzvah is no exception, and it captures a simple but profound truth about our daily patterns.

"A constant fire shall burn upon the altar" – the altar, in the writings of Jewish mysticism, is symbolic of the human heart, the space in each of us most capable of sacrifice. The heart however needs a continuous fire burning in it. For the human heart to live deeply, for it to feel empathy and experience the depth of love, it needs to be on fire, passionate, aflame.

But how? There are times when our hearts and souls are inspired and aflame; but often we feel numb and apathetic. Sometimes we get cynical and detached (as in the above anecdotes.) How do we maintain the flame and the inspiration in our own inner altar?

There is only one way: "The Priest shall kindle wood upon it morning after morning." Each and every morning we must place "wood" on our altar, in order to feed its

potential flame. Fire cannot exist in a vacuum; the fire in our heart and soul, too, requires "wood" to sustain it.

What is the "wood" that is capable of feeding the soul's flames each morning? Study, prayer and charity. They are the morning encounters with the living G-d that allow the fire of the soul to hold on to something and take root into the human psyche.

A delicious piece of cheesecake, reading and answering your e-mails, listening to the news – they don't do the trick of turning on your soul, your inner depth. They lack the properties to bring out the flame of the soul. In the morning, before you do anything else, you need to engage in a labor that will let the flame of your soul emerge. Good Morning Soul must precede Good Morning America. Then you're set for the day, because as Goethe said, a man sees in the world what he carries in his heart. If your heart is aflame, your world that day will be on fire.

And you must place the wood on your altar each morning, no exceptions. Consistency is the key to a meaningful and inspiring day. There are no shortcuts to inspiration; everything comes with a price. The only job where you start at the top is digging a hole. But life is about climbing mountains, not digging holes. And in climbing mountains you must begin on the bottom.

Perceptions

By Rabbi Pinchas Winston

Parshas Tzav

Parah-Point Presentation

Friday Night

THIS SHABBOS IS also Parashas Parah. As we learn in Parashas Naso, a person who has become defiled by contact with the dead (no, not through a séance) is ineligible to eat from the Korban Pesach. By being sprinkled with the water of the Parah Adumah (Red Heifer) was the process a person underwent to become ritually pure again. Hence, we recall that halachah in advance of Pesach. The Parah Adumah is the quintessential chok—statute. This means there is something about the mitzvah that defies human logic, but apparently not why a red heifer is the animal of choice, as Rashi explains:

A red cow: This can be compared to the son of a maidservant who dirtied the king's palace. They said, "Let his mother come and clean up the mess." Similarly, let the cow come and atone for the calf. (Rashi, Bamidbar 19:22)

Thus, the red heifer is the Divine response to the golden calf. Had they not built and worshipped the calf, the Jewish people would have remained immortal. The calf caused death and the impurity that results, so its "mother" has to clean up the "mess."

It's a nice explanation. It's also problematic. It sounds as if the mitzvah of Parah Adumah would not have existed had the Jewish people not sinned with the golden calf. But that is not the case since every mitzvah is eternal by definition,

which means there always had to be such a mitzvah. How does this work with Rashi's explanation?

The Leshem, when talking about the eternity of mitzvos, deals with a similar question. According to the Gemora, mitzvos will be battel—nullified—in Yemos HaMoshiach, the Messianic Era (Shabbos 151b). But how can eternal mitzvos ever not exist?

What the Gemora means, the Leshem explains, is not that the act of a mitzvah will no longer be performed. Rather, a mitzvah won't seem then like a mitzvah seems now, like a yoke and an obligation. With the yetzer hara gone completely (Succah 52a), a mitzvah will become second nature (Drushei Olam HaTohu, Chelek 2, Drush 4, Anaf 12, Siman 12).

The yetzer hara is basically bodily instinct, and mitzvos tend to go against it. This is how mitzvos help to spiritually refine a person. It's the Torah's way of taking a person's life's steering wheel out of the hands of the body and giving it to the soul, so they can become a Tzelem Elokim and live in the "image of God."

But the opportunity to achieve such refinement through our free will choices will end with the death of the yetzer hara and bodily instinct. At least the kind of instinct that tends to make personal comfort a priority over spiritual growth.

Shabbos Day

RASHI ALLUDES TO this same idea at the beginning of this week's parsha, on the verse:

Command—Tzav—Aharon and his sons, saying, "This is the law of the burnt offering..." (Vayikra 6:2)

Rashi comments:

The Torah especially needs to urge [people to fulfill mitzvos] where monetary loss is involved. (Rashi)

The fact that money is involved in a mitzvah instigates the yetzer hara of a person. The yetzer hara will spend all kinds of money on things that give the body instant gratification. But why spend money on a mitzvah, for which the reward won't follow until the World to Come? Not an easy sell to the yetzer hara.

