

Pesach 2016 part 1

1) The Haggadah quotes Rebbi Gamliel, who says ‘**anyone who did not say pesach, matzah and maror does not fulfill his obligation.**’ (רבן גמליאל היה אומר כל מי שלא אמר שלשה דברים אלו) (בפסח לא יצא ידי חובתו ואלו הן: פסח, מצה, ומרור. There is a machlokes (argument) amongst the Reshonim as to what this means and to what degree. Does Rebbi Gamliel mean that one would actually not fulfill his obligation at all? Also regarding what does he not fulfill his obligation? Does he not fulfill his obligation of the consumption pesach, matzah and maror (which would seemingly be illogical if he ate these foods) or sipor (speaking about) yesiyatz (leaving) mitzrayim (Egypt) or saying the Haggadah in general? Whichever of the possible aforementioned approaches pertaining to the status or lack thereof, of not fulfilling his obligation it is, we see that one needs to be extremely cautious and utter pesach, matzah and maror. Ray Moshe Feinstein zasa”l (Drash Moshe, in between parshas Tzav and Shemini page 81) asks, **what is so crucial about mentioning these three mitzvos to the extent that if they weren’t enunciated one would not fulfill his obligation? Pesach, matzah and maror symbolize something much greater and deeper than mere food, something physical. Pesach, matzah and maror each represent a unique significant aspect of Judaism; let’s take each mitzvah individually and isolate it and analyze it.**

Pesach teaches us that we must strive to know and understand that Hashem performs miracles for us, whether they are obviously apparent or less apparent to us. For example; if we are traveling, either as a pedestrian or by means of a car. Typically we will not think about the fact that an amazing miracle is occurring. We must realize that the reality is that this is a miracle that Hashem orchestrates. Dissimilarly, if a person gets in a car accident and walks out unharmed, he will tend to think that a miracle just occurred. Both cases are miracles; the difference between the cases is the miracle was more evident in the latter case. As the Ramban (end of parshas Bo) explains Hashem performs supernatural miracles in order to show that even seemingly normal nature is in fact a miracle. Our ability to breathe normally and use the restroom properly, are miracles. Pesach literally means Passover. Hashem passed over the Jewish houses and only killed the Egyptians. The Egyptians were killed regardless. Meaning, whether they were with the Jews or not. It is irrelevant if the miracle was felt in one place more than another place. Meaning, when numerous Egyptians died right in front of the Jews and the Jews remained alive, the miracle would be apparent. Conversely, if an Egyptian was in an isolated area and died, such as in the middle of the woods, his death wouldn’t have been as noticeable.

The matzah represents Hashem’s ability to immediately bring salvation and success. In Egypt Hashem brought salvation even before the Jew’s dough leavened and became actual bread. We therefore shouldn’t give up and lose hope even in a pressing or painful situation. Even if our potential odds appear bleak, we must not lose hope. Hashem can instantaneously bring success. The deeper message of maror is the complete opposite of the message of matzah. Maror represents Hashem’s ability to instantaneously bring bad. We therefore shouldn’t get too comfortable in the foreign country where we dwell. Something disastrous could immediately occur, embittering and threatening our lives faster than the blink of an eye. We must realize that history tends to repeat itself. In Europe the holocaust happened speedily. We must not be overly confident. Similarly, in Egypt everything was going well and then suddenly matters began to get bitter. We must daven intently that everything continues peacefully.

Due to the aforementioned, we can easily understand why mentioning these three mitzvos is so significant. **It is so crucial to mention pesach, matzah and maror because they each**

represent fundamental principles in the Jewish faith. In summary; Pesach represents that Hashem runs the show and that He performs miracles for us, whether they are evident or not. Matzah represents that Hashem doesn't need preparation and a recognizable time, rather even suddenly and hastily Hashem is able to bring salvation and success. Maror represents Hashem's ability to instantaneously bring bad.

