

THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
TAL Founder & Director

A MESSAGE FOR OUR GRANDPARENTS

The Torah takes it as axiomatic that a society is judged by the way it treats the most vulnerable:

The very young and the very old.

And for me one of the beautiful aspects of Jewish life, in our synagogues, old age homes and extended families, is the conversation and friendship between the young and the old, between grandparents and grandchildren, sometimes even into the fourth generation.

That's how it should be, the young sharing their dreams with the old; the old sharing their memories with the young. Seder night is upon us – the matsa, marror charoset are being prepared, but some years alas there might be something missing. Many people might be separated, by country, city, and house. Even when we are separated, we might not be!

Let's take a closer look at Seder night! When we think about the vista of Jewish History it seems so distant from us. But we can relate to Jewish History in a way which makes it very real.

Take the average Seder. At a typical seder there will be three generations at the table: A grandfather, a father, and a son.

Let's say that the average generation gap is 30 years. So a typical seder represents a span of 60 years of Jewish History. But really if you think about it, there are really not 3 generations at the table, but 7. Because the grandfather sitting at our table was possibly a grandson at his grandfather's seder.

And similarly, our grandson will probably be a grandfather at his grandson's seder. So our seder could contain in it as much as $7 \times 30 = 210$ years!

If you divide 210 years into the time elapsed since the first Seder (approx. 3300 years ago), you come out with the following calculation:

$3,300 \div 210 \sim 14$.

In other words, we just shrank the vast expanse of 3,300 years of history into just over 14 sedarim. That's all that separates us from the experience of leaving Egypt - as little as 14 sedarim!

"And you shall tell your son on that day..."

The whole of Judaism is founded on 14 fathers passing-over the truth of the Exodus to 14 sons, witnessed by those 7 generations which each seder spans. Tradition is only 14 seders long!

This message can be understood further by an incredible story:

On the 28th November 1947, member countries voted on the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine. The plan proposed creating two states, a Jewish and Arab state side by side. If the plan gained two-thirds of the votes, it would herald the creation of the first Jewish State since biblical times and with it, the realisation of the Zionist dream. But this was by no means a sure verdict. It took much lobbying and convincing on the part of the Zionist movement to persuade other nations to vote for the plan. In his speech to the United Nations, David Ben-Gurion argued the case for the creation of the State of Israel by referring to Pesach and the story told in the Haggadah:

"Three hundred years ago a ship called the Mayflower set sail to the New World.

PESACH TIMES

5TH APRIL

🕯️ Latest time for eating Chametz : 10:51
🕯️ Last time for burning Chametz: 11:58

🕯️ Chag comes in: 19:26

6TH APRIL

🕯️ Light Candles: 20:31

7TH APRIL

🕯️ Shabbat Chol Hamoed Chag starts: 19:29

8TH APRIL

🕯️ Chag Ends: 20:34

11TH APRIL

🕯️ Pesach 7th day: Chag Starts: 19:36

12TH APRIL

🕯️ Light Candles: 20:41

13TH APRIL

🕯️ Chag Ends: 20:43



DVAR TORAH
A Message for our Grandparents
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Pesach Insights
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The Egyptian Exile - Why?
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In your Merit
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By Rabbi Raphy Garson



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Yachatz
By Rabbi Shmuel Kimche



HALACHOT
By Rabbi Eli Mansour



OUR CHAHAMIM
Rabbi Chaim Faladji

This newsletter contains Divrei Torah and may contain Sheimot - Please dispose of accordingly

THE ORIGINAL COMMUNAL PARASHA SHEET, SERVING THE COMMUNITY FOR OVER 11 YEARS!

This was a great event in the history of England. Yet I wonder if there is one Englishman who knows at what time the ship set sail? Do the English know how many people embarked on this voyage? What quality of bread did they eat? Yet more than three thousand three hundred years ago, before the Mayflower set sail, the Jews left Egypt. Every Jew in the world, even in America or Soviet Russia, knows on exactly what date they left – the fifteenth of the month of Nissan. Everyone knows what kind of bread they ate. Even today the Jews worldwide eat matzah on the fifteenth of Nissan. They retell the story of the Exodus and all the troubles Jews have endured since being exiled. They conclude this evening with two statements: This

year, slaves. Next year, free people. This year here. Next year in Jerusalem, in Zion, in Eretz Yisrael. That is the nature of the Jews."

Jews don't remember their history, they live and breathe it, and relive and experience it every year on Pesach, by using the Haggadah to tell the story of the Exodus.

Through the Haggadah more than a hundred generations of Jews have handed on their story to their children. The word Haggadah means "relate," "tell," "expound." But it is closely related to another Hebrew root that means "bind," "join," "connect."

By reciting the Haggadah, Jews give their children a sense of connectedness to Jews throughout the world and to the Jewish people through time. It joins them to a past and

future, a history and destiny, and makes them characters in its drama. This year, you might feel alone, but rest assured that you have left your mark on so many of us.

