

EXPANDED
PESACH
EDITION

Matzah and Mon



RABBI
DOVID
SPETNER

Jews are known for a tendency for having stomach issues, which makes the *mitzvah* of matzah particularly challenging for many people. Let's examine the *mitzvah* and we may discover why it is difficult to process on multiple levels.

As we reach the end of *Maggid*, we quote Rabbah Gamliel who tells us, among other things, that we must understand and articulate the reason for eating matzah.

מצה זו שאנו אוכלים, על שום מה? על שום שלא הספיק בצקם של אבותינו להחמיר עד שנגלה עליהם מלך מלכי המלכים, הקדוש ברוך הוא, ואנאלם

This matzah that we are eating, for the sake of what [is it]? For the sake [to commemorate] that our ancestors' dough was not yet able to rise, before the King of the kings of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed [Himself] to them and redeemed them.

Why does the *Baal Hahaggadah* mention Hashem's revelation as part of the institution of matzah? Why isn't it sufficient to remember that we were rushed out?

In order to better understand matzah, let's investigate the nature of *mon*, the food that replaced that first matzah.

In order to do that, let's see what the Ramban writes in *Shaar Hagemul*:

והנה ראינו כי זכי הנפש קיום גופם בדברים הדקים והזכים מהם בדקים מן הדקים כי אנשי המון נתקיימו במן הנבלע באברים שהוא מתולדות האור העליון המתגשם ברצון הבורא יתברך וזכו בדבר משנה שנתעלית נפשם במה שהשיגו בנפלאות כמו שאמרו (מכילתא בשלח) "ראתה שפחה על הים מה שלא ראה יחזקאל הנביא" ומשה שנתעלית נפשו ונתייחדה יותר מהם בידיעת בוראו לא הוצרך לדבר ההוא שנתגשם ונתקיים גופו בזיו השכינה ובהשגת העליונים

The Ramban explains that all creatures, whether physical or spiritual, need nourishment. However, the more spiritually refined the creature is, the more it can be sustained by spiritual nourishment. The

angels are nourished directly by Hashem's *Shechina*. *Mon*, explains Ramban, is really *Shechina* made into physical food. To be sustained by such food, one's body must be specially refined. Ramban explains that this purification happened to the entire Jewish people by the Revelation that occurred during the Splitting of the Sea. Shortly afterwards, the *mon* arrived and they were able to be sustained by it. (This, writes Ramban, is how Moshe *Rabbeinu* managed without eating while on *Har Sinai*. His body was purified by the direct revelation he experienced and was able to be nourished directly from the *Shechina* like the angels.)

Now that we understand the nature of *mon* we can appreciate an aspect of the original matzah based on the *Gemara Kiddushin*, 38a:

תנא אידך ובני ישראל אכלו את המון ארבעים שנה וכן ארבעים שנה אכלו והלא ארבעים שנה חסר שלשים יום אכלו אלא לומר לך עונות שהוציאו ממצרים טעמו בהם טעם מן

The *Gemara* is pointing out that the Torah says that the Jews ate *mon* for 40 years when, in reality, they only ate *mon* after the first 30 days in the *Midbar* when their matzah ran out. The *gemara* explains that the matzah they took out of Egypt had the taste of *mon*.

We read in the *Haggadah*:

ויוצאנו ה' ממצרים. לא עלידי מלאך, ולא עלידי שרף, ולא עלידי שליח, אלא הקדוש ברוך הוא בכבודו ובעצמו.

"And I will pass through the Land



PESACH Q & A'S

WITH

RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

Based on the *Pesachim* of Rav Moshe Heinemann and Rav Shmuel Kammetzky Shlita

Q: Must one search *seforim* for *chometz*?

