

ALTHOUGH THE PASCHAL LAMB WAS OFFERED TO REPUDIATE EGYPT'S ANIMAL GOD, ALL PEOPLE TODAY POSSESS THOSE VERY SAME EMOTIONS WHICH LED EGYPT AND THOSE JEWS ASTRAY. TORAH IS FOR ALL GENERATIONS - MAN'S DESIGN HASN'T CHANGED.

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Parashas Metzarah

RABBI BERNARD FOX

"This is the law of the metzora on the day of his purification. And he should be brought to the Kohen." (VaYikra 14:1)

Parshat Tazria discussed the laws of the metzora. This is a person stricken with tzara'at. The affliction is a result of spiritual failings. The metzora is ritually unclean. Our pasuk introduces the discussion of

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The Foundation of the Jewish People

RABBI REUVEN MANN

I. The foundation of the system of Judaism is the Exodus, which emancipated the Jews from the enslavement of Pharaoh. It is a Mitzvah to remember the Exodus twice a day which is accomplished in reciting the third paragraph of the Shema. However on the night of Pesach we must do more than merely make reference to the fact that G-d redeemed us from Egypt. We must engage in extensive recitation of the entire narrative pertaining to the Exodus story. The Rambam says in Laws of Chametz and Matza, Chapter 7, Halacha 1: "It is a positive commandment of the Torah to tell stories of the miracles and wonders that were done for our forefathers in Egypt, on the night of the fifteenth of Nissan as it says: "Remember this day that you exited from Egypt." (Exodus 13,3) We must pay careful attention to the words of the Rambam. Why does he emphasize that one must discuss the miracles and wonders which were done for us in Egypt? He should simply have said that we should recite the story of the Exodus. Of course in doing so we would make mention of the miracles because they are part of the story. The Rambam is conveying that the essence of the story is the super-natural phenomena which occurred. The whole objective of the recounting is to cause us to focus on the miracles that G-d wrought. The question arises: Why is the miraculous element of the story of such paramount importance?

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The Significance of the Bread

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

When studying Passover in chapter XII in Exodus, we note its distinction from the other holidays. Passover was celebrated in Egypt - there were commands even before the giving of 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 these the Passover of Egypt, and our Passover?

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The Foundation of the Jewish People

RABBI REUVEN MANN

II. We read in the Ten Commandments: Exodus 20:2 "I Am the L-d your G-d who took you out of the land of Egypt from the house of slavery." This Pasuk incorporate's two commands. 1) to believe in the existence of the Creator and 2) to accept Him as our G-d. The historical event which forms the basis of our obligation to serve G-d is the Exodus. Many commentators have pointed to the fact that, great as the Exodus was, the creation of the universe seems to be even more consequential to our relationship to G-d. Thus they ask, why doesn't it say "I am the L-d your G-d who created Heaven and Earth."? In his commentary on the Ten Commandments, the Ramban states: (Ramban's Commentary on the Torah-Exodus 20:2) "I AM THE ETERNAL THY G-D. This Divine utterance constitutes a positive commandment. He said, I am the Eternal, thus teaching and commanding them that they should know and believe that the Eternal exist and that He is G-d to them. That is to say, there exist an Eternal Being through Whom everything has come into existence by His will and power, and He is G-d to them, who are obligated to worship him. He said, Who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, because his taking them out from there was evidence establishing the existence and will of G-d, for it was with his knowledge and providence that we came out from there. The exodus is also evidence for the creation of the world, for assuming the eternity of the universe [which precludes a Master of the universe Who is in control of it], it would follow that nothing could be changed from its nature. And it is also evidence for G-d's infinite power, and His infinite power is an indication of the Unity". as He said, that thou [i.e. Pharaoh] mayest know that there is none like Me on the earth". According to Nachmanides there is something unique about the Exodus which renders it more instructive than creation. From time immemorial people have asked: What is the ultimate cause of the world in which we live or, put another way; What is the ultimate reality? There were many philosophers who believed in the eternity of the universe. This essentially means that the world has no cause. It exists because it has to exist. According to this view there is nothing beyond the laws of nature and the notion of miracles must be dismissed. Historically most philosophers denied this idea and maintained that the Universe did not come into being by itself but had to have a cause. They held that the natural order with its infinite wisdom owes its existence to a Supreme Being who is the cause of all that exists. Judaism of course agrees with the philosophers who maintain that the Universe owes its existence to G-d. However the key area in which we differ is the question of the relationship of G-d to the Universe. Thinkers such as Aristotle and Einstein believed in G-d but denied that He intervenes in human affairs or retains a relationship with man. They maintained that the Universe is a necessary result of G-d's very existence and as G-d is unchangeable so is the world. They also rejected the idea of miracles. The foundation of Judaism is our belief that G-d is eternal and nothing exists beside Him. (He is our L-d there is none else). His relationship to the world is that of the Creator to the created. He brought the world into existence from nothingness (ex nihilo) not because of any extraneous compulsion but purely because of His inscrutable Will. He established the Universe, and the laws of nature by which it operates in accordance with His will. He retains complete control over the Universe and can alter the natural order, and perform miracles in order to achieve His objective in creation. All of the beliefs and practices of Judaism, such as free will, reward and punishment, the efficacy of prayer, etc. are based on this understanding of G-d's absolute power and mastery of His creation. We can now understand the significance of the events surrounding the Exodus. The miracles which completely overturned the natural order demonstrated that there is a Supreme Being who created the world and can make any alterations at Will.