We live your memories and always join you in spirit.

Every other nation has been united because its members lived in the same place, spoke the same language, were part of the same culture. Jews alone, dispersed across continents, speaking different languages and participating in different cultures, have been bound together by a narrative, the Pesach narrative, which they tell in the same way on the same night.

More than the Haggadah is the story of a people, Jews are the people of a story.

Chag Sameach!



RABBI DAVID BAADANI

Director - TAL Chazanut Program

PESACH INSIGHTS

There are two contradictory customs we do around the time of Pesach.

The first custom is that on the night of בדיקת חמץ, the household members hide ten pieces of חמץ and the man of the house searches for them.

The second custom is quite the opposite, and is on the night of Seder where the father hides the Afikoman and the household members look for it.

The question here is, why is it that on Seder night the household members are the ones who find what the father hides, whereas on the night of Bedikat Chametz the father has to look for the Chametz that the members of the house hide?

I would like to suggest an idea, brought in the ספרים הקדושים. Most things happening around us are actually רמזים – clues from heaven. Signs that G-d in his mercy places

in front of us, to help us see where we can improve our traits.

G-d puts in front of every person a mirror through which they can learn where they are incomplete, and where their flaws are. Those 'mirrors' are usually brought to us by our relatives, our loved ones, our children and spouses. When we wisely see them as a heavenly voice showing us where we need to improve, we receive them with joy, gratitude, and blessing. But if, G-d forbid, we treat them with anger and contempt, we will not be able to know which areas to correct and improve on.

On Passover, we see ourselves as real בני חורין - freed from the bondage of the evil inclination. On a night that is, כולו מצה, which is לחם עוני, a bread of poverty and humility, a night of redemption. When our loved ones had revealed everything, we had tried to hide, and when they put a mirror in front of us, we accepted it with love.

In contrast a person who is still in exile, a spiritual exile, and immersed deep within their own

boundaries and limitations is not happy when what they were trying to hide is revealed. Their family learn to hide their 'Chametz', their deeds that originate from lies and pride too. And when they want to find their weaknesses, they will have to do it themselves, without any support from the mirrors or signs that G-d has put in front of them. They will have to do it themselves and look carefully לאור הנר, deep within בַּחֲרִים וּבִסְדָּקִים. Passover is זמן חרותנו, a time when an abundance of redemption descends into the world, a time when one can free themselves from the lies that bind and enslave them all year round. If only we would choose the path of redemption and understand that although truth will upset you at first, if you accept it, it will be what will set you free. Do not throw mud, or worse, try to shatter the mirror you have in front of you because you don't like the reflection. Rather accept them with love, for showing you the way to your personal freedom.



RABBI JOSEPH PEARLMAN

Author of Pninei Yoseph & Pearls of Light

PESACH INSIGHTS

There are so many recipes for Charoset that it seems as if everyone has their own. The Gemara (Pesachim 116a), however, and the commentaries also contain many such recipes, which are not based merely on taste, but on solid halakhic reasons.

Rabbi Levi says that the Charoset is "Zekher le-tapuach (in memory of the apple)" ie, the apple tree under which the Isrealite women hid themselves from the Egyptians to give birth. In order to give the Charoset a sharp taste, Rashi says to use apples and vinegar.

Rabbi Yochanan maintains that the Charoset is Zekher le-tit, in memory of the clay which our forefathers made in Egypt. Rashi advises, to thicken it, to put in plenty of ingredients and grind it well, and Ran says to grind many vegetables into it. At the time of the meal, Tosafot says to thin it by pouring in wine or vinegar. Mordekhai, in the name of the Arukh, says it should be made from all types of food – sweet, bitter, sour – just like clay, which contains all sort of things. Leket Yosher, in the name of Terumat ha-Deshen, adds pears. It suggests that if they are mixed in the proper measure with apples and nuts, the resulting material will have the colour of clay. According to other opinions, however, while the Charoset should have the texture of clay, it need not be of the same

colour.

Shibbolei ha-Leket maintains that, since the Charoset is in memory of the clay, we should add a little bit of clay or brick scrapings. Maharam de Lunzano totally disagrees with this, for we must convert sorrow into joy. He says that the suggestion of adding brick scrapings had its origins in a misprint in Rashi ad Rashbam (Pesachim 116a). The erroneous text read "ve-cheres," which means broken bits of pottery, but it is clear that the correct reading should be "Ve-charoset." It is only the latter which is to be ground "in memory of the clay."

The Talmud Yerushalmi (Pesachim 10:3) says the Charoset is zekher le-dam, in memory of the blood. Tosafot, quoting the Yerushalmi, accordingly advise the use of wine or vinegar to thin it out at the time of the meal. Rema (Orach Chayim 473:5) rules that it must be made thick like clay, and then we add a little vinegar or red wine, so it will be suitable for dipping.

