

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

The Awesome
Power of GrowthRABBI ADI ROLAND
GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

THIS WEEK'S READING OF PARSHAS HACHODESH, the last of the four *parshiyos*, seems a bit out of place with the rest of the three. *Chazal* tell us to specifically read about and emphasize the *mitzvah* of sanctifying the month in a public setting. Why this *mitzvah* more than any other one? One might be tempted to say that we read it because it mainly deals with the *korban pesach*, which is most relevant as Pesach is just around the corner, and sanctifying the month only the beginning of the reading. However, if this is true, does it not make more sense to read it closer to Pesach, perhaps the Shabbos right before Pesach, similar to *Parshas Zachor*, which is read on the Shabbos before Puriim? Furthermore, the Gemara in *Megillah* (30b) states that we read it specifically the Shabbos before Rosh Chodesh Nissan, implying that it has to do more with Rosh Chodesh than with Pesach!

Perhaps we may suggest that the reason *Chazal* wanted this *mitzvah* read at this time of year in a public setting is as follows: If we take a look at the context of this *parasha*, we find that *Bnei Yisroel* were on the cusp of leaving Egypt, the land which had imprisoned them for the past 210 years. Even though these years were fraught with difficulties and oppression, they served a purpose as well. Moshe Rab-

beinu refers to Egypt as the *kur habarzel*, the "iron pot" (*Devarim* 4:20). Rashi there says a *kur* is referencing a pot used to refine metals. *Bnei Yisroel* went through a refining process throughout their tenure in Egypt. As they were on the threshold of leaving, they were on a level which was most fertile for growth; similar to an unadulterated piece of metal just waiting to be used to create an exquisite piece of jewelry. In this state and on Rosh Chodesh Nissan, the *mitzvah* of sanctifying the month was the first one given to *Bnei Yisroel* as a whole, the first step in what would be the birth of *Bnei Yisroel* as its own nation in general, and specifically, becoming the chosen nation of Hashem. And similar to a newborn baby where growth is constantly happening, *Bnei Yisroel* would continue to grow spiritually until they stood at the foot of Mount Sinai, cementing their relationship with Hashem with their acceptance of His Torah.

Chazal knew about this special power of growth that this time of year contains and wanted to ensure that we would all recognize it and publicly read about it. They did not want to let such an awesome opportunity of growth just slip through our fingers without even realizing it is there. And as we continue our preparations for the *Yom Tov* ahead, both physically and spiritually, we will do exactly that, harnessing the special power with which Hashem has imbued these special days!

Wishing everyone a *kasher* and *freilichin* *Yom Tov*! 🕍

A RIDDLE FOR YOU

Which personal *korban* (sacrifice) was brought even on Shabbos? 🕍

See reverse side for the answer

A TIMELY HALACHA

RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

Preparing For the Seder When Pesach Falls Out On Shabbos

As a general rule, the Seder table should be prepared before *Yom Tov* so that one is able to begin the Seder immediately upon returning home from *shul* after nightfall (*OC* 471:1). The rationale behind the concern of starting the Seder promptly is so the children should be awake to ask the *Mah Nishtana* and hear the father's response, thereby properly fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *Sipur Yetzias Mitzrayim* (telling the story of leaving Egypt) (*MB* 3).

When Pesach falls out on Shabbos, some of the preparations **MUST** be made before Shabbos, so as not to violate any of the prohibitions of Shabbos. Assuming that one is familiar with the regular Seder preparations, let us explore what changes this year.

-The shankbone (*zeroah*) and egg must be roasted before Shabbos. If one forgot to roast them, one should use another cooked or roasted meat instead (*MB* 473:27).

-On Shabbos, grinding or grating is prohibited. Therefore, those who use horseradish for *maror* should make sure that it is grated before Shabbos and covered with a vessel to retain its sharpness. One may, however, cut the horseradish into larger pieces at all times (*MB* 36).

-Those who use lettuce for *maror* are required to ascertain before the *chag* that they are not infested with insects (*borer*/sorting). One who did not inspect the leaves before Shabbos should consult a

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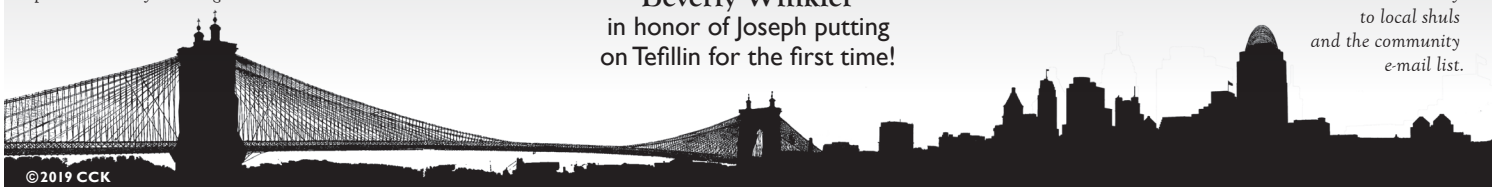
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A TIMELY HALACHA

