

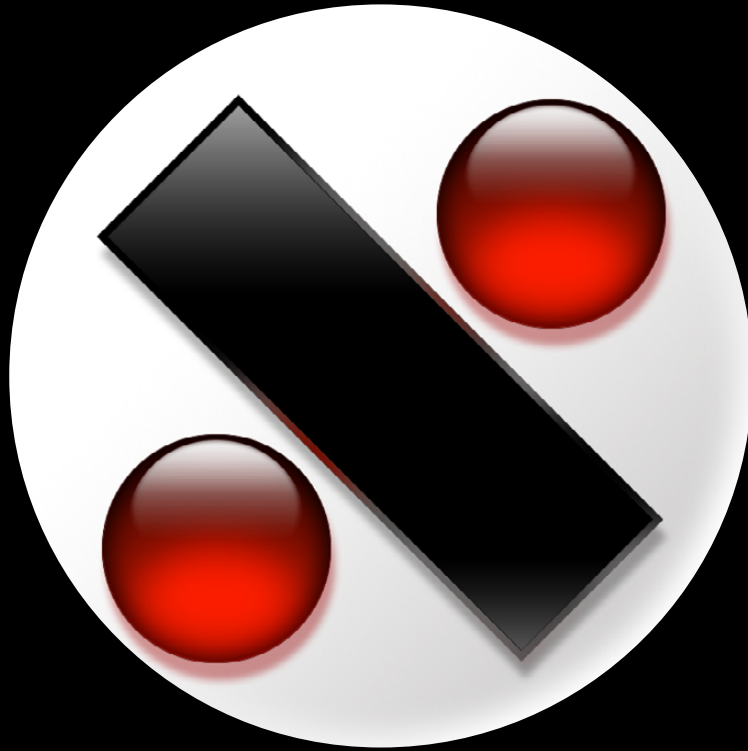
# JewishTimes

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## the Essential Elements of the Commandment

# to Retell the Redemption from Egypt

Rabbi Bernie Fox

*“And Moshe said to the nation: Remember this day that you went forth from Egypt, from the house of bondage – for with a mighty hand Hashem took you forth from this. Leaven products should not be eaten.” (Shemot 13:3)*

## 1. A biblical source for the commandment of Sipur

In this passage, Moshe instructs the nation that must remember the day that they were redeemed from slavery in Egypt and that on the days that commemorate this event – the festival of Pesach – they should not eat chametz – leavened products. In his code of law – Mishne Torah – Maimonides explains that the first portion of this passage in which Moshe instructs the nation to recall the day of its redemption is the biblical source for the commandment to retell the events of the redemption at the annual Pesach Seder.[1],[2]

## 2. An alternative biblical source for the commandment of Sipur

In his Sefer HaMitzvot, Maimonides suggests an alternative source for the commandment to retell the events of our redemption. There he cites the passage: And you should tell to your son on that day saying, “For this purpose Hashem did this for me when I went out of Egypt.” (Shemot 13:8) Why does Maimonides present different passages as the biblical source for the mitzvah in these two works?



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3. The two aspects of the commandment of Sipur represented by its two sources

Every commandment has a purpose and objective. However, in most instances the halachic – the legal obligation – associated with the commandment is limited to its performance. Achievement of the mitzvah's objective is laudable. However, the commandment is fulfilled at its basic requisite level without achievement of its objects. For example, we are required to pick up and wave the four species on Succot. Certainly, this commandment has some meaning and purpose. However, a person who performs the physical action of the commandment fulfills its requirements even if the person has no understanding of the meaning and significance of the performance.

However, there are some commandments in which the performance of the physical activity associated with the mitzvah is meaningless without achievement of the commandment's objective. The best known example is repentance. Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik Zt"l explains that this commandment consists of two components or aspects:

1. The activity of verbal confession of one's sin.
2. The internal commitment to repent from the sin and evil behavior.

The mitzvah is fulfilled only through the merger of its two aspects. A person who makes the commitment to change but does not verbalize his confession has not fulfilled the requirements of the commandment. Neither has the person who utters the required confession without the commitment to alter his behavior.[3]

Any commandment that consists of these multiple aspects – an activity and

an objective – can be defined in terms of its activity or in terms of its objective. In the example of repentance it is equally correct to define the commandment as an obligation to confess one's sin or as an obligation to repent or reform one's behavior. Both definitions are correct. The first defines the commandment in terms of its required physical activity. The other definition focuses on the commandment's purpose or objective.

Maimonides seems to suggest that the commandment of Sipur – retelling the events of our rescue from Egypt is a member of this class of commandments. The commandment consists of an outward activity designed to achieve an internal objective. We are required to engage in retelling the events of our exodus. Through this activity we must recall and internalize the significance of these events.

4. The Hagadah must be recited in a language understood by the Seder participants

This insight provides a basis for Ramah's ruling that the Pesach Hagadah cannot be merely recited in Hebrew without understanding its meaning. Instead, it must be read in a language understood to the participants or read in Hebrew and then explained.[4] The process of Sipur must impact the participants. Therefore, the process must be carried out in a manner that communicates the events.

5. The aspects of redemption that must be recalled

A careful analysis of the above passage suggests that there are three issues or aspects of the redemption that must be recalled in the process of Sipur. The

passage states: Remember this day...

1. that you went forth from Egypt,
2. from the house of bondage –
3. for with a mighty hand Hashem took you forth from this.

In other words, our recollection of the events must encompass three aspects. First, we were brought forth from Egypt. Second, we were in bondage in Egypt. Third, the process through which we were redeemed demonstrated Hashem's omnipotence – His mighty hand.

*"Raban Gamliel said: Anyone who does not discuss these three things on Pesach does not fulfill his obligation. These are the things: Pesach, Matzah, and Maror.*

*For what reason did our ancestors eat the Pesach when the Temple was in existence? Because the Holy One Blessed be He passed over the houses of our ancestors in Egypt...*

*What is the reason that we eat this Matzah? Because there was not adequate time for the dough of our ancestors to leaven before the King of All Kings, The Holy One Blessed be He was revealed to them and redeemed them...*

*What is the reason that we eat this Maror? Because the Egyptians made the lives of our ancestors bitter in Egypt...."(Pesach Hagadah)*

6. Retelling the events of our redemption through Pesach, Matzah, and Maror

The above section of the Pesach Hag-

*(continued on next page)*





dah is derived directly from the Mishne of Tractate Pesachim. Raban Gamliel explains that we are required to retell the events of our redemption from Egypt through explaining the significance of the Pesach sacrifice, the Matzah, and the Maror. We explain that the Pesach reminds us that Hashem passed over the households of Bnai Yisrael when He struck the Egyptians with the most destructive and terrible of His plagues – the Plague of the Firstborn. Matzah reminds of the suddenness of our redemption. Our ancestors were hastily released from bondage and quickly and eagerly ushered from the land by the very masters who only days before had refused to grant them their freedom. Maror reminds us of the suffering and torment that our ancestors experienced in Egypt.

7. The essential elements of the mitzvah of Sipur represented by the Pesach, Matzah and Maror

Apparently, these three messages comprise the essential elements of the mitzvah of Sipur. Each of the objects central to the Seder – the Pesach, Matzah, and Maror – communicate one of these elements and these elements must be presented in the context of explaining the meaning of these objects.

Let us more carefully consider these messages. Pesach reminds us that Hashem spared the household of Bnai Yisrael when He struck the Egyptians with the Plague of the Firstborn. It communicates the miraculous nature of the redemption and the revelation in the redemption of Hashem's omnipotence. Matzah reminds us of the sudden transformation to freedom; the redemption occurred so swiftly the people could not adequately prepare their provisions for



their unexpected journey into the wilderness. Maror reminds us of the cruelty of our bondage in Egypt.

Why are these messages – communicated by the central objects of the Seder – so central to the mitzvah of Sipur? They are the essential elements because they exactly correspond with the elements identified in the first of the passages cited by Maimonides as the biblical source for the commandment. These are the three elements that we are required by the passage to remember! ■

[1] Rabbaynu Moshe ben Maimon (Rambam / Maimonides) Mishne Torah, Hilchot Chametz U'Matzah 7:1.

[2] Rav Yosef Dov Soloveichik notes that the commandment as expressed in the passage is to recall the events of the date of the redemption – the 15th of Nisan. Maimonides' formulation of the commandment in his code reflects this formulation. He states: It is a positive commandment to retell the miracles and

wonders that were preformed for our ancestors in Egypt in the night of the 15th of Nisan. (Mishne Torah, Hilchot Chametz U'Matzah 7:1). Maimonides' wording is unclear. One possibility is that the reference to the 15th of Nisan is intended to identify the date that the commandment is performed. In other words, Maimonides is saying that the commandment is to be performed on this date. Alternatively, he could mean that the commandment is to focus on the events that occurred on the 15th of Nisan. If this is the correct explanation, then the mitzvah of Sipur performed at the Seder would be limited to the discussion of those events leading up to the redemption and the redemption itself. Subsequent events – including the parting of the Reed Sea – would not belong in this discussion. Rav Soloveitchik suspected that this second interpretation was in fact Maimonides' position. He cited peculiar omissions from the Hagadah attributed to Maimonides to support this position.

