

LAMPLIGHTER

14 Nissan
Erev Pesach

1240

22 April
5776/2016

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The central theme of Passover is freedom - the liberation of the Children of Israel from the Egyptian oppressors. The celebration of this freedom is of such importance in Judaism, that we are required to relive the Exodus from Egypt every single day: "In every generation a person should consider himself as if he himself went out of Egypt."

But, exactly what type of freedom were the Jews granted when they left Egypt? Did we not remove the yoke of Pharaoh only to replace it with an even greater yoke? "When you take the people out from Egypt they shall serve G-d," Moses is told. G-d took the entire Jewish People out of slavery in Egypt, only on condition that they become subservient to Him! Observing the Torah and its 613 commandments is certainly a heavy yoke. Is it not a contradiction to claim that the Jews were freed from bondage, if they afterward found themselves in a new sort of servitude?

The concept of freedom is relative, dependent on many factors. That which constitutes freedom for a plant is quite different from the freedom demanded by an animal or a human being. A tree requires good soil, abundant rain, air and sunshine to thrive. But those same conditions would present the very opposite of a free existence for an animal, which is not rooted to the ground and must enjoy freedom of movement, in addition to sufficient food and water.

Moving up the ladder of creation we see that the same freedom that suffices for an animal does not constitute freedom for a human being. If we were to fulfill all a person's physical needs, yet not allow his intellect to be satisfied, this would be a terrible deprivation. Freedom for man includes the recognition that he possesses a need to fulfill his intellectual yearnings, to develop his full potential as a human being.

And yet, even intellectual fulfillment is not true freedom for a Jew. His Jewish soul must also be taken into consideration, that "veritable piece of G-d" which is the birthright of every member of the Jewish nation. Even when this soul is clothed in a physical body it maintains its intimate connection with its G-dly source. A Jew can only find true freedom and fulfillment when his soul is afforded the opportunity to strengthen that bond with G-d, through the Torah and its commandments.

That is why our Sages said, "A truly liberated person is one who engages in the study of Torah." Torah for the Jew is as essential to his existence as water is to a fish. Contrary to being a yoke, Torah is our very life. Just as a fish can live only in water, the Torah is the Jew's only appropriate medium.

Freedom, therefore, is that which will enable every single organism in the world to live up to its full potential. For a Jew, whose soul is his true essence, genuine freedom is that which will allow him to draw closer and closer to G-d - learning Torah and performing mitzvot (commandments)

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Jump

By Yanki Tauber

Philosophers and physicists are both bothered by the past (though for different reasons). We know that every action produces a reaction and every event becomes a cause for numerous subsequent events. Think of it: gazillions of occurrences and actions, all conspiring to dictate to this one single point of now. Any change in any past event would alter this equation and produce a different result. Simply stated, the present -- what I'm going to do and what's going to happen to me at this very moment -- is the sum and product of all that I did and all that happened to me up to now.

Philosophers are bothered by this because thinking man tends to think of himself as a creature endowed with choice. Physicists have a problem with it because their microscopes and particle accelerators reveal a random universe. As for the rest of us, we wake each morning to a new day, but soon feel the familiar weight of our yesterday's pressing us into the grooves of habit and necessity. Nevertheless, we continue to believe that we are "in control," that with a sufficient amount of determined effort we can, and will, break free.

The Jewish calendar reserves eight days each year to celebrate that faith. The eight days of Passover, "our season of freedom", embody the conviction that, in any given moment, we have the power to step out -- in the words of the Haggadah -- "from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to joy, from mourning to festivity, from darkness to great light, from bondage to redemption."

Thus our sages decreed that the Exodus from Egypt is an event that should recur in each generation of our history, and in every day of our lives. For what else is an "Exodus" if not the power of a people to step out of their past, to wrench free of their circumstances, to give birth to a new self that is independent of the womb from which it emerged?

Therein lies the deeper meaning of the name of the festival. Commonly translated "Passover," the Hebrew word Pesach literally means to "jump over."

"Walking" or "running" implies a change of place, yet this is a change that derives from and is predicated upon your prior position. One foot leaves the ground, but the other remains planted there to provide the forward impetus. The movement may be small or great, slow or swift; but in all cases, each step derives from the one before it.

