

EGYPT & PASSOVER

- Bondage
- Moses Staff
- 10 Plagues
- Jacob
- Hagadda

Egyptian racism
of the Jews

1313 B.C.E

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Jewish racism
of Blacks

BLACKS: A LESSER RACE?

- Racist Views
vs. God's Words

IS THE TORAH RACIST?

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Pages 20-27

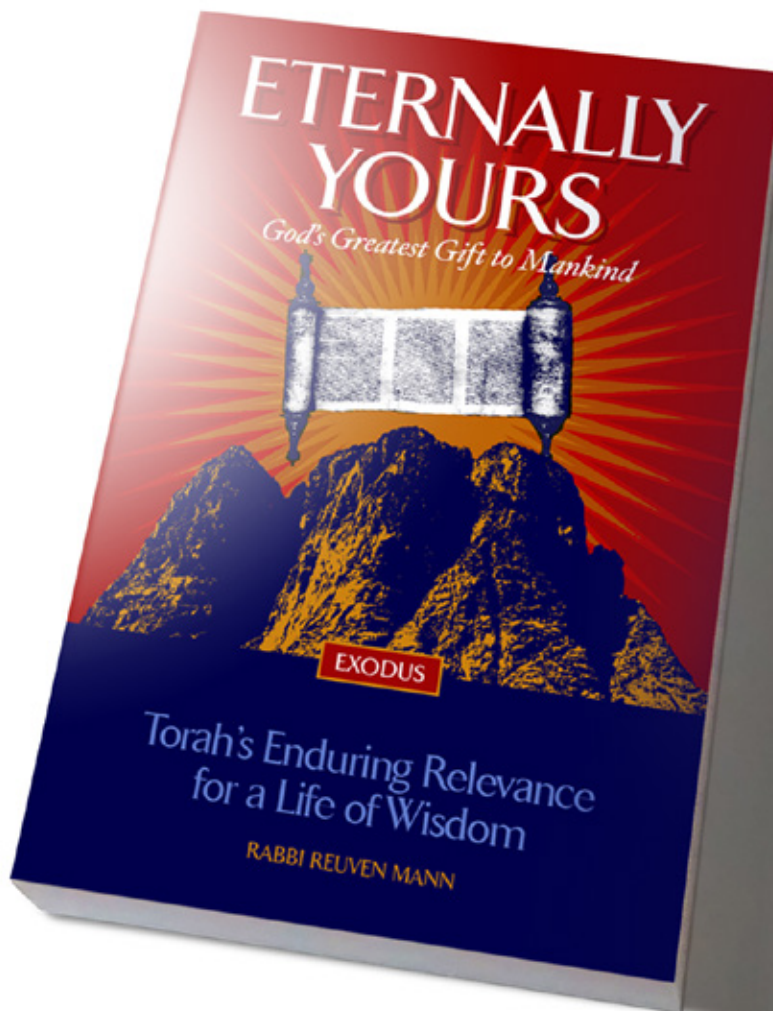


LETTERS

- Demons & Ghosts
- Corrupt Rabbis
- Why the Good Suffer
- The Angel of Death

Exodus

The 2nd of the Five Books of Moses is one of the most fascinating and inspiring stories ever written. It describes the formation of a unique and eternal People, from their cruel enslavement by King Pharaoh, to their miraculous redemption and emergence as a nation via a public Revelation on Mt. Sinai.



The themes in this Book are eternal and applicable to every time and situation. Throughout history downtrodden Peoples, identified with the oppressed Jews and composed inspiring hymns which depicted Moses confronting Pharaoh and commanding him to “Let my People go!” The purpose of this book, “Eternally Yours” is to examine the underlying ideas contained in Exodus. My governing premise is that there is deep wisdom hidden beneath the surface which if properly apprehended will enlighten our lives. I analyze the emotional forces at work in the drama and this yields new insights into human psychology with great practical consequences for our understanding of the dynamics of social interactions. It also provides a deeper insight into the phenomenon of anti-Semitism and demonstrates that the pattern depicted in Exodus has recurred many times in history. This contains important lessons for confronting this problem in our time. The analyses and resolutions presented in this book lead to meaningful conclusions that are relevant to a deeper understanding of the challenges we face today as individuals and a society. My hope is that the book will enhance the reader’s appreciation of the Bible’s stories and that he will come to regard it as a source of enlightenment, enjoyment and inspiration. While it is written from the perspective of an Orthodox Rabbi, I firmly believe that people of all faiths and backgrounds who have an interest in the Bible will find it useful and gratifying. It contains no religious preaching, only a search for and analysis of, the eternal wisdom of the Book of Exodus.

Rabbi Reuven Mann

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THE JOURNAL ON JEWISH THOUGHT



3 Letters

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

7 Human Equality

EDITORIAL
Responding to racism

8 Archaeology

ARUTZ SHEVA
Ancient coins bear evidence to the revolt against the Romans.

9 Bondage

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM
How God's enslavement of the Jews fit the crime Moses always pondered.

10 Ten Plagues

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM
The plagues had a design beyond the spectacular miracles; Ibn Ezra hints to their underlying messages.

14 Passover

RABBI DR. DARRELL GINSBERG
Jacob's consideration about Egypt, and the Haggadda are analyzed.

16 Passover

RABBI BEN-CHAIM & DANI ROTH
Dani Roth's question opens up a new insight into why Moses required a staff for the miracles.

20 Passover Imagery

MESORA.ORG
Over the years, Mesora and the JewishTimes have created original Exodus images and collected others. We hope these images add to your Seder and excite your family and guests. Chag Sameach!

LETTERS

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Are Blacks and Whites Equals?

Theop: I read a recent post by Rabbi Ben-Chaim that refutes the notion of Black Inferiority. I am Black and actually surprised by this and I want to know whether he really meant that.

Rabbi: Yes, I mean that, and I will answer your many other valid concerns in-line.

Theop: I want to join the people of Israel based on some NDE experience I had in the past but the answer is always that I should join the Noachide group, of which I tried to join, but failed to be accepted. I suspect if I was white I would have been more acceptable.

Rabbi: Any person desirous of converting to Judaism should be welcomed by the Jewish court, which should determine his/her sincerity, and then teach him/her and convert him/her. This is God's plan, that Torah is observed by all peoples. This explains why Abraham taught all people he met, why Moses tried to teach Pharaoh, and why our greatest leaders were converts, descendants of converts or married converts.

Theop: However, in some past magazine Black inferiority was discussed especially a reference to the Talmud about Ham committing a certain lewd sin while in the ark and his skin turning black...the curse of Noach on the Canaanite. At home I have a commentary from the Lubavitcher that mentioned that this is the main reason the Abraham and the founders of Israel avoid marriage with the Black people.

Rabbi: Perfected men like Abraham never had issue with one's skin color, so this matter that you heard from Lubavitch is false. An intelligent Jew today would have no issue marrying a Black spouse. And about Canaan, Noah's curse was not that he become less intelligent, as that is impossible for a person to change. Noah's curse was that he be a slave to his brothers (Gen. 9:25).

(CONT. ON NEXT PAGE)

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Theop: That is why specifically Aaron and Marian were angry with Moses for marriage to an Ethiopian lady.

Rabbi: This too is false, as the Torah (Num. 12:2) openly states that Miriam's contention with Moses was that he left his wife, as if Moses was greater than Miriam and Aaron, that Moses should separate from his wife and no longer engage in sexual relations. But Moses was in fact far greater than they were, as God says (Num. 12:7,8). Moses separated from his wife only at God's command. Miriam had no issue with Tzipora, Moses' wife, being black. Had she any issue, why wait so many years to mention it?

Theop: In contemporary Israel, it is an open secret that Jews especially in Israel suspect that Ethiopian Jews and other African are inferior and backward; I have read several articles on this. I just want to know why the Rabbi believes in the equality of man when no Black nation has been able to construct a successful, prosperous society, from Africa to the Caribbeans, building what other people regard as shit-hole society instead of the Garden of Eden. Thanks. I am asking with a sincere heart.

Rabbi: Israeli culture is evidently flawed. I understand that many Israelis are quite superstitious, believing in red strings as fortuitous, that notes in walls get answered, and that rabbis can give blessings...such beliefs rendering these Jews lower in human rank than a Black society that fails to prosper. And that failure to prosper is a cultural phenomenon—not a racial or genetic limitation—as generations follow previous ones that do not properly educate or toil to advance themselves. Ancient Indians and Egyptians—generation after generation—accepted mysticism. With no intelligence, man's need for acceptance forces his mind to actually believe his cultural beliefs are correct. Abraham too served idols, until his mind developed and discovered God. His intelligence overpowered his social needs. He made enemies, as he cared more for speaking truths.

I advise you to earnestly seek a good rabbi or knowledgeable Torah teacher in your area and learn Torah and convert to Judaism. ■

Demons, Ghosts, & the Angel of Death

Reader: Will there be animals in heaven? I also wanted to know if you believe in reincarnation? I am converting to Judaism and some of the things I've been hearing about are really hard for me to believe, i.e., demons, ghosts, the Angel of death. For someone who wasn't raised to believe this way, these concepts are really hard to grasp. I know without a fact that the messiah hasn't come yet because what is stated in the Torah that he would accomplish hasn't happened yet. Do you think you could help me? Thank you and may Hashem richly bless you.

Rabbi: Heaven is not physical, as our bodies decay in the grave, but our souls exist in a non-physical state of bliss. Thus, there are no people or animals "there." We are in communion with God's wisdom. But with regard to the World-to-Come, it is stated, "No eye has seen it, God, aside from You God" (Isaiah 64:3) (Talmud Berachos 34b).

