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Metzora/Shabbos HaGadol: Resolving the Shabbos Pesach Paradox

Who goes to who?

“These are the laws of the Metzora on the day of his purification and he should be brought before the Kohen. And the Kohen will come out to him outside of the camp...” There’s an obvious contradiction here that is discussed by the commentaries: Who goes to who? The pasuk initially says that the Metzora goes to the Kohen but then it explicitly states the opposite: the Kohen goes out to the Metzora. Which is it? In the special year of a Jewish leap year we have parshas Metzora intersecting with Shabbos HaGadol. What is the common denominator between the two?

Why Shabbos?

Chazal tell us that the special Halacha that the Jews had in Egypt to separate the korban Pesach on the 10th of Nissan came out on Shabbos that year. This is one of the sources for Shabbos HaGadol. The fact that we mark Shabbos HaGadol and not the 10th of Nissan forever after shows that the main force at play was Shabbos, because if it’s to commemorate the separating of the korban Pesach (which we were not commanded to do in future generations) we would’ve been marking the 10th of Nissan! Why didn’t Hashem just give us Shabbos? Shabbos remained hidden and was not revealed until after Krias Yam Suf by Marah. If we needed Shabbos before Pesach, why didn’t we get it? How did

separating of the korban Pesach supplement for Shabbos in that generation?

Shabbos & Pesach – the Chicken & the Egg

There is a special relationship between Shabbos and Pesach that needs to be explored. Pesach itself is called Shabbos in the command to count the omer. “Counting from the day after **Shabbos**” refers to **Pesach** as we know through the oral transmission. But it’s more than that: **Which is first, Shabbos or Pesach?** Historically speaking, when looking from Hashem’s view of reality, Shabbos came first. It was created on the seventh day of creation and over 2000 years later Hashem took us out of Egypt and we got Pesach. **In our experience it’s just the opposite: we got Pesach when taken out of Mitzrayim and then we got Shabbos subsequently in Marah!** This duality is also expressed in contradictory Pesukim. In parshas Mishpatim it lays out Shabbos and the three Regalim, and **Shabbos is first** and then Pesach shavuos and Succos. In parshas Ki-Sisa it again lays out Shabbos and then the three Regalim, and **there it first lays out Pesach and then Shabbos** and then resumes to talk about Shavuos and Succos. There are two different versions of the “Aseres HaDibros” that were said simultaneously in one utterance. In the version in Parshas Yisro it says that we keep Shabbos because **“six days Hashem created heaven and earth and**

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rested on the seventh day” which would put Shabbos before Pesach that happened over 2000 years after creation. However, in the version in Parshas Va’eschanan it says “remember that you were a slave in Egypt and Hashem took you out of there and therefore Hashem commanded you to keep the day of Shabbos” **according to that version Shabbos actually commemorates the exodus and that would put Shabbos after Pesach.**

Shabbos & Yom Tov – The Root & the Branches

In Parshas Emor in the parsha of the Moadim that we declare - **it first opens up with Shabbos which we don’t declare** and then **restarts** “these are the Moadim of Hashem that you will declare” and starts with Pesach. **Why is Shabbos there?** Shabbos is not declared by Beis Din like the months. Shabbos comes in automatically when the sunsets on Friday. Why did the parsha then **restart** “These are the moadim of Hashem” with Pesach? The Zohar explains that **Shabbos is the root of all Kedusha.** Only Hashem can make something out of nothing. Kedusha is a creation of Hashem like everything else. Hashem created Kedusha when He created Shabbos “and He blessed it and sanctified it”. **Our ability to make YomimTovim or any other form of holiness is to actually draw upon the power of Shabbos** and that’s why it’s there and the parsha of the Moadim and yet in a league onto its own - **because it is the source – the Moadim are the branches.**

Escape Hatch

My Rebbe Maran HaRav Moshe Shapira ZT”L further explained to me that aside from Shabbos being the source of Kedusha that all is drawn from, **the fact that the Jewish people have shabbos makes them able to access Kedusha.** This world is seemingly a sealed box of three dimensions that don’t end anywhere. This is indeed the unfortunate state of **all non-Jews who are commanded to “never rest just like the world just keeps on turning”.** Shabbos which is the “seventh” is center. **“Center” does not exist in physical reality!** There is no space that can be called the center because it could be subdivided between the all the dimensions that it touches upon. Hashem says “I have a wonderful gift in my treasure house and I’ll give it to the Jewish people” It’s not just the command to

keep Shabbos – **“the gift of Shabbos” is to give us the center of reality that’s not accessible in physical space. Once we have Shabbos we can escape the limitations of the physical world!** We access the point that’s on no side of the three dimensions of physicality and yet permeates all dimensions and with that we can access the light of the Yomim Tovim.

