

LAMPLIGHTER

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Erev Pesach

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

According to the Chabad tradition, the four questions at the Passover Seder are asked in the following order:

1. On all nights we need not dip even once, and on this night we do so twice.
2. On all nights we eat Chametz (leavened bread) or Matzah, and on this night only Matzah.
3. On all nights we eat any kind of vegetables, and on this night Maror (bitter herbs).
4. On all nights we eat sitting upright or reclining, and on this night we all recline.

What is the reason for this particular sequence?

We cannot say that the questions are ordered according to importance, for if they were, the obligation to eat Matzah on Passover - a mitzva explicitly stated in the Torah - would have been first. By extension, eating Maror, which in our times is a mitzva, decreed by our Rabbis, would have been second. Reclining, symbolic of freedom, would have been third, and the question as to why we dip twice would have been last, as it is only a custom.

Are the questions arranged according to the chronological progression of the Seder? Again, the answer is no, for the first thing we do is to make Kiddush, which is then drunk in a reclining position. If the questions were asked sequentially, "reclining" would have preceded "dipping," for the vegetable is dipped in salt water only after Kiddush.

"Dipping," however, is the first question that is asked by the Jewish child. The "dipping" is what initially attracts his attention and catches his eye, despite the fact that it is not a mitzva explicitly mentioned in the Torah nor one even decreed by our Rabbis. The child's curiosity is aroused, precisely by a Jewish custom.

There are some who contend that every effort must be made to observe the Torah's mitzvot no matter how difficult the circumstances, even demonstrating self-sacrifice when necessary. But in their opinion, Jewish customs are not so important. If it is hard to keep a custom they are willing to forgo it, and downplay its significance.

The order of the questions at the Pesach Seder, however, teaches that one must never belittle the importance of a minhag Yisrael, a Jewish custom. It is precisely the custom that is mentioned first in the Haggadah. The custom stimulates the child to go on to ask the other questions.

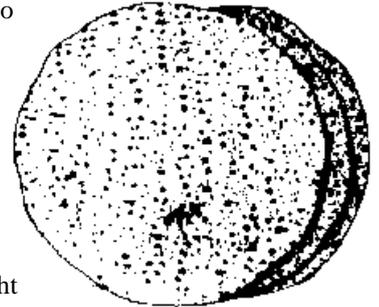
It is specifically our Jewish customs that distinguish us from our non-Jewish surroundings. For it is only when a Jew observes these customs that his uniqueness is apparent, as we say, "You have chosen us from among the nations." "A Jewish custom is Torah!"

Adapted from Likutei Sichot, Volume 1

Are you completely lost at the Seder Table?

By Naftali Silberberg

Does this situation sound all too familiar to you: You're sitting by the Seder table but you feel empty. You may be keenly aware that this occasion is meant to be a deeply spiritual experience, a redemption from your personal enslavement to the Pharaoh within who wishes to hinder your journey to Mount Sinai, but the only thought occupying your mind is: "when are we finally gonna get to dig into the chicken soup and prime rib?" Across the table sits Cousin Moish who is positively ecstatic, totally entranced by the words of the Haggadah, and you feel totally clueless.



Before you despair of ever having a meaningful Seder, take a moment to digest the following thought (a thought which is easier to digest than all that Matzah hand wine!):

Some 3300 years ago in Egypt, the Jews who sat around the Seder tables were in exactly the same predicament as you find yourself right now!

Passover is a holiday of firsts. It is the first of the three festivals, and it is observed in Nissan, the first month of the year. In fact, Ezekiel describes the Exodus as the "birth" of the Jewish nation - the ultimate first. It is "the first" because beforehand we were a nation similar to all other nations. We were steeped in the depravity and immorality of the Egyptian culture, spiritually un-attuned, and certainly not worthy of the incredible miracles which accompanied the Exodus. Passover is a testament to G-d's remarkable kindness and His intense love for us, and it marks the very beginning of our spiritual journey.

It is safe to assume that the Seder table in Egypt wasn't overflowing with inspiring words of Torah; instead the Jews sat around the table anticipating the miracle of Redemption which Moses promised would be coming their way that very night. They were not spiritual people, but they had a deep-seated faith in G-d, and a solid commitment to changing their lives, to embark on the spiritually arduous trek to receiving the Torah.

Jewish holidays are very different than their secular counterparts; they are not a commemoration of, but rather a reliving of an event. The same Divine revelation which triggered the miracles of Redemption in Egypt long ago is present every year on the night of Passover. We, too, can be redeemed although we are not worthy. We need only to emulate our ancestors, to foster our faith in the impending redemption and commit to changing ourselves as befits a member of G-d's chosen nation.

