



גליון מיוחד
SPECIAL EDITION
15TH – 23RD OF NISAN 5781
MARCH 28TH – APRIL 4TH, 2021



**OUR RESPONSE TO
THE WICKED SON**

**REACHING THE LEVEL
OF AHAVAT HINAM**

**HOW TO REACH YOUR
PERSONAL EXODUS**

Hag Hapesah

חג הפסח

Synagogue: 310 - 95th Street, Surfside, FL 33154 **Website:** www.hechalshalom.org **Tel:** (305) 867-6024
Mailing Address: Ness 26 Inc P.O. Box 546632 Surfside, FL 33154 **E-mail:** info@hechalshalom.org | oroziel.bookkeeper@gmail.com

THIS WEEK'S BULLETIN HAS BEEN KINDLY SPONSORED LEILUY NISHMAT
שלמה בן יעקב ז"ל, BY HIS DEAR FAMILY.

Refuah Shelema List

בס"ד

Men

Women

• Yosef Zvi Ben Sara Yosefia,	• Isaac Ben Mesoda,	• Simja Bat Esther,	• Sara Leticia Bat Mesoda,
• Yosef Haim Ben Mesouda	• Haim Ben Marcelle,	• Rachel Bat Sarah,	• Alegria Simha Bat Esther,
• Mordechai Ben Brucha Malka Shmalo	• Yizhak Ben Simja	• Nina Bat Rachel,	• Naomie Bat Rarel Adda,
• Yizhak Abraham Ben Sheli,	• Reuben Ben Eta,	• Gitel Rina Bat Yael,	• Malka Bat Joyce Simja,
• Yosef Yizhak Ben Sara Hana,	• Michael Ben Aliza,	• Miriam Bat Sofy,	• Sivan Simha Bat Yehudit,
• Mordechai Ben Miriam,	• Avraham Ben Leah	• Rahma Bat Simha	• Natalie Rachel Bat Nancy,
• Meir Raymond Ben Mathilde	• Ruben Leib Ben Eta	• Esther Bat Fortuna	• Abigael Haya Bat Esther
• Nathan Moshe Hai Ben	• David Benichu Bar Aicha	• Malka Bat Dina	• Madeleine Bat Esther
• Miryam Jaqueline Sandy	• Menahem Ben Shira	• Raizel Bat Miriam	• Nurit Jacqueline Bat Rahel
• Yaakov Ben Simha Alegria	• Moshe Ben Rahel	• Leah Bat Rivka	• Marcelle Mesoda Bat Alegria
• Aviv Ben Luba Miriam	• David Ben Freha Rina	• Sol Bat Perla	• Eva Bat Yael Khayat
• Yaacov Refael Ben Alegria	• Mordechai Ben Mercedes	• Chana Bat Bilha	• Camouna Bat Fortuna
	• Shalom Gibly Ben Fortuna		

HAGADAH TEASERS (AISH)

1. The Seder begins with a recounting of the 15 steps to be performed (Simane Haseder – Kadesh, Urchatz, etc.). Which Hebrew letter appears here the most (9 times)?
2. Which of the Simane Haseder (Kadesh, Urchatz, etc.) contains a Hebrew letter that is used twice? (4 answers)
3. What verse (that we say every day) is the only place in the Hagadah where Moshe's name is mentioned?
4. What expression describing Hashem appears 11 times in the Hagadah, but nowhere in the Torah?
5. What Torah text is contained in the Hagadah?
6. Which sages of the Mishnah (Tana'im) are mentioned in the Hagadah? (3 sages are mentioned twice, and 6 sages are mentioned once)
7. Which two of the ten plagues are mentioned twice in the Hagadah?
8. How many stanzas are in the "Dayenu" song? What two other praises of Hashem in the daily prayers contain that same number?
9. What 7 names of people from the Torah are mentioned in the verses of Hallel? Which 2 appear most frequently (4 references each)?
10. Which 8 body parts are mentioned in Hallel?
11. Which body of water is mentioned in Hallel?
12. Which chapter of Hallel is the shortest chapter of the entire Tanach?

Answers

- 1) The letter resh appears nine times: urchatz, karpas, rochtza, maror, korech, shulchan orech, barech, nirtzah.
- 2) Hallel has two lameds. Korech has two kafs. Marror has two raishes. Motzie Matzah has two tzaddis.
- 3) In the paragraph following the ten plagues, we state that the Children of Israel "trusted in Hashem and in Moshe His servant." We say this verse every morning in Pesuke Dezimra, before the recital of "Az Yashir."
- 4) The expression "Hakadosh Baruch Hu" (the Holy One, blessed is He) appears 11 times in the Hagadah, but nowhere in the entire Torah.
- 5) The text beginning with the words "Arami Oved Avi" is found in parshat Ki Tavo (Deut. 26:5).
- 6) Rabbi Akiva, Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya are mentioned twice in the Hagadah. Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Tarfon, Ben Zomah, Rabbi Yossi Hagalili, Rabban Gamliel and Rabbi Yehuda are all mentioned once.
- 7) The plagues of blood and pestilence (dever) are mentioned twice – once in the full listing of the plagues, and once in earlier paragraphs.
- 8) There are 15 stanzas in "Dayenu." There are also 15 blessings in the daily morning blessings (Birkot Hashachar), and 15 words of praise in the Emet Veyatziv paragraph recited after the Shema.
- 9) "Yisrael" (Psalms 114:2, 115:9, 12, 118:2) and "Adam" (Psalms 115:4, 16, 118:6, 8) each appear four times in Hallel. These other names appear in Hallel: Mitzrayim the son of Cham, grandson of Noach (Psalms 114:1). Yaakov (Psalms 114:1, 7). Yehuda (Psalms 114:2). Aharon (Psalms 115:10, 12, 118:3). Yosef (Psalms 115:14).
- 10) These body parts appear in Hallel: (1) hands (Psalms 115:4, 7), (2) eyes (115:5, 116:8), (3) ears (Psalms 115:6, 116:2), (4) legs (Psalms 115:7, 116:8), (5) fingers (Psalms 115:4), (6) mouth (Psalms 115:5), (7) nose (115:6), and (8) throat (Psalms 115:7).
- 11) The Jordan River (Yarden) is mentioned in Psalms 114:3.
- 12) Psalms chapter 117 has only two verses.

If anyone would like to contact our Synagogue, please feel free to email info@hechalshalom.org

Community Announcements

(It is YOUR Community, make the most of it!)

Miscellaneous Announcements:

- There are No Communal Kiddushim Seudat Shelishot or Breakfast in the Bet Hakeneset on Pesah.
- This Week's Daf Yomi has been Kindly Sponsored by Mrs. Jeannine Fuhrmann in memory of her Dear Mother Hassibah Bat Djamilah z"l the 19th of Nisan. Tihye Nishmata Tzerura Bitzror Hahayim Amen.
- This Week's Daf Yomi has been Kindly Sponsored by Mr. & Mrs. Albert Belecen in memory of his Dear Uncle Moshe Ben Abraham z"l 21st of Nisan. Tihye Nishmato Tzerura Bitzror Hahayim Amen.
- This Week's Learning has been Kindly Sponsored by Mr. & Mrs. Sammy Maya & Family in Memory of his Dear Grandmother Oro Bat Sinuru z"l the 18th of Nisan. Tihye Nishmata Tzerura Bitzror Hahayim Amen.


Important Message!!!

Eruv Update: Surfside: The Eruv in Surfside now includes the walking paths along the beach. Pushing strollers and carrying is permitted on the paths, but not beyond the path or onto the beach.

Bal Harbour: The Eruv in Bal Harbour included the inner (western) walking path only. The pier at Haulover Cut is not included.

Special Announcements

- We are pleased to announce that Ness 26 is part of the **Amazon Charity Program**, which would allow our community to collect 0.5% of all the orders made by any of you on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). In order to register you need to log on smile.amazon.com and select Ness 26, Inc as the Charitable Organization you want to support, and from then shop on smile.amazon.com instead of www.amazon.com. It won't cost anything more, and is an easy way to contribute to our budget needs.
- Anyone wishing to receive the **Daily Halacha** by the Rabbi please send a whatsapp message to Simon Chocron 786-351-1573
- We have opened up the list for children wishing to say **Pirke Avot** for the Shabbatot between Pesah & Shavuot. We will truly appreciate if those who say Pirke Avot sponsor the Kiddush. Anyone interested in reading any Pirke Avot please contact the Rabbi. *The Fifth, & Sixth Perakim are taken.*

Daily zmanim - March to April 2021 / זמני היום - חודש ניסן תשפ"א																	
myzmanim.com™ USA > Florida > Miami Dade > Miami Beach > 33154 (MyZmanim location ID: US33154)																	
Daylight saving time																	
March / April 2021	לילה לרבנו תם R' Tam's Nightfall	לילה Nightfall	שקיעת החמה Sun set	חילוק נרות Candle Lighting	פלג חמנה Plag Mincha	מנחה קטנה Mincha Ketana	מנחה גדולה Earliest Mincha	חצות Mid day	סוף זמן תפילה Latest Shachris	סוף זמן קריאת שמע Latest Shema	הנץ החמה Sun rise	זמן ציצית ותפילין Earliest Talis	עלות השחר Dawn 72 Minutes	דף היומי Daf Yomi	ניסן תשפ"א		
	בפעולת 16.1° שעות	בפעולת 16.1° שעות	במישור	18 דקות	גר"א ובעל התניא	גר"א ובעל התניא	-	חצות יום ולילה	גר"א ובעל התניא	כגון אברהם ודק' שו"ת	במישור	10.2 מועלות	בפעולת 16.1° שעות	בפעולת 16.1° שעות	פסחים		
14 Sun	8:42	8:38	8:04	7:29	ראש חודש	6:14	4:59	2:00	1:29	11:30	10:30	9:54	9:56	7:31	6:49	6:22	ק"ג ראשון
15 Mon	8:42	8:38	8:04	7:29		6:14	4:59	2:00	1:29	11:29	10:29	9:53	9:55	7:30	6:48	6:17	ק"ד שני
16 Tue	8:43	8:39	8:05	7:30		6:14	4:59	2:00	1:29	11:28	10:28	9:52	9:54	7:29	6:47	6:16	ק"ה שלישי
17 Wed	8:43	8:39	8:05	7:30		6:15	4:59	2:00	1:28	11:28	10:28	9:52	9:54	7:28	6:46	6:15	ק"ו רביעי
18 Thu	8:43	8:40	8:06	7:30		6:15	4:59	1:59	1:28	11:27	10:27	9:51	9:53	7:27	6:45	6:14	ק"ז חמישי
19 Fri	8:44	8:40	8:06	7:31	7:13	6:15	5:00	1:59	1:28	11:27	10:26	9:50	9:52	7:26	6:44	6:13	ק"ח ששי
20 Sha	8:44	8:41	8:07	7:31	לויקרא	6:16	5:00	1:59	1:28	11:26	10:26	9:50	9:52	7:25	6:43	6:12	ק"ט שבת
21 Sun	8:45	8:41	8:07	7:32		6:16	5:00	1:59	1:27	11:26	10:25	9:49	9:51	7:24	6:42	6:11	ק"י ראשון
22 Mon	8:45	8:42	8:08	7:32		6:16	5:00	1:58	1:27	11:25	10:24	9:48	9:50	7:23	6:41	6:10	ק"יא שני
23 Tue	8:46	8:42	8:08	7:33		6:17	5:00	1:58	1:27	11:25	10:24	9:48	9:49	7:21	6:40	6:08	ב שלישי
24 Wed	8:46	8:43	8:08	7:33		6:17	5:00	1:58	1:26	11:24	10:23	9:47	9:49	7:20	6:39	6:07	ג רביעי
25 Thu	8:47	8:43	8:09	7:34		6:17	5:01	1:58	1:26	11:23	10:22	9:46	9:48	7:19	6:38	6:06	ד חמישי
26 Fri	8:47	8:44	8:09	7:34	7:16	6:17	5:01	1:57	1:26	11:23	10:22	9:46	9:47	7:18	6:36	6:05	ה ששי
27 Sha	8:48	8:44	8:10	7:35	צו	6:18	5:01	1:57	1:25	11:22	10:21	9:45	9:47	7:17	6:35	6:04	ו שבת
28 Sun	8:48	8:45	8:10	7:35	פסח	6:18	5:01	1:57	1:25	11:22	10:20	9:44	9:46	7:16	6:34	6:03	ז ראשון
29 Mon	8:49	8:45	8:11	7:36	פסח	6:18	5:01	1:57	1:25	11:21	10:19	9:43	9:45	7:15	6:33	6:02	ח שני
30 Tue	8:49	8:46	8:11	7:36	חול המועד	6:19	5:01	1:56	1:25	11:21	10:19	9:43	9:44	7:14	6:32	6:01	ט שלישי
31 Wed	8:49	8:46	8:12	7:36	חול המועד	6:19	5:01	1:56	1:24	11:20	10:18	9:42	9:44	7:13	6:31	6:00	י רביעי
1 Thu	8:50	8:47	8:12	7:37	חול המועד	6:19	5:02	1:56	1:24	11:20	10:17	9:41	9:43	7:12	6:30	5:59	יא חמישי
2 Fri	8:50	8:47	8:13	7:37	7:19	6:20	5:02	1:56	1:24	11:19	10:17	9:41	9:42	7:11	6:29	5:58	יב ששי
3 Sha	8:51	8:48	8:13	7:38	שבועי של	6:20	5:02	1:56	1:23	11:19	10:16	9:40	9:42	7:10	6:28	5:57	יג שבת
4 Sun	8:51	8:49	8:14	7:38	שמיני של	6:20	5:02	1:55	1:23	11:18	10:15	9:39	9:41	7:09	6:27	5:56	יד ראשון
5 Mon	8:52	8:49	8:14	7:39	אסרו חג	6:20	5:02	1:55	1:23	11:17	10:15	9:39	9:40	7:08	6:26	5:55	טו שני
6 Tue	8:52	8:50	8:15	7:39		6:21	5:02	1:55	1:22	11:17	10:14	9:38	9:39	7:07	6:24	5:54	טז שלישי
7 Wed	8:53	8:50	8:15	7:40		6:21	5:02	1:55	1:22	11:16	10:13	9:37	9:39	7:06	6:23	5:53	יז רביעי
8 Thu	8:53	8:51	8:16	7:40		6:21	5:03	1:54	1:22	11:16	10:13	9:37	9:38	7:05	6:22	5:52	יח חמישי
9 Fri	8:54	8:52	8:16	7:41	7:23	6:22	5:03	1:54	1:22	11:15	10:12	9:36	9:37	7:04	6:21	5:51	יט ששי
10 Sha	8:54	8:52	8:17	7:41	שמייני	6:22	5:03	1:54	1:21	11:15	10:12	9:36	9:37	7:03	6:20	5:50	כ שבת
11 Sun	8:55	8:53	8:18	7:42		6:22	5:03	1:54	1:21	11:14	10:11	9:35	9:36	7:02	6:19	5:49	כא ראשון
12 Mon	8:55	8:53	8:18	7:42	ראש חודש	6:23	5:03	1:54	1:21	11:14	10:10	9:34	9:35	7:01	6:18	5:48	כב שני

Monday (Apr 12) 7:47 AM + 6 חולד חודש אייר חלקים

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Hechal Shalom / Or Oziel

We Would like to Wholeheartedly
Thank our Dear Friends

Alberto Cohen

For Generously
Donating the Rent of

Nisan 5781

Leiluy Nishmat

Don Sady Cohen Bar Cota z"l

Tihye Nishmato Tzerura Bitzror Hahayim

Amen!