A Baraita in the name of Rabbi Yochanan says that it is Zekher le-teven, in memory of the straw (which we kneaded into the clay.) Rashi says to use vegetables; Rashbam, spices; Rif, Rach, and Rema all say to use cinnamon or ginger, which resembles straw: Mordekhai in the name of Rokeach, and quoted by Beit Yosef) suggests calamus, cinnamon, or ginger, which cannot be properly ground to remove the hard strands in them, thereby reminding us of the clay and the straw it contained; Maharil (Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 68)

writes that one should not grind them, so that they will remain long.

Tosefot, in the name of Teshuvot ha-Geonim, says that Charoset is in the memory of the fruits to which all Yisroel is compared in Shir Hashirim: "Under the apple tree I awakened you" (Shir haShirim 8:5) "The fig tree puts forth her green figs" (2:13); "your temples are like pomegranate split open" (4:3,6:7); "I will climb up into the (date) palm tree" (7:9) "I went down into the nut garden" (6:11). Tosafot also adds almonds (Shekedim) because the Holy One, blessed be He, Shakad (was eager and diligent) for the end of the Days – and to whiten the Charoset, since the clay also contained lime.

Peri Chadash, in the name of the Kol Bo, adds grapes, in memory of the vines: "and the vines in blossom give forth their fragrance" (Shir ha-shirim 2:13).

Haggadah Sheleimah (p.63), in the name of Sefer ha-Menuchah, says that it was the custom of Jews from Salonika to add chestnuts and raisins.

Tur (Orach Chayim 473) says that the Charoset is in memory of maror, the bitter times, and so sour things should be included in the recipe. He excludes pomegranates, dates, and almonds because, as Bach explains, only apples, nuts, and figs were mentioned in connection with the Redemption from Egypt. Almonds also are not connected with redemption; on the contrary, they refer to punishment, as in "I see the rod of an almond tree" (Yirmeyahu 1:11)



RABBI BENJAMIN STONE

Rabbi For Mens Wednesday Night Chavruta Program

THE EGYPTIAN EXILE – WHY?

Why did the Jews go into exile in Egypt for two hundred and ten years? We are supposed to be Hashem's chosen people, his am segula – surely we deserve better treatment than that?

In order to consider this question, we need to review the Brit Bein Habetarim, the original contract between Hashem and Avraham Avinu.

Avraham famously sought tangible confirmation of his inheritance of the land of Israel: He asked Hashem:

"How can I know I will inherit (the land of

Israel)?" (Bereishit 5,8) Hashem responded by entering into a covenant with Avraham which guaranteed the granting of the land of Israel to the Jews. However, and as is often the case with contractual dealings, the promised benefit came with conditions: The Jewish people would indeed take hold of Eretz Yisroel – but only after four hundred years of suffering. Furthermore, Avraham himself would never inherit the land (Bereishit 15:13-17).

Avraham's conduct in asking Hashem to formalize his verbal promises might be viewed as reprehensible and indeed the Amorah Shmuel tells us (Nedarim 32a) that Avraham's conduct actually resulted in the punitive terms of the covenant

itself. Because Avraham did not simply trust Hashem at his word, the Jewish nation was punished with exile in Egypt, with the inheritance of the land being delayed for four hundred years.

Shmuel's opinion needs explanation. In the first instance, it seems disproportionate in the extreme that in return for a slip in his emunah, Avraham should be punished so harshly. Furthermore, its beggars' belief that through no fault of their own, four generations of Jews should be subject to slavery and persecution in Egypt.

Rabbi Elazar Fleckeles (Prague, 1754-1826; Masseh D'R'Elazar) writes that Shmuel's opinion should not be taken at face value.

Without a doubt, Avraham Avinu, a key innovator in the field of emunah, was not lacking in trust that Hashem would keep his word. However, Avraham was concerned that if the Jews would march straight into Eretz Yisroel without adequate preparation, then they would settle down, relax, prosper and ultimately forget their national purpose as ambassadors of the Almighty.

In asking "How can I know I will inherit (the land of Israel)?"

Avraham was seeking reassurance that the land would be inherited in the way it was meant to be – as an arena of oppor-

tunity for avodat Hashem and not as a means of achieving material wealth.

In response Hashem promised Avraham that he need not worry about the Jewish people losing focus on their spiritual mission. Prior to their entry into Eretz Yisroel the Jews would be sent into slavery in Egypt where they would be broken down and brought to a level of suffering from which there would be no real hope of escape. Their Egyptian captors would then gradually be brought to their knees by means of a series of a supernatural events and the Jews' escape would be equally miraculous,

culminating in the splitting of the Red Sea.

The transition from hopelessness to redemption would serve to cement in the national consciousness the knowledge that Hashem controls all happenings in the world and that material success comes to a person only if Hashem considers that person deserving of such success.