So remember, if you're feeling lost by the Seder, that's exactly why you are sitting there!

Slice of LIFE

The year 1951; the war had ended in Europe but in Russia Josef Stalin, perhaps the most accomplished mass murderer of all time, ruled the minds, souls and bodies of the populace... especially through his secret police the dreaded KGB.

Most of their work was done deep into the quiet night when people were in wrapped in cocoons of warm sleep oblivious of the fear and murder around them.... that's when the KGB would strike!

But the Koblanov family wasn't afraid. Their route to freedom was one that defied anti-Semites for over 3,300 years; they were sitting around a festively 'decorated' Passover table celebrating the 'Holiday of Liberation'.

But it wasn't easy to feel free.

Three were missing. The father Reb Eliezer had been taken away by police in the middle of the night a few months earlier for 'anti-revolutionary activities'. Then a few weeks later they took his eldest daughter Chaya (leaving behind a husband and a small baby) and finally his wife Elka was arrested a few weeks after that. They were taken to the fearsome Spolerki Prison to await 'trial' and only a miracle would bring them back.

Who knows when the next arrest would occur? It was hanging over their heads like a sharp sword. But what good would being afraid or getting depressed do? Their only hope was G-d.

They remembered the words of the Lubavitcher Rebbe and his father before him: "Our enemies can control our bodies but nothing can control the Jewish soul."

And the words of Rabbi Akiva some 2,000 years earlier who defied the Roman prohibition of teaching Torah. When someone tried to talk him into compromising and not risking his life, he replied with the following parable; 'Once a hungry fox tried to convince a fish to leave his shallow habitat saying, 'Fish, in the stream you are easy prey for fishermen, come live with me in safety on the dry open land.' "Fool!" answered the fish "If I'm not safe here where I'm supposed to be, for SURE I won't last in a place I'm not created for."

"Same with me" Rabbi Akiva concluded. "If I'm not safe with Torah then for sure I'm in danger without it!"

Their only chance was to rejoice in the holiday of Passover.... Only Passover could save them.

So the five that were left; two sisters Liba and Sterna, their younger 20 year old brother Kerpil and their older brother Mendel and his wife tried to be as happy as possible and even managed to sing a few songs of redemption at the Seder.

But after the Seder when the family was asleep and the house was peacefully silent it happened. The house shook, the windows rattled.

It was as though someone was pounding on the door with a sledgehammer. The KGB broke in, took away Kerpil and a few hours later returned and took his two sisters. Then a month later Mendel was taken and the entire family was gone.

A few months later they all miraculously made it to the trial alive but when they heard the sentences they almost wished they were dead. Rav Eliezer got ten years at hard labour in Siberia and the rest of the family got eight (very few people survived even the first year). Within the hour each was on a different train headed for different destinations; one of the hundreds of work camps scattered throughout vast Mother Russia.

Kerpil took it hard. He wasn't a weak person physically but he totally lacked the stamina necessary for the twelve hour shifts, meagre, bread diets and sub-zero weather. After a few months he thought that he wouldn't be able to hold out.

But then two miracles occurred. The first; because he had begun to learn medicine for a few months before he was arrested he was unexplainably appointed to be a camp doctor!

And second; one of the patients he treated turned out to be a Jew who, as a sign of gratitude, took a folded piece of newspaper from his pocket, carefully unfolded it on a table to reveal a piece of Matzah (that he probably carried with him the entire year), broke off a small piece and put it in Kerpil's hand.

It was still several months before Passover but as soon as this small treasure touched Kerpil's palm he felt as though he was plugged in to a new source of life!

That Passover he found an empty room in the work camp, put the Matzah before him, recited what he remembered of the Haggadah by heart, gave thanks for being a Jew, prayed to G-d to get him out of his Siberian 'Mitzrayim' and vowed to always keep Passover.

But miracles can't last for ever.

For five years, through hunger, fatigue, danger and cold he kept Passover religiously

but this year as the holiday rolled around he felt sick. In fact every day he felt weaker and colder until he was really worried.

Of course he wouldn't eat bread (although it was 95% of the camp diet). But usually on Pesach he only ate vegetables that he cooked in a small pot he had secured as his own and this year it he was sure he wouldn't make it on such a meagre diet. He felt as though he would faint any moment... or worse.

And to make matters worse he had to work. If he didn't do his job he would be demoted, punished even killed! But he made his decision. Nothing would make him compromise on Passover.