We truly appreciate it.

In this Merit,

**May Hashem Bless you & your Wonderful
Family with all the Berachot in the Torah**

Amen.

Hechal Shalom / Or Oziel

We Would like to Wholeheartedly
Thank our Dear Friends

Salomon Murciano

For Generously
Donating the Rent of

Nisan 5781

Leiluy Nishmat his Dear Mother
Felicia Amalia Bat Miriam z"l

Tihye Nishmata Tzerura Bitzor Hahayim

Began Eden Amen!

We truly appreciate it.

In this Merit,

May Hashem Bless you & your Wonderful
Family with all the Berachot in the Torah Amen.



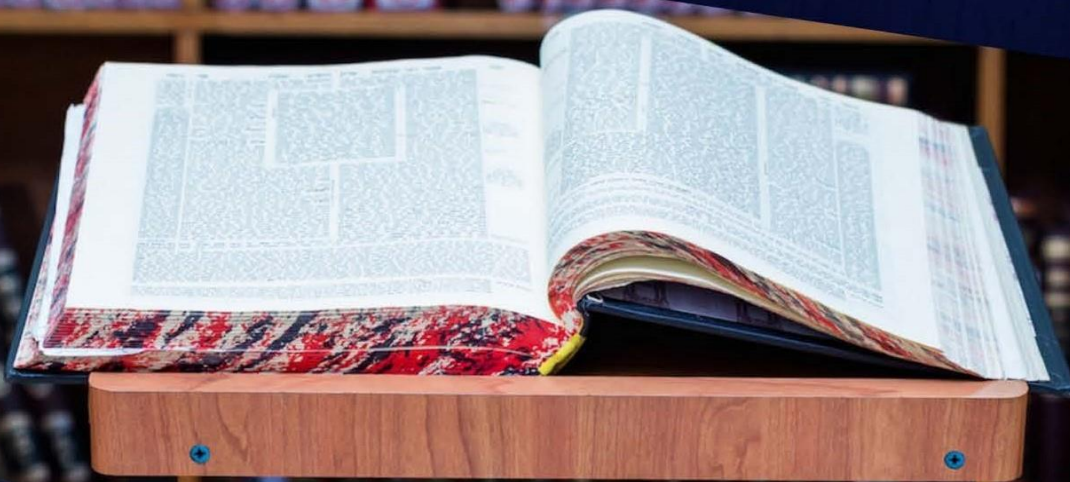
DAF YOMI SPONSORS



THIS YEAR'S LEARNING OF THE DAF YOMI
IS GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY

THE KAMHAZI FAMILY

IN MEMORY OF THEIR DEAR FATHER
SHELOMO BEN YAAKOV Z"L
& FOR HATZLACHA OF THE WHOLE FAMILY.
HASHEM SHOULD BLESS THEM WITH
HEALTH, HAPPINESS, & LONG LIFE, AMEN.



THIS YEAR'S LEARNING OF DAF YOMI IS
GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY

THE AKKAD FAMILY

LEILUY NISHMAT

אברהם בן גרסי-ה ז"ל, שלמה בן תמם ז"ל, אליהו בן רחל
ז"ל, ותמם בת אורו ז"ל תנצב"ה

HASHEM SHOULD BLESS THEM WITH
HEALTH, HAPPINESS, & LONG LIFE, AMEN.

We would like to Wholeheartedly Thank our Dear Friends,

Mr. & Mrs. Ronen Cohen

for generously Donating the TORAH LEARNING of

Nisan 5781

Leiluy Nishmat Shalom Bitton Bar Rachel z"l

the 5th of Nisan

Tihye Nishmato Tzerura Bitzror Hahayim Amen!

We truly appreciate it. In this merit may Hashem Bless you & your wonderful family with all the Berachot of the Torah. Amen.

Happy Birthday To

- Saadia Aquinin – Mon. Mar. 29th,
- Mr. Irving Levine – Mon. Mar. 29th,
- Mrs. Evelyn Belecen – Wed. Mar. 31st.
- Benjamin Cohen – Thurs. Apr. 1st,
- Michael Taieb – Thurs. Apr. 8th,
- Mrs. Batya Belecen – Shab. Apr. 10th,
- Mrs. Tiffany Lemmel (Shoshan)–Shab. Apr. 10th
- Eden Grace Albergel – Tue. Apr. 13th,
- Eliyahu Chocron – Wed. Apr. 14th,
- Mr. Sammy Maya – Wed. Apr. 14th,
- Tehila Taieb – Thurs. Apr. 15th,
- David Gad – Mon. Apr. 19th,
- Dr. Jean Jacques Edderai – Tue. Apr. 20th
- Deborah Shira Gad – Fri. Apr. 23rd,
- Eliyahu Shlomo Michael – Fri. Apr. 23rd,

Nahalot

- Oro Bat Sinuru z"l 18th of Nisan (Mother of Mr. Shabetai Maya z"l)
- Freja Bat Rivka z"l (Aunt of Mrs. Ruby Mouyal)
- Hassiba Bat Djamilah z"l 19th of Nisan
(Mother of Mrs. Jeannine Furhmann)
- Eliyahu Benmergui Ben Luna z"l
(Father of Mr. Abraham Benmergui)
- Moshe Ben Abraham z"l 21st of Nisan (Uncle of Mr. Albert Belecen)
- Hadra Benmergui Bat Sara z"l 22nd of Nisan
(Aunt of Sr. Mose Benmergui)
- Donna Alfon Bat Clara z"l (Mother of Mr. Alberto Alfon)
- Simon Chocron Ben Perla z"l (Grandfather of Mr. Simon Chocron)
- David Ben Luisa Murciano z"l 23rd of Nisan
(Uncle of Mr. Saadia Aquinin.)
- Luna Chocron Bat Simha z"l 24th of Nisan (Grandmother of Simon Chocron)
- Mahluf Rene Bsiri z"l 26th of Nisan (Father of Mr. Stephane Bsiri)
- Nathanel Bsiri z"l (Brother of Mr. Stephane Bsiri)
- Reouven Roger z"l 26th of Nisan (Father of Mrs. Julia Bsiri)

WEEKLY INSPIRATION

Our Response to the Wicked Son

(Rabbi Eli Mansour from Daily Halacha)

The Haggadah famously speaks of four different types of sons, instructing us how to fulfill the obligation of Sippur Yesi'at Misrayim (telling the story of the Exodus on Pesah) to each one. The wicked son, the Haggadah says, asks the question, "Ma Ha'aboda Ha'zot Lachem" – "What is this service to you?" He looks at the Mitzvot observed at the Seder and asks his parents what this is all about, what they are bothering with these special observances. The Haggadah instructs us to respond by citing the verse in Sefer Shemot (13:8), "Ba'abur Zeh Asa Hashem Li Be'seti Mi'Misrayim" – "It is because of this that Hashem acted for me when I left Egypt."

This verse seems very difficult to understand, and it seems even more difficult to understand how this answers the wicked son's question. As the commentators note, the verse seems to say that G-d took Beneh Yisrael out of Egypt so that we can perform the Mitzvot of Pesah. This appears to be the opposite of the actual sequence of events. We would have thought that after the Exodus, G-d commanded us to perform the Mitzvot of Pesah in order to remember this seminal event. But this verse seems to be saying that to the contrary, G-d took us out of Egypt so we can perform the Pesah sacrifice, eat Masa and Marror, and so on.

How could that be? How could the purpose of the Exodus be to perform Mitzvot which commemorate the Exodus? And what does this have to do with the wicked son?

The Bet Ha'levi (Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik of Brisk, 1820-1892) explains that the wicked son questions the relevance of the Pesah sacrifice when its primary purpose is no longer necessary. The ancient Egyptians regarded the sheep as a deity of sorts, as they worshipped the zodiacal sign of Aries, which is symbolized by a sheep. The Pesah sacrifice

was required as a public rejection of Egyptian paganism, and a statement of belief in monotheism. The wicked son claims that this statement was necessary only in the ancient world, when paganism was rampant, and many people believed in the worship of cattle. But once the world no longer followed such foolish beliefs, there should no longer be any reason to observe this Mitzva. The wicked son thus asks, "What is this service to you" – meaning, how is it relevant now? Why should we still be required to observe this ritual?

The answer to this question is that the Torah in fact preceded the world's creation. Even though many Mitzvot have reasons that we understand, there are also other reasons which are inaccessible to us. And therefore, even if the reason of a certain Mitzva – as we understand it – no longer applies, we are nevertheless bound by that Mitzva, because all Mitzvot are eternally relevant, binding and applicable. The proof is that even the patriarchs observed the Mitzvot of Pesah, despite the fact that the Exodus had not happened yet. This demonstrates that the Mitzvot are significant and relevant irrespective of their apparent reasons, because they preceded even the world's creation, and are therefore not contingent on any particular time or place.

This is why the Haggadah tells us to respond to the wicked son by citing the verse, "Ba'abur Zeh Asa Hashem Li Be'seti Mi'Misrayim" – "It is because of this that Hashem acted for me when I left Egypt." This verse teaches us the very point with which we are to respond to this challenge – that the Mitzvot of Pesah are not dependent upon any particular time and place. Hashem brought the redemption so that we can fulfill the Mitzvot; He did not command these Mitzvot because the Exodus happened. The Mitzvot stand independent of any reason or rationale and are binding in every day and age. This is our response to the wicked son, and this is one of the vitally important lessons of Pesah which we are to emphasize to ourselves and to our children on this special night.

The Bread of Faith

(Rabbi Mansour)

Towards the beginning of the Seder, before we begin reading the Maggid section, we break the middle Masa on the table. The Gemara in Masechet Pesachim (115) explains that this is done because the Torah (Debarim 16:3) refers to Masa as “Lehem Oni” – “poor man’s bread,” and poor people generally eat scraps of bread, as opposed to whole loaves. In the Gemara’s words, “Darko Shel Ani Bi’perusa” – a poor person is accustomed to pieces, rather than loaves.

The Gemara’s comment also has a deeper meaning. Elsewhere, in Masechet Nedarim (41a), the Gemara teaches, “En Ani Ela Be’de’a” – the true “poor person” is one who is “impoverished” in terms of knowledge. In this sense of the term “poor,” we are all paupers. We all lack knowledge. We see so many things in the world that make no sense to us – good, innocent people who suffer, evil people who prosper, and countless strange events that defy our understanding. The challenge of Emuna (faith) is to recognize just how little we understand. If person walks into a movie forty-five minutes after it started, he will be unable to follow the plot, and will think that nothing makes sense. We all come into this world well into the “story,” millennia after G-d created the world, and we see and know about very little of what has happened, what happens, and what will happen. Our knowledge is very limited, we see everything from a very narrow viewpoint, and so we don’t understand. Once we recognize this, we can trust and feel confident that G-d runs the world in His perfect wisdom, and everything occurs precisely the way it should, even though we do not understand how this could be.

This is the deeper meaning of the Gemara’s comment, “Darko Shel Ani Bi’perusa.” We are “poor,” very limited in our knowledge, and so we see only a “Perusa,” a piece, part of the story. The events we witness and experience are only a very small piece of the large puzzle, of G-d’s master plan, and this is why we do not understand why things happen as they do. We therefore break the Masa, keep one piece on

the table, and hide the second piece. We remind ourselves that we see only a small portion of what is going on, and the other portion is hidden from our view. That hidden piece is brought back only at the end of the Seder, symbolizing the fact that at the end of our exile, at the time of Mashiah, everything will become clear. Then we will finally access all the hidden information that we are now missing, and we will fully understand everything. Until then, we need to strengthen our Emuna and firmly trust that Hashem is in full control and has only our best interests in mind.

A young child does not understand why his mother holds him down to allow the doctor to give him a shot and cause him pain. Years later, however, when the child realizes that the shot saved him from a dozen or so fatal diseases, he thanks his mother. In our current state, we are “blind,” like ignorant children, and we do not understand the reason for the pain we sometimes have to endure. Pesah reminds us that the day will yet come when we will have the knowledge we lack now, and then everything will be perfectly clear.

