

Toras Aish

Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

RABBI DOV KRAMER

Taking a Closer Look

The last 36 verses of Parashas Tzav (Vayikra 8:1-36) deal with the "shivvas yemay hamilu'im," the seven days of the indoctrination of the Mishkan. The "eighth day" (9:1) when the nation "saw G-d's glory" (9:23-24), was preceded by these seven days, when Aharon and his sons could not leave the Mishkan's courtyard (8:33), at least while the Mishkan was up, and/or during the "avodah" (when the offerings were brought), and/or for pressing personal needs. Moshe put up and then took down the Mishkan each of these seven days (see Rashi on Bamidbar 7:1), until it was left up on the eighth day. Since every week has a Shabbos, obviously Moshe built the Mishkan on Shabbos as well, even though we are told twice (Shemos 31:12-17 and 35:2-3) that building the Mishkan is forbidden on Shabbos (see Rashi on 31:13 and 35:2).

This is not really problematic, though. Since G-d had specifically commanded Moshe to build the Mishkan each of these seven days, at the very least it was a "horu'as shu'uh," a divine commandment that specifically overrides the norm. Just as G-d told Moshe that the 12 Nesi'im (Heads of Tribe) should each bring their personal offering over 12 consecutive days (from Nisan 1-12, the first 12 of the Mishkan), including Shabbos (even though personal offerings are not allowed on Shabbos), so too was the putting up of the Mishkan during the "milu'im" a divinely decreed exception. There were many aspects of the "milu'im" offerings that were different than the way offerings were brought once the Mishkan was fully operational (too many and complex to describe here), so a "horu'as shu'uh" to build the Mishkan on Shabbos would not be a foreign concept. I was curious as to whether or not this was actually the case, or whether there was another possible reason why Moshe was allowed to build the Mishkan on the Shabbos of the "milu'im." Besides researching the issue myself, I discussed it with several chaverim, and would like to present what I have found so far. This is by no means a complete analysis, and (as always) further thoughts and comments are welcome and appreciated (RabbiDMK@cs.com).

The first order of business is to verify that Moshe did in fact build the Mishkan on Shabbos, and

didn't just skip Shabbos and build it on a different day instead (spreading the seven days over eight days). Rashi (Shemos 39:30) says explicitly that these seven days were consecutive. Additionally, numerous Midrashic sources that describe Moshe putting up the Mishkan and taking it down on each of these seven days (see Midrash Hagadol on Vayikra 8:33) give us the exact date of the first of the seven days - the 23rd of Adar (with "the eighth day" being Rosh Chodesh Nisan). Even if that Adar had 30 days (and not just 29), Moshe would have had to start on the 22nd in order to skip Shabbos. (For simplicity's sake I won't get into the opinion that the seven days of the "milu'im" started on Rosh Chodesh Nisan, with "the eighth day" being the eighth of the month.) There is therefore no way around it; if Moshe put up the Mishkan and took it down each of the seven days (which seems almost universally accepted), he did so on Shabbos as well. Once we have established that, we can move on to how he was allowed to.

One chaver suggested (and remembered seeing somewhere, although he didn't remember where) that since public offerings were allowed to be brought on Shabbos (just not personal ones), the putting up and taking down of the Mishkan during the seven days of "milu'im" was considered an "avodas tzibur," and therefore permitted on Shabbos. However, the Talmud Yerushalmi (Yuma 1:1) says that the offerings brought during the "milu'im" were considered personal offerings ("karbanos yachid," not "karbanos tzibur"), making it difficult to imagine that putting up the structure for the "milu'im" was considered a form of "avodas tzibur." Although this possibility can't be ruled out, it's hard to accept without seeing the source for it.

Another possibility could be based on the fact that Moshe built the Mishkan each day with the intention of taking it down before the day was over (according to some opinions he put it up and took it down once a day, according to others it was twice a day, and a third opinion says it was three times a day). The knots made to tie down the curtains around the courtyard and to keep the coverings of the Mishkan from blowing in the wind, since they were tied for less than 24 hours, would only be considered temporary knots (and permissible). The structure of the Mishkan, being designed to be taken apart and put back together, and (during the "milu'im") only put together for a short time, would make it a non-permanent structure,

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and therefore not considered "boneh" (building). As a matter of fact, in his discussion regarding using an umbrella on Shabbos, the Chasam Sofer (Shu"t O"C 72) says explicitly that because, during the "milu'im," Moshe knew he would take the Mishkan down after a short period of time, it was only a temporary structure and there was no problem of "boneh." However, the Avnei Neizer (Shu"t O"C 211:22) disagrees, telling us that because it was put together so well, and it took real effort to take it apart, the Mishkan could not be considered a temporary structure even if, when put together, the intention was to take it down shortly afterwards.