Torah does not speak of reincarnation, only of resurrection at one point in the future. Saadia Gaon fully rejects reincarnation as an alien and foolish belief, perhaps started by Egypt's culture ("The Book of Beliefs and Opinions" Yale Judaica Series, Vol. I "The Soul" chap. VIII pp 259). Reincarnation is not found in Torah, but only in the mouths of today's Jews, which does not determine what is a Torah truth. As Maimonides says, "We only accept as truth one of three matters: that which we experience with one of our senses, that which our mind tells us must be true, or that which is found in Torah." But if any notion is not validated in one of these three ways, Maimonides teaches we must reject it as false. And this is sensible, for there is no other means to determine what is real other than our senses, our intellect, or God's authority.

Demons are not to be accepted as typically misunderstood, i.e., living "evil" beings roaming the earth, as they have never been encountered. When the rabbis referred to demons, they referred to psychological issues, such as imagining we see people when we are isolated. The social need is so powerful that the mind creates vague images or shadows of people to remove our loneliness, just like those in the

desert thirsting for their lives will imagine an oasis.

And the a Angel of Death, as Maimonides explains, refers to the result of following our instincts. There is no real Angel of Death, other than the term applied to those following a purely physical lifestyle. As they have never engaged their intellects, there is no means by which their souls can continue after death. Therefore, as following one's instinctual desires destroys the soul, this lifestyle earns the appellation Angel of Death. This means that one's poor choices is the true "Angel of Death."

The account of Saul and the witch on the surface appears to validate the existence of a ghost. The witch ostensibly raised Samuel from the dead, but the rabbis (Radak, Samuel I, 28:25 towards the end) view this as metaphor. The reason why Prophets depicts this story as literal, is precisely to convey how real this fantasy was in King Saul's mind. Torah has many modes of conveying truths, from repetition, metaphor, juxtaposition, and as here, of an outright impossibility. (Read the entire analysis: <http://www.mesora.org/saulandthewitch.htm>)

Follow Maimonides' principles and accept only that which passes these three methods of validation. You will find nothing in Torah that disagrees with your mind. It is for this reason that the beliefs that you have heard as so called "Jewish" concepts are disagreeable to you. They are misunderstandings that people heard when they were children and have not been able to analyze and reject as adults. ■

Corrupt Rabbis

Everett: I received the following email from Rabbi X. Does he present truths?

Rabbi: Everett, I will quote Rabbi X piecemeal, and insert my replies in line below...

Rabbi X: All the righteous people of the world will have their share in the world to come.

Rabbi: Provided a gentile follows truths of what God is and all fundamentals, one need not be born Jewish to earn the afterlife. Conversely, born Jews who reject or don't know or don't agree with fundamentals can forfeit the afterlife. It's not about who your parents are, but how you think and live.

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Rabbi X: In Judaism, we are not judged on our thoughts, we are not judged on our beliefs, but rather we are judged by God on our actions, on what we do, on our behavior, our acts. It does not matter that one is in a false religion, in idolatry, even. One will be judged on the behaviors that would be required to worship in those idolatrous faiths, but that is still the behaviors that are judged and not the idolatrous faith.

Rabbi: As you know, the 10 Commandments are split into two sets of five; five commands on each one of the two tablets. The first set of five (God's existence, idolatry, using God's name in vain, sabbath and honoring parents) are laws between man and God, while the second set (murder, adultery, kidnapping, swearing falsely and desiring a friend's possessions) are laws between man and his fellow. Within both sets, Saadia Gaon explained that man acts in only 1 of 3 capacities: thought, speech, and action. There is nothing else that man can perform. Within each set of 5 laws, there is a hierarchy of greater importance to lesser importance. Thus, regarding laws between man and God, we notice that the first two laws deal with human thought (accepting God's existence and idolatry) the third law is relegated to speech, and the last 2 are relegated to action. This is because what we think is more vital in our relationship to God than our actions. This must be so, as our relationship to God—a metaphysical being—is not a physical relationship but a mental relationship. In contrast, laws between man and man commence with murder and end with desire. Again, this is because our relationship with man is physical and how we act is more vital than what we think. It is a greater crime to kill somebody than to think about killing him. We learn from here that thought is vital, and this can determine whether we have the afterlife or not. For if we believe in idolatry, we forfeit the afterlife.

To be clear, when a law governs our thoughts, like laws prohibiting idolatry which primarily is the belief in a power other than God, action is only an expression of a corrupt thought. Our souls are more primary than our bodies, and when we corrupt our souls with false notions, it is a greater crime. In terms of the court's ability to punish, this is where behavior comes into the picture: one can be punished for idolatry only through action, but one can forfeit his afterlife

through thought. Rabbi X is incorrect and has no Torah source to defend his position.

Rabbi X: As you may have heard me say, our God is not so petty and small that He only answers the prayers of those who name Him in their prayers, or who have the right faith, the right Belief System. Yes, even the Buddhist and the Hindu get prayers answered, get a Yes from God, even though these faiths are not Judaism, and, certainly in Hinduism, there is idolatry, their adherents get their prayers answered by God.

Rabbi: King David disagrees with Rabbi X: "God is close to all who call Him, to all who call Him in truth" (Psalms 145:18). This means that God is not close to those who pray to false gods. "Not being close" can only be demonstrated in a lack of relationship, meaning, God not reacting to an idolater's prayers. We also read, "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have a mouth but do not speak; they have eyes but do not see. They have ears but do not hear; they have a nose but do not smell. Hands, but they do not feel; feet, but do not walk; they do not make a peep from their throat. Like them will be their makers, all those that trust in them" (Psalms 115). Here, King David states that idolaters receive no reply. Furthermore, the idolaters are "like their idols." This means the idolater is as deaf, dumb and blind as his stone god. Again, this teaches God does not relate to the idolater, but he remains in his ignorance, silence and blindness.

The Book of Job also teaches that even a Jew (monotheist) with basic true concepts of God will not receive a response from God, if he harbors false ideas of God's justice. That is why God did not speak to Job until Job agreed with Elihu's correct teachings (thereby increasing his intellectual perfection which then enabled God to reach him). So, it's not just the idolater who receives no reply from God, but even the Jew who is missing certain information of how God operates, this too blocks any communication from God. This is sensible, for if one prays to an idol or a false god, and God responds, this will endorse the idol.

Again, Rabbi X is incorrect and again, has no Torah source to defend his position. ■

The Good Suffer

Reader: Throughout the Torah, especially in Devarim, we are told that "if you observe the Torah" then you will be given a good life, long days/ years, peace, prosperity and health. The Torah tells us to choose life. However, observance of the Mitzvos, especially when you count the 10,000 extra d'rabbans, do not seem to make people rich, successful etc. The rabbinic laws drain you of your time and wealth (one guy wrote how he cannot afford yeshiva education). If the Torah promise all this, why do we have the perennial problem where the good seem to suffer and the bad people prosper?

Rabbi: I will paraphrase Rabbi Israel Chait:

Rules apply in general, and generally we find that one living a Torah lifestyle enjoys life. He is not concerned about expenditures to fulfill Torah or Rabbinic laws because he values the perfection he derives from them. There are exceptions of good people who endure suffering that we do not understand, but this does not deny the reality of the good lives of upright Jews. We cannot understand individual cases, that is up to God to determine if there is some consideration to withhold prosperity from a certain upright person.

"Length of days" does not apply to longevity, but that each individual day is most fulfilling. Therefore, a person who dies at 30 years old can experience "length of days" if the quality of each one of his days was most fulfilling, and that is found in the highest degree when one studies Torah. One can be quite poor but also quite happy because his enjoyment is not wealth, but wisdom.

Another important point is that one who values the Torah finds he needs much less in life because his satisfaction is not derived from wealth and possessions like beautiful homes and beautiful cars, but from wisdom. This type of person can have very little money but feel extremely rich because he needs very little, therefore he purchases much less and retains much more of what ever wealth he has. And to him, that extra wealth makes him feel rich, even if it's only one thousand dollars. He also has much more time on his hands because he is not pursuing the accumulation of wealth and this adds to his peace of mind. So wealth cannot be measured in terms of bank accounts, but in a

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person's sense of satisfaction. Someone who earns only \$25,000 a year but finds all of his needs are covered is "richer" than a millionaire who is not satisfied with all he has.

At the end of his laws of Shmitta and Yovale (13:13), Maimonides explains that one who dedicates himself to a life of Torah, God will give him his needs to sustain him. It does not say God will make him a millionaire because he does not want to be a millionaire. Rather, one who values Torah and wisdom wants as much time as possible to be involved in this pursuit and only needs a roof, clothing and food. ■

"Powerful Segulah for Jewish Singles"

Rabbi: That was the title of the email I received last week. An orthodox organization was offering to pray for singles, if they were paid, clearly misleading singles with guaranteed success in finding a mate. My response follows...

Torah says that God works with reward and punishment. Therefore, a rasha can't be helped through \$180 donations, but only through teshuvah. And a tzaddik doesn't need this method, as God will answer his prayers based on his perfection...without paying you.

Segulas are not to be found in Torah, Neviim or Kasuvim. Torah's prescription is tefilos to Hashem, as displayed by Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov and their wives. They are examples for us, explaining why Hashem included their lives in Torah. We are not to add or subtract to the Torah's lessons, or foolishly suggest, "We are on a lower level and need amulets or seagulls." That belief adds to Torah, and is idolatrous. Even the Shulchan Aruch says people who believe the mezuzah to possess segulos (powers) are sinful:

"If one affixes the mezuzah for the reason of fulfilling the command, one may consider that as reward for doing so he will be watched by G-d. But, if one affixes the mezuzah solely for protective reasons, it in fact has no guidance, and the mezuzah will be as knives in his eyes". (Gilyon M'harsha, Yoreh Daah, 289, page 113 on the bottom)

Please halt this deception. I know you also don't guarantee that prayers are answered by returning money to unanswered people who paid you, so you are taking money from unsuspecting victims, which is stealing and Lifnay Ivare, misleading.

Not praying for those who don't pay you is also cruel. Honesty. Truth. This is what Hashem desires. ■

Self-medicate?

