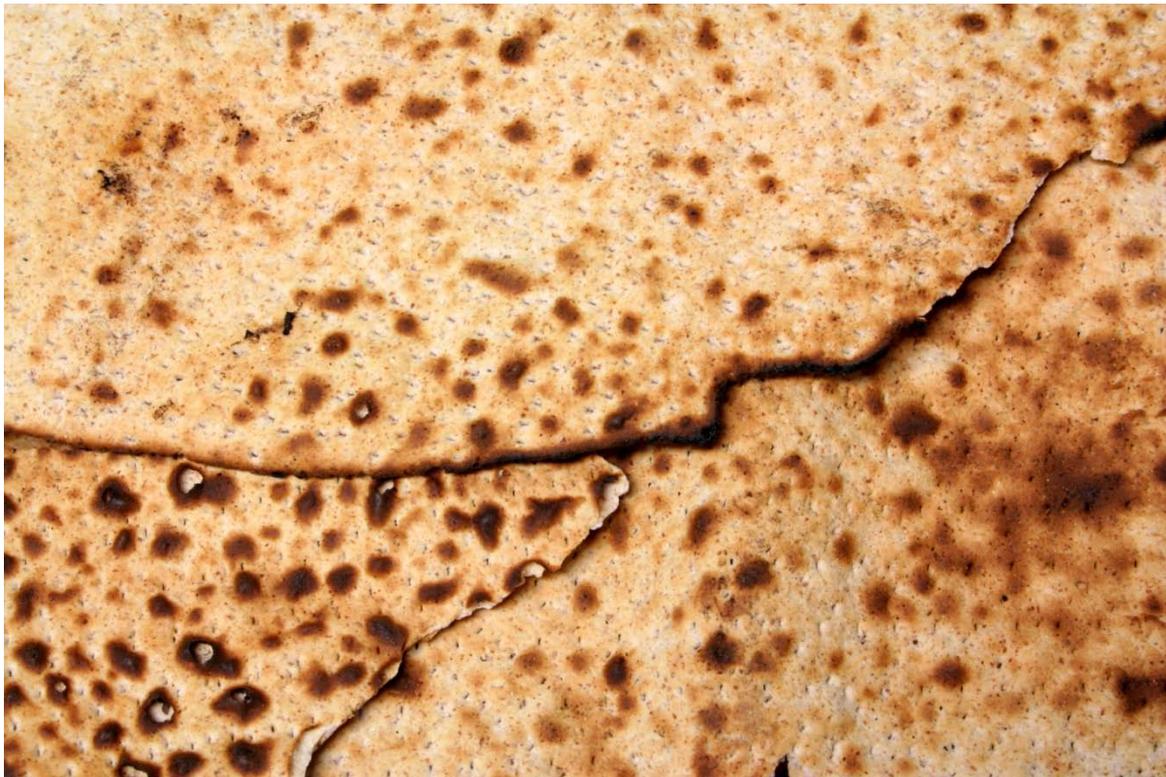


A PESACH READER

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Night and Day

Rabbi Elyakim Milikowsky/Kollel Zichron Amram/Yeshiva of Greater Washington

Pesach is the holiday of our freedom. It is the time when we celebrate our redemption from the enslavement we suffered in Mitzrayim. Pesach begins on the fifteenth day of the month of Nisan, for that is the day we were freed and left the land of Egypt. Each year, on the anniversary of our leaving Egypt, we commence a seven-day holiday to celebrate and commemorate the freedom we gained when we left the bondage and boundaries of Mitzrayim.

One of the central ways in which we achieve this commemoration is through the mitzvos of the Seder night. The Torah commands us to bring a Pesach sacrifice on the fourteenth day of Nisan, and to eat it on the night of the fifteenth, accompanied by Matza and Maror. On this night we are also commanded to remember and relate that God took us out of Mitzrayim. These Biblical mitzvos, augmented by Rabbinic mitzvos and customs, are the foundation of the Seder we have today. In establishing the night of the fifteenth of Nisan as the time to relive and recount our redemption, the Torah seems to be establishing that night, when at midnight God separated us from the Egyptians by passing over our houses as He smote their firstborns, as the essential time of our Geulah, our redemption.