The most comprehensive discussion of the issue that I have come across is by the Aruch Laner (Yevumos 6a), and I thank Rabbi Yitzchok Dovid Frankel, shlita, for directing me to it. The Talmud discusses the concept of an "asay" (commandment to do something) superceding a "lo sasay" (prohibition against doing something), the source for it, and its parameters. The Aruch Laner asks why we don't learn that an "asay" supercedes a "lo sasay" even if violating the prohibition includes the punishment of "kareis" (being "cut off" from the Nation of Israel) from the fact that the Torah told us that we are not allowed to build the Mishkan on Shabbos. After all, if we were never allowed to fulfill a commandment when it violates such a prohibition, the Torah wouldn't need to tell us that we can't build the Mishkan on Shabbos either! It would seem that the Mishkan was an exception, but otherwise the "asay" can be fulfilled despite it causing us to violate the "lo sasay" that is punishable by "kareis."

By the same token, the Aruch Laner continues, why don't we learn that we can fulfill an "asay" in such a circumstance from the Nasi that brought his offering on Shabbos? He answers that, as mentioned before, this offering was a "horu'as shu'uh," a specific, divinely decreed exception, which cannot be applied to other situations. The commandment to build the Mishkan on Shabbos was also a "horu'as shu'uh," making it necessary to tell us that it did not apply to other situations. There are several aspects of the Aruch Laner's reasoning, though, that I don't quite follow.

First he says that although when Moshe put up the Mishkan the first six days of the "milu'im" he took it down on the same day, when he put it up on the

seventh day it stayed up, ready to be used on the eighth day. Since Chazal tell us (Shabbos 87b) that "the eighth day" was Sunday, the seventh (and last) day of the "milu'im" was Shabbos. If Moshe never took apart the Mishkan after building it on the seventh day, the structure (or knots) can't be considered temporary. It is true that Rashi's words (on Bamidbar 7:1) and the wording of some Midrashim can be understood to mean either that it stayed up after being built on the seventh or after it was built on the eighth. However, most of the Midrashic sources say explicitly that Moshe did take it down on the seventh day as well, with some opinions stating that he even built it on the eighth day and took it down before building it again on the morning of the eighth and leaving it up.

Then he says that putting up the "kerashim," the 10-cubit high beams that made up the walls of the Mishkan, did not really constitute violating the prohibition against doing "melachah" on Shabbos, since they were too heavy to be put up by humans (even Moshe) and therefore had to miraculously go up "by themselves" (see Rashi on Shemos 39:33). This also seems problematic, as first Moshe tried to put them up, but once he couldn't, they went up by themselves. If putting them up was prohibited, how could Moshe have even tried to be "mechalel" (lit. make ordinary, but understood to mean violate) Shabbos?

The real prohibition, the Aruch Laner says, was spreading the "ohel" (lit. tent, but referring to the covering of the Mishkan) over the "kerashim." Because this would have been prohibited, G-d had to expressly tell Moshe that he was allowed to do so, even on Shabbos. And, in order to make sure that Moshe knew that this was only a "horu'as shu'uh" that only applied to the seven days of the "milu'im," G-d had to tell him explicitly that normally you can't build the Mishkan on Shabbos. (It is for this reason that telling us that we are not allowed to build the Mishkan on Shabbos does not indicate that other cases would be permitted when doing the "asay" means violating a "lo sasay" punishable by "karei".)

The Aruch Laner does not mention the knots necessary to tie down the curtains of the courtyard fence and the coverings of the Mishkan. If Moshe took the Mishkan down on the seventh day as well, these knots would not be a problem, only the fact that (according to the Avnei Neizer) the Mishkan was put together too well to be considered a "temporary" structure. The truth is, though, that the Vilna Gaon (in his comments on Seder Olam 7) says that the fence around the courtyard stayed up all seven days, it was only the Mishkan structure itself that was taken down every day. Nevertheless, it is a bit awkward that the Aruch Laner doesn't even discuss the knots.