Rabbi: No person in their right mind would inject himself with an unknown fluid, for he knows this can be fatal. And, as we know that earthly life lasts only a few decades, our greater concern should be for our souls which can enjoy an eternity of pleasure. The problem people face is their conviction that physical pleasures outweigh pleasures of wisdom and the soul. People also live with a fantasy of immortality, making it additionally difficult to embrace the truth of a brief lifespan and the reality of the afterlife. But the pleasures of the afterlife can also be enjoyed here if a person can break away from physical pleasures and experiment with Torah study. It's difficult to share with the person who is ignorant of Torah that he can truly enjoyment Torah study and wisdom in general, instead of trying to gain happiness from wealth and fame that the most successful people don't seem to find. One must spend some time learning to enjoy the experience.

Part of the problem is that our society raises us to seek public approval, expressed in the value of success and fame (public matters), as opposed to the pursuit of wisdom (a private experience). Of course, society got this notion from the very design of our psyches. Psychologically, an infant craves parental approval. The infant views the parent as more significant than any other person. At a certain point in maturation, the infant becomes an adult who recognizes that his parents are no different than any other. What most people do at this point is seek to fill the void by creating figures in their mind that will replace the "parental" approval for which they still crave. As Rabbi Israel Chait stated, society itself fills that parental role. Thereby, people continue to live guided by the unconscious emotion for approval. And as society praises success and fame, people

spend their entire lives chasing it...all to gain an unconscious approval from the "parent." But people fail to attain true happiness. Why?

Judaism asks a person to question everything, to examine his behaviors, and to learn what God has taught to be the true source of happiness. God designed us, therefore His prescription for happiness has to be true. A person truly wishing happiness must not self-medicate, as he knows the doctors know better than him, so he also must not ignore God's prescription for happiness. Doing so, a person forfeits a truly happy life and perhaps even his afterlife. Therefore, it behooves every person to immediately consider God's words, identify a knowledgeable Torah educator or resource, and invest time in order to experience what you are missing. Just as we are convinced by a doctor's knowledge to follow his advice, should we not be even more convinced by the Creator's prescription for happiness? ■

Relating to God

Ben: Since Hashem is transcendent (not immanent) and therefore does not have emotions or attributes, what does it mean to emulate Him? I understand that the Torah was "written in the language of man" and due to human limitation, had to describe Him in anthropomorphic terms (including His 13 Middot). Through the Torah, He provides us with human examples to emulate (such as the patriarchs) in order for us to relate to tangible examples of remarkable character. But in terms of how we relate to Him, the God of the Philosophers, I'd like to read/hear an articulated description of rationalist theology as it pertains to how humans can relate to the Unknowable One.

I like to use this comparison: God is akin to the builder of the computer, the physical world is akin to the computer itself, and humans are akin to the programs therein. The programs can never understand how they came to exist, nor can they find the builder who wrote their code, since he exists outside of the system, but they may be able to recognize that there is an intelligence behind it. The builder can interact with the computer or even choose to destroy it, and neither would affect him whatsoever. That being said, Hashem "spoke" to Moshe. So what does this communication really mean? How

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can we understand His "love" for us if He is devoid of emotion? How did He create the world from nothingness if He has no will? This, by definition, would compartmentalize Him into separate notions, chas veshalom.

Obviously believing in His immanence creates more problems than solutions, and I'm well aware that classical Judaism is purely monotheistic not pantheistic. As a Jew who follows the tradition of Maimonides and the Geonim, I was posed with the question of how one can seek a relationship with the transcendent God of the philosophers. The New Age Jewish movements, although not aligned with Mesora, do offer a clearer system of how to connect to God (even if incorrect), which in turn makes it more attractive to the masses. Whereas rationalists don't seem to have a set hashkafa or consensus on the matter. I could be wrong, and I apologize for my rant, but I hope you understand what I'm trying to say. Which books/articles do you recommend?

Thank you, Ben

Rabbi: I suggest Duties of the Heart.

Regarding how we imitate God's perfection when we do not know what He is, God already addressed this by commanding us in the many mitzvahs that His intelligence determined is the happiest life and how we draw closer to Him. God commands us in matters like charity and justice, knowing that we can only act on these institutions in human terms.

Rabbi Israel Chait explained that when man is involved in pursuing wisdom and Torah knowledge, that is, as the Rav stated, a "rendezvous with God." Meaning that this is the closest relationship man can experience and it is also the most enjoyable, and all that man should seek.

God's love towards man means His will for our specified perfection as outlined in the Torah. His love for us means His desire for our ultimate good, and the primary example of this love is His giving of His Torah to mankind.

Regarding God having will, which you question the meaning of since that is a human term, we must say that His creation of the universe and man are not without purpose, this being the meaning of the word will. ■



Racism put to rest.
Twin sisters of different races.
Coincidentally featured in
this month's National Geographic.



Human Equality

As Clear As Black & White

EDITORIAL

Black people descend from the same first couple from whom white, Asian, and Indian people descend. Adam and Eve are mankind's grandparents. God never reinvented man that one race is lesser or better. Some Jews feel they are better, and that is racist arrogance. We all have the identical psyche, body and soul. Moses married a black woman, and Abraham cared for all walks of life. Judaism does not judge a person by how we are born, but how we die; were we righteous? God is the authority, and His Torah (Bible) says "One Torah for the Jew and convert." Meaning, all humans possess the identical potential. And consider this: God could have created any of you white/Jews as black/gentiles. Therefore, take no baseless pride in how your Maker made you..."He made us, it was not we [who did]" (Kind David, Psalms 100:3)

It behooves an intelligent person to study the words of our greatest Torah teachers, starting with Maimonides. I quote him verbatim below where he states that every human being has equal potential in God's eyes. This is not to be taken lightly, and one must have great respect for great minds, as the saying goes, "From Moshe (Moses) to Moshe (Maimonides) none have risen on par with Moshe":

Not only the tribe of Levi, but every person from anyone who enters the world whose spirit generously moves him, and he understands from his own thinking to separate himself to stand before God, to serve Him and to worship Him, to know God, and he walks uprightly as God made him, and he breaks off from his neck the many calculations that people seek, this person is holy of holies and God is his portion and his inheritance forever and eternally. And he merits in this world a means to sustain him just as the priests and Levites. Behold, King David, peace be upon, said, "God is my portion and my cup, You support my lot" (Psalms 16:5). (Maimonides, Laws of Sabbatical Year & the Jubilee 13:13) ■

Archaeology

Archaeologists discover dozens of 'freedom coins' from Jewish Revolt against Rome in cave near Temple Mount

Coins from revolt against Romans found near Temple Mount

Arutz Sheva Staff, 26/03/18 14:40



Bronze coins, the last remnants of a four-year Jewish revolt against the Roman Empire, were found near the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

These bronze coins were discovered by Hebrew University archaeologist Dr. Eilat Mazar during renewed excavations at the Ophel, located below the Temple Mount's southern wall.

These 1.5cm bronze coins were left behind by Jewish residents who hid in a large cave (7x14 meters) for four years (66-70 C.E.) - from the Roman siege of Jerusalem, up until the destruction of the Second Temple and the city of Jerusalem.

While several of the coins date to the early years of the revolt, the great majority are from its final year, otherwise known as, "Year Four" (69-70 CE). Significantly, during the final year, the Hebrew inscription on the coins was changed from "For the Freedom of Zion" to "For the Redemption of Zion," a shift which reflects the changing mood of the rebels during this period of horror and famine.

"A discovery like this - ancient coins bearing the words "Freedom" and "Redemption" - found right before the Jewish Festival of Freedom - Passover - begins is incredibly moving," shared Dr. Mazar.

In addition to Hebrew inscriptions, the coins were decorated with Jewish symbols, such as the four Biblical plant species: palm, myrtle, citron and willow, and a picture of the goblet that was used in the Temple service.

Many broken pottery vessels, including jars and cooking pots, were also found in the cave. According to Mazar, it is remarkable that this cave was never discovered by subsequent residents of Jerusalem nor used again after the Second Temple period. As a result, the cave acts as a veritable time capsule of life in Jerusalem under the siege and during the four-year revolt against the Roman Empire.

The new finds all date back to the time of the rebellion and were found in the Ophel Cave directly above a Hasmonean Period layer that was situated at the base of the cave. A more complete report of these findings will be published in the third volume of the Ophel excavations; the second is being published this week.

According to Mazar, the coins were well preserved, probably because they were in use for such a short time. A similar number of "Year Four" coins were found near Robinson's Arch, near the Western Wall, by Professor Benjamin Mazar, Eilat Mazar's grandfather. He conducted the Temple Mount excavations right after Israel's Six Day War, on behalf of Hebrew University's Institute of Archaeology.

The Ophel excavations are situated within the Walls Around Jerusalem National Park, which is managed by the National Parks and Gardens Authority and the Eastern Jerusalem Development Company. Funding was generously provided by the Herbert W. Armstrong College of Edmond, Oklahoma, whose students participate in the digs. ■

God's Justice: Bondage

Rabbi Moshe Ben-Chaim

Why were the Jews subjected to Egyptian bondage? To recap, Moses once saved the life of a Jew beaten by an Egyptian. Moses carefully investigated the scene, he saw no one present, and killed the Egyptian taskmaster and buried him in the sand. The next day, Moses sought to settle an argument between the infamous, rebellious duo Dathan and Aviram. They responded to Moses, "Will you kill us as you killed the Egyptian?" Moses feared as the matter was known. But how was this matter made public? The Torah described the scene just before Moses killed the taskmaster (Exod. 2:12), "And he turned this way and that way, and there was no man (present)..." If there was clearly no one present, who informed on Moses? Rabbi Israel Chait taught there is only one possible answer: the Jew who Moses saved was the informant. We are astounded that one who's life was saved would inform on his savior. What causes such a degree of unappreciative behavior? The Torah's literal words describing Moses' astonishment are "Therefore the matter is known," referring to the disclosure of Moses' murder of the Egyptian. Rashi quotes a midrash (Exod. 2:14) on the words "the matter is known":

"[Moses thought] the matter has been made known to me on which I used to ponder: What is the sin of the Jews from all the seventy nations that they should be subjugated to back-breaking labor? But now I see they are fit for this."

