

# SHABOS HAGADOL

Parshas Tzav

By Rabbi Menachem Rokeach

The name of this Shabos, “the Great Shabos”, “Shabos Hagadol” abounds with exaltation. By honoring it with this name, a compliment is tendered to both, to Shabos and to Passover. Just to list a few of the many reasons why it is called by this cherished name will fill the pages of this essay, and hopefully will remain on the Pesach agenda, as it involves Pesach thought.

1) Shabos is a source of blessing for the whole week (Shabos 118a, Zohar Yisro). This teaching is mentioned every Friday evening when we’re about to receive the Shabos, in Lecho Dodi, “come let us go to welcome the Shabos, for it is a SOURCE of blessing”. Now, Pesach is also called “Shabos” - “You are to count (Sfirath Haomer) from the morrow of the Shabbos...” (referring to Pesach). And it, too, has impact on the days (and weeks) that follow. The source of blessing on this Shabos is therefore divinely broadened in order to exuberate blessing even on Pesach which itself is called Shabos.

2) By the same token, as in wisdom, with a giver and a taker, the giver gains deeper insight as he bestows upon the taker, the Shabos takes from Pesach as it gives. “I have learned a lot from my teachers, more from my colleagues, and from my disciples more than from both” (Taanis 7a). For the Exodus is a basic concept of Shabos. In the Ten Commandments of Chumosh Devorim, in the second Tablets, the Mitzva of Shabos observance is connected to the Exodus. “And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Hashem, your G-d, has taken you out... therefore Hashem, your G-d, has commanded you to make the Shabos day” (5:15).

Although the Biblical requirement of Shabos Kiddush is fulfilled with the Maariv prayer (with the blessing “Mekadaish Hashabos”, the Rabbinic injunction necessitates recital over a cup of wine. The Talmud maintains (Psochim 117b) that mention of the Exodus in the Shabos

Kiddush is a requisite, according to most authorities a Biblical requisite (unlike the view of Iben Ezra). (See Mishna Brura, Law of Shabos ch. 271, and his lengthy clarification in Biur Halacha).

A puzzling debate is raised: Since the Exodus connection is Biblical, how is it that the Friday evening Maariv does not mention the Exodus? It may be suggested that the authors of the Shabos Maariv deliberately omitted the Exodus background in order to be in a position to fulfill the Kidush requirement (over a cup of wine), at home, when his wife and younger members of the family can be included in the fulfillment.

The Shabos is here a GRAND taker from Pesach. This too makes it a GRAND Shabos, a Shabos Hagadol.

3) When Erev Pesach coincides with Shabos, the requirement of Korbon Pesach overrides the stringency of Shabos (Psochim 58a). (Otherwise the slaughter of an animal on Shabos is prohibited). Such a day needs the emphasis that Shabos and its restrictions are the core of Yahadus. Erev Pesach is an exception, otherwise Shabos is not compromised.

One ventures to conjecture the reason the Korbon Pesach is observed even on Shabos erev Pesach is that Shabos itself contains the element of Pesach, (as above #2). Here we should pause to illuminate upon the reason the Exodus is so fundamental in the observance of Shabos. Just a synopsis of a more elaborate Hebrew essay (by this writer) entitled "Avdai Hashem" (servants of Hashem):

Two words say it all: CHORUS - CHAIRUS. "The Tablets were Hashem's handiwork, and the script of Hashem CHORUS (engraved) on the Tablets" (Shemos 32:16). "Do not read CHORUS, but CHAIRUS (freedom) (Avos 6:2). The Israelites, by the Exodus, enjoyed not only CHAIRUS, freedom from slave servitude to Pharaoh, but gained CHORUS. They were elevated not merely to freedom, but to billions of rungs higher, to be servants of Hashem. The stamp - signature, "OSE" to this prestigious status is Shabos. And it is exclusive: "Between Me and the children of Israel it (Shabos) is a sign ("OSE") forever... (Shemos 31:17).

The child's MA NISHTANA receives an elaborate response. But the succinct answer is "we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and Hashem redeemed us and elevated us to the princely position of being servants of Hashem. The conclusion of this response is in the first chapter of Hallel, "Praise Hashem ye servants of Hashem..." this chapter though only "part" of Hallel, must be recited before even partaking of the Matzoh.

The insights on Pesach, thus, present a better appreciation of the gift of Shabos, indeed a Shabos Hagadol.

4) The Korban Pesach, eaten at night, Nisan 15, but prepared on Nisan 14, affords emphasis on the indispensability of preparation for a Mitzva. The day of erev Pesach, with the Korbon Pesach, is itself a major component of Avodas Hashem. The law of Tzitzis having eight fringes, says Rashi (Bamidbor 15:41), signifies the eighth day of Pesach when the SHIRA took place, at the crossing of the sea. Though the SHIRA was sung on SHEVIEE, the seventh day of Pesach, the eighth day is significant, as the eight since the KORBAN PESACH was brought on erev Pesach.

An interesting parallel to the prerequisite of well preparedness before a Mitzva, is found in our Parsha Tzav:

As the Mishkan was about to be erected on Rosh Chodesh Nisan, Moshe and Aaron were commanded to seclude themselves for seven days. The seven days, called PRISHA, were reserved for proper preparation for the observance of building the Mishkan and the Korbonos.

Prisha, the Torah teaches, should be observed, additionally, seven days before Yom Kippur (by the Kohain Gadol) and before observance of the law of Poroh Aduma (see Rashi Vayikra 8:34). Parshas Tzav, being the scriptural portion for this Shabos Hagadol, it offers additional, intensified efforts in preparation for this beautiful Yom Tov, to enjoy and be inspired.