Another issue is that the commentators (Ibn Ezra - in his "short" commentary - and Sefornu on Shemos 40:18 and Rashi on Menachos 99a) tell us that

when Moshe put together the Mishkan, rather than first putting up the "kerashim" and then the "Mishkan" (the covering, called such because it was the most important part of the structure), he put up the covering and then the "kerashim." However this was accomplished (see Sefornu), the bottom line is that it was built backwards, first the roof and then the walls. And, as Rabbi Frankel points out ("Machat Shel Yad," Pekuday 3), building a (temporary) tent backwards (first the roof then the walls) is not prohibited on Shabbos (see Mishneh Berurah 315:17). [It should be noted that the Mishkan covering did not form a wall in front, nor did it reach the floor on either side, and may not have reached the floor in the back either. Besides, it is more likely that it did not come down on the sides before the "kerashim" were put up - and even if it did, did not come down until after the "roof" part was in place, so the covering itself could not have formed the walls before the roof part was up.] It turns out, then, that the one problem that caused the Aruch Laner to say it was a "horu'as shu'uh" was not really a problem!

I would suggest that, if the Mishkan could not be considered a temporary structure (like the Avnei Neizer), the knots were not a problem because they would be undone in less than a day, and the covering was not a problem because it was put up before the walls, the only problem would have been trying to put up the "kerashim." The "horu'as shu'uh" was only needed in order to allow Moshe to attempt to put them up, but in the end there was no "chillul Shabbos" even had there been no "horu'as shu'uh." This may have been the reason why Moshe was told to put on the roof first, so that there would be nothing done that would be problematic on Shabbos even had there been no "horu'as shu'uh." © 2009 Rabbi D. Kramer

RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Shabbat Shalom

“Pour out Thy wrath upon the Gentiles who do not Know You and who do not call upon Your Name." (Passover Haggadah)

During that magical and mystical evening devoted to the Passover seder - the night when every Jew attempts to feel as if he/she personally experienced the servitude in and the exodus from Egypt - there is one jarring note voiced by the celebrants after the Grace after the Meal and just before the chanting of the Hallel praises to G-d: "Pour out Thy wrath upon the Gentiles who do not Know You and who do not call upon Your Name." They have devoured Jacob, and laid waste His Temple." Why call out these words altogether, and why at this particular section in the Seder, after the third and just before the fourth cup of wine?

The words themselves emanate from Psalm 79, which opens, "A song to Assaf: Elohim, the Gentiles have entered into Your inheritance, have defiled Your

Holy Temple, have given Jerusalem to the jackals." The custom to include these words within the Haggadah harks back to the time of the completion of the Jerusalem Talmud (4th Century C.E. SMaG 118b). Rabbenu Menahem Meiri brilliantly analyzes the particular place at which they are inserted: we have just eaten the meal reminiscent of the Paschal sacrificial meal in the Holy Temple and we have recited the Grace after Meals, the introduction to which (zimmin) is derived from the verse, "Since I call upon the name of the Lord, give greatness to our G-d." We have also prayed for the restoration of Jerusalem (the third blessing of the Grace after the Meal) and have given the "good and beneficent" G-d His due for having granted us the merit of burying our dead with their corpses not having decomposed (the fourth blessing). Clearly the Grace after Meals (in these 3rd and 4th blessings) is making reference to the destruction of the Second Temple and the horrific Hadrionic persecutions after the Bar Kochba attempt at rebellion. Hence, we who have called upon the name of G-d ask Him to punish those who do not call upon His name, and we who have just "devoured sacrificial food" ask that those who 'devoured' Jacob (and laid waste his Temple) not be allowed to remain unpunished.

Rav Moshe Isserless, great Ashkenazi decisor of sixteenth Century Krakow, Poland, adds yet another custom: "And we open the door [at this point] in order to remind us that this [the seder night] is a Night of Watching (Leil Shimurim), the Night of the Watchful Guardian [G-d watching over Israel], and in the merit of this faith the Messiah will come and pour out his wrath on those who deny G-d's existence." (Shulhan Arukh Orah Haim Siman 480) Expounding on this custom, the 20th Century Hafetz Haim (Rav Yisrael Meir Kagan HaKohen of Radin, Poland), in his Mishnah Brurah commentary of the Set Table (Shulhan Arukh,) added: "We are not frightened [of the open door]; and it is the custom in these countries to pour an extra cup of wine and to call it the Cup of Elijah..." A 12th Century authority (Maaseh Rokah 19a) cites the custom of leaving the door open all night in order to go out to greet Elijah the Prophet, herald of the messiah, although most authorities suggest that the door be kept ajar only for a very short time if at all, and that - especially in Gentile countries - we not rely on miracles by leaving our doors unlocked. (Magen Avraham Orah Haim Siman 481, and the Hok Yaakov there).