Moses now understood why the Jews were deserving of Egyptian bondage. This ungrateful Jew's backstabbing act answered Moses' question. But this ungrateful nature of informing on Moses is generated from another flaw: the need for Egyptian approval. That is, "Even if my brother Jew saves me, Egypt is still the authority whom I must respect." It wasn't aggression against Moses, but an "uncon-

ditional allegiance to Egypt." Even prior to Egyptian enslavement, the Jews' were emotionally crippled, and identified with their Egyptian host. The famous Patty Hearst case embodies the Stockholm Syndrome, where victims sympathize with their captors. Israel identified with Egypt. Such an identification would cause one to inform on his own friend, even on his own savior Moses. Moses witnessed this corrupt character trait firsthand and realized that Israel justly received the Egyptian bondage as a response. But how does the punishment fit the crime? You may ask that the order is reversed, as this ungrateful nature came subsequent to bondage, not before. Moses too knew this, yet Moses saw something in this ungrateful act which he knew predated Egyptian bondage, answering Moses' question why Israel deserved this punishment. What was Moses' understanding of the justice behind Israel's bondage? Seeing that the Jew informed on him even after saving his life, Moses said, "the matter is known," meaning, I understand why the Jews deserve bondage.

The informant was a valid example of the Jewish nation as a whole. He displayed how far the Jews were corrupted into seeking human acceptance, over God's acceptance. He represented the sin of the entire people. In the Jew's mind, man was raised to inappropriate heights, overshadowing God's true position. Man was so valued to the Jew, that he would turn on his own brother, his own savior.

Sforno (Gen. 15:13) says the Prophet Ezekiel blamed the Jews' idolatry as the cause of the bondage in Egypt: "But they rebelled against me and would not

hearken to Me; they did not—every man—cast away the detestable things of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt; then I said I would pour out My fury upon them in the midst of the land of Egypt" (Ezek. 20:8). Sforno adds (Ibid.) that while the tribes (Jacob's sons) were alive, no servitude began, as they were righteous and influential individuals. Thus, the Jews lived in Egypt freely and without sin, for a while. Eventually they were attracted to the Egyptian idolatry, as Ezekiel teaches, and were oppressed due to God's will, as punishment. The Jews' allegiance to Egypt to gain their acceptance over God drove them to accept Egypt's idolatry.

What was the remedy? The Jews were presented by God (through slavery) the opportunity of realizing this sin. Slavery is the one institution where man desires not to be under the grips of man. "And their cries ascended to God because of the slavery. And God heard their cries..." (Exod. 2:23). Egyptian bondage successfully caused the Jews to redirect their hearts towards God to remove their affliction. God's plan worked, and He immediately commenced His plan to save them. Realizing the informant's sin, Moses now had his answer for why the slavery was a just response from God. The punishment fit the crime.

It would seem that today, the crime continues as Israel treats her enemy as a prospect for peace, even while the enemy's leadership urges his people to shed Jewish blood. King David acted properly. He did not go to the table to talk peace with his enemies. He rightfully warred against those who would butcher his people. David slew Goliath with his own hands. David did not release murderers, but put them to death as God demands. All, righteous prophets like Samuel did the same, as is the case with Agag. Our kings and prophets are recorded in Torah precisely to learn God's philosophy.

Misguided Jewish leadership driven by the ancient criminal desire for world acceptance will continue to kill Jews. ■

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Ibn Ezra on the Ten Plagues

Miracles with Profound Messages



Ibn Ezra directs our attention to the performers of the Ten Plagues (Exod. 8:12):

“Know, that by the hand of Aaron were the first three plagues and these signs were in the lower matter as I explained earlier, because two (of them) were in water, and the third was in the dust of the earth. And the plagues performed by Moses with the staff were in the higher elements, just as his (Moses) status was higher than Aaron’s status. For example, the plague of hail and locusts were brought by the wind, and (so too) the darkness, it was in the air; also the plague of boils was through him (Moses). Only three (plagues) were without the staff; the wild animals, the disease of the animals, and the death of the firstborns. And one (plague) with no staff was through Moses, with a little connection with Aaron, and it was the plague of boils.”

Ibn Ezra catches our attention by his first word, “Know”, which urges the reader to think into this specific commentary. He intimates that there is more here than meets the eye. What is he driving at? He does not simply list each plague with its performer, or describe the involvement of the staff. We are not interested in dry statistics when studying God’s wisdom. Here, Ibn Ezra is teaching important principles. Beginning with the word

“Know”, Ibn Ezra is teaching an important lesson.

Each of the Ten Plagues was used as a tool to teach Egypt and the world the following: 1) Aaron and Moses were each assigned specific plagues, in the lower and higher realms respectively, and they performed a similar number of plagues independently, 2) The staff was present in only certain miracles, 3) Moses joined with Aaron in a single plague of boils, 4) God distinguished between Egypt and the Jews through two plagues, in which no staff was used, and which was placed in the center of the series of plagues.

In his Laws of Idolatry, 1:1, Maimonides teaches that early man already began projecting greatness onto the heavenly bodies. Man thought, since the planets, stars and spheres “minister before God,” they too are worthy of man’s honor. Eventually, man’s corrupt thinking and sin increased as he replaced simple honor of stars with his worship of them as deities, until God was no longer recognized. Star worship reveals man’s false estimation that the heavens deserve to be worshipped. Man feared not only the spheres, but also the heavens. Jeremiah 10:2-3 reads, “So says God, ‘To the ways of the nations do not learn, and from the signs of the heavens do not fear, because from them the nations fear. Because the statutes of the peoples are false, because a tree from the forest they cut, fashioned by an artisan with an adze.’” Jeremiah teaches that man did in fact fear the heavens. But their fear stemmed from a false projection; not based in reality. Jeremiah’s lesson is insightful: he equates the fear of heavens with the idolatrous practice of prostrating to wooden idols. He wished to teach that the heavens do not hold any greater powers than wooden sculptures. Man’s idolatrous emotions project the same imagined authority onto both, the heaven and the trees. But the underlying message is that man does in fact ascribe greater veneration to the skies, as Maimonides taught above. It appears that based on man’s first error that God occupies space and lives in the skies, man erred again, ascribing greatness to the spheres and stars that are assumed to be “in close proximity” to God.

This heretical equation between God and space is expressed today in the pantheistic view of tzimtzum: as “God is

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everywhere” (an impossibility for a non-physical God) God needed to contract Himself to “make room” for the universe. From the first heresy of viewing God spatially, people jump to a second heresy of contraction or *tzimtzum*. In truth, as God created the physical universe, He is unrelated to it: He does not exist “in” the universe that He created. We don’t know how God exists or what He is, so it is wise to say nothing about Him. The rabbis teach that “God is the place of the universe, and the universe is not His place” (Rashi, Exod. 33:21). Meaning, He is the prerequisite for all else to exist. Nothing can exist on its own, as all things require creation.

The primitive view of the heavens determining man’s fate, was not alien to the Egyptians. God corrected this error with one aspect of His plagues. Commanding Aaron to perform the plagues limited to the earthly realm, and Moses to perform those of the “higher” heavenly realm, God discounted the dangerous esteem man held towards the heavens. God showed that the only difference between the heavens and Earth is the level of understanding required to comprehend their natures, as the wiser man—Moses—addressed the heavenly plagues, and Aaron addressed the earthly plagues. Laws control both realms, and both could be understood. Understanding a phenomenon removes one’s false, mystical estimations. Realizing all corners of the natural world are “guided” means they are subordinate to something greater. These realms do not “control,” but are “controlled,” teaching the Egyptians that their views were false.

The Egyptians erred by assuming that the heavens were a governing and mystical

realm. God corrected this disproportionately high, heavenly grandeur. God did so in two ways: 1) by showing the heavens’ subordination to a Higher will, God demoted heaven’s status from the divine to the mundane, and, 2) by aligning the plagues with Moses’ and Aaron’s participation, Egypt would understand that not only are the heavens not divine, but they are in equal realms (created and subordinate entities), just as Moses and Aaron are equally human. Additionally, Moses and Aaron each performed three miracles independently to equate heaven and earth, dispelling a false supremacy of heaven and meteorological phenomena. Hopefully, the Egyptians would comprehend that both heaven and Earth are equally under God’s control, as Jeremiah intimated, and that neither one is significantly greater. Egypt would then realize that Something higher was responsible for all creation. God wanted the good for the Egyptians. The good, means knowledge of what is true. As it says in the Torah (Exod. 9:16) with regards to these plagues, “...in order that they tell of My name in the whole world.”

Here we see another lesson that all people are equal, as God desired the good for the Egyptians and not only the Jews. Furthermore, this teaches that all peoples possess equal capacity of recognizing God’s knowledge. The Jew is not superior.

Interestingly, the three plagues designed in the heavens were hail, locusts and darkness. Why these three? Perhaps to address three errors of the Egyptians. Egypt assumed meteorological phenomena to be divine, so God responded with a hail/fire plague to display His exclusive control in this area. Wind was also a

heavenly phenomena, but now they experienced an unnatural wind blowing the entire day, the entire night, until the next morning when it delivered the terror of locusts destroying all vegetation remaining of the hail’s previous destruction (Exod 10:13).

Additionally, that the animal world—locusts—“continuing the job” of the hail—destroying vegetation—taught the Egyptians of a “plan,” as both animal life and the weather targeted one goal. This introduced Egypt to the concept of something greater than animals and weather, as they both were under the control of something else, seen in this plan that both destroyed vegetation.