A: If it is a *sefer* that will be used at the table during a meal over Pesach, then you must check it for *chometz* out of concern that some crumbs might fall out into the food on Pesach and eating *chometz* is forbidden even במשחו and בסל. However, if it will not be used at a meal, the *דבר* ובל ימצא does not apply, because there is no כוונה of crumbs in the *sefer* (RMH). If someone is careful all year not to bring the *seforim* to the table where they are eating, or are careful to clean it off afterwards, they don't need to be inspected regardless (RSK). They say that the Chazon Ish went through his *Chumash* page by page to ensure that there was no *chometz* inside. He put away all his other *seforim* in his house except one *sefer* from a Rav in a neighboring town to Bnei Brak. The *Olam* was blown away that the Chazon Ish was so מחשיב this *sefer* and asked him about it. The Chazon Ish responded, "The special quality about this *sefer* is that I didn't use it the whole year, so I know there is no *chometz* in it!"

Q: If one does not have a *minhag*, how long before Pesach should one abstain from matzah?

A: The *Ramo* (471:2) rules that it is forbidden to eat matzah on Erev Pesach starting from daybreak. [This applies to matzah that one would be able to fulfill the *mitzvah* of מצה אכילת with. Soup with matzah balls (*kneidlach*) are fine since

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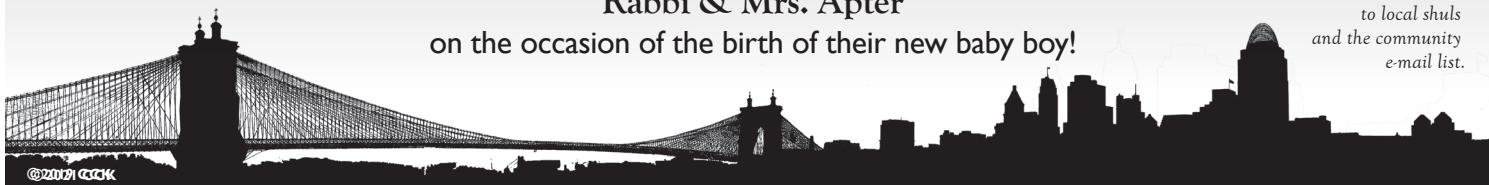
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they are cooked and not baked.] Many have the *minhag* to stop eating matzah from Rosh Chodesh, while others refrain from consuming matzah already from Purim (see MB OC 471:12). One who does not know his family custom should follow the מנהג רוב העולם, which is from Rosh Chodesh. Nonetheless, if one knows that his family comes from a certain place in Europe, that would be the *minhag* to follow (RMH).

Q: Must one sell a stock that he owns in a company that produces or makes profit from *chometz*? Does it make a difference if the majority of owners are Jewish?

A: It really should make no difference whether anybody else in the company is Jewish or not since if you own a *chelek* of the *chometz*, it's potentially problematic. However, even though you may have \$120 in General Motors and are essentially an owner, in so much as nobody would even notice you walking into a meeting at GM, let alone stand up for you, since there are thousands of shares in the company, it is merely an investment, not an ownership. Therefore, if you and they don't consider yourself an owner, then you are not an owner! However, there can be *halachic* ramifications whether the company is Jewish or not regarding אסור בהנאה which is חמץ שעבר עליו הפסח and a שאלה should be asked to the Rav if the company made money over Pesach. If the shares lose value over Yom Tov, you have no problem (RMH in the name of R' Moshe Feinstein, zt"l)!

Q: Must one check his matzah before Pesach for כפולות?

A: A מצה כפולה is a doubled over matzah in which there is a concern that the dough inside did not bake properly. If the matzah comes with a *hechsher*, then you have no reason to check them since each one was already inspected. You may find a חשש כפולה occasionally, but even then you only need to remove and discard the folded area together with a one inch margin of regular matzah and the rest of the matzah is completely כשר (Ramo 461:5 & MB 32). The real כפולות would not have made it into your box of matzos (RMH).

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Matzah and Mon

CONTINUED

of Egypt" – I and not an angel. "And I will smite every firstborn" – I and not a seraph. "And with all the gods of Egypt, I will make judgments" – I and not a messenger. "I am the Lord" – I am He and there is no other.

And a bit further on:

ובמזרח גדל זו גלוי שכינה

"And with great awe" – this [refers to the revelation of] the Divine Presence.

