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Purim 5784- starts on page 7

-Shabbos Mevarchim Nisan-
Parshas Shemos
The Moled will be
Monday night
57 minutes and
7 Cholokim
after 10
Rosh Chodesh is Tuesday



RABBI YY JACOBSON
will be in town for Shabbos

Zmanim by our incredible Gabbaim

Ephrayim Yurowitz
Tzvi Blech



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This week we bentch Rosh Chodesh Nisan.
Moled will be Monday Night 57 minutes and 7 Chalakim after 10.
Rosh Chodesh is Tuesday.

Shabbos Zmanim

2024 Early Friday Mincha, 18 Main
at מנחה גדולה and every 15 minutes from 1:30pm-5:00pm

7:08pm Candle lighting	7:18pm Mincha in tent נ	7:18pm Chabad Mincha	7:26pm Shkiya	
SHABBOS SHACHRIS MINYANIM:				
5:51am Vasikin, followed by a Daf Yomi Shiur 20↑	8:00am Shachris 2 18 main	9:15am Shachris 3 Tent נ	10:00am Shachris 4 Bais Chabad 20↑	10:00am Shachris 5 18 main
2:00pm Pirchei	7:10pm Mincha followed by Shalosh Seudos	7:27pm Shkiya	8:07pm Maariv 1	8:12pm Maariv 2
Late Maariv Motzei Shabbos Every 15 Minutes! 8:45 pm - 11:15pm 18 Main				

Weekday Zmanim
Zmanim for the week of April 7-13

Shacharis — 20 min. before Neitz
Mincha & Maariv — 12 min. before Plag and more (see posted times)

	Neitz	Shma Magen Avraham	Shma Gra	Tefila Gra	Chatzos	Plag	Shkiya
Sunday	6:29am	9:01am	9:43am	10:48am	12:58pm	6:07pm	7:28pm
Monday	6:28am	9:00am	9:42am	10:47am	12:58pm	6:07pm	7:29pm
Tuesday	6:26am	8:59am	9:41am	10:47am	12:58pm	6:08pm	7:30pm
Wednesday	6:25am	8:58am	9:40am	10:46am	12:57pm	6:09pm	7:31pm
Thursday	6:23am	8:57am	9:40am	10:45am	12:57pm	6:10pm	7:32pm
Friday	6:21am	8:55am	9:39am	10:45am	12:57pm	6:11pm	7:33pm
Shabbos	6:20am	8:54am	9:38am	10:44am	12:57pm	6:11pm	7:34pm

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Parshat Shemini and the Aigel

The *parasha* opens with a commandment to Aaron “Take for yourself a calf, a young male of cattle for a sin offering” Rashi explains; this is to inform Aaron that Hashem grants atonement for him through this calf, for the golden calf that he made. Why does Aaron need atonement at all? We know the *parah aduma* was a *kaparah* for the *aigel*, as it is said “the mother will come and clean up the mess of the child.”

Rav Yehuda Tzadka, Rosh Yeshivat Porat Yosef in Jerusalem, shares an insight. There were 3 types of sins that took place by the golden calf: 1) People that prostrated themselves to the *aigel*, they were killed by sword. 2) Those that only in their hearts worshipped, they passed away in the plague that took place after the grinding of the *aigel*. People drank it with water and died just like a *sotah* that dies as she drinks the water. 3) Those people who did not protest against the actions that took place during the *aigel*, for them the *kaparah* was the *parah aduma*. Group #1 violated in their heart and action, group #2 only in their heart and group #3 lacked the protest against evil. Aaron was not in any one of these groups. His violation was in action but not in heart as his intention was to stall the people until Moshe would return in hope to prevent the sin. He brought a *korban* in this weeks’ portion as a *kaparah* for his “sin.”

This seems to imply that Aaron did a sin and needed atonement. That cannot be possible because his thoughts were pure, and even his actions were to stall the people. When the *aigel* was miraculously created in the fire, Aaron was shocked. This was not what he expected to happen, he expected for the gold to simply melt. Even his action was not sinful. do we rectify the pain of Aaron for all of eternity and inform the world of his innocence?

The Talmud (*Kedushin* 39b) teaches us that if one has good intentions without action Hashem will attach an action to his intention. When one has negative intention with a positive action, Hashem won’t include the negative intention to the action. Here Aaron intention and action were good, it was Hashem who threw him a curve ball that produced the *aigel* causing great embarrassment to Aaron.

The *parasha* opens that it was on the eighth day of the *meluim*. The number eight always signifies something that is above nature like the 8 days of Chanukah and Brit Mila given on the 8th day. Additionally, it was Rosh Chodesh Nissan and the word Nissan comes from the word nes, miracle. Hashem is showing that Aaron did not sin with the *aigel*, rather the miracle that Hashem performed made it appear as though he sinned, causing him great distress. Now Hashem is illustrating through this time, at the *Mishkan* through Aharon bringing this *korban*, that he is innocent of any sin and is worthy of being the *kohain gadol*. That is why Hashem commands Aaron “*kach lecha aigel, take for yourself an aigel;*” it’s for you and everyone to know with absolute clarity that you’re not at fault due to the miraculous results that caused an *aigel* to appear. This *korban* was a special opportunity for Aaron to come closer to Hashem, clear his name and establish his purity.



