



Perhaps the reason why we are to lift the matzo (and maror) when we discuss them, is to highlight the reality of the salvation. Matzo, partially cooked bread, is proof to the speed at which God caused us to leave Egypt. Lifting the matzo, we thereby say, "look for yourself". The transmission is to be as impactful on one's emotions as on his intellect (*Rav Mann*). The obligation to view ourselves as those who exited is based on this idea. Hallel is then sung as our thanks, as we realize our current state of freedom is based on God's Exodus thousands of years ago.

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# JewishTimes

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of Jewish Beliefs and Practices

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## The Plague of Hail

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

(Reprint for Passover reading)

In Parshas Vau-Ayra, at the end of the ninth chapter, we find Moshe (Moses) not only responding to Pharaoh's plea to halt the plague of hail, but also giving Pharaoh rebuke: Exod. 9:30, "And you and your servants, I know that you have yet to fear God."

Why during the plague of hail, unlike other plagues, does Moshe suddenly rebuke Pharaoh? Is there something we may derive from this story that may explain Moshe's behavior?

It doesn't appear that God instructed Moshe to rebuke Pharaoh, so Moshe's words here are his own. What then did

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## Thoughts on Passover

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

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

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

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

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

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

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

5) We read, "masscheel b'gnuss u'misayame b'shevach", "commence with degrading statements and conclude with praise". What is the concept behind the edict that the story

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## ASK YOUR CHILDREN:

"Why in Egypt did we have to sacrifice the calf, for God to take us out and give us the Torah?"  
Have your children email us with their answers: [questions@mesora.org](mailto:questions@mesora.org)

## Questions & Answers

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**Question:** What exactly is idolatry?

**Response:** I would have to define it in accordance with a Rabbi's explanation: "Relating to G-d through methods foreign to G-d's prescribed modes of worship." The source, or psychological need which acts of idolatry strive to satisfy, are primal in nature. The instinct in specific I refer to is the need for an authoritarian, or parental being.

To elaborate, when one is an infant, he views his parents as "super" types of beings. As parents feed, hold, care and nurture the infant, a child develops a strong bond and need for this relationship. As an example of how powerful the need for this attachment is, we may see a lost child with the most fearful look on his face. The fear of having "lost" the parent is a dreadful one, and runs very deep.

Now, what happens as a child grows into an adult? What happens to this need? One of two things may occur; 1) The proper response is that the now grown adult will abandon his view that the parent is no more capable than he. He then moves on with mature concepts of parents. Or, 2) The physically grown adult will not abandon his overestimation of the parents being superior. He won't accept his parents as he is; human, limited, and frail. What then happens is, this conflict of one realizing his parent's shortcomings, and his strong desire for psychological guidance, will produce projections of authority onto other objects or beings. He will seek replacements for his parents. This in short is the cause for all forms of idolatry. Throughout history we see that people have worshiped stars, animals, totem poles, and other objects not deserving of any such elevation. Nonetheless, these objects maintained high esteem in the eyes of those in need due to the aforementioned reason.

Among the many expressions of idolatry, the Torah includes enchanters, fortune tellers, and other advisors. The Torah categorizes all such projections as false, and as idolatrous. It is against reality, and it is the most harmful of sins one can commit, as one forfeits the most crucial kernel of knowledge one can attain, i.e., There is One G-d, no other object or force of nature is to be elevated to deification.

When one believes there are forces outside of G-d, his entire concept of G-d is corrupt. G-d by definition must be The Singular Existence and Sole Cause of Creation, and control of laws and matter. Assuming this is not true, or even adding gods onto G-d, is a complete denial of G-d's Unique Nature.

Therefore, idolatry - the projection of powers onto anything except G-d - ends up to be not only incorrect regarding the projected object, but the worst sin, as it is the abandonment of the true idea of G-d. I would add that the error made in projecting powers onto physical objects is an internal contradiction: If we hold that physical objects are created substances, this means that they have no power over themselves, as they were brought into existence by something other than themselves. To then claim that these very created objects can control anything, is a contradiction, and it's the best argument for disproving any assumed powers.

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# The Plague of Hail

**RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM**

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Moshe see in this plague, and what was his purpose in this dialogue?

