

A New Yavneh Publication

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A Taste of History

Anecdotes from Yavneh's Past

By Jeff Gluck, Yavneh Alum

Back when the kosher kitchen was at Stevenson Hall, the students were in charge of kashering for Pesach, and were paid by the Department of Food Services. Each student who ate at the kosher kitchen was asked to put in at least two hours. Some put in a lot more. In 1981, I was co-leader of the effort. It was late one night, and two of us were working on kashering metal cooking utensils. Many of these utensils had welded joints, so they could not simply be dipped in boiling water - they needed to first have their joints blowtorched. On this particular night, I was in charge of the dipping, while another person was in charge of the blowtorching. That person would blowtorch the utensils and put them on a table for me to take into the kitchen, where I had my water boiling. On one trip, I picked up a ladle and brought it into the kitchen. I then went to put it into the boiling cauldron. Unbeknownst to me, it had JUST been blowtorched, and the joint was still extremely hot. When that part of the ladle hit the water, the water started splattering/splashing. In a moment of panic, I pulled back. The object being a ladle, however, it scooped up some of the boiling water, which landed on my upper right chest/right shoulder. Someone called the proctors to take me to the Infirmary, and of course, they asked what happened. Regardless of what they were told (and I was not the one who told them), the only part that seemed to "stick" with them (and with other people who later heard the story) was that I had burned my shoulder with a blowtorch.

Announcements

- We've got a bit of a complicated schedule since it's both Shabbat and Chag, and then just Chag. Seudah Shlishit will be from 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM Saturday, then Mincha, Maariv, and another meal (for Chag) from 8:30 PM to 9:30 PM. All in the CJL dining hall.
- Kiddush this week is sponsored by Yavneh. If you are interested in sponsoring a Kiddush, please contact Mendy Fisch (mendy@princeton.edu).
- Anyone chametz sold through Yavneh will be unsold no later than two hours after chag. Enjoy!

Obscure Halacha

How Frum are You?

By Greg Burnham

Four cups of wine at the seder - the obligation comes down in the first mishna of the tenth perek of Pesachim, but the symbolism is harder to find. Some say the cups represent the four salvations God wrought for the Jewish people during Pesach, though there're many others. If that isn't enough, though, the Gemara brings up a different problem: it is dangerous to drink an even number of cups of wine, for this makes one particularly susceptible to demon attacks. The Gemara (Pesachim 109b) cites a Baraisa, saying "One should not eat pairs, nor should he drink pairs," and learns from Rav Pappa who heard from Yosef the Demon (ibid. 110a) that "Ashmedai, King of the Demons, is appointed over all pairs." Now, with regard to Pesach, one of the answers the Gemara gives as to why the four cups are not problematic is that Pesach night is described as a "lail shimurim" (Shemos 12:42). This is taken to mean a "night of guarding," that is, a night when God especially protects Israel against evil spirits.

But say it's not Pesach night and you happen to be careless and drink an even number of cups and go out on the road (where demon attacks are most common) - what should you do then? The Gemara (ibid. 110a) offers the following remedy: "He should hold the thumb of his right hand in his left and hand and the thumb of his left in his right hand, and he should say 'You and I are three.' And if he hears 'You and I are four,' he should say to him 'you and I are five,' and if he hears 'you and I are six,' he should say to him 'you and I are seven.'" The Gemara relates one incident when the number in this dialogue got up to 101, at which point "the demon burst." Rashbam explains that this was "m'rov l'ar" - "out of great distress." Ben Yehoyada further explains that this distress was caused because 101 is the gematria for the name of the angel Michael, who renders demons powerless.

Things to Anticipate

- One more week of classes! That's it!
- Seniors Shabbat: a Yavneh tradition wherein the freshmen get gifts for the outgoing seniors. Oh seniors... we will miss you.

A Quick Thought

By Rabbi Josh Ross

Well, by the time you read this, hopefully Julie Roth's two new baby boys will have had their brit, and Yavneh will have won the dodge ball tournament. Hey - anything is possible when you are writing about it before it happens! Of the two options it is much more likely that the Roth boys will have had their brit. If Yavneh has won, you can stop reading my words now and mentally insert a glorious *dvar* Torah about the parallels between Yavneh and a triumphant victory over the Egyptians on Pesach. By an act of God. Because, let's be honest that's what it would take for Yavneh to have won it all, but I digress.

The thing about the brit is this: We always view it as this special thing that a lucky boy gets to be a part of and women are excluded from. I have always argued that one could view it from a slightly different perspective. And given that this is Pesach, and Pesach is very much about changing your perspective and looking at the world around you in a fresh way, I thought we could take another look at the brit. We already know that women were responsible for saving us in Egypt from some of my earlier Quick Thoughts:

Rabbi Akiva said in a discourse: Israel was redeemed from Egypt on account of the righteous women of that generation. What did they do [...]They used to feed them, wash them, anoint them and give them drink, and cohabitated with them. (Shmot Rabbah 1:1)

So according to Rabbi Akiva the only reason we will get to celebrate Pesach at all is because of the actions of the women in Egypt. While all the men were running around in despair and getting divorced and assimilating into Egyptian culture and generally feeling sorry for themselves, it was the women who saved the Jewish people. What happened? How did the women stay strong and what brought us men so low? What happened that allowed us to slide so far down? Well, according to the midrash the first thing the Jews stopped doing in Egypt was the brit. I think it is possible to suggest that the cause for the behavior of the men was their lack of brit. And why were just the men in trouble? in *Gemarah Avoda Zarah* (27a) we see:

And according to the one who follows the words, "let him surely be circumcised," a

woman may fulfill the commandment of circumcision, as a woman is like one who has been circumcised.

So we see that perhaps the brit is really much less about some special covenant with God than a special slap in the head from God to the average man. Women don't need the extra slap. For whatever reason (and I'm not going to start getting into a fight about gender feminism here) women don't need the extra reminder. Men do. You know - despite everything Avraham did, it was not until Avraham circumcised himself that God called him *tamim*. If it wasn't for the women we wouldn't have Pesach. Perhaps if we had kept up the mitzvah of brit in Egypt we all would have merited to be led out of Egypt instead of God having to intervene and save us before it was too late.

Maybe we should all take a step back as Pesach draws to a close and think a little more about our mitzvahs. Instead of complaining about more matzah we should consider what it means to be poor. Or what a miracle means. Or what we owe God. Maybe we should spend a little more time considering those commandments we seem to consider our God given right, and perhaps they will actually appear to be a God given reminder of something we need to consider before we move on. Perhaps, like the brit, there are two sides to every story and we need to consider that. Instead of complaining about another chag, maybe we should revel in it. Experience it. Consider it. Consider what it means to have left Egypt. And consider what commandments we are ignoring, and how bad that may be for us.

Minyan Times

Friday Mincha	6:15 PM
Kabbalat Shabbat	After Mincha
Saturday Shacharit	8:45 AM
Saturday Mincha	7:25 PM
Saturday Maariv	8:35 PM
Sunday Shacharit	8:45 AM
Sunday Mincha	7:35 PM
Sunday Maariv	8:35 PM