[3] Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, Al HaTeshuva (Jerusalem, 5739), Part 1.

[4] Rav Yosef Karo, Shulchan Aruch, Orech Chayim 473:6.

See Mishne Berurah ibid, note 63. Mishne Berurah suggests that the passage "And you should tell to your son..." (Shemot 13:8) is the basis for this requirement. "Telling" means to communicate information. This cannot be accomplished unless the communicator and recipient of the information understand the message communicated. However, the term "tell" in the Torah does not always imply that the communication must be understood. When presenting the first fruit – the Bikurim – in Yerushalayim, the presenter is required to recite a set of Torah passages. These are recited in Hebrew and the presenter reciting the passages need not understand their meaning. In its formulation of this requirement, the Torah describes the presenter as "telling" the contents of the passages.



# Freedom *is on the Tablets*

Rabbi  
Reuven  
Mann



The holiday of Passover is one of the most popular on the Jewish calendar. A large number of Jews and many gentiles will attend a Seder and observe some of the laws and customs of this season to one degree or another. The special appeal of the holiday seems to lie in its theme of freedom. The Haggadah recounts the story of the enslavement of the Jews under the wicked Pharaoh and their deliverance via the miraculous intervention of Hashem. This narrative has been a source of fortification to many oppressed people throughout history. It inspired the composition of moving Negro spirituals and was a source of encouragement in the heroic struggle of Black Americans for freedom and equality. At this moment in history, as we witness the battle of oppressed people in many Arab countries to obtain freedom from tyrannical despots, the theme of human freedom so championed in the Haggadah could not be more relevant.

The major objective of our Seder gatherings is to engage in vigorous discussion prompted by challenging questions. In that spirit, I would like to ask whether we are to regard the freedom obtained on the night of the Exodus as permanent or only temporary. At first glance, the sources seem to be ambivalent. In the Maariv (evening) prayers we praise Hashem “who removed His nation from their midst to eternal freedom.” The idea of enduring freedom is echoed in the Haggadah when we enunciate the obligation of each person to “view it as though he/she had personally gone forth from Egypt” and proclaim “It was not just our ancestors alone whom the most Holy redeemed, but also us did He redeem with them...” However we must ask: can this assertion be taken at face value? Haven’t the Jews been oppressed and enslaved in so many ways at so many times and places throughout our exile? The Haggadah, seemingly in contradiction with itself begins with the famous paragraph of “This is the bread of affliction” in which we say, “now we are slaves next year may we be free.” In the Shemoneh Esrei prayer recited three times a day we pray for Hashem to “see our affliction and redeem us speedily” and also to “sound the great Shofar for our freedom and gather us together from the four corners of the earth.” How can we thank Hashem for having granted us eternal freedom and yet lament the fact that “now we are

slaves” at the same time?

I believe that the answer lies in a deeper understanding of the concept of freedom, which is at the heart of this festival. Liberation from external bondage and the right of self-determination are essential in achieving this goal, but, by themselves, are not sufficient. The Rabbis have made a very significant statement on this subject. The Torah describes the Tablets containing the Ten Commandment as “the handwriting of Hashem inscribed on the Luchot.” The Hebrew word for inscribed is “charut” whose letters can also be read as “cherut” which means freedom. Employing this play on words the Rabbis teach, “There is no free person except the one who engages in Torah study.” They are instructing us that human freedom is not just of the body but of the soul as well. One can be exempt from external constraints but can be a slave to his own uncontrollable urges or compulsions. The purpose of the Torah is to communicate the knowledge we need to live a life, which is in line with our nature. It is only through recognition of truth that we can liberate ourselves from our enslavement to instinct and the pursuit of what King Solomon labeled as “vanity of vanities.”

We can now resolve the conflicting statements we have referred to. In the sense that the “freedom inscribed in the Tablets” is always available we may regard ourselves as eternally free. As we increase our share of the wisdom revealed to us in the Torah, make intelligent choices and emulate Hashem’s ways of justice and compassion, we fulfill our identity as beings created in the “Image of G-d.” It is this type of self-actualization that constitutes true human freedom. To the extent that we spurn the Torah and embrace alien values, we relinquish our freedom. The root cause of our exile is expressed in the Holiday Musaf prayer, which says, “And because of our sins we were exiled from our land.” We begin the Seder with an acknowledgement of the stark reality that we have not yet achieved the goal of the Exodus and are right now slaves in a foreign land. However, we go on to affirm that in every generation we must view it as though we have been liberated from Egypt. True freedom is within our reach. We have the Torah, which is the “Tree of life for all who seize hold of it.” Let us resolve to aspire to access the freedom, which has been inscribed for us on the Tablets. Next year may we be in the land of Israel. Next year may we be free. Chag Sameach. ■

*Rabbi Reuven Mann is the spiritual leader of the Young Israel of Phoenix*



# acronym only m's

Rabbi Dr. Darrell Ginsberg

One of the culminating moments in the seder night involves the recitation of the ten plagues. There is an almost climactic aspect to it, as it is positioned towards the end of maggid, serving to demonstrate God's complete control over nature, as well as reminding us of the pivotal role played by the plagues in our exodus from Egypt. Upon completing this, we recite, almost as an afterthought, the following:

"Rabbi Yehudah gave them simanim: (see image)



Is it really that important that the ten plagues be placed in the form of an acronym? It turns out (no big surprise) that there is a debate amongst the Rishonim as to the intent of this acronym, revealing how this teaching of R' Yehudah helps us gain a greater understanding of the seder experience.

The one initial question raised by nearly all of the commentators on the Haggadah is quite simple: it does not take a rocket scientist (assuming that analogy still applies in the 21st century) to take the first letters of the plagues and create this acronym. We know R' Yehudah was a tremendous talmid chacham, and yet one of his most famous contributions to the Haggadah is this???

The most common interpretation of the acronym involves looking at the plagues beyond their individual identities, seeing them as distinct groups which each reflect a particular theme. This will soon be taken up, but let's first see some of the less advertised explanations. This first is brought in the name of Rashi by the Ritvah (see the Haggadah of the Ritva). Rashi reinforces the above question, writing that an elementary school student could come up with this formulation. He then explains that without this acronym, one might come to say that there is no chronological order to the Torah – "ein mukdam ume'achar baTorah." This is due to another recounting of the plagues, in Perek 105 of Tehilim, where Dovid HaMelech offers analysis of these instances. When writing about the different plagues, Dovid did not follow the historical order found in the Torah. For example, he first writes about the plague of choshech, then dam, and then tzferdeah – clearly not the order found in the Torah. Rashi, then, is emphasizing that the order of plagues found in the haggadah, as codified by the acronym, serves to distinguish from the order (or lack thereof) posited by Dovid HaMelech. What is odd about this opinion is that Rashi himself, throughout his commentary on the Torah, writes that there is no chronological order to the Torah. How do we understand this contradiction? And how does his explanation resolve his initial question?

Let's take one other opinion before answering Rashi. The Rashbatz (R' Shimon Ben Tzemach Duran, 1361-144, see his commentary on the Haggadah) writes that using simanim, or acronyms, was a common practice of R' Yehudah, in order that his students not make an error. He does the same in Menachos (96a), where he uses an acronym to prevent errors in the area of measurements of the two loaves used in the Bais Hamikdash. He emphasizes (somewhat similar to Rashi) the importance of this specific order being clear,

## PART II

versus the order espoused by Dovid HaMelech. He concludes by writing that it is important, via this technique of acronyms and their value for students, to emphasize this exact order of plagues as found in the Torah. What is the main idea being presented by the Rashbatz?

It would seem that both agree about the acronym's main purpose—it is a kiyum in the re-telling of the events of our exodus from Egypt (sipur yetzias mitzrayim), the primary mitzvah of the seder night. As the Rambam writes in the Mishneh Torah (7:1), it is a mitzvah on the night of the fifteenth to tell the story (mesaper) of the miracles and wonders that were done for our forefathers in Egypt. This acronym serves as an enhancement in the performance of this mitzvah. According to Rashi, the reason for the acronym is to stress the importance of the chronological order of the plagues. In general, one would not be primarily concerned with the order, and would instead focus on each individual plague as an area of study. That is not to say there is no idea in the order itself. However, the necessity of following the timeline would be secondary, at best. Therefore, Rashi is telling us at that the acronym emphasizes the need to focus on the plagues in the order they occurred. This makes sense in the context of re-telling events – following the chronological order is critical in transmitting historical records. So when reciting this acronym, we are emphasizing the necessity of following the historical order, and how it fits into the theme of re-telling the events. According to the Rashbatz, there is a different aspect of the sippur that is being brought to light with this acronym. As he points out, R' Yehudah used acronyms to teach students not to err, and this was used simply as a method of memorizing. In the case of the seder night, as we all know, there is a pivotal concept involving teaching our children what took place in Egypt. From the very first inquiry via karpas, through the different ideas found in magid, the entire seder night takes on the context of a back and forth between parent and child. As the theme of the education plays such a crucial role, R' Yehudah's use of this acronym becomes much clearer. It is a simple acronym, but it reflects the importance of the seder in the education of our children. It helps emphasize the importance of not just studying the plagues for our own benefit, but to ensure we are teaching our children as well.

