



Moor Lane More Torah

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Humble Beginnings by R' David Shasha

One of the more memorable parts of the Seder is when we raise the Matzah and Marror and explain their significance. Rabban Gamliel says that discussing these things along with the Korban Pesach constitutes the main obligation of the Seder.

The Ben Ish Chai offers the following parable providing an explanation as to why discussing the Matzah and Marror is so important.

A king was travelling with his attendants, and came across a simple peasant boy. This boy, despite his modest upbringing and shabby attire, showed himself to be a wise, shrewd and exceptionally talented boy. The king decided that this boy possessed the ideal qualities to work in the palace as a minister.

After some time, this boy, now a young man, had gained quite a reputation and enjoyed a prominent and trusted position in the king's inner circle. As well as gaining many new friends, his newly acquired honour earned the disdainful eye of some envious and resentful colleagues. Out of spite, they accused him of using his position to steal from the royal treasuries.

The king confided in his new minister that although he harbours no suspicion towards him, he must still investigate the matter to retain the loyalty of the accusing officials. After a thorough search of his living quarters and seeing nothing untoward, the king was prepared to dismiss the allegations until he noticed a closed door. "What lies behind this door?"

he asked. His minister sheepishly shied away and avoided the topic. After seeing that he had struck a nerve, the king was convinced that he had found the evidence that he was looking for and barged into the room. However, instead of seeing treasures, all that was there was just some very dirty old clothes placed on a table in the centre of a bare room.

"What on earth are you hiding these old clothes for?" asked the king. The minister explained, "Your Majesty, I have never taken your kindness for granted; these clothes remind me of my humble beginning. I look at them regularly and this helps me to appreciate all that I have been blessed with and the immense debt of gratitude that I have towards the king."

Focusing on the Matzah and the Marror, considering our journey from the bitterness of servitude to Hashem's cherished nation helps us to appreciate and fulfil our special role as an Am Kadosh.



Pesach & Me by R' Shmuel Livshin

What's the difference between חמץ and מצה? Not much, just a few moments. If you leave(n) (excuse the pun) מצה unbaked for just a moment more than 18 minutes, it's already חמץ. The words themselves are very similar: the only difference between them is the ה' of מצה and the ח' of חמץ; the other letters are the same. How much difference is there between a ה' and a ח'? Just a very small line. There's not much in it.

But they are even more similar than that. Even the ingredients of חמץ and מצה are the same. Flour and water! That's it! So, what makes something חמץ? Air. Plain and simple air. חמץ has risen and is now filled with air. The base ingredients are the same, but חמץ has made itself bigger with nothing (air has no substance.) It's for this reason that חמץ represents גאווה, haughtiness. What does it mean to be haughty? To make oneself bigger than one really is i.e., to fill oneself with air, just like חמץ. Of course, a person has to realise his strengths and abilities. That's the flour and water. To be humble doesn't mean to pretend that you are a nobody who can do nothing; that would be naive and stupid. In fact, if you don't know your strengths, you can't even begin achieving

in this world. Being humble means understanding that you have talents and strengths, and recognising that they come from Hashem. They are a gift from Him and we are indebted to Him for them. The more talented a person is, the more he owes to Hashem! Haughtiness is to think that I am the cause of my abilities. That's the air, with

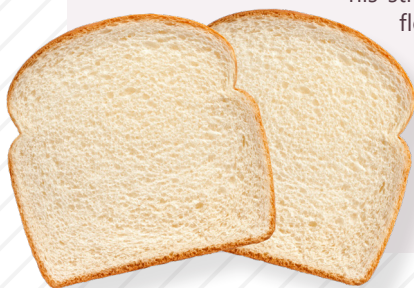
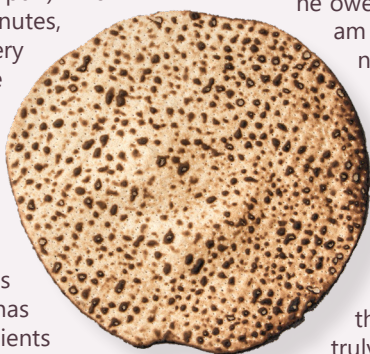
no substance. For example: You can walk? Great, you deserve a pat on the back. But who gave you the ability to walk? Hashem! Not everyone can walk, you know. You're clever? Charismatic? Witty? Successful? All from Hashem!

We all have an element of גאווה, haughtiness, within us. Yes, we know that Hashem created us and rules the world, but there is that impediment that stops us from truly accepting and feeling it in our hearts. True Emunah is withheld by that bit of 'me' inside of us.

The Haggadah is not just a story. It's a realisation of Hashem and His greatness. We can't do that properly if there is still a remnant of the 'me' in our hearts vying for the limelight. Come Pesach, we have an opportunity to take the חמץ (haughtiness/me) and burn it at ביעור חמץ, the burning of the חמץ before Pesach. Then we can really say the Haggadah on seder night. It won't just be a show.

And not just seder night; we refrain from eating חמץ the whole Pesach so that we can utilise this special time to truly recognise Hashem's greatness and internalise real Emunah in our hearts.

Chag Sameach and a Pesach Kasher.