III. Let us review the basic lessons which are contained in the words: "I am the L-d thy G-d who took you out of the land of Egypt from the house of slavery" A) The Universe is not eternal. B) G-d alone is eternal and created the world (ex nihilo-from nothing). C) G-d retains total control over the entire course of human history. D) G-d created the world for a moral purpose which is rooted in the rejection of evil. i.e. idolatry and the affirmation of the true creator of heaven and earth. Equally important is the point that He intervened in the course of human history to rescue a particular people who were to become His nation. This demonstrates that G-d created mankind for a moral purpose which can only be achieved through adherence to the mitzvos, moral imperatives and truths that are contained in His Torah. It is therefore important to remember that the Jews have a special place in G-d's scheme of things. The Exodus is not just an abstract historical event. It happened to us and gave us our national character and mission. As the Ramban says (ibid.): "This is the intent of the expression, Who brought thee out, since they are the ones who know and are witnesses to all these things". He further states in his Commentary on the Torah-Exodus 13:16: "...And because the Holy One, blessed be He, will not make signs and wonders in every generation for the eyes of some wicked man or heretic, He therefore commanded us that we should always make a memorial or sign of that which we have seen with our eyes, and that we should transmit the matter to our children, and their children to their children, to the generations to come. And He placed great emphasis on it, as is indicated by the fact that one is liable to extinction for eating leavened bread on the Passover, and for abandoning the Passover offering, [i.e., not taking part in the slaughtering thereof]. He has further required of us that we inscribe upon our arms and between our eyes all that we have seen in the way of signs and wonders, and to inscribe it yet upon the doorposts of the houses, and that we remember it by recital in the morning and the evening...[He further required] that we make a sukkah every year and many other commandments like them which are a memorial to the exodus from Egypt. All these commandments are designed for the purpose that in all generations we should have testimonies to the wonders so that they should not be forgotten and so that the heretic should not be able to open his lips to deny the belief in the existence of G-d. He who buys a Mezuzah for one zuz [a silver coin] and affixes it to his doorpost and has the proper intent of heart on its content, has already admitted the creation of the world, the Creator's knowledge and His providence, and also his belief in prophecy as well as in fundamental principals of the Torah, besides admitting that the mercy of the Creator is very great upon them that do His will, since He brought us forth from that bondage to freedom and to great honor on the account of the merit of our fathers who delighted in the fear of His name". In conclusion, we can now understand why the Rambam places such emphasis on recounting the miracles which took place in Egypt. They contain profound teachings about creation, G-d's ongoing relationship to the world and the special role that the Jewish people play in His plan for mankind. May this Passover be a time of reflection on the foundations of Jewish existence and renewed aspiration to achieve the purpose for which we were created. ■

Parashas Metzorah

RABBI BERNARD FOX

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the cleansing and purification process of the metzora. The Chumash explains that the afflicted individual must be brought to the Kohen. The Kohen is responsible for the execution of this process.

The commentaries are concerned with the wording of our passage. The metzora is brought to the Kohen. The implication is that the Kohen does not come to the metzora. The metzora must come to the Kohen.

What is the reason for this law? In order to answer this question, we must recall one of the special laws governing the conduct of the metzora. During the period of the affliction, the metzora must live outside of the city or camp. This means that the afflicted person cannot enter the camp to consult with the Kohen. The Kohen must leave the city and come to the metzora.

This practical consideration would seem to require that the Kohen come to the metzora! What is the meaning of our pasuk? How can the metzora come to the Kohen?

Sforno explains that there is another consideration that is relevant. The honor of the Kohen must be respected. Therefore, it is inappropriate for the Kohen to travel to the metzora. However, the metzora cannot enter the city! How are these conflicting considerations resolved? Sforno explains that this is the issue addressed by the pasuk. The metzora must approach the city. The Kohen meets the metzora directly outside the boundaries of the camp. This procedure respects the position of the Kohen without compromising the prohibition against the metzora entering the city. This is the meaning of the pasuk. To the extent possible, the metzora must be brought to the Kohen.[1]

Sforno's explanation is very interesting. The Chumash is

stressing that the metzora must respect and honor the Kohen. This implies that the metzora has a special need for this lesson. Why is this message so relevant for the metzora?

Maimonides explains that tzara'at is a punishment for lashon hara – gossip and tale bearing. He adds that this behavior ultimately leads to the denigration, by the gossiper, of the righteous.[2] What is the connection between these two activities?

Perhaps, the righteous are particularly susceptible to being targeted for lashon hara. What motivates us to speak lashon hara? Lashon hara is a means by which we can feel better about ourselves. We denigrate others that we feel are, in some way, better than ourselves. We are saying that our target is not really such a good person. We no longer need not feel that we compare poorly to this person.

We can now identify the reason that the tzadik is very susceptible to being targeted. The tzadik challenges our estimation of ourselves. The behavior of the righteous gives us cause to recognize our own faults. This occurs through a process of comparison. This can be a painful realization. Some individuals will be tempted to speak lashon hara against the tzadik. This tactic helps alleviate the pain created by the comparison.

The Kohen is devoted to the service of Hashem. He represents commitment to Torah and righteous behavior. This status exposes the Kohen to lashon hara. It is fitting that, as part of the purification process, the metzora express respect for the Kohen. Perhaps, for this reason the entire process of identifying tzara'at and purification is the responsibility of the Kohen. This arrangement forces the metzora to demonstrate humility in the presence the Kohen.

"The Kohen shall then order that for the person undergoing purification there be taken two live clean birds, a piece of cedar, some crimson thread and a hyssop branch." (VaYikra 14:4)

This pasuk introduces the purification process for the metzorah. The Chumash describes the purification process in some detail. The first portion of the process involves the items listed in our pasuk. One of the two birds is slaughtered. The blood of this bird is mixed with fresh water. The second bird, along with the cedar, crimson thread and hyssop are dipped into the mixture of blood and water. The mixture is sprinkled on the metzorah. The live bird is then released.

