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Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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Under the auspices of **Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita**
Son of the tzaddik and miracle-worker **Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l**, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker **Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"l**



Maskil L'David

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by **Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita**

The Maror of the Korekh or the Bitterness of Exile

It is stated (Shemot 12:18), "In the first [month], on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening, you shall eat matzot." Chazal say (Mechilta of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai there) and it is also ruled as halachah (Rambam hilchot chametz u'matzah, perek 6) that it is a positive commandment of the Torah to eat matzah on the eve of the fifteenth of Nissan, because the Torah determines that it is obligatory.

However, with regard to the eating of maror, the Rambam rules (Chametz U'Matzah perek 7) that maror in our times is a Rabbinical commandment, and it is not a Torah commandment to eat maror. A reason for the difference is because maror is really supposed to be eaten together with the korban Pesach, and since today we do not have a Beit Hamikdash, and we do not bring a korban Pesach, therefore we only make a remembrance for the korban. For this reason, the maror is only Rabbinical.

There are those who question, then why is the eating of the matzah a Torah commandment? Why is it not Rabbinical like maror? After all, it is stated (Shemot 12:8), "And on this night, they shall eat the flesh, roasted over the fire, and matzot; with bitter herbs they shall eat it." Since there is no korban Pesach, and maror is Rabbinical, then also the eating of the matzah should be Rabbinical.

The answer is that since there is an explicit pasuk in the Torah commanding us to eat matzah, the eating of matzah is not contingent upon the korban Pesach. And like the opinion of the Rambam that it is a mitzvah in itself. Thus the eating of the matzah is a Torah commandment, but the eating of the maror in our times is only a Rabbinical commandment.

My explanation on the matter is that the main part of Pesach is the eating of the matzah, and the Festival is actually called in this name "The Festival of Matzot," because the matzot are the main issue, and they are eaten throughout the seven days of the Festival, as it is stated (Shemot 12:15), "For a seven-day period shall you eat matzot." And although the main mitzvah of eating matzah is only on the first night, as on Sukkot the main mitzvah is eating a kezayit on the first night of Sukkot, in any case, one must continue eating in the Sukkah throughout the Festival, as it is stated (Vayikra 23:42), "For a seven day period you shall dwell in booths."

In other words, a person is not obligated to eat all seven days in the sukkah, but if he wants to eat something, he must eat it only in the sukkah. Similarly, on Pesach, a person does not have to eat anything throughout Pesach, but if he wants to eat something, he may eat only matzah and not bread, G-d forbid. Specifically, matzot must be eaten throughout the seven days, because the matzot remind us of the meager bread that our ancestors ate in Egypt during their slavery there.

Therefore, the Torah commanded that eating chametz is prohibited on Pesach throughout all seven days, and one must eat matzot during the seven

days of the Festival. Moreover, the mitzvah of eating matzah is stated explicitly in the Torah several times, and therefore eating matzah is a distinct mitzvah that applies to all generations, and it is actually a Torah commandment.

This is not the case with eating maror, since the korban Pesach was brought only on the fourteenth day of Nissan and not on all the following seven days. It is forbidden to eat it in impurity, and is also eaten on satiety only on the eve of the fifteenth of Nissan, and it is prohibited to leave over for the next day. Since today we do not have the Beit Hamikdash, and we are all in a state of impurity because we do not have the ashes of the Red Heifer to purify us, and we do not have the Beit Hamikdash to atone for us, therefore, we do not have a korban Pesach today.

This is why also the maror is only a Rabbinical mitzvah. We do not find that eating maror is practiced throughout all the seven days, but rather it is like the korban Pesach, which is eaten only on the first night. And if it is like the korban Pesach, then maror is not a Torah commandment, but only a Rabbinical commandment, as it is stated (Shemot 12:8), "They shall eat the flesh on that night – roasted over the fire – and matzot; with maror they shall eat it." Thus, maror was meant to be eaten together with the korban Pesach. Since today we do not have a korban Pesach, the maror is only a Rabbinical mitzvah.

When the Beit Hamikdash was in existence, Hillel the Elder would make a sandwich of matzah and maror and eat them together, to fulfill the command, "They shall eat it with matzot and maror. This implies that only Hillel did this, and it was his custom to eat matzah and maror together.

Why did Hillel do so? Because Hillel the Elder already saw through Divine inspiration the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash, and knew that Bnei Yisrael would stop eating the korban Pesach. Therefore, Hillel made a remembrance of the Mikdash, by making a sandwich of the matzah and the maror and eating them together, in order that everyone should remember that after eating them they would eat the korban Pesach when they were satiated, and they would recall that when the Beit Hamikdash was in existence, they would eat the korban Pesach after eating the matzah and the maror. After the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash, we eat only the matzah by itself and the maror by itself.