We must understand that the plagues were not simply haphazard acts, but each was carefully designed by God. Each one contained some unique idea. Moshe understood better than any man the depth which can be discovered by studying any of God's creations, including these plagues. I am certain Moshe pondered each plague, but saw something unique in hail.

After Moshe says "And you and your servants, I know that you have yet to fear God", these two verses follow, "The flax and the barley were struck, for the barley was ripe and the flax was in its stalk. And the wheat and the spelt were not struck for they ripen later." There is a question as to who said these two verses. Ramban says these words are spoken by Moshe. I agree, but I would like to pose my own interpretation.

As God intended to awaken the Egyptians and Pharaoh to His unique distinction as the Creator of heaven and earth, God desired not only to show His might, but to counter obstacles in this society's corrupt nature so they may arrive at the truth. What obstacle did Pharaoh harbor? Moshe said, "You and your servants have yet to fear God". Pharaoh's obstacle was obstinacy.

Moshe was first telling Pharaoh what his exact flaw was in recognizing God. Moshe then viewed the hail, and pondered the different affects it had on various crops. Moshe saw that stiff plants broke, while flexible ones survived. He then thought to himself why God created a plague which didn't destroy all crops. Perhaps Moshe saw God's approach to reprimanding the Egyptians: God created each plague - not necessarily pre-designed from the outset - but God meted out what was needed at each juncture, depending on Pharaoh's current response. Pharaoh was now being obstinate, as Moshe pointed out to him "you have yet to fear God". Obstinacy had to be pointed out to Pharaoh if he was to understand Moshe's next statement which were in direct response to his character. Stripping Pharaoh of his defenses would be the best method for him to finally recognize God. Moshe therefore intimidated to Pharaoh his character flaw via a parallel: "The flax and the barley were struck, for the barley was ripe and the flax was in its stalk." Meaning, "you Pharaoh are going to be broken" as you are stiff like the flax and barley.

"And the wheat and the spelt were not struck for they ripen later." Again a parallel, "you Pharaoh would be spared if you were flexible", as are the wheat and spelt.

Moshe was intimating to Pharaoh, "this current plague was designed as a parallel to you". The goal being that you repent and follow God, as God wishes this for all mankind, "For I do not desire the death of the dead (the wicked) says God, but (in his) repentance and in his living."

This also taught Pharaoh an essential lesson about God, that He recognizes man's thoughts and actions. How else could God design a plague to address a single man's (Pharaoh) specific nature? This is a great lesson. I believe the Egyptians would be surprised if an idol talked to them although they desired the idols to recognize and respond to their actions. Now however, Pharaoh was being taught by Moshe that there is in fact a God Who does know all man's thoughts.

Why did Moshe tell Pharaoh this through metaphor and not directly? Perhaps in general, when someone is faced with a principle which completely counters his current philosophy, he will push it away with both hands in defense. No one likes feeling the carpet is pulled out from under them. So to leave Pharaoh with some room to digest the ideas, Moshe used a metaphor which can, after time, appeal to the person more casually, thereby avoiding the defensive onslaught of the ego, and offering the best possibility for acceptance. ▣

## Pharaoh's Astrologers

**RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM**

When reading Shmos, we come across a Rashi (Exod. 1:22) which states that Pharaoh's astrologers told him that the Jewish messiah had been born, but they weren't sure as to whether this messiah was born of the Jews or of the Egyptians.

Later, Rashi (Exod. 2:3) states that the reason why Moses' mother Yocheved couldn't hide him anymore, was because the Egyptians counted the months from when Yocheved and her husband remarried to determine when a new baby would be born, in order to slay him. Since Moses was born 3 months premature, his mother was able to hide him that length of time. But at the ninth month, she knew that the Egyptians would be visiting to take her child.

A number of questions surface:

1) Did the Egyptians know when Moses was born or not? From the first Rashi, they seemed to know based on astrology, but from the second Rashi, they miscalculated by 3 months. 2) How can humans know something outside of their sense perception? Is astrology fact or fiction?

3) Why were these astrologers only certain about one aspect (that he was born) but they were ignorant of his nationality?

On the one hand, one could side with the Egyptians and state that when they predicted Moses' birth, it was indeed his birthday. But since he was born three months premature, they didn't bother searching his mother's tent, as they assumed whoever was born, was born at nine months. This still shows ignorance.

