

A PARASHA THOUGHT

Shabbos Hagadol –
Shabbos of Purity

The Shabbos before Pesach is known as *Shabbos Hagadol*. The name *Shabbos Hagadol* comes from the great miracle that took place the Shabbos before *Yetzias Mitzrayim* (going out from Egypt). On that Shabbos every Jewish family took a lamb, which the Egyptians viewed as a god, into their homes to prepare for the upcoming *Korban Pesach*. Although the Egyptians were furious, they were powerless to stop the Jews (*Orach Chaim* 430:1). Interestingly, unlike any other time of the year, we celebrate this miracle not on the date it happened, which is the tenth of Nissan, but rather on the Shabbos before Pesach. Why?

In *parshas Metzora*, the Torah deals with the purification of a person struck with *tzaras*. The Ibn Ezra writes that the purification of a *metzora* is similar to the first ever Pesach in *Mitzrayim*. What is the specific connection between the *metzora* and the first ever *Korban Pesach*? Rav Gedaliah Schor (v 3 p 44) brings from the *Zohar* that the word *oneg* (pleasure) has the same letters as *nega* (*tzaras* affliction). The *Zohar* continues that one who gives *oneg* to Shabbos will be saved from the affliction of a *nega*. Rav Schor explains that someone who has *tzaras* is not only closed off from the rest of the community in a physical sense, but spiritually as well his soul has been covered by an impurity that needs the *Korbanos* to spiritually get his soul back on track.

So too, the Jewish people in *Mitzrayim* were covered with impurity, and on Shabbos the tenth of Nissan, the *Bnei*



RABBI
YAAKOV
MARCHUK

Yisroel began the purification process of leaving the impurity of Egypt to become Hashem's nation. The first step of that process was to take the *avodah zarah* (idol worship) of Egypt (which they had also served) and separate it as a *korban* in front of their angry neighbors.

The fact that our forefathers did this on a Shabbos is by no means coincidental. Only through the purifying power of Shabbos could they muster up the courage to begin anew to heal their spiritual affliction.

As we know, Jewish holidays are not merely commemorations of past events. Rather, the spiritual energy of those past events returns each year at that time. For this reason, every year as we prepare for Pesach and our own exodus from Egypt, the Shabbos before Pesach serves as the first step in preparing us for the purification and cleansing of our souls during Pesach, as it did in Egypt for our ancestors. Therefore, *Chazal* (the sages) felt that Shabbos prior to Pesach was the most fitting day to "re-live" this miracle, as opposed to the tenth of Nissan. Based on this idea, we can explain why the custom of many rabbonim is to speak at the *Shabbos Hagadol drasha* not only *halachos* of Pesach, but also words of *mussar* and inspiration, as Pesach is a time of returning to Hashem. 🕊



The Kollel will be on
Pesach break from
April 8th until April 26th

THE RABBI WAS ASKED
ON THE PARASHA

THIS WEEK WITH
RABBI DOVID SPETNER

Q. When a recovered *metzora* brings his *korban* in the *Beis Hamikdosh*, the Torah writes (14:11) that the Kohein has the *metzora* stand "lifnei Hashem" which normally means within the *azara/courtyard* of the *Beis Hamikdosh*. However, the *metzora* is still *tamei* (impure) so how can he enter the *azara*? A similar question can be asked regarding the blood of the *korban* that is placed on the ear, thumb, and big toe of the *metzora*. The blood cannot leave the *azara* without becoming disqualified and the *metzora* cannot enter the *azara*. What is the solution?

A. Rashi explains that the *metzora* would stand within the gateway to the *azara* named *Shaar Nikanor*. This gate was not sanctified as part of the *azara* yet it still qualified as "lifnei Hashem." The blood, however, could not be taken out of the *azara* itself. The Gemara (*Yoma* 31a & *Zevachim* 32b) tells us that the *metzora* sticks his ear, thumb, and big toe into the *azara* to receive the placement of blood. The Gemara entertains the possibility that partial entry would not be a violation of entering the *azara* while *tamei*.

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THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

CONTINUED

However, the Gemara seems to reject this (see Rambam & Raavad Bais Mikdash 3:18) and we must conclude that the Torah permitted the *metzora* to partially enter in order to perform this *mitzvah*. 🕊️

Something always bugged you about the upcoming parasha (or last week's)? Ask! Submit a question on the parasha by Monday at noon by emailing parasha@cincykollel.org. Questions will be selected to address at the discretion of the Rabbi who is answering that week. Questions may be edited for brevity/clarity.