The Month of Nissan

by Rabbi Daniel Coren

This Shabbas we will be ushering in the month of Nissan with the special segment that is read from *Parshas Bo* beginning with the words *החדש הזה לכם*.

The Gemara in *Maseches Shabbas* 147 relates a story about the great Rav Elazar ben Arach, who traveled to some special resort area, and after indulging in all the different hot springs and baths, he forgot his Torah. In fact, when he came back and was called up to the Torah they were reading the above *pasuk* (maybe it was *Parshas Hachodesh*) and instead of reading the words *החדש הזה לכם*, he read them *היה לבם*, which implies that his heart became dumb and numb from too much self-indulgence.

[As an aside, there is a fascinating explanation from Rav Shimshon from Ostropoli z”l regarding the letters that Rav Elazar got mixed up. The angel that is in charge of forgetting is called *תריב* and the angel that is in charge of remembering is called *דד”ך* meaning the angel of forgetting replaced the angel of remembering, and hence these letters got switched.]

This story about R. Elazar ben Arach needs explanation. What is message that Chazal are teaching us in this story? And how did these words about the month of Nissan reflect Rav Elazar’s forgetfulness of the Torah?

To explain, I would like to share what Rav Ovadya Yosef z”l writes regarding this month. Rav Ovadya discusses why we don’t recite *tachanun* the entire month of Nissan. The *Mishna Berura* discusses this too, except regarding the last days of Nissan, the reason for not saying *tachanun* is different in these two sources. Both explain that the first days of Nissan were days when the princes of the Tribes in the desert, starting with Nachshon ben Aminadav, brought an inauguration *korban* and therefore they became days of Yom Tov. The 14th of Nissan is Erev Pesach which is also considered Yom Tov. And then you have the seven days of Pesach. Regarding after Pesach, the *Mishna Berura* says since the majority of the month is Yom Tov, so the whole month is Yom Tov. Chacham Ovadya writes that the third Bais Hamikdash will be built in the month of Nissan, and the last days of the month will be celebrated and become a Yom Tov.

I would like to suggest a simple idea. A Jew’s purpose in the world is to reach closeness with Hashem and “graduate” from this world to merit the eternal pleasure in the world to come. Using the physical world as a conduit for spiritually will elevate a person and facilitate this goal. However, if the person loses focus and lies to himself that he is doing things for Hashem, but in reality he is motivated by self-indulgence. then his actions will have the opposite effect. The month of Nissan is the prime example of this principle; it’s a month filled with days that look like they are focused on physicality, but in truth, the month is permeated with spirituality.

May we be *zoche* to seeing Mashiach *bimhera biyameinu*.

Two Signs of Kosher Animals

Land animals that are permitted, or kosher, for Jews to consume are identified in this week's Torah portion by two distinct characteristics.

Firstly, the animal must bring up its cud and chew it. This means that after swallowing its food, the animal must regurgitate it from the first stomach to the mouth to be chewed again. This regurgitated food is called "cud."

Second, the animal must have completely cloven hooves.

For example, the cow, goat, sheep, and gazelle possess both these characteristics and are thus kosher. The donkey and the horse, on the other hand, which lack both of these features, are defined as non-kosher animals. The pig, which has split hooves but does not chew its cud, and the camel, which chews its cud but has no split hooves, are non-kosher animals.

Why do these particular characteristics cause an animal to become kosher?

The Power of Food

Judaism teaches that the physical attributes of an animal reflect the distinct psychological and spiritual qualities of its soul.

Another point expounded by Judaism is that the food a person consumes has a profound effect on one's psyche. When a person eats the flesh of a particular animal, the "personality" of this animal affects, to some degree, the identity of the human consumer.

The split hooves and the chewing of the cud represent two qualities of the soul of these animals that are crucially necessary for the healthy development of the human character. When the Jew consumes the substance of these animals, he becomes a more "kosher" and refined human being.

Moral Self-Discipline

Cloven hooves -- the division existing in the coverings on an animal's feet -- are symbolic of the notion that one's movement in life (reflected by the moving legs) is governed by a division between "right" and "left," between right and wrong, between the permissible and the prohibited. A split hoof represents the human capacity to accept that there are things to be embraced and things to be rebuffed.

This process of moral self-discipline is the hallmark of living

The important part of Torah learning is the effort put in to the learning.

It's not the getting there, it's the going

-Reb Shlomo Freifeld



a wholesome life, physically, psychologically, and spiritually. A violin can produce its exquisite music only when its cords are tied, not when they are loose and "free." Similarly, a human being who allows himself to do whatever he wants, whenever he wants, wherever he wants and with whomever he wants, robs himself of the opportunity to experience the inner music of his soul.



Rabbi YY Jacobson

And when we have no clear differentiation between right and wrong, in a short time we tend to lose the very foundation of civil life. Nothing is a given, nothing is important, nothing is sacred, because nothing is even real. We end up in an endless wasteland, trying to numb our pain and anxiety through every possible distraction. The very core of the "I" gets lost in world where nothing matters besides the fact that nothing matters. Semantics, rather than conviction, becomes the stuff our soul is carved of.