That creates bodily resistance. It can be subtle, so subtle that even the person themselves doesn't realize they are being affected and held back. But on some level, a little less of the person is used for the mitzvah than is ideal.

Even for someone like Moshe Rabbeinu. There is a Shalshelas cantillation note above the word for, "and he slaughtered it" (Vayikra 8:23) towards the end of this week's parsha. In the three other places it occurs in the Torah, it hints to some kind of hesitation in the heart, something not recognized on the outside of the person.

Like Lot not wanting to leave Sdom with the angel despite its impending destruction.

Like Yosef not wanting to run from the wife of Potiphar despite the sin involved.

But what reason did Moshe have at the inauguration of Aharon and his sons into the Temple service, to hesitate?

Because he had known, ever since Parashas Tetzaveh, that great people were destined to die on that day to sanctify the Name of God. He had assumed, until next week's parsha, that that was supposed to have been himself and Aharon. Could that not have easily been somewhat of a distraction during the mitzvah, a subtle one that we could only know about because of the Shalshelas?

As the Leshem explains, we learn Torah and perform mitzvos primarily to spiritually refine our bodies while rectifying our souls. This means training the body to stop resisting both, like teaching a child to grow up and do the more responsible thing for their own good and development. That takes will, lots of will.

But it won't any longer the moment God dispenses with the Sitra Achra and yetzer hara in Yemos HaMoshiach. Then the body will be happy to do any mitzvah. It will no longer have to be commanded.

Seudas Shlishis

THIS RAISES A question: If the Parah Adumah was always meant to be a mitzvah, was the golden calf destined to occur? This could suggest, yes:

Go and see how The Holy One, Blessed is He, when He created the world created the Angel of Death on the first day as well...Man was created on the sixth day, and yet death was blamed on him. What is this like? A man who decides that he wants to divorce his wife and writes her a document of divorce. He then goes home with it and looks for a pretext to give it to her.

"Prepare me a drink," he tells her.

She does, and taking it from her he says, "Here is your divorce."

She asks him, "Why?"

He tells her, "Leave my house! You made me a warm drink!" to which she replies, "Were you able to know that I would prepare you a warm drink in advance that you wrote a divorce document and came home with it?"

Similarly, Adam told The Holy One, Blessed is He, "Master of the Universe, the Torah was with You for 2,000 years before You created the world...yet it says, 'This is the law when a man will die in a tent' (Bamidbar 19:14). If You had not planned death for Your creations, would You have written this? Rather, You just want to blame death on me!" (Tanchuma, Vayaishev 4)

In other words, the Midrash says, as much as Adam HaRishon seemed to have the choice to avoid sin and death, he didn't. He was destined to eat from the Aitz HaDa'as and to bring death into the world.

Not only this, but the Midrash continues:

It was similar concerning [the sale of] Yosef...Rav Yudan said, "The Holy One, Blessed is He, wanted to carry out the decree of, 'Know that you shall surely be (strangers)' (Bereishis 15:13), and set it up that Ya'akov would love Yosef [more] so the brothers would hate him and sell him to Arabs, and they would all [eventually] go down to Egypt..." (Tanchuma, Vayaishev 4)

On one hand, this information is a relief. It takes away the need to find a good explanation for, how such great people could commit such not-so-great acts. On the other hand, it is disturbing because it implies that we can be railroaded by Divine Providence down the wrong path...against our will.

One could argue that perhaps this idea only applies to specific events with great impact on Jewish history. Or, perhaps it is a deeper insight into free will itself, and how we're meant to use it.

Melave Malkah

ONE THING IS for certain, we have free will. God told us so, and tradition teaches that we will be judged for our choices. You can question what free will is, or wonder if we have any. But when it comes to life, it would be wise to assume you have it and use it responsibly.

Something else we can be certain about is that though we have free will, we do not have absolute free will. Many choices are made for us by life itself, imposed upon us since so many things are out of our control. But then again, does that take away anything from the choice I made, as long as I believed at the time my choice could make a difference?

Let's face it, history is not random. God made it with a specific purpose in mind, and with a master plan to be fulfilled. He knows the future and doesn't make mistakes, so whatever He had in mind was as good as done once He started to think about it. This is true right down to every person who will ever exist and every decision they will ever make.

At the end of the day, though a person makes all kinds of plans, there is a good chance that they will not turn out as anticipated. We don't know the future, which allows us to live with the perception that our decisions can make a difference and direct the course of history. It's all we need to be able to make choices for which we will be held accountable.

This does not completely solve the mystery of free will, but who says we can at this time, or that we should? The Parah Adumah is a mitzvah with a message, and it reads: Some things you can understand while others you cannot. Understand what you can, but don't get bogged down and distracted by what you can't. Recognize the free will opportunity of every moment, and utilize it meaningfully. It will save you in this world and reward you in the next one.

