



פסח

CIRCLE TIME

AT YOUR

Shabbos Table

... FOR A Meaningful and Entertaining SHABBOS WITH YOUR CHILDREN ...

TELL ME A MASHAL >>

A dvar Torah with a story.

GEULAH, THEN AND NOW

וְכַךְ תֹּאכְלוּ אֹתוֹ מִתְּנִיכֵם חֲגָרִים וְנַעֲלֵיכֶם בְּרַגְלֵיכֶם וּמִקְלַכֶּם בְּיַדְכֶם וְאָכַלְתֶּם אֹתוֹ בְּחִפְזוֹן פֶּסַח הוּא לֵה' (שמות יב:יא)

This is how you must eat it: with your belt tightened around your waist, your shoes on your feet, and your walking staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; this is the Pesach offering for Hashem. (Shemos 12:11)

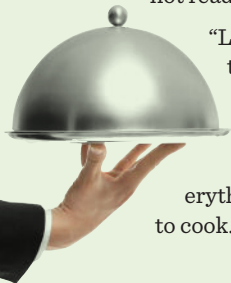
Hashem commanded our ancestors in Egypt to eat the Korban Pesach in the manner described in this pasuk, but these rules do not apply to our celebration of Pesach. On the contrary, we are to eat the Korban Pesach in a relaxed manner, leaning in comfort like kings and queens. Why did the rules change?

Howard Greenstein was away on an extended business trip. Luckily, he was in a community with a kosher hotel. When he checked into the hotel, he was told that breakfast was served every day in the dining room at 8:30 in the morning, lunch every day at 1:00 p.m., and supper at 6:30 p.m. He arranged his daily schedule around the mealtimes, and he found the meals quite tasty.

One day, Howard needed to meet a very important client, but the client told him that he was available only between one and two in the afternoon. At 11:45 a.m., Howard went to the hotel dining room and asked to be served his lunch early. The cook told him, "I can't serve you anything now. The food is not ready."

"Listen, I can't wait until the regular mealtime today," Howard explained. "I have an important appointment so I have to eat lunch early."

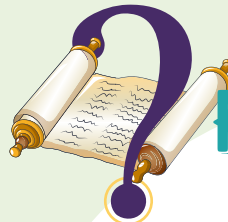
"But I told you—the food is not ready. Everything is on the stove and it needs another hour to cook."



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PARSHAH RIDDLES

Answers to this week's riddles appear on page 3.

- 1 It's 4 x 4 at the Seder. What are they?
- 2 What must always be left but must never be left over?
- 3 What part of this year's Seder will have 5 parts on one night and 3 parts on the other?
- 4 We don't for the first and third times, but we do for the second. What is it?
- 5 We do this mitzvah many times during the year, but this is the only time we do it at night. What is it?



CHOLENT STORY

A story told in parts, designed to get children to come back to the table for the main course!

The tzaddik Rav Tzvi Aryeh of Alik was a student of the Maggid of Mezeritch. He had many devoted followers from all over Ukraine and Belarus. One year, a group of his chassidim traveled to Alik to spend Rosh Hashanah with the rebbe. After an inspiring Yom Tov, the chassidim came over to Rav Tzvi Aryeh to bid him farewell and to receive his blessings for the new year.

The rebbe blessed each of them, but he told one particular chassid, “My blessing for you is that Hashem should find you an excellent position as a *melamed* (a tutor) so that you will have a good *parnassah*.”

The young chassid was shocked to hear these words. After all, he was the son-in-law of the wealthiest man in his town. Besides, he had a fair amount of savings himself. Why would he think of seeking a position as a private *melamed*, earning the most meager salary? Despite his doubts, the chassid said nothing to the rebbe. As a devoted chassid, he believed sincerely that the rebbe’s words were important for him, and he began to worry. *What is going to happen to my father-in-law that would make me consider seeking a position as a melamed?*

The chassid and his friends boarded a wagon that would return them to their hometown. The group was in high spirits and began singing songs of praise to Hashem for their good fortune, but this one chassid remained silent, withdrawn into himself. His friends tried to cheer him up, but to no avail. Toward evening, they stopped at a Jewish inn for the night. They all sat at the table while the innkeeper served them a good supper. They ate and drank, and they began a Torah discussion.

As their debate became more vocal, the worried chassid could not help but be drawn in. He voiced his opinion, and soon he proved to his friends that he was right.