CONTINUED

rabbi for guidance. Alternatively, one can use the stalks instead of the leaves. This is done by rinsing them under a strong stream of water and rubbing the stalks during the rinsing

-Regarding salt water, it is best if it is prepared before Shabbos. In a situation where that was not done, one can make a small amount of salt water, but only the minimum sufficient for the Seder (MB 60).

-Charoses, which usually consists of apples, nuts, cinnamon, and ginger, is typically ground up (*tochen/grinding*) and then wine is added (*lush/kneading*). Therefore, all efforts should be made to prepare the *charoses* before Shabbos. If one forgot, one can cut up the fruit into large pieces and then place them into a vessel which already contains the wine or vinegar, as opposed to adding the liquids afterwards (MB 371:67). The subsequent mixing should not be done with a spoon or other utensil; rather, one should mix the *charoses* by using one's finger or by shaking the vessel. Also, one should try to make the *charoses* less thick (more "liquidy"/*belila racha*) than usual (R' S Kamenetsky p. 218). According R' Moshe Heinemann, *charoses* should have the texture of applesauce.

May we all merit to fulfill the *mitzvos* of *Leil Seder* (Passover night) properly. 🕍

RIDDLE ANSWER

The korban besach when erev besach fell
out no Shabbos. 🕍

GLIMPSES OF THE KOLLEL

KID'S CLUB

The Kollel's "Kids' club" provides weekly after school learning for Rockwern Academy students. Torah study led by Rabbi Chaim Heinemann is accompanied by snacks in the vibrant environment of the Kollel.



IT HAD TO BE HASHEM

MARC DID NOT GROW UP IN A RELIGIOUS FAMILY, although he knew that he had relatives that were religious. When he grew older and he returned to a life of religious observance, he wanted to meet the relatives he had heard that he had, but had never met. One of his relatives, he had heard was actually a *Chassidic rebbe*. Marc asked his rabbi if he could set up a meeting with the *rebbe*. A date was set up for the intermediate days of Pesach. When the *rebbe* met Marc, they had a nice conversation as they figured out how they were related. Finally, the *rebbe* said, "there was one *bris* I was invited to attend, I remember the name was Moshe

Dovid, do you know who that is?" "That was me!" Marc responded. "That's amazing!" the *rebbe* exclaimed. "I remember that we had totally lost contact with your family, when out of the blue your father called me and invited me to attend and act as the *sandek* (the person who holds the baby during the *bris* ceremony) at the *bris*. I did not feel like going at first, but my wife encouraged me to attend, and said "who knows, maybe if you pray for the child during the *bris* maybe he will be inspired to return to his roots someday!" I followed my wife's advice, and now I see my prayers were answered!" 🕍

BEYOND ELLIS ISLAND

THE TRAILBLAZERS, TRIALS, & TRIUMPHS OF AMERICAN JEWRY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

The Rabbi of the Jewish community of Holyoke, MA, was greatly revered by his peers for his Torah scholarship. Known as "The Holyoker," Rabbi Yehuda Leib Forer was one of the last students of the famed Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik in the Yeshiva of Volozhin in the late 1800s. His study partner in Volozhin was the Meitscheter Genius, Rabbi Shlomo Polachek, who would later teach in Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) for six years. After his move to America in the late 1920s, many leading scholars, including Rabbi Moshe Soloveitchik (also of RIETS) would consult Rabbi Forer before rendering their *halachic* decisions. When Rabbi Mordechai Gifter, later the head of the Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland and a leading Torah figure, was a rabbi in Waterbury, CT, he would take the train to Holyoke to meet Rabbi Forer in person and discuss Torah topics with him. The correspondence between the two was later published as its own *sefer*. Several *yeshivos* in New York would send their students to him for Rabbinical ordination, among which was Yeshivas Rabbeinu Chaim Berlin, and one of the students who was ordained by the Holyoker was Rabbi Yaakov Weinberg, later head of Yeshivas Ner Yisroel of Baltimore. 🕍

SOURCES: Shoen, Rabbi Avraham Ze'ev. "Illustrious Rav Yehuda Leib Forer." Retrieved from <http://www.pruzh.org/> Birnbaum, Rabbi Avraham. Interview with Rabbi Yaakov Reisman. *Yated Neeman*. 22 Dec 2010. Retrieved from www.yated.com

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