This thesis is borne out by a Gemara in Maseches Berachos (9a), in which the Gemara, explaining a dispute as to whether the Pesach sacrifice may be eaten until midnight or dawn, states: הכל מודים כשנגאלו ישראל ממצרים לא נגאלו אלא בערב שנאמר הוציאך ה' אלוך ממצרים לילה וכשיצאו – *Everyone agrees that when Israel was redeemed from Mitzrayim, they were redeemed only by night, as the verse says 'Hashem your God took you out from Mitzrayim by night'; and when they went out, they went out only by day, as the verse says 'On the morrow of the Pesach the children of Israel went out with an uplifted hand'*. The Gemara is saying that Yetzias Mitzrayim, the Exodus from Egypt, consisted of two parts; the Geulah, the redemption of the Jewish people from the enslavement of the Egyptians, which took place on the night of the fifteenth of Nisan, and the Yetziah, the actual leaving the land of Egypt which occurred the next day. Although both components of Yetzias Mitzrayim are necessary and integral, the night is fixed as the time of our Geulah, our redemption. Night is the time in which we were redeemed from our previous downtrodden existence and elevated by God to be His people.

There is, however, another Gemara in Maseches Berachos (4b) that identifies the day as the time in which we were redeemed. The Gemara discusses there the concept of *semichas Geulah leTefilah* – preceding the Amidah prayer with Shema and its berachos that discuss our redemption. We must first appease God by praising the wonders He did for us in redeeming us from Mitzrayim and choosing us as His beloved nation; only then can we approach Him in prayer to ask for our needs. The Gemara records a dispute between R' Yochanan and R'

Yehoshua ben Levi as to whether *semichas Geulah leTefilah* is necessary both by the morning and night prayers, or if it is reserved solely for the morning prayers. The Gemara explains this dispute as a disagreement as to when the Geulah can be considered to have occurred: ר' יוחנן סבר גאולה מאורתא נמי הוי אלא גאולה מעלייתא לא הויא אלא עד צפרא ור' יהושע בן לוי סבר כיון דלא הויא אלא מצפרא – *R' Yochanon holds that Geulah also occurred at night, although the real Geulah only occurred in the morning, and R' Yehoshua ben Levi holds since it (Geulah) only occurred at morning, (that what occurred) at night is not real Geulah.* The Gemara is clearly saying, insofar as we have a daily obligation to recount our redemption before we pray to God, the real redemption is the actual leaving of Mitzrayim on the day of the fifteenth; the only dispute is whether the occurrences of the night, as a precursor to our leaving Mitzrayim the following morning, also rise to a secondary level of Geulah.

This idea, that throughout the year we consider what occurred on the day of the fifteenth to be the real Geulah, can be also be discerned in the Mishnah (Masechet Berachos 12b) that discusses the obligation to remember Yetzias Mitzrayim every day of the year: אמר ר' אלעזר בן עזריה הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה ולא זכיתי שתאמר יציאת מצרים בלילות עד שדרשה בן זומא שנאמר למען תזכור את יום צאתך כבן מארץ מצרים כל ימי חיך ימי חיך הימים כל ימי חיך הלילות – *R' Elazar ben Azaryah said, I am as a man of seventy years and I did not merit that Yetzias Mitzrayim should be said at night until ben Zoma derived it from the verse that says 'in order that you remember the day of your going out of Mitzrayim all the days of your life', the days of your life – (refers to) the days, all the days of your life – (comes to include) the nights.* All agree that the day is a time in which we are obligated to daily remember Yetzias Mitzrayim; whether we are so obligated at night is a matter of dispute, and when the issue is resolved that our obligation extends to night also, it is secondary to our obligation at day. Presumably, this is because the day is seen as the time of the real Geulah; what occurred at night is only viewed as a precursor to redemption.

