

SCHEDULE

שבת קדש

Mincha & Candles Erev Shabbos **7:14 PM**

Daf Yomi **7:30 AM**

Shacharis- Followed by Kiddush **8:30 AM**

-Sof Zman K"Z- גר"א 9:57 < 9:16א"מ

Mincha **2:15 PM**

Mincha - Followed by Shalosh Seudos **7:10 PM**

Maariv - **8:24 PM**

Weekday Minyanim & Shiurim

Sunday

Shacharis I **6:50 AM**

Daf Yomi- By R' Teichman **7:30 AM**

Shacharis II **8:30 AM**

Mincha / Maariv **7:25 PM**

Monday - Friday

Daf Yomi- By R' Teichman **5:45 AM**

Shacharis:

Monday, Thursday **6:40 AM**

Tue., Wed., Fri. **6:45 AM**

Mincha (Mon-Fri) **1:45 PM**

Mincha / Maariv **7:15 PM**

Daf Yomi -Take II (Mon-Thurs.) **9:00 PM**

Maariv (Mon.-Th) **9:45 PM**

PRE PESACH CAMP

Ages: 2-4 and 5-7, two separate groups

When: Sunday 4/6, Wednesday 4/9- Friday 4/11 & Sunday 4/13

Time: Sunday 10:00 am -4:00 pm, Wednesday - Friday 8:45 am - 3 pm

For more info please contact: Sarah Marizan at 410-245-1718 or mimializa@gmail.com

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Shul Contacts

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Issue#330

RABBI'S MESSAGE

Who is the Real Baal Ha 'Boss'?

"A plague upon 'one' of your houses!"

The plague that most defined the contrast between the houses of the Egyptians and the Jews was

that of the death of the firstborn. Despite the fact that regardless of whether at the moment the plague struck the Jew found himself in the home of an Egyptian or vice versa, the Jew was spared

and the Egyptian perished. (רש"י שמות יב יג ד"ה ולא יהיה)

Nevertheless, the Torah accentuates G-d's passing over the homes of those who placed the Paschal blood on their door posts and lintel, and "their houses being saved".

Evidently is the home that saved them even if they weren't there.

The actual verse where we are commanded to attest to this event and express to our children, ואח (רש"י שמות יב יג ד"ה ולא יהיה), *but He saved our homes*, almost seems to emphasize the preservation of the physical abode more than the lives contained within.

What significance is there to mentioning the houses being rescued when we were anyway leaving Egypt for good several hours later?

The concept of an afflicted "house" appears for the first time when our matriarch Sarah was taken by the Egyptians, after observing her beauty, to the House of Pharaoh, when she descended together with Avraham Avinu to Egypt. The Torah relates that to confound any ignoble intentions, G-d afflicted Pharaoh with **בגעים גדולים**, *severe plagues*, which Rashi interprets to mean a type of skin disease that would make cohabitation impossible, thus safeguarding Sarah.

The verse goes on to state that not only was he smitten, but *"ביתו"*, his "house" as well, with Rashi explaining this to mean literally the walls and pillars of his home as well. This is in fact the very first time the term *בית* is used in Torah in its physical sense not figuratively referring to one's household or family.

When G-d informs Moshe of the impending last of plagues, that of the killing of the firstborn, G-d refers to it as **עוד בגע אחד אביא על פרעה** (שמות יא א), *One more plague shall I bring upon Pharaoh*.

Of all the plagues that were sent upon the Egyptians this one alone of the smiting of the firstborn is referred to as a **"בגע"**, connoting a correlation to the original "plague" that was cast upon Pharaoh and his domicile in the days of Avraham and Sarah. (פרד"א מל"י מובא בתורה שלמה)

A home is a place we escape to from the fast paced and maddening world we occupy throughout our day.

Tragically, often a home serves as a playground for its inhabitants, a place to romp freely without consequence, away from the scrutiny of others. Hopefully however, a home is an environment where one can dwell on one's goals, focus on one's life, regaining the composure and inner strength that one can only get from contemplative thought isolated from the distractions of the outside world.

When one discovers his house afflicted with a **בגע** צרעת, *a leprous affliction*, he must go and inform the Kohen.

(ויקרא יד לה) *The one whom the house belongs shall come and declare to the Kohen.*

The Talmud analyzes the emphasis in the verse in its description of the one coming, אשר "לו" הבית, literally translated as, "to whom the house is his", as indicative of one consumed with an overblown image of self and stingy sense of entitlement. It implies one who builds a home to create barriers from responsibility towards those outside its walls, one who doesn't view his possessions as other than tools for personal indulgence. In fulfillment of the Torah's call for the removing of all utensils in the household prior to the house being declared impure and quarantined by the Kohen this individual will now be forced to remove all his "toys" from his fortress displaying them for all to see. (יבא יא)

Once a house is determined to be halachically leprous and deemed impure, anyone entering this poisoned environment will together with everything he is wearing, his clothing and shoes, become impure.