Challenge Yourself

The second quality that characterizes a "kosher" human being is that it always chews its cud.

Even after a person "swallows" and integrates into his life certain values, attitudes, and behaviors, he must never become totally self-assured and smug about them. The spiritual human being needs to continually regurgitate his ideas to be chewed and reflected upon again.

Man must never allow himself to become fully content in his own orbit. Contentment breeds smugness; smugness breeds boredom, arrogance, and judgmentalism. A person ought always - till his last breath - challenge himself, examine his behavior, and refine his character.

Or as Rabbi Adin Even Yisroel-Steinsaltz once said: How do you know if you are alive or dead? If something hurts you, it means you are alive.

Womens Shiur **Tuesday** 9:30am (18 Main)
Chassidus Shiur **Monday & Thursday** 7:45am (18 Main)
Shabbos: Friday Night – before Barchu (20 Upstairs)
Morning 8:40 (20 Upstairs) | After Davening 12:00pm (20 Upstairs)
Please Note: Rabbi Jacobson's Shabbos morning shiur will now begin at 8:40 am, followed by the Minyan at 10:00 am.

UFARATZTA



Let Hashem Owe You Instead of You Owing Hashem

Someone pledged to give money if a certain close relative would be healed from an illness. The Rashab said to him, "give the money before that person is healed, so that Hashem will owe you, instead of waiting until after he is healed, and you owe Hashem."

The Rebbe Rashab P498

*Beis Nisan (1920) Yom hillula of the 5th Chabad Rebbe
Admor Shalom Dov Ber – Rashab.*

Starting the Hagada Before Nightfall

~Night Kollel~ ~Kollel Boker~



by Rabbi Nachum Scheiner, Night Kollel & Morning Kollel

We previously discussed that one cannot fulfill the *mitzvos* of the *seder* before nightfall. The *matza* and *marror* must be eaten at night, at the time when one can eat the *korban pesach*.

But why can't we start the *haggada* before nightfall, and get the ball rolling? The Brisker Rav says that this question is actually raised in the *haggada*: "יכול מבעוד יום" – One may have thought that the *mitzvah* can be fulfilled while it is still day, in a case that a person was *mekabel yom tov* early. Since it is already Pesach, one would think that he can start performing the *mitzvah* of *sippur yetzias mitzrayim*, just as one can make an early Shabbos and recite *kiddush*.

The answer to the question is also provided by the *baal hagada*: "ת"ל בעבור זה – בשעה שיש מצה ומרור מונחים לפניך". The *mitzvah* of *sipur yetzias mitzrayim* must be done at the time that the *matza* and *marror* is in front of him. In other words, the *matza* and *marror*, which are ready to be used for the *mitzvah*, have to be there in front of you. This is the *pasuk* we tell the *שאינו יודע לשאול* – the child that has no idea what is happening. We show him the *matza* and *marror* at the time of the *sippur*, which serves as a visual-aid, a way of helping the child understand what is happening.

In other words, according to the Brisker Rav, this prerequisite: "בשעה שיש מצה ומרור מונחים לפניך" – at the time that the *matza* and *marror* are there," means that they must actually be there in front of you on the table. He proves this from the expression used by the *Mechilta*: "at the time that the *matza* and *marror* are in front of you **on the table**," which means that they must physically be there in front of you.

According to this understanding, if a person were to be stuck somewhere without *matza* and *marror*, he would not be able to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *sippur yetzias mitzrayim*, either. He also proves this from the fact that the *matza* is called "*lechem oni – lechem she'onim alav devarim harbei* – bread that we relate many things [i.e., *sippur yetzias mitzrayim*] over it." The *Gemara* explains that one of the connotations of the word *oni* is an expression of talking, which means that we relate the story over the *matzos*. In other words, the *matzos* being on the table is an integral part of the *seder*.

He adds that even after the *mitzvah* was done, and the *matzos* were eaten, one can still fulfill this prerequisite by having *matza* on the table, since it is the time of the *mitzvah*. For this reason, the *Tosefta* tells us that when the students of the great rabbis in Bnei Brak came in to tell them that the morning had arrived, they cleared the table and left. Why is it necessary to tell us about the cleaning crew? The Brisker Rav explains that the *Tosefta* is teaching us that the table had to have the *matzos* there the entire night, in order to continue

to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *sippur*.

The *Minchas Chinuch*, on the other hand, asserts that it is only "בשעה שיש מצה מרור מונחים לפניך" at the time that the *matza* and *marror* are there, meaning that they do not actually need to physically be there.

Summary

One must wait until nightfall to start the *haggada* because that is the time that the *matza* and *marror* are there in front of you on the table.

There are a number of *Kuntreisim* available – both in English and in Hebrew, including: 1. *Baking Matzos* 2. *Mechiras Chometz* 3. *Leil Haseder and Daled Kosos*
Hard copies are available at the shul, or you can send an email to: Rabbischeiner@18forshay.com.

