

Continued from page 50

This is why the Bris bein HaBesorim is important. Here the eternal relationship between Klal Yisrael and Hashem was forged. Avrohom was told to go “outside” to see the stars – this would symbolize how Israel eternally operates “outside” the natural order of existence. So even if his descendants would later sin, their sins could be atoned and wiped away because they were never intrinsic to their selves (Maharal, Gevuros Hashem). Their inner, pure core could never be tarnished or lost in exile.

Their relationship to Hashem meant that they were not restricted to the laws of the natural order. Despite being physical incapacitated and spiritually dead in Egypt, they were not lost. It was still possible for the Jewish People to “cry out” to Hashem and be redeemed. And their survival would be conditional upon their supernatural relationship with Hashem – one that transcends the natural order.

This relationship will be preserved for time immemorial (Maharal, Gevuros Hashem). This is the definitive object referred to in the pronouncement “*Vehi she’omda*’ THIS is what remains” – i.e. the eternal, supernatural relationship with Hashem that stretches to all generations. Here Jewish survival is assured despite all of their evil antagonists.

The secret of Seder night was where all the rules that conform to nature were ripped up. The very rules of creation were undone – the 10 Plagues being a reversal of the 10 Sayings of Creation corrupted by the Egyptian refusal to see Hashem within the universe (Sefas Emes). The process of redemption in the 10 Plagues was not simply judgement or revenge upon the Egyptians for their cruelty; the 10 Plagues brought about gilui Shechinah, “revelation of the Divine Presence”.

Mitzrayim, “Egypt” is the bastion of *mitz’orim*, “constrictions” (Degel Machanah Ephraim). On that night, the very seder, “order”

creation was undone. Klal Yisrael was freed from these bonds. Redemption came because they were exclusively attached to Hashem – having broken free from attachment to all natural matters. Here a new Seder, “order” was introduced – one that operates supernaturally. And they were able to touch the Shechinah.

This is the crux of the Seder story. It traces the Egyptian exile all the way back to the supernatural bond forged with Hashem together with Avrohom at the Bris Bein HaBesorim. Their historic survival – where they are forever bound to Hashem – is the guarantee of their eternity.

How to relive the Exodus

We have noted the historic context of the Exodus where Yisroel were freed from the limits imposed by their natural setting, by their elevation, to the supernatural realm. Now the Hagaddah proceeds to provide the key to practically and experientially feel the supernatural element, and the subsequent joy that follows.

The highlight of the Seder, as mentioned by Rabban Gamliel is the three foods: Pesach, matzah and maror. Here the Jew has to eat, or, in case of korban Pesach in exile, tap into their essential symbolisms that contain within them the themes of the night. We ingest these foods as the means to “taste the way to freedom”.

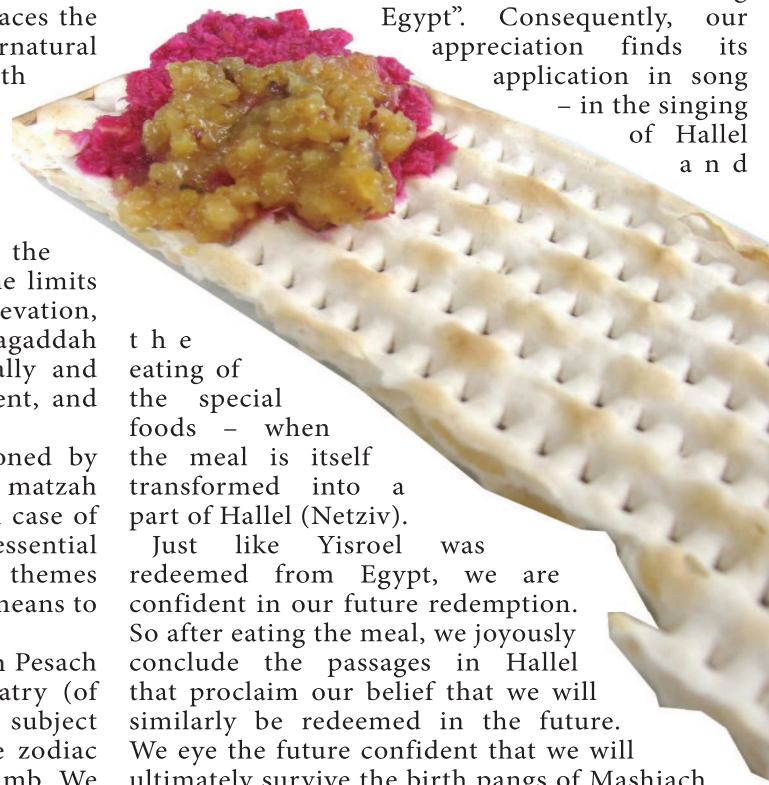
PESACH: The slaughtering of the korban Pesach taps into the rejection of Egyptian idolatry (of sheep) to demonstrate how Yisroel is not subject to the astrological forces of nature – the zodiac for the Jewish month of Nissan being a lamb. We were directly under Hashem Who “passed over” (pasach) the houses of Klal Yisroel because their supernatural bond meant they were directly under Hashem and not subject to the natural realm.