The Zohar calls Masa “Lahma De’mehemnuta” – “the bread of faith.” The experience of Pesah is intended to bolster our Emuna, to remind us that there is so much that we do not know, and to trust that we are always in G-d’s capable hands, and everything He does for us is always only for the best.

Reaching the Level of Ahavat Chinam

(Rabbi Frand from Torah.org)

I recently read a story which is not related to the *parsha*, but certainly falls into the category of *inyane d’yoma* [contemporary events].

Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook (1865-1935), the first Chief Rabbi of Eretz Yisrael in modern times, was an outstanding genius, but he was a controversial figure. Certain rabbinic personalities of the “old *yishuv*” took issue with many of his ideas and positions. Rav Kook was

speaking somewhere, and one of the zealots started yelling at him in the middle of his *drasha*. The outburst did not faze Rav Kook — he continued with his *drasha* — but it was certainly a *bizayon* [embarrassment] for this Torah giant.

Later that same year, Pesach time rolled around. Rav Kook distributed *maot Chittim* [*kimcha d'Pischa* – i.e., charity funds for the Passover holiday] to those with financial needs for the upcoming holiday. He presented his *gabbai* [secretary] with a list of the poor people to whom the charity funds should be distributed. Lo and behold, this very zealot who had so inappropriately embarrassed the Chief Rabbi earlier that year, was on the list to receive *maot chittim*.

The secretary told Rav Kook, “I refuse to give him the money! How could you give such a person money after what he did to you?” Rav Kook told his *gabbai*, “If you do not deliver the money to him, I will!” The Chief Rabbi explained his rationale for giving him the money: Chazal say that the *Bet HaMikdash* was destroyed because of *sinat chinam* [unjustified hatred of one Jew for another]. There is a famous maxim that if the *Bet HaMikdash* was destroyed because of *sinat chinam*, the only way it will be rebuilt is with *Ahavat chinam* [unjustified love of one Jew for another].

Rav Kook explained: *Ahavat chinam* means that you like the person for no reason, just like *sinat chinam* means that you hate the person for no reason. But Rav Kook analyzed as follows: When one Jew loves another Jew for “no reason,” that is not really *Ahavat chinam*, because there is a Mitzvah of *vahavta l'reyacha ka'mocha* [love your fellow Jew like yourself]. I need to love every Jew according to Biblical law. Thus, the fact that I love another Jew cannot be called *Ahavat chinam* — that is an *ahava* for which we are bound by oath from the time of Har Sinai! What then is *Ahavat chinam*, asked Rav Kook? It is when a person insults you and embarrasses you, and you have every justification in the world to put him on your ‘enemies’ list and to totally ignore him, and **nevertheless** you show him love and

compassion, and give him money when he is in need. That is *Ahavat chinam*.

Pesach is approaching. During Nisan, the Jews were redeemed, and in Nisan we are destined to be redeemed. This is the time to practice “*Ahavat chinam*.” This is conjecture on my part, but perhaps this is why Rav Kook waited until before Pesach to give him money. He specifically wanted to do an act of *Ahavat chinam* for which we will merit the rebuilding of the *Bet HaMikdash* — during the month that we are destined to be redeemed.

The Ben Ish Chai cites an insight on the following question from the *Mah Nishtana*: “On all other nights we do not dip even once; tonight, we dip two times.” The Ben Ish Chai explains that one dipping commemorates “And they dipped the tunic in blood” [Bereshit 37:31], and the other one commemorates “You shall take a bundle of hyssop and dip it into the blood...” [Shemot 12:22]. One time we dip at the Seder to commemorate the brothers taking Yosef’s coat and dipping it in blood; the second time we dip at the Seder commemorates the bundle of hyssop (*agudat ezov*) that we dipped in blood in Egypt on the night prior to the Exodus. The Ben Ish Chai comments: If we want to atone for the sin of hatred between brothers, the way to do this is to take an “***agudat ezov***”, i.e., to come together as an *agudah achat* (a unified group) which will do Your Will with total dedication.

Tisha B’Av is normally the time that we talk about *Ahavat chinam*. However, as we all know, the truth of the matter is that there is a tremendous connection between Tisha B’Av and Pesach. The first day of Pesach *always* falls on the same day of the week as the coming Tisha B’Av. Please G-d, Pesach this year will start on a Friday night, the first day of Pesach is Shabbat. That is also the day on which Tisha B’Av falls this year (although the fast and other observances are pushed off until Sunday). We know, likewise, that we eat an egg by the Seder, to remind us of the Destruction of the Temple, to remind us of Tisha B’Av. There is thus a thematic connection between Pesach and Tisha B’Av.

This is the connection, says the Ben Ish Chai: If we want to achieve atonement for the sin of

dipping Yosef's tunic in blood, if we want to merit the promised redemption in Nisan, the way to achieve that is "and you will take a bundle of hyssop" – to forget some of our petty differences, and to in fact come together ***b'agudah achat***, so that, Please G-d, "we will eat there from the sacrifices and the Paschal offerings" speedily in our days, Amen.

Hagaddah Insights

(Rabbi Frand)

We Are What We Do

One of the perennial topics that come up at the Seder is the nature of the dialog between the Wise Son and his father in the Hagaddah narrative. The Wise Son asks his father "What are the testimonies, decrees, and ordinances that Hashem our G-d has commanded you?" The answer given to him is "Therefore explain to him the laws of the Pesach offering: that one may not eat dessert after the final taste of the Pesach offering."

Why is this terse answer an appropriate response to his all-encompassing question? The simple and perhaps the correct answer is that this statement "Ayn maftirin achar haPessach Afikoman" is the last Mishna in Perek Arvei Pessachim, which discusses the laws of Seder night. In fact, we tell him everything – from A to Z – from that Talmudic chapter. The law that one cannot eat anything after the Afikoman is "Z" – the last item in that catalog of laws found in the Talmudic Tractate dealing with Passover.

However, if we wish to engage in homiletics (which is very common on Seder night) one could interpret as follows: The Wise Son is asking a very fundamental question. We all realize how basic and fundamental the Exodus story is to our religion and to our historical experience. Still, the Wise Son is asking – why do we need this abundance of Mitzvot that have to do with the Exodus? Would it not suffice with just one or two symbolic commandments to recall the event? Moreover, aside from all the many Mitzvot associated with Pessach in general

and the Seder night in particular, there are another several dozen Mitzvot that the Torah identifies as being "zecher l'Yitziat Mitzraim" [commemorating the Exodus from Egypt]. For example, the mitzvah of Tefillin and the mitzvah of redeeming the First Born are classified as being "zecher l'Yitziat Mitzraim". Why so many Mitzvot? Why all these testimonies, decrees, and ordinances?

The truth of the matter is that the question the Wise Son asks is really the question the Sefer HaChinuch addresses to his son. In Mitzvah 16 (regarding the prohibition of breaking a bone from the Paschal offering), the author explains the reason for this mitzvah: On Seder night we need to feel like wealthy people, kings and princes. Kings & princes do not break bones when they eat their meat. Such behavior typifies one who rarely eats meat and wants to suck out the last bit of juice from the broken bone. The Chinuch writes that in order to feel and demonstrate that we are free and wealthy men (the experience of "Cherut"), the Torah commands us to emulate such practices and not break the bones on Seder night.

Then, in a fundamental teaching, the author writes (to his son), "Do not think the number of commandments relating to the Exodus is excessive and that one or two rituals would suffice for our children and grandchildren to not forget the historical events of the Exodus from Egypt. Such an idea (which is basically the question of the Wise son) is mistaken. My dear son, listen to this and it will give you a basic understanding into the reason for much of Torah and many of the Mitzvot: **MAN IS INFLUENCED BY HIS ACTIONS** (Adam nif'al k'fi peulotav)."

The world says, "You are what you eat". The Chinuch says, "You are what you do" and "The way you act is the way you become."

The Chinuch gives a famous parable about a person who was a righteous individual – kind, compassionate, and kind-hearted. For whatever reason, he ended up in a profession where he needed to be cruel. In contemporary terms, we can picture someone who got in trouble with the mafia. They drafted him into their service and they told him that he was going to be their enforcer. "You are going to

start breaking people's knees or we will break your knees!"

This person started out as a wonderful compassionate individual. But, as fate would have it, for years and years he needed to make his living by being an enforcer for the mafia, using all kinds of violent techniques to collect funds for his employers. The Chinuch writes that such a person will inevitably eventually develop a nature that is cruel and hard-hearted. You become what you practice. You are what you do.

On the other hand, he writes, a person who is mean and cruel but is forced into a profession in which he must be kind and giving will eventually become a compassionate person. This, he says, is what Mitzvot are all about. It is not merely enough for us to do one or two things. The more you do the more you become. The fundamental idea of doing Mitzvot is to change us for the better! The Torah wants there to be a lasting impression on our souls. By the performance of Mitzvot we should CHANGE. There should be an impression. This lasting impression on our souls comes about by doing Divinely mandated actions over and over again.

Therefore, if we drink the wine, lean, emulate free wealthy men, do not break the bones and act the part, we will become like wealthy people, kings & princes. This is why we do not eat dessert after the Afikoman. We want the taste (of the Matza/Paschal offering) to remain in our mouths. We want to create a lasting impression to the Mitzvot we do. This is what we tell the Wise Son. The desire to have a lasting impression is symbolic of what Mitzvot are about in general. The goal of Mitzvot is that we should become different, better, people. We achieve that goal by doing. The more we do, the better we become. This is the reason for the testimonies, decrees, and ordinances which Hashem our G-d has commanded.

Not Only One Has Risen Up Against Us

"And it is this that has stood by our fathers and us. For not only one has risen against us to annihilate us, but in every generation, they rise against us, to annihilate us. But the Holy One, Blessed is He rescues us from their hand."

This is not a novel statement. It was obvious when the text of the Hagaddah was composed, and it is certainly obvious by now that there have been many many people who have risen up to attempt to destroy us. It is a vast understatement to say that "not only one has risen up" against us! What then is the author of the Hagaddah telling us?

Furthermore, how does the narrative continue? "Go and learn what Lavan the Arami attempted to do to our father Yaakov! For Paroh decreed only against the males, Lavan attempted to uproot everything..." Why is this the proof to the statement "Not only one has risen against us?"

I saw an interesting observation. The expression "For not only one has risen against us to annihilate us" means something different. If we look at the world and at all the ideologies that have come across the world stage, so many ideologies began with one person who developed a following. From one person an idea took hold. For instance, Martin Luther started a movement (Lutheranism). Karl Marx had an idea (Marxism). Millions and even billions of people followed the idea of one man. A person comes up with an idea; people take to the idea; they propagate the idea, and the idea becomes widespread among people – but it originated from one man with one idea.

There is an exception to this rule and that is anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is a movement by which various people throughout the ages have had various reasons why they hate Jews. The reasons, however, are rarely the same reason. "For not one person alone rose up against us to destroy us." There is something different about anti-Semitism: It was not merely one person's idea. Person A had one idea why he was anti-Semitic; Person B had another idea why he was anti-Semitic, and so on down the line. One person said it was racist; another person said because they do not like our noses; some people said because they do not like the way we act. They converge at the same point of hatred, but they begin with a variety of often contradictory reasons and ideas for their hatred.

What does that say? Not only one stood up against us. Anti-Semitism in its various forms

has been promoted by so many people. However, everybody has a new complaint, finds a new flaw, comes up with a new idea why to hate us. The bottom line, however, is the same – they all hate us.

Come and hear – because Pharaoh followed Lavan. If he was merely following in Lavan's footsteps, he would need to uproot everything – get rid of all the Jews – exactly as Lavan tried to do. But, no! Pharaoh had a new form of anti-Semitism: Only kill the males. This was something new.

This is the way it has been throughout the generations. The "miracle" of anti-Semitism is one of the greatest proofs of the existence of the Almighty. Most "isms" come and go, whether it is humanism, socialism, or communism. But there is one "ism" that has been with us since time immemorial – anti-Semitism.

It started with Lavan, thousands of years ago. It continued with Pharaoh and then with other enemies. It continued with Nevuchadezzar, the Greeks, and the Romans. It continued with the Moslems and the Spanish and the Catholics. It continued with Chelminski and the Ukrainians and with the Nazis. This has been going on for thousands and thousands of years.

What does that tell you? It tells you that it is not our noses and it is not our faces and it is not this and not that. It is not because we control the world or because we do not control the world, or we are too poor or too rich. It is because our enemies understand on some level that we are the nation designated by G-d and put here in this world to spread His Word. That fact is what they cannot take. That is why they hate us.

It comes in different forms. It comes for different reasons. "Not for one reason alone have they risen up against us." The miracle is that in each instance and in each generation "G-d saves us from their hands."

Here we are in 2015 where so many millions of people thought that "if we have a State" that will cure anti-Semitism. They thought, "if we act like everybody else" that will cure anti-Semitism. We want to be normal like everybody else.

Three hundred thousand people are massacred in Darfur without much of an international reaction, but the United Nations goes ballistic when an Israeli bulldozer runs over one woman by accident. What is that saying?

Not only one has risen up against us to destroy us. G-d alone, nothing else, saves us from their hands. Not the State, not normalization, not assimilation. Only G-d saves us from their hands, in each and every generation.

How to Reach Your Personal Exodus

Liberate your will by embracing the power of small. (By Rabbi Dov Heller, M.A.)

Passover is the holiday of freedom, the opportunity to expand and grow beyond one's perceived limitations. In Hebrew, the word Egypt means "narrow." Egypt was a place that limited human potential and enslaved the will. Freedom from one's personal Egypt is the experience of expanding and moving beyond one's personal limitations by harnessing and liberating one's will.