Viewed from this perspective, the Egyptian exile was not a punishment for the Jews at all – but a necessary preparation for their successful entry into Eretz Yisrael.



RABBI DANNY FISHER

Director - TAL Boys After School Programs

PESACH INSIGHTS

Once a year on Seder night, Hashem instructs us to sit with our family and to discuss the miracles that took place over 3000 years ago. This includes the miraculous 10 plagues as well as the phenomenal Krias Yam Suf. The שפ"ר in טור points out that every person who retells the story of יציאת מצרים with joy is guaranteed that he will rejoice in עולם הבא and benefit from the glory of the שכנה. Happiness is so essential that it completes the fulfilment of the מצוה of סיפור יציאת מצרים in the best possible way.

There is no greater שמחה for Hashem then listening to בני' telling the story of יציאת מצרים on Seder night. During Seder night, Hashem gathers the Malochim and says to them' come and hear the סיפור יציאת מצרים that my children are retelling' Hashem goes and rejoices with His children during this time. When the Melochim gather together, they in return praise Hashem for all the ניסים that Hashem preformed for כלל ישראל. The Melochim are exultant to see how the Jewish people rejoice over the גאולה and solely focus on that. The ילקוט מעם לועז points out, that likewise we need to praise and thank Hashem for all that He does for us in our own lives. Even though we are not worthy of all the ניסים that are

performed for us.

When we sit this year iy'H at the Seder, remember we are the chain in the link between the previous generations and the future generations. We hear our parents and grandparents tell us the story of יציאת מצרים, just like they heard it from their parents and grandparents, all the way back to the first Seder, the year after they came out of מצרים. This is something to be proud and excited about, that we are part of the מסורה all the way back to מצרים, with no break in the chain. Iy'H we should continue the chain and retell the story of יציאת מצרים to the next generation.

Have a wonderful and inspiring פסח



RABBI MASHIACH KELATY

Rabbi of Stanmore Sephardi Kehillah

IN YOUR MERIT

As the Jewish people miraculously passed through the Red Sea and beheld miracles even greater than those seen in Egypt, they jubilantly sang Az Yashir. The Torah then goes on to describe how Miriam led the women in song, "And Miriam the prophetess, sister of Aharon, took the drum in her hand and all the women went forth after her with drums and dances." While the women sang the entire song of Az Yashir as the men did, the Torah chooses to highlight one Pasuk in particular which the women sang: "Sing to Hashem for He is exalted above the arrogant; he hurled horse with its rider into the sea."

Why does the Torah single out this Pasuk as being sung by the women if they in fact sang the entire Az Yashir? Additionally, while it is understandable that the Egyptian riders drowned in the Yam Suf, what did the horses do to deserve drowning as well?

I once heard a beautiful idea in explanation. Chazal tell us, "In the merit of the righteous women of that generation, the Jewish people were redeemed from Egypt" (Sotah 11b). Besides bolstering Klal Yisrael's spiritual state and population growth throughout the long and harsh exile, the Jewish women remained firmly convinced that Hashem would one day redeem them. It was in the merit of such self-sacrifice and belief that the entire nation was released from slavery. When the Jewish people later left Egypt

and the men took the lead in the fore-front, the women began to wonder what had happened. "Wasn't Klal Yisrael freed in our merit? Shouldn't we receive equal glory as the men?" It was in response to this that Miriam answered, "Do not think that you are any less important than the men and any less a part of the redemption. To the contrary, it was rightfully in your merit that we were redeemed. Just look at the fate of the Egyptian horses. Why did they drown? Because they enabled the Egyptians to reach us at the Yam Suf. If not for the horses, the Egyptians would have been unable to pursue us. The same is true of us all. Had we not facilitated the redemption and enabled it to come to fruition, we would still be in Egypt. On that account, we have all the reason to be proud and

exult."

We would be greatly remiss if we were to overlook the tremendous degree of gratitude we owe our wives, mothers and sisters for making such a Yom Tov

possible. For over three thousand years, they have been the stronghold of Klal Yisrael on all fronts. Creating the infrastructure of the Jewish home within and without, in their merit we were

redeemed from Egypt and in their merit, we will be soon heralding our future redemption.