Somehow he made it! He dragged himself to work every day for seven days and actually finished the holiday in one piece!

Almost. Outside of Israel Passover is eight days and on the last day of Pesach a soldier came to him with an order to appear immediately before the dreaded chief doctor of the camp; a middle aged woman with mean, narrow eyes who was known as an anti-Semite and a bloodthirsty sadist to boot.

Kerpil's knees knocked as he climbed the stairs to her office. If she decided to fire him he would have to return to hard labour... which meant sure death. He stood before her, pale as a ghost, certain that this Passover would be his last in this world and stammered, "Have I done something wrong? Did someone complain about me?"

"Listen" She said, "You look ill. I think you have to get out of here." Kerpil couldn't believe his ears... she was talking like a human being!

"Don't tell anyone I told you this" she continued, "But in a few months there will be a group of officials here to review all the prisoners. Since Stalin died (in 1953) things are changing. Just tell them that you regret your past deeds and I'm sure they will free you. You don't look well at all."

It seems that the poor diet of Passover was exactly what saved him!

Several months later the officials did arrive and over a half a year later.... Just a week before the next Passover (!) Kerpil was freed! But imagine his joy when he returned home to discover that his entire family had unexplainably been freed just days before him; all were alive and all miraculously had their sentences shortened in time to be home together for the holiday of Pesach!

That year at the Passover meal there were a lot of personal miracle stories about leaving Egypt.

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ISSUE 1185

MOSHIACH MATTERS

In the first few pages of the Haggadah we read: "This year we are here; next year, may we be in the Land of Israel. This year, we are slaves; next year, may we be free people." On these words the Rebbe explains, "Mentioning the Land of Israel and our ultimate freedom at the beginning of the Haggadah suggests that the purpose of the Seder is not only to relive the exodus from Egypt, but to prepare for the Redemption."



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Erev Pesach, 5745 [1985]

Greeting and Blessing:

Thank you for your letter and telegram with the birthday greetings, which I heartily reciprocate in the words of our Sages, "Whoever blesses others is blessed by Hashem [G-d] Himself."

Accordingly, may Hashem bestow His blessings on you and your wife and family in a generous measure, both materially and spiritually.

With regard to the problem concerning your nephew, there is no need to emphasize to you the great tragedy of intermarriage, a Jew marrying a non-Jew. Therefore, no effort should be spared to save both parties from such a situation. Indeed, if there is true feeling between the two persons involved, neither of them should wish to drag the other into such a tragedy and should not let a personal desire or passion, which in most cases is short-lived in any case, blind him and her to one's elementary human duty, not to mention the religious aspect and the fact that it is entirely unacceptable from the Torah viewpoint.

I am aware, of course, of the common argument that there seem to be many intermarried couples who are apparently happy. But the bitter truth is that in most, if not all, such cases, this is only because such couples are too ashamed to reveal the true situation at home and in their private life, for obvious reasons, especially if they had been warned about it and chose to ignore such warnings.

The same may be said of another common argument that since both parties involved are adults and are prepared to take their chances, no one should interfere with their decision. The fallacy of such an argument is obvious if we consider a simple illustration of a person standing on top of a bridge and preparing to jump, claiming aloud that it is no one's business to stop him, etc. In any civilized society, it would be the duty of anyone who can do something about it to save the person from committing suicide, or harming himself, and, indeed, very often the fire department and police department are mobilized to save the person despite his or her protestations.

There is surely no need to elaborate on the above.

To conclude on a happy note, especially as we are now about to celebrate Pesach, the Festival of Our Liberation, may Hashem grant you and all yours, in the midst of all our people, a growing measure of liberation from all negative aspects and distractions, materially and spiritually, so as to serve Hashem wholeheartedly and with joy.

Wishing you and all yours a joyous and inspiring Pesach and shnas hatzlocha (a successful year)

With blessing,

CUSTOMS CORNER

What are some of the significance of the three matzos and four cups of wine at the Passover Seder?

The three matzos represent the three categories of Jews: the priests, the Levites and the Israelites. They also represent the three Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The four cups of wine represent the four expressions of Redemption of the Jewish people. They also represent the four Matriarchs: Sara, Rebecca, Rachel and Lea.

A WORD

from the Director

An important part of the Passover Seder is the asking of questions by the children and the answering of them by the adults.

There are ways of asking questions and ways of answering questions, depending on whether the child belongs to the category of the "wise," the "wicked," the "simple," or "the one who doesn't know how to ask."

While the famous four children of the Passover Haggadah differ from one another in their questions, intellect, Jewish involvement, affiliation and reaction to the Seder, they all have one thing in common: They are all present at the Seder.