Therefore, in order for everyone to remember that during the time of the Beit Hamikdash they ate matzah and maror and then ate the korban Pesach, Hillel used to make a sandwich of them together, in order to fulfill the pasuk (Bamidbar 9:11) "They shall eat it with matzot and maror. In this way we remember better the absence of the korban Pesach, and we will pray to Hashem to rebuild the Beit Hamikdash for us, and there we will merit eating from the offerings and from the korban Pesach.

Chevrat Pinto NYC

207 West 78th Street • New York NY 10024 • U.S.A
Tel: +1 212 721 0230 • Fax: +1 212 721 0195
hevratpinto@aol.com

Jerusalem • Pninei David

Rehov Bayit Va Gan 8 • Jérusalem • Israel
Tel: +972 2643 3605 • Fax: +972 2643 3570
p@hpinto.org.il

Ashdod • Orh 'Haim Ve Moshe

Rehov Ha-Admour Mi-Belz 43 • Ashod • Israel
Tel: +972 88 566 233 • Fax: +972 88 521 527
orothaim@gmail.com

Ra'anana • Kol 'Ha'im

Rehov Ha'ahouza 98 • Ra'anana • Israel
Tel: +972 98 328 078 • +972 58 792 9003
kolhaim@hpinto.org.il



Hillulah of Tzaddikim

15 - Rabbi Shmuel Halevi Wosner

16 - Rabbi Simchah Ziskind Brojde Rosh Yeshiva of Chevron

17 - Rabbi Meir Abuchatzera

18 - Rabbi Sasson Pirsiado Rosh Yeshiva of Beit El

19 - Rabbi Yehoshua Falk Katz Author of the Sm"á

20 - Rav Hai Gaon Rosh Yeshiva of Pompadita

21 - Rabbi Chaim Greineman



When are the Gates of Heaven open?

The saintly Rebbe of Kosov, zt”l, who was the author of *Ahavat Shalom*, would arouse the whole congregation to pray on the leil haseder specifically, and during the entire Festival of Pesach in general, for a prosperous livelihood and abundance, saying that sometimes the lack of abundance occurs because a person only prays for his livelihood on Rosh Hashanah; when praying for life, he also asks for sustenance, but he does not ask for it at other times.

The truth is that on Pesach we are judged in respect to our grain (Rosh Hashanah 16a), thus it is the most opportune time to pray for it. Likewise, on the Festival of Shavuot we are judged in respect to fruit, so we should increase our prayers that quality fruit should grow to delight people.

While praying for spiritual profusion, we must also pray for having the equanimity necessary for dealing with the burden of our livelihood and for success in all matters.

The Haftarah

“At that time”

(Yehoshua 5:2)

The connection to the parashah and to Pesach: In the haftarah we read about the korban Pesach that Bnei Yisrael brought when they arrived to Gilgal, which is connected to Pesach and to the parashah, since we read about the mitzvah of korban Pesach.



Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

The delay of the Redemption

Rabbeinu Yisrael Meir HaCohen of Radin, zt”l, devoted a substantial portion of his day to arouse Jewish people’s awareness to the prohibition of lashon hara, and he even wrote a sefer on the subject.

The Chafetz Chaim believed that one of the main reasons for the lengthiness of our Exile was because of negligence and ignorance concerning one’s proper speech. (As he put it, there is a lot of ignorance concerning this matter and people are used to saying whatever they want, without considering whether it is permissible or perhaps constitutes rechilut or lashon hara), and the lack of a comprehensive sefer halachah on the subject is one of the main reason for laxity in this matter.

Freedom from the Yetzer Hara

Pesach is the time of true freedom. This stems from the freedom which our fathers merited in Egypt at this time through wondrous miracles, without which we would not be free today. This is because when Hashem performed the miracles for our fathers in Egypt, He made sure that those miracles would influence us and continue to affect us with their holiness stemming from the miracles then, which would draw abundance of endless enlightenment because of the sanctity of the original festival and the miracles wrought then. When a person is aroused to great happiness, without doubt he will experience something of that same elation of being a free man that our fathers experiences when they left Egypt.

This can be compared to a locomotive pulling dozens of cars. All the cars are pulled by the locomotive, which is the most important part of the train; the force of the locomotive is what propels the train forward. Only a fool would think that the car at the end goes by itself, without any help or connection to the locomotive.