I would like to suggest that this initial revelation that killed the first born and began the redemption had another impact. It also purified the bodies of the Jewish People to receive the *mon* aspect that was latent in their special matzah. This explains why Hashem's revelation was an integral part of the matzah of Egypt that we are called upon to recall.

Our matzah as well, may allude to this more lofty form of nourishment.


Rashi in the Gemara Brachos, 17a, writes:

שאר שבעים – יצר הרע שבלבנו המחמיצו

He is explaining that a person's evil inclination is described by the metaphor "the yeast in the dough."

What is the meaning of this metaphor?

It may be because, chemically, yeast involves chemical breakdown – a kind of rotting. This breakdown is what makes bread easier to digest than matzah and, in a way, makes it a more base and physical food. The Ramban and others explain that prior to the sin of Adam Harishon we were designed to live forever in our bodies. Sin introduced the need to die, decompose, and eventually be rebuilt with *techiyas hameisim* – the resurrection of the dead. Rav Chaim Vital explained (quoted in *Ruach Chaim* - Avos 3:3) that prior to Adam's sin, food was pure nutrition – just like *mon*. Only after the sin did other elements get mixed into food, thus requiring peeling, cooking, and our bodies to expel the negative aspects. After the sin, just as good and bad became mixed in our minds, so also in food.

Thus we see that even our matzah, by lacking yeast and therefore missing chemical breakdown, is itself an allusion to the lofty food of before the sin and akin to the *mon*. Matzah may be difficult to digest, but it reminds us that nourishment was designed to be of a higher form and has its source in Hashem's *Shechina*. 

THE MIRACULOUS STORY OF THE SARAJEVO HAGGADAH

RABBI NOSSON WIGGINS

The Sarajevo *Haggadah* is one of the oldest Sephardic *Haggados* in the world, originating in Barcelona ca. 1350. The Sarajevo *Haggadah* probably left Spain in 1492, was subsequently taken to Venice, and was eventually obtained by the Bosnian museum in 1894. The *Haggadah* is currently owned by the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo, where it is on display.

The Sarajevo *Haggadah* is inscribed by hand on parchment (bleached calfskin) and decorated in copper and gold. It begins with 34 pages of Torah illustrations, from the creation of the world through the death of Moshe. Its pages are colored with wine stains, from actual usage at Pesach seders over the centuries.

The Sarajevo *Haggadah* is among the most exquisite illuminated Jewish manuscripts – and one of the most valuable books – in the world. Recently, it was appraised at \$700 million.

A fascinating story has recently been told about the Sarajevo *Haggadah's* miraculous survival from the Nazis during the Second World War:

During WWII, when Yugoslavia was divided, Sarajevo suffered greatly. In 1941, Ante Pavelic, Hitler's ally, proceeded to massacre Jews, Gypsies, and Serbs, some of whom sought assistance from their Muslim or Croatian neighbors. The Bosnian National Museum's chief librarian at the time was an Albanian Muslim named Dervis Korkut. He was the scion of a prosperous family of Muslim intellectuals and an avowed anti-Fascist, who had studied theology in Istanbul and the Sorbonne.

In 1942, when Nazi commander Johann Fortner arrived at the museum, seizing the Sarajevo *Haggadah* was one of his prime objectives. Hitler wanted the rare and expensive artifact to be prominently displayed in his "museum of the extinct race" which he planned to establish after ridding Europe of all its Jews. The chief librarian Dervis Korkut took the precious book and hid it under his coat. When Johann Fortner confronted Korkut over the book, Korkut simply said another Nazi officer had already been by to take possession of it. "Which officer?" Fortner barked. "Name the man!" "Sir," Korkut replied, "I did not think it was my place to require a name." Thus, the book was saved! Dervis Korkut gave the book to a Muslim imam who hid the book in his mosque library until after the war when it was returned to its home in the Bosnian National Museum in Sarajevo.

So, if you are ever in the area, make sure to stop by and check out this ancient *Haggadah*. 