For essays on the current situation, go to www.shaarnunproductions.org.

Good Shabbos,
Pinchas Winston

Drasha

By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Parshas Tzav

Bloodsport

Blood. At worst, it invokes ghastly images of death and war. At best, it represents life-saving transfusions. On any scale it is not appetizing. It is for that reason that it is difficult to comprehend the repeated warnings and admonitions that the Torah makes concerning the consumption of blood. Beginning this week, there are three warnings in the Torah concerning the prohibition of consuming blood. There is a specific verse that tells parents to admonish their children and discourage any thought they may have of eating or drinking blood.

Leviticus 22:26-27: You shall not consume blood... from fowl or animal. Any soul that consumes blood will be cut off from his people.

Leviticus 17:10-12: Any man of the House of Israel and of the proselyte who dwells among them, consume any blood — I shall concentrate My attention upon the soul consuming blood, and I will cut it off from its people.

Deuteronomy: 12:23: Only be strong as not to eat blood...

Rashi quotes the words of Rav Shimon Ben Azai: "if blood, which is so repulsive, needs such dire warnings surely one must take great precaution not to succumb to sins that are appealing." Rabbi Yehudah explains the repetitive admonitions in the context of history. During that era, many nations would actually indulge in blood-drinking ceremonies. Thus the Torah exhorts the Jewish nation on that matter. In any case, it is quite apparent that both Rabbi Shimon and Rabbi Yehudah were bothered by repeated warnings, which should be unnecessary. It is difficult to comprehend why the Torah spends more energy warning, admonishing, and exhorting the Jews against blood-consumption than against most other prohibitions that are much more alluring.

Also, why is this one of only two prohibitions that our sages interpreted an extra verse, as "a warning for parents to admonish their children." Why does this prohibition surpass the norm of parental supervision that is required by any other Mitzvah?

An old Jewish story has a devoutly religious woman running into a Chasidic Rebbe as she was crying uncontrollably.

"Rebbe," she cried, "it's my son. He went absolutely meshuga. He started acting totally insane. Even you won't be able to help him. He needs a psychiatrist!"

"What's the matter?" Asked the Rebbe.

"The matter?" She cried. "He's crazy! He's acting like a gentile! He dances with gentile women and began dining on pig!"

The Rebbe looked to the poor woman as he tried to put her problems in perspective.

"If he would dance with pigs and dine on women, I would say that he is crazy. But the way you describe him he is not crazy at all. I'd just say that he is becoming a very lascivious young man. And I can deal with that."

On a homiletic note, perhaps, we can explain the Torah's passionate admonitions about blood. The Torah understood the test of time. Acts that are considered vile and obscene by today's standard may be accepted as the norm tomorrow. Societies change and attitudes change with them. The ten greatest problems of the 1950's public school class may be considered decent, if not meritorious, behavior today. The Torah understood that society changes. Therefore it admonishes us on the lowest form of behavior with the same intensity as if it would be the normal custom. And it tells us to pass these specific admonitions to our children. We can not dismiss the warnings by thinking, "drinking blood is bizarre behavior. Why should my children need to worry about it?" The Torah says, even if something may be base and bizarre to our generation, if it's Torah it must be told to our children. It is impossible to know what the next generation will consider repulsive and what it may consider fashionable. Today's revulsion may be tomorrow's bloodsport. Times change and people change, but Torah remains eternal.

Good Shabbos!

<https://jewishlink.news/how-now-red-cow/>

How Now, Red Cow?

By Rabbi Stewart Weiss

March 28, 2024

The section of the Torah we read as Maftir this Shabbat—Parshat Parah—has baffled scholars and commentators for all of our history. Taken from the parsha of Chukat, it is known as the chok par excellence, the most perplexing of all the seemingly unknowable statutes of the Torah. Said Shlomo HaMelech: "Amarti achkimah, v'hi rechokah mimeni," "I thought I could become wise, but it is beyond me" (Kohelet 7:23).

The ashes of the red heifer, when blended with various other ingredients, created a compound that somehow managed to spiritually purify those who had been defiled after coming into contact with a dead body. Yet, at the very same time that the person was purified, the Kohen who administered the compound was himself rendered tamei!

How can this be? How can the very same item have the exact opposite effect on two different people? It seems logically absurd!

To me, this is not the most challenging part of the puzzle. I find it even more mysterious that the ashes of a dead thing can bring one back from the dead; i.e. remove the stain of death from one who had touched death. Now, I can understand how some acts—such as immersion in a mikvah—can serve to alter, or negate, the imprimatur of death, for in that instance it is life (in the form of water, which is a primary source of all life) which dispels death. But how can death cancel death?! This is indeed mystifying.