We just analyzed two opinions regarding the famous acronym of R' Yehudah. Now let's look at two other opinions, one very well known, one a bit more obscure.

The Ritvah offers the most well-known opinion regarding how to understand this acronym. In his commentary on the haggadah, he explains how the grouping reflects a specific theme regarding the plagues. For example, the first three established the reality of God, the second group signifies that God communicates with man, and the final group explores the concept of God and prophecy. He offers numerous other examples, ranging from philosophical to political to economic, all following this general approach.

There is no question that each of the multiple possibilities offered by the Ritvah (and still more by other commentaries) requires its own analysis. However, it is important to understand the overall approach of the Ritvah – what does this system of organization demonstrate about the plagues?

It could easily be that there are two ways one could view the plagues. On the one hand, each one has its own individual identity, needing to be understood as a particular manifestation of God's control over nature. However, the Ritvah is adding another dimension to this analysis. One needs to look at the interrelationships between the plagues, with each plague functioning as part of an entire system. The grouping creates a tziruf, a mechanism of binding the different plagues together. By viewing the individual plagues as part of a greater system, he gains

a greater insight into yediyas Hashem. The above example helps prove the point. Each plague demonstrates the idea of God's complete control. Yet tying them together demonstrated other objectives, such as the truth of prophecy.

The Rid (Rabbi Isiah di Trani ben Mali 1180-1250, one of the baalei Tosafot) offers a little known and extremely difficult explanation for the acronym. Astonishingly, he writes that the acronym is not being directed towards the ten plagues. Instead, it is actually referring to the section of the haggadah immediately following the recitation of the acronym. In this section, we are introduced to a debate between R' Yosi, R' Eliezer and R' Akivah regarding the quantity of plagues both in Egypt and by Yam Suf. R' Yosi explains that while God brought ten plagues in Egypt, he brought fifty plagues at Yam Suf (based on a drash). R' Eliezer applies a factor of four to R' Yosi's explanation, leading to forty plagues in Egypt and two hundred

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by Yam Suf. Finally, R' Akivah applies a factor of five, meaning fifty plagues in Egypt, and two hundred by Yam Suf. The Rid explains that when adding up the total plagues by Yam Suf, one gets a total of five hundred. This number corresponds to the numerical total of the acronym.

For all the mathematicians out there, one might notice that the gematria of the acronym is actually 501, not 500. The Rid points this out, and offers what would seem to many strict adherents to gematria to be a faux pas. As he puts it, “in gematria, one does not concern himself about an extra or missing number.” In other words, the objective of gematria is not the “coincidence” achieved by the exact number. Instead, it should serve as a vehicle to greater knowledge.

Notwithstanding the exactitude of the calculation, there are obvious questions about this explanation. The fact that the acronym is referring to the next set of plagues discussed, rather than the original ten, is certainly a unique take. While one can intuitively see the importance of focusing on the ten plagues, and the acronym emerging from its analysis, it seems strange, to say the least, to assume it is related to these “other” plagues by Yam Suf. How can we understand this explanation? There is also the overall issue of these plagues by the sea, as well as the additional plagues that took place in Egypt according to two of the opinions. The Torah never records these plagues as occurring; furthermore, we have no knowledge of the particulars of these plentiful plagues. One could argue that the point is that if you thought there were only ten plagues, you were way off. What is the overall importance of these additional plagues? (Due to a lack of space, the specific issue as to the understanding the nature of the debate between R' Yosi, R' Eliezer and R' Akivah will not be taken up).

When one studies the ten plagues, as presented in both the Torah and the Talmud, one sees the primary objective of the realization of God's complete control over nature manifest to both the Egyptian and Jewish people. Each plague reflects, in its own particular way, insights into this fundamental idea. For example, God explains (Shemos 7:5) that the Egyptians will know God once He raises His hand against them and takes Bnai Yisrael out of Egypt. What knowledge is being referred to here? The Rashbam explains that they will know God is the Master and Ruler (Adon U'Moshel), as they could claim not to know Him before this. The Rashbam is reinforcing the above concept, namely that the plagues

would demonstrate God as being in control of the natural world. If this were the only message, its understanding would easily be accomplished through the recitation and analysis of the ten plagues during the seder night. Yet we see another feature to the plagues, expressed through this debate and the Rid's subsequent understanding of the acronym. When discussing Moshe's impending mission, God explains (ibid 3:20) as follows:

“I will then send forth my hand, and strike Egypt with all My wondrous deeds that I will perform in their midst. Then he [Pharaoh] will send you out.”

The Malbim points out that the focus here is on the plagues being a punishment to the Egyptians, alluded to with the use of “strike” (hikah). One can therefore deduce from this another middah of God being expressed through the plagues – God's system of justice, *schar v'onesh*. It is crucial that the plagues be viewed from this perspective as well, serving as the basis for the Rid's

position, as well as the need to emphasize the “extra” plagues both in Egypt and by Yam Suf. The plagues, as listed in this debate, are never individually identified. We have no idea as to the specifics of these plagues by Yam Suf, whether they followed the general theme of the ones in Egypt, or were completely different. We also have no inkling as to the additional plagues that, according to two opinions, were inflicted on the Egyptians in Egypt proper. Rather than focusing on the individual identity of each plague, we are instead presented with a vast quantity of plagues, indistinguishable from



one another and serving to help us focus on their role in punishing the Egyptians. The middah of *schar v'onesh*, then, was on full display as well, understood through these supplementary plagues. It could be that according to this approach, R' Yehudah had a very different objective in mind when developing this numerical calculation. When studying the plagues, one should see both of these fundamental ideas about God reflected in them. At first, we see God's hegemony over the natural world. We then transition to the next concept, seeing the manifestation of God's justice through these plagues. The two ideas, of course, work hand in hand. R' Yehudah, though, was assisting us in balancing the two ideas, seeing how they work concurrently, bridged together through this acronym. It is composed of the ten plagues of Egypt, at the same time alluding, through gematria, to the vast quantity of plagues inflicted on the Egyptians. One can see, then, these two fundamental concepts contained in this seemingly innocuous acronym. ■







# God's Justice

Rabbi Moshe Ben-Chaim

Even without Ibn Ezra stating it[1], of all matters “under the sun” (on Earth) the suffering of the righteous, the prosperity of the wicked, and why they both face the same fate (death) are most difficult. King Solomon and King David also express their trouble understanding this. King Solomon goes so far to state that man cannot arrive at an answer, whether he “toils to find it, or if a wise man seeks to know it”. (Koheles 8:17) The king thereby teaches that despite all efforts seeking conclusive principles of God’s justice; searching both realms – experiential and thought – the answer is elusive. Yet, the prophets and Rabbis discuss this matter. So there are certain, attainable truths, regardless our inability to arrive at a “complete” explanation of all cases.

## The Source of the Question

It is crucial that we consider “why” both kings had trouble with this issue. The reason is due to their conviction that God knows all, that He can control all, and that He is absolutely just. Due to all three of these truths, our divinely inspired kings knew that all members of mankind are subject to God’s justice. (Maimonides also includes these topics in his treatments of God’s Justice.[2]) As God’s justice is perfect, when our kings could not explain certain phenomena, they searched for reasons for what “appeared” to conflict with justice, God’s knowledge, and His capabilities.

To be clear, our kings were convinced that man’s fate must be in accord with a perfect justice and reason. Their deficiency in grasping that plan was the source of their questions, which we read in their books Psalms and Koheles. So we must move ahead slowly in this area, accepting our deficiency of knowledge and comparatively low level of intellect. If we can accept – as did the kings – that God is perfect in every manner, we will come away with the attitude that it is not a flaw in God when matters are beyond

our understanding, but it is a flaw in us. The Rabbis expounded: “For it is not an empty thing, from you.” (Deut. 32:47) The word “from” (instead of “for”) teaches this: if you find a Torah matter incomprehensible, it is “from you” that the matter is difficult, and not due to any flaw in God or His Torah. Maimonides also stated this idea that God’s justice is beyond man’s grasp.[3]

## It is impossible to Determine Rules of Justice

As King Solomon said, we cannot examine the complete set of human experiences in order to grasp which rules of God’s justice are at work. For any rule to be true, it must be applicable to all cases. If we say gravity is a property of all objects, and we locate one object without gravity, then gravity – as explained – is false. It is not a “rule”, since it does not apply to 100% of the cases.

Similarly, as we cannot observe all cases of God’s management of human affairs, since they are too many today, and far too many since mankind was created; on our

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own, we cannot suggest that any rule of God's justice is true or false, since we cannot test it against "all" cases. The only true rules are those, which God tells us are true, such as His attributes of mercy, graciousness, long suffering, abundant kindness, truthfulness, forgiveness, etc. stated in His Torah[4] and validated throughout history.



Approaching this area is made more difficult by man's lack of an employed methodology of Torah analysis. Our feeble minds also contribute to a greater misconception of God's justice. How then did the Rabbis and kings of Israel talk about God's justice? It was only through divine inspiration or prophecy that they discussed certain rules. Yet, some people don't pay heed to one of the wisest men – Solomon – and reject Torah or God, when matters aren't fully explained the "their" satisfaction. This expresses their underlying corruption, that they feel they can understand God's ways, despite the fact that they cannot even explain Solomon's teachings. Their arrogance causes them to stumble repeatedly. Maimonides teaches at the end of his laws of Tzaraas, that it is man's attachment to his Earthly existence, that cultivates his Lashon Hara, his subsequent attack on the righteous, then the prophets...and ultimately his attack on God.

