

B"H

## **PREPARE FOR THE COMING OF MOSHIACH!**

### ***BEGIN WITH A GRIN***

A shepherd goes with his flock of sheep to the pasture. Suddenly, a person in a nice suit comes over and says, "What an impressive flock you have! Tell me, what do you feed them?"

"Nothing," replied the shepherd. "I let them root about in the garbage and they eat what they find."

"What?! That's animal abuse! I'm a supervisor from the Agricultural Ministry and I'm fining you 1000 shekels!"

The next day, the shepherd take the flock out again. Another person asks him, "You have a nice flock. Tell me, what do you feed them?"

"Uh," the shepherd thought for a bit. "They graze on the grass here, in the field."

"What?! That destroys public property. I am a city supervisor and I'm fining you a 1000 shekels!"

The next day, the shepherd went out again and a third person asked him the same question, "Please tell me, what do you feed your flock?"

"Listen," said the shepherd, "every morning I give each sheep ten shekels so they can go and buy whatever they like."

### ***PREPARED LAMB***

In parshas Bo, we read Hashem's command to the Jewish people to prepare for leaving Egypt. They were to take a lamb (meant for the korban Pesach) on the tenth of Nissan. The question even a "ben chameish l'mikra" would have is what's the rush? Why did they have to buy a lamb four days before it would be slaughtered and keep it in their homes? It would be far easier to go to the market on erev Pesach and choose a fat lamb for the Yom Tov meal ... Who needs a lamb running around the house for four days?

Rashi brings the explanation of Rebbi Masya ben Charash who says that the Jewish people were bare of mitzvos, not having even a single mitzva in whose merit they could be redeemed. Furthermore, they were immersed in idol worship. They had grown used to the idol-worshiping way of life of the Egyptians. This is why G-d gave them two mitzvos, the blood of the korban Pesach and the blood of circumcision, so they would be somewhat "clothed" and to extricate them from idol worship. As Rashi puts it, "Withdraw and take for yourselves" - withdraw from idolatry and take for yourselves sheep for the mitzva.

Sounds extraordinary, doesn't it? G-d gives the Jewish people a chance to free themselves of decades of spiritual deep freeze with two mitzvos!

That sounds good and even wonderful but that's no answer! The question was why did G-d command them to take a lamb on the tenth of the month, four days before it would be slaughtered. R' Masya ben Charash does not answer that. He only speaks about the "Pesach blood," the blood of the lamb that was slaughtered on the fourteenth of Nissan while saying nothing about the lamb being taken on the tenth! Aside from that, how does the "blood of

circumcision” come in here. Who was talking about that? We asked about buying a lamb not about calling for a mohel!

The Rebbe explains this in an amazing sicha. Going out of Egypt was not just the physical liberation of the Jewish people from Egyptian servitude. It was primarily a spiritual exodus, a spiritual liberation from the corrupt Egyptian influence. Egypt was the superpower of the world at that time, advanced in every area of science and material development. At the same time, Egypt was the lowest of all nations as far as morality and human decency. They had a negative spiritual impact on the Jewish people. The corrupt influence and spiritual frost that the Jewish people were in at the time were expressed in two ways: 1) the absence of positive doing, i.e. living without mitzvos, a life without holiness, a life without faith and, 2) negative behavior as seen in their immersion in idol worship. They not only worshiped idols; they were steeped in idol worship... Their minds were saturated with the beliefs of Egyptian idolatry.

### ***PREPARE FOR TAKEOFF***

In response to this, G-d gave them two types of mitzvos: one positive mitzva – circumcision, which serves as the covenant between a Jew and G-d that is carved into the body and sanctifies it. And an additional commandment to address the negative - the korban Pesach whose purpose was to disconnect the Jewish people from Egyptian idolatry.

It's important to remember that the sheep was one of the gods that the Egyptians worshiped. The purpose of the korban was for the Jewish people to take a lamb they had become accustomed to deify and worship, and slaughter it and eat it roasted, in order to disconnect them from believing in idols, to the point of absolute heresy.

At the same time, it was necessary to give them something to connect to, true faith for which it is possible and even worthwhile to give one's life for, firm faith in the Creator of the universe and the One who directs it to the point of a permanent covenant. Circumcision! [Because, after all, in life, it is very easy “to take” but very hard “to switch”.] Disengaging from the yetzer ha'ra of idol worship without exchanging it for belief in a Creator creates a dangerously deep psychological and emotional schism, which is why G-d gave them the “blood of circumcision,” in order to connect them with an infinite and eternal bond to belief in Him!

Based on this, we also understand why it was necessary to take a lamb four days in advance of slaughtering it. Disengaging from such an entrenched way of life doesn't happen in an instant. If the Jewish people would have taken a lamb and immediately slaughtered it, that would have been hasty action resulting from momentary enthusiasm but it would not have provided a process of parting ways with a deeply entrenched belief system. After four days though, the Jewish people came to the momentous act of slaughter with full awareness and an inner decision to free themselves from the foolishness of idol worship.

We see an example of this in the test of the Akeida. G-d shows Avrohom the place of the Akeida after three days of traveling. Why didn't He show it immediately? “So that it wouldn't be said that He confused him and confounded him suddenly and deranged his mind.” A four day wait shows that something was done in a premeditated manner and full awareness. The four day wait in Egypt was the best preparation for leaving Egypt both physically and emotionally.

This provides a lesson for our generation, the generation of Geula. If the Geula from Egypt required preparation, all the more so does the Geula from this final exile require preparation. We cannot suffice with petty stuff. We need to leave with “great wealth,” full of mitzvos (even more than) like a pomegranate!

And it's not enough to be involved just with ourselves, with our own garments and "buttons." We need to go out and find Jews who are bare (through no fault of their own) and provide them with garments of mitzvos!

***TO CONCLUDE WITH A STORY***

We will end with a story about the importance of preparing for every mitzva and mainly in connection with tefilla. Rabbi Yisroel of Salant once asked the Rebbe Maharash why Chassidim take a long time over their prayers when, during prayer alien thoughts come to a person and wouldn't it be better to hurry up and get away from them? It's like Jews traveling in a wagon and shkotzim come and throw rocks at them. Obviously, they should whip the horses and get away as quickly as possible!

The Rebbe Maharash said, that's true when the youth are chasing the wagon but when they succeed in getting on the wagon, escaping won't help. On the contrary, the wagon must be stopped and they need to be fought with and thrown out. The analogue is understood. When evil is found within man, the way to get rid of it is not in haste but with preparations and patience.

Good Shabbos!