While I certainly do not claim to be smarter than Shlomo HaMelech, I do have a thought on the matter.

In the circle of life, there is a very close proximity of death to life. For example, a leaf dies when it falls off a tree, but when it flutters to the ground it enriches the soil, which will then give life to new plants. A woman giving birth to a child will cause her reproductive system to (temporarily) go sterile, but she will then recover, regenerate and be capable of bearing other children. A person dies, but at the moment of death, he or she enters into life eternal; and so a cemetery is referred to in Jewish tradition as a *beit chaim*, a house of (eternal) life.

On a national level, our greatest moments of life are connected to the bitterest pangs of death. So it was when we reached the lowest level of degradation in Egypt, only to be followed swiftly by our redemption. And so it was 70 years ago, when from the ashes of the Shoah there arose the rebirth of our great nation Israel. It is as if Hashem cannot bear for us to remain *tamei* for long; we must always return to vibrant, dynamic, active life.

That is why I believe that all the trauma, all the pain, all the terrible loss that we have suffered in the war against Hamas will ultimately lead to a stronger, more secure Israel and, by extension, a safer world. Why we have to endure so many tears and so much anguish is an enigma as puzzling to us as, well, as that of the *Para Aduma*. But I believe wholeheartedly that when we emerge—*im yirtze Hashem* may it be soon—we shall toast *l'chayim*—to life!

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<https://jewishlink.news/hamotzi-and-birkat-hamazon-on-mezonot-foods/>

Motzi and Birkat Hamazon on Mezonot Foods

By Rabbi Daniel Mann Eretz Hemdah March 28, 2024

לעילוי נשמת יואל אפרים בן אברהם עוזיאל זלצמן ז"ל

Question: I understand that if one eats a sufficient amount of food whose bracha is Mezonot, he recites Hamotzi and Birkat Hamazon on it. Do bread and Mezonot combine to comprise the required amount when each separately lacks a shiur? How about different types of Mezonot, e.g., cake and oatmeal?

Answer: The Gemara (Brachot 42a) says that for "pat habaah bekisnin—food that shares qualities with bread but is not normal bread," whether one recites Hamotzi or Mezonot on it depends on whether one is *koveia seuda* (sets a meal) on it. When "pat habaah bekisnin" gets Hamotzi, one also recites Birkat Hamazon on it (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 168:6) and washes on it (*ibid.* 158:1).

To be a candidate for bread status, food must be made from “the five grains” and be baked or look like bread. (Spaghetti is not “pat habaah bekisnin” or treated like bread no matter how much of it one eats—see *ibid.* 168:10). Various characteristics determine whether foods that pass these tests are bread or “pat habaah bekisnin” (*ibid.* 7).

A kezayit of bread suffices to require Birkat Hamazon, (*ibid.* 9), but if one eats less, “pat habaah bekisnin” cannot take it over that threshold, because objects with different shiurim do not join together to reach the shiur (see Shabbat 76a). However, if one was slightly short of the shiur needed for “pat habaah bekisnin,” the bread—with its smaller shiur—can complete the bigger shiur needed for “pat habaah bekisnin,” (*ibid.*). Different types of bread combine for a kezayit and types of “pat habaah bekisnin,” combine for keviat seuda. (Arguably, elevating “pat habaah bekisnin,” to bread status must focus on one food, but I have not found sufficient basis for this in the sources.)

The Magen Avraham went much further in combining things, claiming that it is enough that the meal with “pat habaah bekisnin” is a real meal. He writes: “If he set his meal on ‘pat habaah bekisnin,’ even though he ate with it meat and other things and if he had eaten (that amount he had of) it by itself he would not have been satiated from it, he still recites Hamotzi and Birkat Hamazon.” His approach emanates from the Gemara (*ibid.*) and Rishonim who describe eating of these semi-breads as that which is done at a normal meal. After all, a normal meal includes foods other than bread. So while no amount of cooked or fried grain-based food could get Hamotzi, oatmeal that you mentioned and many other things one has as part of a meal with, say, a boreka, can—according to the Magen Avraham—change the boreka’s bracha to Hamotzi.

I must warn you, though, that it is very difficult to apply the matter of being koveia seuda on “pat habaah bekisnin.” First, there is a machloket whether the amount of keviat seuda to eat depends on the individual’s satiation or how much most people eat (see opinions in Rosh, Brachot 6:30). Another regarded approach sets the amount at the size (weight/volume?) of three or four eggs. This is a cutoff point regarding certain halachot of serious eating, even though it does not satiate most people (see Mishna Berura 168:24).