On the other hand however, one would seem more correct to state that the Egyptians really didn't know anything, and when they stated that the messiah was born, it was a guess, perhaps to maintain their position. Previously, they suggested that Pharaoh's dreams of the 7 cows represented 7 daughters who would be born and die. They were wrong here, and in many other cases. But it wasn't objectively proven that their theory was impossible, so they remained at their posts.

A Rabbi suggested that this may not have been the first time the Egyptian astrologers predicted the birth of a messiah. The astrologers, as in the past, had to produce information to make themselves credulous, and to keep their positions. If they never inform Pharaoh of news, Pharaoh might dismiss, or even kill them. Thus, they were under pressure regularly to provide information to Pharaoh. They also had to be sure that any information couldn't be proved 100% wrong, so when they would state matters, they would do so either in generalities, or in areas that one can never prove impossible. Alternatively, the astrologers saw that Pharaoh was now subjugating the Jews, as the Jews were more numerous, and possibly could pose a threat to the Egyptians. The astrologers surmized the possibility of an uprising, and weren't sure whether it would be spearheaded by a Jew or an Egyptian sympathizer. They therefore used rational deduction in their forecast to Pharaoh and told him that it could be either a Jew or Egyptian saviour.

The fact that the astrologers couldn't determine Moses' nationality, and that the second Rashi implies miscalculation, uncovers their ignorance, and removes any credibility of their astrology.

Perhaps this is why Rashi recorded

these two stories, to teach that astrology is a farce. Just as people today cannot read palms, or foretell events with any accuracy, so also was the case in Egypt. Pharaoh had his astrologers as a source of security for areas wherein he was doubtful. All that was needed was that Pharaoh believed them. Objective reality was not a concern of Pharaoh. Emotional security was.

The Radak, as well as all the Rabbis, dismiss any truth to the Baales Ovee (the female conjurer) in Samuel I, 28:7-19. They unanimously deny any reality to this story, and call it all "futility, void, lies, and mockery".

King Saul had visited the Baales Ove to bring up Samuel from the dead. The story on the surface says she did, and that King Saul talked with Samuel. The Radak however quotes the Rabbis and states, "the Rabbis said three things in regards to conjurers, 1) the one who brings up the dead sees but doesn't hear the dead person, 2) the one who is in need hears, but sees not the dead, and 3) the ones who do not care either way neither see nor hear anything. Such was the case with King Saul, he was in need, so he heard Samuel talking, the Baales Ove saw, but didn't hear, and the two who Saul traveled with, Avner and Amasa, neither saw nor heard a thing."

What does this prove? That King Saul's discussion with Samuel was a daydream, a fantasy, or an illusion. Just as sometimes we think we hear someone talking to us or calling our name, all but to turn and see nobody there, so also according to Radak and all the Rabbis was this case with King Saul and the Baales Ove. He was in such need, that he thought he heard Samuel. His two men didn't care, so they heard nothing. And the Baales Ove needed to keep her status, so she feigned seeing him.

As Jews, a rational people, we do not believe knowledge emanates from sorcerers. They are all false. Knowledge emanates from G-d, and there are specific ways of uncovering this knowledge - careful analysis, and rational thinking. Just as the study of physics and all other sciences which are based on principles embedded in the tangible universe require methodology to arrive at concepts, so much more so, the abstract world of ideas disclosed to us through the Torah requires a refined, rational approach.

It is relatively easy to detect when something is an accurate science. If it follows rational principles, it can be a science. If however, we hear statementst such as, "this crease in your palm is long, therefore you will live long", we

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# Pharaoh's Astrologers

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

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should see no connection between an accidental fold in our flesh, and the avoidance of disastrous situations which will lead to our death. This type of statement should be immediately identified as outside the rational sphere.

Taking what we hear on the surface as truth, and believing it, is not the way to discover reality - truth about the world and God. Even when reading a Rashi, we should look into it, and see if it is as clear as rational ideas should be. If not, perhaps he is teaching us something beyond the surface.

A reader responded to this article as follows:

Reader: You seem to say that Pharaoh's astrologers were incorrect, in essence guessing, and that Saul did not really hear Samuel. If so, first of all, why were these episodes recorded in Tanach?