A "jump," in which both feet leave the ground, implies a break from the past -- a quantum leap rather than an incremental step, a rebirth rather than a maturing.

Yet the purpose of the jump is not to leap to heaven and stay there. If you do that, you missed the whole point. The idea is to return to the ground, not only one or two or many strides ahead, but also as a different person from the one who crouched down there to leap. To return to your past not as prisoner bound by its laws, but as a master descending upon it from above, using it and moulding it to your higher ends as you advance in your journey. Until the next jump.

Slice of LIFE

Here is a story from Rabbi Shabtai Slavatitski, the Rebbe's Shliach (Representative) in Antwerp, Belgium:

There was once a Chabad Rabbi who led a large congregation, many of them Holocaust survivors. Each member, of course, had his own memories and problems but all of them learned to pretty much cope. Or so it seemed.

One of them was Mr. Goldvasser (fictitious name). He was a seemingly normal person; a good businessman with a healthy sense of humour a generous heart and a keen mind. But he had one idiosyncrasy; he never remained in the Synagogue for the Blessing of the Kohanim on the holidays.

(The Kohanim are direct decedents from the Priests in the days of the Temple and they are commanded to bless the congregation with a fifteen word blessing as prescribed in Num. 6:24-26. Outside of Israel the blessing is usually made only three times a year; on the holidays in the morning 'Musaf' prayer.)

The Rabbi was always a bit apprehensive about asking Mr. Goldvasser for an explanation but his curiosity became so great that he finally concocted a plan. He invited him to his home for a meal and after they had eaten well, sang a few songs and made a few 'l'chaims' he asked.

"Tell me Mr. Goldvasser. I've noticed that you don't stay for the blessing of the Kohanim. Is there some reason? Is something wrong? I mean, it's not that important. It's just something I noticed. You don't have to talk about it if you don't want to. I just wondered. Am I right?"

Mr. Goldvasser became silent and it seemed that his eyes became glossy with some past vision, or perhaps with tears.

"Well, Rabbi" he began after almost a minute, "It was like this...."

"I was in Auschwitz. I can't explain what happened there, I think it's even forbidden to remember such things. But there was one person; we called him 'The Rabbi'. No one knew his name, but he was different than all of us. I'm sure he lost his family and everything just like the rest of us but he never showed it. Not only that but he used to keep everyone's spirits up.

"If he saw someone depressed he would say a good word. If you ever wanted to talk he would listen. He could listen forever. He always had a hand for a bent shoulder and a

shoulder for someone to weep on and a hug for a broken heart and even a joke to break the sadness.

"Anyway, once it was getting close to Passover and he announced that we had to figure out a way to get Matzot.

"Matzot! Everyone was thinking about dropping dead and he made us think of Matzot. And it worked. Until finally someone noticed on the way to where they took us to work outside, someone noticed a few crumbs of Matzot!

"It took a few days but finally we found out that one of the prisoners had a job cleaning the house of one of the Nazi officers and when the German wasn't at home this Jew risked his life and made a Matzah for himself. If he got caught he would have been killed for sure. Anyway a few crumbs must have fallen there near the road and that's how we found out. It was a real miracle.

"The Rabbi had a talk with this fellow and at first he said it was impossible; too dangerous. But finally he agreed ... and he somehow succeeded in making two Matzot. It was another miracle.

"It doesn't matter that we were about eight hundred men in that bunker. Do you hear? Eight hundred! But we were actually happy when the Rabbi woke us up at midnight and showed us those Matzot.

"He broke them into pieces and handed them out, then each of us broke them into smaller pieces until each of us had a piece.

And each person held it in his hand while the Rabbi recited what he remembered from the Passover Haggada by heart and we repeated after him. Finally he made the blessing and ate and so did we. Each one ate his crumb of Matzo. At first we were quiet. Like whispering so those German snakes wouldn't hear us but after a few minutes I guess we forgot where we were.