I'd like to explore another possible reason for the custom of opening the door, one which I believe will shed light on all of our various customs surrounding Elijah's visit to our Seder tables all over the world and our exclamation concerning the Gentiles.

As we have seen, the Grace after the Meal refers to the destruction of the Temple and the Jewish suffering after the fall of Betar (135 C.E.) Hence our cry at this juncture in the Seder for the punishment of those

who refuse to recognize G-d - His morality and His nation Israel - is most understandable. Our next cup of wine, however, introduces the Hallel, Psalms of Praise for our return to our homeland although the psalms we read testify to our still being in a rather vulnerable position ("Please G-d save us" is part of Hallel)." We therefore invoke Elijah, herald of the Messiah, to announce the culmination of our complete salvation with the establishment of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

From this perspective, we can see that the suggestion of Josephus, great historian of the Second Commonwealth as to why we open the door before the fourth cup seems most logical: "On the Festival of matzot, which we call Pesach, the priest-kohanim are accustomed to open the gates of the Temple immediately after midnight...." (Antiquities 18, 2.2). Hence, we open our doors as well, as a prayer that soon the Temple doors may again be opened. And when we remember that the main task of the Temple in Jerusalem is to serve as a House of Prayer to all nations, as the focus in the world to which all the nations will rush to learn Torah from Zion and the word of G-d from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2, Micah 4), we are opening the door to welcome all the nations to "beat the swords into plough-shares" and to accept the G-d of peace and morality.

The Divine Revelation at Sinai is preceded by a tale of two Gentiles: Amalek, the symbol of unredeemable evil which must be destroyed (Exodus 17:8 - 16), and Jethro, the Gentile inspired to join the ranks of his son-in-law Moses as a result of G-d's miracles for the sake of freedom during our Exodus (Ex 18:1-12). Amalek is the Gentile whom G-d must destroy; Jethro is the Gentile who must be welcomed into the Temple Gates!

The Midrash on the verse, "This is the law of the Passover lamb sacrifice, no son-stranger (ben-nakhar, Gentile) may eat of it" (Ex 12:43), teaches,

"Job declared, 'a stranger (ger) may not dwell outside,' the Holy One blessed be He cannot invalidate any of His children (whether Jew or Gentile); I shall open my doors for the guest to enter the presence of the Holy One, blessed be He... And eventually strangers (gerim) will be priest-Kohanim in the Holy Temple." (Shmot Rabbah 19, Vilna Edition)

Thus, just before the praises of Hallel, we must open the doors of our Seder to the Gentile world, in the tradition of the function of our Holy Temple, as our invitation to every human being to accept the G-d of peace and morality - despite our (legitimate) theological differences when they enter our portals. Peace will come to Israel only when 'thou shalt not murder' is accepted by every nation of the world, when the word of G-d will emanate from Jerusalem to all peoples whereby "every one will call upon his/her G-d from the vantage point of morality and we will call upon the Lord

our G-d forever and ever." © 2009 Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin

RABBI BEREL WEIN

Wein Online

Judaism does not view service of G-d or of other humans as being a purely voluntary exercise. In fact Judaism follows a regimen of obligations and commands. Any system that requires discipline and continued commitment is built on the giving and acceptance of commands. Every efficient army or commercial enterprise in the world is based upon a command structure.

Thus it is axiomatic that the Torah uses the word "tzav" - command - when describing Moshe's instructions to Aharon in assuming his now new role as the High Priest of Israel. Though Judaism allows great latitude for individual talents and creativity to be expressed, there is always a basic framework of commands and laws within which this talent and creativity is to be channeled.

The blessings that Jews pronounce before the performance of a mitzvah all state that the Lord has commanded us - "v'tizvanu" - to perform this holy act. We bow to G-d's will and to the discipline of Torah in our performance of the rituals of Judaism.

We currently live in a society that exalts the idea of being able to do things "my way." Again, though individuality is to be admired and encouraged especially in the young, the basic framework has to be maintained. And that framework consists of the grids of commandments and obligations that bind us to Torah and tradition.

Jewish experience teaches us that Judaism cannot be made meaningful by employing fads and gimmicks, no matter how popular they may initially seem to be. The spirit of Shabat is never enhanced and made meaningful through the condoning of the violation of its commandments.

Lowering the standards of Shabat observance to make it more popular has only led to its complete demise among the descendants of those who tinkered with its commandments.

This Shabat is the one that precedes the holiday of Pesach. It is called "Shabat Hagadol" - the great Shabat. In reality every Shabat is the great Shabat. There is no other concept in Judaism that carries with it so many commandments and obligations, so many do's and don'ts, as does the Shabat.