Mesora: See the Radak on the incident concerning Saul and the Baales Ove, the female conjurer. The Radak states that Samuel did not rise from the ground as a cursory reading would suggest. Radak states that it was all a projection on Saul's part. A fantasy of his mind. The Torah is designed to teach man about the law, which is aimed to benefit man's soul, his mind, and his drives. As such, the reason the Torah records such stories is to teach us how man operates psychologically, whether it be when man operates positively, or even

negatively, as with Saul, and Pharaoh's astrologers. Seeing how Saul and Pharaoh's astrologers made mistakes teaches the reader about incorrect notions, so we learn more about our nature as humans, and that we may also identify that which we should distance ourselves from.

Reader: Also, if the astrologers were guessing, why would Pharaoh be willing to kill the thousands of Egyptian boys who would have been born that day?

Mesora: The astrologers were in positions of counsel due to Pharaoh's need for advice. They counseled Pharaoh with general statements, such as those where they could not be proved wrong, i.e., "you will have 7 daughters, and you will bury 7 daughters". If Pharaoh approached them and said, "where are my 7 daughters?", they could respond. "you will have them yet". Similarly, they stated that "a savior of the Jews is to be born". Pharaoh was superstitious, and out of a fear of an uprising of a savior, he, like any other power hungry leader, might resort to following the only prospect for success, that being the astrologers' advice of slaying even Egyptian males.

Reader: And if they were guessing, how did they get the date right?

Mesora: Who said this was the only day they told Pharaoh that a savior could be born? Perhaps they said this on many occasions, and chance had it that they also said it on Moshe's birthday. Keep in mind that the astrologers previously stated that a savior is to be born. The first time they said this, they were unsure about his date of birth, and they were unsure about his origin, whether it was Egyptian or Hebrew. They were feigning knowledge of future events, as Pharaoh was looking to them for

direction. They couldn't say "we don't know". They would either lose their positions, or be killed. They therefore made general statements that had possibility of coming true, based on current events.

Reader: Similarly, how did Saul hear from his dream of Samuel correct information about his and his son's death in the coming war? And why would he have imagined hearing his teacher telling him he would die?

Mesora: Saul stated that he was grieved by the Phillistines oppression, and that G-d had removed Himself from Saul. This shows that Saul was in a worried state. When one is in such a mindset, his dreams will follow his fears. This also applies to daydreams, which the Rabbis state Saul was experiencing. Why he actually was killed with his son was due to his mindset. One not at ease, and with tremendous worry, will falter in his decisions, and Saul's decisions here were in war. His death, and his son's death were not foretold, rather, they were results of his fears distorting his clear thinking. □

## Arrogance & PRIDE

RIVKA OLENICK

"Be careful lest you forget Hashem, your God." Devarim 8:11

The Torah is specifically speaking about the character flaws of arrogance and pride, which are closely related. The dictionary defines arrogance as: full of unwarranted pride and giving oneself an undue degree of self-importance, haughtiness and conceit. When a person conducts him/herself in an arrogant manner, he/she is saying: "I am faultless, it's others who are at fault." And if a person believes they are faultless why should they bother to live according to Torah? The person believes their priorities in life come before what God has established for mankind. Independence and acquisition is what estranges a person from God. A person thinks: "I have all that I need." All the possessions and enjoyments a person has he/she attributes to their own doing. The trap "one sets up for oneself" is based on an over-estimation of who they are in the world. And by living in the trap of

arrogance and pride, a person is convinced they do not need God. Yet everything one has achieved and obtained in one's life is due only to God.

The Gemora in Sota 5a, warns against arrogance and pride, which are closely related. "Arrogance does not just lead to forgetting God, arrogance itself is the beginning of forgetfulness of God." Since man's thoughts should be directed to God, arrogance does not allow room in one's mind for thoughts of God. In all that man enjoys, his good fortune and everything that he has gained makes man think it is all due to his own power and strength. How quickly and easily man forgets that he was a slave in Egypt. How helpless he was until God took him out.