### Method is Crucial

Let us examine King Solomon's words, and demonstrate an incorrect and correct reading:

*"There is a futility that is performed on the Earth; there are righteous people who experience the fate of the wicked; and there are wicked people who experience the fate of the righteous...I said that this too is futile." (Koheles 8:14)*

The question is, what is the "futility"? Most will say the inverted fate of good and evil people is the futility. But quoting Ibn Ezra on verse 9:4, I suggest that here too, the futility King Solomon speaks of, is the flawed view of the masses. It is the masses – not King Solomon – that utter these words questioning God's justice: "righteous people experience the fate of the wicked...". These are not King Solomon's words. His words are "I said that this too is futile". "I said" is meant to indicate that this is where the king commences his words. But the previous words are the masses' errors.

Understanding how to read a verse makes all the difference in deciphering the king's wisdom. He cites the error of men, thereby exposing false philosophies like a tumor under a microscope. Thereby, he intends to teach that when people make an assessment and form an accusation of God's justice, that the good people suffer and the wicked prosper, they are in error due to the two aforementioned reasons: 1) they cannot analyze all cases due to their number and complexity; 2) their minds are too feeble.

Sforno on 8:14 says we cannot impute injustice to God for His management of humans. He says that the righteous people who suffer must be pious people who lack acumen, so they stumble and become the laughing stock. The ridicule suffered by these pious individuals is the "evil of the righteous". And the wicked who prosper are those highly intelligent people who know how to attain great positions. Their fame is the fate we'd expect to see visiting

the righteous; that some wicked people enjoy at times. In both cases, you must note that their respective fates are brought about through themselves, not through God. This is important, as it removes the claims that God is unjust. Man brings this upon himself. Sforno's position is then clear: man must deserve what evil befalls him. Taalumos Chachma – a commentary – also voices this view.[5]

King David also describes God's exact justice: "Many are the evils of the righteous and from all of them, God saves him. He guards all his bones; not one is broken".[6] And this must be so, for our just God is not prevented from assisting those who follow Him. He will not unjustly harm those who are fully righteous, and He will spare them all pain. He knows all, He is in full control, and as we have witnessed throughout history, He is just. He warns those like Cain, the Generation of the Flood, the city of Nineveh and others to return to a good path, and not suffer punishments. Those who repent are spared all evil.

Although we cannot answer all questions, King Solomon does convey the flaw in those questioning God's justice: "For whoever is connected with life has hope. For a living dog is better than a dead lion."[7] Ibn Ezra says these are the words of the masses. King Solomon cites their error again, to teach us their corrupt psychology. The king unveils man's barometer of value: "life". That which partakes of life, an Earthly existence, is all that one considers, and all that man feels is real. So the live dog is estimated as higher value, than the dead lion. "The dead know nothing"[8] the masses think, so they err that God will not reward the righteous and punish the wicked in the afterlife.

Lacking intelligence, the masses find fault in the trials and successes of the righteous and wicked respectively, and harbor a claim of injustice against God. They do not look at the latter end of the wicked, as King David teaches, is their destruction[9]. They do not look at Sforno's position that evils are self-inflicted. Maimonides teaches this is the greatest cause of human suffering. Rashi teaches that children under 13 might die as a punishment to the parent(s). For their young years have not allowed them to become responsible for their actions, that they might possess blame. Neither do their premature deaths harm those children. And as Creator, God retains all rights to create persons with brief and long lifespans. God "took" Chanoch[10] before his time, despite the fact that "he walked with God". Thus, a righteous person might be killed prematurely if God's considerations deem it as a good. Just as we do not know why God took Chanoch, we don't know enough to explain the Ten Martyrs, the Holocaust, or a tsunami that leaves thousands dead in its wake. Perhaps many people, undeserving of God's providence as Maimonides teaches, and as taught in the book of Job, will be left unprotected by God. God says He will "hide His face" if we are sinful. So many Jews can perish.

The masses do not know a fraction of God's system of justice, but strongly launch claims against God. If however, one would studiously inquire, as King David inquired of the priests and the wise men of Jerusalem (Rashi, Psalms 73:17) one would find pleasing ideas. The unknowns are difficult to grasp, as our kings said. But they also voiced

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clear principles of God's justice, which are not undone by our questions. We must be fair and not forget the entire good God has performed throughout time, starting with His creation of man, a being with the potential for great enjoyment and fulfillment. We must not forget his innumerable acts of kindness, such as the Egyptian Plagues and His Passover redemption. This holiday is truly about "viewing ourselves as having been freed."

## PART II

The question was raised: "As it was God alone who set all into motion at Creation, then any catastrophe or harm that people experience at any moment in history, must be the direct result of His Creation. Why then, do we not view all harm caused "naturally" as God's will?"

This question presents the theory that "nature" and God's intent are one and the same. However, if we can explain nature as not being God's will, we will remove the question of God's injustice in cases like tsunamis. Let us first accept that God can create an autonomous system. A system, that does not require God's involvement, but works freely. This "system" is human free will. Now, as God can create this freely operating system that relies only on each of us, then God can create other systems, such as nature. But let's elaborate.

A voice of a specific pitch shatters glass. This is a law, a constant. We witness this, and accept this as a natural phenomenon. However, some suggest it is not the combined "natures" of voice and glass that account for the shattering of glass and instead, opine it is God (not he person) who causes the human voice. And it is God (not high vibrations) that breaks the glass. But if this were true, God would be lying to us. For God knows that every human accepts the principle of "Natural Law". God says that natural law is a reality, "Chukos shamayim vaaretz" (Jeremiah 33:25) In this matter, human intuition has it correct. God is not lying to man, and He wants man to observe the reality that there are many laws that govern the universe.

If we don't say the world operates by natural laws, but that God causes all events each moment...why shouldn't we leap off a roof? We should be consistent and say that gravity isn't a reality – God is willing everything, each moment to fall – not gravitational "laws". And perhaps the moment I jump, God won't will 'me' to fall. There is no law that says I will fall...according to this position.

In fact, all of us accept the reality of "laws" and physical "properties". We do not suggest God is willing gravity at each moment, or that each day God repeatedly wills wood to burn. We do not say God causes the birds to sing at sunrise, but rather, that the sun's appearance affects birds in this natural manner. For if we say God is performing all we see at each instant, then we deny a system. And a system is much more impressive, than God's lack of delegation and causing every single event. Besides, we already proved through the example of free will that God creates autonomous systems.

Another illustration can be taken from man. When someone stabs another person, God holds him culpable of



sin. This is because man accepts the constant properties of sharp metal objects, and the soft nature of human flesh. Had these not been constants, man might defend himself saying "I didn't know that the knife would remain sharp as I pushed it into John. God could have made the knife melt as it touched John's skin." Ludicrous as this sounds, it makes the clear point: God desires man's conviction in "natural laws" that it govern all matters with consistent properties. It is not God's will each moment that metal remains solid and sharp. Accepting natural law is essential to man's sins and mitzvos.

As such, when violent forces beneath the oceans shift tectonic plates, tsunamis must occur. Such massive upheavals affect the ocean's surface, generating enormous waves. Those in its path – if not under God's providence – will certainly perish. This is not a case of God murdering people. This is natural law that at times reaches inhabited lands. So how do we answer the question: "As it was God alone who set all into motion at Creation, then any catastrophe or harm that people experience at any moment in history, must be the direct result of His Creation. Why then, do we not view all harm caused "naturally" as God's will?" We answer as follows: this tsunami had to occur. But the fact that certain people traveled to this location was not preordained. Had any individual been worthy, God would have intervened, just as He did to save Noah's family, the Jewish nation from Egyptian bondage, Jonah from the whale, and all other instances.

As we see, the area of God's justice is vast, and deep. We can know certain principles, but we are ignorant of far greater, and we do not know when God is at work to save, to punish, or if undeserving people are up to chance. All we can do is study further. By doing so, we will certainly remove more of our questions. God recorded His acts of justice in His Torah for this very reason. ■

[1] Koheles 9:3

[2] The "Guide", book III, chapters xix, xx

[3] The "Guide", book III, chapter xvii (pp 287 Friedlander paperback ed.) "...the justice of His judgments, the method of which our minds are incapable of understanding".

[4] Exod. 34:6,7

[5] Koheles 8:14

[6] Psalms 34:20,21

[7] Koheles 9:4

[8] Koheles 9:5

[9] Rashi on Psalms 73 and 92

[10] Genesis 5:24



# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BREAD

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 prior to 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?

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) 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 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). 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 contra-

diction to Rashi is derived from the very same verse. Rabbi Reuven Mann suggested very simply: the Jews correctly did not rely on miracles, so they took the dough as food. Their act of following Moses into the desert also displays their trust in God, but this trust does not mean they should not take what they can for now.