RABBI RAPHY GARSON

Rabbi Of Ohr Yisroel Federation Synagogue, Elstree

PESACH INSIGHTS

There is a song we all sing every day. It is the song, sung by a nation of freed slaves when they witnessed the annihilation of the Egyptian armies. After seeing the miracles of a sea that split, the elated people sang "Then Moshe and Bnei Yisrael chose to sing this song to Hashem. When describing the song, the Torah employs the word "yashir", which is the future tense of the word "shar" and means will sing. The grammar is wrong, "The sang" – back then. Rashi explains that the use of the future tense is an allusion to one of the foundations of our faith - Techiyat Ha'Metim, the Resurrection of the dead. There will come a time when G-d will bring the dead back to life, and they will sing His praises once again. The Peninim al Hatorah quotes Rabbi Shabsi Yudelevitz, z"l, who suggests that while all songs of praise will be sung once again, the Shirat Ha'Yam, is nitzchi, an eternal song. A song that will be sung repeatedly because of its eternal essence. To understand this idea more profoundly he writes the following story. The Jewish community of Slonim, located in Belarus, was special and renowned for its citizens who were modest and wise. Logic dictated therefore that the man chosen to be the "cantor," the chazzan for the High Holy Days, must have been an individual of great stature who was endowed with a powerful and melodious voice. Regrettably, these criteria had a negative effect on the community, as anyone who was able to achieve this position was immediately propositioned by another city to accept the position of chazzan in that community. Slonim's Jewish community not only consisted of fine upright individuals; they also had the finest chazanim every year. In fact, only ever for one year, as the following year they moved out to other communities. One year, they were unable to locate a chazzan that was acceptable for them. Yom Tov was just a few weeks away. What would they do? An elderly member, who years ago had an excellent voice, offered his services. The President of the community agreed only if the man agreed to sign a contract promising to keep this position for a

minimum of five years. Reb Yosha, as he was known, agreed and the contract was signed and presented to the Rav of Slonim, Harav Aizil Slonimer, z"l. The Rabbi read the agreement and began to laugh. The lay leaders were perplexed at their Rabbi's reaction. Why was he not elated! They had secured a chazzan for five years. Seeing their confusion, he told them "Let me share a story with you." "Many years ago, when I first took the position as Rabbi of Slonim, a new cemetery had just been established. The older one was filled up and the community needed a new place to bury their dead. A huge plot lay desolate for many months as no one wanted his loved one to be the first corpse to be buried in the new cemetery. They would be so lonely!

The Chevra Kadisha offered an incentive to the person who agreed to be buried in the new cemetery. Signs were put up throughout the city, declaring that a sizable sum of money would be offered to the family of anyone who was buried in the new cemetery.

Within the city of Slonim lived a poor man. Pesach was quickly approaching, and his family were struggling financially. There was no money to buy food for the Yom Tov.

He went out for his daily walk, begging for charity. On his return home he noticed the signs offering an incentive to whom-ever was buried at the new cemetery. Rushing home to his wife, he said, "Quick, I have a way to get out of debt and help us start a new life. Call the Chevra Kadisha and tell them I have died. Make sure you dress me in the traditional tachrichim, shrouds, and cover me with a sheet. Tell them that I am all prepared for burial in the new cemetery. Do not forget to stress the fact that you are so poor that you are unable to pay for any of the burial expenses. They will then give you the "incentive" money immediately. With the money go and buy whatever we need for Pesach. The faithful wife, faced with little other options, listened to her husband.

The Chevra Kadisha felt the new widow's pain but was delighted with the prospect of finally having someone buried in the new cemetery. Everything went along as planned. The funeral procession took a little longer since the distance to the new cemetery was quite a bit further.

Along the way, the members of the

Chevra Kadisha decided to stop at an inn and get a drink. As soon as they left the coffin, the poor man jumped out, and together with his wife, fled the scene, never to be heard from again. Completely taken by surprise, when the Chevra Kadisha discovered what had happened. This would never happen again. And so, when the next person died and his family was willing to have him buried in the new cemetery, his body was tied down to the coffin, so that he could not "escape." Rav Aizil concluded his story, saying "You should have made a contract years ago with the young, healthy chazzanim. Our Reb Yosha is not going anywhere. He is too old. And he does not need ropes to hold him here!"

Rabbi Shabsi Yudelevitz explained that this idea applies equally to Shirat Ha'Yam. In life everything that we see is nothing more than an illusion. We see a corpse wrapped up in shrouds. We can even hear the wailing sounds of a bereaved widow, but it is all a façade, it is a mirage. The corpse is not a corpse. The shrouds are not real. Everything is an illusion played out before our eyes. A chazzan may be singing but, in truth, the songs are not songs, the singing is not singing. Nothing is real, simple because nothing is permanent.

This chazzan who sings before us today may not be here tomorrow. Nothing in this world is real because it does not last. Everything is of a temporary nature. However, when Hashem attests in the Torah, that the Egyptians have drowned, and the Jewish People no longer have anything to fear, it is real, it is true, it is forever.

Beautifully, he explains therefore, the Shirah which "Klal Yisrael" sings in recognition of the destruction of their enemies is an enduring praise, an eternal song, a song that spans the generations for all time and beyond. And it is for this reason that the song of praise sung by Moshe and the Jewish people, lasts forever.

A song which is sung to the Creator of the world, whose compassion is true and absolute, whose goodness is real and complete and is something that is eternal. Eternity is measured by the barometer of absolute truth, reality, and endurance. This song is indeed a song of the future as well.