"Then the Rabbi says like this. He says 'Listen Jews! Listen my friends and my brothers. We just left Egypt! See! No one can break our spirit! No one! We are free!!' And he began to sing a song. And dance. He danced! And we all danced.

"There were all sorts of Jews there a lot of them were atheists... but everyone danced. That night we danced! We were free.

"But then the door came crashing open and the spell was broken. There stood a Nazi officer with a few soldiers behind him like mad dogs.

"'What is this?!' He screamed red with anger. 'SINGING??' He screamed even louder. 'In Auschwitz you cry, you don't sing!'"

He pulled out a pistol, put it to the head of one of the prisoners and said "Tell me who

is responsible or I'll kill you. I'll kill all of you out one by one! WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS!!?"

"Everyone knew it would happen. The Rabbi stepped forward and said in a loud, calm voice. "I am. I'm responsible. You can kill me. "

"The officer motioned to his soldiers to grab The Rabbi, lowered his pistol, put it in its holster and said, "You won't die so fast, Jew. You will die tomorrow, in public by hanging."

"They took the Rabbi away and early the next morning before dawn they woke us early, and made the entire camp stand in the yard. There were several thousand prisoners and Nazi guards were everywhere us with pointed guns. There in the middle on a podium between two huge Gestapo guards stood the Rabbi.

"The officer stood straight, hands behind his back, his chest jutting out and yelled. 'Now, Jews, you will see what happens to someone who dances in Auschwitz.

Everyone will watch! Do you understand?! Everyone! Anyone caught not watching will be killed on the spot. ON THE SPOT!"

"But as they were putting the noose around the Rabbi's neck he turned to the officer and said in a clear voice for all to hear, 'As a man about to be killed I demand my last wish! Doesn't a dying man get a last wish?'"

"The commander hesitated, smiled as though amused. "'Last wish is it? Alright Jew..... What is your last wish?'"

"I am a Kohen" he answered "And I want to bless the crowd."

"Bless? Heh! And how long will this take?'"

"It will take one half a minute, perhaps less," he replied.

The officer looked at the soldier with the noose, made a motion with his head to wait, looked at the watch on his wrist and said,

"You have thirty seconds."

"The Rabbi's voice was clear as a child's, he stood proudly straight, closed his eyes, raised his hands and the fifteen words of the blessing rang out like a voice from heaven. 'Y'vorechecha, HaShem, V'yishmorecha...' We all burst out crying like babies and when he finished.....it was over.

"That blessing is what kept me alive in Auschwitz, through the rest of the war and to this very day.

"It rings in my ears when there is no hope and shines in the darkness when all is lost. I never want to hear another Kohan's blessing. I never want to forget that pure blessing I heard. That is why I leave the Shul."

Published by **The Chabad House of Caulfield** in conjunction with the **Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.**

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ISSUE 1240

MOSHIACH MATTERS

G-d did not force those Jews who did not want to leave Egypt to do so. In contrast, in the future Redemption, even those Jews who do not consciously want to be redeemed will be taken out of exile. This is because when G-d gave us the Torah, He connected our essence with His essence, making it impossible for us to really oppose our connection with Him. Of course, we can go through the motions of opposing our connection to G-d, but this is only superficial. Sooner or later, our deep, inner essence will surface, and this will make us all indeed worth of being redeemed. (*Daily Wisdom/Likutei Sichot vol. 2*)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

The date of this letter was unavailable

The festival of Pesach [Passover] calls for early and elaborate preparations to make the Jewish home fitting for the great festival. It is not physical preparedness alone that is required of us, but also spiritual preparedness - for in the life of the Jew the physical and spiritual are closely linked together, especially in the celebration of our Sabbath and festivals.

On Pesach we celebrate the liberation of the Jewish people from Egyptian slavery and, together with it, the liberation from, and negation of the ancient Egyptian system and way of life, the "abominations of Egypt." Thus we celebrate our physical liberation together with our spiritual freedom.

Indeed, there cannot be one without the other: There can be no real freedom without accepting the precepts of our Torah guiding our daily life; pure and holy life eventually leads to real freedom.

It is said, "In every generation each Jew should see himself as though he personally had been liberated from Egypt." This is to say, that the lesson of Pesach has always a timely message for the individual Jew.