One's personal Egypt is the pain of wanting to improve oneself in a specific way but feeling powerless to bring about that change. In place of growth, one feels stuck and hopeless.

Gary has struggled with loving people and feeling connected to them for as long as he can remember. He has tried so many techniques hoping one of them would result in the breakthrough he longs for. He has a pattern of learning about some tool for loving people, getting excited about it, and after two weeks or so, quitting, as he realizes it's not working for him. Recently he read about a technique called the "love game" – the suggestion is to study someone closely and make a list of five virtues that person possesses. Love being defined in this context as the pleasure we get when we identify someone with their virtues and excuse their faults. Gary once again felt a rush of excitement because the idea made so much sense. Unfortunately, after two weeks, he ran

out of gas again. Feeling like a loser, he felt resigned to living a life of disconnection.

I think we all can identify with Gary's frustration. There are aspects about who we are that we long to change so badly but have given-up, feeling resigned to living with our limitations.

One's true free-will point is that small step that one can make consistently, without herculean effort.

Our sages taught, "Nothing can stand in the way of one's will." We have the power to improve ourselves in any way we truly want to. Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler taught that the secret of liberating one's will is to identify where one's free-will point lies, or what I call "our personal points of real possibility." One's true free-will point is that small step that one can make consistently, without herculean effort.

There always exists some meaningful change that a person can make, some step towards becoming better. That change may be so small that one may be inclined to discard it, thinking it's not much of an accomplishment. That's a big mistake. Making any real change, no matter how small, is significant and deeply fulfilling. This is the "power of small." And it is the key power to liberating oneself from imprisoned will and attaining authentic growth and transformation.

A common reason why people fail in improving themselves is that they consistently set the bar too high with goals that are too difficult to reach. The Talmud tells us, "If you try to grab too much you'll end up with nothing." Realistic growth that takes an honest look at one's free-will point is the best way to avoid what I call self-improvement burn-out. Don't be seduced by the dramatic accomplishments encouraged by life coaches and mentors. For many people, this is a formula for chronic frustration and depression.

Know yourself and accept your limitations. Don't compare yourself with others; competing with others distracts us from being honest with ourselves. Be secure with who you are – an imperfect person striving to grow. Avoid grandiosity and perfectionism. Celebrate instead every tiny step of growth.

Gary's real problem was that he was always setting the bar beyond his free-will point. The tools he had tried were out of his range of real possibilities for him. If Gary were able to be honest with himself, he would discover that his free-will point would be a very small change. Fortunately, with some guidance, Gary discovered where his free-will point was. Once a day he would greet one person with a sincere and genuine smile. When he received a nice smile in return, he felt connected and more positive about that person.

After a month Gary was astonished by the change in the way he felt about himself and others. He was feeling empowered and convinced that he could maintain this change without pushing himself overly hard. Once Gary felt he had mastered this change, he felt ready to raise the bar a notch. He even felt that he could begin thinking about looking for virtues in others as his next step in loving people.

This approach to growth is truly empowering. The power of small is ultimately about living in reality and striving for genuine transformation. Every exodus from our personal Egypt begins with small steps that are located at our free-will points. With the power of small, we can understand why our Sages say, "Nothing can stand in the way of will."

Father-on-Loan

(Rabbi Hoffman Torah.org)

Nisan. Pesach. A time of redemption. "Just as they (we) were redeemed in Nisan (from Egypt), so too in Nisan they will again be redeemed." (Rosh HaShanah 11a) The ge'ulah ha-atidah (future redemption) is likened to our redemption from Egypt. In what ways will they be similar?

Hashem (G-d) appeared to Moshe in the form of a burning bush. He had a message for the Jews: "*Behold, I have seen your affliction in Mitzrayim (Egypt) and I have heard your cries... I shall descend to rescue you from the hand of Egypt.*" Moshe replied to Hashem: "*Who am I... that I shall take the Children of Israel out of Egypt?*" Hashem answered, "*For I shall be (Eh-*

yeh) with you. And this is your sign that I have sent you: When you take the people out of Egypt, you will serve [Me] upon this mountain." (Shemot 3:7-12)

Rashi explains this cryptic passage. Moshe asked Hashem: In what merit are the Jews leaving Mitzrayim? What have they done to deserve this special treatment? Hashem answered: Although they have done nothing **yet**, they will in the future be doing a very great thing – they will soon stand upon this mountain (Mount Sinai) and accept My Torah.

R' Elazar, the son of the illustrious Rebbe R' Elimelech of Lizensk zt"l once spent Shabbat at the court of the famous Rebbe R' Pinchas of Koritz zt"l. After davening (prayers), as is the custom in Chassidic courts, R' Pinchas held a Tisch (a communal Shabbat meal led by the Rebbe). Being the son of a great tzaddik (righteous person), R' Elazar was given a seat next to the Rebbe. At one point, R' Elazar, caught up in his own holy thoughts, sighed to himself, "Oy – Tatte," (O Father – a reference to G-d). R' Pinchas, who was renowned for his cutting truthfulness and abhorrence of lip-service, overheard his krectz (sigh). He turned to him and whispered, "Who says?" [i.e. Who says that you in fact are so close to Hashem as to refer to Him as your Father?]

R' Elazar was crushed. What hurt him the most, he reckoned, was that R' Pinchas was absolutely right! Was he really so close to Hashem? Was his whole avodah (service of G-d) no more than lip-service?

He returned home dejected. His father, R' Elimelech, noticed right away that something was amiss. He asked his son, and R' Elazar told him what had happened, and how broken-hearted he felt. "What?!" R' Elimelech exclaimed. "And if one doesn't have a Father – must he remain an orphan? The pasuk says: 'Sh'al Avicha – You have to borrow a Father!' [This is a play-on-words of the passage (Devarim 32:7) which reads, "Sh'al avicha ve- yagedcha, Ask your father, he will tell you." The word sh'al, to ask, can also mean to borrow.] Sometimes, when we feel very far away, we have to take Hashem as our Father – on loan."

This insight provides the answer to one of the prime catch-22's in life. We constantly ask Hashem to give us all our needs – sustenance, health, peace-of-mind, etc. Yet if we reflect on our past deeds, we are often left with an empty feeling in our stomachs. Why? Why should He? What have I really done with my life that I now brazenly stand before Hashem and ask that He sustain me like a father to a son? Have I really lived up to even a small percentage of the potential which He has given me?

Yet were He to forsake us now, if Hashem would say, so to speak – enough is enough – then we would certainly be lost. For how could we even begin to correct our ways, to fix that which is wrong, if Hashem will not continue to sustain us and provide us with our needs? So we ask that Hashem give us **on credit**. True, our avodat Hashem (service of G-d) has been lacking to this point. Our sacks – which should be overflowing with Torah and mitzvot – are woefully empty. We have nothing with which to "pay" for the good which we ask. But, we beseech Hashem, please give us anyway. We will surely repay You in the future. What was, was. But from now on, we will resolve to undertake our avodas Hashem with renewed zest, with energy and vitality and excitement. We will learn more, daven better, and treat others with more respect. We "borrow" from the Father that we have scorned. And though our behaviour as His children may be wanting, He extends us credit and continues to provide for us. Because He trusts us – we will repay Him.

This, explains the Chozeh (Seer) of Lublin, is the merit with which the Jews were taken out of Mitzrayim. Hashem answered Moshe, "Eh-yeh – for I shall be with you." The word Eh-yeh alludes to this concept. Eh-yeh is in the future tense, "For I shall be." What I am now is not what is important. I will be good. **I will be something great**. This is why Hashem, in the context of the Exodus, refers to Himself as "Eh-yeh asher Eh-yeh, I Will Be As I Shall Be." (3:14) His special treatment of the Jews has no justification based on the present context. But, "When you take the people out of Egypt, they will serve [Me] upon this mountain..." Though it is not apparent, they will one day be a great nation. A nation of righteous individuals, who

will serve Me and accept My holy Torah upon this mountain.

As the final redemption draws closer and closer, one is sometimes thrown into despair. Are we really worthy of redemption? Aren't we straying further and further from the way of the Torah? But we must be strong. We must remind ourselves that the Jews of Mitzrayim were not redeemed until they reached the absolute bottom. The point at which they no longer had any merits of their own. All they could do is cry out to Hashem, "Tatte!" They were redeemed not because of what they were, but because of what the future held. They were redeemed because they promised Hashem: If You take us out of bondage, then we will serve You with all our hearts and all our souls. We too must be ready. Ready to do what we can now – ready to grasp at the promise that the future holds.

"In Nisan they were redeemed from Egypt and in Nisan they will again be redeemed." "As in the days of your Exodus from the land of Egypt, I will [again] show you wonders." (Michah 7:15) Avinu She-ba-shamayim, Father-in-Heaven, may we once again experience the redemption and salvation that our forefathers in Egypt felt when You removed them from slavery and made them Your nation!

Next Year in Jerusalem

Passover's inspiring message of hope.

(By Emuna Braverman)

I can't believe it's already a year since last Passover. I can't believe I bought my shmurah matzah on sale before Purim (!) and that it's time to sit down and make my menus. I can't believe all the groceries I've bought (and all the money I've spent!) and all the groceries I've yet to purchase! I can't believe all the cleaning and cooking that lies ahead. I can't believe that I have to figure out new ways to keep my grandchildren entertained during the plagues.

I can't believe how much I long for the renewal and hope of this springtime holiday. For the timing of the holiday is no accident. Passover occurs in the spring so that we can harness our connection to the physical renewal to our

spiritual goals. Just as the ground is bringing forth new blossoms and hope seems re-ignited after a long bleak winter, so too with our souls. Passover is our chance to rise from the darkness and gloom and pessimism of the dark days of winter and embrace the hope and optimism and opportunity of spring. With the advent of Passover and spring, our downtrodden spirits can fly anew.

This is the message of the Seder as well. The Passover Seder takes us on a journey, a trajectory from slavery to freedom. At the beginning of the evening we are caught up in the bitter experience of our slavery in Egypt. We are focused on the tears and the pain. By the end of the evening we have moved towards freedom. We sing songs of praise to the Almighty culminating in our heartfelt wishes for next year in Jerusalem, not just the physical city but the spiritual one, not just the modern city of malls and cars and hi-tech but the spiritual one of the Temple and the Messiah.

When we sit at our Passover Seder, wherever we are in the world, we share these same goals. We share this hope for the future of our nation. We have shared many bitter times for our people throughout the generations and we are expressing our firm belief that in the future we will share the joy of redemption.

"Next year in Jerusalem" is not just a slogan, a rallying goal, a clever Madison Avenue tag line. It is a deeply rooted expression of religious belief and of trust in G-d. It is not just a way to end the Seder on an emotional high; it is an expression of our reality. When we utter those words at the end of our Seder (those of us who are still awake!) we are saying that we know there is something more than the pain and trauma we are experiencing now. We know that, like all exiles in the past, this too will end. We know that our salvation comes from the Almighty and that He is only waiting for us to turn to Him to come to our rescue. When the Jewish people groaned under the burden of slavery and cried out to G-d, He "remembered" His covenant. G-d does not have senior moments. He did not forget His covenant with the Jewish people in the midst of all His other tasks. He was waiting for us to cry out to Him.

He's waiting now as well. But He's making it so easy for us. He's even fed us the script. As we express our gratitude to the Almighty for all the good He has bestowed on us throughout the ages, as we tell tales of servitude and redemption, we continue to focus on the ultimate future experience. When we say that last line, when we get up and dance around the table in a fervent prayer for the fulfillment of this Messianic dream, we don't just get caught up in the moment, we don't just focus on our family and friends around the table (as wonderful as that is!) but we turn our hearts and minds heavenward as we recognize that only the Almighty can bring us what we truly want in the depths of our souls – *"leshana haba b'yerushalayim habenuyah"* – next year in the rebuilt Jerusalem!

DAILY HALACHA

Halachot of Pesah

(Daily Halacha)

The Spiritual Lights That Come Down at the Seder

The Arizal (Rav Yishak Luria of Safed, 1534-1572) taught that on the night of the Seder, a great spiritual light descends from the heavens as a result of the Mitzvot that we perform. Although we always bring down spiritual light through our performance of Mitzvot, the Arizal explained that the lights come down on the night of the Seder in a special way. Normally, the lights of "Katnut" ("youth") descend first, before the lights of "Gadlut" ("adulthood"). (More specifically, there is first "Katnut Rishon" and then "Gadlut Rishon," which is followed by "Katnut Sheni" and then "Gadlut Sheni.") On Pesah, however, it is reversed: the great lights of "Gadlut" come down before the smaller lights of "Katnut." It is explained that the order is reversed on this night because it had to be reversed at the time of Yesi'at Misrayim (the Exodus from Egypt). If the smaller lights would have descended first, the negative spiritual forces in Egypt, which were exceptionally powerful, would have been able to withstand this power. G-d

therefore sent down the great lights of "Gadlut" first, which the negative spiritual forces were unable to withstand, and this phenomenon repeats itself each year on the night of the Seder, when we commemorate Yesi'at Misrayim.

The Ben Ish Hai (Rav Yosef Haim of Baghdad, 1833-1909), in his work *Od Yosef Hai* (Shana Rishona, Parashat Sav; listen to audio recording for precise citation), explains the deeper meaning of the Ma Nishtana on the basis of this concept. He writes that the lights of "Gadlut" come down to the Seder table through the recitation of Kiddush, and then when we dip the Karpas, the "Katnut" lights come down. The children, who are "Ketanim" ("minors") and thus sense the reversal of the sequence of "Gadlut" and "Katnut," ask why things are different on this night, how it is possible for the "adult" lights to come before the "child" lights, resembling an adult turning into a child. The answer to this question is "Abadim Hayinu Le'Pharaoh Be'Misrayim" – we were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, a place with a very strong "Kelipa" ("outer shell"), meaning, powerful negative forces. The impurity in Egypt was so strong that if G-d had not redeemed us on the night of Pesah, we would still be there even today. We therefore needed the unusual sequence of "Gadlut" before "Katnut" to break those forces and enable us to leave, and this sequence occurs again each year when we fulfill the Mitzvot of Pesah.