Rabbi Scheiner

KOLLEL BOKER | 7:00-8:00am

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- Currently: מסכת פסחים, פרק ערבי פסחים, פרק ערבי פסחים
- Friday - Shuirim Beinyonei Dyoma and relevant topics

NIGHT KOLLEL | 8:15-9:45pm

- Chavrusa learning - Halacha
- Currently: הלכות שבת

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Parshas Hachodesh Klal Yisroel Play Above the Sun

Why do we call it “קידוש החודש” and not קביעת החודש – for we are setting the month? Shlomo Hamelech says in *Koheles* 1:9 “ואין כל חדש תחת השמש” – “There is nothing new under the sun.” Although we see that there are new trees, and new living beings, they are not called, “new” for it was already set from before that it would come into existence in the future. *Chiddush*, new, is that which there was no *koach*, power, for it to be created from something which was already in this world.

However, the very essence of Klal Yisroel is *chiddush*. Avrohom and Sarah did not have the *Koach* to bring children into this world. It was only through a miracle that they bore a child. Thus, the entire existence of Klal Yisroel in this world is a *chiddush*. When Klal Yisroel were entrenched in the *tumah* of Mitzrayim, it was as if they were not a nation – they were like an unborn fetus in an animal. In a very short time, they came out of the darkness into the light, and were immediately a complete nation. Klal Yisroel miraculously went through the *yam*, and ate food of the angels, *mon*. All of this attests to the *chiddush* of Klal Yisroel, which was not part of the creation prior to it.

The question is that if indeed, אין כל חדש תחת השמש – that there is nothing new, then how can we explain above regarding Klal Yisroel, which seems to be complete *chiddush*? We must say that what Shlomo Hamelech was speaking about is “תחת”

“השמש” – that which is under the sun, down here on this world. However, Klal Yisroel are on an elevated level; they “play above the sun.” Klal Yisroel are really a nation of *olam Habah*, it is just that they are temporarily here in this world, in *olam hazeh*, as a preparation for the Next World, *olam habah*.

The reason that we call it קידוש החודש – is because *kedusha* is separation, for Klal Yisroel are able to separate the *chodesh* from below the Heavens, meaning that it shows that Klal Yisroel are separated from this world, and they deal, “above the sun.” This is also relevant to *Shabbos Kodesh*. All that was needed to be created on the seventh day of creation was created on the sixth day, thus when *Shabbos Kodesh* came, all of the creation was to be complete. *Shabbos* was to be like the eighth day, that which above nature, after the completion of the seven days of Creation. Thus, *Shabbos* is considered above nature and time. In truth, the Ohr Hachaim tells us that every *Shabbos Kodesh*, there is *chiddush*. The life source of this world comes from *Shabbos*. Each *Shabbos* gives life to the six days following it.

This also applies to the inauguration of the *Mishkan*, יהי ביום השמיני. The first seven days, the שבועת ימי המילואים, were days of preparation – to fix that which was ruined by the *chet* of the *eitz hada'as* during the seven days of creation. Then came the eighth day, the day which represents above *Teva*, a day which cannot be ruined. We lain *Parshas Hachodesh* specifically on *Shabbos Kodesh*, as just as *Shabbos* represents above *teva*, above this world, so too does *Kiddush Hachodesh*, represent Klal Yisroel being “above the sun.”

Changing Habits – How?

Take a good look at yourself. Everyone has felt it. The phantom ring of the cell phone on a day when you're sure you do not have a cell phone.

It might be *Shabbos* or any time when you are sure that you're not carrying your phone with you, but yet you feel or hear a vibrating device, if only for a moment. Or maybe you were somewhere without a phone, perhaps you forgot it or (Heaven forbid) lost it. Uh oh, no phone. You can't entertain yourself digitally. What are you to do with all this free time?

But alas, our time is not free, far from it. Our time is not even ours. We are slaves to the device. The truth is we are uneasy and uncomfortable without our phone. Amazing, but easily explainable. When you don't want to deal with your issues – distraction is king. If our generation has a credo, it must be we cannot ever be alone with our thoughts, with ourselves.

To some of us, the idea of being alone with ourselves and not being able to “talk digitally with our friends” is horrifying, terrifying. When did all this happen? It's not only our phones. Any distraction, anything that entertains us when we are “alone.” It could be a husband or wife that works crazy long hours. Or any other addictions r”l. They all have one common denominator: they help us run away from ourselves.

Now to be sure, recreation is necessary and healthy. All work and no play makes Yaakov a dull boy. To keep ourselves from burning out we must engage in healthy activities. But the question here is, and everyone knows it's about time we asked: Are we afraid to spend time with ourselves? We have to work hard to truly confront

RABBI BEN ZION SNEH



our challenges, and living in this pampered generation has made us all weaker and infinitely less patient with ourselves and those around us.

Real growth only occurs when there is resistance, correction and discovery, when we change old habits – instead of constantly giving in to them. As the Maharal observed, a seed that does not break, remaining whole and beautiful without cracking open, cannot bring forth a tree or any growing matter. We spend our valuable time running away from ourselves to swim in the pleasurable sea of technology. It's constant, day and night. We all have challenges to confront, pain to deal with. Not everything is fine.

But we choose the narcotic of not knowing, not seeking and not caring, over the painful albeit fulfilling tour of our inner lives. But we really can't be blamed- inner work is difficult. But can only be accomplished when we turn down the static of our technological “friends.” An action that is easier said than done. None of this self-searching is new.

