

Bo 2015

1.

Why do we call Pesach, Pesach whereas the Torah refers to it as Chag Hamatzos?

“Hashem said to Moshe, ‘Stretch your hand over the land of Egypt for the locust swarm, and it will ascend upon the land of Egypt and eat all the grass of the land, everything that the hail had left. Moshe stretched his staff over the land of Egypt...” (10, 12-13)

“ויאמר יקוק אל משה נטה ידך על ארץ מצרים בארבה ויעל על ארץ מצרים ויאכל את כל עשב הארץ את כל אשר השאיר הברד. ויט משה את מטהו על ארץ מצרים וגו.”

Nachalas Tzvi pages 156-157:

Hashem told Moshe to stretch out his hand in order to create the locusts plague. Why then did Moshe stretch out his staff? Similarly, regarding the plague of blood (see 7, 19) the same question exists. Hashem instructed Moshe to tell Aharon “take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt.” The next pasuk says that Aharon only took his staff, but says nothing about his hand! Why aren’t the instructions of Hashem being followed?

The Nachalas Tzvi says that we can answer this based on the following question of Kedushas Levi; why do we call the holiday of Pesach, Pesach unlike the Torah, that calls Pesach Chag Hamatzos?

The Gemara in Berachos (6a) relates that Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak asked Rav Chiya bar Avin ‘what’s written in Hashem’s tefillin?’ (What is the simple interpretation of this Gemara; Hashem doesn’t have a body (as the Rambam states (hilchos yesoday hatorah perik alef os tes)) and therefore obviously can’t wear tefillin? The only reason that the Torah in numerous places refers to Hashem as having a body is so we are able to have some sense of comprehension of Hashem. Our mind only has the ability to fully recognize what we see. The Torah speaks in the vernacular of people. (דברה תורה בלשון בני אדם) All of Hashem’s body parts which are referred to in numerous pesukim are only mere descriptions and ‘nicknames’ of Hashem? The Maharsha answers and explains that Tefillin represent us getting closer to Hashem. The Gemara is essentially asking, what are the pesukim which indicate that Hashem tries to get close to us as well?) Rav Chiya bar Avin answered that the pasuk in Hashem’s tefillin is “who is like my nation Israel, there is no one like them.” This shows that Hashem loves us (Hashem praises himself by praising us.) Our tefillin says "שמע ישראל ה' אלהינו ה' אחד". So we praise Hashem and He praises us.

Based on this Gemara the Kedushas Levi explains that **Hashem refers to Pesach as Chag Hamatzos in the Torah because He is praising us that we listened to his instructions by eating abnormal and unleavened bread, aka matzah. Our hastily departure from Egypt (בהפזון) disallowed a more lavish and scrumptious meal. Furthermore, Rashi (12, 39) quotes the Mechilta which points out that we had complete faith in Hashem by traveling to the desert without proper provisions. We accomplish this every year via eating matzah. Our annual consumption of matzah symbolizes our compliance towards Hashem and His mitzvos. We forego our tastier and preferable foods on Pesach by abstaining from**

consuming any form of bread. Conversely, we refer to Pesach as Pesach because we are praising Hashem for passing over and sparing us during the last plague of the killing of the firstborns!

The Nachalas Tzvi answers the original questions by using this idea of the Kedushas Levi. **Hashem told Moshe to raise his hand because He wanted it to look like Moshe was running the show and praise Moshe. Conversely, Moshe wanted to demonstrate that it was all Hashem and praise Him. Moshe therefore only performed the plagues with the staff, which had the name of Hashem engraved on it.**

With this we can understand a deeper idea behind the korban Pesach. The Nachalas Tzvi (page 391) quotes the Elshach Hakadosh who offers similar idea. For the korban Pesach Hashem commanded that blood should be placed upon the two doorposts and then the lintel. Moshe yet again however, changed this order by telling them to first place the blood on the lintel and then the doorposts. The reason for this discrepancy and ‘disobedience’ is the following. The lintel symbolizes Hashem, due to its higher physical level. Conversely, the two doorposts symbolize Moshe and Aharon. Hashem desired to honor Moshe and Aharon. Moshe and Aharon attempted to accomplish just the opposite. The same applies to the plague of killing the first born. Hashem instructed Moshe to put blood on the doorposts and lintel. **The pasuk states that Moshe told the Jewish elders to put blood upon the lintel and then the doorpost. Why did Moshe switch the original order commanded by Hashem? The answer is that the doorposts represent Moshe and Aharon and the lintel represents Hashem. Therefore, Hashem wanted to praise Moshe and Aharon by allowing them to precede. Likewise Moshe and Aharon wanted to praise Hashem.**

The question arises, why would Hashem want to praise Moshe? One answer is the same reason Hashem praises us. Additionally, Hashem wanted to demonstrate to the Jewish people that Moshe is a capable and fitting leader. Lastly, Hashem wants to give respect to whom respect is due.