A SHINING EXAMPLE

RABBI EPHRAIM SKOLNIK

Dov Ber Koninsburg lived in a small village in Poland in the early 1930s. Making a living was challenging, so Dov Ber decided that he was going to do what many others had already done in his town and the surrounding towns. He was going to emigrate to America where the streets were paved with gold and he could make money to bring back to his family. As he was getting ready to leave his hometown, the rabbi told him, "Dov Ber, whatever happens in America always remember whatever G-d does is for the best." Dov Ber got to America and found a job as a carpenter and quickly realized that if you wanted to make money you needed to work hard. He partnered with a nice American named Joseph who spoke English and ran the finances. Over the next few months Dov Ber and Joseph

made some money and it was almost time for Dov Ber to return to Europe to his family. Just a few weeks before he was supposed to leave, he got a telegram saying that his father passed away. Having no choice, Dov Ber sat *shiva* in America with just a few friends and no family. While he was sitting *shiva*, Joseph came in with some papers for him to sign and said, "I know that it's not such a great time but you have always trusted me. It's urgent that you sign these papers immediately." Dov Ber would have normally shown them to someone who spoke English, but because of the urgency of the matter he had no time and he signed. After Dov Ber got up from *shiva* he went to the bank to withdraw his earnings so he could return home to Poland. But to his utter shock, the account was empty. Apparently, Joseph had him sign over his share of the business and then ran off with the money. Dov Ber was broken and penniless in foreign country and he recalled the rabbi's words, but couldn't figure out how any of this could be good. The bank manager, hearing the story, couldn't help but feel pity for Dov Ber and decided to help him. He said, "the only way you can start over is to become a U.S. citizen. Then you can open your own carpentry business with your old costumers and won't need any partners." Having no choice, Dov Ber remained in America and over the next year, with the help of the bank manager, learned English, became a U.S. citizen, and opened his own business. Finally, it came time and he went home to his family. By now the clouds of war loomed over Poland. After the Nazis invaded Poland, large crowds gathered at the U.S. consulate trying to save themselves and their families. But the U.S. consulate was not accepting any requests of citizenship; the doors to safety were closed. Realizing his good fortune, Dov Ber pushed

TEFILLA TIDBITS

RABBI YAAKOV MARCHUK

We say in Yom Tov davening, "You have chosen us from all the nations; You love us and found favor in us." Hashem chose the Jewish people not because they were worthy; to the contrary, the Jewish people worshiped idols in Egypt just like the Egyptians. But in spite of that, Hashem took us out of Egypt and chose us as His nation. The *Nesivos Shalom* (*Pesach*, page 252) explains that Hashem could have first given us *mitzvos* to earn our way out of Egypt, but instead took us out meritless. Hashem showed us that His love for us is not dependent on our performance of *mitzvos*, and even when we slip and fall, Hashem's love for us does not waiver. 🕊️

his way to the front and showed the officers his U.S. passport. Immediately they took in him and his family and gave them safe passage to America. Dov Ber thought back to the rabbi's words and realized what had seemed like his darkest hour had been Hashem's way of sparing him and his family. 🕊️



RABBI ABA MARI'S BATTLE AGAINST THE SPANISH-PROVENCAL ENLIGHTENMENT (PART III)

RABBI NOSSON WIGGINS

Although the majority of rabbis, including Rashba and Rosh, backed Rabbi Aba bar Mari, the latter felt that due to the intensity of the controversy it would be impossible to initiate the ban in Montpellier. In addition, Rabbi Aba felt that the age of thirty was too much to demand of the generation and therefore requested that Rashba introduce the ban in Barcelona and proclaim the prohibition only until the age of twenty-five. Rashba agreed to the new guidelines of the ban, but because he fell ill shortly after, the ban was put on hold. Several months later, in the summer of 1305 (*Parshas Devarim*), Rashba regained his strength and, together with the thirty-eight other rabbinic leaders of Spain and Provence, signed a 50-year ban against the study of philosophy. To avoid reigniting the flames of controversy which had since been extinguished regarding the philosophical works of Rambam, the ban excluded any works on philosophy written by the *Chachmei Yisrael*. The text of the ban has been preserved and is printed in the *Teshuvos Ha-Rashba* (vol. I #415 in the Machon Yerushalayim edition). Rashba sent his student, Rabbi Shimshon ben Meir, to distribute letters to all the communities throughout the land requesting their compliance.

To Rashba's great dismay, a counter ban was produced in Montpellier which placed a *cherem* on anybody who restrained himself from the study of philosophy due to Rashba's ban. In response, Rashba gathered six of the original rabbis and reissued the ban stating clearly the reasons for the ban and the reasons why the counter-ban from Montpellier was invalid. This time Rashba managed to garner enough support and the *cherem* was finally accepted.

After Pesach the Jewish history column will introduce an intriguing new topic. Stay tuned! 🕊️

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