There is also a machloket whether we accept the Magen Avraham to include other foods eaten at the meal to reach keviat seuda—the Mishna Berura (*ibid.*) accepts him; the Birkei Yosef (Orach Chayim 168:6) and Aruch Hashulchan (Orach Chayim 168:17) disagree. There are also several permutations and opinions about how broadly to apply the Magen Avraham. Is it only for foods that are eaten with the mezonot, e.g., crackers and cheese, a sandwich on a “mezonot roll” (see discussions in *VeZot Habracha* 4:3; *Netivot Habracha* 57)? Is it only when the mezonot and other foods are eaten at the same time (Shemirat Shabbat Kehilchata 54:132), in the name of Rav Auerbach? Rav

Moshe Feinstein (Igrot Moshe, Orach Chayim II, 32) has an expansive approach. While the Magen Avraham assumes the “pat habaah bekisnin,” must play a major part of the meal, Rav Moshe reasons that today’s trend to eat less bread at meals than was once standard lowers the amount of “pat habaah bekisnin,” needed as well.

Many poskim assume there is a difference between lechatchila and bedieved, i.e., avoid meals with significant “pat habaah bekisnin,” and no bread due to the huge gray area. Nevertheless, common practice is to eat non-bread meals without Hamotzi/Birkat Hamazon (see *Avnei Yashfeh* II, Orach Chayim 20; *Teshuvot Vehanhagot* I:182).

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Rabbi Yissocher Frand

Parshas Tzav

On All Other Nights We Eat Chametz and Matzah

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand’s Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: #1331 Should Women Bentch HaGomel? Good Shabbos!

The following is both a beautiful comment on Parshas Tzav and on the Hagaddah.

The first of the four Mah Nishtana questions is “...on all other nights we eat chametz or matzah, tonight only matzah”. Most of us have been saying this since we were five years old. Maybe when we were five, we did not pause to notice the following very glaring inference:

The traditional way to translate “she’bechol haleilos anu ochloim chametz u’matzah” is that on all other nights we can eat either Chametz or Matzah. In truth, that is not what the questions says. Literally, the question states that every night of the year, we eat chametz and matzah. Now in fact, rarely, at any given meal, do we eat both chametz and matzah together. So, it seems that it would have been more appropriate to phrase this question differently.

In fact, it is not necessary to go very far to come up with a more apt way of expressing this “either/or” dichotomy between chametz and matzah. The fourth question states “...on all other nights we are seated bein yoshvin u’bein mesubin (whether sitting or reclining) tonight we are all reclining.” If the author of the Hagaddah is smart enough to figure out how to contrast two alternative scenarios with the expression “bein yoshvin u’bein mesubin” why did he not utilize a similar formula and say “shebechol haleilos anu ochlim bein chametz u’bein matzah,” which would mean “either/or”?

The Binyon Ariel was the Rav in Amsterdam. He says that the first question is indeed precisely articulated as stated that “on all other occasions we eat chametz and matzah together”. How so?

The Binyon Ariel explains something unique about the Korban Todah (Thanksgiving Offering), which is in our parsha. The Korban Todah is a very unique offering. Not only do you bring an animal offering on the Mizbayach (Altar), but together with the Korban Todah, the person needs to bring “Lachmei Todah” (breads of the Thanksgiving Offering). Lachmei Todah are very peculiar because they include both leavened and unleavened loaves! The Binyon Ariel explains that the first question in the Hagaddah (based on the Mishna in Arvei Pesachim) is referring to the fact that normally when we bring a Korban Todah, we do so with chametz and with matzah together. This question is not referring to what we eat on Seder night in our time. This question is referring to the Korban Pesach, which is very similar to a Korban Todah. Unlike the normal Korban Shlamim which may be eaten for two days and one night, the Korban Todah is only eaten for one day and the following night (i.e. – it must be consumed by the following morning). A Korban Pesach is like that as well. Furthermore, just like a Korban Todah needs to be accompanied with bread, so too a Korban Pesach needs to be accompanied by bread (“It shall be eaten upon matzaoh and marror” (Shemos 12:8).

The author of the Hagaddah is asking why on this night are we bringing this unique kind of Thanksgiving Offering that is eaten only with unleavened bread and not also with leavened bread? This is how the Binyon Ariel interprets the first question of the Mah Nishtana.

Rabbi Buchspan from Miami Florida wanted to explain the symbolism of the fact that the regular Korban Todah includes both chametz and matzah and the Korban Pesach only includes matzah.

Rabbi Buchspan quotes an interesting insight from Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch in Sefer VaYikra on the parsha of Korban Todah. Rav Hirsch writes that matzah represents nature in its crudest form, before human involvement and innovation. What is matzah? Flour and water. It does not get more basic than that. There is very little human innovation. You put the flour in the water, you bake it, v'nomar amen.