We have discovered a duality to the Geulah. On the anniversary of the redemption itself, when we celebrate and relive the Geulah at the Seder table, we recognize night as the time in which we were redeemed. The rest of the year, however, when we remember and recount our redemption, day is considered to be the time of our redemption. What is the meaning of this dichotomy?



The existence of these two distinct times of redemption, and the difference between them, is encapsulated in two Pesukim in Parshas Bo. In the final two Pesukim of the portion of the Torah that relates the story of the occurrences of the fifteenth of Nisan the Torah says: ויהי מקץ שלשים שנה וארבע מאות שנה ויהי בעצם היום הזה יצאו כל צבאות ה' מארץ מצרים: ליל שימרים הוא לה' להוציאם מארץ מצרים הוא הלילה הזה לה' שמורים לכל בני ישראל לדרתם: – *And it was at the end of four hundred and thirty years and it was on that very day all the legions of Hashem went out from the land of Mitzrayim. It is a night of anticipation for Hashem to take them out of the land of Mitzrayim, It is the night for Hashem, a protection for all the children of Israel for their generations (Shemos 12,*

41-42). These two Pesukim, in one breath, say that the Yetzias Mitzrayim of Bnei Yisrael (the legions of Hashem) was at day, and that the night is the time for Hashem to redeem them from Mitzrayim. The Torah seems to be differentiating between the redemption of the Jewish people, and God's redeeming them. This seems an impossibility – how can it be that God redeemed the Jewish people on the night of the fifteenth, yet they were only redeemed the following day?

To resolve this paradox we must delve deeper into the meaning of the redemption of the Jewish people from Egypt. On one level, it can be understood as the beginning of the development of the Jewish people as a nation. Leaving Egypt was the first step the children of Yaakov took towards becoming Klal Yisroel, the nation of Israel that would receive the Torah and settle the land of Israel. This aspect of Yetzias Mitzrayim is what we remember throughout the year. As we go about our daily business we must be cognizant that our existence as Klal Yisrael is by virtue of Hashem having led us out of Egypt on the day of the fifteenth of Nisan so many years ago. The Geulah that we recount each day is, in the words of the Gemara, the *Geulah Malyasa*, the complete Geulah, the time we actually left the confines of Mitzrayim and embarked upon our journey towards our destiny. In this perspective, the amazing events of the preceding night are only a precursor to our Geulah, for although the Egyptians were asking us to leave, in the meantime we were still exactly where we had been for so many terrible years. Day is the time in which Bnei Yisroel actually experienced the Geulah.

On a deeper level, however, the Geulah can be appreciated as much more than just the first step on an exalted national journey. As Rav Hutner explains (*Maamarei Pachad Yitzchok 101*), the redemption of the Jewish people from amongst the Egyptians was actually the creation of the Jewish people. Until the moment of redemption the children of Yaakov were virtually indistinguishable from the Egyptians amongst whom they lived. God, in His infinite kindness, redeemed us and made us His people. This awesome act was beyond the scope of the world as we inhabit it. This Geulah occurred when Hashem performed Makkos Bechoros, the smiting of the firstborns. When Hashem passed over our houses and spared our firstborns, He was creating *bni bechori Yisrael* – His firstborn son, Klal Yisrael. This Geulah took place *b'chatzi halayla* – between the halves of the night. It took no time, for God Himself performed it. The redemption of the night of Pesach was not a complete, actualized Geulah; that occurred only the next morning. It was, however, something even greater. It was a perfect Geulah. When Hashem redeemed Klal Yisroel with Makkos Bechoros, for an ethereal moment they were pure and purely His. There was no time for imperfections to creep into the Jewish people, as the Geulah occurred outside the bounds of time. Night is the time of God's perfect redemption.