Finally, with the plague of darkness, God displayed control over the primary focus in heaven: the sun. Weather, the atmosphere and outer space were all shown as false deities and under the exclusive control of Israel’s God. Additionally, the plague of “darkness” had one other facet: it was palpable, perhaps to show that it was not simply an eclipse.

Ibn Ezra also made specific note of two plagues where no staff was used. These two also included the lesson of national distinction: “And I will distinguish on that day the land of Goshen that My people stand on it, to prevent from being there the wild beasts...” (Exod. 8:18), and, “And God will distinguish between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt, and nothing will die of the Israelites” (Exod. 9:4). Why were both of these plagues designed to distinguish Egypt from Israel? Not just one plague, which could be viewed as a freak incident, but two plagues which differentiated “Egyptians” from “Jews,” taught that God works differently than Egypt’s view of the divine. The Egyptians thought that to please their gods was man’s correct obligation, and precisely how gods operated: an expression of a child/parent relationship. How would such an infantile idea be corrected in order to teach God’s true system? By Egypt witnessing punitive measures only on their “side of the river,” they were awakened to a new idea: objective morality. They were held accountable. They also realized something even more essential: their relationship to their gods was one where their gods benefited from man’s actions. Egypt felt that their gods need man to serve their needs, which were projections of man’s own needs. But Judaism teaches that relating to God is not for God, but truly

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only for man. God does not need man. Man cannot affect God. Man must do that which is proper for himself, and if he does not, he will not only be punished, but he will lose the true good for himself. The Egyptian's exclusive receipt of these two plagues—a system of “reward and punishment”—woke them to a realization that service of God means not catering to a god's needs, but rather, an alignment with proper ideals and morality. This is a drastic difference from Egypt's primitive notion of worship and pleasing their gods.

Simultaneously, these two plagues attacked the very core of Egyptian gods: animals. Their own animals died, and then, wild animals attacked them. It was a devastating blow to their esteemed deities. Their deification of animal gods was destroyed. Pharaoh's response (Exod. 8:21), “sacrifice to your God” confirms his lowered estimation of animals, to the point that he encourages Moses to slaughter them, and to do so to his God. In other cases, Pharaoh does gesture to free the Jews, but only here in connection with the animal plagues does Pharaoh say “sacrifice to your God.” I believe the Torah includes these words of Pharaoh to inform us that the plague had the desired effect on Pharaoh. God understands what will affect man, and so it does. The Egyptians were all the more confused when they saw that Israel was not affected, even though they did not serve animals. In Exod. 9:7, Pharaoh himself sends messengers to see if Israel was harmed. This plague of the animal's death concerned him greatly.

God displayed His control of the universe: the first three plagues showed His control of the Earth, the last three over the heavens, and the middle three displayed His control over man, an expression of justice as only Egypt's population was attacked by animals. Only their herds were killed, and their astrologers were exposed as charlatans when they could not remove boils from their own bodies.

Perhaps the staff is not employed in these three plagues, since these were more clearly God's measures of justice, distinguishing Egypt from Israel as the verses state. As such, human participation



through directing these plagues (the staff) would suggest God does not exact justice alone. Therefore, God did not instruct Moses or Aaron to employ the staff in these three plagues. God must be viewed as the only one who determines man's justice.

An additional reason suggests itself why these two animal plagues were bereft of the staff. Perhaps the staff carried with it some element of cause and effect; man would hit something, and only then would the plague commence. Perhaps, God wished to teach that He is in no way bound by the physical. A plague may occur with no prior cause. Removing the staff might effectively teach this lesson, as nothing was smitten to bring on these plagues.

I heard another explanation for the use of the staff. Although God did not need it (He needs nothing) for Moses and Aaron to initiate the plagues, its presence was to remove any divinity projected by Egypt onto Moses and Aaron, lest onlookers falsely believe these two mortals possessed some powers. The staff might have been employed as a redirecting agent, a pointer. By seeing the staff incorporated into the miracles, Moses' and Aaron's significance was diluted in Egypt's eyes. But wouldn't people then believe the staff to have those powers? I believe for fear of this erroneous notion, God created a miracle where the staff itself turned into a snake. This was to show that it too was under the control of God. Had there been no use of a staff, focus would have remained on the announcers of the plagues (Moses and Aaron) thereby deifying man, not God. But I feel the first possibility is most correct, i.e., that God must be viewed as the sole cause of human justice.

Why did the plague of boils require Moses and Aaron to work together? My friend Jessie Fischbein made a sharp

observation. She said that just as Moses and Aaron addressed the higher and lower forms of matter in their respective plagues, the plague of boils executed by both Moses and Aaron included the higher and lower matter: ashes from Earth, and they were commanded to be thrown towards the heavens (Exod. 9:8). Her parallel revealed another facet of the boils, as God's plagues contain many strata of insights. I believe the boils' combination of realms was to teach that heaven and Earth do not operate in two separate, encapsulated systems. The very act of throwing ashes towards the heavens teaches that both Earth and heaven work together. This was a necessary lesson in the reduction of the heaven's exaggerated status. By showing this further idea that the heavens participate in earthly phenomena, the heavens' false, divine status was stripped that much further. Just as his subjects will view a king who spends time with commoners in a less regal light, so too the heavens now lost their reputation by participating in earthly matters. Moses could have collected the ashes himself, but by working with Aaron, together, they underlined this point.

One question remains: Why are the two animal-related plagues placed in the middle of the series of the Ten Plagues? Perhaps, as these plagues specifically intended to distinguish Egypt from Israel, the evildoers from the victims, this theme of “justice” is placed smack in the middle of the set of 10 Plagues. Thereby, justice emerges as a highlighted message of all the plagues. A story or an awards dinner does not commence with the primary plot or the guest of honor. In both, they are placed at the midway point. Here too, perhaps God placed His plagues of justice in the midway point of all the plagues, to underline the theme that all the plagues were in fact an expression of justice, not viciousness. ■



Disdain to Awe

Rabbi Reuven Mann

The story of Passover is replete with mighty miracles in which Hashem manipulated the forces of nature to produce dramatic results. These are the ones that grab our attention and are the focal point of the Seder narrative.

However, the story also contains supernatural “happenings” of a more subtle nature that are quite instructive and should not be overlooked.

A case in point is Hashem’s instructions to Moshe in preparation for the liberation. Moshe was to encourage the Jews to confront their Egyptian friends and neighbors and request “vessels of silver and of gold and garments.”

At first glance, this seems like a very strange obligation. How comfortable could a Jewish slave feel about soliciting luxurious items from ordinary Egyptians? How could these people, who presumably looked down on the Jews, be expected to respond in a positive manner?

The verse, seemingly anticipating this problem, provides a fascinating piece of information. “Hashem gave the people favor in the eyes of Egypt; also the man Moshe was highly esteemed in the eyes of Pharaoh’s servants and the eyes of the people.” (Shemot 11:3)

This sentence explains the Egyptians’ unexpected and forthcoming response to the bold Jewish initiative. Apparently, Hashem conducted a magical transformation of attitude in the hearts of the populace. Suddenly, the Jews were no longer a despised, unworthy people,

but one with great charm and charisma, whom you would feel honored to have dress in your finest.

How did this astounding change of heart occur? Of course, it can be explained as a “hidden miracle.” Certainly, G-d has the ability to shape the thoughts and emotions of man. Had He wanted, He could have manipulated Hitler’s emotions so he would lose his fanatic hatred of the Jews. However, this does not seem to be the way that Hashem “operates,” perhaps because that might constitute too extreme an interference in man’s free will.

In my opinion, it is reasonable to assert that the newfound admiration for the Jews came about in a “natural” manner. I have analyzed how this unique phenomenon might have taken place, in a rational manner.

The verse itself seems to point to the ordinary character of this development, for it tells us that Moshe achieved great stature in the eyes of the people and leaders of Egypt. This seems counterintuitive. Why wasn’t he hated because of all the pain and suffering he brought down upon the country?

Amazingly, Moshe earned the deep respect of the Egyptians for his courageous confrontation with Pharaoh. In this endeavor, Moshe displayed great humbleness, patience and compassion. In spite of the oppressive treatment forced upon the Jews, Moshe was kind to the Egyptians, warning them in advance about the impending plagues and removing them as soon as Pharaoh implored him to.

Moshe’s core message that Hashem is the Ruler Of the world was getting through. Proof of this can be seen in the plague of hail. Moshe had warned the people to remove their living possessions from the field to spare them from destruction. The verse states, “He who feared the Word of the Lord of Pharaoh’s servants drove his slaves and livestock into the houses.” (Shemot 9:20)

The esteem accorded to Moshe carried over to the Jewish people. Great leaders bring honor, not only to themselves, but also to the societies they represent.

There was another factor at work in this transformational process. We must assume that, for most of the years that it was in effect, Egyptian citizens were not opposed to the mistreatment of the Jews. How did they justify the brutal oppression of an innocent group? It is reasonable that Pharaoh convinced them of his own paranoid fear that the Jews were a dangerous fifth column who would join with Egypt’s enemies when she was under attack.

This, of course, was a blatant calumny. Anti-semitism in all of its manifestations, in every time and place where it has raised its ugly head, is based on the most egregious falsehoods that any sane mind can easily disprove. I regard Jew hatred as a mental disorder brought about by intense hatred that is not amenable to reason.

Once a false narrative is socially entrenched, it

becomes part of the cultural fabric of the society. Subsequent generations take it for granted and do not challenge its validity. There was no incentive for anyone to look into the enslavement or to question its underlying legitimacy.

That is, until the plagues came along. The ever-increasing pain of the afflictions caused people to ask, why is this happening to us? It is because the King refuses to grant the Jews a brief vacation to serve their G-d!

Under the blows that ravaged their land, the Egyptians finally got around to the big question: why are we enslaving the Jews in the first place? Suffering makes the mind more acute. They reviewed all the lies that they had been told about the Jews. In the light of their newfound mental clarity they discovered the truth.