It is difficult to determine the meaning of this process. The commentaries offer various explanations. One of the most interesting is provided by Rav Yosef Karo. In order to understand this interpretation, we need an introduction.

The human being is a combination of the spiritual and material. These two elements compete for dominance within the individual. How should a person resolve the conflict between these elements? There are various approaches to this issue. Some religions favor denial of the material element of our nature. If all of humanity would adopt this approach, humanity would cease to exist. The instincts provide the motivation for many human endeavors. The obvious example is procreation. Clearly, humanity cannot survive if the instinctual drives are completely suppressed.

An alternative is to adopt the opposite extreme. Some individuals forsake their spiritual element. These people choose to become completely absorbed in their material desires. This solution to the human conflict is also ineffectual. First, often these people feel unfulfilled. It seems we have a need

for spiritual expression. A life bereft of any spiritual endeavor feels empty and meaningless.

Furthermore, the human being has the potential to achieve eternal existence. The spiritual element is not extinguished by death. However, this element must be developed during the period of one's existence in this world. If one does not develop spiritually, the element becomes atrophied. It cannot survive material death.

We can now understand Rav Yosef Karo's comments. He explains that the two birds represent the two aspects of the human being – the spiritual and material. One bird is slaughtered. This bird represents the instinctual element. Complete dominance of this element results in the destruction of the individual. Happiness in this world is lost. Eternal existence is forsaken.

The other bird represents the spiritual element of the human being. This bird is dipped into the blood of the slaughtered bird. What is the message, here? One cannot completely ignore the instinctual element. Instead, the spiritual person must acknowledge the instinctual element and even indulge this element to a limited extent. This is essential for the existence of society and the stability of the personality. This acknowledgement is symbolized through the dipping of "spiritual" bird into the blood of the "material" bird.

The bird is then freed. This act symbolizes the freedom of the spiritual element to pursue spiritual endeavors. Acknowledging the instinctual element does not damage the individual's spiritual element. On the contrary, denial of the instincts is destructive. The healthy individual recognizes the importance of the instincts and through this recognition attains spiritual freedom.[3] Using this approach Rav Yosef Karo also explains other elements of the purification process. ■

Passover

RABBI BERNARD FOX

"Before one begins to search one recites the blessing, "that sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us on the removal of chametz"... (Shulchan Aruch, Orech Chayim 432:1) "And there are those who observe the custom of placing pieces of chametz in a place that they will be found. This is in order that the blessing will not be recited needlessly. However, if these pieces are not distributed, it does not prevent the recital of the blessing. This is because a person's intention in reciting the blessing is to remove chametz if it is found. (Ibid, Rema 432:2)

On Pesach, leavened substances – chametz – are forbidden. A number of commandments regulate our interaction with these substances. These mitzvot prohibit consumption and possession of chametz. It is prohibited to even benefit from this forbidden substance. In addition to these prohibitions, there is a positive command regarding chametz. One must remove all chametz from one's possession prior to Pesach. Two processes are employed to fulfill this positive command. First, a thorough search is conducted on the night of the fourteenth of Nissan – the night prior to Pesach. Any chametz found during this search is subsequently destroyed. Second, we nullify our ownership of all chametz. This is accomplished through the pronouncement of a specific legal formula. This formula is recited after the search for the chametz and repeated after the destruction of the chametz.

The search for the chametz fulfills a positive command to remove the chametz from our possession. Therefore, it is preceded by a blessing. This blessing is described in the above quotation from Shulchan Aruch. Rema – Rav Moshe Isserles – deals with an interesting problem. It is prohibited to recite a blessing needlessly. This blessing is recited prior to fulfilling the commandment to remove

chametz from one's possession. It is possible that the person reciting the blessing will not find chametz. No chametz will be removed. If this should occur, the mitzvah of removing chametz has not been fulfilled. The blessing was recited needlessly.

Rema, suggests that this consideration led to the development of a popular custom. Pieces of chametz are placed in a specific place in the house. The search is conducted. At least these pre-placed pieces of chametz are found. This assures that some chametz is removed. The mitzvah is fulfilled. The blessing is not recited needlessly.

It easy to appreciate the logic of this custom. It seems to respond to a valid consideration. However, Shulchan Aruch does not require the placement of these pieces of bread. Furthermore, Rema explains that there is a basis for Shulchan Aruch's dismissal of this issue. He points out that it is not absolutely necessary to find chametz in order for the blessing to be recited. He argues that the meaning of the blessing is determined by the intention of the person by whom it is recited. This person does refer to the commandment for the destruction of chametz. However, one's real intention is that we are commanded to destroy any chametz one may find. Therefore, this objective is fulfilled regardless of finding actual chametz. This explains the position of Shulchan Aruch. There is simply no need to validate the blessing though distributing pieces of bread.

Rema's argument is somewhat difficult to understand. The terms in the blessing are not an expression of personal thoughts. Our personal interpretation of the blessing is irrelevant. The blessing refers to a specific commandment. In order to determine the meaning of the blessing, we cannot consider a subjective interpretation of one reciting the blessing. We must analyze the actual commandment.

This blessing acknowledges the mitzvah to remove chametz from one's possession. Rema seems to concede that the commandment requires the actual removal of chametz. If so, the personal interpretation of the individual reciting the blessing is unimportant! If the mitzvah is fulfilled, the blessing is valid. This requires the actual removal of chametz.

An alternative explanation of Shulchan Aruch's position can be derived from a discussion in the mishne. The mishne raises an interesting question. The search for chametz seems to ignore a practical problem. How can the search actually assure that one's domain is free of chametz? Assume a person checks one room of his or her home. This individual then moves on to another room. In the interim, prior to completing the inspection of the second room it cannot be regarded as free of chametz. Any chametz in that room could be dragged by a mouse to the already inspected room. As a result, it seems impossible to determine that the house is completely free of chametz. The mishne responds to this issue. It explains that we do not concern ourselves with this consideration![4] This is a rather odd response. How can a valid consideration be dismissed?