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 teeth on dry 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 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 alone. 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 identification with the free Egyptians, Rashi comments that when the Jews despoiled the Egyptians of their silver, gold and clothing, at

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Moses command, they valued the Egyptian clothing over the silver and gold. (Exodus 12:35)

However, the Jews had the wrong idea. Their newfound 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, is 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 alone, 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, (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 alone; 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.

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 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



*The Egyptians – know for having invented bread – only increased the Jews' longing for this elite food, as they suffered in forced labor, fed only with poor man's bread – matza. The slave desires his master's lot.*

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 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 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 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, 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 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, "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) We have a purpose in being created, and it is not to be free and live as we wish. Our purpose is to engage the one faculty granted to us - our intellect. And the primary use of the intellect is forfeited when we do not recognize God, as the Egyptians faulted. 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. I am always amazed that we are so fortunate.

Finally, 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. ■

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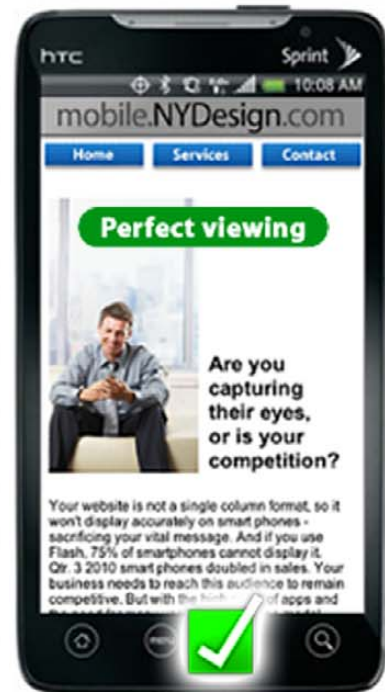
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## The Seder

The Seder is the central focus of Passover. During the Seder, there are a number of primary laws. We read the following in the Talmud (Pesachim 117a) and in the Haggadah: "Rabbi Gamliel taught, 'Anyone who does not explain three matters on Passover, does not fulfill his obligation; 1) the Paschal lamb, 2) matza and 3) the bitter herbs.'" We wonder why these three elements are so central to Passover. How do these define the nature of the holiday? Another interesting feature is that there were two Passovers: an Egyptian Passover, and all others celebrated after the Torah was given. Why are there only one Sukkos, and one Shavuot? What aspect of Passover demands two versions? The Talmud and Haggadah also teach that we are obligated to view ourselves as if we were redeemed from Egypt, and that we must also recline while eating matza and drinking the four cups of wine to express this newfound freedom. And, "even if we are all wise...all knowing the Torah", we are still obligated to recount the Exodus. But why? How can we learn more, if we already know this story inside out? We then read of every generation who attempts to destroy us, but that God saves us. We recount Laban's evil, and God's salvation; we recount at great length the Egyptians' evils, and how God heard our cry, and saved us with miracles. Another law is that when reciting the Haggadah, we must recount our history, commencing with our degraded events and concluding with our praiseworthy status: we commence with our having been slaves and idolaters, and conclude with God's redemption and granting us Torah. We follow this theme with the recital of Hallel, praising God. Astonishingly, our Haggadah that recounts so much about our life in Egypt and God's plagues, mentions Moses just once: Maimonides' Haggadah omits Moses' name altogether. We would think Moses' role in Passover should be present. Why is Moses of little or no focus? Although we have cited many laws, there is one reason for all of them...can you determine it? If not, let's investigate further.

## Pesach – Matza – Maror

"Rabbi Gamliel taught, 'Anyone who does not explain three matters on Passover, does not fulfill his obligation; the Paschal lamb, matza and the bitter herbs'."

What is the significance of the Paschal lamb? As we recount our history in the Haggadah, we learn of our state as idolaters before Abraham's times, and God's oath to make us a great nation. We learn of our Egyptian bondage and God's miracles. Why did God deliver so many plagues? God desired to direct Pharaoh and his people to the error in their ways, and each plague targeted another misconception. The first three plagues displayed God's sovereignty over Earth; the next three, over Earthly events; and the last three, over the heavens. All three realms, Earth, the heavens, and all in between are shown to be under God's control: the Egyptian gods could do nothing to deflect God's plagues. Finally, when Pharaoh sustained his denial of God, God delivered a plague inexplicable by nature: firstborn deaths. Thereby, God taught conclusively of His exclusive reign as Creator and Governor of the universe: as He created everything, He alone controls all natural laws, and no realm escapes His control. We learn of our Egyptian bondage, and the central flaw of our oppressors: they worshipped something other than God. And we learn how God attempts to offer man truth before delivering the final blow.

To be entitled to freedom and accept a Torah from the true God, we must understand what "God" refers to. If we assume the Egyptian mean-

# Pesach Matza & Maror



ing, we do not deserve redemption. Thus, God commanded our sacrifice of the Egyptian deity, the Paschal lamb. It is only through this sacrifice, that we deny the false god and affirm the true God, earning our delivery from a bitter existence to taste freedom: embodied in matza, as it could not rise due to God's swift delivery.

The Paschal lamb is the Egyptian god; an idolatrous culture which projects its fantasies onto reality, also projecting its need for human domination, which caused our embittered, slave existence. For this reason, when no Temple exists and no Paschal lamb is sacrificed, the bitter herbs also cannot be fulfilled as a Torah law, but are only Rabbinic. The bitter herbs (our bitter existence) result from the lamb-worshipping culture who feels favored by their gods, and who can justifiably oppress others who devour their God, "For the Egyptians could not eat bread together with the Hebrews, for it is an abomination to the Egyptians." (Onkelos; Exod. 43:32)

Our Torah law reflects this relationship between idolatry and oppression, by commanding the bitter herbs only be eaten when the idolatrous Paschal lamb is present. Exodus 12:8 reads, "And you shall eat the flesh on that night, roasted by fire, with matza and bitter herbs you shall eat it (the Paschal lamb)." It teaches of the relationship between the matza and bitter herbs, that they depend on the Paschal lamb. Meaning, it is through the denial of the lamb-god that we earned a delivery from the bitter life, to taste freedom: the matza.

### Passover's Objective

As Rabbi Gamliel teaches, explaining this triad forms our primary obligation in Haggadah: 1) killing the idolatrous Paschal lamb (Pesach) is the means by which we earn redemption from 2) bitterness (maror) to 3) freedom (matza). Without explaining these three, we do not fulfill our command, and for good reason.

The goal of Passover is to engender a feeling of appreciation for God, who took us out of Egypt. God transformed our slave nation into a dignified, free people who received Divine laws for our own good. To emphasize this contrast and to create our real sense of thanks, Passover is the only holiday possessing two forms: A) the Egyptian Passover, and B) all later Passovers. The objective of these two holidays is to highlight this very contrast of our having A) been slaves, and B) our present freedom. Samson Raphael Hirsch states the reason for the Egyptian Passover: we were to focus on our "current" bondage, eating poor man's bread, bitter herbs and sacrificing the lamb...to be contrasted suddenly by God's swift salvation. We must realize we did nothing to cause our salvation: it was God alone. This contrast is the key aspect of Passover. For it is only through contrasting bondage to freedom, that we might feel thankful to God. Therefore, Passover is the only holidays with two versions: since the holiday is one where "contrasting" our "bondage to freedom" is the focus, so as to engender our thanks for God's kindness.

We therefore recline to embellish our freedom, and recount our tragedies followed by our successes, again offering a 'contrast' and thanks for the good God bestowed upon us. This explains why we are obligated to view ourselves as if we were redeemed from Egypt. Now, "even if we are wise...", we are still obligated to recount the Exodus". Why is this? The answer: this is not an exercise in "learning", but in generating "appreciation", something we must and can do yearly. So it matters none that we repeat what we know already, as wise, elderly Jews. For even at that prime age, we must renew our appreciation for God who redeemed us. And as our appreciation reaches its crescendo, we recite the Hallel, as an expression of our thanks, for true thanks would be lacking, if we were not moved towards expression. We might also suggest that Moses' role is downplayed in the Haggadah, since God is to retain full focus of our appreciation.

Matza recalls poor man's bread, but also teaches of God's salvation. So when no Temple exists and the sacrifice cannot be brought, despite the absence of the means of our redemption – killing the Egyptian god – we may still eat matza, as matza embodies the "objective" of Passover. Of course we lack the complete picture portrayed in the triad of "Pesach, Matza and Maror", nonetheless, Passover's objective of matza – "redemption" – is significant enough to stand alone. So significant is the objective of freedom embodied in matza that the Torah verses command us in matza again by itself, (12:18) in addition to the matza commanded to be eaten with the Paschal lamb and the bitter herbs.

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This holiday is called the “Holiday of Matzas” and not the “Holiday of Pesach” to emphasize the matza’s independent lesson, not reliant on the lamb or the herbs. However, bitter herbs are commanded only when the Paschal lamb is present, as we said, for they reflect the bitterness associated with the culture deifying the lamb-god. More precisely, our bitter bondage was a result of an idolatrous culture, devoid of Divine morality. Therefore, the two – bitter herbs and the lamb – are inseparable. We cannot talk about a bitter bondage if the cause of that bitterness – idolatry (the lamb) – is absent. So with no Paschal lamb, there are no bitter herbs. But since matza embodies the overall objective of “redemption”, and since the Torah commands eating matza even when no Paschal lamb is present, matza retains an independent role.

