

Bo: Milah and Pesach

- Nisson Shulman.

The link between dam milah and dam Pesach, Mesirat Nefesh and a united community. The secret of our survival

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Yetziat Mitzrayim is a central theme of all our beliefs and mitzvot, Anochi Hashem Elokecha asher hotzeticha meeretz Mitzrayim; “You know Me, not from philosophy, but from an actual historical meeting between the Jewish people and Myself”, says Hashem, “when I took you out of Egypt”. Of course that historical meeting was not a one-time moment in history. From that time forth, Hashem’s hashgacha is clearly evident in our survival till this day.

This is emphasized by a familiar passage in the prophet Yehezkel, Vaeavor alayich vaerech misboseses bedamayich, vaomar lach bedamayich hayi, bedamayich hayi. This passage which teaches an important truth of Jewish history and survival, is repeated in the Hagadah of Passover, because of its importance.

Our sages explain, Bizchut dam Pesach vedam mila nigalu mimitzrayim.

Why were these two mitzvot chosen as precursors of geula?

They are linked in halakhah. They are the only two mitzvot ase whose violation is punished by karet. An arel may not eat of the korban Pesach. Nor can a person whose child or servant is uncircumcised.

Clearly mitzvot Pesach and Mila are extremely intertwined. Why?

Dam Mila represents the mesirat nefesh of the Jew. Circumcision is always described as Brit of Avraham Avinu, who in fact represented the first example of Mesirat Hanefesh, the Kivshan Haesh, and the Akeda...

Many times in each lifetime, Hashem tests our faith. We are tested in our personal lives, in our community’s fate, our people’s destiny. We are tested about maintaining our emuna in the justice of Hashem, despite hard national and personal trials. Avraham, after receiving the promise of the Holy land, was then forced to leave it. Sarah was tested by being kidnapped by Avimelech. We call it Akedat Yitzchak, but the real trial and test of faith was Avraham’s, for it is easier to sacrifice oneself than to sacrifice a beloved.

Every Jew must make Avraham's commitment. The Brit Milah, is the first step towards redemption. Korban Pesach is the second step. It is a community mitzvah, a korban tzibbur, a national sacrifice. Korban Pesach is even brought on Shabbat because a korban of the community takes precedence, and is brought on Shabbat. So it is with korban Pesach which is brought if the majority of kohanim and community are temeim. Tuma Dehuya BeTzibur.

Hashem saved the Jews in Mitzrayim, not merely because of individual dedication, bizchut dam milah, but also because together they forged a united people, thus fulfilling mitzvaht Pesach. Therefore Pesach is eaten in a representation of an entire community, in habura, bekahal beeda beYisrael, It represents the union of millions of people to forge Am Hashem...

When dam mila joins dam Pesach – when individual commitment is linked to a united community, then we are on the road to redemption. That is how we were redeemed in Egypt. That is how we will be redeemed, bigeula shelema when yavo mashiach tzidkenu venomar amen.