This mishne is conveying a basic concept underlying the process of searching for chametz. The search is not merely a practical means of determining that the domain is free of chametz. In an absolute sense, this is impossible. One cannot inspect the entire domain simultaneously. Even were this possible, the inspected domain could become contaminated by chametz. This chametz could be bought into the inspected domain from another home not yet inspected.[5] What then is the value of the search?

The mishne is telling us that the search is effective because it confers upon the domain a legal status. Once a room is inspected this legal

status is created. The room is legally regarded as chametz-free. This legal status exists despite the possibility of contamination. Halacha can and does chose to disregard the possibility of contamination. Halacha has the right to determine the requirement for creating a legal state. In short, the search is effective because it creates a legal status of chametz-free. It is not effective because it creates an actual practical assurance.

We can now understand Shulchan Aruch's position regarding the blessing over the search. The search is not merely a means for finding and removing chametz. The search creates a chametz-free status in the domain. This suggests an alternative understanding of the mitzvah to remove chametz. We are not actually required to remove all chametz from our domain. The mishne explains that this is virtually impossible. Instead, we are required to create a legally chametz-free domain. The blessing prior to the search acknowledges that we are fulfilling this commandment. Therefore, it is valid whether or not chametz is found. It is valid because the mitzvah is not to remove chametz. The mitzvah is to render one's domain chametz-free.

"This is the bread of affliction that our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. Let all that are hungry come and eat. Let all that so require come and join in the Pesach offering. Now, we are here. Next year, may we be in the land of Israel. Now, we are servants. Next year, may we be free people." (Haggadah of Pesach)

This short paragraph is recited prior to breaking the matzah at the opening of the Seder. The paragraph contains a number of elements. It describes the matzah as the bread eaten by our ancestors during the bondage. It includes an invitation to

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Passover

RABBI BERNARD FOX

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others to join in our meal. Finally, it closes with a confirmation of our conviction in the coming of the Messiah. The Messiah will come and we will be a free people in the land of Israel.

Rabbaynu Saadia does not include this paragraph in his Haggadah. He replaces it with a similar paragraph. Rabbaynu Saadia's version contains two of the three elements. It begins with an invitation to join in the Seder. It concludes with the confirmation of our conviction in the coming of the Messiah.

In both versions we affirm our conviction in the Messianic era. This conviction is one of the fundamental principles of Judaism. However, why do we begin the Seder with this affirmation?

The Haggadah indicates that there is an close connection between the redemption from Egypt and the Messianic era. The end of the Magid – the portion of the Haggadah that retells the story of the exodus – we recite the blessing of Ga'al Yisrael. In this beracha we thank Hashem for redeeming us from Egypt. We acknowledge that we now celebrate the Seder as a result of this redemption. We then express our wish to soon be able to celebrate the festivals in the rebuilt holy Temple.

This blessing indicates that the celebration of Pesach is related to the Messianic era? What is the relationship?

There are two basic possibilities. The first is that the redemption from Egypt is incomplete. We are in exile. Our affirmation of the Messianic era is a request to the Almighty to hasten the Messiah's coming. This explanation is consistent with the formulation of the blessing of Ga'al Yisrael. We begin the blessing thanking Hashem for our redemption. We then acknowledge that this redemption is incomplete. We cannot serve the Almighty in the Bait HaMikdash. We pray that Hashem will rebuild

the Temple so we can serve Him more fully.

However, this interpretation does not explain the affirmation of the Messianic era at the opening of the Seder. According to this first explanation, we mention the Messianic era only after recalling our redemption. We are asking Hashem to complete the redemption. It would not make sense to affirm our conviction in the Messianic era before we discuss the redemption from Egypt.

Therefore, an alternative explanation is needed. It seems that the through introducing the Seder with an acknowledgement of the Messianic era we are identifying one of the objectives of the Seder. The purpose of the Seder is not solely to recall our exodus from Egypt. Retelling the story of our redemption serves another purpose. We are obligated to fully accept that the Messiah will ultimately arrive. How do we know that there is a basis for this conviction? The redemption from Egypt provides the proof. The Almighty rescued our ancestors from slavery. He created a free nation from an oppressed people. If we accept the truth of these events, we have a firm basis for our conviction in a second redemption through the Messiah.

The order of the Seder expresses this theme. We begin with an affirmation of the Messianic era. We then discuss the basis for our conviction – the redemption from Egypt. We close by articulating the connection. Hashem redeemed us from Egypt. Therefore, we can be sure that He will redeem us again.

"This matzah that we eat – what does it represent? It recalls that the dough of our fathers did not have sufficient time to rise before the King of all Kings – the Holy One Blessed be He – appeared to them and redeemed them; as it is stated, "And they baked the dough that they brought out of Egypt into cakes of matzah. Because it did not rise for

the Egyptians chased them out. And they could not delay. And they also did not prepare provisions". (Pesach Haggadah)

The Haggadah explains the symbolism of matzah. The matzah recalls the haste of the exodus from Egypt. The Egyptians were eager for Bnai Yisrael to leave Egypt. They begged the Jews to leave as soon as possible. The Jews did not have time to allow their dough to rise properly. Therefore, the dough baked into unleavened cakes.

The Haggadah quotes a pasuk from the Torah that describes the haste of the departure from Egypt and the preparation of the matzah.