All attempts to "improve" the Shabat have proven to be self-defeating and eventually are unable to stand the rigors of time and circumstance. Shabat is great because it is the embodiment of Jewish commandments and discipline. Those who abide by its strictures and obligations taste the delight of that day, a foretaste of paradise itself.

All of its prohibitions somehow lead to a true state of contentment and freedom. The greatness of Shabat is therefore inextricably bound with the concept of freedom.

Shabat and Pesach march together in tandem throughout Jewish life. Shabat is therefore the great gateway to Pesach for by understanding and accepting the concept of "v'tizvanu" - of obeying commandments and fulfilling obligations we can achieve the freedom of soul that we all so desperately strive for.

It is therefore no mere coincidence that the Torah reading of "Tzav" usually falls on the Shabat that precedes Pesach - Shabat Hagadol. Freedom comes with a purpose and a price. Being commanded is both the price and reward of achieving freedom. © 2009 Rabbi Berel Wein- Jewish historian, author and international lecturer offers a complete selection of CDs, audio tapes, video tapes, DVDs, and books on Jewish history at www.rabbiwein.com. For more information on these and other products visit www.rabbiwein.com/jewishhistory.

RABBI AVI WEISS

Shabbat Forshpeis

Our parsha informs us that the priests' first task of the day was to remove the ashes from the offering sacrificed the previous day. (Leviticus 6:3) Is there any significance to this being the priests first order of business with which to start the day?

Samson Raphael Hirsch suggests that this mandate serves as a constant reminder that service of the new day is connected to the service of the previous day. After all, it was the ashes from the remains of yesterday's sacrifice that had to be removed. In one word: even as we move forward in time and deal with new situations and conditions it is crucial to remember that all that is being done is anchored in a past steeped with religious significance and commitment.

Another theme comes to mind. Just as a small portion of every food grown in Israel must be given to the priest (terumah), so is the priest responsible to remove the last remains of the sacrificial service (terumat ha-deshen). Thus, the entire eating and sacrificial experience is sanctified through a beginning or ending ritual. Terumah elevates the food as we give its first portion to the priest; terumat ha-deshen elevates the sacrifice as the kohen maintains contact even with the remains of the sacrificial parts. Not coincidentally, the portion given to the priest and the ashes removed by the priest are given similar names-terumah and terumat ha-deshen-as the word terumah comes from the word ruum, to lift.

One last thought. The priest begins the day by removing the ashes to illustrate the importance of his remaining involved with the mundane. Too often, those who rise to important lofty positions, separate themselves from the people and withdraw from the

everyday menial tasks. The Torah through the laws of terumat ha-deshen insists it shouldn't be this way.

A story reflects this point. A few years ago a husband and wife appeared before Rabbi Gifter, Rosh Yeshiva of Tels, asking him to rule on a family dispute. The husband, a member of Rabbi Gifter's kollel (an all day Torah learning program) felt that as one who studied Torah it was beneath his dignity to take out the garbage. His wife felt otherwise. Rabbi Gifter concluded that while the husband should in fact help his wife he had not religio-legal obligation to remove the refuse.

The next morning, before the early services, the Rosh Yeshiva knocked at the door of the young couple. Startled, the young man asked Rabbi Gifter in. No, responded Rabbi Gifter, I've not come to socialize but to take out your garbage. You may believe it's beneath your dignity, but it's not beneath mine.

And that may be the deepest message of terumat ha-deshen. © 2009 Hebrew Institute of Riverdale & CJC-AMCHA. Rabbi Avi Weiss is Founder and Dean of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, the Open Orthodox Rabbinical School, and Senior Rabbi of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale.

RABBI KALMAN PACKOUZ

Shabbat Shalom Weekly

The Torah states: "Then (the Kohen/the priest) shall take off his garments and put on other garments and carry forth the ashes out of the camp unto a pure place" (Leviticus 6:4). What lesson to we learn from the ceremonious taking out the ashes from the altar each morning?

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch comments that the taking out of the ashes that remained on the altar from the previous day expresses the thought that with each new day, the Torah mission must be accomplished afresh, as if nothing had yet been accomplished. Every new day calls us to our mission with new devotion and sacrifice. The thought of what has already been accomplished can be the death of that which is still to be accomplished. Woe unto him who with smug self-complacency thinks he can rest on his laurels, on what he has already achieved, and who does not meet the task of every fresh day with full devotion as if it were the first day of his life's work!