One might naturally wonder whether the child at the Seder is really aware of this sequence of spiritual lights at the Seder, such that he can ask this question. Many adults cannot comprehend these esoteric concepts, and certainly these topics lie well beyond the grasp of the young child asking the Ma Nishtana. The Ben Ish Hai writes that Hazal nevertheless established that the child should ask this question because his soul indeed understands these concepts and senses the changes that occur on the night of the Seder. The soul of a "Katan," a child, is especially sensitive to the "Katnut" lights and detects that the "Gadlut" lights come first on this night. Indeed, the Gemara in Masechet Megila (3) comments that oftentimes a person's soul is able to discern things which we are not consciously able to perceive.

The Ben Ish Hai's comments emphasize the depth and significance of each word of the Haggadah, and even the section which is read

by the young children. This is why we make the children recite the Ma Nishtana, as this recitation, whereby the children involve themselves in deep concepts, serves as a Tikkun (rectification) of their souls. And thus we should be aware that beyond the straightforward meaning of the text of the Haggadah, there are many additional layers of depth and profundity which lend to this night a special dimension of spiritual significance.

- There is a custom when kindling or fueling the fire for burning the Hametz to use items that had been used for other Mivvot, such as the Arba Minim and the wicks from the Hanukah candles. One should refrain from activities such as sewing, laundry and haircutting during the afternoon of Erev Pesah. One who wishes to take a haircut on the afternoon of Erev Pesah must go to a non-Jewish barber. It is permissible to shave, polish shoes, cut nails and conduct business in the afternoon of Erev Pesah.
- Hacham Ovadia Yosef, both in Yehaveh Da'at (5:34) and in Hazon Ovadia (p. 230), writes that as **women are included in all the Mivvot of Pesah, they must also read the full Hallel before the Seder.** They may recite the Hallel either in the synagogue or at home, but either way they must ensure to recite the full text just as they are obligated to fulfill all the other Mivvot that apply on the night of the Seder.
- One should use wine, and not grape juice, for the four cups at the Seder, but women, as well as men for whom drinking four cups of wine poses considerable difficulty, may use grape juice. Preferably, they should mix wine and grape juice, or drink wine for at least the fourth of the four cups.
- All the four cups at the Seder must be drunk while leaning to the left, and one who drinks without leaning must drink the cup again while leaning. If one drank the second cup without leaning, he does not repeat the Beracha of "Asher Ge'alanu" when drinking again. It is advisable for the head of the household to announce before the recitation of "Asher Ge'alanu" that everyone should drink while leaning to the left after the recitation.
- One must lean on his left side while drinking each of the four cups of wine. If one drank a

cup without leaning, he must drink another cup while leaning. One does not fulfill the Mivva by drinking a cup of wine without leaning. To fulfill the obligation of Heseba (leaning) at the Seder, one must lean to the left side, at least at a 45° angle, and rest on something, like the back of the chair, a pillow or the table.

- The cup used for the four cups of wine at the Seder must contain at least 86 grams (a little over 3 oz.). One should preferably drink the entire cup, but one fulfills the Mivva even if he did not drink the whole cup, as long as he drank the majority. Therefore, it is preferable to use a cup that does not contain much more than the minimum required 86 grams, so one would be able to drink the entire cup or at least the majority of the cup. However, for the first cup of wine, which is also drunk for the requirement of Kiddush, one must ensure to drink the complete amount of 86 grams. One fulfills the obligation of Kiddush only if it is recited over a meal, and since the meal at the Seder is eaten long after Kiddush, one must drink this amount of wine to be considered to have recited Kiddush at a "meal."
- The wine should be drunk all at once, rather than sipped, though if one did sip the wine, he has nevertheless fulfilled the obligation.
- When the Seder is held on Mosa'eh Shabbat, one must recite Haddala in conjunction with Kiddush, following the proper sequence. If one realized after Kiddush, but before Karpas, that he had not recited Haddala at Kiddush, then he must recite Haddala over a cup of wine at that point. If he realized his mistake during Maggid, he should recite the Beracha over the candle at that point and recite the Beracha of Haddala at the end of Maggid, right after the Beracha of "Ga'al Yisrael," over the same cup of wine over which he recites "Ga'al Yisrael." If he realizes during the meal, he should recite Haddala at that point, and if he realizes during Hallel, then he should recite Haddala after Hallel.
- According to Sephardic custom, Romaine lettuce should be used for Marror. One must ensure that the lettuce is free of insects. Although it is customary to use Romaine lettuce, one may, strictly speaking, use iceberg lettuce, as well. There are those stringent who use endives for Marror. If

necessary, one may combine different forms of Marror to reach the required quantity of "Ke'zayit." If one cannot obtain any of these vegetables, he may use for Marror any bitter-tasting vegetable, but the Beracha of "Al Achilat Marror" should not be recited in such a case.

- When one washes his hands for U'rhatz after Kiddush at the Seder, he must comply with all the laws that apply to hand washing before bread, and one should not speak or divert his attention until after he partakes of the Karpas. There is no Beracha made on this Netilat Yadayim. One should make a point to wash his hands inside his home, and not leave to wash his hands elsewhere
- One must wash his hands a second time at the Seder before eating the Masa, even if he had ensured to keep his hands clean since the earlier washing before Karpas. One recites a Beracha over this second washing, even if he had mistakenly recited a Beracha over the first washing. The one leading the Seder holds all three Masot in his hands while reciting the Beracha of "Hamosi," and then puts down the bottom Masa for the recitation of the Beracha of "Al Achilat Masa." He should eat a Ke'zayit from each of the two Masot, whereas everyone else may eat just one Ke'zayit. Salt may be added to the Masa, and according to Kabbalistic teaching it is proper to add salt to the Masa.
- One should not lean or recline during the reading of Maggid. Instead, it should be read in an upright position, and with a sense of awe and reverence.
- The reading of Maggid should be completed before Chatzot (midnight as defined by Halacha). This means that one should recite the concluding Beracha of "Asher Ge'alanu" before Chatzot. BeDiavad, if he finished after Chazot, he still may make the Beracha of "Asher Ge'alanu". After the Seder, one should continue learning and discussing the Exodus and the laws of Pesach until he feels the need to go to sleep.
- At the Seder, one must eat for the Afikoman at least one Kezayit of Masa, within four minutes (or at most seven minutes), while leaning. Some have the custom to eat two Kezetim. One who did not lean while eating the Afikomen should eat another Kezayit

while leaning, unless he is too full to eat more Masa. One may not eat or drink anything on the night of Pesah after the Afikoman, except for the two remaining cups of wine, and water. One may also drink tea or coffee to help him stay awake.

- If a non-Jew will be coming to one's home during Pesah, such as a workman who comes to do repairs, it is preferable to respectfully ask that he does not bring Hametz into the home, but strictly speaking, the non-Jew may be allowed to enter the home with Hametz, as long as one ensures to remove any crumbs that are left.

KID'Z KORNER

Kid'z Korner (Torah Tots)

Humility Is The Greater Merit

Rabbi Samuel Kariver, though very poor, resolved to never ask for help from others, no matter what the situation. His Master, the Lubliner, heard and instructed a rich Chassid to buy good requisites for Pesach and to deliver them to his disciple. So pleased was Rabbi Samuel that the L-rd permitted him to adhere to his resolution to never ask another for help, that he recited the seder service in high spirits. It seemed to him that he had attained a rare state of holiness. However, on the second seder night, Rabbi Samuel was very tired and lay down for a rest before beginning the seder. He fell asleep and awoke a few moments before midnight. He wished to partake of the Afikomen before midnight, and was therefore compelled to recite the service very rapidly. He was very depressed afterwards and wondered whether any other Jew had ever been compelled to perform a seder so hurriedly. When he related what happened to the Lubliner, the Rebbe told him: "Your first seder was of little merit. Your belief that you had flown straight to Heaven was a sign of arrogance. Your second seder, however, was of higher merit, inasmuch as

humility and a knowledge of your frailties accompanied it"

Shares in The Embarrassment

Among the famous practitioners of our forefather Abraham's virtue of hospitality, was Rabbi Akiba Eger. Naturally, on Pesach, it was "Let all who are hungry come and eat..." Once, at the seder, one of the poor guests accidentally overturned his cup. As the red wine stained the fine white tablecloth and the guest's face was red with embarrassment, Rabbi Akiba tipped the table slightly so that his own cup was overturned.

The Blood Libel

The "Blood Libel," would usually crop up before Pesach. Even though it was denounced by governments and Popes, and disproved on numerous occasions, it brought tragedy to the Jews for nearly 1,000 years. From the massacre at Cordova in 1013 to the infamous Beilis trial in 1911, the blood of innocent Jews was shed as freely as the blood of the Pesach lamb, in the time of the Holy Temple. May these innocent sacrifices serve as atonement for us today and may G-d in His infinite mercy hasten our redemption.

Even today, in the countries of the former Soviet Union it is still rearing its ugly head from time to time. It is therefore of interest to see how a King of Poland, Stanislas August Poniatowski dealt with such a case nearly 200 years ago.

In 1787, a peasant of Olkusz (near Cracow) found a Christian girl in the forest. She told him that a Jew wanted to kill her. Since it was before Pesach, a ritual murder charge was immediately proffered. A poor tailor, by the name of Mordecai, was arrested and tortured until he confessed. But the local landlord, a certain Stanislas of Wodzicki, was not satisfied. He wanted to have the leaders of the Jewish community tortured.

It was at this point that the Jews of Cracow appealed to the King for help.

"It was after the dance at the cloth-galleries," Wodzicki writes in his Memoirs, 'And I sit in my room, - writing letters. Suddenly my uncle Elias

of Wodzicki comes in and says: 'Dress, Sir Stanislas, and come along with me to the King!'

"I replied that I would gladly fulfill the uncle's desire, but I had already been introduced to the King. "

'It is not a matter of introduction, he answered, 'but the devilish affair with the Jews. The King takes an interest in this matter and wants to discuss it with you. '

"I understand and guess something is afoot," I say.

"The uncle asks, 'What do you guess?'

"That the Jews have gotten even to the King," I reply. The uncle remained silent.

"I dressed and we drove to the palace. We waited a short time and then the door of a small room opened, and the King entered and addressed me in this way:

"I did not expect that you, after having learned and studied in foreign countries, should still give credence to such medieval stupidities that the Jews use Christian blood for Easter. it is true that we find such accusations in the history of all countries, and Jews were condemned to terrible punishments. But our enlightened age knows that these victims of superstitions and prejudice were innocent. I would ask you, Sir, not to push this matter in the courts!"

Frightened at the King's attitude, the landlord dropped the charges and another tragedy was averted.

The Method of Giving Charity

Rabbi Eleizer said, "He who gives charity in a secret manner is considered greater than Moshe Rabbenu" (Baba Basra 9b). The Ari HaKodesh would always make a special effort to seek out poor people and make sure that they had sufficient food for their family. This was always done in a very discreet manner.

In his city was a pious tzaddik, a poor man who would struggle for his daily bread. And poor as he was, he always shared his meager earnings with other people in his vicinity. A week before Pesach this poor person became ill, and he couldn't go out to earn his living. After pawning their meager possessions his family soon ran

out of food. Although his wife and children were practically starving, he wouldn't accept money from charity, for he believed every person should earn his own living and support himself.

When his wife began to cry, he consoled her with the words, "Have faith in G-d for he never forsakes his creations."

Disguises Himself

Word of this poor man's poverty reached the Ari HaKodesh. Clothing himself in the garb of a traveler, the Ari visited the poor man's house and knocked on his door.

"Pardon me," he said to the man when he opened the door, "Could you tell me where I can lodge for the coming Passover holiday? I am a stranger in town, and I have no place to spend the holidays and hold the seder ceremonies."

"By all means, you are welcome to be with us," answered the tzaddik, although he had nothing in the house to eat.

"Very well," replied the traveler, "here are 100 gold coins to prepare my food and lodging for all the holidays. I have business to do in town and I will be back tomorrow night, Erev Pesach!"

"Before you leave will you please tell me your name?" asked the poor host.

"My name is Rebbi Nissim," answered the Ari.

The tzaddik joyfully reentered his home and gave the money to his wife. Happiness, as never experienced before, reigned throughout the household. The house was scrubbed clean; ornaments were bought, and enough food was secured to feed a regiment. Never had they had so much to eat, and the money was not charity but earned to provide lodging and board to a guest.

Erev Pesach arrived and the entire household waited expectantly for the honored guest to arrive. But he never came. Suddenly the tzaddik reminded himself as to the name of the guest.

"Rebbi Nissim," he said aloud. "Nissim means miracles. Surely, he was no mortal, but he must have been an angel of G-d who performs

miracles. G-d must have sent him to us to perform miracles by giving us money to celebrate the Passover holiday."

And until their dying day no one ever knew that the miracle-performing angel was the tzaddik and gaon, the Ari HaKodesh.

House of the Poor

The holiday of Pesach has become synonymous with aiding the poor and the needy. In the city of Kovno where the great Reb Yisrael Salanter was chief rabbi, there was a special house set aside to house and provide food for the very poor.

Unfortunately, the house was dilapidated and in great disrepair. Reb Yisrael tried many times to get people to contribute to its upkeep, however, too few people heeded his plea, and the condition of the building got worse with each passing day.