May we merit to live our lives in a most real and honest way, taking the time to find out who we really are, not hiding behind our devices and our perceived identities. And may this honesty help us achieve both greatness in our relationships and growth in our spiritual challenges.

This Pesach - Let's grow by realizing that some of our habits are really just chains.

Written by R' Avrohom Hillel Reich based on a lesson and story by Harav Ben Tziyon Sneh Shlita

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Parshas Shemini and Rosh Chodesh Nissan

Rabbi Mordechai Willig

The beginning of *Parshas Shmini* refers to *Rosh Chodesh Nissan*, the day the *Mishkan* was erected (*Rashi Vayikra* 9:1).

At the midpoint of Nisan, on Seder night, we begin with disgrace and conclude with praise (*mishna Pesachim* 116a). According to Shmuel, we begin with "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Mitzrayim" and end "Hashem took us out from there". According to Rav, we begin with "At the beginning our ancestors were idol-worshippers" and end "and now Hashem has drawn us close to His service".

At the *Seder*, we follow both Shmuel and Rav. Shmuel focuses on the micro level, on the slavery in Egypt and the Exodus therefrom. However, Rav looks at the "big picture". Our spiritual enslavement began when our ancestors worshiped idols. It ended when we served Hashem, our ultimate spiritual redemption.

The book of *Shemos*, called the book of exile and redemption, ends with the completion of the *Mishkan*. Even after we left *Mitzrayim* we were still in exile until we returned to the level of the patriarchs when Hashem's presence was in our midst in the *Mishkan* (Ramban, introduction to *Shemos*). This took place on *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* (*Rashi Vayikra* 9:23).

Based on this, my son R' Moshe explained two famous passages in the *Haggadah*.

The final portion of our description of the Exodus (before Rabban Gamliel *omer*, the subject of the next *mishna* in *Pesachim* 116a) is "*Dayenu*". Its last stanza refers to the building of the *Beis Hamikdash*, the return, in the words of the Ramban, not only to the level of our patriarchs, but to their place as well. This represents the completion of Hashem's drawing us close to His service.

The paragraph preceding the disgraceful beginning of idol worship suggests that we tell the story on *Rosh Chodesh Nissan*. On a simple level, this suggestion is based on the references in *Parshas Bo* (*Shemos* 12:2; 13:4) to the month of *mitzvos* and exodus. However, one can interpret this suggestion as referring to the glorious end of our spiritual redemption, which took place on *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* in the year after the Exodus, as described in *Parshas Shemini*.

When reading about the day when we returned to the level of the *avos*, we should all aspire to that goal. Each and every Jew is obligated to say "When will my deeds reach the deeds of my ancestors, Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov"? (*Tana D'bei Elyahu* 25:2). Aspiring to that goal, even if it is beyond our reach, is the very essence of the lesson we must derive from the *Haggadah*. We pray for the day when the goal will be realized with the rebuilding of the *Beis Hamikdash*.

Measure for Measure

Torah Tavlin

... and you shall sanctify yourselves and be holy, because I am holy, and you shall not defile yourselves... (*Vaykira* 11:44)

The story is told – which was actually witnessed by certain members of the Sephardic community – about a certain butcher who took ill and was approaching his final moments. He called the rabbi, R' Eiloan Avidani *zt"l* of Kurdistan, and in a tearful tone confessed that all his life he had been feeding people forbidden meat. The people standing around the deathbed were shocked as the implication of what the butcher had said began to sink in. Even before he completed his confession, the sinful butcher died.

As they were about to bury him in the grave, the *chevra kadisha* – burial society, noticed that the grave was full of mice scurrying back and forth. The people around trembled and scrambled to dig another grave nearby. They dug another grave, but as they were about to lower the deceased into it, they once again they saw an enormous assembly of mice. The rabbi instructed to dig yet a third grave, but once again dozens of mice started running about as they brought the body for burial. They tried chasing the mice away, but to no avail. Even when they lowered wood and set it on fire, the mice still remained. The rabbi realized what was taking place and finally decided, "This is already the third time; we now have a *chazakah*. We have no choice but to bury him here."

Later, when they came to erect the monument, they saw that the mice had completely devoured the body as well as the bones, sparing nothing.

The people turned to the rabbi and inquired, "True, the man was a sinner. But as we know, Hashem always punishes 'measure for measure.' How did this punishment fit the crime?" R' Avidani explained. "The *Talmud Yerushalmi* says that mice symbolize the wicked. The reason is that when they discover food they not only satisfy their hunger with the newly found goods, but they call their friends to join them in their theft. Thus, they are not only sinners themselves, but they bring others to sin as well.



Similarly, one who wishes to indulge in forbidden foods, so be it, and he will ultimately have to stand judgment for his sin. But one who takes others with him and feeds them these foods is comparable to the mice, who not only sin themselves but lure others to participate as well."