RABBI SHMUEL KIMCHE

Rabbi at Netzach Yisroel Schools & Director of UK Program at Reishit

YACHATZ

Strange Minhag? Why are we starting off Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim with this 'Breaking the Matzah'? What does it represent? A famous story is recounted about a man who used to be a member of the "Hells Angels" biking group. Travelling across America with his group for about a decade, until he reacquainted himself with his Jewish roots, married a frum girl and settled down within the tri-state area. He loved everything about his newfound Judaism, except for one thing: Erev Yom Kippur. Going to the mikva would mean exposing the embarrassing tattoos covering his body and revealing his very different (embarrassing) past. He devised a plan: He would visit the mikva at a less busy time and would cover himself with his extra-large towel... The plan worked for the first and second year, but the third erev-yom-kippur all went pear-shaped. He missed the less busy time, and arrived at a packed mikva. He started his usual ritual of undressing in a modest or secretive way, but when he walked out of the mikva towards his stand, he slipped on the floor, and exposed his upper body for all to see. Silence deafened in this crowded room as everyone was shocked at this gallery of unsavoury tattoos. The man turned all colours of the rainbow and laid there paralysed... until one elderly gentleman walked up to him and gently said "My son, I see that you have been through your gehinnom...." He rolled up his sleeve and showed a tattoo of a number branded into his arm by some animal in Auschwitz, and continued "... I too have been through my gehinnom. Come let us leave the mikva together."

I love this story. I feel it to be iconic of our generation. It reminds me of the famous Passuk in yeshaya (27:13) which we read as part of our Rosh Hashana mussaf

(and of course a famous song):

"And it will come to be on 'That Day' a great shofar blast will be blown, and those lost in the Land of Ashur will come, as will those oppressed in the Land of Egypt, and will bow down to Hashem on the Har HaKodesh in Yerushalayim." Those lost in the Land of Ashur. Those crushed in the Land of Mitzrayim. The Ba'al Shem Tov teaches, that in fact we are speaking about two lots of contemporary Jews. Some are "Lost in the Land of Happiness" ("Ashur" related to the word 'Ashrei' means happiness), while others are "Crushed in the Land of Constraints" ("Mitzrayim" is related to the word 'Meitzar', which means a narrow strait. "Min HaMeitzar Karati Kah". The Nile Delta narrows into a strait.). Both are equally damaging. Both are equal threats to our Emunah. In either people can become estranged to our History and our Mission. One through persecution, the other through assimilation. The nevuah is, that they will come back "on that Day", and together bow down to Hashem in Yerushalayim. They will meet in a mikvah, and together identify themselves as Jews.

Yachatz breaks the middle matzah. The first half is the first bite we eat (after the long hagaddah on seder night), and the second half is the last bite we eat ("ain maftirin achar hapesach afikoman"). The halacha states that the first half has to be eaten "bete'avon" (when you have an appetite and are eagerly awaiting the matzah). The second half has to be eaten "Al HaSovah" (when we are satisfied, and have eaten a full Shulchan Orech). The first half is our Emunah despite poverty and hardships, despite hunger. The Second half is our Emunah despite affluence.

The two halves of Yachatz have never been so pertinent to us as we look through history, realise what tonight is about, and understand how these two halves are so necessary at framing the special 'order' of Seder Night.

This is one way of looking at Yachatz - but I recently saw an amazing second approach that spoke to me:

The Gemara [Shabbat 89b] records Hashem approaching the Forefathers accusing the Jewish People "Your Sons Have sinned". Unlike Avraham and Yaakov, Yitzchak steps up to the plate and after some bargaining ["after all, for how many years does a human being live? How much of that is spent sleeping and eating?...etc] Yitzchak strikes a deal - "I will take half the responsibility if you take half the responsibility".

Rav Hutner understands this puzzling deal half Us, Half Hashem - in light of a famous statement in the Gemara [Brachot 17a] - "It is obvious that our desire is to do the Will of Hashem, the only two items that prevent us are; 'The Dominion of Nations (which subjugate the Jewish People)' and 'The Yeast in the dough (The Yetzer Hara)'".

One preventative from the outside (The Dominion of others and antisemitism), and one from the inside (The yetzer Hara).

On Seder night, we free ourselves of the Dominion of The Nations (Leaving Egypt - and the implied future redemption), and the 'Yeast in the Dough' (literally - chametz-free - but symbolically, ridding ourselves of the Yetzer Hara).

Half is our Job (working on the Yetzer Hara - overcoming our desires), Half is Hashem's Job (ridding the world of Antisemitism).

This is the deal that Yitzchak strikes with Hashem - and this is why tonight we break the middle Matzah - the middle of Three Matzot, representing Yitzchak Avinu's involvement in our Destiny.