The innkeeper and his wife overheard the debate from the kitchen. The innkeeper said, “These are all fine young men, but that one is definitely the best of them. He speaks clearly and to the point, and he can explain difficult concepts in simple terms. He is the best choice to be a *melamed* for our sons!”

After the meal, the innkeeper asked the chassid if he could speak with him. He offered the young man to remain in his home and teach the holy Torah to his sons, promising to pay him well. The chassid’s heart fell as he saw his rebbe’s “blessing” coming true. At first he refused the offer, but the innkeeper persisted, offering even better terms.

The chassid saw that things were happening exactly as his rebbe had predicted, and he decided to accept his fate and hope for the best. He agreed to stay at the inn and teach Torah to the boys. After meeting the boys, he realized that they had not learned any Torah up until then. He began teaching them *Chumash* with Rashi, the *Shulchan Aruch*, and some *mussar*. Every day he began with a chapter of *Reishis Chochmah*, which he taught in a very inspiring manner.

TO BE CONTINUED...



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MIDRASH

Hashem commanded our ancestors in Egypt to take the blood of the *Korban Pesach* and dab it onto the doorposts and lintels of their homes. Hashem promised that, at midnight, when He would strike all the firstborns in Egypt of every nationality, He would see the blood on the doorposts of the Jewish homes and pass over those homes without striking anyone inside.

Rabi Yishmael asked, “Why was it necessary to have blood on the doorposts? Hashem knows everything, and He certainly knows who is Jewish and who is not without us helping Him by marking our homes. So what did He mean when He said, ‘I will see the blood on the doorposts?’”

Rabi Yishmael answered, “The *pasuk* means that Hashem will see that we have fulfilled His commandment to sacrifice the *Korban Pesach* and to show all our non-Jewish neighbors that we have done so by dabbing the blood around our doors. By doing this, the Jews risked their lives, since it was a sign of extreme disrespect for the sheep and goats, which were worshipped as gods by the Egyptians. The zealous non-Jews should have staged a pogrom, breaking down the doors and massacring the Jews inside. Hashem protected them, however, and put fear in the Egyptians’ hearts so that no one dared attack a Jew. This is what the Torah says, ‘He will not allow the destroyer to enter your homes to harm you.’ In reward for risking their lives to fulfill Hashem’s command, He protected them from harm.”

Rabi Yonasan added, “Hashem said, ‘I will pass over you,’ and not only, ‘I will pass over your homes.’ This means that even if a Jew would be in a non-Jew’s home, Hashem would pass over him and not strike him. And, if a non-Jew stayed in a Jewish home, it wouldn’t help him; Hashem would strike him there.”



PARSHAH RHYME



Review the main points of the parshah with younger children, while challenging your family to complete the rhymes (use the “grammen” tune). Answers on the side!

- 1) At the Seder we each drink four cups of wine.
We use our best dishes—see how they _____.
- 2) During the Seder we eat *karpas*, but just a little,
After that we break the matzah in the _____.
- 3) Let’s start the *drashos*; we’ll go on for hours.
The more the better; the pleasure is _____.
- 4) Dip in saltwater once, and in *charoses* twice.
You won’t find any bread here, not even one _____.
- 5) The Seder is for everyone; if they come, don’t let them go.
The wise, the wicked, the simple, and the one who doesn’t _____.
- 6) Ask the Four Questions, and if you want, ask more.
The more you ask, the better. You’ll see what’s in _____.
- 7) The evil Pharaoh was punished again and again.
Not once, twice, or three times, but all the way to _____.
- 8) Blood, frogs, lice, wild beasts, and locusts.
Hailstones, darkness, and boils to put Pharaoh into _____.
- 9) The magicians admitted that it was Hashem’s “Finger,”
But stubborn Pharaoh insisted that the Jews _____.
- 10) After drinking the third cup, we’re still thirsty for more.
But first invite Eliyahu for Hallel, go open the _____.
- 11) After the Seder there’s no dessert, no fruit or cake.
We sing *Chad Gadya* and *Echad Mi Yode’a* to stay _____.
- 12) The Torah says be happy; seven days to sing and laugh.
First days we say the whole Hallel; on the rest we say only _____.
- 13) We start the counting of the *Omer*, advancing night by night,
Soon we’ll get the Torah, let’s go forward to the _____.