### Summary

God designed us to find the most satisfaction when we engage our highest element: our intellects. It is our intellect that we sense as our center, and it is only when we engage our intellect that we will find the most profound sense of purpose and satisfaction. For this reason, God delivered us from Egyptian bondage, with the objective of giving us the Torah. Regardless of our state of affairs, the Torah lifestyle will definitely bring us towards fulfillment and happiness. Perhaps, it is for this reason that the Talmud teaches, even a poor person must recline, for even though impoverished and with no means, he must realize that the redemption applies to everyone and affects everyone, poor and rich alike. The Torah system was given to an entire “people”, not to an individual. As such, it must be God’s meaning that Torah improves everyone’s life. We commence the Haggadah with the words, “all who are in need, come and eat.”

Torah laws target specific areas, from relationships to objects of mitzva, from seasons to daily needs, and from actions to proper thoughts. Passover, which too contains many truths, carries the broader goal of imbuing us with an appreciation for God’s redemption. Truly, Passover targets the general feeling of “appreciating God”. It is through all these laws that Passover leads us towards recognition that God created us, and governs us with His intervention and His gift of Torah. It is only through following Torah law and philosophy, that we will indeed become joyous in our lives. With that thought, I wish a truly happy Passover to everyone. ■



# Passover

# Rejecting Idolatry



While the Jews spent their last day in Egypt, God commanded them to reject idolatry (Exod: 12,6-8):

**“And it [the Paschal lamb] shall be under your guard until the 14th day of this month and the entire congregation of Israel shall slaughter it between sunrise and sunset. And you shall take of the blood and place it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses that you eat it in them. And you shall eat the flesh on this night, roasted over fire, with matzahs and bitter herbs you shall eat it”.**

Two questions arise: 1) why must both, blood be smeared and flesh eaten? 2) Why must the Paschal lamb be eaten “together” with matzah and bitter herbs?

Clearly, had God intended only that the lamb be destroyed, killing it would suffice. Certainly, God cares less about the life of the lamb, than He does about the perfection of His chosen nation. God orchestrated a means by which He would make some change in the Jews’ view of reality.

A human being lives many lives, and I am not referring to the false notion of reincarnation. I refer to the many spheres in which we all contend.

We live and deal with others. We live “socially”. We also relate to the physical world even when not enjoying the company of others, assessing what we deem important....living by a “value” system. It appears God wished to undermine the view we had of the lamb, in both the social and value-based spheres.

Demanding we paint our doorways with the lamb’s blood – a public display – we cast social stigma to the wind, and concern ourselves more with the rejection of the lamb. In truth, both self-image and idolatry are fantasies, and we dismiss both in favor of adhering to reality. It appears that idolatry carries more appeal than the psychological dependency we imagine. It also includes the element of “organized religion”, the human behavior of following without understanding. This following is generated out of a need to be part of a group, i.e., social approval. It is a wrong decision. Although baseless, an entire culture of Egyptians accepted animal gods. This is due to social needs. God desired we rise above this need, submitting ourselves to the rejection of others who don’t approve.

And through eating the lamb, we render it as simply another meal. It is subordinate to us – the opposite view of idolaters. The lamb becomes nothing but food, and then human waste.

**“And you shall eat the flesh on this night, roasted over fire, with matzahs and bitter herbs you shall eat it”.**

What demands that the lamb be eaten together with matzah and bitter herbs? What did these two latter objects recall? The bitter herbs are of course to remind us of the bitter lives we led as Egypt’s slaves. Our physical existence was torture. But what about the matzah? We must be clear: at this point (the night before the Jews left Egypt) there was yet no redemption. So the matzah (dough) that didn’t rise due to the speed of our exodus did not yet exist. Therefore, the night before we left, the matzah had but one identity: “poor man’s bread”, or Lechem Oni. But if we had the bitter herbs to recall our physical pain, what other role could matzah play?


Eating poor man’s bread is not painful, but it is humbling, as all of Egypt enjoyed soft bread. Thus, matzah embodies the “psychological” state of deprivation.

To break any further identification with the lamb that Egypt held in awe, matzah and bitter herbs complimented the Paschal Lamb in a negative fashion. When we ate (and will eat) that lamb, we view it with contempt, as it must be complimented by poor man’s bread and bitter foods. This registers a negative association to the lamb on our souls.

In the end, we identify the subtle, social appeal of idolatry, thereby unveiling the absence of any essential, positive attributes. For when the primary appeal is lost, there emerges an imposter religion, and we then see clearly, and expose idolatry as senseless. But we must still eat the lamb to go through the emotional process of subordinating it to us. And as we eat it, we sense contempt, as the accompanying foods recall our physical and psychological pain under the idolatrous Egyptian culture.

Animal worship and idolatry in general is thereby rejected, paving the way to accept the true God at Shavuos. ■





# the 10 Plagues

The purpose of the Ten Plagues was not to destroy Egypt, but to offer the primary lesson to that idolatrous culture: “The God of creation and of Abraham is the only God...and Egyptian deities are imaginations.” God desires the good for all mankind.

Although God knew that Pharaoh would remain obstinate, God nonetheless offers man the opportunity to express free will, as this forms part of God’s justice. Similarly, God warned Cain not to kill Abel, even though He knew the outcome. Such cases are numerous. Now, to understand the Ten Plagues, means to understand the lessons of each plague, not to simply be startled at the phenomena.

Ibn Ezra quotes Rabbi Judah HaLevi (Exod. 8:28) “The first two plagues were in water: the first turned water into blood, and the second caused frogs to ascend from the water. And in the earth were two plagues: the lice, and the mixture of beasts, as it is written, “let the earth bring forth living beasts”. And [the next] two plagues were in the air: for the death of the beasts was only due to cold or heat, some atmospheric change, and they all died in a single moment. And the second [in air] was the boils. The seventh plague [hail] was through a mixture of storms and fire. Locusts were brought from afar via wind. Darkness was delivered by the removal of light. And the tenth, the firstborn deaths was through the descending of destructive forces.”

Rabbi Judah HaLevi teaches that God’s intent was to display mastery over all “elements”. God wished to teach Egypt that their notion of animal deities controlling natural elements was false...He alone controls all elements. Thus, laws relegated to natural properties of water, earth, air, fire, wind, and light were altered at precise moments. This unveiled the fallacy of Egyptian deities to defend the Egyptians, and validated God. And the final plague displayed God’s control over laws above nature. For no natural law can selectively kill based on the order of one’s birth. Birth order is an “event”, and nature cannot attack an event. Nature can only relate to real, physical “substances or properties”. So if all humans share a common substance or biological property, a “natural” plague would affect all people, not just firstborns. But as firstborns alone were attacked, that final plague proved that God controls more than just nature. It

targeted the lesson that man cannot know God, and that the human association of certain animals with certain natural laws is baseless. Egypt should have said, “If I cannot understand how the firstborns alone died, then I have no idea of how the world operates, and my selected deities are imagined, and not real.”

We have another statement by Rabbi Judah in our Haggadahs, “Rabbi Judah once gave in them [the Plagues] signs: D’tzach, Adash B’Achav”...an acronym for the Hebrew terms for each plague. The question is, is this simply a mnemonic device to recall all Ten Plagues, or is there a greater meaning to this grouping?

A Rabbi once taught that there is in fact a greater intended insight. Rabbi Judah grouped the Ten Plagues into three sections. The first group of blood, frogs and lice transpired “in the earth”: either in the water or the land. The second group transpired “on the earth”, referring to the wild beast mixture, livestock deaths, and boils. And the final plagues transpired in the “heavens”: hail, locusts, darkness and firstborns. Rabbi Judah’s lesson here is that God controls all realms of existence: the earth, the heavens, and all in between (“on” earth is not “in” earth, but in-between earth and heaven). We now have two beautiful lessons: God controls all “substances”, and God controls all “regions”.

However, these two lessons imply that the Ten Plagues were absolutes. Meaning, these specific Ten Plagues had to happen. I say this, since the two statements of both Rabbi Judahs seek to display God’s mastery over all substances, and all regions. But I wonder...perhaps these ten Plagues were not “mapped out” from the very outset...but each one was selected only once Pharaoh reacted to the previous plague. So as Pharaoh responded each time, God sent a plague that addressed his current attitude...while also addressing God’s mastery over all elements and regions.

One proof is seen from the very last verses in Parashas Va-era (Exod. 9:31,32). Moses describes to Pharaoh that the stiff plants broke under the crushing force of the hail, while the softer, flexible plants survived, since they bent. Moses is saying, in other words, “Pharaoh, if you would be flexible, you would survive and not be crushed as the stiff plants are crushed.” This means that the plague of hail was intended to parallel Pharaoh’s obstinacy. Had he not been obstinate, hail would be inappropriate. In connection with blood, we read that the Egyptians dug for water (Exod. 7:24) at the “surroundings” of the Nile, for they could not drink from the Nile. And in verse 27 God then plagues “all boundaries” with frogs. Does this mean that since the Egyptians sought to escape the limits of where water turned to blood, God responds with a plague that reaches “all boundaries”...rendering this next plague with an “inescapable” tone in response? I am not certain, but the plague of frogs does say that the frogs entered their ovens, kneading troughs, bedrooms, and beds. It is quite descript of the level of intrusion. And verse 8:2 says the frogs covered the land.