All year long we cannot connect to the awesome Godly redemption of Pesach night. We live in an imperfect world, and we remember the imperfect but real Geulah of the actual leaving of Mitzrayim on the morning of the fifteenth of Nisan. The Jewish people left Egypt, but they took some of Egypt with them: וגם ערב רב עלה אתם – *Also a mixed multitude went up with them*. Only on the night of Pesach itself are we enjoined to remember and recount the perfect but ethereal

Geulah of *b'chatzi halayla*, of the time which is above time. We are able to do so because on this night we are not just remembering Yetzias Mitzrayim, we are experiencing it anew. Every Jew is obligated to view himself on Pesach night as if he is being redeemed now; as if Hashem is choosing him and making him, personally, a member of *bni bechori Yisrael*. On the night of Pesach, as we celebrate our Seder, we can elevate ourselves to an existence which we can't even fathom the rest of the year. On this one night we can be true *bnei chorin* – freed of the imperfections of the real world we must live in until the coming of Moshiach and the perfect, eternal Geulah.

Pesach: A Time of Gratitude to Hashem

By Rabbi Hirschel Wohl/Kollel Zichron Amram/Yeshiva of Greater Washington

In Parshas Bo the *posuk* states, “*Pesach you shall celebrate it as a festival for Hashem, for your generations, you shall celebrate it as an eternal statute (חוק).*”¹ An eternal statute or חוק is generally understood as a commandment which is not entirely comprehended. However, when one thinks about Pesach, it seems fairly straightforward. Ask a young child, and they will tell you that Pesach represents Hashem bringing us out of Egypt and freeing us from slavery. What element of חוק do we find by the holiday of Pesach?³ The Ohr Hachaim Hakodesh¹ explains that the holiday of Pesach feels like a חוק, in that although we were brought out of Egypt, we are still in גלות and we are not completely free. The aspect of true חירות (freedom) is lacking and therefore the holiday appears as a חוק to us since we do not feel redeemed.

In גלות, we do not have true freedom and as a result, we often feel disconnected to Hashem. We are not in *Eretz Yisroel* and do not have a Beis Hamikdash to bring offerings during the holiday season as the Torah commands. Therefore, it behooves us to understand how we can become more connected to Hashem during this holiday season. The Pesach Seder and its beautiful lessons are a perfect place to begin to understand how to connect to Hashem even in גלות.

The Message of Gratitude

There is a mitzvah of *סיפור יציאת מצרים*, to *relate* the story of leaving Egypt on Pesach night. A famous question has been asked in relation to this mitzvah. Every day we are obligated in *מצרים זכר יציאת*, remembering leaving Egypt (which we fulfill with the daily *\Shema*); how is the mitzvah on Pesach to *relate* different than the mitzvah of *remembering*?⁴ Rav Chaim Soleveitchik explains that there are three essential differences between the mitzvos of *relating* and *remembering* leaving Egypt. *Remembering* leaving Egypt can happen in any fashion. In contrast, the mitzvah of *סיפור*, *relating*, involves questioning and answering. Even if a person is alone he is obligated to *relate* the story through questions and answers.⁵ Additionally, *relating* the story of Egypt involves starting from the beginning of the story until the end. The Haggadah is set up where it begins with the roots of our history – with Avraham Avinu - and continues through leaving Egypt.⁶ Lastly, *relating* the story includes the mitzvot of Pesach, Matzah, and

Marror in which we are supposed to understand the symbolic nature of these food items. All of these are fulfilled through the Seder on the night of Pesach.

The common denominator found in these three aspects of the Pesach Seder is the emphasis on speaking aloud and talking about the story extensively. The Sefer Hachinuch explains that relating the story with one's mouth awakens one's heart. Speaking about and elaborating the miraculous events will bring us to have an emotional connection with יציאת מצרים. Therefore, even if one is familiar and knowledgeable about the story of יציאת מצרים, he is still obligated in the mitzvah, so as to bring him to feelings of שמחה, joy and thankfulness (Ritvah⁷). When one relates and elaborates on the story, it brings to the surface feelings of joy and thankfulness, allowing one to connect with Hashem.

Not only should we feel gratitude to Hashem for saving our ancestors and giving them the Torah, but we should feel personally grateful that Hashem saved us. As the Haggadah states "If the Holy One blessed be He had not taken us out of Egypt, then we, our children, and our children's children would still be subjugated to Pharaoh in Egypt." However, given that we are in exile and do not have true freedom (as we discussed above), it may be difficult to feel complete gratitude towards the creator. How do we take the gratitude and instill into our own lives?

