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TRIED AND TESTED SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

We usher in the month of Geulah with the additional *maftir* of Parshas HaChodesh. The Bnei Yisrael are given the ability to bring *kedusha* into the physical world through the calendar and the mitzvah of *Kiddush HaChodesh*. We are commanded to start the process of redemption through slaughtering the sheep, the Egyptian deity. This is followed by roasting it whole and eating it with Matza and Maror. This enabled us to leave Mitzrayim as free men, liberated from the slave mind-set, ready to embark on the journey towards *Kabalas HaTorah*.

Towards the end of the *maftir* we told to 'safeguard the matzos', which is explained by Rashi to mean that we need to take all steps necessary to ensure that they don't become chametz. The verb שמר is then used again at the end of the same pasuk to tell us to safeguard the day of Pesach, to observe it for all future generations. The double use of the same verb is noteworthy, but what is all the more fascinating is that this root comes up again and again in the context of Pesach. The pesukim tell us in two different places to guard the festival of Matzos and the very night of Pesach is referred to as *leil shimurim*, 'a night of guarding'. This is normally taken to mean that this is a night of special protection, a night

when our ancestors earned their liberty and emerged from Egypt as free men and women, when we today enjoy an extra measure of Hashem's Divine protection.

The Rashbam however takes a different angle and explains that the simple meaning of *leil shimurim* is actually a 'night of anticipation'. He bases this *pshat* on the famous episode of Yosef's dreams, which were ridiculed by the brothers, but about which the pasuk says, 'Ve'aviv shamar es hadavar,' 'And his father kept the matter in mind'. Whilst the brothers ridiculed Yosef's dreams as being implausible and nonsensical, Rashi explains that Yaakov waited with anticipation to see when they would be fulfilled.

The Meiri in his introduction to the Beis Habechirah explains that the Moadim are special contact points during the year; they enable us to develop a heightened sense of awareness of Hashem. If we merely go through the motions of observance, then the effect of the Moadim on our souls and ourselves will be minimal. Put bluntly, the amount we will get out of the Yom Tov experience will be directly proportional to the extent to which we invest beforehand in our understanding and appreciation of the events that the Yom Tov is commemorating. In order for us to access the

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tremendous spiritual energy that Pesach has to offer, we need to prepare ourselves to be able to receive it.

Perhaps we can use this to explain why the verb שמר is used multiple times in the context of Pesach. This entire Nissan experience is a Divinely-mandated, tried and tested method for ensuring that the *mesorah* of the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim remains intact, as it indeed has through the last 133 generations since these remarkable events took place. Nissan is by far the most exciting month of the year! There is an air of anticipation that permeates every Jewish home, due to the fact that this Yom Tov requires far more work than any other. The entire home is turned upside down in preparation for the most exhilarating nights of the year. Children are fascinated by their familiar environment changing before their eyes, culminating in the ultimate multi-sensory learning experience of *leil haseder* where everything is done differently.

Hachodesh hazeh lachem, this month is for you, for the Jewish family, for each generation to prepare to pass on our unique traditions of our epic national story.

There can be no better introduction to Pesach than this!

QUESTION

In this week's Parsha we are informed of the various Korbonos that we have to bring, and one type of animal that can be used is Bokor -- cattle. Chazal tell us of two various incidents in Nach relating to this type of animal. In one case we come across a "speaking bull" and in the other one we find "singing cows", not Korbonos per se, but nevertheless strongly connected to the Mishkon/Beys Hamikdosh.

What are the two incidents and where is the Mekor for the Divrei Chazal?

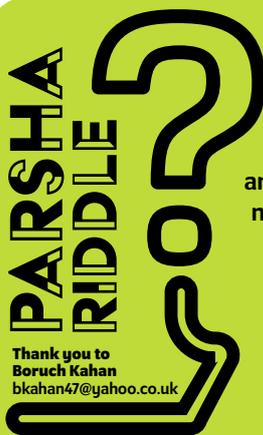
CLUE

- A) Think of the Haftorah on Parshas Ki Sisa
B) The Pelishtim had had enough of this object.

ANSWER FROM LAST WEEK

[Question: What does Rashi inform us of for the third time in this week's Parsha and where are the two previous times he has mentioned this previously?]

Rashi informs us (Perek 35 Possuk 30) that Chur was the son of Miriam. Previously he had told us exactly the same information in Parshas Beshalach (Perek 17 Possuk 10) and in Parshas Mishpotim (Perek 24 Possuk 14).



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2. What is another name of Sefer Vayikra and why?