The Jews had only been beneficial to Egypt. Their distinguished ancestor, Joseph, had saved the nation during the great famine. Subsequently, Pharaoh had invited his family to come and settle in Egypt. These people had never done any harm to Egypt and had loyally built the storage cities of Pithom and Raamses. Indeed, the Jews were a great national asset.

When the lies at the base of the enslavement policy were exposed, the Egyptians’ entire attitude toward the Jews changed. These were good and righteous people who had been viciously maligned. A new aura of awe for the unjustly abused people replaced the former sense of disdain.

This development has Messianic implications. The Rambam says that, as a result of Christianity and Islam (which got the idea from Judaism), the entire world knows about the phenomenon of the Messiah and awaits him. Each of the three religions has its own particular version of who the Messiah will be and what he will accomplish.


The Rambam says that the existence of competing versions of the Messiah is part of G-d’s plan. For when the actual Messiah, the righteous scion of the House of David, arrives and fulfills his mission, culminating with the construction of the Third Temple in its place—the entire world will realize that he is the genuine one whom the prophets foretold. They will then recognize that Judaism is the only divine religion and that “they have inherited falsehood from their fathers.”

At a certain point in the Exodus history, the Egyptians realized that they had been indoctrinated with falsehoods about the Jews, and then they became their ardent admirers.

A similar phenomenon will occur at the time of the ultimate redemption. The theological falsifications that have corrupted mankind will dissipate, and the truth will shine brightly. “On that day Hashem will be One and His Name will be One.” May we merit to witness this great universal deliverance.

Shabbat shalom veChag Pesach sameach ■

Passover is almost here, and we are all anticipating the Seder. Some have the attitude that “we’ve heard this story before” or “been there, done that.” But the Seder can be an opportunity for meaningful discussion of the great concepts that have shaped Jewish and world history. Many interesting and original ideas are offered in my new book, *Eternally Yours*, on Exodus, which is the source of the Passover narrative. Please visit <http://amzn.to/2G6V3Ql> to obtain your copy and become a catalyst for a unique Seder experience.



PESACH NOT NECESSARILY

RABBI DR. DARRELL GINSBERG

The magid section of the Haggadah can be viewed in two discrete parts. The first contains what would appear to be random details in Jewish Law concerning this night, praises of God, and other insights into the background of the Exodus. The second half focuses solely on the analysis of a sequence of Biblical verses, which begin with:

"The Aramean wished to destroy my father (Yaakov); and he went down to Egypt and sojourned (vayagar) there, few in number; and he became there a nation - great and mighty and numerous"

The verse points out that Yaakov "went down to Egypt". The Sages explain that it was "anus al pi hadibur", which many translate as "forced by Divine decree". This alludes to the series of events prior to Yaakov leaving the Land of Israel for Egypt. After discovering that his son Yosef was alive, and the viceroy of Egypt, Yaakov naturally wants to see him (Bereishit 45:28):

"And Israel said, 'Enough! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.'"

Yaakov begins his journey, and upon reaching Beer Sheva, receives a critical prophecy (ibid 46:3-4):

"And He said, 'I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid of going down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up, and Joseph will place his hand on your eyes.'"

God is clearly comforting Yaakov about his decision to leave to Egypt. There is a further reassurance in the promise to redeem the Jews from Egypt.

Why did Yaakov require such reassurances? Many commentators struggle to understand what exactly what so

troubling to Yaakov. Rashi (ibid 46:3) explains that Yaakov's fear was tied to leaving the Land of Israel. Others, such as Ritva, explain that Yaakov was fully aware of the future enslavement of the Jewish people to the Egyptians. Knowing their fate, Yaakov did not want to travel to Egypt and set in motion the Divine plan.

Yaakov seemed resistant to leave for Egypt; he also seemed to never intend to spend a considerable amount of time there. The verse uses the language of "vayagar", which the Sages understand to mean a "sojourn":

"And he sojourned there" - this teaches that our father Jacob did not go down to Egypt to settle, but only to live there temporarily. Thus it is said, 'They said to Pharaoh, We have come to sojourn in the land, for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks because the hunger is severe in the land of Canaan; and now, please, let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen.'"

Why is it so important to emphasize that Yaakov's stay was to be temporary? And can we assume this reluctance to stay was related to his concern of traveling with his family to Egypt?

Yaakov's primary mission was to build the Jewish nation. He carried with him the ideological foundations laid forth by his father and grandfather. The transition now had to extend beyond his direct family to a secure nation. The mission was in peril with the "death" of Yosef, but now, with news of his being alive and ensconced in Egypt, Yaakov was now able to refocus his attention on completing his mission. He was also aware of the future enslavement of the very nation he was tasked with building. Naturally, as a father, he wanted to be reunited with his long-lost son. Yaakov, though, had to consider the potential threats as well that awaited him in deciding to leave his

current surroundings. The point of contention between Rashi and the other commentators concerns the nature of the danger. According to most commentators, the danger was sourced in the future physical subjugation of the Jewish people to the Egyptians. The strain placed on the people through the years and years of toil could very well destroy the nation. Rashi, though, sees the threat in more ideological terms. Leaving the Land of Israel meant leaving an island of ideological security, where the basic tenets of Judaism had been built and a small community developed. Moving the family to Egypt, the pinnacle of secular civilization, meant exposing them to a litany of potentially corruptive beliefs and practices. Naturally, Yaakov would be quite concerned about such a result.

God attempts to assuage Yaakov's concerns, reframing the issue in the context of the prophecy. Yes, the destiny of the fledgling Jewish nation was going to be one filled with peril. But, God promised that it would be a mere stage in their development, rather than their demise. The normal assumption, then, would be a certain resignation of fate demonstrated by Yaakov. However, there is an incorrect premise sometimes promulgated with the idea of prophecy. As we know, mankind was gifted with a concept of freewill. He can choose what type of life to live, strengthening his relationship with God or choosing to turn away. Yaakov was promised by God to be the future of the Jewish people; yet, when faced with an impending attack by Esav, he prepared himself for defense of his family. Yaakov surmised it could be possible that due to his actions, the Divine plan had shifted, and the prophecy altered along with it. The same type of thinking was taking place here. Yaakov understood that there was a Divine plan, but that did not mean he should abandon his responsibility as the ideological father. He never intended for his family to become a permanent fixture in Egypt, hoping that they would be able to insulate themselves from Egyptian influence and return back to the Land of Israel. As is noted above, the family set up camp in Goshen, removed as much as possible from mainstream Egyptian society. While Yaakov understood the prophecy as setting the stage for a difficult path, he did not abandon his role as the leader of the nation. He forged ahead, trying to build the strongest foundation possible, in the hopes that possibly the path laid out might be altered.

The seeds of the nation were planted by

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Yaakov, and he dedicated himself in trying to encourage its growth. As well, he sensed the impending danger ahead, and attempted to put into place some type of protective measure as hope of potential change. With the second half of magid beginning, we now turn to the history of the Jewish trials and tribulations in Egypt. Yet, prior to diving in, it would appear critical for us to not view the events through a prism of fatalism. Framing the story in this manner, and keying in on Yaakov's devoted leadership, help us gain a deeper understanding in the development of the Jewish nation. ■



HA LACHMA ANYA — A REDUNDANT INVITATION?

The first four steps in the Seder are complete, and it is now time to settle in for the Magid, the core component of the Haggadah. The Magid begins with a short set of Aramaic statements, a daunting start to the evening ahead. “Ha lachma anya” has been a source of confusion for many, as its rationale in being the introductory part of the Magid is quite difficult to ascertain.

The text reads as follows:

“This is the bread of affliction that our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. Whoever is hungry, let him come and eat; whoever is in need, let him come and conduct the Paschal lamb (korban Pesach). This year [we are] here; next year in the land of Israel. This year [we are] slaves; next year [we will be] free people.”

A common explanation offered for the objective of these introductory phrases focuses on the expressions of generosity. We are announcing an invitation to those who are unable to afford the Pesach Seder. Yet the offer certainly seems disingenuous. Is sitting at our table an effective way to invite the poor? Why the additional invite for the korban Pesach?

A minority of commentators endorse

the above interpretation, with the Abarbanel writing how one should call out to invite the poor to join the Seder (he adds that if one lives among non-Jews, best not to engage in such a practice). Many others, though, take a much different approach. Rashi explains that the announcement is being directed to the members of the household. We first reference the matza, the bread of affliction. One's family has been avoiding any indulgence in food throughout the day. Consuming matza has been out of mind, as it is forbidden. We must enter the Seder experience with a healthy appetite for the matza. Thus, the invitation is for those in one's home who have been “fasting” to now join the Seder, as the matza will be consumed in due time.

Of course, this is an odd reading of the phrases. For one, kiddush has been made, karpas eaten, things have been moving along quite nicely (depending on whose Seder you are attending). Why would a formal invitation of this sort take place when everyone is already together? Why are we focusing on the commandment of matza, rather than just referencing the entire Seder experience? One other problem emerges when we turn to the second invite. Rashi offers a different explanation when discussing the korban Pesach. The Jewish people would invite each other to join a chaburah, a linking together to one korban Pesach. One should look at himself as dependent on others, and not seek out a solitary korban Pesach experience. Rather, the individual should find others, and join them in consuming the korban Pesach. While this sounds like a noble aspiration, how does this tie in to the first invite? And again, this suspiciously sounds like another disingenuous invitation.

It is interesting to note how Rashi focuses much of his attention on the state of hunger of the various attendees, and how the focus should now be on the matza. The matza is emblematic of the commandments of this unique night. There is the technical aspect to the commandment, the consumption of the aforementioned food. With the onset of night, the obligation to consume the matza comes into existence, the earliest opportunity to rid oneself from the hunger. There is another critical aspect to the matza: its role in the retelling of the Exodus. The Seder phenomenon is all about the recounting and discussion of

the enslavement-to-redemption narrative. The matza is not “merely” a food item we must eat; it is a component of the story of the night. The announcement to the household is the dedication of the matza to this very objective, its role as implement of story now being actualized. It is not quite time to eat the matza, but it is the time to take the matza and bring it into its idealized form. Therefore, speaking of the matza at the start of the Magid is bringing to attention its unique role.