The passage does not refer to the matzah brought out from Egypt as loaves – lechem. Instead, it calls the matzah "cakes" – ugot. Rashbam explains that the term lechem is not applicable to these matzot. The term lechem is only used to describe bread baked in an oven. These matzot were not placed in an oven. Instead, the dough was carried by Bnai Yisrael and baked by the heat of the sun. In order to indicate that these matzot were not baked in an oven the term ugot is used.[6]

This raises an interesting question. On Pesach, we are commanded to eat matzah. Can one fulfill the commandment of eating matzah with sun-baked dough? The Aruch HaShulchan maintains that this product is unfit for use as matzah. He explains that it is difficult to sun-bake the dough before it leavens. He adds that even were leavening avoided, the product would not be suitable for the mitzvah of matzah. This is because matzah is a type of lechem. Lechem is dough processed through the heat of an oven.[7]

Other authorities offer an alternative explanation of the term ugot. Their explanation is based on a comment of Rashi in Tractate Taanit. Rashi explains that the term ugot – the singular of ugot – means round.[8] These authorities conclude that it is appropriate to use

round matzot for the mitzvah of matzah.[9]

This interpretation is difficult to understand. Why would the Chumash stress the shape of the matzot Bnai Yisrael baked when leaving Egypt? Furthermore, why should we be required to imitate this characteristic of Bnai Yisrael's matzah?

A solution to these questions is provided by the pasuk quoted in the Haggadah. The passage explains that the matzah symbolize the haste of the departure from Egypt. Bnai Yisrael did not have the time to allow the dough to rise. Therefore, it baked as unleavened cakes. This haste also explains the round shape. The dough was mixed, kneaded and flattened. The resultant cake was round. Any other form would have required shaping. There was no time to form shaped loaves. We can now understand the requirement to use round matzot for the mitzvah of matzah. Our matzah must reflect the haste of the departure from Egypt. The matzah is unleavened. This captures the image of haste. However, the round shape adds another reminder of the haste of the departure.

[1] Rabbaynu Ovadia Sforno, Commentary on Sefer VaYikra 14:2.

[2] Rabbaynu Moshe ben Maimon (Rambam / Maimonides) Mishne Torah, Hilchot Tumat Tzara'at, 16:10.

[3] Rav Yosef Karo, Maggid Meysarim (Bar Lev, 1990), p 227.

[4] Mesechet Pesachim 9a.

[5] Mesechet Pesachim 9a.

[6] Rabbaynu Shemuel ben Meir (Rashbam) Commentary on Sefer Shemot 12:39.

[7] Rav Yechezkel Michal HaLeyve Epstein, Aruch HaShulchan, Orech Chayim 461:5.

[8] Rabbaynu Shlomo ben Yitzchak (Rashi), Commentary on the Talmud, Mesechet Taanit 23a.

[9] Rav Yitzchak Mirsky, Haggadat Hegyonai Halacha (Jerusalem, 5755), p 19, note 32. □



The Significance of the Bread

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

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Reading the Haggada, we note a conflict in the identity of the matza. The Haggada 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 Haggada, quoting the Talmud (Pesachim 116b) says that matza is commanded in memory of the dough which did not rise due to the Egyptians swift, panic-stricken oust of the Jews. We are obligated by Torah law to recall God's swift salvation by eating the matza. The Jews were ousted from the Egyptian city Raamses, and arrived at Succot. When the Jews arrived, they were only able to bake that dough into matza, not bread. 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, according to Rabbi Yossi HaGalili in the Jerusalem Talmud 14a. The Torah laws describing those Jews' obligation also appear to exclude any restriction of eating leaven. Certainly on the morrow of the Paschal Lamb the Jews were permitted in 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. There was no law not to have 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. This matza demonstrates salvation, the focus of the Passover holiday. This poses a 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). 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 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, (Exod., 12:34), "And the people lifted up HIS loaf before it had risen, ...", "And they baked THE loaf..." (Exod., 12:39) Why this singular reference to numerous loaves? Why so much discussion about the loaf?

Lastly, Rashi praises the Jews for not taking any provisions when they left: (Exod., 12:39) "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." 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 every same verse. It is also quite interesting why the Jews were making dough at this point, while in Egypt.

In order to answer these questions, I feel it is essential to get some background. The Egyptians originated bread. Certainly, as they tortured the Jews, the Egyptian taskmasters ate their bread, as their Jewish slaves gaped with open mouths, breaking their own teeth on matza, or "poor man's bread". The title of "poor man's bread" is a relative term - "poor" is always in comparison to something richer. "Poor man's bread" teaches that there was a "richer bread" in Egypt - real bread. The Egyptians enjoyed real bread, while they fed 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 displaying a trust in God's ability to provide them with food. But we noted that in the very same verse where Rashi derives a praise for the Jews who 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. I do not feel the Jews took 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 bondage. They were now free. They cherished this freedom and longed to embody it in expression. Making 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 an identification with the free Egyptians, Rashi comments that when the Jews despoiled the Egyptians of their silver, gold and clothing, at Moses command, they valued the Egyptian clothing over the silver and gold. (Exodus 12:35)

However, the Jews had the wrong idea. Their new found freedom was not 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. God therefore 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 cakes of dough were 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. 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, (Exod., 12:39) "and provisions they made not for themselves." They did not prepare food, as they relied on God for that. 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.

Matza does not only recall God's swift salvation, but its also represents

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The Significance of the Bread

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

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Egyptian servitude. In the precise activity that the Jews wished to express unrestricted freedom by baking bread, God stepped in with one action serving two major objectives: 1) By 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. 2) But even more amazing is that with one action of a speedy redemption, God not only restricted the dough's process, but He also "saved" the Jews - 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.