The story of Pesach is the story of the special Divine Providence which alone determines the fate of our people.

What is happening in the outside world need not affect us; we might be singled out for suffering, G-d forbid, amid general prosperity, and likewise for safety amid a general plague or catastrophe.

The story of our enslavement and liberation of which Pesach tells us gives ample illustration of this. For the fate of our people is determined by its adherence to G-d and His Prophets.

This lesson is emphasized by the three principal symbols of the Seder, concerning which our Sages said that unless the Jew explains their significance he has not observed the Seder fittingly: Pesach, Matzah and Morror [bitter herbs].

Using these symbols in their chronological order and in accordance with their Haggadah explanation we may say: the Jew can avoid Morror (bitterness of life) only through Pesach (G-d's special care "passing over" and saving the Jewish homes even in the midst of the greatest plague), and Matzah - then the very catastrophe and the enemies of the Jews will work for the benefit of the Jews, driving them in great haste out of "Mitzrayim," [Egypt] the place of perversion and darkness, and placing them under the beam of light and holiness.

One other important thing we must remember: the celebration of the festival of freedom must be connected with the commandment "You shall relate it to your son."

The story of Pesach is the story of the special Divine Providence which alone determines the fate of our people.

The formation and existence of the Jewish home, as of the Jewish people as a whole, is dependent upon the upbringing of the young generation, both boys and girls: the wise and the wicked (temporarily), the simple and the one who knows not what to ask.

Just as we cannot shirk our responsibility towards our child by the excuse that "my child is a wise one; he will find his own way in life; therefore no education is necessary for him," so we must not despair by thinking "the child is a wicked one; no education will help him."

For, all Jewish children, boys and girls, are "G-d's children," and it is our sacred duty to see to it that they all live up to their above-mentioned title; and this we can achieve only through a proper Jewish education, in full adherence to G-d's Torah. Then we all will merit the realization of our ardent hopes: "In the next year may we be free; in the next year may we be in Jerusalem!"

CUSTOMS CORNER

What types of labour are permitted on Chol Hamoed?

Permitted activities include:

1. Anything done in order to prepare or cook food.
2. Anything done for medical purposes.
3. Any non-strenuous work which, if not performed at the time, would cause loss (unless it could have been done before the festival, and was deliberately delayed until Chol Hamoed).

A WORD

from the Director

The lesson which we learn from Pesach for the whole year is to fulfil the "commemorating the Exodus from Egypt"; all year you should remember your action of burning the Chametz before Pesach -- destroying the evil and then making the day holy with blessings, eating matzah and all the positive actions. This will cause a strengthening of the Yetzer Tov [good inclination].

Matzah is called "food of faith" and it was the faith of the Jewish people which brought them out of Egypt. When this faith is instilled in all actions of a person, all year round -- then the person fulfils the mitzvah of remembering the Exodus.

The Torah teaches us "Love your neighbour as yourself." This means that every person should teach this lesson of Passover, males to males and females to females, to do away with the evil and strengthen the good.

By fulfilling the mitzvah of Ahavas Yisroel, loving your fellow as yourself, you will also find that all mitzvos are easier to perform, for "one mitzvah brings along another"; especially the mitzvah of Ahavas Yisroel which, as Rabbi Akiva taught us, is a "Basic Principle of the Torah." Therefore, Ahavas Yisroel enhances all aspects of Torah study and observance of all the Mitzvos with great success.

During the holiday we should do all this with greater joy -- a double joy: the joy of the Jewish people: "The Jews should rejoice in their Maker" (Tanya Ch. 33). This is the joy of the Jew who is involved in Yiddishkeit, Judaism.

Second, the joy of the Holy One, Blessed be He, Who is overjoyed with the conduct of those children who have been properly educated in this manner.

Since "joy bursts through restrictions," this joy will speed the breaking of the current exile and then we will see the miracles of redemption with the ultimate and true salvation through our righteous Moshiach speedily in our days.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED

Once...

It was well after midnight on the night of Passover, and the great Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Bredichev had just finished his Passover Seder, according to all the mystical and esoteric principles found in the awesome mystical works.