"Carry forth the ashes out of the camp." Every trace of yesterday's sacrifice is to be removed from the hearth on the Altar, so that the service of the new day can be started on completely fresh ground. Given these considerations, we can understand the law that prescribes the wearing of worn-out garments when one is occupied with the achievements of the previous day. The past is not to be forgotten. However, it is to be retired to the background, and is not to invest us with pride before the fresh task to which each new day calls us. (Rabbi Hirsch's commentary)

Rabbi Hirsch lived in the 1800's. In today's vernacular, we might say, "Yesterday is a canceled check, tomorrow is a promissory note, today is cash. Spend it wisely!" *based on Growth Through Torah by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin © 2009 Rabbi K. Packouz and aish.com*

RABBI SHLOMO RESSLER

Weekly Dvar

Our Parsha, Tzav, informs us that the priests' first task of the day was to remove the ashes from the offering sacrificed the previous day (Leviticus 6:3). Is there any significance to this being the priests' first order of business with which to start the day?

Rabbi Avi Weiss explains that the priest begins the day by removing the ashes to illustrate the importance of his remaining involved with the mundane. Too often, those who rise to important positions separate themselves from the people and abandon the everyday menial tasks. By starting the day with ash-cleaning, the Torah insists it shouldn't be this way.

A few years ago a couple appeared before Rabbi Gifter, asking him to rule on a family dispute. The husband, a member of Rabbi Gifter's kollel (an all day Torah learning program) felt that, as one who studied Torah, it was beneath his dignity to take out the garbage. His wife felt otherwise. Rabbi Gifter concluded that while the husband should in fact help his wife he had no legal religious obligation to remove the trash. The next morning, before the early services, Rabbi Gifter knocked at the door of the young couple. Startled, the young man asked Rabbi Gifter in. No, responded Rabbi Gifter, I've not come to socialize but to take out your garbage. You may believe it's beneath your dignity, but it's not beneath mine! This message comes to us courtesy of the sacrificial ashes. © 2009 Rabbi S. Ressler & LeLamed, Inc.

MACHON ZOMET

Shabbat B'Shabbato

by Rabbi Yehoshua Shapira, Rosh Yeshivat Ramat Gan; Translated by Moshe Goldberg

We are close to the beginning of the holiday of Pesach, when the entire nation of Yisrael is required to observe the mitzva, "And you shall tell your son" [Shemot 13:8]. Each and every person is obligated in principle to tell the story of the holiday. The sages said that if a person has no son his wife should ask questions. If he has no wife, his friend should ask. The ritual must include speech, every person must tell somebody else about the memory of the redemption from Egypt. Every person should feel that he is able to influence somebody else, that he has what to contribute.

However, there are times when even a man who has sons can feel that this mission is difficult, that he cannot truly do what the mitzva requires. In order to tell a story properly, a person must feel complete

empathy with the subject matter. In order to be effective in passing on memories from the past to the present, the person must feel that the events of Egypt live within him. Every person can feel within his own soul if he is ready for this mission, or if he has a long way to go before he is ready to accomplish the goal.

The dilemma is not only relevant for the night of Pesach. Every father who wants to transfer a living burden of the love for Torah and the fear of heaven in addition to close attachment with the Almighty and the faith that this demands of us encounters the same difficulty. Another important phrase has sprung up in our generation that is related to the factor of "outreach." Many people have a feeling that "I am not worthy" which serves as a motive for standing by and not acting. The result is that the abundance remains locked within us without any way to be transferred over to the other people.

In his book "Ein Ayah" Rabbi A.Y. Kook presents a deep interpretation of what the sages have taught, "Sons die because of the sin of taking an oath" [Shabbat 32b]. An oath is an expression of absolute certainty, based on emotional identification with the Torah in which we believe. When a person has a feeling that he knows absolute truth, he will rise up and make a holy promise in order to incorporate sanctity into his life and to give it an absolute expression. But an oath can also be desecrated. This can happen later on, when a doubt insinuates its way into the person's heart. Perhaps the oath was only a fleeting moment of enthusiasm, perhaps it does not represent the "true me." This is the sin of taking an oath, and it is the reason that the sons may die-it represents a lack of ability to teach them, to instill in them the light of the Torah, to tell them our memories, as we have been commanded to do.

The obligation to tell the story teaches us that we must react properly to every spark that flickers within us, even if we are filled with doubts at the same time. The fact that every Jew receives this command means that every Jew is capable of accomplishing the task. All that is necessary is for him to believe that every spark is a perfect expression of the truth that lies in his own soul. He must clearly state: This is really me, everything else is a lie. This is the only possible way to pass on the "life" of the Torah and the faith to future generations.