We return to the command to eat matza in Egypt. This command could not be to commemorate an event which did not yet happen. This makes no sense. I feel God commanded them to eat the matza for what it did represent - servitude. While in Egypt, why did God wish them to be mindful of servitude? Here I feel we come on to 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 Haggada 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 the resultant appreciation for God's kindness. A contrast between our Egyptian Passover and today's Passover will best engender such appreciation. It compares our previous 'bondage' to our current 'freedom'. Perhaps for this reason we are also commanded to view each of ourselves as if we left Egypt.

So in Egypt, we ate matza representing Egyptian servitude. Today we eat it as the Haggada 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 vs 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, since matza in its original form in Egypt embodied servitude, God wished that servitude be the continued theme of Passover. He therefore centered the salvation around 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.

What is the significance of chametz, leaven? Perhaps, once leavened bread took on the role of freedom, exclusive of any connection with God, leaven thereby took on a character that opposes the very salvation, demonstrated by the matza. This now explains that leaven was not mentioned in connection with the instructions pertaining to the original 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. □

The Obligation of Redemption

RIVKA OLENICK

If a person honestly contemplates life, hopefully one will realize that the only freedom one has is the freedom to pursue true ideas. A person who chooses to earnestly study the ideas contained in Torah will begin to see that doing so provides one with the reward of developing an independent mind. This is really the greatest freedom. Unfortunately, what most people assume is real "freedom" is actually masked as some form of slavery which is defined as bondage and servitude. Slavery is a condition of submission to or domination by some influence. Hard, continuous work like that done by slaves, drudgery. How about this definition: One who has no power of resistance, or one who surrenders himself to any power whatever as a slave to ambition. It is easy to become an emotional slave to what culture dictates as freedom. Wealth, fame, acquisition, etc. and the continuous need of approval from others becomes a futile, frustrating trap that is impossible to break out of. Wealth, fame and acquisition were not and are not meant to be the "redeeming" qualities of the Jew. This is what breaks us down as a people, yet we continue in endless pursuit and then claim that God is unfair and unjust for not granting it all to us. Although we live in a free country, our existence as Jews has a different purpose.

Philosophically, we have it backwards. How concerned are we regarding our philosophical picture of life and what we should truly value in life? We are quite sharp at evaluating our financial picture spending hours in enthusiastic conversation, even at the Sabbath table. We allow ourselves to become intellectually shallow and spiritually diminished if we don't actively pursue true ideas. God gave us the freedom to pursue His truths, but if we do not actually pursue them then we are just as bound up as our ancestors were. We are bound up in our own "present day" oppression. Of course, the oppression that we create ourselves is the same oppression that we continue to pursue and can't break away from. "Turn your fantasy into reality!" We justify this and try to make ourselves feel better by thinking we have control over it but actually we are consumed by it. This is a frustrating end in itself because what you think you really need is just more of what you already have so anything more than what you already have is useless. Every person really lives in their own mind, so either one's mind is in bondage and one always feels poor or one's mind is free and one always feels wealthy. Who wouldn't want to become free and wealthy in the most satisfying way?

God took us out of Egypt from under the burdens of slavery. He heard our cries and our groans, and removed us from our oppression. God restored our energies so that our potential to acquire His knowledge would also be our goal. All of the energies of slavery were redirected, so that our new and restored energies could fulfill their true purpose, which was designed to be a satisfying and appropriate way to live. We were transformed, to serve as an eved Hashem, a servant only of God, not man. Slavery would be redefined as bondage and servitude only to God that would ultimately produce the greatest freedom for us. We should conduct our lives with continuous thanks and praise to God by thinking about this idea more seriously and more frequently. What produces true freedom is the choice to use one's mind and obtain knowledge and live a reasonable, simple life. Fortunately, our redemption came with the advantage of a binding obligation: the system of Torah. When we attach ourselves to it, it can bring a person an additional acquisition: peace of mind. The geula, redemption is our obligation in Torah and mitzvos, this is our mesora.

During the Festival of Matzah, and specifically at the Seder we are commanded to relive the geula, the redemption as if we were there. The theme of the Passover seder is that each of us rededicate ourselves to the geula through each mitzvah we partake of at the Seder. Telling over the story, haggada to future generations is not just reading the haggada "to get through it." It is the reenacting of the haggada and being involved in transmitting the mesora. The seder night/s is a seder of limud Torah, including the laws of the Seder. Each mitzva we are obligated to partake of; wine, matzah, maror, etc. has a specific idea attached to it. When we were taken out of Egypt we were then designated as the recipients, the receivers of truth as we still are, that is the point. We understood that it was God, Who took us out, altered the laws of nature by the Red Sea, destroyed the enemy of amalek and through that miracle changed our status. We were and are now to recognize that we were and are to be completely and totally dependent on God, not man. God redeemed us, and our lives were transformed with the purpose and the obligation of obtaining yedias Hashem, God's knowledge. As His Chosen People, we were and are free to pursue it purposefully, which was and still is the purpose and the obligation of the geula for the Jewish people. Blessed are You, Hashem, Almighty God, the King, Whom we can never praise enough! □

Passover

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Passover is the holiday where commemoration functions as the primary command, as this is the holiday of 'transmission', passing down the Mesora - tradition - to the next generation. Recalling the Exodus forms the basis of innumerable other commands, even the basis of the other holidays. A Rabbi pointed out that we count from Passover to Shavuot, and we refer to the Succot holiday as a remembrance of the Exodus. We read in the Passover Hagadda of the command to discuss the story of the Exodus, even if we are wise men, and even if we are alone.

With such importance attached to Passover, I would like to enumerate some questions and offer some answers:

1) Why is matzoh, unleavened bread, essential to the Passover holiday? What is the concept behind it? Additionally, what is the significance of the Paschal Lamb and the bitter herbs, all three of which are so essential, that their omission from our discussion causes us not to fulfill our obligation?