One Pesach, before the seder began, Reb Yisrael put on his coat and left his warm and comfortable house. The hours flew by and still he did not return. His wife was frantic and rushed out for help in trying to discover what had happened to him.

Refuses to Leave

The people searched every house in the city for Reb Yisrael, and only found him when they came to the house set aside for the poor. To their horror, he was lying flat on the floor amid the squalor and dirt sound asleep. Next to him, the poor people also lay. They had no choice, for all the beds were broken.

The people begged Rabbi Yisrael to leave the dilapidated building and return home. However, he adamantly refused.

"I will not go home," he kept saying over and over again.

Soon, word of the incident spread throughout the city and it created quite an uproar. Imagine! The rabbi of the city, the greatest rabbi of his generation, lying in such filth! And on the night of the seder, too!

"Please, rabbi," they begged, "Please come home. This is no place for you to be on the night of Pesach."

But Reb Yisrael stood firm. "No, I will not go home until this house is repaired and made fit for people to live in. Are these people any worse than me?"

His words made a deep impression on the community and within hours, enough money was pledged to guarantee that the building would be repaired and made into a decent place in which to live.

No Smuggling

Reb Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev was known as the great "defense attorney" for the Jewish people. Under any and all circumstances, he was able to find a good word to say about his special nation.

One Pesach eve, after the chametz (bread) had been searched for and burned, he took his *shamash* (assistant) with him for a walk through the streets of the town.

Meeting a peasant, he stopped him and asked quietly, "Tell me, would you perhaps have a little smuggled silk to sell? I need it very badly."

"Indeed, I do," replied the peasant. "I have as much as you want"

The rabbi thanked him and continued on his way to the amazement of his dumb-founded *shamash*.

Any Chametz

Reb Levi Yitzhak continued on his way and met a Jew trudging along the street.

"*Shalom Aleichem*," he said. "Tell me my friend, perhaps you can let me have some *chametz*?"

The Jew looked at him in horror and said: "Rebbe, how can you suspect me of such a thing? Do I dare have *chametz* on the eve of Pesach, G-d forbid!"

Reb Levi Yitzhak paused and lifted his eyes to the heavens and said:

"Behold, O L-rd of the Universe, what a great people are our children, Israel. The Russian czar is a fierce and mighty ruler. He prohibits the smuggling of goods into his land and posts soldiers and police with deadly weapons to watch the frontiers day and night. If anyone is caught, he is brought before a judge and

immediately sentenced to a severe prison term.

"Nevertheless, all kinds of goods are smuggled in and the peasants defy him almost openly.

"You, on the other hand, wrote a few words in your Holy Torah, saying: 'And no leavened bread shall be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven found in all thy borders.'

"There are no soldiers to guard against violating this law and no judges and prisons to punish the violators. Still, as soon as the hour of prohibition arrives, not a crumb is to be found in a Jewish home!"

The Meaning of Chad Gadya

The Vilna Gaon's explanation of the famous Passover song.

(By Rabbi Alexander Seinfeld)

The Passover Haggada ends with the fun but peculiar song, *Chad Gadya* – An Only Kid.

This colorful song features a kid (a baby goat) purchased by "my father" for the price of two zuz, an ancient coin.

No sooner does he buy the kid, it is eaten by "the cat," which is in turn bitten by "the dog," which itself suffers being beaten by "the stick." The stick doesn't get off lightly for its beating; it is burnt by "the fire," which is naturally doused by "the water."

What happens to the water seems quite natural: it gets lapped up by "the ox," which leads to the fatal slaughtering of the ox by "the butcher." The butcher faces none other than the Angel of Death, and in case you thought that this dastardly fellow was invincible, he is ultimately vanquished at the conclusion of the song by the Holy One, Blessed be He.

The symbolic meaning of this sequence of people, animals and objects remained obscure until the Vilna Gaon presented the following interpretation.

Each verse alludes to one person or event in Jewish history:

The kid is the birthright mentioned in Genesis 25. This is the right to take the baton that had

been passed from Abraham to Yizhak, to continue Abraham's mission to build a world full of loving kindness and monotheism and devoid of idolatry, child sacrifice and other evils.

My father is Yaakov who bought the birthright from his twin brother Esav, who had been born first and thus had the natural right to the birthright.

The two zuzim are the bread and stew Yaakov paid Esav for the birthright.

The cat represents the envy of Yaakov's sons toward their brother Joseph's, leading them to sell him into slavery in Egypt.

The dog is Egypt, where Joseph landed, and where eventually the entire clan of Yaakov and the subsequent Israelite nation lived, were enslaved and were redeemed.

The stick is the famous staff of Moses, used to call forth various plagues and part the waters of the Sea for the Israelites to cross.

The fire represents the thirst for idolatry among Israelites that proved to be a persistent bane for over 800 years, from the year they left Egypt until the destruction of the First Temple in the Fifth Century BCE.

The water represents the Fourth Century BCE sages who eradicated idolatry.

The ox is Rome (Esav's descendent) who destroyed the 2nd Temple in 70 CE.

The butcher is the "Messiah Son of Joseph" (Mashiach Ben-Yoseph) who will restore full Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel.

The Angel of Death needs no introduction; in this song he represents the death of Messiah Ben-Yoseph

The Holy One of course also needs no introduction; here He arrives with Messiah Ben-David.

The repetition in each stanza underscores the ebb and flow of Jewish history – sometimes we're down, but then we rise up. While most of the song looks backwards, it ends with an optimistic view toward the future, a fitting conclusion to the Seder.

POUR LES FRANCOPHONES

Pessah, la Fête du Renouveau

(Rav Isaac Nabet)

Comme nous l'avons déjà expliqué, les fêtes de Pessah, Chavouot et Soucot sont appelées « Chaloch Régalm ». Ce nom qui signifie littéralement les « trois pas » évoque la Mitsva de pèlerinage que l'on faisait à l'époque du Beth Amikdach. Lors de ces trois fêtes, les hommes devaient effectuer une marche qui commençait en bas du Mont du Temple pour s'achever sur les parvis du Beth Hamikdach. En outre, nos sages ont donné une raison un peu plus profonde à cette appellation. « Regel » veut également dire jambe en hébreu. Ainsi Pessah, Chavouot et Soucot représentent-ils les trois pieds sur lesquels chaque juif repose. Sans elles, nos vies spirituelles seraient bancales, instables. En effet, pendant chaque fête, Hachem déverse un flux de bénédictions spirituelles et matérielles. Et ce sera grâce à ces forces puisées que nous pouvons effectuer notre service Divin durant le reste de l'année.

Il est écrit dans la Michna de Roch Hachanna que Pessah est le Roch Hachanna des Régalm. C'est-à-dire que c'est la première fête de l'année. Or, dans la Torah, chaque première chose possède une sainteté particulière et contient en elle les bases de ce qui va suivre. Par exemple, le premier né d'une famille va influencer tous ses frères, et c'est pourquoi il reçoit une part double d'héritage. Si Pessah est la première fête de l'année, il paraît évident que son importance est supérieure aux autres cérémonies religieuses de l'année. Essayons de comprendre pourquoi.

Chaque fête possède son histoire spécifique, ses forces spirituelles et son service Divin propre. Ainsi à Roch Hachanna nous faisons le plein de crainte du ciel, à Kippour de Téhouva, à Soucot de joie...La source de ce phénomène provient du fait qu'Hachem est éternel. Donc ses interventions dans le temps ont laissé une empreinte éternelle qui se perpétue chaque année. Par exemple, puisqu'il pardonna aux bné Israël la faute du

veau d'or le 10 Tichri, tous les ans, le 10 Tichri, à Yom Kippour, Il pardonne les fautes des bné Israël. C'est pourquoi si nous désirons comprendre l'essence de chaque fête, nous devons tout d'abord nous intéresser à l'intervention d'Hachem lors de l'événement initial.

Comme nous le savons, le 15 Nissan, Hachem sortit nos ancêtres d'Égypte. Cette libération est considérée comme la naissance du peuple juif. A partir de cette date, le Créateur nous sépara des goyim afin de nous donner la Torah et de faire de nous Son peuple. Cette délivrance dura presque un an, pendant lequel Hachem multiplia les miracles aux yeux de tous, afin d'ancrer dans le cœur de millions de bné Israël le fait qu'Il maîtrise tous les éléments. Enfin, nous disent nos sages, par quel mérite nos ancêtres ont-ils eu la possibilité d'être sauvés ? Par le mérite de leur foi. En effet, malgré plus de cent années d'esclavage, ils crurent en Moché Rabénou lorsqu'il leur annonça que Dieu l'avait envoyé pour les libérer. Voilà en quelques mots l'événement que nous allons célébrer.

Pessah représente donc la fête de l'Emouna, de la foi. Chaque juif a la possibilité de remplir ses batteries de croyance en Dieu lors du Seder. En racontant les miracles qu'Hachem fit à nos ancêtres, nous remettons les choses au clair : tout est contrôlé par le Tout Puissant, les bonnes choses et les moins bonnes, les difficultés et les délivrances, l'argent, la santé, les enfants...Et plus nous allons raconter la sortie d'Égypte plus nous prendrons des forces pour l'année. Or comme la foi est le fondement notre religion, Pessah devait être la fête qui ouvrait l'année. Le don de la Torah et les Mitsvot, la crainte et l'amour de Dieu n'existent que si dans un premier temps nous prenons conscience qu'Il existe un Dieu qui a créé le monde et le gère dans ses moindres détails.

Mais plus que cela, nous devons savoir qu'il existe un travail encore plus élevé en ce soir de Pessah. Les bné Israël sont nommés « Banim Lamakom » les enfants d'Hachem. Cet attribut ne veut pas seulement dire que nous devons plus craindre Dieu que les autres, ou qu'Il se comporte envers nous avec plus de compassion. La notion d'enfant signifie qu'il

existe un lien, un amour très fort entre Hachem et nous. Si nous faisons un bilan de Santé de notre religion à l'aube de ce printemps, nous pouvons nous réjouir. Les juifs font Téchouva dans toutes les régions du Monde, se renforcent, mangent cacher, font Chabat... Des dizaines de milliers d'avrékhim étudient la Torah toute la journée, des Yéchivot sont pleines...60 ans après la tragédie de la Shoah, un monde de Torah s'est reconstruit. Cependant, une ombre assombrit le tableau. Nous respectons la Torah et les Mitsvot, mais Hachem semble être absent de nos vies !! Lorsque nous avons des problèmes, nous nous tournons vers les médecins, les banquiers, vers tout le monde sauf Lui. Nous avons perdu ce sentiment d'être les enfants d'Hachem. Lorsque nous écoutons les histoires de nos grands-parents, nous comprenons que même si les gens étaient ignorants, ils vivaient avec Hachem. Il faisait partie de leur vie, de leur maison comme un des membres de la famille.

Le soir de Pessah, l'histoire se renouvelle et laisse à chacun la possibilité de renaître. Nous pouvons ainsi recréer ce lien éternel et redevenir les enfants d'Hachem. A ces fins, nous n'avons qu'une seule chose à faire, imiter nos ancêtres et croire que c'est possible. Nous devons comprendre que notre Père peut nous aider à vivre cette vie spirituelle que nous désirons tant, qu'Il peut nous inculquer le goût de l'étude, de la prière, du Chabat...Voilà un des objectifs de ce soir de Pessah : pendant quelques heures, les portes s'ouvrent afin de donner la possibilité à chacun de prendre un nouveau départ. Alors ne passons pas à côté...

Nous vous souhaitons de très bonnes fêtes, et vous disons à très bientôt...

Serviteur d'Hachem

Comme vous le savez, la majorité des médicaments sont amers. Cependant, tout adulte raisonnable comprend que pour le bien-être de son organisme, il se doit d'avaler le remède prescrit. Les enfants qui n'ont pas encore assez de conscience pour comprendre cela avaleront des sirops au goût de fraise, de caramel ou de menthe. La Torah, nous dit le

Talmud, représente notre seul antidote contre le mauvais penchant. A l'image des médicaments, il existe des remèdes doux et des traitements plus violents. J'ai l'habitude de vous envoyer chaque semaine quelques bonbons pour Chabat : cette idée du rav Bravda se présente comme un vaccin contre le Yetser Ara : même si cela pique au début, sachez que c'est pour notre bien.

Dans une semaine, vendredi soir, nous dirons à la fin de l'Aggada : « Raban Gamliel disait : tout celui qui ne dit pas Pessah, Matsa ou Marokh n'est pas quitte de son obligation. » Certains sages, comme Tosfot ou le Ran comprennent que cet enseignement se rapporte à l'accomplissement des Mitsvot de cette soirée : ainsi, si une personne apportait le sacrifice de Pessah, mangeait sa Matsa ou son Marokh mais sans savoir pourquoi, elle n'aurait pas accompli ces Mitsvot parfaitement. A l'inverse, le Rambam explique que cette leçon s'applique à la Mitsva de raconter la sortie d'Egypte. Selon lui, si une personne oublie de dire Pessah, Matsa ou Marokh à la fin de l'Agada, elle n'est pas quitte de la Mitsva de raconter la sortie d'Egypte. A priori, comment comprendre qu'une personne qui a expliqué tous les détails de la sortie d'Egypte et des dix plaies pendant deux heures n'est pas quitte parce qu'elle n'a pas dit Pessah, Matsa ou Maror ?

Le Midrach demande pourquoi dans la Torah, après de nombreuses Mitsvot, il est écrit : « Je suis Hachem ton Dieu qui vous ai fait sortir d'Egypte » ? Celui-ci illustre le sens de cette phrase à l'aide d'une parabole : un jour une guerre se déclara entre deux pays. Un des pays annexa une partie de l'autre, et mit en prison tous les habitants de cette région. Un des prisonniers était le fils d'un très bon ami du prince d'une région avoisinante. Ce dernier décida alors de délivrer ce jeune homme. Il se dirigea vers la prison, négocia la valeur de son rachat et partit parler avec le prisonnier : "Si je te libère, es-tu prêt à devenir mon esclave ?" demanda le prince.