Even the so-called "wicked" child is there, taking an active, though rebellious interest in what is going on in Jewish life around him. This at least justifies the hope that someday also the "wicked" one will become wise, and will become more conscientious about Judaism.

Unfortunately, today, there is another kind of Jewish child: the child who is conspicuous by his absence from the Seder; the one who has no interest whatsoever in Torah and mitzvot, laws and customs; the one who might not even be aware that there is a Seder, or an Exodus from Egypt or the subsequent giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai.

This fifth child is not always a child in chronological years, but often a child in Jewish knowledge and awareness.

In the 1980's, certain groups suggested leaving an empty chair at the Seder table as a reminder of the Jews in Russia or other countries where Jews wanted to celebrate Passover but were unable to do so.

At that time, the Rebbe encouraged everyone to fill that chair with a fifth child, a Jew-young or old, rich or poor, wise or simple—who would otherwise not be at the Seder.

This year, let no chair be empty at any Seder. Whether at a public Seder of many participants or a private Seder in an apartment in the City, let us not only accommodate every Jew who wants to be at a Seder, let us all have the goal of reaching out and bringing to our table one Jew who would not otherwise be at a Passover Seder.

On behalf of the Chabad House of Caulfield, best wishes for a Chag Pesach Kosher VeSameach - a kosher and joyous Pesach!

J. I. Gutterick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Some two hundred years ago in Poland lived a great Tzadik (Holy Jew) called Rabbi Meir of Premishlian.

He was famous for his erudition and wisdom but most renowned for his miracles. Just as Moses did miracles to free the Jews from their problems so did the Tzadikim in every generation. (In fact it would be safe to say that the only reason the Jewish people could survive almost 2,000 years despite being a lone sheep surrounded by millions of wolves, is in the spiritual merit of these men.)

One night a desperate Jew came before Rabbi Meir with a terrible story. He was the owner of the local inn and had been doing very well. The local populace was friendly with him, frequented his place regularly and always paid their bills. In exchange he gave them good service, fresh food, good advice and, most importantly, un-watered down whisky.

But recently things took a change for the worst. People stopped coming, almost every morning he was greeted by a broken window or two and he and his family began receiving threats.

After a bit of investigation he discovered the cause. A new priest had arrived from a neighbouring town and was preaching hatred. At first no one listened but gradually it began to catch on by the simple folk. He convinced them that if they got rid of the Jew they could get his money and even have free drinks.

The Rebbe closed his eyes for a moment looked up at the innkeeper and asked, "Tell me, do you believe that G-d took the Jews from Egypt?"

"Rebbe!" he exclaimed in surprise "Of course I do! Why I, and my father and his father before him... we all believe in G-d and in all the Tzadikim like it says in the Torah (Exodus 14:31)."

"Because now is the month of Nissan, the month the Jews left Egypt" the Rebbe continued. "And the prophet Micha (7:15) says; 'Just like when you left Egypt... so G-d will show you miracles'.

"If you believe it will happen... then it will. Now, take this and go to the priest." The Rebbe took out a blank piece of paper, wrote something on it, put it in an envelope, sealed it and handed it to him.

"Don't worry about getting in; just tell the guards you have an important message. Then, when you enter his room, tell him you want to be alone and as soon as the door closes tell him 'Reb Meir of Premishlian knows something that no one knows; that your mother was Jewish.' Then give him the letter."

He took the letter and left but the further away he got from the Rabbi's house the more petrified he became and the smaller and more hesitant his steps were. But the words of the Rebbe echoed in his ears; "Do you believe that G-d took the Jews from Egypt?"

He never really gave it much thought... till now. Going out of Egypt was a lot scarier than he ever dreamed!

Before he knew it he was standing before the huge black gate with the huge cross on it in the high iron fence that surrounded the Church. His blood curdled. He just wanted to run home, load his family on his wagon and just leave but then the Rebbe's face loomed before him saying "...so G-d will show you miracles'. If you believe it will happen!"

He said a prayer, pushed open the gate, walked down the path to the massive church and, to his surprise, met with no resistance at the door. He was shown in and ushered directly to the evil priest's study. But the priest was not happy to see him. "What is this?" he shouted at his servants. "What does he want here!?"

"I want to see you alone" the innkeeper said calmly. "I have a message from Rabbi Meir Premishlian."

The priest ordered his servants to frisk the visitor and when they were sure he was harmless they turned, left and closed the door behind them.

The innkeeper immediately announced as calmly as he could, "The Rabbi says that he knows something about you that no one knows... that your mother was Jewish. Now, he wants you to read this letter."