Answers: 1) shine 2) middle 3) ours 4) slice 5) know 6) store 7) ten 8) focus 9) linger 10) door 11) awake 12) half 13) light

RIDDLE ANSWERS:

1. There are 4 cups of wine, 4 expressions of *Geulah*, 4 sons, and 4 questions.
2. We must eat the meat of the *Korban Pesach* with *heseibah*, while leaning on our *left* side. We must eat every bit of it; we may not have any *leftover* meat.
3. On the first night, Kiddush has 3 *brachos*. On the second night, we combine Kiddush with Havdalah, so it has 5 *brachos*.
4. When we do *netilas yadayim* the first time, by *Urchatz*, we don’t say a *brachah*. When we do it the second time, by *Rachtzah*, we do say the *brachah*. When we wash *mayim acharonim*, we don’t say any *brachah* either.
5. The mitzvah of reciting Hallel.

You may be surprised to find something familiar in every haftorah.

HAFTORAH: YOU KNOW NAVI

SUMMARY

Right after Bnei Yisrael crossed the Jordan River into Eretz Yisrael on 10 Nissan, Hashem told Yehoshua to prepare razor-sharp stones and perform a *bris milah* on all the men and boys. While they were traveling in the wilderness, most people did not perform a *bris* because they had to be ready to travel at any time. But now that they were in Eretz Yisrael, they had to fulfill the mitzvah of bringing a *Korban Pesach* on 14 Nissan, and if they did not have a *bris* they could not do that mitzvah. A million or more people had their *bris* on that day!

Beginning the first day of Chol Hamoed Pesach, Bnei Yisrael stopped eating the *mann*. Yehoshua met a *malach* who warned him that Bnei Yisrael must continue their intensive Torah learning even though they were now preparing to wage war to conquer Eretz Yisrael from the Canaanite people. Bnei Yisrael were given the land only in the merit of studying the Torah and observing the mitzvos.

CONNECTION TO PESACH

We read this section today, the first day of Pesach, since it describes the first Pesach that Bnei Yisrael celebrated in Eretz Yisrael. On the second day of Pesach, the haftorah describes the Pesach that Bnei Yisrael celebrated during the time of Yoshiyahu, king of Yehudah. Both these haftoros emphasize how Pesach was a time when Bnei Yisrael were inspired to do *teshuvah* and grow closer to Hashem.

YOU KNOW NAVI

The *malach* told Yehoshua, “*Atah basi*,” which means, “I have come now, at this time.” *Chazal* interpreted this in connection with Torah study, since we are obligated to have set *times* for learning Torah each day. Even if we are involved in very important mitzvos, like conquering Eretz Yisrael or building the Beis Hamikdash, we are still obligated to be *kovei'a ittim*, to set aside times during the day and night to learn Torah.

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“I don’t care,” Howard insisted. “Just serve me the food the way it is. I’ll make do.”

The cook shrugged and went into the kitchen. A few minutes later he came out with a bowl of steaming hot soup and a plate with meat and rice. Howard thanked him and sat down to eat hurriedly.

As soon as he tasted the soup, he grimaced. It was not at all spiced, and the potatoes were half raw. He put down his spoon and pulled over his plate. He struggled with his fork and knife to cut the meat, and when he finally got a bite-sized piece he found that it was too tough to chew. The rice was half-done as well, and it kept getting stuck between his teeth.

Howard looked up pleadingly at the cook, but the cook just shook his head and said, “I warned you,” before heading back into the kitchen.

A few days later, the cook posted a notice on the hotel’s bulletin board. He had a dentist appointment the next day, and he needed to leave early in the afternoon. Because of that, lunch would be served at 12:00, an hour earlier than normal.

Howard winced when he read the notice. He remembered what the food had been like when he ate lunch at 12:00 a few days before. But when he walked into the dining hall the next day, he was met with the delicious aroma to which he had become accustomed since his arrival. And when the food was served, he found that it was just as good, if not better, than it had been on other days.

After enjoying his lunch, Howard went over to the cook and thanked him for an excellent meal. “But I don’t understand,” he added. “How come the meal was so delicious today even though it was served at noon? When I ate lunch at noon a few days ago, it was awful!”

“You silly goose!” the cook replied with a guffaw. “When you demanded to be served early a few days ago, you gave me no advance warning. I had no plans of having food ready at that hour, and so everything I served you was only half-cooked. I knew for several days that I had to serve lunch early today, so I made sure to prepare everything earlier so that it would be done by noon. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I have to rush out to my dentist.”