-Bien évidemment, déclara le jeune homme.

Le prince sortit de sa poche un contrat d'esclavage et le fit signer par le prisonnier qui fut libéré sur le champ. Une fois arrivé au

palais, le prince se tourna vers le fils de son ami : « Fais-moi couler un bain chaud, s'il te plaît. »

- Mais je suis un noble, ce n'est pas de mon rang de faire des choses pareilles.

Alors le prince sortit son contrat et lui dit : « travaille ou je te ramène là-bas. »

Ainsi, conclut le Midrach, après chaque Mitsva difficile, la Torah nous rappelle que depuis que nous sommes sortis d'Egypte, nous sommes les esclaves d'Hachem. Tant que nous respectons Sa volonté, Il nous assure l'abondance spirituelle et matérielle. Mais si nous n'écoutons pas Ses ordres, Il peut nous renvoyer en Egypte. C'est-à-dire nous envoyer un peuple antisémite qui nous pourchasse à l'image des Égyptiens. Ou nous confronter à des épreuves qui ne nous laissent pas vivre : par exemple des difficultés financières ou de santé, de couple ou d'éducation... Voilà le contrat que nous avons signé le 15 Nissan.

Aujourd'hui, nous n'avons pas d'exemple de vie d'esclave. Nous connaissons la notion d'employé. Qu'est-ce qu'un employé ? Une personne qui désire un travail facile, bien rémunéré, sans trop de contraintes, avec beaucoup de vacances. Lorsqu'un employé se sent fatigué, il prend quelques jours de congé maladie. Et si les conditions de travail ne lui plaisent plus, il fait la grève jusqu'à nouvel ordre... Pour sa part, un esclave qui se lève avec 40 ° de fièvre se rend au travail à 5h30. S'il arrive cinq minutes en retard, il reçoit des coups, dix minutes des coups et la prison. S'il veut faire la grève, c'est une rébellion : il recevra des coups, ira en prison et sera pendu.

Le Schla Akadoch explique que la raison essentielle de notre descente en Egypte fut d'apprendre à devenir esclave. Cette école permit à nos ancêtres d'enlever toute fainéantise, orgueil, afin d'apprendre à être soumis aux ordres. Cependant, à la fin de ces longues années en Egypte, nous étions enfin prêts à être les esclaves d'Hachem. Hakadoch Baroukh Hou nous a tellement donné de Mitsvot difficiles que sans ce stage, il aurait été impossible d'accomplir la Volonté Divine.

Alors pourquoi Pessah se nomme-t-elle la fête de la liberté ? On aurait dû l'appeler la fête de l'esclavage ! Nous sages disent que tout celui qui n'est pas le serviteur d'Hachem devient celui de son mauvais penchant. En cela, il se prive de ce monde-ci et du monde futur. Ainsi, la fête de Pessah nous enseigne que nous sommes les esclaves d'Hachem : nous devons manger de la nourriture spécifique, nous asseoir dans une position précise, nous laver les mains, couvrir les Matsot... le Gaon de Vilna compte 64 Mitsvot ce soir là qui nous disent comment nous comporter.

Désormais nous pouvons comprendre pourquoi Raban Gamliel enseignait que tout celui qui ne dit pas Pessah, Matsa ou Marokh

n'est pas quitte de son obligation de raconter la sortie d'Egypte. Tout le but des dix plaies et de tous les miracles est de faire de nous les serviteurs d'Hachem. Ainsi, même lorsque nous sommes confrontés à des Mitsvot difficiles comme le sacrifice de Pessah, ou comme le fait de manger de la Matsa pendant 7 jours... nous sommes obligés de le faire, sans nous plaindre et sans fainéantise.

A la fin du Seder, nous chanterons le Hallel et nous proclamerons : « Louons Hachem nous les esclaves d'Hachem ». Un soir par an, nous fêtons cette véritable liberté. Nous nous réjouissons d'avoir été choisis pour servir le Patron de ce monde, afin de mériter de jouir de ce monde-ci et du monde futur.

REFLEXION SEMANAL

(By Rav Yaakov Singer)

Pesaj: Una experiencia personal

El exilio y la redención del pueblo judío son un mapa para el crecimiento espiritual.

El número cuatro es importante en la *Hagadá*. Hay cuatro copas de vino, se hacen cuatro preguntas, hay cuatro hijos... Todos estos *cuatros* tienen su raíz en los cuatro diferentes términos que se utilizan para describir cómo el pueblo judío dejó Egipto:

1. Yo los sacaré,
2. Yo los rescataré,
3. Yo los redimiré,
4. Yo los tomaré para Mí (Éxodo 6:6-7).

Cada uno de estos términos es necesario. Constituyen cuatro diferentes partes de un proceso que llamamos "redención". La redención no pasó de la noche a la mañana, sino que tomó tiempo. El descenso a la esclavitud tomó tiempo y el camino a la libertad también tomó tiempo. En Génesis 15:13, Di-s le dice a Abraham sobre el descenso: "Tus hijos [1] serán extraños en una tierra que nos es de ellos, [2] los servirán y [3] ellos los oprimirán...". Hubo alienación, esclavitud y aflicción. Y tal como el descenso del pueblo judío a la

esclavitud en Egipto fue un proceso gradual, su ascenso a la libertad también fue un proceso gradual. Hubo llanto del pueblo judío. Moshé apareció en escena. Hubo plagas. La terquedad del Faraón. Y hubo una mano fuerte y brazo extendido de Di-s que nos sacó. Fue un proceso que tomó tiempo.

¿Qué tiene esto que ver con nosotros?

La *mitzvá* de relatar el Éxodo de Egipto no se trata de leer noticias del pasado. Su propósito es demostrarnos que nosotros mismos estamos saliendo de Egipto. Este proceso de descender y después volver a levantarse es personal.

Pero no nos relacionamos con el Éxodo de Egipto de manera personal, ya que usamos palabras demasiado impersonales para describirlo. El pueblo judío estaba en *galut*, 'exilio'. El pueblo judío experimentó una *gueulá*, 'redención'. ¿Qué tienen que ver el exilio y la redención con nosotros? Esas palabras nos parecen extrañas; aptas para una nación, pero no para un individuo y ciertamente no para ti o para mí.

Si entendemos estos términos bajo la perspectiva de nuestras vidas podremos relacionarnos mejor con ellos.

Galut/exilio: ¿Qué significa estar en exilio? Estar en exilio es estar atrapado en los malos

hábitos. Exilio es ser esclavo de viejas formas de pensamiento. Exilio es sentirse muy lejano de las relaciones que nos importan (Mamá, Papá, Di-s, amigos). *Mitzraim* (Egipto) viene de la palabra *tzar*, que significa 'angosto' en hebreo. Estar en exilio es sentirse limitado y restringido, incluso cuando podemos caminar o conducir tan lejos como queramos. Eso es personal. Eso es algo con lo que todos podemos relacionarnos.

Gueulá/redención: ¿Qué significa ser redimido? Redención es estar libre de la presión de nuestros pares. Redención es trabajar muy duro en algo y sentirse bien por el arduo trabajo. Redención es decir "Te quiero mamá" incluso aunque no esté de moda decirlo. Redención es hacer lo correcto, incluso cuando no es fácil hacerlo.

¿Cómo dejamos el lugar de restricción y negatividad para llegar a la libertad y felicidad? Usemos el ejemplo del pueblo judío como guía.

Cuando el pueblo judío descendió originalmente a Egipto, Iosef separó un lugar para ellos en Goshen. Puede que haya sido un espacio privado para el pueblo judío, pero seguía tratándose de una tierra extraña y pagaron el precio por ello; la influencia de los egipcios los afectó. Después de la muerte de Iosef y sus hermanos, los judíos comenzaron a trabajar para los egipcios y con el tiempo eso se convirtió en opresión y aflicción.

Esto es similar a lo que ocurre en un nivel personal. Nosotros inocentemente nos alejamos de nuestro hogar, de los valores de nuestra casa, y nos encontramos en un lugar extraño. Hoy en día ni siquiera tienes que salir de tu casa para hacerlo (¡hoy existe Internet!). No parece tan malo al principio. Al fin y al cabo todo tiene su lado positivo y su lado negativo, pero poco a poco comenzamos a adquirir hábitos muy malos, hábitos que nosotros ni siquiera queremos tener.

Entonces, ¿qué hizo el pueblo judío para salir de Egipto?

A pesar de que fue Di-s quien los sacó, el pueblo judío causó la salida. El versículo dice: "Los hijos de Israel gimieron por el trabajo y ellos lloraron" (Éxodo 2:23). El gemido fue una súplica para que el trabajo duro se detuviera,

pero el llanto fue un rezo, un deseo de estar cerca de Di-s. Juntos ellos iniciaron el proceso de la redención. "Di-s escuchó sus gemidos y Di-s recordó su pacto" (Éxodo 2:24). A pesar de que la esclavitud y la aflicción aún no se habían detenido, el llanto creó esperanza. No fue hasta que "Israel vio a los egipcios muertos en la costa" (Éxodo 14:30) que las capas de la esclavitud fueron retiradas por completo, pero el proceso ya había comenzado mucho antes que eso.

Y nosotros tenemos que hacer lo mismo. Tenemos que querer tener mejores pensamientos, hábitos más sanos, relaciones más cercanas y una conexión con Di-s. No tenemos que tener todas las respuestas, pero nos tiene que importar lo suficiente como para llorar: "¡Aquí estoy! ¡Quiero cosas buenas! ¡Quiero una relación!". Esa es nuestra parte; entonces pueden ocurrir los milagros.

Ese deseo de no huir de los problemas sino avanzar hacia algo positivo es el mensaje de la cuarta palabra de redención: "Yo los tomaré para Mí". Los primeros tres pasos en el proceso de redención son para salir de Egipto y dejar atrás todas las cosas negativas que ya no queremos. La cuarta etapa es luchar por una vida más sana y feliz. Para que Di-s nos tome, nosotros debemos desear esto. Cuando tenemos eso claro, no hay límites para la libertad y la felicidad que podemos experimentar.

¿Cómo nos ayuda el Séder de Pesaj a lograr esto?

La increíble oportunidad que nos brinda la noche del Séder es que Di-s nos está diciendo que tenemos una oportunidad de saltar de una forma antinatural y milagrosa desde el estado de exilio —desde nuestro mundo de limitaciones— hacia la redención total, la libertad. (Ese es uno de los significados de Pesaj: tenemos la oportunidad de hacer un salto en nuestro crecimiento espiritual).

E incluso es más que eso: Di-s nos da un "traje para saltar", una forma de experimentar ese salto. Este "traje" se conoce como las cuatro copas de vino. A medida que tomamos cada copa, avanzamos por los pasos del proceso de redención, perdiendo los *niveles* de esclavitud y

abriéndonos hacia un mundo de verdadera libertad.

Así que para prepararte, lo primero que debes hacer es preguntarte: ¿Qué te está esclavizando? ¿Qué valores o hábitos están evitando que seas quien quieres ser?

Considera cómo eso crea alienación, esclavitud y aflicción en tu vida. Imagina como sería tu vida

si esos bloques fueran removidos. Entonces podrás asistir al Séder con muchas expectativas. Antes de cada una de las primeras tres copas de vino, pídele a Di-s que se lleve las cosas que te están deteniendo. Y entonces, antes de la cuarta copa de vino, pídele a Di-s que te lleve a un lugar de libertad y alegría.

NAHALOT

Nahala of "Maran Habet Yosef" **zt"l Friday the 13th of Nisan**

Rav Yosef Karo, Bet Yosef, Shulchan Aruch, Kesef Mishneh, and Magid Meisharim, (1488-1575). His first major work, the Bet Yosef is a comprehensive commentary on the Tur; it took 20 years to write. In it, he gathered the opinions and decisions of all the major authorities up until his time and cross-referenced them. He ruled between differing views on the basis of a consensus between the three preeminent halachic authorities, the Rif, the Rambam, and the Rosh. The work was completed in 1542, but he continued to refine it for the next 12 years and published a second edition. After he had completed the Bet Yosef, Rav Caro made a summary of his rulings in the form of an index without reference to sources and titled it Shulchan Aruch ("Laid Table"). It was completed in 1555 in Israel; it was first published in Venice in 1565. Eventually, the Rama's gloss (called HaMapa -- "The Tablecloth") was published together with the Shulchan Aruch in Cracow in 1578, and together they became the universally recognized Code of Jewish Law. The Rambam had published his Mishna Torah without references for his rulings. The Maggid Mishna, a commentary on Mishneh Torah written by Rabbi

Vidal di Tolouse, had referenced six of the fourteen sections of the work, and Rav Caro set out to complete the references, while at the same time explaining the Rambam's view and defending it from the Raavad. The Kesef Mishneh, as it was called, was published in Venice between the years 1574-76.

Nahala of Rav Shlomo Walbe **zt"l Tuesday the 17th of Nisan**

Rav Shlomo Wolbe, mashgiach of Yeshivat Givat Shaul in Yerushalayims Sanhedria neighborhood (1916-2005). Born in Berlin, Rav Wolbe's early education was in the Yeshiva of Frankfurt and in Rav Botchko's yeshiva in Montreux, Switzerland. In the 1930s, he spent several years in Mir, where he became a close talmid Rav Yerucham Levovitz and Rav Chatzkal Levenstein. Rav Wolbe spent the war years in Sweden. After the war, Rav Wolbe moved to Petach Tikvah, where he married the daughter of Rav Avraham Grodzinsky, hy"d, the last mashgiach of Slobodka. Through her, he became a nephew of Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky, and a brother-in-law of Rav Chaim Kreisworth. In 1948, Rav Wolbe became mashgiach at Yeshivah Gedolah of Be'er Yaakov, a position he held for over 35 years. Later, he served as mashgiach in the Lakewood Yeshiva in Eretz Yisrael and he opened Yeshivas Givat Shaul. Rav Wolbe published his first Hebrew work, Alei Shur, to provide today's yeshiva student with a basic guide to assist him to become a ben Torah.