18 Riddles & Questions for The Chag of Pesach

QUESTIONS:

COMING UP SOON:

1. One of the few ברכות only said once a year [even in חוץ לארץ].
2. A day we say full הלל, they say 1/2.
3. A day we say 1/2, they say none.
4. 6 days we all say 1/2.

LATER ON IN THE YEAR:

5. 2 days we say full, they say none.
6. Some people say 14 הלל times in חודש ניסן. True or false?
7. Which מצוה do we finish this year 41 [halachic] hours after we start it?
8. Which מצוה do we finish 49 days after we start it?
9. What restrictions apply for 7 1/2 days [מן התורה]?
10. The phrase 'וחרבו שלופה בידו' comes in the הגדה, but also somewhere else on 1st day פסח. Where?
11. I am a measurement on everyone's lips starting from 2nd סדר. What am I?
12. Why doesn't the מחזור give the divisions for Kriat Hatorah for שבת [with 7 not 5 עליות] on the 2nd day of פסח as it does on the 1st day?
13. Where on the 2nd day do we hear about a man undoing the wicked work of his grandfather?
14. Three ways in which the weekday עשרה עשרה is different from the weekday חול המועד פסח we said before פסח.
15. When [not this year] could we read all about כיפור on פסח?
16. Which 20 פסוקים from the תורה are said twice on one of the days of פסח?
17. Two cases of a restriction on eating certain food which finishes one day earlier for people in Eretz Yisrael than for people outside Israel.
18. How many times will we say בורא מיני בשמים over Pesach in הבדלה?

ANSWERS:

1. על ביעור חמץ
2. 2nd Day פסח
3. 8th Day פסח
4. 17th to 20th; 2 ניסן days ראש חודש אייר
5. הלל on 2nd Day שבועות and שמחת תורה.
6. True: Those in חוץ לארץ who say הלל in shul on 8 סדר nights; the actual 8 סדר days ראש חודש ניסן and 1st day ראש חודש אייר.
7. בדיקת חמץ, which we start at night of the 13th with קרבן and finish by the 5th hour on שבת.
8. ספירת העומר
9. The restrictions on not eating, getting benefit from, owning חמץ.
10. In the הפטרה: referring to the 'man' who appeared to יהושע.
11. עומר.
12. 2nd day never falls on שבת.
13. עבודה זרה uprooted the המלך יאשיהו מנשה.
14. יעלה ויבא [3 תן ברכה] מוריד הטל [1]
15. At שבת when the next חול המועד on מנחה פרשת אחרי מות.
16. The שירה is said in דמרה פסוקי and as Kriat Hatorah on 7th day. Same on פרשת בשלח.
17. A) Chametz. B) Chadash - grain planted during the year which becomes permitted for people in Eretz Yisrael at the end of the 1st day of the Omer – nightfall of the 17th of Nissan. For people outside Eretz Yisrael it becomes permitted only on the nightfall of the 18th of Nissan.
18. None, as מוצאי שבת is טוב. It is said once in ארץ ישראל at the end of the 7th day.



Which Day? *By R' Aharon Gillis*

The second day of Yom Tov in Chutz L'aretz involves a 'repeat performance' of the mitzvot of the previous day. Let's consider a halacha six months away which has a bearing on how this applies to Pesach.

The Rif writes that the Halacha is that we sit in the Succah outside of Eretz Yisrael on the eighth day of Succot - even though it is Shemini Atzeret - because of Sefeika Deyoma. However, we do not make a berachah on the succah, even though when doing other mitzvot on the second day we do make a berachah, such as the shofar on the second day of Rosh Hashana which is also a Sefeika Deyoma. The reason for this, writes the Rif, is because demonstrating outright that it is Succot - by making a berachah on the Succah - is showing that it is not Shemini Atzeret, and this is a Zilzul (degradation) to Shemini Atzeret. (Sitting in the Succah alone does not show explicitly it is still Succot, as one might be doing so for one's own pleasure.)

Asks the Ran: if this is true, why do we count the Omer on the Second night of Pesach? Surely it is degrading to the first days of Yom Tov to do this counting which really starts on the day after Yom Tov?

To this the Ran gives two answers: the first is that the Omer is not counted at the time of Kiddush, when we are declaring the Kedushat Hayom, in contrast to the berachah on the succah, which is said during Kiddush where we are declaring it is Shemini Atzeret, which is degrading to the Kiddush that we are making.

The second answer is that the sitting in the succah on the eighth day is a mitzvah derabanan, as we know that it is not really still Succot. The counting of the Omer, however, is Min Hatorah, and overrides the degradation of the mitzvah derabanan of keeping the second day of Yom Tov.

According to the second answer we can understand the Minhag some Ashkenazim have of counting the Omer only after the Seder. Since there is a Zilzul of Yom Tov involved [which is overridden by a Torah mitzvah], these people fulfil the Mitzvot Hayom of the Seder first, before doing the mitzvah of counting the Omer, to avoid degrading the Kedushat Hayom by fulfilling a mitzvah which belongs to the day after Yom Tov.

According to the first reason however there is no degradation as we are not counting the Omer during Kiddush, and there would seem to be no reason (at least in Halacha) to count later.