How do we understand this concept alongside the invite for the korban Pesach? Rashi seems focused on the concept of the national nature of the korban Pesach. A person cannot partake from the commandment as an individual; rather, he must unite with his fellow Jews in its performance. Why is this critical to emphasize now? As the Seder experience gets underway, the story combined with the obligatory foods of the night, every individual must approach the event with two mindsets. The first is as an individual, seeking to study and understand the wonders God promulgated onto the world during this epoch of Jewish history. On one level, it is a personal experience, engaging and gaining from the Seder. The commandment of matza falls on each individual, a pathway of solitary involvement. There is another mindset that is necessary for the evening ahead. The individual comes as a member of the Jewish people, united with his fellow brethren. The Seder night is an expression of the Jewish nation, coming together in a most profound manner. The commandment of the korban Pesach personifies this mentality, a commandment that can only be done through a group. The individual must reflect on his part of the whole, as the nation reclaims its identity on this special evening.

The above explanation helps elucidate the content and placement of the introduction to the Magid section of the Haggadah. Before we jump into the core themes of the night, we require a moment of preparation. When we reflect on the two mindsets required, that of individual and member of the nation, we are ready to immerse ourselves into the critical ideas and themes of the night. While a small Aramaic set of statements may at first seem a peculiar way to being the Magid, we can see how in fact they play an essential role in laying out the foundation for the evening ahead. ■

PASSOVER

MOSES STAFF

WHAT WAS THE NEED?

**RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM
AND DANI ROTH**



Dani Roth asked me this excellent question, which I never heard asked by adults:

“Why did Moses need to wave a staff when announcing the plagues? Couldn’t he just announce the plagues, since it was God who really made the plagues?”

Once I heard Dani ask this, I told Dani, “That’s a great question.” I immediately started thinking and researching the Torah for clues. Dani is correct: God has no needs, so whether Moses waved a staff, or simply announced to Pharaoh the next plague, or even if Moses did nothing, God can cause the plague independent of Moses’ actions. Furthermore, what difference is it to Pharaoh and Egypt if they see Moses waving a staff or not? The plague alone is the impressive event!

To answer Dani’s question and learn the significance of Moses’ staff, we must study the first instance of the staff found in Exodus 4:2 during Moses’ first prophecy at the burning bush on Mount Sinai. During this prophecy (which commenced in chap. 3), God outlines His plans to send Moses to address Pharaoh to answer the cries of Abraham’s descendants and

deliver them to freedom, also giving them the land of Israel.

Moses was the most humble man on Earth[1], and therefore when God summoned him to lead the Exodus, he replied to God, “Who am I that I should address Pharaoh and take out the Jews?” God then assures Moses that He will be with him. Moses then asks what name of God he should use, and God says, “I am, that I am.” God then instructs Moses to gather the Jewish elders and inform them of His plan, and God assures Moses “they will listen to your voice” (Exod. 3:18). God concludes that He knows Egypt’s king will not initially release the Jews, and that He will bring the plagues. Ultimately the Egyptian king will release the Jewish nation, and the Jewish women will ask the Egyptian women for gold, silver and clothes and they will despoil Egypt. This apparently ends God’s address to Moses.

However, we notice that in God’s initial presentation to Moses about how these events will take place, God does not command Moses to use his staff. This is significant.

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In the next verse Moses says, “...they [the Jews] will not believe me and they won’t listen to my voice for they will say, ‘God did not appear to you’” (Exod. 4:1). Moses says this, despite God’s earlier assurance that the Jews would in fact believe Moses (Exod. 3:18). Some Rabbis[2] critique Moses for this disbelief, while Maimonides teaches[3] Moses was merely asking “how” God intended His plan will cause the Jews to accept Moses’ words, as God stated in verse 3:18. (I will soon propose a third possibility.) Nonetheless, God responds, “What is in your hand?” Moses replied, “A staff.” God told Moses to cast it downward. Moses did so, and it became a snake. Moses then fled from the snake. God then told Moses to grab its tail and it returned to a staff. God explained this miracle was “in order that the Jews will believe that the God of the patriarchs appeared to you (ibid 4:5).” In 4:17 God commands Moses to use this staff to perform the miracles and the plagues[4]. But we must ask, as God already told Moses “they will listen to your voice (Exod. 3:18)” even without the staff, how can God now say that due to the staff miracle, “the Jews will believe that the God of the patriarchs appeared to you”? The Jews’ belief is independent of the staff’s miracle!

God then performed another miracle of Moses’ hand becoming leprous. God continued:

“And if they do not believe you, and they don’t listen to the voice of the first sign, they will listen to the voice of the second sign. And if they don’t believe also to these two signs, and they don’t listen to your voice, then you shall take of the Nile’s water and pour it on dry ground and that water you take from the Nile will become blood on dry land (Exod. 4:8,9).”

What is this “voice” referred to here? Furthermore, Moses too says, “they will not believe me, and they won’t listen to my voice.” Why is this “voice” in addition to Moses himself?

Now, while it is true, as Dani’s father said, God could have ultimately planned Moses to use the staff, regardless of Moses’ apparent initiation of the need, it is equally tenable that God’s instruction to Moses to use the staff was only a concession to Moses, and not part of God’s original plan. A few other considerations lead me to this assumption. First of all, after Moses pleads with God to find another emissary and God concedes to allow Aaron to speak instead of Moses, God includes in that concession the statement “And this staff take in your hand with which you will perform the miracles” (Exod. 4:17). Why is the command to take the staff joined to Aaron’s appointment? Second-

ly, in verse 4:20 the staff is mentioned again, but now Moses calls it the “Staff of God.”

The Purpose of the Staff

Moses was most humble, viewing himself as no one special. He did not wish leadership. Perhaps Moses’ very humility made him perfect for this role in God’s plan. As God wished to display His greatness to the Egyptians, a humble man would ensure that the focus remains on God, and not allow leadership to corrupt him.

I wish to suggest the purpose of the staff is connected to Moses’ humility. Perhaps God gave Moses this staff to equip Moses with complete confidence. Holding the staff throughout the signs and plagues — the staff that turned into a snake and back again — Moses was thereby emboldened to carry out God’s mission confidently. He would be able to speak with a “voice” of confidence. Perhaps also, God grouped together His concession of sending Aaron with His command to take the staff (ibid 4:17) to say in other words, that both were concessions — “for Moses” — not Pharaoh or others. And Moses’ reference to the staff in 4:20 as “God’s staff” is another way of saying that Moses viewed the staff as a surety from God: Moses’ sentiment of satisfaction that he will succeed.

This explanation of the staff also explains why the staff was a “response,” and not in God’s original plan: the staff was for Moses, not the Jews, as God already said the Jews will believe Moses prior to the staff’s miracle. When God says the staff will be used “in order that the Jews will believe that the God of the patriarchs appeared to you (ibid 4:5),” God does not mean the staff is what convinces the Jews, for God said, “they will listen to your voice (Exod. 3:18)” without the staff. Thus, the staff was to provide Moses with the necessary assurance, in order that “he” feels confident that the Jews will listen. The staff was to embolden Moses, and was unnecessary for the Jews or Pharaoh.

Dani, thank you once again for asking me a great Torah question that has lead me to learn new Torah ideas. Together, we are sharing Torah with many other people. ■

[1] Numbers 12:3

[2] Rashi, Ramban

[3] Guide for the Perplexed, book I, chap. lxiii

[4] Ibn Ezra, Exod. 4:17



the Significance of Bread

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM



PASSOVER

When studying Passover (Exod. 12), we note its distinction from the other holidays: Passover was celebrated in Egypt. That is, commands existed even prior to the Torah. Today, we reenact those commands in the form of the shank bone, the matza, the bitter herbs, and other laws. Succos and Shavuot are commemorations of God's kindness to us. Passover is as well, but it differs from the other holidays with our pre-Torah Passover observance in Egypt. Additionally, our adherence to God's commands in Egypt contributed to the holiday's structure: there is only one Succos holiday and one Shavuot. But there are two Passovers: the Passover of Egypt, and all subsequent Passovers. What may we learn from its distinction from the other two holidays? What differences exist between the Passover of Egypt, and our Passover?

Reading the Haggadah, we note a conflict in the identity of the matza. The Haggadah commences by describing the matza as "lachma anya,"—poor man's bread. The Jews were fed this during their Egyptian bondage. However, later on, the Haggadah, quoting the Talmud Pesachim 116b states that matza is commanded in memory of the dough which did not rise due to the Egyptians' swift, panic-stricken oust of the Jews. (After the Death of Firstborns, the Egyptians panicked, "we are all dead!") We are obligated by Torah law to recall God's swift salvation by eating the matza. The Jews were driven out from the Egyptian city Raamses, and arrived at Succot. When the Jews arrived, they were able to bake that dough only into matza, not bread, for the hastened exodus retarded the leavening process. The matza serves as a barometer of the speed by which God freed the Jews. Was this matza part of God's orchestrated events? Did God desire this barometer in the form of matza?

We should note at this point that the Jews in Egypt observed only one day of Passover (R. Yossi HaGalili, Jer. Talmud 14a). The Torah laws describing those Jews' obligation also appear to exclude any restriction of eating leaven. Certainly on the morrow of the Egyptian Passover, the Jews were permitted to eat leaven. Rabbeinu Nissim comments that it was only due to the rush of the Egyptians that their loaves were retarded in their leavening process. Had the Egyptians not rushed them, the Jews would have created bread for there was no prohibition on bread at that point.