On the day following Pesach (Isru Chag), during the meal, I saw one of the guests looking worried. I told him: Why are you worried? Today is Isru Chag, and we are supposed to rejoice. Did you already forget everything I spoke about yesterday, that we must continue to draw from the sanctity of Pesach, which is considered “Poise’ach – passing over,” meaning that one must forget all his worries and trust only in Hashem.

I also added: Did you forget that Pesach teaches us adherence to mitzvot, which are like the matzot; hard and tough. This implies that it is not easy to keep them properly, and a man must take the trouble to observe them by subjugating himself totally to Hashem. What is the reason that we eat matzot for seven days? This alludes to the seventy years of man in which he must work to serve Hashem without receiving any

Walking in Their Ways

reward in this world, as it is stated (Kiddushin 39b) “There is no reward for precepts in this world.”

The righteous man replied: This is exactly the reason why I am worried. I am lacking the exalted feeling that I experienced throughout Pesach, and that is why I am downhearted.

When I heard this, I quickly told him: This is the interference of the Yetzer Hara, which wants to bring you to despair “for the sake of Heaven.” Then your despair will bring you to doubt your faith, until you will fall entirely into the net of the Yetzer Hara, and you will lose all the faith you achieved on this Festival, so that your gain is offset by your loss.

You should know that Hashem knows that the sanctity of Pesach is so awesome and inspiring that one is liable to feel at the end of the Festival a great letdown. For this very reason, Hashem, may He Be Blessed forever, gave us the mitzvah of counting the Omer immediately following the festival of Pesach. In this way we can continue drawing close to Hashem from Pesach until Shavuot, the time when the Torah was given, which was the purpose of the Exodus from Egypt. So we find that Hashem told Moshe (Shemot 3:12) “When you take the people out of Egypt, you will worship G-d on this mountain.”

This can be compared to a person who enters a brightly lit beautiful house, and upon seeing the beauty and luxuries of the house, from which he will move on to an even more magnificent palace where he will ultimately live, he is filled with joy. But suddenly all the lights go out, and he is enveloped in fear because of the darkness that fell upon him. However, in the midst of the darkness, he sees a small candle illuminating the way to the magnificent palace; if he will keep walking to the light of the little candle, he will end up in the longed for dwelling.

The message, of course, is that right after Pesach all the inspiration of the Festival discontinues, and the person feels let down. Therefore, Hashem provided us with a way to continue carrying on in the light of the Festival by counting the Omer until the Festival of Shavuot. Ultimately, through the Torah, a person can arrive on his own to achieving the purpose of Creation of fulfilling Hashem’s will.



Piyutim

Strengthening Fellowship and Meriting Blessing

The following is a piyut (liturgy) about the Festival of the Matzot composed by Rabbeinu Chaim Pinto, zya"l (The first letters of each line spell "אני חיים בר שלמה חזק" I am Chaim bar Shlomo chazak")

אשורר שירה חדשה, לה' עושה גדולות
הלוא הוא, הפליא ועשה, מופתים ואותות מעולות
ועדה ברה וקדושה, הוציא אותה מאפלות
ואור גדול האיר לנו, כאור חמה שבעתיים
בחוזק יד הוציאנו ה' ממצרים:

בכל זאת חיזק את לבו, רשע עריץ ולא
אבה לשלח את עם קרובו, אל ארץ טובה ורחבה
ויך כל בכור באוייביו, הוא ולא מלאך שר
צבא ויציל לאום אהובה, ולא חלו בה ידים
בחוזק יד הוציאנו ה' ממצרים:

גצה לזכות עדתו, וברוב חסדיו גמלם
לפרוש מחמץ מצוותו, בזמן זה לדורות
עולם כי עם השטן חברתו, אחים, ולא יתפרדו
כולם מצה חלקם וגורלם, הנה טובים השניים
בחוזק יד הוציאנו ה' ממצרים:

שלושה שמורות סודם, שלוש ראשונות
מאירות מוחין דאבא יסודם, המה בראש ועטרות
זרוע קו ימין נגדם, ביצה לצד הגבורות
מרור ביניהם מתווך, לקח אליו פי שניים
ויהיו אלה בתווך, והוא בין המשפתיים
בחוזק יד הוציאנו ה' ממצרים:

חרוסת תחת זרוע, סודות נצח בה נתכנו
ההוד אל הכרפס ריע, ותחת הביצה תנו
וביניהם הן בוקע, יסוד חזרת אופנו
קערה מלכות אמנו, נשלמו עשר אורים
בחוזק יד הוציאנו ה' ממצרים:

שירו מאד לא-להודו, פינו יספר נוראותיו
טובו סלח גבר חסדו, עלינו על פי מידותיו
כל גויים כאין נגדו, ובישראל שם תורותיו
ויכתירם בעטרותיו, לאיש כתרים שניים
בחוזק יד הוציאנו ה' ממצרים:

חדש קדם ימינו, למה נשכחנו
זה כמה, זכרנו ושכחנו עשה בגויים נקמה,
קנא לכבודך אבינו ושלח מנחם נחמה
אז יגדל שמך רב עוצמה הנוטה כדוק שמים
בחוזק יד הוציאנו ה' ממצרים:

אתן לדם את מימיהם, ולשתות מהם לא יכלו
וכן עשו חרטומיהם, לשטח הנראה כולו
כי אין השליטה להם, במה שהו אמת חתלו
ולא סר ממעללו, האכזר מלך מצרים
בחוזק יד הוציאנו ה' ממצרים:

יחיד שליט בנבראים, גזר וצפרדע עלתה
וממנה היו יוצאים מחנות וזעקה רבתה
ובתוך מעיהם נחבאים, לא האמינו גם עתה
כי בלהטיהם נעשתה צפרדע במצרים
בחוזק יד הוציאנו ה' ממצרים:

חזק יסף להכותם, בכנים בכל גבולם
רחש ובם ובהמתם, כי כן גזר מלך עולם
חרטומים קצרה יכולתם, בושו ונכלמו כולם
אמרו זאת אצבע חי נעלם, שלא-להי השמים
בחוזק יד הוציאנו ה' ממצרים:

יחד באו ונאספו, כל מיני חיות הטורפים
טרף גדול בהם טרפו, מאד והנם זועפים
דבר ושחין במ נגפו, ברד כבד בו רשפים
הכה בו רעים מקציפים, אל מתחת השמים
בחוזק יד הוציאנו ה' ממצרים:

יסף אדיר להכותם, מכה רבה ועצומה
ארבה עלה לאדמתם, ויכסה את אור החמה
אכל פרי תנובתם, וכל עשבי האדמה
נהלל לשוכן רומה, השם נפשינו בחיים
בחוזק יד הוציאנו ה' ממצרים:

מלך שלח חושך להם, ונעשו כולם כעורים
ולא ראו את אחיהם שלוש ימים אמורים
ולא קמו מתחתיהם, שלוש ימים אחרים
נגלו מצפונים אחרים, אל בני א-להים חיים
בחוזק יד הוציאנו ה' ממצרים:

Treasures

Based on the teachings of
Moreinu v' Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik
Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita



The Festival of Pesach is called the Festival of Matzot

The matzot is from the same root word as mitzvot. Bnei Yisrael came out on this holiday from Egypt in order to accept upon themselves the mitzvot. Just as the matzot are thin, so too, a person loves the mitzvot and wishes to feel that they are not difficult. We know, Hashem does not give mitzvot to Am Yisrael which they cannot abide. Although the mitzvot seem to us big and difficult, they are really small and every person can perform them. This is why the Festival of Matzot is called by its name which refers to mitzvot.

This Festival is also called the Festival of Pesach, and Pesach is from the root word of passing over. This signifies that a person can "pass over" i.e. forget the past and begin a new page. Just like Hashem passed over the houses of Am Yisrael, we pass over all the bad things we have done until now, and concentrate only on the fulfillment of mitzvot.

I also would like to add that the Festival of Pesach is a special Holiday, since everyone prepares for this Festival; rich and poor alike. I feel that on this Festival the Jewish soul awakens, because the Festival of Pesach is a Festival filled with mitzvot, such as leaning, the Four Cups, eating matzot, and eating Maror. All of the miracles that Hashem performed for them were in order to prepare them for receiving the mitzvot.

Of course, we feel the Festival of Pesach today by all the cleaning we do, since there is not home that is not cleaned. Even those who are not at home for the Festival clean their home, because there is an awakening of cleanliness. Regarding this, Chzal say that this is the Festival of cleansing from sin. One cleanses himself from sin and performs mitzvot, in fulfillment of "mishchu yedaychem m'avodah zara v'kechu lachem tzon shel mitzvah – draw forth your hands from idolatry and buy for yourself a sheep of a mitzvah."

Indeed, in order to feel what the Festival of Pesach is, one has to be Jewish, since only a Jew feels the sanctity of Pesach. Regarding this it is stated, "Pesach hu l'Hashem – It is a Passover sacrifice to the Lord," it is the Festival of Hashem. Just as Hashem passed over the houses of Bnei Yisrael during the Plague of the Firstborn and killed only the Egyptian first-born, so should we feel on this Holiday.