The Maggid of Dubno used this *mashal* to explain the difference between the *geulah* from Egypt and the *Geulah* that we are hoping to experience soon. Our ancestors in Egypt had descended to the 49th level of *tumah*, and they were slipping fast. Hashem had to redeem them before things got worse spiritually, and so He rushed the *geulah* 190 years earlier than it was originally scheduled. That is why he instructed the people to eat the *korban* with *chipazon*, hurriedly. This signified the hurried *geulah* that they experienced since they were unprepared spiritually.

The future *Geulah*, however, will take place only after Bnei Yisrael do *teshuvah*, as the Rambam teaches. For all of us to do *teshuvah* is a slow process, and so Hashem will have plenty of time to prepare the *Geulah*. When we eat the *Korban Pesach* in the Beis Hamikdash, we are reminding Hashem of the future *Geulah*, as we say in the *brachah* of *Ga'al Yisrael* in the Haggadah. Therefore, we eat it in a relaxed manner, reposing like kings and queens.

NOTRIKON

The *sefer Chaim L'rosh* by Harav Chaim Palachi suggests a way to remember the items that are placed on the Seder *ke'arah*. Dovid Hamelech said (*Tehillim* 26:6), *Erchatz b'nikayon kappai v'asovevah es mizbachacha Hashem*—"I will wash my hands in cleanliness and I will go around Your *mizbe'ach*, Hashem." The word *mizbachacha* (מִזְבַּחְךָ) is a *notrikon* (acronym) containing the initial letters of the words *matzah, maror, zeroa, beitzah, charoses, karpas*—all the items found on the *ke'arah*. We wash our hands before eating the *karpas*, but we have to wash them again before eating the *matzah*, and this is the meaning of "I will wash my hands in cleanliness." That is, even though my hands have been washed, I will wash them again. And why do we do this? Because "I will go around Your *mizbe'ach*," meaning that we spend a long, long time reading the Haggadah while the *mizbe'ach* (*ke'arah*) is on the table.

TREATS FROM TARGUM

So much more than just translation — quick insights into Targum Onkelos!

וִיקְרָא לְמִשְׁפָּה וּלְאַהֲרֹן לַיְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר קוּמוּ צְאוּ מִתּוֹךְ עַמִּי
גַם אַתֶּם גַּם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּלְכוּ עִבְדוּ אֶת ה' כְּדַבְּרֵיכֶם
(שְׁמוֹת יב:לא)

He called for Moshe and Aharon at night and said, "Get up and leave my nation, you and the people of Yisrael. Go and worship Hashem as you said." (*Shemos* 12:31)

Targum Yonasan: The area of the land of Egypt was 400 *parsos* wide, and the land of Goshen where Moshe and the people of Yisrael resided was in its center. The palace of Pharaoh was on the edge of the land of Egypt. When Pharaoh called for Moshe and Aharon during Pesach night, his voice carried all the way to the land of Goshen. Pharaoh begged Moshe in a plaintive voice, saying, "Get up and leave my nation, you and Bnei Yisrael, and go worship Hashem as you said."

Moshe, Aharon, and the people of Yisrael heard Pharaoh crying but they paid no attention to him until Pharaoh, together with all his servants and all the Egyptians, pushed the nation of Yisrael to exit the land. They said, "If we keep them here even one more hour, we will all probably die."

THIS DATE IN JEWISH HISTORY

Today, 15 Nissan, is probably the most important date in the Jewish calendar year. It was the day in 2018 when Avraham Avinu made the *Bris Bein Habesarim* with Hashem, agreeing that his descendants would go into exile in exchange for becoming the permanent owners of Eretz Yisrael. It was the day in 2047 when the three *malachim* came to visit Avraham to heal him after his *bris milah* and to tell Sarah that she would soon bear a son, and it is the birthday in 2048 of Yitzchak Avinu. All this is according to *Seder Olam*.

Rashi in *Parshas Toldos* tells us that this is the date in 2172 when Yitzchak Avinu gave his *brachos* to Yaakov Avinu. The Torah tells us, of course, that this is the date in 2448 when our ancestors left Egypt.

The *Yalkut Shimoni* tells us that this is the date when Hashem killed the entire army of Sancheriv, which was besieging Yerushalayim in the time of King Chizkiyahu.