We can elaborate this concept even more from a pasuk in Shiur Hashirim (6, 3) “I alone am for my beloved’s and my beloved is mine.” "אני לדודי ודודי לי." Hashem loves us and we mutually love Hashem. We praise Hashem and vice versa as mentioned above. Lastly, with this idea we can explain an inconsistency regarding Suktos. The Chumash delineates the halachas pertaining to the daled minim (four species) prior to the halachas of the Suka as stated in Vayikra (23, 40-42). Conversely, the Mishna and Gemara in Mesechas Suka relate the halachos of the Suka prior to the halachos of the daled minim. Why the discrepancy? **The Suka symbolizes the clouds of glory. (ענני הכבוד) The clouds of glory were a gift and miracle from Hashem to us. They protected us. Therefore, Chazal felt that it is incumbent upon us to recognize the good that Hashem bestowed upon us via teaching the halachos of Suka first. Dissimilarly, the daled minim symbolize our relationship towards Hashem.**

The Kedushas Levi continues and elaborates (12, 27) and states that **it is a mitzvah to speak about the praise of Jews and Hashem receives a tremendous amount of pleasure from this.** With this concept we can understand the Gemara in Menachos (36b) that states that it is prohibited for one to divert his mind while wearing tefillin. The reason for this Halacha is that

we must constantly praise Hashem and the Jews. This is accomplished via wearing the Tefillin. Therefore, when one diverts his mind from the Tefillin, he is simultaneously and problematically not praising Hashem and the Jewish people.

The Gemara in Shabbos (118b) relates Rav Shashes uttering ‘they will give me reward for fulfilling the Mitzvah of Tefillin.’ The question pertaining to the statement of Rav Shashes is obviously glaring; everyone is obligated to wear Tefillin. What is the chidush (insight) and special action that Rav Shashes performed that he is expecting special reward for? Rashi explains that Rav Shashes didn’t walk four amos (six-eight feet) without wearing his tefillin. The Ben Yehoyadah suggests a different answer. He explains that what was uniquely impressive regarding the manner that Rav Shashes performed the mitzvah of Tefillin was his focus. Rav Shashes had an atypical impressive concentration when wearing the Tefillin. Therefore, Rav Shashes surely deserved special reward. (Perhaps an explanation of this abnormal acute focus is due to the fact that Rav Shashes was blind. This enabled him to easily focus and not get distracted by visually seeing other images.) The Beis Levi quotes the Pesgamin Kadishin (os 18) who elaborates even more on the concept we mentioned above. First he begins by asking an additional question on the aforementioned Gemara. The statement of Rav Shashes is very cryptic for an additional reason as well. On Shabbos and Yom Tov Tefillin are not worn. Furthermore, when one immerses himself in the mikvah and takes a shower, he obviously doesn’t wear Tefillin. Therefore, the question arises; how was it even possible for Rav Shashes to never walk four amos without wearing Tefillin? He answers based on the Gemara in Berachos quoted earlier. One of the aspects of our avoda (way of serving Hashem) is to constantly thank and praise Hashem. We are additionally obligated to consistently give the benefit of the doubt and judge people favorably. We must look at the good of our fellow brothers, the children of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov as opposed to looking at the bad. We must be optimistic and view the glass as half full as opposed to half empty. With this we can explain the statement of Rav Shashes ‘they will give me reward for fulfilling the mitzvah of Tefillin.’ Meaning, that the explanation is not that Rav Shashes was constantly wearing Tefillin, but rather that Rav Shashes was always praising Hashem and the Jewish people.

The Kli Yakar (Shemos 35, 2) offers a similar explanation. Originally (Shemos 25, 8), Hashem commanded that the Mishkan should be built. Subsequently (35, 2), Hashem commanded that Shabbos should be kept. However, when Moshe instructed the Jews to build the Mishkan and keep Shabbos, he first instructed them to keep Shabbos and only subsequently did he instruct them to build the Mishkan. Why the difference? **Shabbos is considered respect to Hashem (כבוד המקום). Shabbos was given in order that we can abstain from work and rest. It commemorates that Hashem stopped working and creating the world on the seventh day. Shabbos demonstrates that Hashem created this world anew. Conversely, the Mishkan is considered respect to the Jews (כבוד ישראל). The Mishkan demonstrates that Hashem forgave us for committing the sin of the golden calf. It also testifies that we are the chosen nation. It demonstrates that Hashem descended from above and rested His divine presence upon us. Therefore, Hashem first commanded us to build the Mishkan in order to respect us. Moshe wanted to do the opposite. He commanded us to keep Shabbos first in order to respect Hashem.**