It is clear to us that the Festival of Pesach and the Festival of Matzot are connected to one another; one must skip the sins and observe the mitzvot, both Pesach and Matzah. This implies that a person must arrange to skip over all the bad things that he did and begin doing good deeds and fulfilling mitzvot. This is also a facet of cleaning for Pesach. One must wash himself and skip the bad things in order to don new clean clothes. Therefore, this holiday is also known as the Festival of Pesach, as well as the Festival of Matzot.



RELEVANT TOPICS

Why not about Abaye and Rava?

The incident is mentioned of Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah and Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarfon, who were gathered in Bnei Brak and were recounting the story of the Exodus from Egypt the entire

night.

This incident related in the Hagaddah follows what is mentioned right before – “Whoever elaborates upon the events of the Exodus from Egypt is praiseworthy.” Thus, the author of the Haggadah goes on to relate a story about the Tanna'im who discussed lengthily the story of the Exodus from Egypt.

Many people were perplexed; what new lesson does this story come to teach us? Did not other Tanna'im also elaborate on the Exodus from Egypt? And the Amora'im, like Abaye and Rava also elaborated upon it, as well as the Gaonim, Rishonim, and Achronim. Doesn't every Jew discuss the story of the Exodus of Egypt well into the night? What is special about this particular account?

A wonderful explanation was given by the gaon Maran Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, zt"l, (brought in “L'avdo Belaivav Shalem):

On Pesach there is a special opportunity to transform oneself from one extreme to the other.

If we examine the story with the Tanna'im, we will see how a Jew can change radically!

The first Tanna mentioned here is Rabbi Eliezer.

Rabbi Eliezer was the son of a wealthy man. Until the age of twenty-eight he did not learn anything, and did not even know Kriyat Shema or how to recite the Blessing after the Meal. Nevertheless, he grew to become “Rabbi Eliezer HaGadol!”

The second Tanna is Rabbi Tarfon.

In Masechet Kallah it is mentioned that Rabbi Tarfon was enormously wealthy, and the owner of many properties and assets, which normally burdens a person greatly. However, despite his great wealth, he did not engage in anything other than Torah, and grew to be Rabbi Tarfon.

The third Tanna – Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya.

About him the Gemara states (Berachot 28a) that Rabban Gamliel came to visit him and saw that the walls of his house were black. He said to him: “From the walls of your house it is apparent that you are a blacksmith.”

The poverty was apparent in his walls. Black walls! Today even the poorest family have painted walls, just maybe they are dirty. But the walls of Rabbi Yehoshua's house were black because of his extreme poverty. Yet, despite his trials of dire poverty, he grew to become Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya

The fourth Tanna – Rabbi Akiva.

As we all know, until the age of forty, Rabbi Akiva did not read or learn. Every mocked him. His wife suggested that he go learn in the Talmud Torah the letters of the aleph-bet. But he told her, “I'm ashamed to learn with small children.”

What did his wife do in her great wisdom?

She took a donkey that had a dent in its back, laid on it some earth, and planted all kinds of vegetation. She took the donkey with the plants to the street and everyone was astounded, “Have you ever seen a donkey with a portable garden?”

On the first day, all the neighbors came out to observe the amusing sight. On the second day only half the people came to watch, but on the third day no one came out to look. Thus Rachel taught him from the experiment with the donkey:

The same will happen with you when you will go to learn in the Talmud Torah. On the first day everyone will laugh at you, on the second day less, on the third day less, and after a week, they will become accustomed to the situation and not laugh at all.”

Now, even a person who begins learning Torah as a young child barely finishes Shas (Talmud). But to know the entire Bavli and Yerushalmi, when at forty he could not read nor write – what chance did he have?

However, Rabbi Akiva – against all odds – grew to enormously lofty heights, until he achieved such greatness, that Moshe Rabbeinu was jealous of him!

The last Tanna – Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya.

In our time, in order to be a member of the Moetzet Gedolei HaTorah, one must be at least seventy-five years old. Less than seventy-five, one cannot even be a candidate.

And yet, all the leaders of the generation, the holy Tanna'im, the great sages Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Akiva and Rabban Gamliel, were all candidates to be the Nasi (President). But, not one of them was appointed to be the Nasi of the Jewish nation. Whom did they take as a Nasi? A young man who was only eighteen years old – Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah. Against all odds, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah received the honorable appointment.

This is the lesson that the author of the Haggadah teaches us: Do you want to hear an “incident?”

Learn from all these Tanna'im how you should elaborate on the story of the Exodus from Egypt. And if you will ask, from where did we acquire the strength to get out from the forty-ninth level of impurity, and within fifty days to reach the lofty heights of receiving the Torah? This we can learn from the “incident” of specifically these Tanna'im, whose situation seemed impossible, yet they grew to exalted heights.