In the magid section of the Haggadah we read:

“ברוך שומר הבטחתו לישראל ברוך הוא שהקדוש ברוך הוא חשב את הקץ” *Blessed is Hashem who keeps his promise to Israel. For the Holy One, blessed be He calculated the end of exile*. This statement is in reference to Hashem's promise to Abraham at the covenant between the parts when Abraham is promised that Israel will go forth from Egypt with great possessions after the exile. Rabbi Yaakov Me'Lisa (the author of the *Nesivos*) asks what does it mean that Hashem calculated the end of exile?⁸ Also, what is being added when it says Hashem is keeping His promise? Rabbi Melisa explains this passage in the Haggadah by way of a parable.

There are two types of promises a king may make. One promise may be easy to fulfill and the king should not have to expend much time and energy in fulfilling it. For instance, if a king promises a deserved officer no taxes for a year, it would not be too difficult for him to fulfill. This promise requires no energy or thought on the king's behalf. However, if the king makes a promise to someone beloved to him, the king would make it his obligation to put more time and energy into fulfilling his promise. For instance, if the king promises his wife a golden ring, the king will dedicate more time and energy to fulfill it. Even though purchasing the golden ring may be easy, he will spend time thinking of the different ways he can present it to her and what he will say to her at the time of giving the ring. The king will make it his duty to be thinking about his promise on a daily basis until it is fulfilled because he cares about his wife so much. In this sense his wife who receives the gift has two reasons to thank her husband the king, one for the promise and second for the time he spent thinking about his wife and the good he wished to bestow upon her.

In the same fashion Hashem fulfills his promise with the Jewish people by constantly “thinking” about them and saving them from the hands of their enemies. The promise, as understood by the Nesivos, is in reference to the eventual redemption of the Jewish people in the end of days.

In this fashion it connects beautifully to the passage in the seder,

“...וְהָיָא שְׁעִמְדָּה...” *And it is this promise which has stood by our fathers and by us for not just one has risen up against us to destroy us, but in every generation they rise up against us and the Holy One blessed be He saves us from their hand.* Hashem is not only going to fulfill His promise by redeeming us in the end of days, but also Hashem will calculate the end of days, thereby saving us from every nation that seeks to annihilate us. In other words, the only reason we have survived until now is because Hashem configures ways and manipulates the world preventing us from being destroyed. Hashem is constantly thinking about His beloved nation and looking for ways to bestow good tidings upon us.

Pesach is a perfect time to reconnect to Hashem through the lessons which the Haggadah teaches us. After going through the Haggadah and talking about the story of exile we should feel a debt of gratitude. By talking about the story we are also talking to ourselves in the process allowing our words to penetrate our hearts. As we consider all the amazing miracles which Hashem has performed for the Jewish people throughout history we should be overflowing with gratitude and appreciation towards Hashem.

- 1) Shemos 12:14
- 2) Bamidbar 19:1
- 3) According to the Ibn Ezra חוק is in reference to our being outside of Israel. According to the Abarbanel חוק is in reference to some of the specific laws by karbon pesach.
- 4) Sefer Hachinuch Mizvah 21, Emek Bracha ,
- 5) For example, we purposely do things different at the seder so children will ask questions which create discussion.
- 6) The beginning of the story starts with “From the beginning our ancestors worshiped avodah zarah” and the narrative continues to tell about our redemption from Egypt.
- 7) Ritvah commentary on Hagaddah ואילו
- 8) Rabbi Yaakov Melisa commentary on Haggadah

A Letter to Talmidos

The following is a letter that our Menahel, Rabbi Zev Katz, wrote (as part of his weekly messages) to our alumnae this week. As the message relates to the core mission of the Yeshiva and of attitudes toward Chinuch in general, we reproduce it here. We have preserved the less formal tone of the letter, as opposed to the more structured essays usually presented in our series.

