

# Dvar Torah

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to his community at

Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

*Graciously shared with PhiloTorah*

## TZAV

How often do we tend to become more concerned about the right and the left and forget about the center path? How often do events and persons on the fringes derail us from our life's mission? Our life's goal often becomes an overwhelming attempt to stay on that middle path, finding the road that is not only too far, but not too far right or too far left. Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur are often viewed as the holidays of new beginnings and fresh starts. Pesach, on the other hand, comes in the middle of the year. Though the Torah calls the month of Nissan ROSH CHODASHIM - "The First of Months", clearly, it does not feel like a New Year's holiday. Rather, it's a middle of the year holiday. In deeper analysis, there is something to be said about fashioning a holiday to enunciate the center or the middle.

My brother, Rabbi Moshe Yeres, referred me to the homiletic work "Leyom Chaggenu" written by Rabbi Ben-Zion Firer.

He notes that the theme of middle and center can be found throughout the Holiday of Pesach.

1. The holiday of Pesach itself, commence in the middle of the middle month of the year.
2. The actual moment announcing their liberation occurred at midnight - BACHATZI HALAYLA.
3. The Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, took place the next day at midday - BACHATZI HAYOM.
4. The prohibition of Chametz begins on Erev Pesach, in the middle of the day- MISHESH SHA'OT ULMAALA. (Talmud Pesachim 4-5)

As Rabbi Firer points out, no other holiday is the theme of "middle" so recurrent. Perhaps, this is because Pesach is synonymous with the theme of the Redemption- GE'ULA. For Ge'ula to be successful it must be put in the perspective of the center. Great movements in history often fail when they pay more attention to the fringes and periphery than the central themes that initially constituted their ideals. Making everything black and white is sometimes no good; it is the centerline of gray that can be the key to success.

The challenge of the Exodus from Egypt was to create redemption for ALL. The challenge of our Pesach is to affect a personal redemption in each of us. This is an ongoing process renewed every year. Pesach is not for new beginnings.

**Pesach is the holiday when we stop and ask ourselves if we are still on track from our resolve of last Yom Kippur. Pesach is half-time. We take stock and resolve to re-strengthen ourselves as we understand our goals. 🏠**