The priest looked startled and said. "What! Jewish? How did he...? Does anyone else know this? Did you or he tell? Who else knows?"

"As far as I know... no one." The innkeeper answered.

"Good. Good!" the priest said quietly. "If what you say is true and no one knows then... well... things will be different. I'll read the letter, now please leave."

The letter was a request by Reb Meir to the priest to speak only positively about the Jews from now on and to encourage the gentiles to do the same.

And it worked.

The next Sunday the priest explained that what he said earlier was what the Egyptians said before G-d punished them with ten plagues thousands of years ago. But we must love the Jews! As G-d said to Abraham, "Those who bless you I will bless and those who curse you I will curse. (Gen 12:3).

In any case, it worked and from then on the feeling of brotherhood in the town was as never before.

But the priest was not satisfied. He took the first opportunity to go visit the Tzaddik in private and ask him how he knew about his mother?

"Why, I myself only knew a few weeks ago!" the priest said. "She called me to her deathbed and whispered that she was Jewish and it was a secret that she had kept her whole life. She told me that she sent me to priest's school because she didn't want me to suffer as she had suffered. But how did you know? She never told anyone... I'm certain!"

"Don't be surprised." The Tzaddik answered. "Everything is written in the Torah. That day I was learning the Torah and suddenly it was revealed to me... your name, your mother's name and her secret. But I didn't understand why until the innkeeper came with his story.

"Now" Reb Meir continued, "I advise you to secretly return to the religion of your father's. I will teach you what to do but outwardly you must continue to be a priest and teach brotherly love. By merit of this G-d will forgive your past and reward you in the future".

Thoughts THAT COUNT

The Exodus from Egypt took place in the springtime (the 15th of Nisan), as the Torah states (Ex. 13:4), "Today you are going out, in the month of spring." At that time of year the forces of nature are most manifest and the natural world is at its peak of beauty. To the Egyptians, who worshipped nature, it seemed as if their deity was ascendant. G-d took the Jewish people out of Egypt in the spring to demonstrate that nature has no power or existence of its own and is completely subservient to G-d. (*The Rebbe*)

One of the reasons it is called Seder, literally order or arrangement, is that it alludes to the order or sequence of all of Jewish history in macrocosm. Everything that has ever befallen the Jewish people is part of G-d's plan and is guided by Divine Providence. (*The Maharal of Prague*)

When a Jew eats matza and introduces it into his body, it sanctifies all his limbs and makes them holy. It is therefore appropriate that we prepare ourselves before performing this great mitzva and ensure that our mouths and bodies are worthy, as it states, "You shall eat matzot in a holy place." (*Tiferet Shlomo*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 3-5 APRIL 2015

BEGINS	3rd	4th	9th	5th	ENDS
6.54	7.49	5.45	MELBOURNE	6.48	
6.51	7.45	5.43	ADELAIDE	6.44	
5.27	6.18	5.20	BRISBANE	6.17	
6.31	7.20	6.28	DARWIN	7.20	
5.25	6.17	5.18	GOLD COAST	6.16	
5.54	6.46	5.46	PERTH	6.45	
6.31	7.25	5.23	SYDNEY	6.24	
6.39	7.33	5.31	CANBERRA	6.32	
6.44	7.41	5.34	LAUNCESTON	6.39	
6.56	7.51	5.47	AUCKLAND	6.49	
6.53	7.51	5.44	WELLINGTON	6.49	
6.42	7.40	6.39	HOBART	6.39	
6.24	7.16	5.17	BYRON BAY	6.15	
6.54	7.43	6.52	SINGAPORE	7.42	



Light candles on April 4th after the time given, and only from a pre-existing flame

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD
EREV PESACH • 14 NISSAN • 3 APRIL

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	6:54 PM
	MINCHA:	7:00 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	7:30 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	10:30 AM
	MINCHA:	6:50 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS/MAARIV:	7:49 PM
	CANDLE LIGHTING FOR YOM TOV:	Not before 7:49 PM
SUNDAY 5 APRIL, 2ND DAY	YOM TOV:	
	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	MINCHA:	5:50 PM
	YOM TOV ENDS/MAARIV:	6:48 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS: MON-THU:	8:00 AM, 9:15 AM
	MINCHA: MON-WED:	5:55 PM
	MAARIV: MON-WED:	6:40 PM, 9:00 PM
THUR EVE 9 APRIL, SHEVI'I SHEL PESACH:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:45 PM
	MINCHA:	5:50 PM
	MAARIV:	6:35 PM