Thoughts on Haggadah



מגיד – Maggid

There seems to be someone missing in the *Haggadah*. One who opens a *chumash* to learn about the story of the Jewish people being brought of slavery will see a key figure mentioned over and over and over again. We are talking of course about Moshe *Rabbeinu*! Where, though, is he in the *Haggadah*? This is the point of the night. We wish to point out that it was Hashem Himself who led us out of bondage and, Moshe, though the central messenger of Hashem, could do nothing on his own.

This is the bread of affliction - הא לחמא עניא

We begin the retelling and reliving of the exodus from Egypt with focus on the matzah, “This is the bread of affliction that our forefathers ate in Egypt,” even though our sages teach us that the *mitzvah* of telling the story of the exodus is on the night when the *maror* and *korban Pesach* are in front of us as well. On a basic level this could be because, even though the main body and structure of the *Haggadah* was established by the *Anshei K’nesses Hag’dolah*, the Men of the Great Assembly, which was during the beginning of the Second Temple era, other parts were added later through the time of the completion of the Talmud. The end of the paragraph contains a prayer for the reestablishment of the Jewish people in the land of Israel, which would tell us that this paragraph of *Ha Lachma Anya* was written after the destruction of the Second Temple. After the destruction of the Temple the *mitzvah* of *korban Pesach* was no longer performed, and the *mitzvah* of *maror* was now only done on a Rabbinic level, as opposed to the matzah, whose performance is still at the level of a Torah *mitzvah*. Hence its centrality.

On a deeper level, the duality of what the matzah represents, both the food of affliction and the food that represents the haste of redemption, is therefore that which best represents the duality of the experience of the seder. We want to relive both the harsh bondage and the redemption from it.

מה נשתנה – What is different about this night?

Why do we encourage the children to ask first, before we begin relating the story of the exodus? The answer is very simple, says K’sav Sofer. The point of this exercise is to pass on the exodus to another generation, and we wish to relate it and relive it all with our children. The difference, though, between the attention paid by someone to the answer to a question the person asked and the attention paid by someone who did not ask the question is exponential; therefore, we encourage them to ask.

Blessed is the Omnipresent Blessed is He – ברוך המקום ברוך הוא

After we discuss the how great the obligation to relate the story of the exodus is, and before we begin actually relating the story, we pause to offer a fourfold praise to Hashem. Some explain that we do this because, even though we do not say the blessing over Torah study more than once a day, here where we are soon to expound on the four verses that sum up the bondage and redemption of Egypt, we preface them with four expressions of praise.

And we called out to Hashem... And Hashem heard our cries...And Hashem took us out – ונצעק אל ה'...וישמע ה' את קולינו...ויציאנו ה'

The Chofetz Chaim writes that with all the of the story of leaving Egypt, there is something that cannot be lost upon us. We must see that the prayer of the Jewish people hastened the redemption. He continues by quoting a *Midrash* that records an allegorical conversation between Hashem and the Jewish people. “We have no *korbanos* to bring us merit,” say the Jewish people. “Your words of Torah are what I desire,” answers Hashem. “We don’t know Torah.” “Then pray with fervor before me. Did I not redeem your forefathers because of their prayers?” As it says, “And the Jewish people groaned because of their work.” “And in the days of Yehoshua, I performed miracles for them because of their prayer. I do not ask you for slaughter or for offerings, rather for your words!” As it says in Hoshea, “Take words and return to Hashem.” From all this, says the Chofetz Chaim, we see that Hashem wants us to raise our voices in prayer for redemption, and through that, He will redeem us!

לא על ידי מלאך ולא על ידי שרף ולא על ידי שליח – Hashem took us out not through an angel and not through a saraf and not through a messenger

We emphasize that it was Hashem alone Who took us out without any intermediary. The Sfas Emes points out that this, too, is why we are considered to be forever free from enslavement following the redemption from Egypt. By bringing out the Jewish people from slavery in the miraculous fashion He did, it turned us into a people that in our innermost being are free. Thanks to our national identity as Hashem’s people to whom He gave His Torah, we can never be enslaved in totality as we were in Egypt ever again. It is because of this that any future exile, by definition, can only be temporary. Contrast this to a redemption that Hashem “brought about” by human resources, such as the redemption of Purim. There the Talmud relates that even after the miraculous turn of events, we were still considered to be “subjects” to Achashveirosh.