פנינים על הפרשה הרב היים קנייבסקי

מעלת גרה בגרמה אותה תאכלו (י"א ג)
דבר נפלא כתב רבינו בספרו טעמא דקרא:

כי הנה אחד מסימני הטהרה של בהמה היא 'מעלת גרה', ומבאר רש"י שמעלה ומקיא את האוכל ממעיה, ומחזרת אותו לתוך פיה לכתשו ולטחנו הדק וכו', שעל ידי הגרה האוכל נפטר ונימוח. ופעולה זו היא סימן שאינו עצלן, כי העצלן לא יעשה כן. ויש לפרש דלכן סימן טהרה הוא, כי עצלות היא מידה מגונה וזריזות היא מעלה עצומה. ולא יזו שליוחות מחפשים בדווקא את העצל?
איתא במשלי (י"ב טו) כחומץ לשיניים וכעשן לעיניים כן העצל לשולחיו. רבינו באר את הדמיון בין חומץ ועשן לעצל: החומץ יש בו מעלה וחסרון, שמצד אחד הוא מזיק לשיניים בריאות, אבל לשיניים חולות, אדרבה הוא מועיל ומרפא (שבת ק"א א'), וכן עשן מזיק לעיניים בריאות (שבת ק"א ב') ולעיניים חולות לפעמים הוא מועיל.

וכן הוא עצל, לדבר טוב אין כדאי לשלוח אותו כי יתעצל, אבל לדבר שאינו טוב כגון גט, הוא טוב, שלפעמים טוב שמתעכב (דוגמתו בגיטין ל"ד א' ברוך הטוב והמטיב שלא נתן לה את הגט, וכן בכהנים תקנו גט מקושר שיתאחרו מלתת גט).

מצווה דאורייתא

נשאל רבינו אם יש בעיה להראות לילדים חיות טמאות וטהורות כדי ללמדם מה טהור ומה טמא. השיב רבינו הנה למעוברת כתוב שלא תראה, אבל לילדים כדי ללמדם, אדרבה, זה מצוה דאורייתא, כדי שילמדו מה טהור ומה טמא.



CONTROLLING KINDNESS

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig

“And the chasida...” (11:19)

The Talmud teaches that each locale has a proclivity toward certain character traits or behaviors. Babylonia is noted for its high incidence of flattery, and as a source for this, the Talmud cites a verse found in the vision of the prophet Zecharia in which two winged women transport a measuring utensil to Babylonia. The Talmud interprets this to be an allusion to their bringing the trait of flattery to Babylonia. Rashi explains the inference to flattery in this verse in the following manner: The Torah describes the women as having the wings of a “chasida” – stork. The Talmud explains that a chasida is so named because the stork performs acts of “chesed” – kindness for its friends. How does performing acts of kindness for its friends transform the stork into the symbol of flattery?

To begin answering the aforementioned question, we must first address another difficulty raised by the commentaries. The Ramban teaches that since the birds which we are prohibited to eat exhibit negative character traits, consumption of them would infuse a person with these traits. In light of this, it is difficult to reconcile the Ramban’s teaching with the Talmud’s explanation of the name “chasida”. Why would the Torah name an unclean bird with a positive trait? The Talmud is teaching us that what person does for his friends should be done out of commitment and obligation to the relationship. Viewing all that we do for friends as acts of kindness is a negative trait. Therefore, the chasida is being defined by a negative trait, not a positive one.

What motivates a person to view that which he does for his friends as acts of kindness? The Hebrew word for “friend” is “chaver”, which is a derivation of the word “chibur” – “to be joined with”. The closer a relationship is, the greater the loss of independence; commitment to a relationship is accompanied by obligations. A person must make himself available to accommodate his friend’s needs. When a person views that which he does for his friend as a kindness, he maintains a distance within the relationship, not allowing for a commitment that would require obligation. He seeks to maintain his independence, for this allows him to have a relationship on his terms. What he is doing in essence is retaining his control over the relationship.

The act of flattery is essentially the same as the behavior exhibited by the chasida. When a person resorts to flattery within a relationship, he is giving his friend a false sense of reality. This is a manipulative act, giving the flatterer control over the relationship. Again, the relationship is being dictated on his terms. This explains a statement made by the Talmud: The punishment of the flatterer is that he will fall into the hands of the one who he flattered. Since he attempted to control, the quid-pro-quo is that he will eventually be controlled.



Just so you should know...

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The Month of Nissan

Rabbi Pinchas Winston



This week is the last of the four *parshios* for this time of year, *Parashas HaChodesh*, which always comes in advance of the new month of Nissan. It was in advance of Rosh Chodesh Nissan that G-d, 3,312 years ago and in Egypt, handed over the responsibility of keeping track of the years into the hands of the Jewish people:

G-d spoke to Moshe and Aharon in the land of Egypt, saying, “This month will be for you (*la-chem*) the head of the months — the first for you of the months of the year.” (*Shemos* 12:1)

The moon symbolizes the Jewish people and their mission on earth, and therefore, the reason for their redemption from Egyptian oppression. For, just as the moon reflects the light of the sun to the earth and reduces its darkness, so, too, were the Jewish people redeemed to reflect the light of G-d, that is the light of Torah, to mankind.

In addition, since the word “*la-chem*” (*lamed-chof-mem*) in the above posuk has the same letters as the word “*melech*” (i.e., king — *mem, lamed, chof*), Nissan is treated as a “king,” deserving of more honor than the rest of the months. Lest we forget, it IS the month within which Pesach itself falls, and therefore, the month of redemption — past, present, and future, *b’ezras Hashem Yisborach*.