In his book Horeb, A Philosophy of Jewish Laws and Observances, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch says: "Be not proud! Never look upon anything and call it your own, neither your possession, your strength and good looks, nor your intelligence and abilities. But always remember that it is not you who have procured these things for yourself - but God who lent them to you. That it is He alone Whom you have to thank for them. Nay, more that he is still Master of them although you call them yours. Think of this and beware of pride - for sin has no greater friend!"

So, what can a person do to be free of the trap of arrogance and pride? The first step is to cultivate self-knowledge. Look into your personality and try to be honest about who you are. Begin to figure out what your disposition is and what is in your heart. And if you need help, ask for help. Go to someone you trust, who is honest and cares about your life, your Rav, or your friend. Ask for an objective opinion. And at the same time look at yourself, watch for situations that bring out arrogance, pride and obstinacy. At the end of the day make a calculation of the day: a self-examination to "see" how you behaved. Be your own judge and don't excuse yourself for anything. Determine whether you took a step forward or a step back - and try to be honest, this is truly for your own benefit! Start each day with new hope in making small changes. Is it difficult? It is. But think how much energy a person puts into making changes in a business plan? Even small ones!

Rabbi Hirsch says: "Just as the door stands wide open to one who runs after impurity, so God Himself helps one who makes purity his aim." □



## Thoughts on Passover

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

(continued from page 1)

of the Exodus must begin with our degradation, and conclude with praise?

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

God had planned to redeem the Jews to give them the Torah, but to do so, they had to recognize Who was actually giving the Torah. By definition, the Torah only has value as a means to recognize God if God's existence is a reality to the recipients. Jews who deified the lamb were not worthy of accepting the Torah. God therefore commanded the Jews to take the lamb, and hold it four days until the day of slaughter. The purpose of holding the lamb publicly was to denounce idolatry in the face of the idolaters. This would be a demonstration of a strong conviction in God's rule, not the Egyptian's god.

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

Study of reality dictates that there is only One Creator, One Source for all that is real and true. These two concepts needed to be accepted for God to save any soul. It is for this reason that God



states, (Exod. 12:13) "...and will see the blood and I will pass over you and there will be no plague to destroy when I smite the land of Egypt".

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

The Ibn Ezra points out that had the Jews been given longer time to tarry, the dough would have leavened. Interesting that Ibn Ezra spends ink on this point. But for good reason. This statement teaches us the entire concept behind chametz, or leavened foods.

Ibn Ezra is teaching that chametz by definition would be that substance which would have emerged had the "Jews tarried in Egypt". Chametz is that which is antithetical to the Exodus. It represents a lingering in the Egyptian culture. Therefore we are commanded to remove all chametz, meaning, we are to recognize how mutually exclusive the idolatrous life is to Judaism. Judaism teaches the acceptance of reality, where man must change himself to be in accord with what is true and real. While idolatry is the opposite - the projection of man's wishes onto reality, creating a psychologically protected universe where all man's wishes are "true". Idolatry caters to the infantile, psychological crutches which man has yet to see as false and remove himself from. The Rabbis of blessed memory state, "a righteous person changes himself to be in accord with reality, and a wicked person changes reality to be in accord with himself".

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

This also explains why the Paschal lamb was to be eaten together with matzoh. The eating together means that matzoh qualifies the lamb. How so? If we were to simply eat the lamb without the matzoh, we would not be stating that the lamb's purpose is to be redirected towards God. The matzoh represents the act of redemption, as its existence emerged at the precise moment of the redemption. Matzoh therefore represent "Ge-ula", or redemption for this very reason. Therefore, we eat the matzoh at the moment we eat the lamb, thereby showing that the lamb is not a god, but the God Who orchestrated the Exodus is God. Eating the lamb without matzoh would mean to say that abolishing idolatry without recognizing God is sufficient. This however is not so, and we must always tie hand in hand the ideas that, "idolatry is false-monotheism is truth".

Recognition of God must always be the result of our commands, otherwise we are missing the main point.

Someone had asked, "When the Messiah is here, what will be the purpose to the temple sacrifices?" I say that although idolatry is gone at that point, we still must commemorate how wrong are the false ideas of lost

cultures. Although lost, the seeds of that culture which brought forth idolatry are in every man. We therefore require constant recognition of those drives and notions which are destructive and antithetical to Torah.

