



שבת הגדול תש"פ

Morai V'Rabosai,

Given the extraordinary circumstances our קהילה as part of the rest of ישראל find ourselves in this ערב ישועה, there will be no תפילה בציבור once again this שבת הגדול in our shul, and unless הקב"ה sends his יו"ט as only he can, that situation is likely to extend on through לטובה. We simply must put the מצוות פיקוח נפש before anything else as הו"ל instructed us to. I can tell you with the utmost certainty that the horrific times we are in, are just that, **absolute פיקוח נפש**. As many of you know, I am part of the חברה קדישה here in Monsey, and I am witnessing first hand, how devastating this מגיפה is. The fact that I have time to sit down and write to you this week is a minor נס unto itself. Before I venture into anything else, I beg all of you, PLEASE, PLEASE, as much as humanly possible - shelter in place! Minimize your human contact to the ones you are living with now. I understand for many of you, that will inevitably lead to a lonely יו"ט פסח, which goes against the very spirit and nature of this יו"ט of כל דחפין, but כל דחפין is not a מצות יהרג ועל יעבור. If you mix with others, there won't be בני חורין either you or someone else you came into contact with הו"ש. Only if we will be מקיים instead הכא this year we are here as we are, even if that means alone, then maybe אי"ה next year we will be able to celebrate יו"ט as בן חורין of this terrible plague.

Because traditionally the Rav in a shul gave a שבת הגדול דרשה (even Rabonim who aren't נוהג to speak weekly, always speak on שבת הגדול and שבת שובה!) and of course if we can't daven together, we certainly can't come together for a דרשה. This letter will serve as my curtailed שבת הגדול דרשה for תש"פ (those of you who fall asleep while reading it, please send me feedback, it'll feel far more real if you do!)

As we have done in the past שבת הגדול דרשות, we will divide the דרשה between an initial bit of דרש and then we will move on to some הלכות.

One of the interesting aspects of the עשר מכות which were imposed by הקב"ה on the מצריים in ספר מפרשים brought in the מדרש שמואל (פ"ה משנה ה') מסכת אבות in מדרש שמואל who learn that really בני" did have a minor version of the מכות. It was for a very short period of time, to enable בני" to understand the גודל הנס, and to appreciate what they were being spared from so to speak. However, by and large כלל ישראל were able to observe how הקב"ה made his presence known, and in doing so basically destroyed מצרים, and many מצריים died or were severely damaged both physically and emotionally. Yet the Yidden while they could observe the ניסים and נפלאות personally, they remained largely untouched. There are actually מפרשים there in אבות who learn that the reason the משנה uses the terminology of עשרה ניסים as opposed to the expected עשר מכות is because the משנה was takeh not referring to the 10 מכות themselves, but to the 10 ניסים of ישראל not being really affected by each מכה. In each case, the מכה, be it צפרדע or דם etc, was happening to the מצריים all around the בני" in ישראל yet כלל ישראל was impacted minimally if at all! There were 10 מכות, so that the נס occurred 10 times, hence the language of ניסים בניסין! נעשו לאבותינו במצרים

Unfortunately the same cannot be said for **מכת דבר** the **מגיפה** we are experiencing, if anything the reverse seems to be the case. As a member of the **חברה קדישה**, and as one who is touch with other **חברות** I KNOW that our communities are being hit particularly hard! There was an article published by the local Governmental Health Agency, indicating as many as 80% of the seriously ill from the Covid-19 virus, and are equal percentage of the dead **ל"ע** are actually from Monsey/SPV environs. Things are even worse in parts of Brooklyn, where our co-religionists predominate, and naturally as a result of this, Frum people, especially Rabonim are asking why, what have we done to deserve this? Initially, before the **פטירות** began piling up, it was why were we exiled from our shuls, and our schools. Why would the **הקב"ה** through this terrible **מכה** prevent us from spending **יו"ט** with our families. Now the questions have turned even darker as well. Why is the **הקב"ה** seemingly singling out his devoted ones, the **שומרי תורה ומצוות** and felling them with this devastating illness? So, I've heard so many well meaning Rabonim and Talmidai Chachamim, who have picked up pens, and have taken to this airwaves and internet and spoken about the whole litany of ills which plague **כלל ישראל**, and how they believe that its due to important issues, such as **כבוד הבה"מ** and **הבה"כ**. Talking in shul, not davening with **כוונה**, etc. Others come up with other reasons, and while they are ALL legitimate concerns and should be rectified, the determination that **כלל ישראל** is doing this that or the other, really misses the **עיקר** the way I see it **רבותי**! Let us say that talking during davening is a problem in many shuls, or too much of a focus on the Kiddush and too little focus on davening and learning is a significant widespread problem. Does that mean that if one davens in a shul where these are not issues, he can pat himself on the back and say **בשרירות ליבי אליך**? He isn't **מהוייב** somehow, to be **מפשפ במעשיו** like the **גמרא** in the beginning of **ברכות** writes? In general, it is safe to say, that WE on our reduced **מדריגה** with the **הדורות**, **נתקטנו הדורות**, don't really have the ability to make the direct connection, between punishments and **יסורים** that the **הקב"ה** sends and a specific issue, especially a issue that the **ציבור** or all of **כלל ישראל** is suffering from. **מפשפ במעשיו** in response to **יסורים** is an individual **עבודה** and its not about a specific or singular **חטא** necessarily. It means individually we must examine all of our **מעשים**, looking through our **מידות** and making certain that the **דרך** we are traveling upon is a correct one. Of course our individual actions heed examination as well.