However there is one caveat. The clothes he is donning only become impure if he remains in the house: *the amount of time it takes to eat a half-*

loaf of wheat bread, rather than barley bread, while reclining and eating it with a condiment. (נגעים יג ט)

This requirement seems to imply that one is only to be completely absorbed by the toxicity of this defiled environment if he is there long enough to theoretically eat a higher quality bread, e.g. wheat, tastily, e.g. with a condiment, and comfortably, e.g. while reclining.

The Shelah HaKadosh teaches that every component of life falls into one of three categories: 1) **טעם**, a word that can imply sense, flavor or accent, which reflect on each of these ideas respectively.

Something objectively good represents something meaningful and *sensible*. Sweetness reflects on its external *flavor*, not necessarily good or bad. Something beneficial takes into account one's circumstance, desire and need and *accents* its worthiness in the view of the beholder.

Often when the pursuit of "good" is defined by one's subjective perspective it can lead one to a path of destruction where one deludes oneself into a state of sweet indulgence and lethargic comfort.

The great Tanna Rabbi Elazar Ben Arach found himself drawn to a resort that offered beautiful vistas and wonderful beaches. His indulgent lifestyle there caused him to forget his learning. Several of his students found him there and posed a question to him regarding the laws of a house smitten with leprosy quoting the above referenced Mishna and its mention of eating wheat bread with a condiment while reclining. He was confounded as he had forgotten his learning.

The great Gaon Rav Dovid Luria in his commentary to Pirkei D'Rebbe Eliezer alleges that the students, by quoting this Mishna specifically, successfully prodded him to regain his learning by intimating the cause for his lapse of commitment to his studies.

They were implying to him that it was in his pursuit of "good" food that was tasty and eaten in comfort that detoured him from his greatness.

This Mishna teaches that one "enters" into a realm of impurity by metaphorically pursuing 'quality bread dipped in delicious condiment while relaxing'.

One who is lax exposes oneself to the dangers of a house that is contaminated with an attitude of *"Baal HaBayis"*, the owner of "his" house, permitting himself to indulge selfishly as he pleases in blind pursuit of self-determination.

Rabbi Elazar Ben Arach "got it" and was able to retrieve his previous stature.

(פרד"א קנטער שם האחד אליעזר את ד)

We are taught that there is an additional underlying message in this requirement to remain in the house afflicted with leprosy this requisite amount of time before becoming impure.

One eats bread fashioned from wheat more quickly than barley bread. A condiment further reduces the amount of time it takes to eat half of a loaf by assisting in its ingestion. One who eats while reclining is more focused and likely to consume the product in a shorter amount of time than eating while standing. (רש"י צירובין ד, וסכה ו, ברכות מא.)

Perhaps the Torah is subtly directing us to the antidote to succumbing to self-delusion.

If one does not dwell on the good, the sweet and the comfort, but rather consumes efficiently without any need to savor the experience, one can safely ward off temptation.

This is a lesson not related to eating alone but to all encounters with the physical world. We may partake of permitted pleasures as long as we don't linger and we remain focused on the higher goal beyond. The experience then enhances our existence in this world and assists us in achieving all our spiritual goals, never to be distracted.

On Pesach we eat **לחם עני**, the Bread of Affliction. The Rama instructs us to preferably bake it from wheat flour. (אורח חיים נט טז א)

We eat it with Marror which the Ibn Ezra asserts was used as a condiment to their bread in ancient Egypt. (שמות יב ח)

The Halacha requires of us to fulfill the mitzva of eating the Matzah while reclining.

Our ancestors learned well this lesson of consumption.

Matzah must be baked quickly and efficiently to prevent any possibility of leavening. Wheat represents the quality of all that is truly good in this world, but it too must be tempered by not



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overindulging in the moments of enjoyment.

Marror teaches us that not all that is sweet is satisfying. Even the bitter herb of suffering and challenge can enhance one's endeavor towards attaining a sweet and pleasurable life. It all depends on how we utilize it, very much like the physical Marror "condiment" that can improve the quality of the bread.

Reclining allows us to focus on the activity we are engaged not lapsing into mindless consumption.

A firstborn son can represent a sense of privilege and entitlement. It can also reflect on responsibility and purpose.

The Egyptian homes were modeled after the House of Pharaoh, a place for indulgence, empty entertainment and selfish isolation.

The Jewish homes were indeed saved, וראת בתנו הציל, it was in how they utilized their physical homes to create a Sanctuary where the walls would come to testify how the activities that took place within the home were infused with a healthy sense of moderation and purposeful focus.

The Egyptian firstborn perished in the contaminated environment of indulgence.

Our firstborn remain dedicated to leading the way in displaying the perfect balance as we journey through a material world towards self-perfection.

As we clean house in preparation for this most uplifting Yom Tov, let us reevaluate the nature of our homes and make sure that we fortify its walls with the inspired, focused and measured activities that take place within them, making sure they are in the image of our illustrious ancestors.

If we succeed we too will merit that our houses shall never be afflicted and we will be given the blessings we need to achieve that most worthy and loving appellation, בן בכורי, *My firstborn Yisroel!*

באדבור,
צבי טייכמאן