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PARSHA ENCOUNTERS

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Parshas Metzoraח ✍️ Rabbi Dovid Rokach

Faultless

The *psukim* in this week's *parsha* specify several items brought by a *metzoraח* when he seeks to become pure: *And there shall be taken for the one who becomes pure two live kosher birds, cedar wood, red woolen thread, and grass* (*Vayikra*, 14:5.) *Rashi* explains that each item symbolizes a characteristic of the *metzoraח's* behavior. Chirping birds represent excessive speech and a magnificent cedar tree represents arrogance, both of which are traits that lead to the sin of *lashon horah*. The simple thread and grass, in contrast, represent the quality of humility that the *metzoraח* must undertake if he wishes to improve. Although it seems logical for the *metzoraח* to bring items symbolizing his efforts to become pure, it is less clear why items symbolizing his shortcomings are brought. What is the purpose of dwelling on past faults when it is now time to move forward?

One reason for the *metzoraח* to contemplate his previous shortcomings is that formulating an effective solution typically requires a clear understanding of the problem. The *Mesilas Yeshorim* states that the *yetzer harah* makes sure people are too preoccupied with everyday life to consider the merit of their behavior. If one engages in even a few moments of introspection, however, it is only a matter of time before simple logic leads to self improvement. Indeed, a fundamental first step of the *teshuvah* process is to verbally acknowledge past sins through *viduy*. The *metzoraח* is required to bring items that force him to confront his past weaknesses so that he can appreciate the steps he must take to improve.

In addition to clarifying where improvement is needed, contemplating one's faults can also provide the tools for further growth. *Rashi* states that the commandment in *Shema* to serve *Hashem* with all of our hearts requires that both the *yetzer hatov* and *yetzer harah* be utilized for *avodas Hashem*. (*Dvarim*, 6:5.) But how does one serve *Hashem* with the *yetzer harah*? Rav Eliyahu Soloveichik *shlita* explains that, in this context, each *yetzer* refers to certain *midos*. The *pasuk* is teaching us that although some *midos* typically promote *mitzvos* (*yetzer hatov*) and

others often lead to sin (*yetzer harah*), none of our *midos* are inherently limited to good or evil. For example, anger can easily cause numerous sins, yet it is sometimes necessary to express anger in response to inappropriate behavior. The obligation of serving *Hashem* with all of our hearts therefore requires us to harness all of our *midos* for *avodas Hashem*.

When the *metzoraח* brings items representing unfavorable *midos*, he is not merely dwelling on past faults. The same *midos* that previously led to sin can be made part of the *teshuvah* process if they are instead utilized in the proper way. Indeed, the *Gemarah* states that a *metzoraח* who is a *talmid chochom* should use his power of speech for *Torah* study. (*Aruchin*, 15a.) The importance of transforming faults into positive qualities is perhaps further symbolized by the opposite fates of the two birds brought by the *metzoraח*. (*Vayikra*, 14:5-7.) Setting one bird free while the other bird is killed illustrates that the same power of speech (represented by these birds) can be used in ways that lead either to life or to death.

This time of year is particularly well suited for changing faults into strengths. In connection with the *korban Pesach*, the *pasuk* states: *Seven days you shall eat with it matzos, bread of suffering, because you rushed to leave Egypt* (*Dvarim*, 16:3.) The *Seforno* explains that *matzo* symbolizes both slavery and freedom. Just like the pressure of forced labor allowed no time for bread to rise during the *shibud*, the pressure of our rush to freedom at *yitzias mitrza'im* also required us to suffice with *matzos*. The *matzo* therefore demonstrates how *Hashem* transformed a negative quality that characterized our suffering for so many years into a symbol of redemption. May we be *zoche* during this time to transform any of our own personal faults into tools for *avodas Hashem* and thus bring about the transformation of our present *galus* into the final *geulah*.

Rabbi Rokach learns daily at the kollel.

HALACHA ENCOUNTERS

Shabbos Erev Pesach

A special Halacha Encounters by the Rosh Kollel shlit"א
HaRav Dovid Zucker

With Erev Pesach falling out on Shabbos this year, there are many halachic and practical issues that must be dealt with. We have to be able to have a chametz-free, changed over kitchen for Shabbos, and at the same time try to have three meals on "bread" before 10:11 (All times given are for the Chicago area) Shabbos morning – all with our sanity and Oneg Shabbos intact. We will try to present a clear, step by step approach to navigating through this Shabbos in order to make it to the afternoon in a halachically sound and relaxing way.