I've often told the incredible story of the Munkatzer Rebbe, the **בעל מנחת אלעזר**'s visit to **ירושלים** in 1930 in order to visit the Saba Kadisha- Rav Shlomo Eliezer Alfandri. Rav Alfandri had come to **ירושלים** to die in **א"י** as many **גדולי ישראל** did at the end of their lives. The visit lasted a week, and during the Minchas Elazar's visit, the Saba Kadisha was niftar. In his book about the visit R' Moshe Goldstein tells of the initial meeting that took place when the Minchas Elazar just got to **ירושלים**. The Saba Kadisha lived in a tiny one room apartment, and the Minchas Elazar wasn't a small man, so only the 2 of them fit into the room, and the Minchas Elazar closed the door after he entered. The rebbe's **גבאי** was overcome with curiosity so listened in on their conversation through the keyhole. The Tzaddikim communicated in the one common language they had, **לשון הקודש**. The Minchas Elazar began by asking the Saba Kadisha the question **"מתי יבא המשיח?"** when is moshiach coming? The Saba Kadisha answered after a short pause **"ישנם מעקבים"** there are those who hold him back. Now, before I tell what the Minchas Elazar's follow up was, I want to remind you that although the Muckatzer Rebbe was universally recognized and celebrated as one of the **גדולי הדור** and a major Halachic Authority, he was in some sense also very controversial. He was probably the MOST extreme anti-zionist – in Europe. In general he was a man who was not disposed to **פשרה**, especially when he felt that religious principles were at stake. He hated **השכלה** and labeled many as **Apikorsim**! Yet this very same **קנאי** when hearing the Saba Kadisha say there are **מעקבים**, didn't ask is it those terrible **ציונים**, or the **משכילים** or **Apikorsim** who are holding him back from coming! In a broken

voice choked with sobs he asked the Saba Kadisha if **האם אני מן המעקבים?** am I one of those who are holding Moshiach back! His continued sobbing according to the Gabbai, obscured the Saba Kadishas response to his question. However **רבותי** that is how a גדול thinks, and that is the model for our approach. Not, what's wrong with **כלל ישראל** and not examining what others are doing. The question always must be **האם אני מן המעקבים**, that's what **מפשפש במעשיו** demands!

Now, although there is a beautiful vort, I heard from Rav Yisroel Meir Lau Shlit"א regarding the מצות ראייה we have on **שלש רגלים**, in which he notes that the מצוה of coming up and bringing קרבנות on the רגל is mentioned 3 times in the תורה and each time the תורה changes the script slightly. In one place the תורה writes **את פני אדון ה'** and adds the words **אלוקי ישראל** adding in those additional words of **אלוקי ישראל**, and in the 3rd place the תורה merely writes **אלוקי** the word **אלוקי** is used. Rav Lau explained that these 3 different נוסחאות represent the 3 different types and levels of השגחה הבורא in this world. First, the whole world, the universe, that's represented by **פני אדון ה'** for he is the **רבונו של עולם**. Then there is a level of השגחה specific to **כלל ישראל** that can be seen in the לשון of **אלוקי ישראל** wherein he is uniquely directly involved with **כלל ישראל** not through any intermediaries. And finally there is השגחה פרטית the individual השגחה each and every member of **כלל ישראל** can be זוכה to that's represented in the לשון of **פני אדון ה'**, your direct **אלוקים**. He adds that each one of the **שלש רגלים** exemplifies one of these השגחות. Succos, with it's קרבנות of the 70 nations is the first level the universal השגחה the **אדון ה'**! The 2nd is פסח with its leining of **שה"ש** the ק"ק designed only for **כלל ישראל**. The third is מתן תורה in which every yid was meant to be his own **לשכינה** and have his own direct relationship with **הקב"ה**. So even though according to Rav Lau's מהלך Pesach is the **יו"ט** of השגחה Klal Yisroel. This year because of the מצב, we are going to have to combine פסח and שבועות and hope we can reverse it and be together come שבועות time! We will have to develop our direct relationship with **הקב"ה** at home during **יו"ט** and at the same time daven for all of **כלל ישראל**. This begins with **בדיקת המץ**. This year more than any other we must be **מבער** the המץ and שאור of our מידות רעות, with the physical המץ, **מפשפש במעשיו**, and demonstrate to **הקב"ה** that we can be trusted going forward to do what he wants of us. We need each one of us to regain his trust so that he gives us another chance and when he does אי"ה not mess it up! **הג כשר ושמח**

Halacha

As always we will base this portion of the Drasha on questions that I have received this or in previous years, or questions I remember came up during the years my father- was Rav.

