



# NHS Sedra Sheet

## A Potpourri for Seder Night – Michael Lebrecht

טו ניסן תשע"ח – 30 March 2018 – שבת / יום ראשון של פסח

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### ורחץ

The second item on the seder night agenda is 'Urchatz' – the washing of hands prior to eating the Karpas-vegetable which is dipped in salt water.

Halocho states that food dipped in liquid requires washing before eating it. This applies throughout the year and is to do with tumah issues. So why are we so punctilious to observe this Halocho specifically on seder night?

The Netziv suggests that we attempt to re-enact the seder as it was conducted at the time of the Beis Hamikdosh. Since at that time they were well aware of tumah laws, they would definitely have washed their hands at this point, ergo, so do we.

He continues this theme by suggesting a reason for the minhag of wearing a kittel on seder night.

In Beis Hamikdosh times, they would eat the Korban Pesach with a mixture of awe and great respect. As part of this, they would dress in impressive 'royal' clothes. The Torah states that when Pharaoh elevated Yosef to fill the position of Viceroy of Egypt he 'dressed him in fine [white] linens' (Bereishis 41:42). Taking their cue from this posuk, they too donned these royal-style clothes when eating the Korban Pesach.

In our re-enactment of the Beis Hamikdosh seder, we dress in a [white] kittel

### הא לחמא עניא

One of the difficult passages of **Ho Lachmo** is the section that seems to invite all and sundry to come and eat and celebrate Pesach with us - including eating the Korban Pesach.

Yet we know that people could not just turn up uninvited. Everyone had to be part of a group prior to Erev Pesach when the Korban was sacrificed. Additionally, what is the point of inviting people from behind closed doors?

Rabbi Yonoson Eibeshitz suggests that we are in fact speaking to the guests who are already around the table. We are reminding them of one of the house rules, namely, that it is forbidden to break a bone whilst eating the Korban Pesach. This is likely to happen if a person is very hungry. He will want to get his teeth into every last bit of meat to satisfy his hunger. That is when a bone of the animal may get broken. Therefore, the Pascal lamb must only be eaten when a person is satisfied.

Consequently, we instruct our guests 'anyone who is hungry should come and eat [all that he needs]'. Afterwards, 'partake of the Pesach' that he was already part of.

### ברוך שומר הבטחתו

**Blessed is He who keeps (Heb. Shomer) His promise to Yisroel'**

The Vilna Gaon says that the promised reward of wealth that the Bnei Yisroel were expecting, was actually due to be the large bounty taken from the Egyptian army at the splitting of the Yam Suf.

However the recipient of that promise – Avrohom – was under the impression that his descendants would receive this reward when they actually left Egypt. In order to forestall any complaint from Avrohom, Hashem arranged matters that when they left Egypt, they did so with ample wealth.

One might think that this 'early' reward of wealth, would mean that Hashem was no longer obliged to keep His promise to enrich them at the Yam Suf. This was not so.

Thus we are praising Hashem for a double gift of wealth – both at Yetzias Mitzrayim and the Yam Suf.

That is why the Baal Hagodo uses the word 'Shomer' rather than the more accurate 'Mekayeim'. Shomer means to 'keep' in the sense of eagerly awaiting for something to happen (Rashi, Bereishis 37:11). 'Mekayeim' means to do something now. Hence, we bless Hashem specifically for 'waiting in anticipation' to keep His promise of wealth at the Yam Suf even though wealth had already been granted to Bnei Yisroel when they left Egypt.

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