His pupils had never seen such a Seder. The Rebbe and all those present felt transported into a different world, as though they had gone out of all their bodily limitations and into a world of pure G-dliness.

Suddenly the room filled with the sound of a deep rumbling like massive thunder, and then from within the thunder an awesome voice announced loudly:

"Levi Yitzchak's Seder was pleasing to G-d, but there is a Jew in Bredichev called Shmerl the Tailor who's Seder was better!!!"

The Rebbe looked around him, and it was obvious that only he had heard the heavenly announcement.

"Has anyone heard of a tzaddik called Shmerl the Tailor?" He asked his Chassidim; there was no answer.

After several minutes of silence one of the elderly Chassidim piped up and said, "There is one Shmerl here in Bredichev that I know of, and he used to be a tailor about thirty years ago, but he's certainly no tzaddik, in fact he's pretty far from that. They call him Shmerl the Shikker (drunkard) and he lives with his wife in a few old large shipping crates near the railroad tracks."

But Rav Levi Yitzchak was thinking to himself, 'Aha, this must be one of the hidden Tzadikim living here in my town and I knew nothing about it!'

In fifteen minutes, at two in the morning, The Rav was standing in front of Shmerl's door, and when he heard someone walking around inside, he knocked.

The door opened and an old Jewish lady poked her head out of the door. "Good Yom Tov!" said Rav Levi Yitzchak quietly and politely, "Please excuse me for the late hour. Is your husband Shmerl at home?" "Good Yom Tov." She answered, "Just wait one minute please, Rebbe, wait right here."

She disappeared back into the house and the unmistakable sound of a bucket being filled with water was heard from inside. Then a minute or two of silence and suddenly... SPLASH! She threw the bucket of water on her sleeping husband!!

"Aaahh!!! Oyyy!!! Where am I??? OOY VAI!!!" He screamed, and then his wife chimed in shouting "Get up you drunk!!! The Rabbi has come to punish you!!! Wake up you good for nothing!!!!"

Poor Shmerl staggered, sopping wet, to the door, and when he saw that it really was the Rabbi, he fell at his feet and began weeping, "Please Rabbi don't punish me, I didn't know better. Please have mercy!!!"

The Rav of Bredichev was completely astounded at this bizarre scene. Could it be that this man's Seder was better than his own?

He bent down, lifted poor Shmerl to his feet and said, "Listen, Shmerl, I didn't come to punish you, in fact I don't even know what you are talking about. Please let me in, let's sit down and talk, I only want to ask you something. Go put on a dry shirt and we'll talk."

Minutes later they sat facing each other over Shmerl's small table. The Rav looked at him kindly and softly said: "Shmerl, listen, I want you to tell me what you did in your Seder last night. Don't worry, I promise that I'm not going to punish you, I promise."

"Oooy!" moaned Shmerl and began weeping again, "I didn't mean it, I don't know any better, oooy!" It was obvious that Shmerl was still pretty drunk.

Gradually he calmed down and began speaking. "Early this morning, that is... yesterday morning, I'm walking in the street and suddenly I notice that people are rushing, rushing around. This one has a broom, this one is carrying a box, this one something else, everyone is rushing except me. So I stopped someone I

recognized and asked him, 'What is everyone rushing for? Where are they all going?'

So he answers me, 'Oy Shmerl, are you so drunk that you forgot that tonight is Pesach?! Tonight is Pesach! Do you remember what Pesach is?'

I tried thinking but my mind wouldn't work, 'Pesach, Pesach, I... I can't remember. It sounds very important though; I remember something about Matzot... and Egypt. 'Listen' I asked him, 'please, do me a favor and tell me what it is again.'

The man looked at me in a strange way, and answered 'Listen, Shmerl, tonight you have to make a Seder, you know, eat three matzos, four cups of wine. You'll enjoy the wine, Shmerl!', he said with a sad smile, 'but you won't enjoy abstaining from your foul vodka for eight days.' 'Eight days!!!' I said, 'Why?? Why can't I drink for eight days?' I was trembling and beginning to remember a little.