PESAH DIGEST

Salt of the Omer

(By Haham Amram Assayag)

It is customary in some Sephardic Kehilot, amongst them the Mekubalim and all Moroccan

Communities, to give out on the second night of Pesah when we begin to Count the Omer. Some take salt for every member of the Family.

Salt takes a prominent place in Jewish rituals that one can trace back to the very first days of Hashem's creation of the world. The creation of the Heavens came about by the division of the waters that hovered over a vacuum that was soon destined to be the world.

The pasuk states: "Vayabdel ben hamayim asher mitahat laraqi'a uben hamayim asher me'al laraqi'a." – "And [Hashem] divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament."

The Midrash [cited by Rashi, Vayikra 2:13] says that when the earthly waters saw that their fate was to remain on earth while the other waters were destined to form the Heavens, they began to cry. They exclaimed: "Woe unto us that we are not worthy of staying close to our Creator, and we must be near impurities." Hashem ordered that they should stop crying because as a comforting gesture He assured them that He will order the earthly waters to be presented as a libation upon the altar. The Midrash states that this was not satisfactory to the waters, as *nisukh hamayim* (the water libation) took place only once a year. So Hashem promised them that He would also make a covenant with the salt contained in them (i.e. the oceans), to be placed on the altar with every offering. Thus, the commandment:

"Vekhol qorban minhatekha bamelah timlah velo tashbit melah berit Elohekha me'al minhatekha al kol qorbanekha taqrib melah." – "And your every meal offering shall you season with salt; you may not discontinue the salt of your G-d's covenant from upon your meal offering, on your very offering shall you offer salt."

The "Omer", which is the name of a measure for grains, is also the name of the meal offering brought to the Temple on the second day of Pesah. In order to allow the Jews to enjoy the new crop of grain, we first present an offering of that grain to the Bet HaMiqdash, after which time we, as individuals, make enjoy the produce of the new crop. On Shabuot, we will collectively offer to the Bet HaMiqdash, two breads made from the new grain. This offering is known as *Minha*

Hadasha LAdo-nai – a new offering to Hashem. The acronym of these Hebrew words is the letters Mem Lamed Het (מ"ל"ה"), which form the word *Melah* (מֶלַח) – salt. In honour of this special offering symbolized by salt we, too, take salt at the time that this offering would have taken place. The word *Lehem* (לֶחֶם) – bread, is formed with the same letters as *Melah* (מֶלַח), hence the constant connection between bread and salt. Therefore, on the second day of Pesah, when the new offering will allow us to begin eating the new bread, we take along salt to our own altar – one's table at home.

This may be a possible explanation for our ancient custom; however it does not yet address the mystical dimension attributed to the salt. Indeed, this salt serves as a protection from the evil eye ("ayin hara"), which explains why every family has used it similar to an amulet [Debeq Meah §70:16 by Ribi Abraham Hamaoui ~1850 and Ben Ish Hai (Year 1, Sav §6)].

The 13th century commentator Rabenu Bahya of Saragossa, through his discussion of the Kabbalistic characteristics of the salt, may have shed some light on understanding the importance of the salt. He writes that salt is composed by two opposing elements of the four elements of creation: water and fire. Salt exists naturally in the waters of the oceans, yet it is extracted through the means of fire (the sun or artificial fire to stimulate evaporation).

Rabenu Bahya reminds us of what our Hakhamim taught us in reference to the creation of the world. When Hashem decided to create the world, He thought to create it with only the attribute of Justice (*Midat Hadin*), by which man would be accountable immediately for his every action and receive retribution accordingly. Hashem realized that the world could not stand with judgment alone, because man, as a potential sinner, would bring about the immediate destruction to his world. Therefore, Hashem incorporated the attribute of Mercy (*Midat HaRahamim*), a means of protection for man until he amends his ways. The fusion of these two attributes allows the world to exist and be sustained. Rabenu Bahya tells us that *Midat HaDin* is represented by the element of fire, while *Midat HaRahamim* is represented by the element of water. Salt is therefore, symbolic of the fusion

of these two attributes, representing the formula for the very maintenance of the world. That is why, he explains, the Tora in the above pasuk refers to salt as the covenant of your G-d (Berit Eloheka) because it represents the very covenant of creation that allows the world to exist and not to crumble in the wake of sin. This also explains the chemical preservative qualities of salt, which serves to maintain a substance and the spiritual protective dimensions attached to it.

The original prayer recited on the first night according to Sidur HaRashash is as follows:

"Yehi rason milefanekha Ado-nai Eloheinu v'Elohe abotenu, bizkhut sefirat ha'omer asher sivitanu beToratekha ubizkhut shemotekha haqedoshim, vehatehorim, hayose'im mehamizmorim halalu hayose'im merashé tebot umisafé tebot ubizkhut abotenu haqedoshim Abraham, Yischaq, veYa'aqob, sheyihyé zé hamelah li lishmi ulkhol mi sheyisa hamelah hazé „alav yihyé lo lemaghen vesina, mideber umimaghefa, ume"ayin hara", umikol dabar ra, Amen ken yehi rason."

Hag HaMimouna

Maghen Abot - e"H Ribi Mordekhai Lebhār s"t

Towards the end of Pesah we all anticipate with much joy, "Hag haMimouna" where we have the custom to eat special foods such as Moufleta and Sbeqia, sing songs, play festive Arabic music, decorate our houses, dress in djelaba oulkaftan, and much more. We have the custom to open our houses to the people of the community and allow them to come in and taste from the wonderful foods and take part in this joyous occasion. It is only until one of our holy brothers/sisters walks into the finely decorated house, praising the table spread, and asks the infamous question, "So this Mimouna is for what again?" Hopefully to ask for the last time because here is what you tell them...

Origins of Mimouna

Contrary to popular belief, the Mimouna is not exclusively a Moroccan Minhag. In Turkey, Syria, Tunisia, and other countries, the common minhag was to put out a bowl of flour with coins or green vegetables a sign of berakha that the

future will bring. It seems that the underlying theme of Moṣa'é Pesah is one of a time for berakhot.

E"H Ribi Eliyahou Bitton s"t in his sefer *Netivot haMa'arab* explains that Mimouna dates back to the time of the Geonim.^[1] The final day of Pesah is associated with the coming of the Mashiah (the Messiah), and as we conclude the Hag haGeula (Pesah) our hopes turn to the building of the third Bet haMiqdash and partaking in the feast of the Mashiah, speedily in our days, Amen.^[2] It is for this reason that we read the traditional 'Od Hayom *haftara* (in Hebrew, and Arabic, or Ladino), which discusses the arrogant Sanherib's conquest of Jerusalem and its subsequent downfall with many allusions to the Pesah redemption from Egypt and the final redemption that is still to come, b"H. With this, our hopes of the Mashiah's arrival are high at the end of Pesah, but many are left downtrodden and depressed after the Hag when he does not arrive. Therefore, Mimouna is done to uplift the spirit of the people of 'Am Yisrael, to strengthen their emuna (faith) and to assure them that the Mashiah is still just around the corner, even though he might not have come this Pesah.

[1] The era of the Geonim took place from 434-479 [589-1038 C.E.] which followed the Amoraim (Talmudic Era) and preceded the Rishonim.

[2] Ba'al Sem Tob, *Hayom Yom*, pp. 47

Where does the name Mimouna originate from?

Noheg Behokhma mentions another source to Mimouna from the Jews of Tripoli in Libya who have a tradition that the Rambam's father passed away on the 29th of Nisan and the Mimouna celebrations are in memory of him (according to this, the name "Mimouna" comes from Maimon, the Rambam's father).

Noheg Behokhma mentions a few more interesting reasons for Mimouna:

-That the word "Mimouna" refers to food, and this night marks the time when it is again permissible to eat staple grain foods, hence the custom to eat mofleta and couscous on this night,

-That in Tafilalet in Morocco there were refugees from a city near Sudan called Temimona, which had been destroyed, and they prayed during

Pesah that G-d return them to their ancestral homeland,

-That "Mimouna" is related to the Hebrew word for faith, "emuna", and this celebration is an expression of the Jews' faith in G-d that they will be redeemed in the month of Nisan, just as the Redemption from Egypt happened in Nisan.

As we see, the reasons behind this night are deep and meaningful, therefore we should be especially vigilant to keep an aura of qedusha to the night, and not Has Veshalom waste the tremendous opportunity the night has to offer to achieve higher levels of qedusha.

What do we do for Mimouna?

An especially important practice that was common in Morocco was that on the night of the Mimouna one would go to a Tora scholar and asks for his blessing.

Noheg Behokhma by Rbi Yosef Benaim zsl"l mentions an account in the Talmud (Pesahim 30a) that Raba went to see his teacher, Rab Nahman, on the last day of Pesah; this seems to be the source for the custom of going to a Tora scholar to ask his blessing on the night of Mimouna. In the writings of the Arizal it is mentioned that special spiritual emanations descend on the last day of Pesah thus making it an 'Et Raon, an opportune time, to receive blessings.

Moufleta

The minhag we have to prepare and eat Moufleta on Mimouna stems from that which the Kaf haHayim wrote (Siman 491, s"q 11) that the Gaon Mibilna zsl"l would strive to taste some hames. The reason behind this is to declare that we never really wanted to refrain from eating hames, rather we did it solely in order to fulfil the misva of not eating hames. We show this by eating hames as soon as we are allowed to. Rbi Haim Halberstam of Sanz zsl"l (1793-1876) would make Habdala at the end of Pesah on beer specifically for this reason. Therefore, we eat Moufleta to show that we really want to eat hames but refrained from doing so because of the misva.

Other Foods and Customs

The Moroccan Jews have the minhag to place various foods on the Mimouna table which all

serve as a good sign and to ward off any bad luck or other bad items that prevent berakha (blessing). Some of these foods include: a whole fresh fish, fresh fava beans in their shells, a bowl of flour, a jug of buttermilk (le Petit Lait / Libn) to make brkoks, dried fruits, lettuce, butter, honey, almonds, and dates. Some stick five fava bean stalks alone in the flour to symbolize abundant food (the flour) and the spring months (the greens), in hopes that the produce of the fields would be bountiful. Others place five eggs, five green fava beans, and a cup of oil in the flour. All of these are arranged in fives to ward off the evil eye throughout the year and to bring only berakhot.

Many have the minhag to put gold jewellery or cash bills in the flour, and to put a plate on the table with the fresh fish laid out on a bed of romaine lettuce with coins lining the plate, and a coin covering the eye of the fish, this so that we should multiply (the fish) and be prosperous (the money). The minhag of Ouazan (and other parts of Spanish Morocco) is to take a pinch of flour and smear it on the foreheads of everyone present for berakha.

Many have the custom to have the entire family sit around the head of the family while they dip the leaves of Romaine lettuce into butter and honey, some do this with dates and butter in them (Tmar B'j'bda), and they gives it in the hands of each person while giving the berakha (Trbhu U^adu) because dates in the Tora are referred to as "Debash" - "Honey", and eating them represents a good sign and a good mazal (destiny). This night we say to one another "Trbhu U^adu" - "You should be prosperous and successful," and some say "Trbhu U^adu Utfarhu" - "You should be prosperous, successful, and happy." Rbi Yedidya Monsonego zsl"l, the former Chief Rbi of Morocco, explained this common custom, that when the Jewish people left Egypt and crossed the sea (which happened on the seventh day of Pesah), they were too busy taking stock of the Egyptians' wealth that they did not wish each other success or blessing until after the holiday, hence we bless our friends on this night.

Recipe Corner

Mufleta

What are mufleta? Mufleta are essentially like crepes that are either dipped or coated in honey and butter. Mufleta are the first leavened food served after the Passover / Pesach festival for Jews in Morocco and Moroccan-Jews around the world. How are mufleta made? Traditional mufleta recipes are made as follows: balls of dough are rolled out in very thin leaves or sheets and cooked together in a frying pan. Each new sheet or leaf is laid on the previous one so that the fresh leaf is always on the bottom. When the mufleta is finished cooking, it is brought to the table and the leaves are separated. Mufletas are then eaten in one of two ways: one way is that pieces are broken off and dipped in a blend of butter and honey and the second way is that they are smeared with butter and honey and then rolled like a cigar with the butter and honey inside them.

Mufleta symbolizes sweetness, happiness and prosperity in the Mimouna festival.

Ingredients: (Makes 15 to 20 mufletas.)

3 3/4 cups flour

1 1/2 cups warm (not boiling) water

Pinch of salt

Vegetable (not olive) oil, as needed



Instructions for the Mufleta recipe:

1. Place flour and salt in bowl.
2. Scoop out a "well" in the middle and add water there.
3. Mix, adding a little extra water if dough seems too dry.
4. Mix together until a light and elastic dough is formed.
5. Divide dough into 15 to 20 small balls.
6. Cover with dish towel and let stand 30 minutes on a flat, well-oiled surface.
7. Oil hands and on oiled surface, roll dough into thin circles.
8. Spread small amount of oil in frying pan and cook mufleta over medium heat.
9. Cook both sides.
10. Pan does not need to be re-greased before cooking the rest of the mufletas.
11. Place on a plate and cover with dish towel to keep them warm.
12. Serve warm with butter and honey.
13. These may be frozen and re-heated in microwave.