

## Pesach: Bedomayich Chayi Basking in Blood's Bounty

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles  
Summary by Channie Koplowitz-Stein

In the *Hagadah*, we recite a verse in Yechezkel. "Through your blood(s) shall you live! And I said to you: 'Through your blood(s) shall you live!'" Our Sages ask why it's repeated twice. In addition, we say these verses as part of the circumcision ceremony. What is the connection?

*Bnei Yisroel* did not merit Hashem's redeeming them from *Mitzrayim*. Therefore, Hashem gave them two *mitzvot*, circumcision and the Pesach sacrifice, so they would earn it. Rav Asher Weiss notes that the first blood refers to the suffering of *Bnei Yisroel* at the hands of the nations. The second is the symbol of our noble mission and dedication represented by the *korban Pesach* and *bris milah*. With this, they incorporate the two major themes of the *Seder*, "They embittered our lives," and the second, "Let all who are hungry come and eat..." To be saved from our challenges, we must focus on the joy Hashem gives us. Sadness creates distance. When you thank Hashem in gladness, you break down barriers and can then more easily make requests of Him.

The mission of the generation that was redeemed was best concretized with the building of the *Mishkan*. The *Mishkan* had one major support beam which went through all the upright beams on three sides. Rav Weiss explains that this beam came from the tree under which Avraham offered hospitality to the wayfarers. This view supports the theme of *Bnei Yisroel* as a nation of chesed. Others say that this beam came from the staff of Yaakov

Avinu when he fled Esav, symbolizing exile. It represents the blood of our self-sacrifice in clinging to Hashem that sustains us throughout the generations of exile, adds Rabbi Pruzansky.

However, most of the commentators explain that the passage refers to the impure state of *Bnei Yisroel* in Egypt. You will live through the merit of the blood of *milah* and *Korban Pesach*. The *Beis Halevi* cites *Tehillim* 105 that links *Bnei Yisroel's* growing population to the Egyptians' hatred of the Jews. Why would a loving God cause the other nations to hate His people? *Bnei Yisroel* knew they would be enslaved for 400 years. They reasoned that if they could become less distinct, the Egyptians would not oppress them as much. Therefore, they followed up the *brit* with a plastic surgery that would seem to obfuscate it. Unfortunately, if we try to assimilate, the nations hate us even more. Certainly Egypt's antagonism toward the Jews was meant to keep *Bnei Yisroel* separate to facilitate their redemption. It is through these *mitzvot*, circumcision and *Korban Pesach* whose blood was smeared on our doorposts, that we merited being redeemed from Egypt.

Observing these two *mitzvot* demonstrated our connection to Hashem and created that opening writes the *Sefas Emes*, that Hashem could then "pry open," wide and redeem us. Since *Bnei Yisroel* needed supernatural intervention to be redeemed, their act also needed to defy nature. *Bnei Yisroel* defied the Egyptians by openly tying their lamb/god to their bedposts and painting their doorposts with its blood. These *mitzvot* actualized *Bnei*

*Yisroel's* love for Hashem from ephemeral thought to concrete action.

The body reconnected to Hashem through the *bris milah*, and the soul was reconnected through the *korban Pesach*. Therefore, we have the plural *bedomayich/by your bloods*, one for each of these connections, and repeat *bedomayich chayi* to indicate both an individual and a communal connection.

*Korban Pesach* was a way of reestablishing our bond to Hashem, for we were symbolically eating at the King's table. *Brit milah* is the gift of our physical individual connection to our Creator while *korban Pesach* established our communal connection, writes Rabbi Mintzberg. We elevate our physical desires, represented by the *brit* and strengthen our faith to come closer to Hashem emotionally and intellectually through the *korban Pesach*.

On the night of Pesach we have to live in our blood, in our emotional soul, we have to feel Hashem's love and respond with our own. We must resolve to live to sanctify Hashem's name. As *Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer* notes, "*Bedomayich chayi*," is a command for the future, not a history of our past.

Eliyahu Hanavi regularly appears at a *brit* and at the *seider*. Eliyahu Hanavi rose to heaven while still alive. He lives in both realms simultaneously, this world and the future world. If you live in this world and observe these *mitzvot*, you will be infusing this world with the aura of the World to Come.

## Netivot Olam: Two Forms of the Yetzer Hara

Based on a Naaleh.com class by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller-Gottlieb

The Maharal quotes a Gemara in *Masechet Niddah*, a person who purposefully brings himself to thoughts of desire cannot dwell within the same encampment of Hashem as it says, "It is evil in the eyes of Hashem." In another context it says, "Hashem isn't someone who desires wickedness and he doesn't dwell with evil." In a certain sense a person who has desirous thoughts is worse

than a person who actually sins. If a person did something evil it doesn't mean his essence is evil. He may have just been trapped momentarily by his passions. But a person who purposely brings himself to thoughts of desire affects his essential self.