2) Why does the passage in the Torah command us not to have leavened foods existing at the commencement of the slaughter of the paschal lamb? It is not yet Passover, so why should leaven be prohibited?

3) Why must the Paschal Lamb be eaten together with matzoh and bitter herbs? What is the concept behind this law?

4) We constantly find commands which read "do such and such, it is a remembrance of the Egyptian Exodus". Why is the focal point of so many laws the Exodus of Egypt, as opposed to the inheritance of Israel?

5) We read, "masscheel b'gnuss u'misayame b'shevach", "commence with degrading statements and conclude with praise". What is the concept that our recounting the story of the Exodus begin with our degradation, and conclude with praise?

To answer these questions, it is important the we clarify the events. The Jews were slaves in Egypt for hundreds of years, during which time many Jews adopted Egyptian beliefs. This culture was essentially idolatrous, as they raised the lamb and many other objects to a deified status and worshiped it as a god. We recall the Rashi on the passage discussing the plague of darkness, that four fifths of the Jewish people were killed during that plague in order that the Egyptians wouldn't witness it. The reason for their deaths was that they had abandoned living correct philosophical lives in favor of following the corrupt Egyptian culture.

God planned to redeem the Jews so as to give them the Torah, but to do so, they had to recognize Who was actually giving the Torah. By definition, the Torah only has value as a means to recognize God if God's existence is a reality to the recipients. Jews who deified the lamb were not worthy of accepting the Torah. God therefore commanded the Jews to take the lamb, and

hold it four days until the day of slaughter. The purpose of holding the lamb publicly was to denounce idolatry in the face of the idolaters. This would be a demonstration of a strong conviction of God's ultimate superiority over Egyptian gods.

The Jews were commanded to place the blood of the lamb on their doorposts, on the inside. One reason was that the doorpost is the part of the house most seen, as all must pass through to exit and enter. But primarily, it was placed inside for the Jews themselves to see, not for the Egyptians. They needed to ponder that 'blood' was the cause of their redemption. We refer to both the blood of the Paschal Lamb, and the blood of circumcision, which was commanded as well at that time. These two bloods taught those Jews two concepts; 1) Circumcision reminds us that the life of physical enjoyment, Hedonism, is contrary to the Torah's goal of indulging in wisdom, and 2) the Paschal blood reminds one that succumbing to imagined, psychological crutches such as idolatry are diametrically opposed to accepting reality and monotheism.

Study of reality dictates that there is only One Creator, One Source for all that is real and true. These two concepts needed to be accepted for God to save any soul. It is for this reason that God states, (Exod. 12:13) "...and will see the blood and I will pass over you and there will be no plague to destroy when I smite the land of Egypt".

As the Jews followed these commands, they were spared. But as a Rabbi once stated, the Egyptians' firstborns were killed in order to wipe out those who promulgate that culture. As they were horrified at the deaths, the remaining Egyptians feared for their lives and ousted the Jews in a hurried panic (Exod. 12:33). So fast were the Jews urged to leave that the dough had not time to rise. They later baked it into matzoh, unleavened bread.

The Ibn Ezra points out that had the Jews been given longer time to tarry, the dough would have leavened. Interesting that Ibn Ezra spends ink on this point. But for good reason. This statement teaches us the entire concept behind chametz, or leavened foods. Ibn Ezra is teaching that chametz by definition would be that substance which would have emerged had the "Jews tarried in Egypt". Chametz is that which is antithetical to the Exodus. It represents a lingering in the Egyptian culture. Therefore we are commanded to remove all chametz, meaning, we are to recognize how mutually exclusive the idolatrous life is to Judaism. Judaism teaches the acceptance of reality, where man must change himself to be in accord with what is true and real. Idolatry is the opposite - the projection of man's wishes onto reality, creating a psychologically protected universe where all man's wishes are 'true'. Idolatry caters to the infantile, psychological crutches which man has yet to see as false and remove himself from. The Rabbis of blessed memory state, "a righteous person changes himself to be in accord with reality, and

a wicked person changes reality to be in accord with himself".

We destroy the Egyptians' God and use it in service to the Only Real God. (See my understanding of Maimonides on this point) We also must not have any chametz around at the point of slaughter, even though it is not yet Passover. The reason is that since acceptance of God is mutually exclusive to idolatry, all remnants of idolatrous life must not coexist. So at the very moment we declare idolatry as false by killing the Egyptian god, we must not have that which represents our desire to linger in Egypt, that being chametz.

This also explains why the Paschal lamb was to be eaten together with matzoh. The eating together means that matzoh "qualifies" the lamb. How so? If we were to simply eat the lamb without the matzoh, we would not be stating that the lamb's purpose is to be redirected towards God. The matzoh represents the act of redemption, as its existence emerged at the precise moment of the redemption. Matzoh therefore represents "Ge-ula", or redemption for this very reason of serving God. Therefore, we eat the matzoh at the moment we

eat the lamb, thereby showing that the lamb is not a god, but the God Who orchestrated the Exodus is God. Eating the lamb without matzoh would mean to say that abolishing idolatry without recognizing God is sufficient. This however is not so, and we must always tie hand in hand the ideas that, idolatry is false, and simultaneously state, monotheism is truth. Our commands must always eventuate in our recognition of the One Who commanded us. Otherwise, we are missing the main point.

Someone had asked, "When the Messiah is here, what will be the purpose to the temple sacrifices?" I say that although idolatry is gone at that point, we still must commemorate how wrong are the false ideas of lost cultures. Although lost, the seeds of that culture which brought forth idolatry are in every man, forever. We therefore require constant recognition of those drives and notions which are idolatrous, destructive and antithetical to Torah.

