



SCHEDULE

שבת קדש

Mincha Erev Shabbos		4:52 PM
Friday Night Learning		7:30 PM
Daf Yomi		7:30 AM
Shacharis-Followed by Kiddush		8:30 AM
-Sof Zman K"ס-	9:50 א"ג \diamond 9:08 א"מ	
Mincha - Followed by Shalosh Seudos		4:55 PM
Maariv -		6:02 PM
Father/Son Learning		7:00 PM


Avos U'Banim
 7:00 PM Motzei Shabbos
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For more information and sponsorship opportunities contact Moshe Berry at mmberry@gmail.com

Weekday Minyanim & Shiurim

Sunday

Shacharis		6:50 AM
Daf Yomi- By R' Teichman		7:30 AM
Shacharis		8:30 AM
Mincha / Maariv		5:00 PM
Monday - Friday		
Daf Yomi- By R' Teichman		5:45 AM
Shacharis		
Monday, Thursday		6:40 AM
Tues., Wed., Friday		6:45 AM
Mincha (Mon-Thur)		1:45 PM
Daf Yomi (Take II)		9:00 PM
Maariv (Mon-Thur)		9:45 PM

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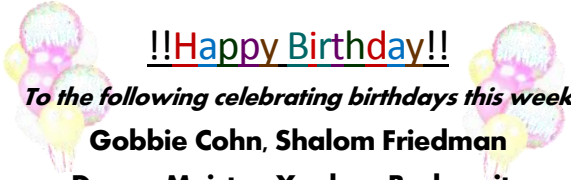
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Issue#268

It's Time to Grow Up

Ever travel on a plane or train? When do you get up from your seat to prepare to exit? There are those who are standing at the door, suitcase in hand, well before they know it will open. And there are those folks who will calmly wait until the very last second before they need to depart, scooping up their personal items as they leave. On the night of the Exodus a very unusual scene played out.

The Jewish nation had prepared their lambs, yet from the prior Shabbos, to be brought on the eve of Pesach. They were told that when that day arrived they would slaughter and roast it, then consume the sacrifice on the night of the fifteenth, finishing to eat it by midnight. At that juncture the plague of the “Firstborn” would commence. They would however first make their departure from Egypt by morning.

Nevertheless despite this significant lapse of time, they were mysteriously instructed:

(שמות יב יא) וככה תאכלו אתו מתניכם חגרים נעליכם ברגלכם ומקלכם בידכם (שמות יב יא) you eat it; your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand...

Although there would be many hours before their final release, they stood with their belts firmly buckled, shoes carefully tied and walking stick ready in hand, all while “eating” their share of the *Korban Pesach!* Joining with their families and friends grouped together, celebrating with excited anticipation their imminent liberation, they stood for hours, laden and poised waiting to leave. A strange sight indeed.

The Saintly Meor V'Shemesh, Rav Klonymus Kalman HaLevi Epstein, makes a remarkable assertion. He claims that the very first failure of Man, the partaking from the “Tree of Knowledge of Good and Bad”, wasn't merely a transgression relating to the eating of any particular “forbidden” fruit. It was rather in man's compulsion to discern and select between the eating of something he favored more, over an item that was less enticing to his palate, that his deficiency lay. The awareness of “good and bad” and being particular in the arena of what one physically ingests, consumption that is unrelated to nutrition but solely to corporal pleasure, is the seed of man's descent and loss of stature. For this reason the Torah had no need to identify the fruit, it was irrelevant, it could have been of any type. What was fatal however was his “need” to “choose” what he bodily desired. This weakness was the cause his for his expulsion from the utopia of Gan Eden.

The eating of the Pesach on this fateful night was to emphasize a downplaying of man's need to satisfy his carnal cravings. This was the rebirth of “Man” after all, as embodied in the ideals of this Chosen Nation. The nature of man is to kick back and relax when enjoying his meal, seeking a comfortable environment so he may savor his food. It was with this in mind that G-d instructed the nation not to allow for this indulgence, reiterating the notion that as long as we are supplied nutrition the associated pleasure is secondary.

(מאור ושמש פרשת בא ד"ה וככה)

Man eats for three reasons.

Firstly, and most importantly, to placate the natural hunger that is instinctive to us, that forces us to tend to our body's health and nutritional needs in order to survive. Secondly, it bonds us with others. When we sit together with family or friends it creates a calm and enjoyable venue for relaxed interaction. The Talmud indeed extols the value of eating together. *גדולה לנימה שמקרבת את הרחוקים (סנהדרין נק). גדולה לנימה שמקרבת את הרחוקים (סנהדרין נק). How great is feasting together that it brings those distant close!* Finally we often eat because it “feels” good, it is emotionally satisfying. Beyond its value in quenching our hunger and thirst, eating at times calms us even if we aren't exactly hungry. When nervous, tired, anxious or lonely we often find a close friend in food and drink.

Rav Menachem Recanati, a famous thirteenth century Kabbalist, reveals for us a mystical association regarding these three items that were employed particularly during the eating of the Pesach; the belt, the shoes and the staff.

חגורת, *your loins girded* align with the very first reference to מתניכם חגרים,

loincloths, after the sin of Adam and Chava when they realized their nakedness the verse states; *ויעשו להם חגרת (בראשית ג ז) and made themselves loincloths.*

נעליכם ברגלכם, *your shoes on your feet* finds its parallel in the Song of Songs that describes the loyal pilgrimage each Jew made to the Temple three times a year, *מה יפו פעמך בנעלים, (שה"ש ז א) How beautiful are your steps in sandals.*

ומקלכם בידכם, *and your staff in your hand*, is rooted in the verse that describes how Yaakov succeeded in crossing the Jordan River alone with merely his staff in his hand, bereft of all possessions, *כי במקלי עברתי את הירדן (בראשית לב יא), for with my staff I crossed this Jordan.*

What deeper significance is implied in this correspondence?