So much of Seder Night is so central to us as a Nation. Yachatz is only the kick-off. May we merit to witness the materializing of the hope that every Seder Night has dreamed of, and may we be Next Year in Jerusalem.



HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

Pesach – If One Forgot to Lean While Drinking One of the Four Cups at the Seder

The obligation of Heseba leaning to the left at certain points during the Seder, including when drinking each of the four cups.

The Shulhan Aruch rules that this

obligation applies equally to men and women. The Rama (Rav Moshe Isserles of Cracow, 1530-1572) writes that in ancient times, women often did not sit with their husbands, and thus would not be required to lean, but nowadays, women must lean just like

men.

The Shulhan Aruch (Orah Haim 472:7) rules that if one forgot to lean when leaning is required, he must repeat the act while leaning. Thus, if one forgot to lean while drinking one of the four cups, he must drink another cup while

leaning. For example, if, after eating the Karpas, one remembers that he had not leaned while drinking the wine at Kiddush, then he must fill his cup and drink while leaning, without reciting a Beracha. He then proceeds to Yahatz.

When one forgets to lean while drinking one of the first three cups, it is clear that he does not recite the Beracha of "Boreh Peri Ha'gefen" when he then drinks again. When it comes to the fourth cup, however, the Poskim are in disagreement as to whether one who forgot to lean and then drinks a fifth cup recites a Beracha when he drinks the fifth cup. The Shulhan Aruch (Orah Haim 480) writes that since we do not expect to drink any more wine after drinking the fourth cup, one who remembers afterward that he had forgotten to lean must recite a Beracha over the fifth cup. This case is one of "Heseh Ha'da'at" – where one's attention was diverted from drinking, as he had assumed that he would not be drinking any more, and so a new Beracha is required when he then drinks again because he had forgotten to lean. This is the Shulhan Aruch's ruling, based on the position of the Rosh (Rabbenu Asher Ben Yehiel, Germany-Spain, 1250-1327). Rabbi Akiba Eiger (1761-1837), howev-

er, in his notes to the Shulhan Aruch, cites the Ginat Veradim as disagreeing with this ruling. In a different context, the Shulhan Aruch writes, based on a comment by Rabbenu Peretz (France, d. 1295), that when we sit at the Seder table, we are considered guests of the Almighty. We are to see ourselves not as sitting in our own homes, but rather as sitting at G-d's table as His guests. Now when a guest finish drinking, and then more wine is brought, he does not recite a Beracha over the additional wine. A guest is completely dependent on his host, and always anticipates the possibility that more will be served, and so even after he eats and drinks, there is no "Heseh Ha'da'at." As such, he does not recite a new Beracha when more food or drink is served. Therefore, even if one forgot to lean when drinking the fourth cup of wine at the Seder, he should not recite a Beracha when drinking again, because he has the status of a guest, who does not recite a new Beracha when he drinks again after having finished drinking. Accordingly, Hacham Bension Abba Shaul (Israel, 1924-1998) rules that we apply to this situation the famous rule of "Safek Berachot Le'hakeil" – that we do not recite a Beracha when it is uncertain whether it is required. Therefore, if one forgot to lean while drinking

any of the four cups, he drinks another cup without reciting a new Beracha. Incidentally, it should be mentioned that although Haggadot include the Beracha Aharonah for wine – "Al Ha'gefen" – after the fourth cup, only those who drank a Rebi'it of wine recite this Beracha. The cup of wine at the Seder must contain at least a Rebi'it – approximately 3.1 oz. – and one should preferably drink the entire cup for each of the four cups, but if this would be very difficult, it suffices to drink the majority of the cup. Many people find it difficult to drink an entire cup of wine toward the end of the Seder, and so it is quite common for people to drink less than a Rebi'it for the fourth cup. One who did not drink an entire Rebi'it for the fourth cup must ensure not to recite the Beracha of "Al Ha'gefen" after drinking.

Summary: One who forgot to lean after drinking any of the four cups of wine at the Seder must drink an additional cup as soon as he remembers. He does not recite the Beracha of "Boreh Peri Ha'gefen" over the new cup. If one drank less than a Rebi'it (3.1 oz.) for the fourth cup of wine at the Seder, he must ensure not to recite the Beracha of "Al Ha'gefen" after drinking.



OUR CHAHAMIM

Rabbi Chaim Faladji

Rabbi Chaim Faladji, the Rav of Izmir, Turkey, was one of the great sages of his generation. Born in 1788 (5548), he took upon himself the responsibility, in every sense of the word, of the community with grace and an attitude that was unequaled in thoughtfulness and attentiveness. At the same time, he was known for his extreme diligence in Torah study, a diligence that found expression in the enormous number of books that he authored, the total of which numbers 95. Among these are Guinzei Chaim and Hukey Chaim.