As well, it was in the month of Nissan that the Mishkan — the EIGHTH DAY of the Inauguration Ceremony — was finally erected and put into full service, in honor of Yitzchak Avinu who was born in this month. Furthermore, the Talmud adds, Nissan is the month during which the world was created, at least according to Rabi Yehoshua, and, according to Kabbalah, this refers to the original emanation of light with which all of creation resulted.

This month has three names: First Month, Month of Spring, and Nissan — the first originating in the Torah, and the latter, from Babylonia. However, Nissan is related to the word “*nitzan*” which means “bud,” for this is the season of re-birth, when trees begin to bud. Hence, it is the time of year that we make a special blessing on newly-budding fruit trees. Every twenty-eight years, the sun is said to be at full-strength in this month, precipitating a special blessing said at this time.

Interestingly enough, the Hebrew word “Nissan” (*nun-yud-samech-nun*) has within it the word “*neis*,” which means “miracle”; Nissan is certainly a month of miracles. The gematria of “*neis*” is 110 (*nun-samech*), the age to which both Yehoshua bin Nun and Yosef HaTzaddik — his ancestor — lived, both for which, the Arizal points out, miracles happened and through whom redemption occurred.

The remaining two letters of the word (*yud-nun*) total 60, represented by the letter “*samech*” in the *Aleph-Bais*, which, according to Kabbalah, symbolizes man’s need to rely upon (“*somech*”) G-d for redemption, be it personal or national redemption. This is the source of true trust and faith in G-d.

As well, the word “Nissan” has in it the letters *yud-samech*, “sandwiched” between two nuns: *yud-samech* total the number seventy, the number of redemption as we learn from Purim, and the “nuns” allude to the “*Nun Sha’arei Binah*” — the “Fifty Gates of Understanding.” “*Mitzrayim*” is “*meitzer yummm*” — the constriction (*meitzer*) of “*yummm*” (*yud-mem*) which equals fifty, and therefore, Nissan is the month during which we overcame all opposition to the Fifty Gates, thereby achieving spiritual freedom and then physical freedom.

So, no matter how you look at it, there is plenty of reason to pay attention to the month of Nissan, and to prepare for it on the Shabbos just before its Rosh Chodesh.

Unauthorized Fire Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z"l



Jewish thought is counter-philosophical. It insists that truths are embodied precisely in particular times and places. There are holy times (the seventh day, seventh month, seventh year, and the end of seven septennial cycles, the jubilee). There are holy people (the Children of Israel as a whole; within them, the Levi'im, and within them the Kohanim). And there is holy space (eventually, Israel; within that, Jerusalem; within that the Temple; in the desert, they were the *Mishkan*, the Holy, and the Holy of Holies).

The holy is that point of time and space in which the Presence of God is encountered by *tzimtzum* – self-renunciation – on the part of mankind. *Just as God makes space for man by an act of self-limitation, so man makes space for God by an act of self-limitation.* The holy is where God is experienced as absolute Presence. Not accidentally but essentially, this can only take place through the total renunciation of human will and initiative. That is not because God does not value human will and initiative. To the contrary: God has empowered mankind to use them to become His “partners in the work of creation”.

However, to be true to God's purposes, there must be times and places at which humanity experiences the reality of the Divine. Those times and places require absolute obedience. The most fundamental mistake – the mistake of Nadav and Avihu – is to take the powers that belong to man's encounter with the world, and apply them to man's encounter with the Divine. Had Nadav and Avihu used their own initiative to fight evil and injustice they would have been heroes. Because they used their own initiative in the arena of the holy, they erred. They asserted their own presence in the absolute Presence of God. That is a contradiction in terms. That is why they died.

We err if we think of God as capricious, jealous, angry: a myth spread by early Christianity in an attempt to define itself as the religion of love, superseding the cruel/harsh/retributive God of the “Old Testament”. When the Torah itself uses such language it “speaks in the language of humanity” (Brachot 31a) – that is to say, in terms people will understand.

In truth, Tanach is a love story through and through – the passionate love of the Creator for His creatures that survives all the disappointments and betrayals of human history. God needs us to encounter Him, not because He needs mankind but because we need Him. If civilization is to be guided by love, justice, and respect for the integrity of creation, there must be moments in which we leave the “I” behind and encounter the fullness of being in all its glory.

That is the function of the holy – the point at which “I am” is silent in the overwhelming presence of “There is”. That is what Nadav and Avihu forgot – that to enter holy space or time requires ontological humility, the total renunciation of human initiative and desire.

The significance of this fact cannot be over-estimated. When we confuse God's will with our will, we turn the holy – the source of life – into something unholy and a source of death. The classic example of this is “holy war,” jihad, crusade – investing imperialism (the desire to rule over other people) with the cloak of sanctity as if conquest and forced conversion were God's will.

The story of Nadav and Avihu reminds us yet again of the warning first spelled out in the days of Cain and Abel. *The first act of worship led to the first murder.* Like nuclear fission, worship generates power, which can be benign but can also be profoundly dangerous.

The episode of Nadav and Avihu is written in three kinds of fire. First there is the fire from Heaven:

Fire came forth from before God and consumed the burnt offering.
Lev. 9:24

This was the fire of favor, consummating the service of the Sanctuary. Then came the “unauthorized fire” offered by the two sons.