RABBI ZVI SOBOLOFSKY

TorahWeb

Many of the mitzvos associated with Pesach revolve around proper timing. There are very specific guidelines of time that govern the proper observance of the Korban Pesach. The korban must be offered during the afternoon of the fourteenth day of Nissan. It is critical that it be eaten at the proper time. The precise time for eating is a dispute whether it is

until midnight of the fifteenth of Nissan or until the morning. If the korban was not completed at the right time, the leftover meat becomes disqualified, subjecting one who eats it to the severe punishment of kares.

Similar to the requirement of eating the Korban Pesach at the correct time, there exists an obligation to perform the other mitzvot of the Seder at precisely the right time. Tosfos (Pesachim 99b) observes that unlike Shabbos and other yomim tovim when it is permissible to eat the meal earlier than when it is actually=2 Onightfall, the matzah must be eaten after dark. By whatever time the Korban Pesach must be completed so too must the matzah be eaten. The poskim extend this insistence on proper timing to the maror, the telling of the Hagada, the saying of the Hallel and the drinking of the four cups.

The basic difference between chometz and matzah is also a function of time. Exactly the same ingredients of flour and water make up both. It is only the factor of time that differentiates between them. Even the prohibitions of eating and possessing chometz revolve around the clock. At one moment in time of Erev Pesach, one can no longer eat chometz. An hour later, one can no longer benefit from chometz. Finally at noon, the prohibition of owning and eating begin according to the Torah itself.

More than any other yom tov, time plays a critical role in the proper observance of Pesach. What is the significance of this? Why does the proper commemoration of Yetzias Mitzraim require such observances that are so time oriented?

During davening and kiddush of each yom tov we mention that we celebrate these days as a remembrance of Yetzias Mitzraim. Although the Shalosh Regalim are linked to Yetzias Mitzraim historically, what is the connection between the observance of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur and Yetzias Mitzraim? Even though there is no historical connection, we declare that these two Yom Tovim are also "zecher leyetzias mitzraim." Apparently there is a dimension not dependent upon historical events that link the entire concept of yom tov to Yetzias Mitzraim.

The first mitzvah given to the Jewish people as a nation as they are about to leave Mitzraim is Kiddush Hachodesh-sanctifying the new moon. Is this just a necessary prerequisite since one cannot observe Pesach on the fifteenth of Nissan if Rosh Chodesh Nissan is not declared? Apparently, there is a greater significance why we were given Kiddush Hachodesh on the eve of attaining our freedom. There is one feature that truly demarcates between a slave and a free man. A free man is master of his own time whereas a slave's time belongs to his owner. The halacha teaches us that one cannot sanctify an object he does not own. Not only is this true of material possessions but it is true of time as well. Before the Jewish people were freed it was inconceivable that they should be able to sanctify

Rosh Chodesh. The mitzvah of Kiddush Hachodesh was the beginning of the transformation from slavery to freedom. The very observance of yom tov is a testimony to Yetzias Mitzraim. The ability to create "kedushas hazman" of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur is a declaration of "zecher leyetzias mitzraim" even if there is no historical connection between them. The relationship between time and freedom is highlighted by the statement of Chazal that only one who is involved in Torah study is truly free. Talmud Torah is a mitzvah that has no limitations²⁰of time. One who fulfills this mitzvah properly by salvaging every moment is truly in control of time and is a free man. One who wastes the most precious gift of time by not sanctifying it properly cannot be called a free man.

The celebration of Pesach centers on time more than any other yom tov of the year. It is specifically at this time, when we commemorate our transformation to becoming free men, that the sanctification of time becomes a primary theme of the yom tov. We who now are in control of time can use time properly in the service of Hashem. As we observe the mitzvot of the Seder in their proper time and are careful concerning the prohibitions of chometz we are declaring that this is the celebration of "zecher leyetzias mitzraim." © Copyright 2009 Rabbi Z. Sobolofsky & TorahWeb Foundation

RABBI MORDECHAI KAMENETZKY

Symbolism Over Substance

The entire Seder ceremony is replete with symbolic gestures. We drink four cups of wine to represent four Biblical expressions of redemption. We dip and lean like kings to represent freedom, and eat bitter herbs to remind us about the bitter slavery. We also eat other symbolic foods that portray our Egyptian bondage: salt water to remember tears, and charoses, a mixture of apples, nuts and wine that looks like mortar, to remind us of the laborious years in Egypt.