On the other hand, chametz is an example of man's manipulation of the natural elements, where human ingenuity yields a far more advanced and sophisticated product than the original ingredients. When you take flour and water and you add yeast and other ingredients, then instead of getting a thin little matzah that sometimes tastes not much better than cardboard, you get a geshmake challah that is a symbol of human involvement and the human ability to make something so much superior to a basic nature-based product.

Rabbi Buchspan writes that when the four individuals who are required to offer a Korban Todah (those who travel across a desert, those who travel across the sea, the seriously ill who are healed, and those who are freed from imprisonment – Brochos 54b) bring their Thanksgiving Offering, they acknowledge that there were two elements that saved them. Number one, the Hand of G-d saved them, with minimal if any human involvement. That is symbolized by the matzah. But whenever a person is saved in any one of these situations, there is also human involvement. When a person is sick and he needs an operation, it is not the doctor or the surgeon that heals, it is the Ribono shel Olam that heals. But on the other hand, healing requires hishtadlus (human effort). You need to find the right doctor. You need to go to the doctor. You need to make decisions regarding your care and follow the recommended medical protocol. A person's healing certainly requires personal involvement as well as that of the Almighty. We are not Christian Scientists who claim “The Almighty made me sick. He will make me well.” We do great hishtadlus in seeking competent medical treatment, which is a very legitimate thing to do.

Likewise, if a person is crossing a desert or travelling on the high seas, he needs to make effort on his own to return to civilization. He cannot just rely on the Ribono shel Olam to miraculously pluck him from his dangerous situation. If a person is on a sinking ship, he needs to get into the life boat. He cannot say “If G-d wants to save me, He will save me miraculously.” So the four individuals who need to offer thanks must all offer a dual acknowledgement – an acknowledgement of the Yad Hashem, symbolized by the matzah (which is lacking in human involvement) and an acknowledgement of his own successful effort to return safely home or to regain his health, symbolized by the chometz (which requires human involvement).

However, the Korban Pesach is different. This is the miracle of the Ribono shel Olam acting on His Own. “You shall not leave the door of your house until morning” (Shemos 12:22). The Angel of Death was roaming the streets of Mitzrayim. What were the Jews supposed to do? They were commanded to do nothing, to act with total passivity. Everything will be taken care of by the Ribono shel Olam. That is why the Korban Pesach—which is a form of the Korban Todah, which normally involves human participation—was brought with only matzah, symbolizing the lack of human involvement in the deliverance from Mitzrayim.

Parshas Tzav

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig

This week's Insights is dedicated in loving memory of Avraham ben Yosef.

Installation Coronation

Take Aharon and his sons with him and the anointing oil [...] (8:2).

In this week's parsha, we find Hashem giving Moshe instructions for the official installation of Aharon and his sons as kohanim – the priestly class of Bnei Yisroel. Moshe then gathers all of Bnei Yisroel to watch as he follows a step-by-step process for initiating Aharon and his sons as the kohanim.

Aside from the steps that might be expected in the process of elevating their status – immersion in a mikveh, dressing them in priestly vestments, applying and sprinkling the special anointing oil to all the vessels in the Mishkan and to Aharon and his sons as well, etc. – we find a very unusual ritual.

Several sacrifices were offered: a bull was brought as a sin offering, a ram was brought as a burnt offering, and a second ram was brought as a peace offering (see 8:22 and Rashi ad loc). Moshe then applied the blood of the peace offering to Aharon's and his sons' right ear lobes, right thumbs, and right big toes.

This ritual is only performed in one other place in the Torah: by the purification of a person who has been struck by tzora'as – commonly (and incorrectly) translated as leprosy.

What is the meaning of this enigmatic ritual and what is the relationship between initiating the kohanim and cleansing one who has recovered from tzora'as?

Aharon and his sons were being elevated to a new status over the rest of the Jewish people. They were now receiving forevermore one of the three crowns that Hashem gifted to this world; they were receiving the crown of kehuna. Without proper perspective, being crowned can be a dangerous affair as it can easily lead one to harbor false notions of self-importance. A person can actually begin to believe that he is receiving this honor because there is something intrinsically great about himself.

The unique ritual of placing the blood on the ear lobe, thumb, and big toe is intended to address this issue. The unifying connection between all of these parts of the body is that the ears, fingers, and toes represent the person's extremities. When a person gets cold, the first parts that are affected are the extremities – namely the ears, fingers, and toes – because they are the furthest from the core of the body. Yet, when a person is asked to point to himself, he always points to his core. Thus, by emphasizing the extremities, this ritual demonstrates that the position is not about them personally, it's about what they can do for others.