The soul has three garments –thought, speech, and action. None of these are the soul

in essence. Each garment however, moving from the outside in, gets closer to the essential soul. Deed is the most external and the key factor because we were put into the world of action to do *tikun olam* (rectification). However you cannot recognize through the deed who the doer is. In essence if you were to see three people commit a murder and you were a Martian, each of the acts could all look the

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the same. Yet in reality, one could be a hero, one could be involved in an accident, and the third could be an actual murderer because his intent was to murder. The essential person is described more through intent than through the action itself.

Fantasies or desires come from an empty space within a person that should be full of goodness and light with the goal to accomplish tikun atzmi and tikun olam. When goodness is absent then darkness surfaces and people tend to fill that with fantasy. For

men the deepest *yetzer hara* has to do with the brit basar -the physical covenant with Hashem. For women it's *brit sefatayim*, the covenant of speech. When a person's speech or inner descriptive power (*hirhur*) is misdirected and he thinks and speaks badly of others he is filling his empty space with evil.

The Gemara tells us, Rav Shmuel bar Nachmani says in the name of Rav Yonoton - the *yetzer hara* seduces a person in this world and testifies against him in the next world. We sometimes end up in these inner debates with

ourselves. We treat the *yetzer hara* as though it is an equal contender to the *yetzer tov* when in fact we must not allow this sort of equality to take place.

In this world the *yetzer hara* resonates within us. Attempting to repress it is like shutting up oneself and the truth is that in this world it is a part of us. Only in the future world will the soul experience a rude awakening when it will see that what seemed to us to be authentic was really superficial and false.

## The Words of Shlomo Hamelech

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Yitzchak Cohen

*Shlomo Hamelech* tells us in *Kohelet*, "In the morning, sow your seeds, and at night, do not rest your hand, for you do not know which will succeed, this one or that one, or whether both of them will be equally good." The *Metzudas David* explains, we cannot know which direction the wind will go, whether or not one particular season will be good for the crops or not. *Kohelet* is telling us, plant in the seasons that are good for growth. But don't rest during other times, for it could be both times are good and perhaps only one crop will succeed. Don't take a chance on one. Be ready to work even during a bad season, because at the end it may turn out to be the most successful. This is the simple meaning. However, the *Mishna* tells us more.

The sixth *Mishna* in *Avot d'Rav Nosson* tells us, "If you learned *Torah* when you were young, learn *Torah* even when you are old." In fact, learning *Torah* when one is old may garner even more reward. Hashem doesn't look for end results. He wants our efforts. The more the exertion, the greater the reward. Likewise, *Chazal* say, "If you learned *Torah* when you were wealthy, learn *Torah* even when you are poor." The reward for learning despite difficulties is greater than learning when one has it easy.

The Gemara in *Chagiga* says, if a person travels six months to learn *Torah*, then learns

for a day and travels back another six months, he gets reward as if he learned for a whole year. Most *mitzvot* are not that way. If I travel three days to get to a wedding, I don't get credit for the days I traveled. Yet the *Mishna* tells us, if a student travels during Sukkot to learn *Torah* from his Rebbe, he is exempt on the way from the *mitzva* of *sukka*. This is based on the principle, "One who is engaged in a *mitzva* is exempt from another *mitzva*." If one is traveling to learn *Torah*, the act of getting there is also part of the *mitzva*. Learning *Torah* is not an end result. The *mitzva* is *l'asok b'Torah*-to be busy with *Torah*. Becoming a *talmid chacham* may or may not happen. There's no halacha to become one. Even if you don't remember what you learned, you still get reward for your efforts. *Chazal* say, don't rest, plant the seeds. It may not be the best time to do it. But do it anyway. Study *Torah* in all circumstances. "*Ki heim chayeinu*-For the *Torah* is our life."

Rabbi Meir gives another explanation. If you learned by one *Torah* teacher, don't consider it enough. Go and learn from others as it says in *Mishlei*, "Drink the blessed water..." The commentators explain, when it comes to learning an approach in *Gemara*, limit yourself to one teacher. However, when it comes to *sevaros* (analysis) of the text, learn from multiple teachers.

Rabbi Yehoshua gives another explanation. "If you married when you were young and became widowed, marry again when you are older..." Even if you are old and cannot have any children, don't rest..." And if you can still have children, have more. Each child is a blessing from heaven. Don't worry about financial burdens. Hashem provides.

Another way to understand the verse in *Kohelet* is-If you gave charity in the morning, give again in the evening. Perhaps one or the other may not have been necessary or perhaps they were both needed. *Tzedakah* is compared to planting, because when you plant you take a chance. You don't know if the seeds will grow. When a person says he needs your help, perhaps he really doesn't. Still we have to take the chance and help him. We have to be, oseh *tzedakot*, busy with good deeds. We learn this from Hashem who constantly gives us numerous other blessings unconditionally. Hashem too takes a chance and plants. He gives us unlimited potential, *kochot hanefesh*, and there are times when a person wastes it or never uses it. Still Hashem does not stop giving. So too, the *Mishna* tells us, if you are able to give, give. Don't think that if you already gave you're now exempt.

May we continue to constantly plant, in our quest to reach *tikkun* and *sheleimut* in serving Hashem.