'Because that's the law!' he answered, 'Eight days you can't eat Chumatz and Vodka is Chumatz (leavened grains). If you can't take eight days, maybe go to Israel,' he laughed, 'there it's only forbidden seven days! Here,' he said reaching into his pocket, 'Take this, if you need more come to my house. Chag Smeach! (Happy Holiday)'. He gave me some charity, a card with his name on it, smiled and hurried away.

I was stunned. But I knew I had to act fast, so I took all the money I had, bought a big bottle of Vodka and drank the entire thing. That night, that is... just a few hours ago, I was sleeping soundly in my bed when suddenly my wife throws a bucket of water on me, you see how she does it, and starts screaming: 'Shmerl, you bum! You drunk! You good for nothing! All the Jewish men in the whole world are making Seder tonight and YOU are lying like a drunken ox. Wake up and make a Seder!!!!' like that.

I staggered to my feet, put on some dry clothes and sat down at the beautifully set table.

The candles were shining up the room and sparkling from the plates and silverware. Everything was new, clean, I felt so different, almost holy. I looked at the wine and the Matzot, the Haggada (prayer book for Passover night) was open in front of me, and my wife was sitting in her place opposite me like a queen, she was even smiling. Everything was so quiet.

Then you know what I did?

I looked up and I started talking to G-d. Just like I'm talking to you now. I started talking to G-d and I said, 'G-d... listen... I don't know you, but you know me. You know that after my father got killed I had to work all the time and I never had time to learn, right?'

So I don't know how to read this book, in fact I can't read anything! And I don't know what I'm supposed to do tonight either; in fact I never really know what to do.

One thing I do know... I know that a long time ago You sent Moshe who took us out of Egypt, and I'm sure that you will send Moshiach to take us out of all our troubles now!!'

Then I drank the four cups, ate some Matzas and went back to sleep. That is what I did, please don't be mad, Rabbi."

Now I know why your Seder was better than mine. By me, I also wanted the Moshiach to come, but I had other things on my mind as well, all the Kabalistic unifications etc. but you thought only of the redemption, and you did it with all your heart."

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD
EREV PESACH • 14 NISSAN • 22 APRIL

FRIDAY NIGHT	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5.26 PM
	MINCHA:	5.35 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	6.05 PM
SHABBOS	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.34 AM
	MINCHA:	5.20 PM
	MAARIV:	6.10 PM
	CANDLE LIGHTING FOR YOM TOV:	not before 6.22 PM
SUNDAY APRIL 24, 2nd DAY YOM TOV	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	5.25 PM
	YOM TOV ENDS / MAARIV:	6.21 PM
WEEKDAYS	SHACHARIS:	MON-THUR: 8.00 AM / 9.15 AM
	MINCHA:	MON-WED: 5.25 PM
	MAARIV:	MON-WED: 6.15 PM
THUR EVE APRIL 9, SHEVI'1 SHEL PESACH	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5.18 PM
	MINCHA:	5.25 PM
	MAARIV:	6.05 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING: 22 APRIL 2016

BEGINS	22nd	23rd	28th	ENDS	24th
	5.26	6.22	5.18	MELBOURNE	6.21
	5.25	6.20	5.18	ADELAIDE	6.19
	5.06	5.58	5.01	BRISBANE	5.58
	6.20	7.09	6.17	DARWIN	7.09
	5.04	5.56	4.59	GOLD COAST	5.56
	5.30	6.24	5.24	PERTH	6.23
	5.06	6.01	4.59	SYDNEY	5.59
	5.12	6.08	5.06	CANBERRA	6.07
	5.12	6.10	5.04	LAUNCESTON	6.09
	5.28	6.24	5.21	AUCKLAND	6.23
	5.22	6.20	5.13	WELLINGTON	6.19
	5.09	6.08	5.00	HOBART	6.07
	5.02	5.55	4.57	BYRON BAY	5.54

Light candles on April 23rd after the time given, and only from a pre-existing flame. End times for the Second Days of Pesach (spanning the night of the 28th, the 29th and end the 30th of April) will be printed in the next issue of the Lamplighter.