We asked why we refer to so many commands, as a "remembrance of the Exodus". We now see that the Exodus per se is that event which removed us from idolatry. It is not the "being out of Egypt", or the entrance into Israel which holds such significance. The very act of the Exodus was the event which embodies "leaving" idolatry. Additionally, the Rabbi taught that the Exodus is that which engenders in us an appreciation for God. It is then essential that as Jews, we constantly appreciate God's acts of kindness which allow us to involve ourselves in Torah study, the most enjoyable act, and our lifelong goal. Commencing with our degraded status and remembering our bitterness via the bitter herbs, followed by a conclusion of our state of grandeur engenders such an appreciation,.....and an apropos point to conclude! Happy holiday.



Questions & Answers for the Seder

RABBI REUVEN MANN

Questions & Answers Was Moshe a good negotiator? At first glance it would seem he wasn't a good negotiator. The second plague, frogs seemed to bring Pharaoh to his knees. (see Shemos 8:4). Pharaoh asks Moshe to pray to G-d to remove the frogs and promises to allow the Jews to leave. Moshe proceeds to pray and G-d, in response, removed the frogs. When Pharaoh saw that the frogs were gone he hardened his heart and refused to release the Jews. Why didn't Moshe insist on conditions before removing the pressure? Did Moshe learn from this mistake? The same pattern is repeated. (see Shemos 8:28). Pharaoh promised to free the Jews under the pressure of Arove (wild beasts). Moshe warns Pharaoh to be serious, prays to G-d, the plague is removed and Pharaoh again hardens his heart. Moshe still does not learn. He repeats the same "mistake" by Barad (see Shemos 9:35) and by Arbeh (Locust) (see Shemos 10:20).

Question 1: Why didn't Moshe use the leverage he had to pressure Pharaoh into concessions--instead of accepting his worthless promises? Did Moshe actually trust Pharaoh?

Answer: We see from this that the purpose of the Makkos (plague) was not to beat Pharaoh into submission. G-d had the power to save the Jews without any Makkos. Or he could have gone straight to the slaying of the first born. (See Shemos 7:3-7). The purpose of the Makkos was not to destroy but to teach that there is a Supreme Being outside the scheme of the Universe who created the world and has absolute control over it. The purpose of the Makkos (plague) was to break down the false idolatrous ideas of Egypt and to teach them about Hashem--the Creator of Heaven and Earth who brought the world into being from nothingness and retained absolute control over everything that happened. G-d wanted Pharaoh to use his free will to arrive at this conclusion. Had Moshe refused to remove the plague until Pharaoh complied - then the Jews would have been released but it would not be as a result of a freely arrived at choice. Thus the plague created the pain which forced Pharaoh to deal with the reality. In the moment of pain he recognized G-d and asked Moshe to remove the plague. Moshe complied. He removed the plague. Now Pharaoh could reflect on what had happened and arrive at the proper conclusion--not out of a sense of duress. The only value of a miracle is to draw our attention to the facts which can lead us to the truth. However we must exercise our own power of choice. No one can coerce us. If G-d wanted to he could force the entire world to believe in Him. But the goal is that we should accept Him and serve out of our own free will. This is a fundamental foundation of Judaism.

Question 2: If it is the will of G-d for Pharaoh to accept Him on the basis of free will, why does it say repeatedly that G-d "hardened" his heart. The plain meaning seems to be that G-d made him stubborn thereby preventing him from the right choice.

Answer: The great Bible commentator S'forno explains that it doesn't mean that G-d took away Pharaoh's power of choice. To the contrary it means that G-d strengthened Pharaoh on an emotional level so that he would not be overly frightened and crushed by the awesome blows that were brought down upon him. The average person would have been too emotionally overwhelmed to resist. If that were to happen then Pharaoh would give in from the force of the blows and this would defeat the purpose of allowing him to recognize Hashem as a result of free-will. Thus G-d strengthened him emotionally and gave him the fortitude necessary to avoid emotional panic and exercise the power of Bechira (choice).



Question 3: After Moshe's initial meeting with Pharaoh failed, G-d told him to return and perform a miracle i.e. to throw his staff on the ground and it would turn into a snake. This would seem to be impressive but Pharaoh called his magicians and each one did the same (with their secret devices). Moshe's snake then devoured their snakes. However the ability of the magicians to duplicate Moshe was enough to enable Pharaoh to remain stubborn. Why did G-d give Moshe a sign which was subject to imitation thus undermining its authenticity?

Answer: G-d does not want to overwhelm people into believing in Him. He wants us to use our minds, think carefully, make the appropriate distinctions and reach a logical conclusion. That is why He gave Moshe a sign which the magicians could imitate. However if anyone was interested in the truth they could clearly discern between the magic of the sorcerers and the genuine miracle of Moshe. The magicians used slight-of-hand and would always keep the audience at a certain distance. Moreover the staff of Moshe consumed the snakes of the magicians. There was enough therefore for the thinking person to discern and to distinguish the true from the false. It is only through the proper use of our G-d given intelligence that we can know Him and serve Him.

Question 4: The Matzah is the symbol of the Exodus. The reason is because the redemption came about suddenly, and without prior notice

so that the Jews did not have enough time to allow the dough to rise. However why didn't the Jews know that the redemption was imminent? Moshe told them in advance to prepare a sheep for the Korban Pesach and to sprinkle the blood and that G-d would pass over their houses and slay the first born of Egypt. They knew that the big night was coming and freedom was at hand--why didn't they have enough time to prepare normal, leavened bread?

Answer: The purpose of the Seder is to engage in spontaneous discussion. Not everything should be scripted. Therefore while I have an answer to this question I have decided not to express it and to allow you to use your own creativity in resolving this problem.