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

## Question on Idols:

Reader: I would like to know if something not designed for idolatry, but which has been used for idolatry, may be used for its original purpose or no, for example a bedside table, made to be a proper "bedside table", which has been used as an altar of an idolatrous cult, and then used as a bedside table. If there is a prohibition against such an object, does this apply to the person who has used it in an idolatrous cult or also to other persons?

Mesora: There is a difference between objects which man can manipulate, and objects which he cannot. The former includes mountains, seas, lakes and so on. The latter includes animals, stones, trees, etc. The law is that the former can never become idols. The latter can. The question is why limit the former if something is worshiped, shouldn't this be the criteria by which an object becomes an idol?

If we think into the distinction of 'manipulation' as the basis for objects receiving idol status, we learn a basic concept in the prohibition of benefiting from idolatrous objects. That which man can manipulate can be termed 'under man's dominion'. We would not refer to a mountain as that which man can control. This being the case, only moveables attain a status as 'subjugated' to man. That status of "idolatrous" is merely an example of that which man manipulated for his wishes. Therefore, objects which man controls can be termed as subject to his designation, and can become idols if he uses them as such. But mountains and the like, having an objective status, are not subject to a new designation created by man's subjective wishes.

Once an object has become an idol through creation by a gentile, or through actual worship through a Jew, man is prohibited to derive benefit until the object is defiled by the gentile, thereby removed from idolatrous status. A Jew cannot defile an idol, so if it came into his possession as an idol not yet defiled, it is prohibited eternally.

It should also be noted that an object need not be made at the outset for idolatrous practice in order to become idolatrous. □

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# ISRAELI FIRMS: ADVERTISE YOUR COMPANY PROFILE FREE TO U.S. BUSINESSES IN NEED OF YOUR GOODS AND SERVICES



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USAIsrael.org is a new website with a smart idea to help alleviate Israel's economic woes. USAIsrael's goal is to have American businesses show preference to Israeli providers for their business needs. American firms spend hundreds of millions of dollars on supplies and services on a monthly basis. Our goal in creating USAIsrael, is to redirect this buying power towards Israel. In this fashion, US firms do not need to reach deeper into their pockets to help out Israel. Instead, we ask that they spend their existing budget on Israeli firms, a wiser plan, as it helps both parties; At no new cost, US firms can acquire their needs from professional Israeli resources at competitive fees, and Israel's economy receives the financial boost it needs. Additionally, US firms get a chance to show strong support for you, our Middle East ally, going through the same terrorist troubles the US currently faces.

USAIsrael.org hosts helpful site links. The "Submit Company Profile" link enables any Israeli based firm to create detailed profiles of their goods and services, as well as their web and email addresses. These profiles get stored in the

USAIsrael database. The "Search Companies" link enables US businesses to search the database for a vendor, see the vendor's site, make contact, and close deals. Israeli firms may also post business plans and positions in their firms. US businesses are also invited to submit Requests for Proposals (RFP's) searchable by Israeli firms. Donations may also be made and directed to your desired cause.

The website has free membership for both US and Israeli businesses. Mesora.org plans to email numerous companies in both the US and Israel, notifying them of this new site, and generating leads Israel's way. Of course, not all buying habits can be duplicated long distance, but in many cases, products and services purchased locally in the US can be purchased from Israel's resources at comparable fees. Certainly, all web based businesses can redirect their spending with no perceived difference in service and price. Israel's resources will also prove to be a bargain in many cases.

With USAIsrael.org Mesora.org proves that creativity combined with a yearning to help others

can yield profitable results for Israel, and charitable results for the US, without costing anyone a dime.

What can you do in Israel to help Israel's economy? Publish USAIsrael.org in the media, informing Israeli businesses of this new, free method of attracting business from American companies who want to help. use the image above as your actual ad. Banners are located on the USAIsrael.org website for those who wish to place them on your sites.

Our goal is to impress US businesses with a broad range of Israeli based firms who can provide quality and professional services to replace their existing US vendors.

Start reaching out to your Israeli businesses, tell them to submit their company's profile free. Ask Israel's newspapers to run press releases so many businesses may participate. The more businesses who join, the more who will attract American dollars. We are aiming to be not only a financial help, but have an uplifting effect on Israel's morale.

Please email USAIsrael.org with your suggestions or interest in partnering.

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