Aaron's sons, Nadav and Avihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before God, which He had not instructed them [to offer].
Lev. 10:1

Then there was the counter-fire from Heaven:

Fire came forth from before God, and it consumed them so that they died before God.
Lev. 10:2

The message is simple and intensely serious: Religion is not what the European Enlightenment thought it would become: mute, marginal and mild. It is fire – and like fire, it warms but it also burns. And we are the guardians of the flame.

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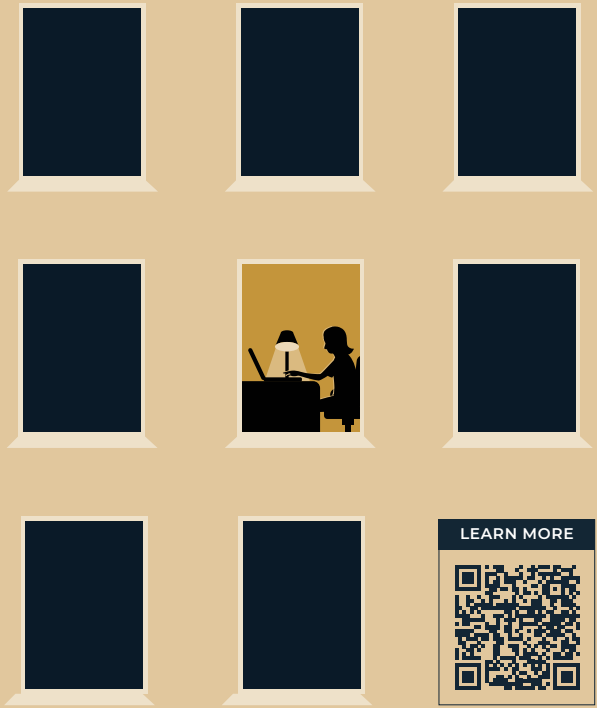


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JOKES

A Couple of Tests

Little Moishie Grossman was saddened by the fact that his Zadie was in the hospital. So he decided to write Zadie a "get well soon" card. Inside the card he wrote:

Dear Zadie,

Mommy tells me that you went to the hospital for some tests. I hope you get straight A's!

Love, Moishie

Deposit with a Whisper

One day a young man went up to the teller window at the bank and whispered, "Please deposit this hundred dollars in my savings account."

The teller handled the transaction and whispered back, "Have a good day."

He started to leave but changed his mind.

"I'm sorry we have to whisper," he said, "but if my car knows I've deposited money, it'll break down again."

With his finger to his lips he tiptoed out.

Short ones

I'd like to start with the chimney jokes - I've got a stack of them. The first one is on the house.

I used to be addicted to swimming but I'm very proud to say I've been dry for six years

I was raised as an only child, which really annoyed my sister

I saw a documentary on how ships are kept together. Riveting!

I'm sure wherever my Dad is: he's looking down on us. He's not dead, just very condescending.

I needed a password eight characters long so I picked Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.

My sister had a baby and they took a while to name her and I was like, 'Hurry up!' because I didn't want my niece to grow up to be one of these people you hear

about on the news where it says, 'The 37-year-old defendant, who hasn't been named.

Hey, if anyone knows how to fix some broken hinges, my door's always open.

I have kleptomania. But when it gets bad, I take something for it.

A cement mixer collided with a prison van on the G/WB. Drivers are asked to be on the lookout for 16 hardened criminals.

Daily Planet Budget Constraints

Clark Kent and Lois Lane were the star reporters for the Daily Planet newspaper.

Due to budget constraints, the Board of the Daily Planet advised Perry White, the Chief Editor, that he had to let one of his star reporters go. He was really overwhelmed about the magnitude of the decision.

"Who should go, Clark Kent or Lois Lane?" He actually did some praying, which he hadn't done for a long time. He asked, "Please, show me a sign."

That afternoon he was doing some shopping at Walmart, and when he went to his car he suddenly saw the answer.

The next day he called Clark and Lois into the office and said, "I'm sorry, Lois, but you have to go."

After Lois collected her things and left, Clark took Perry aside and asked, "Chief, how did you know which one of us should go?"

Perry said, "Well, that turned out to be easier than I thought. While I was parking at Walmart, I looked up and there was the sign: FIRE LANE."



HA HA

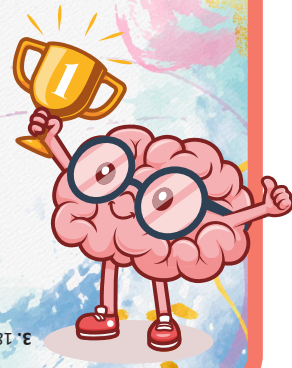
BRAIN TEASERS

People make me, save me, change me, raise me. Who am I?

I know a word. It has six letters, if you remove one letter, you'll be left with 12. What is it?

How many letters are there in the English alphabet?

One breaks yet never falls; the other falls yet never breaks!



Answers: 1. Money 2. Dozen 3. 18: 3 in 'the', 7 in 'English', and 8 in 'alphabet'; 4. Morning and night

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