A heavy yolk rested upon Rabbi Chaim Faladji's shoulders, one that stole much of his time. One marvels at discovering just how exhaustively he succeeded in studying Torah, how he managed to give his own explanations, and how he arrived

at writing such a large number of books, ones which opened the eyes of the Jewish world. His story is in fact one of time optimization. His books testify to the fact that one can arrive at finding the time to accomplish many more things than we, ordinary people, can even imagine. The works of Rabbi Chaim deal with many tractates of the Gemara and offer explanations on Halachah and Aggadah. They deal with the work of the Rambam, with the four sections of the Shulchan Aruch, and give thousands of responses to Halachic questions. His works offer explanations on the weekly Torah sections and comprise, moreover, over 100 discourses and 14 volumes on the entire Tanach. One of his books deals with questions pertinent to dayanim, another on the laws of sacrifice, another on laws pertaining to the community, etc., etc. It is simply impossible in this

article to detail the 95 books that he wrote. How did he find the time to write all of these books?

The most definite answer to this question is found in his own personal account: "I take Heaven and Earth as my witnesses that from the day that I began to reason for myself, until the day of my twentieth year, I was deeply immersed in Torah study day and night, without the loss of the least moment, for I occupied myself with nothing having to do with the world in general. And from the age of 20 until the age 40, since I had a family to feed, I occupied myself with the affairs of the world in order to survive. Yet when I had no issues to deal with, I didn't take advantage of it in order to lose my time, but instead returned to my studies. In the same way, from the age of 40 – the age at which I became a Dayan (judge and decision-maker), and when I took charge

of the needs of the community – until today, year after year I took upon myself an extremely heavy yolk, for there was no instant in which I wasn't called upon during disputes and communal affairs, both in the city itself and its surroundings. Yet even though the authorities added even more difficult tasks to me, and in several domains, and even though my heart grieved within me because I could not study Torah as I wished, I forced myself to find time where I was free from my tasks – the little spare time that I had – in order to consecrate my eyes and heart to the study of Torah. May my actions be observed and imitated when one is faced with numerous communal and individual worries and

pressed for time, that one's eyes and heart not wander in following vain pursuits when given a few moments of freedom from responsibilities, and may blessing be found in one's Torah!" Next came a promise: "As long as you have a great desire for Torah, and as long as you do not give yourself over to trivial pursuits, and that your mind becomes completely liberated during the hours and minutes that you are free in order not to lose anything, we will help to find time to accomplish what you desire, to study the Torah a little and to practice it a lot. Most of the time, when a man or woman presented themselves before me and I had to speak to them at length in order to comfort them, G-d knows just how much

I suffered when they caused me to lose hours of Torah study. However if I pushed them aside, I feared humiliating them and not having shared in their pain. Now we know that 'honorable conduct [derech eretz] precedes Torah.' As for that which our Sages told us in Perkei Avoth, that reducing social contacts (derech eretz) to a minimum is one of the 48 things by which Torah is acquired, this means that one should avoid extending social contacts in one's private life in order to occupy oneself with Torah, but this does not at all deal with the honor of others, for in that respect one risks causing them pain and humiliation."

KIDS zone

? QUIZ TIME!

1 How many cups of wine do we drink?

(We drink 4 cups of wine)

2 Who is the 5th cup for?

(The 5th cup is for Eliyahu Hanovi)

3 What do we do while drinking the wine?

(We lean)

4 How many Matzot do we leave on the table?

(We have 3 Matzot on the table)

5 What animal did the Jews used to bring as a korban pesach?

(A sheep)

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Whether they're round or square, one thing's for sure: Matzah is what Pesach's all about, and that means Chametz is on its way out... for 8 whole days! Not only do we not eat Chametz during Passover, we also don't want to see it, own it, or get any benefit from it either.



But what is Chametz?
Chametz is leaven – any food that's made of grain and water and been allowed to ferment and rise for more than 18 minutes.

Bread, cereal, cake, cookies, pizza, pasta, bagels, doughnuts...all these are perfect examples of Chametz.

In fact, any processed food that is not certified "Kosher for Passover" may include Chametz ingredients, especially if it contains one of the five grains: wheat, barley, spelt, oats and rye.

Chametz VS Matzah

Instead of Chametz, we eat Matzah:

A hard, cracker-like bread made from a dough of only flour and water which has not been allowed to rise. We eat Matzah to remember how quickly we left Egypt, and the pure faith we had in G-d, that He would save us.

When G-d told us it was time to leave Egypt, we left straight away, without stopping for a second! Our ancestors had so much faith in G-d, that they put their dough in sacks on their backs, and left – without giving it time to rise. The hot desert sun baked the dough on their backs into the cracker-like bread we eat today: Matzah!

That is one of the reasons why Matzah is also called: "Michlah DeMehnutah" which means The Bread of Faith, in Aramaic.

On Pesach we remember the miracles G-d performed for us, by putting the CRUNCH on Chametz and getting the MUNCH on Matzah!