These are the ten plagues – אלו עשר מכות

The miracles of the plagues that Hashem brought upon the Egyptians as a show of mastery over the creation is one of the foundational concepts in Jewish life. As the Ramban notes at the end of *parshas Bo*, this is why so many of the *mitzvos* are tied to remembering the Exodus from Egypt. It is brought that R’ Chatzkel Levenstein, the famed *Mashgiach* of Mir and Ponevezh, was once found alone in a room with his eyes closed, swaying back and forth on bench with a smile crossing his face. When asked what was the cause of his mirth, he responded that as an exercise in strengthening his *emunah* in Hashem he would imagine the miracles of Egypt. When imagining one of the plagues according to how our sages record the miracles, the scene struck him as comical and he could not repress a smile from crossing his lips. Witnesses also tell of when the Chofetz Chaim would review the Torah portions relating to the Exodus, he would in his own words speak out the story in all its detail as he learned the *passukim* with Rashi. One witness related that the Chofetz Chaim chuckled when speaking to himself of the large frog that arose from Nile River multiplying over and over due to it being beaten by the Egyptian necromancers. The seder is about experiencing slavery and redemption, not just telling it over. So go ahead and close your eyes for a few moments (preferably before too many of the cups of wine so you don’t automatically fall asleep), and imagine... the slavery, the miracles, and the redemption.

פסח שאנו אוכלים...מצה שאנו אוכלים...מרור שאנו – The korban Pesach that we eat...The matzah that we eat... The maror that we eat, what is it for?

Historically what the *maror* represents preceded both the *korban Pesach* and the matzah, and the *korban Pesach* preceded the matzah. Yet the matzah precedes the *korban Pesach* at the seder, as the *korban Pesach* is the last thing eaten so that its taste stays in our mouth. If that be so, what is with the order of their discussion at the seder? The S’fas Emes answers that matzah represents our redemption from slavery, the *maror* signifies the bitterness of the slavery and the Egyptians who made it that way, while the *korban Pesach*’s significance is that it represents that Hashem in His glory came down to take the Jews out of Egypt. Even though what the matzah and *maror* signify are important, they take a proverbial back seat to reinforcing the revelation of Hashem to the Jewish people on the night when Hashem smote the Egyptians on our behalf while mercifully “skipping” over our houses at the same time, changing our relationship with Hashem for ever after. 🌟

Q: If one forgot to shave or cut his nails before *chatzos* on Erev Pesach, what should he do?

A: In general, anything not permitted on Chol Hamoed is not permitted to be done Erev Pesach after *chatzos*. However, if one did not do so, one can be *meikel* to cut one's nails afterwards, since some are lenient on Chol Hamoed (RMH). In extenuating circumstances, one can shave or get a haircut as well. In this situation, finding a non-Jew to give the haircut would be better (RSK).

Q: How should one fulfill the *din* brought by the Magen Avraham to make a *zecher* of Haman on the second day of Pesach?

A: Merely saying the words "They hung Haman on the second day Pesach" suffices. However, we have it built into the *Haggada* when we recite during *Nirtza* ראש מבית רשע מוצת בעץ חמשים בפסח, referring to Haman who was killed on this day, and with that we are יוצא the *zecher* Haman (RMH).

Q: Does one need to kasher dentures for Pesach?

A: We are not *noheg* to kasher fillings in one's teeth whether they are made out of plastic or metal. Evidently, we rely on the fact that any food which enters a person's mouth is not hot enough to be considered יד סולדת בו. Although one can drink coffee or tea which is יד סולדת בו, one generally won't let the liquid touch the gums and teeth and therefore no בליעות come out of the fillings. For the same reason, dentures are not a problem either. However, they should be cleaned and scrubbed to ensure that no actual *chometz* is stuck to them. Most cleansing agents are fine to use. The main issue would be alcohol, which is not a problem in the US, since most alcohol in America is made of petroleum (RMH).

