

A HOLY NATION?

by Rabbi Yehudah Prero

The Aruch HaShulchan in Orech Chaim, 473:2-3 asks as follows: "The Tur writes 'that we do not make the B'racha of She'asa Nissim by the Seder because we will say it later in the Hagada...' meaning that just as we make the Bracha on Chanukah and Purim, its obvious that we should on Pesach as well, but because of the fact that in the Hagada we discuss all the miracles and wonders and then we make the Bracha of "Asher Ge'alanu" at the end of Maggid, this is like making the Bracha of She'asa Nissim, and there is no need for two Brachot. However, this reason is not enough, as by the Megilla, we make the Bracha of Sheasa Nissim before reading the Megilla, and another Bracha after the Megilla, so if we can say two there, why can't we say two here? "

The Aruch HaShulchan first mentions an answer offered by the Maharil. The Maharil said one only makes the Bracha of She'asa Nissim on a Mitzvah D'rabanani, a mitzvah of Rabbinical origin, which means that we would make the B'racha on Purim and Chanukah, but not on Pesach which is D'Oraisa - Scriptural in origin. The Aruch HaShulchan writes that he does not understand this answer, so he offers what he thinks is the true answer. The Rabanan, who instituted and formulated the Brachot, only established Brachot when we are blessing Hashem for commanding us to do THIS mitzvah, such as eating Matzo, sitting in the Sukkah, blowing Shofar. They did not make Brachot out of the mitzvah itself. As we are commanded *in the Torah* to tell about the miracles of the night, and THIS is the mitzvah of the night, if we had a Bracha which would in fact amount to fulfilling the same obligation (remembering and mentioning the miracles) it would be a Bracha composed of a Mitzvah D'Oraisa. The Rabanan did not make this type of Bracha. Only by a Mitzvah D'rabanani could they formulate such a Bracha. I hope the answer presented here helps clarify things.

Another question I received was based on another item in the first post, which stated that the nation of Israel was taken out of Egypt only because they were holy. A reader asked how we reconcile this with the famous teaching of the Sages that the nation of Israel had sunk to the 49th level of Tum'ah, impurity, before leaving Egypt. How can a "holy" nation be on such a low level of impurity?

(For the answer to this one, some credit is due to R' Hayim Ganzweig.) The Sages, Chazal, tell us that there were some things that the Jews were careful about. For example, they did not change their clothing (which perhaps is why the son of one reader came home from school saying that people wore tzi'tzis in Egypt. As to the truth of that, I am not sure.). They did not change their names. We

also know that only one person in Egypt was involved in a forbidden relationship, Arayot. As we said in the first posting that it is separation from Arayot that creates holiness, the Jews were indeed holy. However, the Jews did worship idols in Egypt. In fact, at the time of the splitting of the sea, the angels pointed this fact out to Hashem, wondering why the Jews were deserving of the treatment they were getting. It was because of the sin of idol worship that the nation of Israel sunk so low and became so impure. Hence, we see it is possible to be "holy" AND "impure" at the same time.

And now for some kid tips...

Shoshana Socher wrote that she attended a Seder where the hostess placed a bowl of tiny candies on the table. The kids got to take a candy for each question they asked.

Wotalf@aol.com, a father of five, wrote that : the child has to be made into a participant. For the youngest kids, ask them at times if they know any songs, such as "Who knows a song about Pharaoh and Frogs on his head?" For elementary school kids, as they have been bombarded with material about Pesach in school, get them going by asking them questions. The kids who are kept in the seder will then begin to volunteer information. Challenge high schoolers with questions and let them say what they learned as well. And remember...adults get bored, too. Be ready with questions to ask everybody at the Seder.