2) Sichos Rabbi Shimshon Pinkes pages 39-40

Why are we so stringent and careful to thoroughly and meticulously clean our property and items from any trace of chametz? There are numerous stringencies pertaining to chametz which are halachically nonexistent in any other realm of halacha. For example, where else do we find a prohibition of seeing or finding something? **בל יראה ובל ימצא** (you cannot see or find) is a unique stringency which is nonexistent and inapplicable in any other area of halacha as stated by Tosfos (beginning of Pesachim). Why is this so and what is the significance behind this atypical halacha? The Rosh (Pesachim 3, 2) states that the Jews are holy and have the custom to clean their houses before Pesach. They even clean areas that are not Halachically obligated to be cleaned. Similarly, the Shulchan Aruch (siman 442) writes, some people have the custom to clean the walls of their house and chairs in their house that chametz touched. The Mishna Berurah (sif katan 28) discusses the importance of not making fun of any custom regarding cleaning for Pesach. Even if the custom seems foolish and is an unnecessary and additional stringency. There is probably a basis for this custom. Rabbi Pinkes explains that the time of Pesach aka when the Jews left Egypt, the Jewish people became a nation. We became a newborn nation, Klal Yisroel. We therefore need to be more careful with Pesach cleaning. What is the connection between us becoming a new nation and cleaning carefully? The physical cleaning that we perform symbolizes the spiritual cleaning that we need to perform as well. Let's elaborate on this concept based on a Gemara. The Gemara (Shabbos 129b) relates that it is permissible to violate Shabbos in order to save a child's life on Shabbos. There are certain acts that we leniently allow for the sake of a child, even though we do not permit these acts for an adult. The logic behind this is; an adult is already healthy. Conversely, children are much more delicate and potentially susceptible to sickness. If we aren't careful with a child's life, he or she could chas v'shalom die. The same applies when Pesach approaches. We are dealing with the creation of a people and a nation. The Gemara in Yevamos (61a) states 'you are called אדם (person/people) and the other nations are not called אדם.' אתם קרויין אדם ואין העובדי'. כוכבים קרויין אדם'. What is the simple explanation of this seemingly racist Gemara? Rabbi Meir Shapiro explains that we are now referred to as one entity. We are compared to one person, as the pasuk states that the Jews camped by the mountain. Why, when the pasuk informs us that the Jews encamped by the mountain, does the pasuk use singular tense (after all, there were approximately 3,000,000 people)? Rashi quotes the Mechilta that explains the singular tense alludes to the Jews being 'like one man with one heart.' (איש אהד בלב אהד) This is the explanation of the aforementioned Gemara in Yevamos. When the Gemara said the Jews are called אדם, the explanation is that we are considered as one. Meaning, when one Jew is in pain then all of the Jews are in pain. Conversely, as we know, if a Chinese gentile is in pain usually a random gentile in Timbuktu doesn't care. Rabbi Pinkes elaborates and explains that the creation of the Jewish nation that started when we left Egypt required all of the conditions of a regular childbirth. Meaning, just like must be very careful with a child that nothing detrimental happens, so too, regarding the birth of the Jewish nation, we must be very careful and delicate. This is the

explanation as to why specifically regarding chametz there is a unique prohibition of seeing and/or finding. What is chametz? Chametz is שאור שבעיסה (yeast in the dough) as stated in Berachos (17a). **Rashi (ibid) explains and clarifies that chametz is the yeitzer hara (evil inclination). What is the simple explanation of this? The correlation between chametz and the yeitzer hara is the following; when the bread leavens it becomes puffy and fatty. Chametz symbolizes gashmiyos (physicality's), lusts, and pleasures of this world (תענוגי עולם הזה). Conversely, matzah is simple, slim and flat. This is why when we became a new nation it was so vital that we removed any trace of gashmiyos (physicality's), lusts, and pleasures of this world (תענוגי עולם הזה). We had to get rid of chametz aka the physical in order that we could accept and focus on the spiritual. We needed to get rid of the potentially fatal problems that could lead to the death of this child, aka the new Jewish nation and potential spiritual death.** Just like it is permissible to physically 'violate' Shabbos in order to save a babied life; so too regarding Pesach, we need to get rid of potential spiritual problems. The beginning of the spiritual existence of the Jewish nation obligates us to distance ourselves more from the yeitzer hara than we typically would. We must mamesh (actually) burn and get rid of the chametz. The Zohar says that bread on Pesach (aka the Matzah) is called the bread of emunah (belief/דמהמנותא/נהמא). The reason for this is; the eating that we do on Pesach injects proper belief and faith into our hearts. This is why the Haggadah asks 'why do we consume this Matzah?' What is the explanation of this question? This question is really asking, what is the spiritual purpose of eating this matzah. To which that Haggadah answers, it is because the Jews didn't let their dough leaven upon leaving Egypt. The explanation to this answer is the following; the unleavened bread that we annually consume completely commemorates the unleavened dough the Jews ate when leaving Egypt. Pesach is essentially a full week of courses on emunah, Torah wisdom and clarity pertaining to the existence and strength of Hashem and His focus on us. Pesach is a week of distancing ourselves from the yeast in the dough, aka the yeitzer hara. After Pesach the consumption of chametz is permissible because once the child is healthy, he is no longer included in the category of a delicate child. When a sick person is healthy he can eat everything and is no longer limited to rationed food and specific foods such as water and toast. He can begin to expand to other diverse types of food. Pesach is a time that the soldiers reunite. The soldiers of a person body come together and distance the yeitzer hara. **After we reached a spiritual and lofty level, we no longer need to be limited. The chametz will not endanger us anymore.**