

4) For whom is it important that we remember our exodus? Why?

5) We are told that telling the Pesach story of our exodus from Egypt only 'counts' when there is *Matza* and *Maror* (bitter herbs) in front of us (at the Seder). What do you think is the significance of having these physical items in front of us when we tell the story?

[torahsparks@uscj.org](mailto:torahsparks@uscj.org)



*Chag Kasher V'Sameach!*

The weekly Haftarah Commentary  
By Rabbi Mordechai Silverstein, Senior CY Faculty in Talmud and Midrash,  
may be found at: <http://www.uscj.org.il/learn/commentaries/>

Copyright 2017, The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

*The Conservative Yeshiva offers Jews of all backgrounds the skills for studying Jewish texts in a supportive Jewish community. We are a vibrant, open-minded, fully egalitarian community of committed Jews who learn, practice, and grow together. Learning is lishma, for its own sake, without exams or papers. Our goal is to give students the ability and the desire to continue Jewish learning and practice throughout their lives.*

*New applications are welcome for full or part-time study.*

Learn more at [www.conservativeyeshiva.org](http://www.conservativeyeshiva.org)

Or contact Rabbi Joel Levy, Rosh Yeshiva, Director

The Conservative Yeshiva at: [cyoffice@uscj.org](mailto:cyoffice@uscj.org)



**The Shirley & Jacob Fuchsberg Center for Conservative Judaism**

8 Agron Street, P.O. Box 7456, Jerusalem, Israel 94265

Tel: 972-2-625-6386 Fax: 972-2-623-4127

[Israel@uscj.org](mailto:Israel@uscj.org) • [www.uscj.org/Israel/](http://www.uscj.org/Israel/)



The Conservative Yeshiva is a Project of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism



## TORAH SPARKS

### *Shabbat Hagadol*

### *Parashat Tsav*

April 2-8, 2017 – 12 Nisan 5777

Annual (Leviticus 6:1-8:36): Etz Hayim p. 613-625; Hertz p. 429-438

Triennial (Leviticus 6:1-7:10): Etz Hayim p. 613-617; Hertz p. 429-432

Haftarah (Malachi 3:4-:24, 23): Etz Hayim p. 1295-1298; Hertz p. 1005-1008

## Matzah All Year Long

**Rabbi Rami Schwartz** is the founding director of Ramah Day Camp of Greater Washington, DC, and the rabbi of a new Jewish community of 20s and 30s in the greater DC area.

With Seder a few days away, the cadence of those four questions comes into focus. "What makes tonight different from other nights, such that on all other nights we eat *hametz* (leavened bread) or *matzah*, but tonight only *matzah*?" It has always struck me as odd: other than the extra boxes of Streit's I try to finish by mid-May, *matzah* is not a fixture in my year-round diet. Though its consumption is not forbidden by Jewish law, other than just prior to Passover, it is by definition the bread of a certain season.

The *haggadah* begins with the proclamation: "*Ha lahma anya* - This is the bread of poverty, which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt!" and it concludes by explaining that this *matzah* "is because the dough which our ancestors prepared did not have sufficient time to rise..." (Ex. 12:39). With a bread so symbolic as to conjure the paradox of both captivity and liberation, why would the opening question of the *haggadah* refer to this so Positively-Passover bread as a food consumed year-round?

How appropriate a question to ask on this Shabbat HaGadol, as it aligns with *parashat Tsav*! God's instructions for Aaron and his sons regarding their sacrificial rites include an oft-overlooked appearance of this bread of poverty:

*Ha'Noteret mimena* - What is left of [the *mincha* offering] shall be eaten by Aaron and his sons; **it shall be eaten as unleavened cakes** [*matzah*], in the sacred precinct; they shall eat it in the enclosure of the Tent of Meeting. **It shall not be baked with leaven** [*hametz*]. I have given it as their portion from My offerings by fire; it is most holy, like the sin offering and the guilt offering. (Lev. 6:9-10).

We learn here that the priests "kept Passover" for one of their frequent meals, the *mincha* offering, all year long. Rashi emphasizes the prohibition against mixing this flour-cake with *hametz*, and Ralbag attributes this prohibition to the general ritual avoidance of mixtures that were of common concern in the rabbinic tradition.

If *matzah* was in fact eaten — and *hametz* avoided — on occasion all year round, what distinguishes the Passover *matzah* as a unique spiritual experience of redemption?

R' Isaac Abravanel (15<sup>th</sup> C., Spain) suggested that the key to understanding this lies in the description of the leftover (*noteret*) as "My offering," as in "from My table." He compared this to a King who rewards his servants with food from his own table. What happens to be on God's table, in this case, is *matzah*. After all, we learned last week that the *mincha* offering is made of flour and oil packed into unleavened cakes (Lev. 2:3), so of course the leftovers will be unleavened. The distinction of this priestly meal is that it makes it to God's table at all, whereas the other portions of a priest's diet are made up of unburned tithes (Abravanel).

There is a difference between food that comes from the tables of people and food from the table of God. Food from God's table retains the properties of that table and transforms a meal into a Divine experience. To eat *matzah* is to transport oneself to that special place, to sit at God's table and be nourished by the Source of Life.

How different is this night, indeed, that we should all receive nourishment from the Master of the Universe, and share together in that portion of redemption.

## A Vort for Shabbat Hagadol Parashat Tsav

Rabbi Daniel Goldfarb, CY Faculty

The Torah instructs that the sin-offering (*korban hatat*), associated with misdeeds, be offered in the same place (the holy of holies) as the burnt offering (*korban olah*), a sacrifice expressing dedication. The *Ma'agelei Tsedek* says this is to encourage the sinner not to be depressed, that penitence for his sins can put him in the same place before God as the *tsadik*. R' Yisrael Salanter (1809 - 1883, Lithuania/Germany, father of the Musar movement) said that the *korban olah* actually comes to atone for sinful *thoughts*, and where one repents for sinful actions one should repent for sinful thoughts, since they so often lead to misdeeds.

## Table Talk

Vered Hollander-Goldfarb, CY Faculty

*This is Shabbat Hagadol – the Shabbat before Pesach. In honor of Leil Haseder that will take place this upcoming week (on Monday and Tuesday nights), the questions this week are dedicated to the holiday that celebrates asking questions.*

### Haggadah Shel Pesach

- 1) In the Haggadah we read about 4 children who have different reactions to the events surrounding the Pesach Seder. Look in the Haggadah – what is each one called? What do you think is the connection between them? Who do you sympathize with? Why?
- 2) In the Haggada we sing about all the good things that God did for us, and if He had done only this or that it would have been sufficient for us (Dayenu). Pay attention to the points we choose to highlight in this song. What line(s) would you add if you were writing the song today?
- 3) We consider the story of Pesach one of redemption, Geula. (The root of it, Gimmel- Aleph-Lamed, is found in the Haggada. Keep your eyes open.) What do you think is the difference between redemption and salvation (as we might define the story of Purim)?