There is much to study in connection with the plagues. There are the plagues themselves, the precise words and interactions initiated by Moses, the responses of the Egyptians and Pharaoh after each plague, and there are God’s words of instruction, and to whom He instructs, i.e., Moses or Aaron. It is no wonder that the Sages stayed up all night on Pesach discussing the Exodus.

This year, may we all learn more of God’s wisdom by patiently examining His generous clues in our Torah.

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On another note, we can fulfill this Pesach on an even greater level. Last week we discussed the truth that true friendship demands that we risk friendship. We must value the good for our friends and relatives, more than we value our friendship, which is truly selfish. But that's the last resort. Of course, we try the most pleasant approach first, so we remain in good standing, should our friend or relative seek additional direction.

If we can invite a non-observant friend or relative to our Seder, we might be able to offer them a chance at true life. The opinion of the non-observant Jew is that life has a purpose without Torah or knowledge of God...or that all God wants is that "I am nice". This lifestyle is usually based on ignorance of Torah, and a desired level of convenience. They also wish pleasures, sophistication, fame, luxuries, and other motives and lusts. We must be aware of this if we engage them in discourse. Otherwise, we may be addressing the wrong issues. Their choice is not based on study, and the realization that one is a created being, with a Creator, to Who he or she owes his and her life.

Each person has but one chance at living properly, with the possibility of an eternal, blissful existence. We must make our friends aware of this inevitable fact. They must face their mortality. God desired our Exodus, so that we should not lose our true lives like the idolatrous Egyptians. God did not desire evil for the Egyptians either, and offered them ten chances.

History is undeniable, so a safe starting point is the story of the Exodus. When a non-observant Jew accepts this history, he or she must also accept the rest of this history, culminating with Sinai. Torah was the reason God redeemed the Jews. Our Torah is so undeniable; other religions retain the entire Five Books. Ask those who are non-observant to refute that. They cannot.

Now, once God's existence and His will are realized and accepted, a rational person might feel the tendency to inquire further. The Seder is an opportune event, when the conversations center on true historical phenomena, all pointing to a Creator, and His will for the Jews. You must impress upon the non-observant Jew that God did not redeem, but killed those Jews who did not follow His laws while yet in Egypt. Those who did not reject animal deification were not spared. Rashi teaches that four fifths of the Jews died in the plague of darkness.

We must be concerned for all other Jews, and we can do something to help them not forfeit their one chance at true existence. This matter must not be light in your eyes.

You can sympathize with the non-observant Jew, that it is initially a difficult change, to follow God's will. But that is only because their energies are used to a set pattern...not because observance is painful. Breaking one's pattern always meets with temporary frustration. But the enjoyment derived from study – the primary mission of the Jew – is something which grows, and offers greater happiness than the lives of those chasing fleeting fantasies, and temporal pleasures. You must convey that part of what you ask your friends, is to take a leap, since you cannot make them experience the joy of study and wisdom in a single conversation. And since they cannot imagine what you know to be true from your own experience, you will need to use your relationship as leverage...for their own good. You can assure them that you have nothing to gain, and that you know they will enjoy the religious lifestyle more than their current life...they must trust you. Just as they trust a doctor who has greater knowledge of what makes the body

happiest, your friend or relative must admit that God knows best what will make man happiest, in all areas, and primarily regarding his philosophy in life.

Try at first to make this idea resonate: "You are a created being, and your Creator has a plan for you." Then use the events of the Egyptian redemption, protection from the plagues, God's sustained providence over us, and His gift of Torah to demonstrate that all along, God bestowed only good upon us. Describe Creation; that God set the world's stage, and then created man last after all was ready for him. God created all else...and then created man, so man might have that with which to study. And God gave us intellect – which no other being possesses – for the primary purpose of its engagement, and joy in satisfying natural, human curiosity. God laid out the heavens, and all natural laws that are fascinating, since 'fascination' is something that pleasures man over all else.

Use this Pesach, if you can, to imbue at least one other person of what great plan truly awaits each and every one of us...and that we cannot find true happiness if we reject God's plan for us. If we choose the latter, God abandons us here, and we forfeit our eternal lives in the world to come. What a tragedy.

But...something fantastic truly awaits one who at least takes a chance, and admits he or she does not have all the answers. God desires the good for all mankind, and He desires that we teach this good to others. ■

## the 4<sup>th</sup> Plague



When studying the 10 Plagues, it is quite easy to get "distracted" by their miraculous features, thereby losing sight of the verses' subtleties. More than anything, the Torah is intended to reveal God's wisdom. To this end, millennia of Torah students, Sages and Rabbis have toiled in Talmud, Mishna and Scripture, training their minds, and as they learned the same areas year after year, they arrived at greater depths of God's wisdom. We must be sensitive to what at first seems like unimportant data, and ask ourselves why God deemed "this" verse or idea to be included: "What is its lesson?" Let us take the plague of the mixture of wild beasts from Parshas Vaeyrah as an example (Exod. 8:16-28):

"And God said to Moses, 'Arise in the morning and stand before Pharaoh as he goes to the river and say to him, 'Send My people that they will serve Me. For if you do not send My people, behold, I will send unto you, unto your servants, and unto your people and into your homes the Mixture [of wild animals] and the Mixture will fill the houses of Egypt and also the land that they are on. And I will distinguish on that day the land of Goshen on which My people stand, that there will be no Mixture, in order that you shall know that I am God in the midst of the land. And I will place a salvation between My people and between your people: tomorrow this sign shall

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occur.' And God did so, and the Mixture came heavy [on] Pharaoh's house and his servants' homes, and [in] the entire land of Egypt the land was destroyed due to the Mixture. And Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said, 'Go sacrifice to your God in the land'. And Moses said, 'This is not proper to do so, for it is an abomination to Egypt to sacrifice to God our God; for behold, if we sacrifice the abomination of Egypt in front of their eyes, will they not stone us? A journey of three days we will travel in the desert and we will sacrifice to God our God as He has told us.' And Pharaoh said, 'I will send you and you will sacrifice to God your God in the desert, however, do not travel too far, pray for my sake.' And Moses said, 'Behold I will exit from you, and I will pray to God to remove the Mixture from Pharaoh, from his servants and from his people tomorrow, however, let Pharaoh not lie, not sending the people to sacrifice to God.' And Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to God. And God did as Moses' word, and He removed the Mixture from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people...not one was left. And Pharaoh hardened his heart also this time, and he did not send the people."

A number of questions arise:

1) Why did God deem the Mixture essential to the 10 Plagues? What is specific to this plague that it was perfectly appropriate for afflicting Pharaoh and Egypt? What were its lessons?

2) Unlike other plagues, here alone we see an emphasis of "sacrificing" to God, mentioned six times. Is this significant, and if so, how?

3) Why does God refer to this plague as (Arove) "Mixture"? Is this title significant?

4a) Pharaoh says, "Go sacrifice to your God in the land". Moses said, "This is not proper to do so, for it is an abomination to Egypt to sacrifice to God our God: for behold, if we sacrifice the abomination of Egypt in front of their eyes, will they not stone us?" Besides the practical ramifications of shielding the Jews from being stoned, is there another idea Moses instills in Pharaoh, with his "own" address?

4b) In general, aside from God's administering of the Plagues, we find Moses addressing Pharaoh in his own words. Was Moses instructed to do so? We certainly do not see so in the text. And if he was not instructed, why did he address Pharaoh? Another instance is Exodus 9:31 and 9:32, where Moses is about to pray to God to halt the Hail. But before he does so, he tells Pharaoh, "the stiff plants broke from the hail, while the softer plants survived"(paraphrased). Why this interruption, and again, why was Moses addressing Pharaoh? We do not read that God commanded Moses to address him, other than the announcement of the plagues, and their description as per God's words. Why the additional address by Moses?

5) When commanding Moses to warn Pharaoh, God instructs him to say the following: "And I will distinguish on that day the land of Goshen on which My people stand, that there will be no Mixture, in order that you shall know that I am God in the midst of the land." We wonder what is this rarely seen objective of "distinguishing" Israel from Egypt. Is this God's primary goal with this Mixture of beasts, and that is why it is stated? If so, what is the underlying message? "Distinguishing" cannot be a lesson in itself. "Distinction", by its very definition, is concerning some 'area' of distinction; as in a distinguished scholar, where his 'knowledge' is distinct from others. So we must ask, in what area did God distinguish the

Jews via this plague? This question is compounded by the next verse where God states He will render a salvation for the Jews, not to be harmed by the Mixture. The distinction is made again. Why?

#### Moses' Role

I believe Moses address to Pharaoh teaches us a number of ideas. One idea stated by a Rabbi, is that Moses was necessary for the plagues, but not that God could not perform them without Moses. The Rabbi taught that Moses was necessary, so as to communicate the deeper ideas contained in each Plague. God did not merely plague Egypt with arbitrary miracles, but with signs and wonders which addressed certain flaws in Pharaoh and the Egyptian culture. They were intended to reveal insights necessary for the potential repentance and perfection. Without someone as wise as Moses, the perception of the plagues' underlying ideas would be missed.