Speech in Exile

However Hashem only gives his gifts to a worthy recipient. “..... I will give it to the **Jewish people** who I love” or as Chazal tell us Hashem told Shabbos “.....the **Jewish people** will be your mate”. **But you need a “Jewish people” that’s separate from the rest of humanity. That’s why we need Pesach to separate the Jewish people as being different from all the nations and only then there finally is a recipient for Shabbos in this world.** What exactly changed that made the **Jewish people** a different type of humanity with Yetzias Mitzrayim? How did the world change with Yetzias Mitzrayim? The Zohar and the writings of the Arizal teach us that **prior to Yetzias Mitzrayim speech itself was in exile** The Tikunei Zohar says that **“Pesach”** is to be understood as two words **“peh”** - the mouth **“Sach”** -speaks that with Yetzias Mitzrayim the power of speech was liberated and that is the significance that we have the Mitzvah of **Sipur Yetzias Mitzrayim** - to **talk** about the exodus and **“the more we talk about Yetzias Mitzrayim the better”** because it is to **celebrate the liberation of speech and “storytelling”!** What does all that mean?

What is Speech?

The gift of speech is not a sophisticated form of mating calls or warnings of danger. The animals manage just fine without language and live in packs with a communal structure and exhibit tremendous intelligence in caring for themselves and building their shelters. One can argue that they understand each other better than people understand each - with all their language. Speech and language can’t be just a more sophisticated form of communications like that which other lifeforms have. We got the power of speech from our divine immortal soul from heaven after it merged with the body. “And he blew into his nostrils a breath of life

and man became a creature of life" Onkelus translates "creature of life" as "a speaking spirit". **If speech comes from the Neshama from heaven it can't be pragmatic communication.** We find speech at the very beginning of the Torah. **Hashem created the world through "speech".** What is speech and what does it do?

Transmission

With Speech Hashem created the world. This means that first Hashem "thought" the idea, **"put that thought into words"**, and then that entity came into physical actuality - which means: **Speech is the transition from conceptual thought to physical reality!** The human being, with his intelligence that's augmented by his Neshama, is supposed to **apprehend abstract ideas like "right and wrong" and "ethics" and then put those ideas into words for the purpose of making them more "concrete" in a manner that he could live by in the physical world.** Ideas need to be put into words to be concretized in a manner that they could be put into a plan of action whether for himself or for others to follow by his instructions. Another word for instruction is "command" as in **"Mitzvah"**-commandment. The **Nefesh HaChaim** explains that **the Divine power in mitzvos is the Divine command** - that is what puts spiritual power in these actions that we do! **If not for the Divine words commanding us to do the Mitzvos they would have no spiritual power.** With this idea the **Ramchal** in **"Daas Tevunos"** explains the idea "greater is he who is commanded to do the mitzvah than he who does it voluntarily" because **the one who is commanded is following the instructions of the Divine word and it's those Divine words that put power in his deeds. The one doing it voluntarily does not have the Divine command and does not have those Divine words putting power into his action.** It is the Divine speech that facilitates prophecy and **it is the essence of what we mean by "Torah". "Torah" is that Hashem put his will and wisdom into words and communicated it to us.** With this we understand why **Speech emerged when man became a composite of body and soul because Speech is the bridge between the two it is the ability to communicate and transfer from spiritual into the physical.**

Chomatz Matza Mitzvah

Prior to Yetzias Mitzrayim this power of speech to bridge the spiritual world of concepts and everything that the Torah teaches was sealed off and Speech was just used for in the same manner that animals communicate and that's called that **"speech was in exile"** it was not in its proper place and performing its real function and that's alluded to in **"Chometz"**. The letters **"Mem"** and **"Tzadi"** common to **"chometz"** **"matza"** and **"mitzvah"** are in the system of **A" T - B" Sh** (alef interchangeable with Tav, Beis interchangeable with Shin, etc) are interchangeable with **"Yud"** and **"Heh"**. The Gemara in Menachos teaches us with the letters of **"Yud"** and **"Heh"** Hashem fashioned two worlds - the higher world with **"Yud"** and the lower world with **"Heh"**. We're supposed to unlock not just the spiritual power of the **"Heh"** but to also draw power from the **"Yud"** and infuse it into physical reality. That is the significance of the Divine name of **"four letters"** - the power of **"Yud"** and **"Heh"** is fully absorbed into the **"Vav"** and **"Heh"** representing the forces of the physical realm (the **"Vav"** representing the six edges of the three dimensions and the **"Heh"** representing the seventh - between them are the whole seven that we call "nature"). That's what the letter is **"Mem"** and **"Tzadi"** represent but they were sealed off and that's what's represented by the **"Ches"** of **"Chometz"** - that we're not able to access what the **"Mem"** and **"Tzadi"** represent because the world is sealed off from heaven - the unbroken roof of the **"Ches"** cut us off from the spiritual dimensions. The Zohar explains that **"Yetzias Mitzrayim broke the "Ches" and it became a "Heh" and spelled "Matza"**. **The break in the "Heh" allows for spiritual to enter the physical** and **"Heh"** could be subdivided into the letters **"Dalet"** and the short leg a **"Yud"** that the even the power from the **"Yud"** permeates the four directions of the physical realm. That was accomplished with Yetzias Mitzrayim and following Pesach with the additional for their six weeks of the omer which is the numerical value of the **"Vav"** of **matza becomes mitzvah** when we get the Torah and get commanded to keep **mitzvos**.