A חגורה is simply a belt that secures one's garments that lay over one's loins, allowing for free and unimpeded movement, by preventing the clothing from falling or flapping intrusively. The Targum thus translates חגרת את הירדן as חגרת, rooted in the word חר, which infers quickness and zeal.

It was Adam and Chava's impulsive indulgence, that slowed their progress forward, that needed to be reined in and “girded”, instilling within them a heightened sense of diligence so as to avoid this failure again.

The Talmud relates how it was customary to open or loosen one's belt prior to eating to allow for more comfortable consumption, by releasing pressure against the belly. (שבת ט.)

In Egypt they “girded” their loins in a symbolic display of a desire to contain that instinctive hunger, so they might rectify the earlier sin in Gan Eden.

This addressed the first function of food; measured sustenance. We must tighten our belt to affect moderate and purposeful consumption.

Shoes are man's vehicle to the world, it gives him mobility and with it the opportunity to interact with a wider circle of people in developing a greater social network. The arrival in the Temple and the wider Jewish community's collective involvement in celebrations and rituals associated with the various holidays, gave healthy context to the “feasts” the groups of pilgrims would join together in. In the presence of the Divine we would never lapse into frivolous camaraderie that so often develops in the relaxed atmosphere of friendship.

The donning of their sandals at the expense of a more comfortable atmosphere, was their remarkable declaration of a consciousness not to expose themselves to a tempting environment of relaxed instincts that can often detour man from the values and behavior that is so pure and noble.

The grasping of a staff represents self control, the grabbing a hold figuratively, of oneself. A staff enables man to maintain his balance on the rocky road of life.

Yaakov emphatically states that despite the lack of any creature comforts, as they were all relinquished to Elifaz in exchange for his life, one can find personal definition and inner calm, overcoming the mightiest challenges.

כי במקלי עברתי את הירדן, *for with my staff I crossed this Jordan.* במקלי we are taught is the numerical equivalent to the name 182 עיקב. Yaakov was attesting to the reality that we need nothing other than our ideals and inner qualities and strengths. If we recognize our individual greatness we will never look to physical indulgences or pastimes to provide us meaning in life.

The staff they held tightly on to, freeing up only one hand to partake of the Pesach, was their loud affirmation that they would not be misled as Adam and Chava were by the lure of colorful and delightful pleasures that deceive us into thinking we need it for our mental and emotional health. With a good and honest look at ourselves and a proper appreciation of who we are, we can refrain from dirtying our hands by not being tempted to stick them into the proverbial pot!

According to tradition Yitzchok Avinu was born on the fifteenth of Nissan, Pesach.

The verse reports about Yitzchok: *ויגדל הילד ויגמל ויעש אברהם משה גדול ביום הגמל את יצחק (בראשית כא ח) The child grew and was weaned. Avraham made a great feast on the day Yitzchok was weaned.*

Rashi tells us that this took place exactly twenty four months after his birth. According to this calculation this feast then took place in Pesach. It is described as the day Yitzchok became a גדול, a grownup. This is in fact the first description in the Torah of someone growing up.

In what way could the day a child is weaned from his nursing mother qualify as the day he grew up?

The moment an infant enters the world it has an instinctive hunger for its mothers breast. There the child not only finds sustenance but also an immediate bond with its mother. Often a child will turn to nurse not to satiate its hunger but to secure the confidence it discovered in the comfort of the mother's bosom.

We are exposed from the moment we arrive on this earth to the challenges of “consumption”.

Will we wean ourselves from the superficial involvement in them by realizing that pleasure is here for us to enjoy but not to indulge? Will we use this valuable tool to provide us healthy nutrition, meaningful and joyous encounters with others and pleasurable experiences that will prod us to appreciate its magnificence from a benevolent G-d, but never demand or expect it?

It isn't just about food. It is about how we “consume” all the activities that are part of the physical world we live in.

Are we grabbing “forbidden fruit” when we select from the vast menu of the tree of “good and bad” the world offers us, picking what we “like” forfeiting what we don't?

How many objects, activities or indulgences do we succumb to in the course of our day or week, claiming we can't live without them?

The Bluzhever Rebbe, father of the famed Bluzhever Rebbe who survived the Holocaust, writes in his work Keren Yehoshua, that we call the Shabbos prior to Pesach, *שבת הגדול*, the “Grownup” Shabbos, based on this verse.

The Talmud derives from the word *ויגמל*, used in this verse, that the “great feast” that Avraham threw to commemorate this event will find its completion in a feast graced by the Avos, Moshe, Yehoshua and lead by Dovid HaMelech. It will take place after Moshiach will have arrived, where G-d will be *גמול חסד* reward with kindness, to his nation for having fulfilled their mission.

Every Seder night he avers, we experience a kernel of this future feast, and achieve an element of growth, thus *שבת הגדול*.

What connection is there between the word *גמול* meaning to recompense and the context it is used in by Yitzchok which means to “wean”?

The greatest gift one can confer to a person is to wean them from dependence.

The weaning of Yitzchok from his mother's milk is the initiation of the process that represents the ultimate growth; the ability to not be attached to anything material.

To find strength in our inner resolve and in our bond with G-d alone lies the seeds of our redemption.

We are still “big babies” in need of this food or that toy or activity. When will we grow up? When will we see the emptiness in so many of the things we preoccupy ourselves with?

When we wean ourselves from this “need” we will have finally “grownup” and deserve to feast in that royal meal that awaits us in the company of our illustrious ancestors who yearn together with the Almighty to share with us the greatest pleasure of all!

באהבה,
צבי טייכמאן