MATZAH: Matzah is about tapping into the dimension not limited by time or space. This food was not exclusively as a result of historic events – as the laws to eat the korban Pesach together with matzah were given a fortnight before the Exodus! It reflects our supernatural relationship to Hashem that goes beyond the natural order – something alluded to in the first Seder at chatzos, “midnight”. Midnight cannot be measured because it is a concept that cannot physically exist – there is no one moment that is midpoint of the night (R Yochanan Bechhofer). But the idea is Hashem saying, just like matzah is something that cannot be subject to the natural laws of time, so will I lift you out of Egypt in a moment that is beyond time”. They had to move immediately with no hesitation. They could not stop to first make a plan. Otherwise, this would flow into the natural world of space and time. The opportunity of transcendence would be lost forever.

MAROR: The eating of bitter herbs on Pesach seems strange. We do not have anything comparable in other festivals to recall, for example, the suffering of Greek oppression on Chanukah. So why do we remember the bitterness of the Egyptian exile on Pesach? The answer is that maror was the secret of our very survival. The bitter exile stripped away any basic existence other than deveykus b’Hashem, “attachment to Hashem”. We had no one to turn to

– except to cry out to Hashem. By tasting maror, we feel the bitterness of attachment to anything other than a connection to Hashem.

The Hagoddoh continues to state how this is the experience every Jew, through the generations, has to personally relive – “every person is obligated to see himself as if he is leaving Egypt”. Consequently, our appreciation finds its application in song – in the singing of Hallel and



the eating of the special foods – when the meal is itself transformed into a part of Hallel (Netziv).

Just like Yisroel was redeemed from Egypt, we are confident in our future redemption. So after eating the meal, we joyously conclude the passages in Hallel that proclaim our belief that we will similarly be redeemed in the future. We eye the future confident that we will ultimately survive the birth pangs of Mashiach and the resurrection. We praise the greatness of Hashem by ultimately seeing the oneness of Hashem in everything within creation (the song *Echad Mi Yodea*).

So the Hagoddoh is an incredible journey of discovery.

We open the Hagoddoh with questions designed to turn us into “seekers”. We relive the Exodus to savour the sweet taste of freedom. This is the spiritual freedom from our earlier bondage to the limitations of the natural world worshipped by Egypt. At Yetzias Mitzrayim, all limitations were removed. Hashem Himself lifted us up to the “supernatural realm” – as per his promise to Avrohom at the bris bein habesorim. We internalize these messages through eating the special foods and fulfilling the mitzvos of the night.

The real freedom of Exodus is the freedom to be oneself: to be in the situation where everything and anything is possible. We have the opportunity to “jump” up and to live on the supernatural realm. The power of the Seder frees us to become the person we dream to be. The only limitation to what we can reach is dependent upon the extent that we are open to it.

Let us join Klal Yisroel to relive the original Yetzias Mitzrayim to attain the freedom to be oneself and reach the greatest spiritual heights.

Adapted from a series of Pesach shiurim given last month by Rabbi Rowe (Aish UK) to the new women’s programme Orah in North West London. Sunday and Wednesday nights from 8:15pm @ Hasmonian Girls School, For more info please email info@orah.org.uk, Orah is a new Torah centre for women of all ages in the London Jewish Community.