#### Purpose of Prophets

This also teaches that God desired that Pharaoh realize another concept: there is immense wisdom out there, and it can only be arrived at with use of the mind. God needs no emissary, but God sent Moses as a primary lesson to Pharaoh that man (Moses) arrives at true knowledge only when using the mind...as Moses portrayed to pharaoh.

This is quite a fascinating idea to me. We are so ready to accept Moses' leadership and role as emissary, but we overlook the very basic question: Why did God desire to send Moses, or send prophets in general? God could have accomplished the plagues on His own. This is a Torah and Maimonidean fundamental: Prophets were sent, not because God needs anyone or anything, but because God wishes to teach man at every turn. And with the sending of prophets, man must realize that a great level of wisdom is required to understand our reality...God's created reality. The prophet is being sent, for he – to the exclusion of others – is fit to understand God, and teach man. This was a primary lesson to Pharaoh: "Your life of idolatry is based on the absence of reasoning, and you require education, through Moses." The most basic lesson to Egypt, and to all cultures today that are idolatrous, is that the mind is not being engaged. If people did use their minds, even to a small degree, they would wonder why they are bowing to stone gods, and deifying man, like Jesus.

#### Animal Behavior

Moses too understood this; he understood his role and that is why he addressed Pharaoh: to explain the underlying messages, and have the effect on Pharaoh and Egypt, desired by God. In the plague of the Mixture of beasts, Moses tells Pharaoh that sacrificing to God in Egypt will get the Jews stoned to death. Moses means to address the very concept of animal worship. I believe this explains why God – in this plague alone – mentions the word "sacrifice" six times. For it is this plague that was sent to address the very problem of animal worship: sacrifice is the antithesis of animal worship! So the repetition of "sacrifice" in this plague alone indicates that sacrifice is central to the purpose of the plague of the Mixture. (God uses word repetitions in other Torah instances too, as subtle suggestions of an underlying Torah theme.)

Now, as Egypt deified animals, Moses directed Pharaoh to recognize this flaw. He told Pharaoh the Egyptians could not stand idly by as animals were sacrificed. For this reason, the Jews were required to offer the Paschal lamb to earn God's salvation: they had to demonstrate their disregard for animal

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deification, and their trust in God's salvation from any stoning, and His deliverance of the nation to Israel.

But how did this plague attempt to correct Egypt's animal deification? It was through psychology. God sent multiple species of beasts that destroyed Egypt, including snakes and scorpions as Rashi stated, the very beasts we find on Pharaohs' headdresses. Thus, the Egyptians should no longer deify that which causes them much grief. When a person is alarmed at some phenomenon, he tends to no longer gravitate towards it, and this I believe was one of the objectives in this plague: to sever ties between man and animal.

Why were a "mixture" sent, and not a single species? A mixture was used as it generates a feeling of disdain toward animals "in general", not just a single class, which would allow the Egyptians to retain their deification feelings for all other beasts that didn't attack them. This explains why this plague was called "Mixture" (Arove). For the Mixture targeted this concept of diluting the Egyptian deification of elevated species, by generating disdain for animals in general.

One last question is why God desired to distinguish the Jews in this plague, in the "land of Goshen". The Rabbis answer (Ibn Ezra 9:1) that God displayed His control over all creation: Earth, the heavens...and all that occurs in between, such as man's actions. Blood, Frogs, and Lice emanated from the Earth. The Mixture, Animal Deaths and Boils occurred "on" the Earth. And Hail, Locusts and Darkness occurred in the air or the heavens. God successfully displayed His control over all creation, by categorizing the plagues in this manner. (Nothing else exists but Earth, heaven, and all events) Of course, God also wished to smite the Egyptians' god, the Nile River with Blood, and there are many other facets to these plagues that we have not begun to detect or examine. As we stated at the very outset, God's wisdom is never ending. But man's is...so I will end with one last question: Why was the next plague Animal Deaths? Was it to act as a follow-up some how to the Mixture? Write in with your thoughts. ■



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# JewishTimes

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# Children's Color-In Section

BY,  
JOSEPH YUSS SIMON



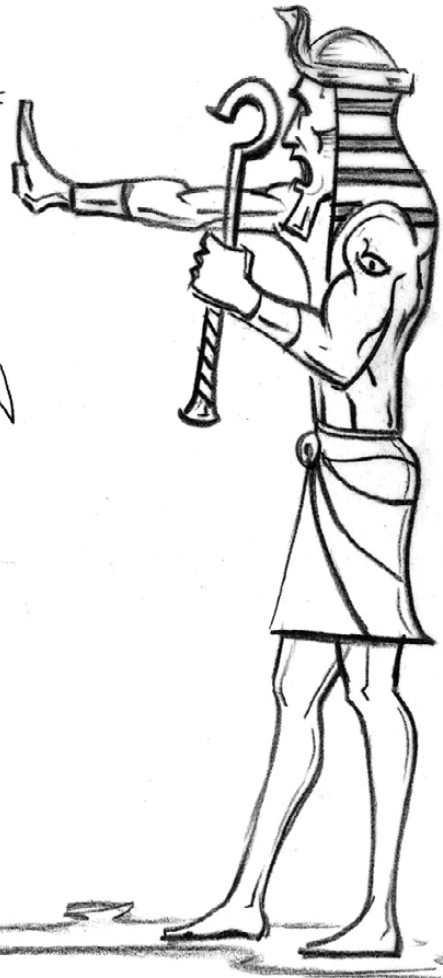
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JOSEPH YUSS SIMON  
9200 OLYMPIC BLVD, SUITE 101  
BEVERLY HILLS, CA 90212  
TEL/FAX: 310.271.5656  
MOBILE: 310-279-9559

THINKWELLSTUDIOS@MAC.COM



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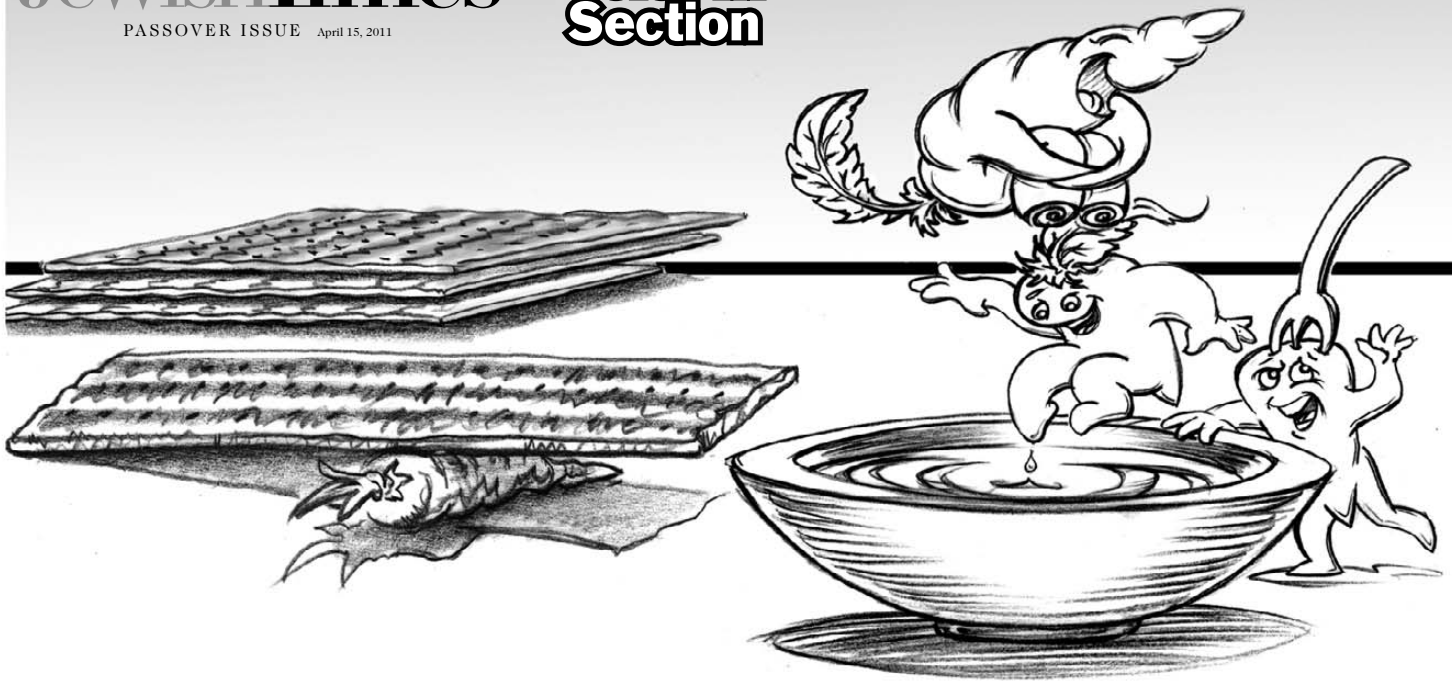




**JewishTimes**

PASSOVER ISSUE April 15, 2011

**Children's  
Color-In  
Section**





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