Q: Can one purchase a full tank of gas on Chol Hamoed if he does not anticipate using all the gas before the end of Yom Tov?

A: There is a *halacha* that one may not cook on the first day of Yom Tov for the second day of Yom Tov. However, if one is already cooking anyway for the first day,

one can be מרבה בשיעורים and add more to the pot (OC 503:1). I would think the same is true for a gas tank in that you are allowed to be מרבה בשיעורים since it is all one transaction (RMH).

Q: Is everyone required to read the *Haggada* at the Seder?

A: Only the בעל הגדה needs to read the *Haggada* and is *motzei* everyone else through שומע כעונה. Therefore, even if other people are assigned to read different parts by the בעל הסדר, that is fine. In general, it is greater when everyone listens to one person reading, similar to one person being *motzei* others with *Kiddush*. Bottom line, one can read along or sit quietly and listen (RMH). There are those who want to suggest that when possible, there is a preference and it is customary for each person to read on their own (RSK based on a *Ran* and *Beis Halevi*).

Q: May one go to the dentist on Chol Hamoed?

A: All רפואה is permitted on Chol Hamoed (OC 532:2). Usually there is no *chometz* in what the dentist uses, but one should ask to confirm. If the patient is not in pain and there is no reason to believe that the condition will get worse if it is not taken care of immediately (such as a routine check up), then R' Moshe Feinstein, zt"l (*Igros Moshe* OC 3:78) recommends scheduling for some other time since it involves *melochos* that are not necessary for Yom Tov (RMH).

Q: Should one buy his own matzos if one is a guest by his parents or by someone else?

A: In order to be יוצא the *mitzvah* of אכילת מצה, one needs to own the matzos. Children can rely on the fact that their parents are giving the matzos to them. If you are a guest, you acquire the matzos from the host since the assumption is that the host invited you to eat when he said דכפין ייתי ויכול. It is not necessary to sit down with the head of the house and make a special *kinyen* on it. When you pick up the matzos to eat, you've made a *kinyen* (RMH).

Q: Can one intentionally smell the

pleasant aroma of fresh bread being baked by a non-Jewish bakery on Pesach?

A: No. *Chometz* is אסור בהנאה, which means one may not derive any benefit from *chometz* on Pesach, which includes smelling the delicious aroma of freshly made bread – even though it does not belong to him (*Biur Halacha* 443:1). However, there is no issue passing by the bakery if one does not intentionally take in the the delicious smell, even if there is a another route that could be taken

Q: Is there a valid *minhag* not to eat in other people's homes over Pesach?

A: It seems to be a *minhag* that a lot of people used to have. In fact the Chofetz Chaim did not offer Rav Chaim Brisker a cup of tea on Pesach because he was sure that Rav Chaim would not eat in anyone else's house. It is a good custom, since everybody has various degrees of Pesach *kashrus* observance. Nonetheless, only keep this custom if it is your family *minhag*. You don't need to accept it upon yourself if your family has not done so (RMH). 🕒

Last time we left off with a final unanswered question:

Q: Why is the reading of *Megillah* on Purim done after *K'rias Hatorah*, while on other *Yomim Tovim* the *Megillah* precedes Torah reading?

A: Thank you to all those who sent in a variety of possible explanations. In order to avoid getting into the more technical suggestions, let me share with you my favorite.

Rabbi Yisroel Reisman offers a simple answer. Our experience is that the reading of *Megillas Esther* tends to bring out the joy and levity of the Purim day; people completing the *Megillah* are often in a frivolous state of mind. Perhaps it was this consideration that caused this *Megillah* reading to be delayed until after the Torah reading. R' Reisman ends off by saying "too many people become caught up in the Purim spirit and neglect the end of davening. I often wish that we would also complete all of the prayers before the reading of the *Megillah*." - R' Moshe Kibel.