



Parashat Pesach 5772 - #229

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On Pesach...

A Night of Protection?!

[Sefer Be-Ahava U-Be-Emuna vol. 3 #60]

Question: How is it possible that there was such a murderous attack in Netanya at the Park Hotel precisely on the night of the Seder (5762, in which 30 people were killed by a suicide bomber). This very night is called "a Night of Protection," a night protected from harmful spirits, and there are countless stories about Jewish People being saved on this night throughout the generations! And furthermore, the attack occurred at the time they were fulfilling the Mitzvot of the holiday and having the Seder? This question greatly burns within my bones!

Answer: Fortunate are you that this question burns within your bones. This is only because you are a true Jew who believes in Divine Providence and who believes in every word of our Sages, may their memory be a blessing. May there be an increase of those like you in Israel.

It therefore remains for us to explain the words of our Sages. It is in fact written in the Torah "It is a night of protection for Hashem" (Shemot 12:42), and our Sages explained: "A night of protection from harmful spirits" (Rosh Hashanah 11b). But there are other explanations by our Sages for the phrase "night of protection" (ibid. and Pesachim 109b), and according to them, it is perhaps possible to say that this night is not protected from harmful spirits. But this is not so, since the Tosafot wrote that according to all opinions it is protected from harmful spirits (Tosafot, Rosh Hashanah 11b d.h. lailah).

The Kli Yakar wrote, however, that only this exact night during the Exodus from Egypt was protected from harmful forces, but not the same night in the later generations (Shemot 12:42). And perhaps it is possible to explain Rashi in this way, who ties this idea to the verse: "and He will not permit the destroyer to enter your homes to smite" (ibid. verse 23). But the rest of our Rabbis explain that the night is protected from harmful spirits, not only the night of the Exodus but all of the nights (on this date) throughout history. In the Mechilta, however, our Sages say that the meaning of "protection" is not that man will be automatically protected, but on the contrary, "It means that all Israel needs to be on guard" (Mechilta, end of chapter 14 and also Merchevet Ha-Mishnah ibid. and Yalkut Shimoni 210). But also here the Rishonim determined that the intention is that man is automatically protected. Or more precisely, says Rabbi Chaim Vital, a student of the Arizal, he is guarded on condition that he engages in

Mitzvot or, at the very least, he is not violating a transgression (Devash Lefi of the Chida, ma'arechet 30 #12).

And the Rama therefore rules: "There are those who say that one should recite "Shefoch Chamatcha - Pour out Your wrath..." before "Lo Lanu - Not for our sake" (continuation of Hallel after the meal), and open the door in order to remember that it is a night of protection, and in the merit of this faith the Messiah will come and pour out his wrath on those who deny Hashem" (Rama to Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 480:1). The Mishnah Berurah explains: "And one should not fear anything" (#10).

And he also wrote: "We customarily only recite the Bed-Time Shema [on the night of the Pesach Seder] and not the other portions which we recite on other nights for protection, since it is a night of protection from harmful spirits" (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 481:2). One should also recite the blessing of "Ha-Mapil - Blessed is the One who casts the bonds of sleep" (Mishnah Berurah #10).

I am nevertheless sure that you would not give an instruction to all of the soldiers of Tzahal to go home on the night of the Seder on account of this reason. And why? Because the night is guarded from harmful spirits (which means demons - which are an abstract spiritual reality), but not from all types of enemies.

For example, the Talmud expresses surprise that there are four cups of wine, since this is a "pair" (a multiple of the number two), and there is an extraordinary spiritual difficulty with pairs. One of the answers is that the night is guarded from harmful spirits (Pesachim 109b), meaning that we do not have to fear "pairs" on this night.

And our Rabbis also write about the necessity of guarding against other extraordinary-spiritual dangers: putting salt on Matzah, pouring out water in the neighborhood of the deceased, food placed under a bed, a peeled egg which was left overnight, reciting "Me'ein Sheva" (on Shabbat night after the Shemoneh Esrei)...and there are those who wanted to say that we are exempt from the ritual washing of hands in the morning (which is because of the evil spirit), but their opinion was rejected (see Torah Sheleimah on Shemot 12:42, milu'im #13). We do not find in any of these discussions, however, that the Rabbis thought that there was protection from actual danger.

The Kaf Ha-Chaim brings: "There is a custom in various places that they do not lock the rooms in which people sleep on the night of Pesach...And one should not act this way...because damage from thieves is prevalent" (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 480:16). One should leave it open only if there are not thieves, but one should close it if there is a fear of thieves, and all the more so the fear of murderers. He also brings: "Maharil writes that one should not lock the door with a strong lock. But where danger is prevalent, we do not rely on a miracle" (ibid. 480:15).

This is the general principle: one must guard against extraordinary spiritual dangers with extraordinary means, and against physical dangers with active means. Blessed is Hashem, we are a wise and discerning Nation. Against savage murderous terrorists, one must hold a weapon and smite them completely off the face of the earth. Against these harmful spirits the holiness of the night of the Seder is not enough – we also need the holiness of the weapon of Tzahal which is like its name - Israel Defense Force.

We must also beware of harmful spirits that are the futile imaginings of murderers who claim that they are peace-loving students of "Aharon, lover of peace and pursuer of peace." These

thoughts are a type of spiritual corruption that brings irreparable damage and spills much innocent blood. Against these you must hold- and use - a weapon "and not permit the destroyer to enter your homes to smite" (Shemot 12:23). Thus will peace be brought into our Land.

Rav Aviner on...

Kosher medicine

Q: Do medicinal pills require kosher certification during the year and for Pesach?

A: A general rule: all medicines which lack taste are kosher since they are not food. They are also kosher for Pesach. And we can even turn medicine which has taste into medicine which lacks taste. How? We wrap the pill in a thin piece of paper. There are authorities who even permit medicine with taste since the ingredients which give the taste are kosher or not chametz. The non-kosher and chametz ingredients lack taste and kosher ingredients with taste are added. This is the opinion of Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach in the book "Halichot Shlomo" (6, 4 and in notes). As a result, almost all medicines are kosher and almost all medicines are kosher for Pesach. There are organizations which publish catalogues with long lists of which medicines are kosher for Pesach as a kindness for people, but they could sum it up in one sentence: 99% of medicines lack taste and are kosher. People are concerned, however, so they publish long lists.

Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Shlissel Challah

Q: Is there an authentic source for making Challah with a key in it (or in the shape of a key) on the Shabbat after Pesach as a Segulah for Parnasah, or is it superstition?

A: It is not forbidden but there is no meaning in doing so (this custom is mentioned in Ta'amei Ha-Minhagim pp. 249-250).

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