Dear Alumnae,

As we bear down on the Yom Tov of Pesach I want to talk about Chinuch. In truth Pesach is the Yom Tov with the greatest focus on children. The Gemara is very clear that there are things we do for the Seder “*k’dai she’yishalu ha’tinonkos*”, and in fact the name of the main part of the Seder, “Magid”, comes from the passuk of “*ve’higadita le’vincha*”, highlighting the primacy of this Mitzva and its' relation to this Yom Tov.

The Medrash in Shmos Rabbah tells us that when Moshe was shepherding the flock of Yisro, one of the sheep ran away and Moshe Rabbeinu chased after it until he reached a brook of water where he saw it drink. Moshe said to the sheep “I didn't know you were running away because you were thirsty”. He saw that the sheep was tired, so he put it on his back and carried it back to the flock. When Hashem observed this, He said: “you who have such compassion for the sheep belonging to a human being are worthy to be the leader of my sheep - Klal Yisroel”. One of the Meforshim asks, was Moshe Rabbainu really correct to leave the entire flock for the sake of just one sheep? How can that be a sign of worthiness to be the leader of a whole people? He answers that was actually the test for Moshe Rabbainu - to see if he understands that a flock is made up of individuals. A leader who doesn't see the individuals within the group is not a leader. Seeing the individual within the group is actually the definition of the leader - not merely a quality that is nice to have.

Along these lines, the Mishna in Pirkei Avos relates the individual qualities of the five talmidim of Raban Yochanon ben Zakkai. Reb Chatzkel Abramsky asks the question that Pirkei Avos is written to teach us life insights and lessons, not to be an encyclopedia of Torah personalities - so what is the Mishna trying to teach us? Reb Chatzkel answers that the Mishna is teaching that if you have multiple talmidim, or multiple children, you don't raise them or teach them the in the exact same way, and you don't try to make them all in your image. The Mishna's lesson

is that your primary responsibility is to find the *nekuda* that defines each child, and to begin to develop that as the central point of the person.

In truth that is the message of the four sons. Many of the Meforshim are troubled in defining the differences between the question of the *chacham* and the *rasha*, and in fact the Torah writes the *pesukim* in such an ambiguous fashion that it requires sophisticated analysis to see the difference. Why didn't the Torah make the difference between them much clearer? Reb Chatzkel answers that the Torah does this to teach us that in raising children you have to understand subtleties, you need to understand things that are beneath the surface. The message is- **four sons, four answers, four approaches**. This is the real way of Chinuch - to be *mechanech al pi darko*. This too is not an added bonus of Chinuch; rather, it is the definition of Chinuch, it is the way Chinuch is supposed to be.

This same concept is mentioned by Rav Schwab ZT"L. In Parshas Ki Sisa, during the incident of the Aigel haZahav, as Moshe descends from Har Sinai Yehoshua tells him that the sounds of commotion from the camp are sounds of war. Moshe tells Yehoshua that these are not sounds of war, but sounds of confusion. The Talmud Yerushalmi, commenting on this episode, asks how is it that Yehoshua, who would one day lead the Jewish people, was not able to discern between the sounds of war and the sounds of confusion. Rav Schwab explains that Moshe was teaching Yehoshua that it's not enough to know that they are sinning - it is more important to know the cause of their sinning. Moshe was explaining to him that the sound he was hearing was not the sound of rebellion - it was actually the sound of fear - fear that Moshe had disappeared, had left them, and now they were afraid. That it was Moshe meant. A leader of Klal Yisroel has to know what is beneath the surface. Again, it's not an "extra" for a leader; it is the essence of the definition of what leadership means.

This is the hallmark of the Chinuch that you received. It is the goal we have always had. Celebrate the differences and unite them under one roof, all dedicated to finding their own unique contribution to K'vod Shomayim. Pesach is the opportunity for you to pass that Chinuch on as you lay the foundation for your family's future. May HKB"H give us all the Siyata Dishmaya to raise our children to their strengths, and to appreciate their individuality, and enhance it in a way that brings *kavod* to Him.

Chag Kasher v'Sameach!!
RZK

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