The message they receive is that while being anointed a kohen is an honor, it is more significantly a great and awesome responsibility. The Talmud has a dispute about whether the kohanim are agents of the people to Hashem or agents of Hashem to the people, but everyone agrees that they are merely agents. In other words, they are facilitators

not principals. This is the message conveyed by placing the blood on the extremities.

This is also true of a person who has been struck by tzora'as. This punishment comes as a consequence of speaking loshon hora. The core motivating force of one who speaks loshon hora is the desire to elevate oneself by putting others down. While every sin contains an element of self-centered behavior, loshon hora is the sin of focusing on the perceived importance of oneself and trying to elevate the opinions of others regarding one's own self-importance. This is why a person needs a kohen to declare them unclean and the process of purification is the same as the kohen's initiation. The message they are supposed to receive and internalize is that they need to focus less on themselves and their own importance.

Neither Liberal Nor Conservative

And Aharon and his sons carried out all the matters that Hashem commanded through Moshe (8:36).

The very end of this week's parsha informs us that Aharon and his sons performed all procedures as they had been instructed by Moshe Rabbeinu. Rashi (ad loc) makes an unusual comment, "This is to tell their praise, that they veered neither to the right nor to the left." In other words, they did exactly as they were told by Moshe.

Rashi's illustration is a little odd. Typically, Rashi would merely say they did as they were told without altering anything. Why does Rashi take poetic license here and state that they veered neither to the right nor to the left? Furthermore, why is this a great "praise" that they actually followed the process that Moshe laid out for them? Wouldn't we expect as much?

The initiation process of the kohanim is discussed both in this week's parsha and in Parshas Tetzaveh. The commentators try, at length, to reconcile the discrepancies in the details as well as the seeming differences in intention of particular activities discussed in both of these parshios. Rashi in his final comment on this parsha seems to be addressing the overarching issue.

The Jewish people have both a written Torah and an oral Torah. Much, if not all, of the oral Torah was given to Moshe at Mount Sinai. In addition, we have another aspect of Torah known as Gemara. The Gemara is primarily Klal Yisroel's interpretation of Torah. That is, the discussions of succeeding generations and the application of those discussions to everyday law as interpreted by the greatest minds of each generation, is all part of Klal Yisroel's contribution to Torah.

This ability of the leaders of each generation to interpret and create binding laws as part of Torah is authorized by the verse "you shall come to the priests, the Levites, and to the judge who shall be in those days, and inquire; and they shall declare to you the law" (Devarim 17:9). Klal Yisroel are likewise enjoined to follow their leaders' interpretations of the law – "according to the judgment which they shall tell you, you shall do; you shall not decline from the ruling

which they shall declare to you, to the right nor to the left” (ad loc 17:11).

This is exactly what Rashi is alluding to here. In Parshas Tetzaveh, Hashem told them exactly what was to be done, while in this week’s parsha we are dealing with Moshe’s interpretation of Hashem’s commandments (see Rashi 8:5). In fact, there are some actions of the process that Moshe required them to do that Rashi points out that he is unaware of the source for those actions (see 8:11).

While Moshe is authorized to interpret what Hashem has commanded him to do, one might perhaps think it is acceptable to be more stringent or to maybe find a leniency because the rule wasn’t expressly outlined by Hashem. Aharon and his sons are thus praised for following Moshe’s instructions, not veering to the right nor to the left.

<https://jewishlink.news/shareholders-in-israel/>

Shareholders In Israel

By Rabbi Moshe Taragin

March 28, 2024

The guidelines surrounding the Mishkan, korbanot and rituals were repeated twice. The first round of instructions, in parshat Vayikra, was directed to the rank and file, while a parallel list in parshat Tzav, was commanded directly to the Kohanim. Even though the general population wasn’t directly involved in the Mishkan ceremonies they were still handed their own list of instructions. Hashem wanted every person to feel individual agency over the Mishkan experience, so that the Mishkan would not become an impersonal and heavy institution. Maintaining the dignity and sanctity of the Mishkan demands that only trained priests officiate in the daily ceremonies. If the Mishkan turns into a freeway with everyone independently ad-libbing, it loses its transcendence and gravitas. Restrictiveness is vital to the Mishkan, but it was still crucial that every Jew possessed agency and was personally invested in this house of Hashem, else it would become detached, bureaucratic and irrelevant.

Similarly, everyone was invited to the inauguration of the Mishkan. The induction of the Mishkan was launched with a seven-day vigil, known as the week of miluim, during which the Kohanim could not leave the precincts of the Mishkan. During this intense period, they practiced the various korbanot and rituals, so that they would become proficient once the Mishkan opened for business. Additionally, the seven-day vigil afforded the Kohanim time to mentally prepare for this solemn project. Though only Kohanim were directly involved in the seven-day vigil, the entire population was invited to attend its opening ceremonies.