Bechoros, Bedikah, Biur and Bitul

Bechoros fast this year on Thursday. Bedikas Chametz is performed, as usual, on Thursday night at nightfall. The beracha is said as usual, as is the post-bedikah "kol chamira vichamiya" that we say following the bedikah on a regular year. From that point on, all chametz that one does *not* know about has been made bateil and ownerless. On Friday morning, we do the regular burning of chametz at the same time we would as if it were in fact Erev Pesach. One, at this point, burns any chametz he is aware of that he will *not* be needing still for Shabbos. We do *not* recite then the "kol chamira" that is usually recited after the burning. Only after the final Shabbos morning meal, **before 11:30 am Shabbos morning, will one recite the final "kol chamira vichamiya,"** making bateil and ownerless any and all chametz, whether one is aware of it or not.

Preparing for Shabbos

Before Shabbos, the kitchen should be made 100% ready for Pesach, with all courses and dishes chametz-free, cooked as if they could be eaten on Pesach. By the time Shabbos begins, the house must be completely ready for Pesach – with all the sold or sealed areas and rooms closed off.

However, in order to be able to make Hamotzi at the Shabbos meals (keeping in mind that one may not eat matzoh this entire Shabbos), one should purchase challah rolls¹ for Lechem Mishna for the Shabbos meals. One should plan on having approximately a half a challah roll per person per meal.² These rolls should be carefully sealed in a plastic bag and put somewhere where they will not spill or cause crumbs to fall out.

Timing the Meals

The Shabbos night meal has no time restrictions at all. **On Shabbos morning, however, one must be finished eating all chametz before 10:11 am. B'dieved if one did not begin his first Shabbos meal before 10:11, he may still do so provided that all chametz is eaten by 10:34.** Therefore men daven very early on Shabbos morning. After coming home from shul, the generally accepted practice is to have two bread meals, one after the other. The family should make Kiddush, wash and eat the rolls from the first meal. At that point, many have fish or some of the main Shabbos meal and then bentch. Following the meal, one should take a half hour or so break or one should actually "do something," for instance, go for a stroll or learn Torah. One may then wash and make Hamotzi again, for Shalosh Seudos, finish the rolls and eat whatever part of their normal Shabbos meal remains. **As long as the rolls are finished by 10:11 and any leftovers fully discarded or**

flushed by 11:30, this meal can continue for as long as one wants. **[One must make sure to say the final "kol chamira" before 11:30 as well. B'dieved one may still say it until 11:41.]** Since the second morning meal may not qualify as Shalosh Seudos according to all opinions, in the afternoon, some time after midday, one should have some meat, fish or fruits as another Shalosh Seudos. One who eats gebroktz on Pesach should preferably have a form of cooked matzoh meal, kneidelach or the like.

Lechem Mishna

The Shabbos meal should begin with the regular Hamotzi made on the Lechem Mishna. Each person partaking of the challah should have an open paper napkin in front of him or her and carefully eat the roll over this napkin, taking care that no crumbs fall onto the table or Pesach utensils. When one finishes the roll, if there are only crumbs left on the napkin, the napkin should be carefully shaken into the toilet and then crumpled up and discarded in the regular garbage. One should then clean his teeth out well from any chametz. If one has braces he may be recommended to eat egg matzah (see below note 1). As it may be difficult to make sure that children do not spread chametz around the area, one may prefer not to give children chametz rolls. They may be given egg matzoh instead. Once the napkins and rolls have been removed from the table, the Pesachdik meal can continue normally.

Any actual pieces of roll left after the final meal should be broken into small enough pieces to be flushed down the toilet. One should, preferably, have in mind prior to flushing the chametz down the toilet, that he is being mikayeim the mitzvah of destroying chametz with this act. Preferably, he should have this in mind prior to entering the bathroom.

Eating the Meals

If one uses chametz utensils to eat the meals, complications can arise regarding serving from Pesach utensils onto the chametz utensils. Additionally, one may not wash the chametz utensils on Shabbos – they would have to be put away with the sold chametz as is and wait until after Pesach for cleaning. Therefore, the meals should be eaten using Pesach utensils. If one finds it easier and more relaxing, and therefore more enhancing of their enjoyment of Shabbos, to use paper and plastic, they may do so lichatchila and do not need to be concerned with the apparent lack of kavod to Shabbos that this portrays.³

Additional Halachos

One may not make any of the Seder preparations on Shabbos. Additionally, while one may (and perhaps should) rest on Shabbos in order to be able to be awake and vibrant at the Seder, one may not say that he or she is resting in order to be awake for the Seder. One may learn the Hagaddah and prepare "divrei Torah" for the Seder on Shabbos.

¹ Alternatively, one may use egg matzoh for the Lechem Mishna. If one does opt to do so, he must be careful that everyone present eats a sufficient amount of the egg matzoh (or egg matzoh together with other food) to qualify making a Hamotzi, as according to many poskim, egg matzoh is Mezonos, even when used at a Shabbos meal. If one uses egg matzoh, he must also be sure that the egg matzoh is the kind that is permissible to be owned on Pesach.

² Every person should have a k'beitzah at each meal in order to make the Shabbos meal "chashuv," as well as to wash Netilas Yadayim with a bracha.

³ See Rema Orach Chaim 306:1.