More recently, this date is the *yahrtzeit* of the Kotzker Rebbe and of Harav Shmuel Wosner, *zichronam l'vrachah*.



HALACHAH

Pesach



1) For the mitzvah of *arba kosos*, the four cups, we should use quality wine.

If you have red wine and white wine available and the red wine is at least as good quality as the white wine, the red wine is preferable. During those times when the non-Jews used to invent blood libels, claiming that the Jews murdered non-Jewish children to use their blood for the wine and matzah, it became customary to use only white wine for the Seder.

2) It was common to use parsley for the mitzvah of *karpas*. It is better to use celery, since it is sweet even when eaten raw, unlike bitter parsley. According to the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, the best choice is a radish. In order to avoid the question of whether to recite a *brachah acharonah* afterward, everyone should eat less than a *kezayis* of the *karpas*.

3) It was common to use horseradish for the mitzvah of *maror*, since it was available even before spring. Since it is so bitter, it is permissible to grind it up shortly before the Seder to make it easier to eat. It must not be ground too long before the Seder, for then it might lose all its flavor by the time we eat it. This year, the first night of Pesach is Shabbos and we cannot grind it at night, so it should be ground on Friday and kept covered and fresh until the Seder.

Actually, the best choice for *maror* is Romaine lettuce. Although it is easy to eat and might

even taste sweet, it is kosher for *maror* since it would become bitter if it would be left in the ground to grow to maturity. It is very important to inspect each leaf carefully to make sure that there are no insects. Nowadays, there is lettuce specially grown to avoid infestation, but it is still necessary to inspect the leaves.

4) The *charoset* is made of a mixture of fruits that represent the nation of Yisrael, notably dates, grapes, walnuts, almonds, figs, apples, and pomegranates. The custom is to add spices that look like straw, such as cinnamon bark or ginger root. In this way, the *charoset* has the appearance of the cement that our ancestors used to form the building bricks when they were enslaved in Egypt. In order to make the mixture soft, we add wine or vinegar.

5) Since we don't have the *Beis Hamikdash* and we don't eat the *Korban Pesach* during the Seder, *Chazal* told us to prepare two cooked foods, one to represent the *Korban Pesach* and another to represent a *Korban Chagigah*. It was common for families to bring both of these *korbanos* on Erev Pesach and eat them at the Seder.

The custom is to grill a foreleg and use it as one of the two cooked foods. A foreleg is called a *ze-ro'á*, and it is representative of the "outstretched arm" with which Hashem took us from Egypt. It also represents the *Korban Pesach*, which had to be barbecued on the fire.

For the second cooked food, the custom is to use an egg, either boiled or roasted. The Aramaic word for egg is *be'iah*, and this word also means "desire." It represents the concept that Hashem

desired to take us out of Egypt in a miraculous fashion, and He was happy to do it.

6) The seats at the table should be arranged in a way that enables everyone to fulfill the mitzvah of *heseibah*, leaning on one's left side when eating or drinking. The table and the *Seder ke'arah* should be arranged on Erev Pesach so that the family can begin the Seder immediately when the men return from shul.

7) The Seder table should be set with one's finest utensils and linens. If someone has expensive decorative pieces, they should be displayed even if they will not be used during the Seder. There are different customs for positioning the items on the *ke'arah*, and each person should follow his family's tradition.

8) Each person should ask someone else to fill his cup with wine, so that he is like someone important who has others serve him. The cup must hold at least a *revi'is* of liquid, and it is best to fill it to the top. To fulfill the mitzvah of the *arba kosos*, each person must drink more than half of his cup's contents each time, and it is preferable to drink the entire cupful. This applies to both men and women. When drinking the fourth and final cup, each person should drink an entire *revi'is* so that he can recite the *brachah acharonah* afterward.

9) It is necessary to lean on the left side when drinking each of the four cups. Even if you normally drink your kiddush wine while standing, for the Seder you must sit down and lean on your left side to drink it. In some communities, the custom is for women not to lean.

THE LAST WORD

A one-liner worth remembering

"CHAZAL TAUGHT THAT THE MASHIACH WILL COME DRESSED AS A BEGGAR AND RIDING ON A DONKEY, SO THAT NO WEALTHY MAN SHOULD THINK THAT HE IS THE MASHIACH!"

- The Chiddushei Harim



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