From a purely logistical standpoint it was challenging to fit three million people into the Mishkan. Yet, despite the technical obstacles it was important to include everyone in

the miluim experience so that the average Jew, who wasn’t a priest, would not feel sidelined by the large and rigidified Mishkan. By inviting everyone to the gala inauguration, everyone was given agency, and all felt personally invested in the project. We became shareholders in the Mishkan, not spectators.

Agency in Israel

Traditionally, Israeli citizens have felt deep agency of their country. Israel was a new country, still in its embryonic stages and still forming its social, political and religious identity. Living through the early chapters of the modern state of Israel was deeply meaningful, as we were conscious about forging something new. Compulsory national service provided every Israeli with a seat at the table and an individual role in defending the country and in enriching daily life. National service provided us with a high engagement level in the affairs of our country. If Israelis were known to be vociferous and politically contentious it was because they possessed ownership and agency of their country. Sometimes too much ownership, but ownership nonetheless.

Shifting Away From Agency

As life in Israel shifted, our individual agency diminished. There was a pocket of about 30 years during which our country experienced spectacular and dizzying growth, as we transformed into a global economic powerhouse and a military superpower. Our fledgling little country had arrived on the grand international stage. We became fabulously successful, but the country felt less personal and more institutional. Our heimish little country transformed from a “little engine that could” into a colossal superpower. As Israel became large and seemingly self-powered, we started taking her for granted. We assumed that the country was stable enough and secure enough to run “on its own.” As we lost personal agency in day-to-day experience, life in Israel felt more humdrum and less meaningful.

Restoring Agency

October 7 reversed this trend. Having been plunged into an existential war, we were forced to take greater agency over the future of our state. The sound of our revitalized agency echoed in the exhausted voices of soldiers who battled in Aza for months, while separated from their families and professions. Declaring their firm intention to pursue this battle to its conclusion, they defiantly announced: “If we don’t protect our homes, who will?” The October 7 massacre stripped away any illusion that our country is self-powered, and that day reminded us that each Israeli citizen has a personal stake in Israel.

While national identification with government institutions runs low, patriotism and enthusiasm for our security forces runs high. This will dramatically affect the future political map of Israel, but, for now, is a reflection of how empowering personal agency can be. The government is an “institution,” while our security forces are every one of us.

During this war our entire country has served a modern “miluim” and it hasn’t been for only eight days. For five months, teachers, hi-tech executives, doctors, lawyers, shopkeepers, men and women have kept a sacred vigil, protecting our homeland from violence. And it hasn’t been merely a practice session for the real show. Everyone has served side by side defending our country, and tragically and too often fell in battle together. If we don’t defend our homeland, who will? If we don’t build this country, who will?

Despite the immense sadness and heart-breaking tragedy of the past five months, they were filled with meaning and soulfulness. It turns out that personal agency and becoming directly involved is not just a more effective policy, but is also more meaningful. For the past five months we have been tired and anxious, but have been filled with meaning and magnitude.

International Shareholders

The war has also provided agency to Jews who reside outside of Israel. They too, took the State of Israel for granted. As flights to Israel proliferated and hotels multiplied it became easier than ever to land in Israel for a few days, enjoy the people and the food, visit family and the Kotel and jet back to regular life. Fortunately, tourism became a booming industry, and traveling to Israel was no longer a pilgrimage.

Oer readers still remember the crowded and suffocating old airport at Ben Gurion. It wasn’t pleasant to arrive at, but the second you landed you immediately knew you were in Israel. The heat, the smell and the cramped lines left no doubt. When the modest terminal was, thank God, replaced by the current modern and shiny airport, landing in Israel

became similar to landing anywhere else. Once pilgrims, Jewish visitors to Israel now became tourists.

Restoring Agency Abroad

Over the past few years, it has become clear that Israel is no longer something which any Jew can take for granted. The shift in mentality began during the corona pandemic when, for a few months, the doors of our homeland were closed to non-Israeli citizens due to health concerns. The unexpected and new reality, that their homeland was no longer just a few hours away, was jolting for many. Of course, two years later, the savage attacks of October 7 further recast the relationship between non-Israeli Jews and the State of Israel by reminding everyone of just how fragile and sometimes dangerous life in Israel still is.

During the past five months, visits to Israel have been very different from the vacations of the past. Shopping and restaurants have been replaced by volunteerism and trips to charred remains of communities in the South. Jews traveling to Israel have, once again, become pilgrims rather than tourists. Tourism is a luxury while pilgrimages are personal, and provide us with agency.

The war has reminded every Jew, both Israeli and non-Israeli, that they are shareholders of Israel and not external spectators. The country isn’t self-powered but dependent upon us. The war has restored our agency.

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לע"נ

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