The REAL Story

Prior to the power of speech being liberated, the line of communication between us and the spiritual

was sealed off. Although they were prophets that walked the earth, the prophecy was one of transcendental experience, **Divinity was not revealed here within the earth.** The process of Yetzias Mitzrayim was to “**speak** my name throughout the earth” and that’s why one of the mitzvahs to celebrate the **REAL power of speech** and tell the **story of Yetzias Mitzrayim.** In a story there’s a intelligent plot that connects all the events - **there’s a story in reality - it’s called destiny!**

Shabbos Hagadol

This line of communication opened on “**Peh -Sach**” enables the transmission of Shabbos to earth. **Shabbos on earth is dependent on Pesach liberating the Jewish people and the power of speech which enables the transmission of holiness of Shabbos into physical realm.** However, as we stated before, the root of all Holiness, including Pesach, is drawn from Shabbos and that’s why these two holidays are inextricably bound up with each other and totally interdependent. Shabbos cannot be extended to earth without Pesach and Pesach cannot exist without Shabbos. This is the greatest “chicken – egg” dilemma. **The only way out of it was the event of Shabbos HaGadol which was a precursor for the concept of Shabbos.** On Shabbos we are separated from the nations of the world and from all physicality and we enter dimensions of holiness which is exclusively ours. “A goy that keep Shabbos deserves death”. However, Shabbos could not be manifest on earth yet until Pesach. Hashem gave a special Mitzvah for that generation to generate a “spark of Shabbos”. **The “spark of Shabbos” was created by the Jews separating them selves from the nations of the world “Pull and take” –“pull yourselves away from idol worship and take the sheep for the mitzvah”.** This is act of separating ourselves created for us a quasi-Shabbos of separating ourselves from the rest of the world and put us into a higher dimension that was enough to tap into Shabbos to enable us to make Pesach. Subsequently, in later years this special service wasn’t necessary because Shabbos was on earth. **The Shabbos before Pesach is what energizes Pesach - but it’s a BIG Shabbos because it’s not just the energy source of the renewed Pesach it is also the energy source of renewed**

Shabbosos because Shabbos on earth is only through the power of Pesach!

Metzora & Mitzrayim

The “**Metzora**” is in his own private “**Mitzrayim**”. It’s not a coincidence that “**Metzora**” and “**Mitzrayim**” share letters and have the same root of being in “constraints” and “boundaries” and “sealed off”. As Onkelus translates “**Tzara’as**” as “**Machtesh d’sagiru**” a plague of being “**closed in**”. One of the outstanding laws of the Metzora is to be separate and isolated outside of the camp. Why did this happen to him? **Because he spoke “Lashon Hara”! He defiled the power of speech!** He has set back the achievement of Yetzias Mitzrayim for himself and he’s now on his own Private Mitzrayim, isolated from the world, sealed off because he defiled his power of speech.

when the Metzora is healed and pronounced “Tahor” that is his personal Tetzias Mitzrayim. Getting the Kohen to go out to him and save him is similar to the Shechina and Moshe going into Egypt and saving us. **But before that happens the Metzora his own private Shabbos HaGadol to merit that salvation.** That’s what’s alluded to in the first Pasuk. First “he is brought before the Kohen” the Meforshim explain that spiritually has to take the first step of improving himself and try to make himself different from the state has fallen into. His “coming before the Kohen” is his own personal shabbos HaGadol to try to better his situation and separate himself from this state that he’s falling into and then the Kohen goes out to him to redeem him and pronounce him “Tahor” is his personal Pesach.