But for which reason are we "commanded" in matza? The Haggada text clearly states it is based on the dough which did not rise during the Exodus. Thus, matza demonstrates salvation, the focus of the Passover holiday, posing this serious problem: not only do later generations have the command of eating matza, but the Jews in Egypt were also commanded in eating the Lamb with

matza, (and maror). Now, if while still in Egypt, when there was yet no "swift salvation", why were those Jews commanded in this matza?

How can Jews in Egypt, not yet redeemed, commemorate a Redemption, which did not yet happen?

It is true: the Jews ate matza while slaves. However, the Haggada says the "command" of eating matza was only due to the speedy salvation. This implies that the Jews in Egypt who also had the command of matza, were obligated for the same reason, which is incomprehensible.

The Torah spends much time discussing the dough, and oddly, also refers to it in the singular, "And the people lifted up (carried) HIS loaf from the kneading troughs before it had risen, rolled up in their garments, placed on their shoulders (Exod. 12:34)." "And they baked THE loaf (Exod. 12:39)..." Why this singular reference to numerous loaves? Why so much discussion about the loaf? And of what need is there for God to record "...rolled up in their garments, placed on their shoulders"?

Finally, Rashi praises the Jews for not taking any provisions when they left: "And they baked the loaf they took out of Egypt into cakes of matza, because it did not leaven, because they were driven from Egypt, and they could not tarry, and also provisions they did not make for themselves (Exod. 12:39)." Rashi says the fact they did not take provisions demonstrated their trust that God would provide. If so, why in the very same verse, did the Jews bake the dough? This implies the exact opposite of Rashi's intent, that the Jews did in fact distrust God! It is startling that a contradiction to Rashi is derived from the very same verse. In order to answer these questions, it is essential to gain some background.

The Egyptians originated bread. The Egyptian taskmasters ate their bread, as their Jewish slaves gaped enviously, breaking their teeth on dry matza, or "poor man's bread"—a relative term: "poor" is in comparison to something richer. "Poor man's bread" teaches that there was a "richer bread" in Egypt: soft bread, which the Egyptians enjoyed while feeding their Jewish slaves matza.

Let us now understand Rashi's comment. He said the Jews were praiseworthy as they did not take food with them upon their exodus. Thereby, they displayed a trust in God's ability to provide food. But we noted that in the very same verse where Rashi derives praise for the Jews, whom Rashi said took no food, it clearly states they in fact took the loaves! Rashi's source seems internally contradictory. I would suggest that a new attitude prevailed among the Jews.

The Significance of Bread

The Jews did not take that loaf from Egypt for the purpose of consumption. This is Rashi's point. The Jews took the loaf because of what it represented: freedom. They were fed matza for the duration of their 210-year bondage. They were now free. They cherished this freedom and longed to express it. Baking bread instead of dry, poor man's matza was this expression of freedom. They now wished to be like their previous taskmasters: "bread eaters." A free people. Baking and eating bread was the very distinction between slave and master in Egypt. The Jews wished to shed their identity as slaves and don an image of a free people. Baking and eating bread would achieve this. To further prove that the Jews valued such identification with the Egyptians, Rashi comments that when the Jews despoiled the Egyptians at Moses' command, they valued the Egyptian clothing more than the silver and gold (Exodus 12:35).

The Jews' attachment to bread is made clear in two glaring details:

"And the people lifted up (carried) his loaf from the kneading troughs before it had risen, rolled up in their garments, placed on their shoulders (Exod. 12:34)."

The Torah records a strange act: the Jews carried this loaf in their garments, not in a bag or a sack. Additionally, they placed it on their shoulders. "The suit makes the man." In other words, as clothing is man's expression of his identity, the Jews placed in their clothes the dough intended to be come free man's bread. They expressed this link between clothing (identity) and the dough. Furthermore, they carried it on their shoulders, as a badge of sorts. They did not pack the dough away. It was a prized entity they wished to display, and form part of their dress.

Torah records these details as they are significant of the problem God was addressing. "Rolled up in their garments, placed on their shoulders" are

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intentionally recorded in the Torah to reveal the Jew's value of bread. This idea is worthy of a few moments to appreciate.

Freedom: Not an Inherent Good

However, the Jews had the wrong idea. Their newfound freedom was not intended by God to be unrestricted. They were freed, but for a new purpose: following God. Had they been allowed to indulge freedom unrestrained, expressed by eating leavened bread, this would corrupt God's plan that they serve Him. Freedom and servitude to God are mutually exclusive. Therefore, God did not allow the dough to rise. They trusted God, they saw all the miracles. They needed no food for their journey, as God would provide. But they took the dough in hopes of making that "free man's food," leavened bread. The dough was not taken for subsistence, but to symbolize their freedom. They hoped upon reaching their destination, to bake bread, expressing their own idea of freedom. But the verse says the dough only became matza, not their intended end-product. Matza was a mere result of a hurried exodus. Matza was so significant, that the Torah recorded this "event" of their failed bread making. They planned to bake bread, but it ended up matza. The Torah teaches that matza was not the Jews' plan. It points out through inference that they desired leavened bread. It also teaches that bread was not desired so much for subsistence, as they verse ends, "and provisions they made not for themselves (Exod. 12:39)." They did not prepare food, as they relied on God. This is Rashi's point. The dough they took was not for provisions; it was to express unrestricted freedom. This unrestricted freedom is a direct contradiction to God's plan that they serve Him.

The Jews were now excited at the prospect of complete freedom. God's plan could not tolerate the Jews' wish. God desired the Jews to go from Egyptian servitude, to another servitude: adherence to God. He did not wish the Jews' to experience or express unrestricted freedom, as the Jews wished. To demonstrate this, God retarded the dough from leavening. The matza they baked at Succot was not an accident, but God's purposeful plan, that any expression of unrestricted freedom be thwarted.

One Act – Two Goals

Matza does not only recall God's swift salvation, but its also represents Egyptian servitude. In the precise activity that the Jews wished to express unrestricted freedom (baking bread), God stepped in with one action serving two major objectives. Causing a swift ousting of the Jews, God did not allow the dough to rise. God did not allow the Jews to enjoy leavened bread, which would embody unrestricted freedom. But even more amazing is that with one action of a speedy redemption, God not only restricted the dough's process, but God became the Jews' savior. He replaced the Jews' intended, unrestricted freedom

with the correct purpose of their salvation: to be indebted to God. The one act—God's swift Exodus—prevented the wrong idea of freedom from being realized, and also instilled in the Jews the right idea: they were now indebted to God, their Savior. They were not left to unrestricted freedom, but were now bound to God by His new act of kindness. An astonishing point.

Gratitude

We return to the command to eat matza in Egypt. Obviously, this command could not commemorate an event, which did not yet happen. God commanded them to eat the matza for what it did represent: servitude. While in Egypt, why did God wish the Jews to be mindful of servitude? Here I feel we arrive at another basic theme of the Passover holiday: contrast between servitude and freedom. In Pesachim 116a, the Talmud records a mishna, which states that our transmission of the Haggadah must commence with our degradation, and conclude with praise. We therefore discuss our servitude or our ancestor's idolatrous practices, and conclude with our salvation and praise for God. We do this, as such a contrast engenders a true appreciation for God's salvation. Perhaps also the two Passover holidays—in Egypt and today—embody this concept of our salvation. A central goal of Passover is to arrive at an appreciation for God's kindness. A contrast between our Egyptian Passover and today's Passover best-engender such appreciation. It compares our previous bondage to our current freedom. Perhaps for this reason we are also commanded to view ourselves as if we left Egypt.

So, in Egypt, we ate matza representing Egyptian servitude. Today we eat it as the Haggadah says, to recall the swift salvation, which retarded the leavening process, creating matza. We end up with a comparison between Passover of Egypt, and today's Passover: servitude versus salvation. The emergence of the Jewish people was on Passover. We have two Passovers, displaying the concept of a transition, a before and an after.

An interesting and subtle point is that God mimicked the matza of servitude. He orchestrated the salvation around matza. Why? Perhaps as matza in its original form in Egypt embodied servitude, God wished that servitude be the continued theme of Passover. He therefore centered the salvation on the dough, which eventuated in matza; thereby teaching that we are to be slaves to God: "You are my slaves, and not slaves to man", is God's sentiment addressing a Jewish slave who wishes to remain eternally subservient to his mortal master. The Torah clearly views man's relationship to God as a servant.

With this understanding of the significance of leavened bread, we understand why the Torah refers to all the Jews' loaves in the singular. The Jews shared one common desire: to express their freedom by eating what their oppressors ate. However, contrary to human feelings, "unrestricted freedom" is an evil... odd as it sounds. God's plan in creating man was to direct us all in understanding and delighting in the truth of God, His role as the exclusive Creator, the One who manages man's affairs, and Who is omnipotent (Ramban, Exod. 13:16). Go had a purpose in creating man, and it is not to be free and live as we wish. Our purpose is to engage the one faculty granted to us and no other creation: our intellect. And the primary use of the intellect is forfeited when we do not recognize God, as the Egyptians displayed. Therefore, God freed us so we may enter a new servitude according to His will: serving Him. But this service of God should not be viewed as a negative, as in serving man. Serving God is achieved by studying Him, His Torah and creation: a truly happy and beautiful life. We could equate the enjoyment and benefit in serving God, to serving a human master who gives us gold if we simply look for it. We need not physically "dig" for it, just the act of seeking the gold would be rewarded with this master giving us abundant treasures. So too is the service of God. If we merely learn and seek new ideas, He will open new doors of wisdom. We are so fortunate.

Finally, what is the significance of chametz, leaven? Once leavened bread took on the role of freedom with no connection to God, leaven thereby took on a character that opposes the very salvation, demonstrated by the matza. This explains that leaven was not mentioned in connection with the instructions pertaining to the original Egyptian Paschal lamb. The Jews had not yet displayed any attachment to bread. Only subsequent to the first Passover celebration do we see the Jews' problematic tie to leavened bread. Therefore, only afterwards is there any prohibition on bread. ■



















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