

Bais Yaacov Bnos Malka Newsletter

לעילוי נשמת יצחק עקיבא בן אהרן ז"ל

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ניסן תשפ"ד



The Dual Symbolism of *Matza*

Matza is a unique food in that it has a dual symbolism – it symbolizes both slavery and *geula*.

The Torah refers to *matza* as “להם עוני,” “the bread of affliction” (*Devarim* 16:3). We ate *matza* as slaves in *Mitzrayim*. Part of the oppression was that the *Mitzri'im* gave us food that we would not enjoy as much as bread. The Avudraham explains further that *matza* takes longer to digest than *chometz*. If one wants to feed his slaves and give them enough energy to continue to work for a long time, then *matza* is more economical than *chometz*. The *Mitzri'im* thus gave us *matza* in order to save time and money. The Seforno offers another reason that *matza* symbolizes slavery. The *Mitzri'im* would rush us back to work during our lunch breaks, and we were forced to go back to work early, before we were ready. Therefore, the dough which was baked in the oven did not have time to rise, and we were forced to eat *matza* instead of *chometz*. Thus, it is quite clear that *matza* symbolizes the *shiabud*, the terrible slavery and oppression that *Am Yisroel* experienced in *Mitzrayim*.

At the same time, *matza* symbolizes the *geula*. The Torah tells us (*Shemos* 12:39) that we ate *matza* because the *Mitzri'im* rushed us out of *Mitzrayim*. The *Sefer HaChinuch* writes that *matza* reminds us of the *nissim* that we experienced, in that we left *Mitzrayim* so quickly. It is interesting that *matza* is baked quickly; the dough is taken out of the oven before it develops fully. Similarly, the *seforim* say, *Hashem* took us out of *Mitzrayim* early, before the full, original four hundred years of slavery were completed. *Matza* is therefore an appropriate symbol for the *geula*.

Chazal interpret “להם עוני” to mean “bread of talking,” bread over which we say many things. We are supposed to tell the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* in front of the *matza*, while we see it. For this reason, we keep the *matzos* uncovered during most of *Maggid*. *Chazal* clearly interpreted the *posuk* to not only refer to *matza* as a symbol of slavery, but also as a symbol of the *geula*.

Am Yisroel actually ate *matza* twice when they left *Mitzrayim*. First, we ate *matza* at night, together with the *korban Pesach*. We ate *matza* again the next day, when we actually left *Mitzrayim*, when the *Mitzri'im* rushed us out. The Abarbanel writes that this represents the two symbolisms of *matza*. The *matza* we ate during the day clearly represents the *matza* of *geula*; we ate *matza* because the *Mitzri'im* rushed us out and our dough had no time to rise. The *matza* we ate at night with the *korban Pesach*, however, symbolized the *shiabud*.

The obligation to eat *matza* on the night of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is mentioned in the *posuk* together with the obligation to eat *maror* (*Shemos* 12:8). *Maror* clearly symbolizes the slavery, and since the Torah groups the *matza* together with the *maror*, it seems that the *matza* we eat with the *korban Pesach* has the same theme as the *maror* – the theme of the *shiabud*. Thus, the Abarbanel explains, we find the two themes of *matza* reflected in the two times we ate *matza* when we left *Mitzrayim*.

Both of these aspects of *matza* are mentioned at the *seder* during *Maggid*. We refer to *matza* at the beginning of *Maggid* as the “bread of affliction,” “הָאֵל לַחֲמַא עֲנִיָּא.” At the end of *Maggid*, we refer to *matza* as the bread of the *geula*: “Why do we eat *matza* tonight? Because the *Mitzri'im* rushed us out.” It turns out that we begin *Maggid* focusing on *matza* as the symbol of slavery and we end *Maggid* focusing on *matza* as the symbol of *geula*. During *Maggid*, we are describing and talking about the process of leaving *Mitzrayim*. We begin *Maggid*, in a sense, as slaves, and we end *Maggid* as a free nation. It works out beautifully that the two themes of *matza* are the bookends of *Maggid*. We begin *Maggid* focusing on one theme of *matza* – we are slaves, “הָאֵל לַחֲמַא עֲנִיָּא” – and when we end *Maggid*, we are free and *matza* is the bread of *geula*.

Why did *Hashem* work it out that *matza*, which had been the symbol of slavery, also becomes the symbol of *geula*? *Hashem* could have orchestrated *Yetzias Mitzrayim* in a way that the symbol of *geula* would have been, say, Brooklyn Bakery brownies. (This certainly would have made it easier to eat a *kezayis* within two minutes...) What is the message in the fact that the same *matza* that had been the symbol of slavery suddenly becomes the symbol of the *geula*?

One explanation is that this teaches us *Hashem's* complete control over world events. On Pesach, we experience *giluy Shechina*. When something completely unexpected happens and this unexpected occurrence is part of the salvation of *Am Yisroel*, that reflects *giluy Shechina*. The very same *matza* that for generations was a negative symbol – the symbol of slavery and oppression – suddenly becomes the symbol of *geula* overnight. That is something only *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* Himself could bring about. The fact that *matza* has this dual symbolism is a further expression of the *giluy Shechina* that we are experiencing on Pesach.

These are some of the ideas that we can take with us into our lives from the various symbolisms of *matza*.

Have a wonderful Shabbos, and Chag Kasher Vsameach!

Himnon competition! The whole school gathered to perform this year's theme song and dance in honor of Rosh Chodesh. Slushies were awarded to the best class performances!



Kita Gimmel mock Seder!



In Kebatz "Trip around the World", the girls are in Japan. They learned how to write some words in Kanji symbols, and made delicious banana popsicles-- frozen bananas are a popular treat in Japan!



In preparation for the END of Pesach and Shirat Hayam, each girl made a pretty "tof Miriam"-- they came out so nicely!