Because this year is so different (The following is said in jest, I'm not sure that Ma Nishtana should be said at the Seder the people might look at you and ask " Really? What's different?? EVERYTHING IS!! "This was only a poor attempt at a joke Raboisai! Be Mochel). Many of the Shailos I've received are either from people making Pesach for the first time (and didn't expect to do so!). Or people who have it made Pesach in years and now are forced to. Their Shailos very much reflect those circumstances:

1. Tevilas Keilim : A lot of people needed new כלים this year, and many of the מקוות are either closed or in locations that make people feel unsafe. So I've seen a number of Hetarim floating around, in which the כלים are "sold" to a goy or be borrowed and the sale to be finalized only after יו"ט. I am NOT comfortable with them and they should only be used in extreme circumstances. We ב"ה have a plethora of natural מקוות מים in our area which can be safely used. Susanne Lake,

Willow Tree Park, and the lake on Grandview to name three! Unless you are completely home bound, and have no one to do the טבילה for you, you should use a pond or stream or lake.

2. Avi Umori zt"l was very fond of the following expression Raboisi "Shmutz is NOT Chometz"! By all means do a thorough job cleaning and koshering for Pesach, but in a year like this one, please focus only on Chometz, leave the spring cleaning for another time.
3. Again I repeat when koshering כך פולטו כבולעו is the standard, loosely translated that means, the way in which the Chametz was absorbed, is also the way in which it is expelled. Absorption happens either with heat or with כבוש כמבושל, long term soaking of the Chametz in liquid even if it's cold. So let's begin with the fridge: its cold in there hopefully, so there is no absorption, clean it well and put covers on the shelves and you're good to go. No koshering necessary.

Ovens absorb via ליבון (direct application of fire / heat) after cleaning and leaving it unused for 24 hours and a full self cleaning mode (remember to put in whatever else you may want to kasher that needs ליבון, such as stove grates or other grates from other cooking devices). The self clean mode in modern ovens is hot enough to create ליבון. Your stove tops if metal should be splashed ערוי כלי ראשון boil water in a pot or kettle splash it boiling hot on the surfaces. The burners and grates should be cleaned and as suggested earlier put in the oven for the self clean cycle.

Counter tops / Back splashes made of granite ceramic or other natural materials should be splashed ערוי כלי ראשון and covered. Metal sinks splash with boiling water. Fill the sink and put a super heated rock or an immersion heating device in the water to make it bubble. It's a Chumrah, to some degree, but its necessary, because often Chametz will sit in the water in the sink for long periods of time and כבוש כמבושל as we said earlier, requires this rudimentary form of הגעלת כלים. If you are using an insert then just splash you don't need the added Chumrah of the Hagala. Use an insert regardless for a ceramic sink as it is not Kasherable for Pesach!

Microwave and warming drawers, in my father zt"l's opinion, cannot, and therefore should not be Kasher for Pesach. Pit them away or seal them. (I am aware of the Poskim who disagree and who say you can kasher both, However this was Avi U'mori's psak and therefore our shul's psak as well!

4. This year please sell all your Chametz even your Chametz Gamur, even if you are not נוהג to do so regularly.
5. Be sure to make an עירוב תבשילין this Erev Pesach (Weds Afternoon) Pesach is a 3 day Yom Tov this year, and you need an Eruv to cook on Friday for Shabbos.
6. We hope to get out a calendar by Yom Tov! No, we aren't being wildly optimistic, it's just that according to Halacha, if one cannot daven with a Minyan, it is required of him to Daven at the time the shul would. The calendar will also give you the Erev Yom Tov zmanim אכילת חמץ and ביעור חמץ as well. Please keep your ביעור חמץ to a minimum. You will have to make your own burning of Chametz this year due to the circumstances. If fire is out of the question, you can flush it down the toilet!
7. **אכילת מצה:** If it won't cause serious health problem one should eat Matza made of white bleached flour (not whole wheat) for מצות אכילת מצה at the seder. The Kezayis Matza this year is 1/3 of a Pupa-Tzeilim matza (the Matzos we baked at BMCS). So to be mikayaim the initial mitzvah, one should ideally eat 2/3 of a matza (2 zeisim) eaten over 4 minutes. (water may be drunk to assist in swallowing the matza)

8. Red wine (even low alcohol) should be used for the four Kosos again, if possible. Grape juice is a 2nd best. Call me if these won't work for you for whatever reason. The minimum Shiur of a רביעיית is 3.3 ounces (according to R' Moshe).
9. If romaine lettuce is your Maror of choice, examine the lettuce very carefully before Yom Tov for bugs! And please try and use just the stalks, avoiding the leafy parts. 4 stalks is sufficient for the Shiur of Maror and Korach
10. 10. Don't forget! After Mussaf **on First Day** Yom Tov we STOP SAYING משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם

That's all we have the time for Raboisai. I am available for שאלות day and night at 914-420-6714. Let's daven that this will still be the ניסן that we will be עתידין להגאל and בירושלים.

בברכת חג כשר ושמח ושנוחה לראות ביאת משיח צדקינו במהרה בימינו

Yonah Ephraim Ben Horav Avrohom Y L Pessin