Using the same idea, Reb Tzaddok Hakohen (Pri Tzadik, Shevuos os gimal) enlightens us with a novel deeper idea about Shevuos. The Torah calls the holiday of Shevuos, Shevuos, whereas Chazal calls Shevuos Aseres. Why the difference? Pesach is a time when the Jewish people were freed. The main freedom was freedom from the evil inclination. After the ten plagues the Jews left a very impure state and entered a state of holiness. However, after some time this holiness dwindled. The Zohar (chalek beis page 170) explains that they had a low spiritual status before they crossed the Reed sea. The angels claimed that they didn't deserve the Reed sea to split for them because they were stooped with idolatry like the Egyptians. (הללו עובדי עבודה זרה, והללו עובדי עבודה זרה.) Afterwards however, they regained their holy status. The word Aseres (עצרת) can mean collect. Meaning, they recollected their holiness. Interestingly enough, the Mechilta (parshas Beshalach, hashira gimal) says that a maidservant saw incredible visions during the splitting of the Reed sea that even Yechezkel didn't merit to see. (ראתה שפחה על הים מה שלא ראה.) (יהזקאל) The completion of the collection (Aseres/asera) of holiness from the days of Pesach was Shevuos, when we received the Torah. The Brisa in Avos (perek vav) also says 'for you can have no freer man than one who is engaged in the study of Torah'. (אין לך בן חורים אלא מי שעוסק בתלמוד.) (תורה.) **Chazal calls Shevuos Aseres in order to praise Hashem for collecting the holiness from the days of Pesach and transferring it. Conversely Hashem calls Shevuos, Shevuos in order to praise us. Our counting of the omer symbolizes our desire to purify ourselves. Furthermore, the counting also symbolizes our yearning to receive the Torah.**

2.

Do we eat matzah because we were rushed out of Egypt or because Hashem commanded us to?

"They baked the dough that they had took out of Egypt into unleavened cakes, for they could not be leavened, for they were driven from Egypt for they could not delay, nor had they made provisions for themselves." (12, 39)

"וּיֵאָפוּ אֶת הַבֶּצֶק אֲשֶׁר הוּצֵיאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם עִגַת מִצּוֹת כִּי לֹא חֵמֵץ כִּי גִרְשׁוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם וְלֹא יִכְלוּ לְהִתְמַהֵמָה וְגַם צִדָּה לֹא עָשׂוּ לָהֶם."

Tiferes Shlomo 257:

The Haggadah asks why we eat matzah. The answer it gives is because of this pasuk that states our dough didn't rise when we left Egypt.

However, the pasuk earlier (12, 15) relates that Hashem commanded us to eat matzah for seven days on Pesach. So which one is it? **Do we eat matzah because we were rushed out of Egypt or because Hashem commanded us to?** If the dough would have risen, would we really eat bread on Pesach; Hashem already instructed us not to?

The Avudraham says that since we were commanded to eat matzah earlier, therefore, the primary reason for eating matzah can't be because the dough didn't leaven. Rather, explains the Avudraham, **we were commanded to eat matzah for seven days based on what was going to happen in the future. Hashem knew that the bread wouldn't leaven.**

The Me'am Loez (Shemos section on Haggadah) elaborates and explains that since Hashem knew the Jews were going to have to leave quickly, He commanded them not to eat chametz

from the onset. Hashem needed to inform us earlier because if He wouldn't have then the Jews might not have remembered the next year why exactly they were eating matzah. Since they were so happy about finally leaving Egypt, they might have not even realized that the dough didn't rise; it would have made no difference to them. Hashem therefore told the Jews earlier, in order that they would realize what was happening with the dough.

This was midah k'neged midah (measure for measure). The Egyptians wouldn't allow the Jews to eat leavened bread because they wanted the Jews to return and hurry back to making bricks. The Jews didn't have enough time to make bread. Therefore, Hashem redeemed us in a very fast way, in accordance with how fast they made us eat and return to work.

Chazal says 'when a mitzvah comes to your hand don't let it leaven.' (מצוה הבא לידיך אל תחמיצנה) Do it immediately. Similarly the Gemara in Pesachim (4a) says זריזין מקדימין למצות. **We must act quickly when performing mitzvos. Time is very important; we shouldn't waste any of it. Even a couple of minutes makes a major difference.** Someone who is just a few minutes late, can miss his flight or train. We must be careful not to miss our 'flight and train'. Meaning, we must act cautiously in this world with our limited time. We must be sure to take advantage and learn and perform as many mitzvos as possible. **We need to grab hold of every second to serve Hashem. The Chidushei Ha'Rim explains the custom of giving a chason (groom) a gold watch. We are showing him that his time is more valuable than gold.**

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