The service is truly filled with symbolism - some direct, and some seemingly far-fetched - and all the symbols are meant to remind us of the slavery we endured centuries ago. But, why not take a direct approach? There are overt ways to declare our gratitude, and there are more immediate ways to mark the celebration. Why don't we just recite the four expressions of redemption as part of the liturgy instead of drinking four cups of wine to symbolize them? Why don't we actually place mortar on the table (problem of muktzeh not withstanding) instead of making a concoction to represent it? And instead of reminding ourselves of backbreaking work by eating horseradish, why not lift heavy boxes?

A Jewish intellectual in post-war England approached Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky, who headed

the London Beth Din, with a cynical question: "In reviewing our Hagadah service," he sniped, "I was shocked at the insertion of , 'Who Knows One', a childish nursery rhyme, at the end. Why would the sages put a silly rhyme - 'One is Hashem, two are the Tablets, three are the fathers,' and so on, at the end of the solemn, intellectual Seder night service? It is very unbecoming!"

Rabbi Abramsky was not shaken. "If you really want to understand the depth of that song, then you must travel north to the town of Gateshead. There you will find a saintly Jew, Reb Elya Lopian. I want you to discuss the meaning of every aspect of life with him. Ask him what are the meaning of the sea and fish, ask him what is the meaning of the sun and the moon. Then ask him what is the meaning of one, of six, of eleven and so on."

The philosopher was very intrigued. He traveled to Gateshead and located the Yeshiva at which Reb Elya served as the Mashgiach (spiritual advisor). He was led into the room where a saintly looking man greeted him warmly.

"Rabbi, I have many questions," the skeptical philosopher began. "What is the meaning of life?" "What is the essence of the stars?"

Rabbi Lopian dealt with each question with patience, depth, and a remarkable clarity. Then the man threw out the baited question. "What is the meaning of the number one?"

Rabbi Lopian's face brightened, his eyes widened, and a broad smile spread across his face. "The meaning of one?" he repeated. "You would like to know the meaning of one? One is Hashem in the heaven and the earth!"

The man was shocked. "What about the depth of the numeral five?"

"Five?" repeated the sage. Why five has tremendous symbolism! It represents the foundation of Judaism - the Five Books of Moses!" The rabbi then went on to explain the mystical connotations that are represented by the number five, and exactly how each Book of the Torah symbolizes a component of the sum.

The man left with a new approach and attitude toward the most simple of our rituals.

At the Seder, we train ourselves to find new meaning in the simple things in life. We teach ourselves to view the seemingly mundane with historical and even spiritual significance. We should remember that when Moshe saw a burning yet non-consumed bush, he realized that his nation is similar - constantly persecuted and harassed, yet never consumed. At our Seder, we view horseradish not as a condiment for gefilte fish, but as representative of our suffering. The Matzoh is no longer a low-fat cracker, but symbolizes the hardships of exile and the speed of our redemption. In addition, we finish the Seder with a simple song that reminds everyone at the Seder, next time you ask,

"who's number one?" don't accept the answer: the New York Yankees or the Chicago Bulls - think on a higher plane! One is Hashem in the heaven and the earth!
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RABBI ZEV ITZKOWITZ

A Byte of Torah

“**A**nd he (the Kohain) shall remove his garments, and he shall don other garments. And (then) he shall take out the ashes (of the Altar) outside the encampments to a place that is ritually pure.” (Leviticus 6:4)

This verse is very interesting. Why did the Kohain have to change out of his priestly garments before taking out the ashes? The reason for this is actually readily apparent. The Kohain wore the priestly garments when he performed the Service in the Temple. However, if the Kohain would wear the garments when he took out the ashes, they would inevitably get dirty. It would be a disgrace for the Kohain to perform the Service in such a state. Hence, the Torah tells the Kohain to put on other clothing in order to take the ashes of the Altar outside the camp (Rashi). However, these clothes did not need to be of the same nature as the clothes for the Service (Rashi, Ramban).

What does the Bible mean by "outside the encampments"? The Children of Israel were set up in three camps. The camp of Kohanim, the camp of the Levites and the camp of the rest of the Children of Israel. These camps were set up concentrically, one within the other, with the Tabernacle in the center of them all. The Bible says that the Kohain has to bring the ashes outside all three of these camps (Rashi). And, at the time of the Temple, outside Jerusalem (Rashi). © 1995 Rabbi Z. Itzkowitz & torah.org

