

Pesach 7th Day, Rabbi David Mahler

Pesach is referred to often as the *Chag HaEmunah*, festival of faith. *Chazal* have stamped this particular *chag* with that encomium as it demonstrates *Am Yisrael's* faith in and love of G-d as well as *Hashem's* faith in and love of us.

From a young age we are taught that the basic meaning of the word *Pesach* is to pass over, as *Hashem* passed over the homes of *Bnei Yisrael* as He struck all the firstborn of Egypt on the 15th of *Nisan*. However, there is a similar word in that very *perek* (*Shemos* 12) which also means to pass over – *Avarti*. Based on the seemingly unnecessary synonym, *Onkelos* defines the word *pesach*, not as pass over, but rather as, to have mercy. *Hashem* showed his abundant love and compassion for His people when He passed over their homes on that exalted evening.

Rav Shimshon Rafael Hirsch builds upon *Onkelos's* translation from a description of a character in *Tanach*. In *Shmuel Bet*, we are introduced to *Shaul's* grandson (*Yonatan's* son), *Mefiboshet*. *Mefiboshet* walked with a limp and is described as a *piseach*. Rav Hirsch notes the identical letters in the word limp (*piseach*) and our holiday of *Pesach*. There must be a connection. Rav Hirsch explains that the particular word is describing the movements of *Hashem* on that night as walking slowly and hesitating. *Hashem* was protectively hovering above our homes.

What was He looking for?

Bnei Yisrael were given the *mitzvah* of *Korban Pesach* as a last chance opportunity to help themselves climb out of the depths of their impurity. They were on the 49th level of *tumah* and needed *mitzvos* to resuscitate them. *Hashem* was anxiously waiting outside to see if they would fulfill His command as He so badly yearned for a renewed relationship with his people.

The picture is magnificent. *Hashem* lingered, peering into our homes, to see if we would do exactly as He commanded – not as a test – but as a loved one constantly looking outside to see if his loved one has returned home.

But the love did not only travel in one direction. According to Rav Shimon Schwab, a *talmid* of the school of Rav Hirsch, he opines that *Am Yisrael's* doors were not closed as they ate their *Yom Tov* meal. The meal was eaten prior to the onset of the 10th plague and thus showed our complete faith in *Hashem's* protection. The occupants of the Jewish homes were full of *bitachon* as they had

absolutely no fear of the consequences of the Egyptians seeing them happily eating their *Pesach* meal of a roasted lamb, its blood painted on the doorposts, in open defiance of their idolatrous worship of these animals. This public display of *bitachon* is what designated these houses as Jewish homes.

The love and faith between Hakadosh Baruch Hu and am Yisrael was mutual. This is the essence of the *chag*.

On the 7th day of *Pesach*, we commemorate and celebrate *Krias Yam Suf*. Perhaps, the greatest display of love for another is the fact that you would do anything and everything for them. The *Rambam* writes that our love for *Hashem* should be at least comparable to a man who is lovesick for a woman. He simply cannot get her out of his mind. The reason is because we are trying to reach the level modeled by *Hashem* towards us.

Hashem's splitting of the sea is the symbol that when you truly love someone else, you will move mountains (as the saying goes) for them. *Hashem's* love for us is so great that He literally splits seas for us.

This is the message of *Pesach*. We love *Hashem* and *Hashem* loves us. The challenge is whether our love can ever match His.

Chag Sameach!