

**Keeping Pesach All Year Round**  
**Pesach 5777**  
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We are so sad that the holiday of Pesach is coming to a close. We have loved every second of our amazing holiday, but the time has come for us to move on. We have some extra matzah and some extra Kosher for Passover mayonnaise. Good luck getting buyers for those items. Most of us can't wait to eat our first bites of chametz. Even Matzah Man has to put away his suit. But don't worry, the matzah mobile will remain as a reminder that we can't wait for the holiday to come again.

We put in all this effort into preparing and celebrating Pesach. What are we supposed to take with us from the holiday as we re-acclimate ourselves to everyday life?

One of the reasons why we do these rituals on Pesach is to habituate ourselves to certain behavior so that the rest of the year we can act in a way worthy of being redeemed.

The rituals take on added meaning because we will bring these rituals into our everyday lives even beyond Pesach.

Here are three examples of how we can take the holiday of Pesach into our everyday lives.

It just so happens that all of these examples come from the discussion of this week's daf yomi, which is the fifth chapter of Bava Batra, titled Hamokheir et ha-Sefinah.

The chapter begins by discussing the technical laws of contract law and of what exactly is assumed to be sold when one sells a movable object. But then the Talmud moves into a discussion of the importance of conducting oneself properly in business relations.

Example number one:

The Mishnah (88a) tells us:

*Ha-siton mekaneach midotav echad le-shloshim yom, u-baal habayit echad le-shneim asar chodesh.*

Literally this means that every thirty days wholesalers must clean off their utensils that are used as a measure, while householders must do this once every twelve months.

The most basic explanation of this is that since a wholesaler sells so many items via these measures, as a result the items are more likely to stick to the walls of the utensils that are used as weights and measures. Thus a wholesaler must scrub the weights and measures more frequently, lest the buyer be cheated.

I studied this page of the Talmud on the eve of Pesach and I couldn't help thinking about it in light of the fact that we were all scrubbing and cleaning our own houses for Pesach.

The Mishnah's word for measure is, *middot*, as in *me-kaneach et midotav*, wipe down your measures. But we know that the word *midot*, also refers to our own actions and character traits, as in, we must work on our own *middot*.

So as I am reading this line from the Mishnah and we are cleaning our homes, one meaning of cleaning our homes came across very clearly: we must scrub our homes from chametz as a way to remind ourselves that we must scrub our own bad behavior from our character. Every thirty days or at least once a year, we must be *mekaneach* our own *middot*.

This is a basic and simple idea. The enormous efforts that we put into cleaning our homes are just a reminder to ourselves to put the same effort into cleaning our souls. Just like we do a full search for chametz once a year, so too we must do a full search of our souls for any nasty habits we have acquired.

Here is a second example:

The prohibition of *chametz* is so powerful that we are not allowed to even have *chametz* in our houses. We cannot simply own it and keep it in a closet. We must destroy it entirely. There are two separate biblical prohibitions against keeping chametz in one's domain on Pesach. This is known as the prohibitions of *ba'al yirah* and *ba'al yimatze* (Shemot 12:19 and Devarim 16:4). Says the Torah, "*Shivat yamim se'or lo yimatzei be-vateichem*, for seven days leaven must not be found in your homes."

But the Talmud in Bava Batra (89b) reminds us that there is another item that we are not even allowed to keep in our possession.

Says the Torah: "*Lo yehiyeh lekchah be-veitkchah eifah ve-eifah gedolah u-ketanah*. You shall not have in your house different weights, large and small." The Talmud explains that the prohibition is against having a false weight, i.e. a weight that can be used to trick someone and steal from them.

So we see that there is a parallel between the prohibition of owning *chametz* and the prohibition of even owning a false weight. In both cases these items are forbidden even if there is no intent to use the item. Just owning them is sinful.

Rabbi Zilbershtein asks the following question in his contemporary work called, *Chishukei Chemed*: Suppose one has two houses that are distant from each other, and it is the holiday of Pesach and in one house there is *chametz* and in the other house a false weight, which one must be destroyed first?

He analyzes the question. On the one hand the prohibition of owning false weights is more severe because it is around the entire year and not just for the holiday of Pesach. On the other hand, there are two prohibitions against owning *chametz*, and the punishment is the more severe punishment of *karet*. Ultimately, he concludes that one should destroy the false weights first because we know that if one finds *chametz* in their house on Pesach that they can just cover it up until after *yontiv*. So we see that owning a false weight is even worse than owning *chametz*!

When studying the *daf yomi* I saw another proof to his conclusion. We know that *chametz* is not prohibited once it becomes moldy and not edible by a dog. However, when it comes to a false weight the Talmud tells us, “*asur le-adam she-yash-he middah chaseirah o yeteirah afilu im hi avit shel mei-mei raglayim*, one cannot keep a false weight in their house even if it is currently being used as a urinal” (*Bava Batra* 89b).

When *chametz* becomes moldy it becomes permitted. But a false weight can never be permitted. It must always be destroyed, even if it has been transformed into an item that one would never even touch.

We see that a false weight is so intrinsically bad that its prohibition is worse than *chametz*.

The lesson is clear. As we rid our homes one week a year of *chametz* we must remember to be vigilant the rest of the year about ridding our homes of sinful items –specifically those items that are used to hurt other people by stealing from them.

Here is the third example.

Says the Talmud: “*Kasheh onshan shel middot yoter mei-onshan shel arayot*, the punishment for using false weights is worse than the punishment for sins of a sexual nature” (*Bava Batra*, 88b).

The commentaries of the Talmud disagree as to the reason for this.

Rashbam explains that if someone commits a sexual sin then one can easily repent, however if one steals from people by using false weights then one does not know the full extent of the crime and so it is impossible to repent for such a sin.

Rambam however cites this teaching from the Talmud and gives a different explanation. He writes:

“Whoever denies the mitzvah of just measures is considered as if he denied the exodus from Egypt, which is the first of God's commandments. Conversely, one who accepts the mitzvah of just measures is considered as if he acknowledges the exodus from Egypt, which brought about all of God's commandments” (Laws of Theft, 7:12).

In other words, one who is not dishonest with a false weight is denying God's role in the Exodus from Egypt.

What is the connection between the two ideas? It seems so random. Explains the Migdal Oz, Rambam is basing himself on an early Midrash which teaches that Gd led us forth from Egypt only on the condition that we are vigilant with our weights and measures so as not to steal. In other words, Gd revealed Himself at Egypt in order to teach us about His presence in the world. If we steal in secret then we are in fact denying His presence in our lives and denying the Exodus. So the purpose of the entire Exodus story is that we conduct ourselves honestly even when acting in secret.

Through these three examples—cleaning our measures once a year, getting rid of our false weights, and recognizing the severity of stealing in secret—we see the purpose of these rituals on Pesach. We act this way on Pesach in order to energize and inspire us to act this way the entire year as it relates to laws of honesty.

If we celebrate the holiday of Pesach and perfectly get rid of our chametz but don't recognize the connection between chametz and dishonesty then we have failed in our observance of Pesach.

The holiday of Pesach cannot end with the last day of Pesach. The rituals of the holiday must carry on in our everyday lives and spur us to act properly. Just as we are vigilant about chametz on Pesach, we must be as vigilant the entire year with respect to the laws of honesty.