

LAMPLIGHTER

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

Passover is not only the first of the three major Jewish festivals, but the foundation and root of all of them. The Exodus from Egypt prepared the Jewish people for receiving the Torah on Shavuot. Sukkot, too, is connected to Passover, in that it commemorates the booths (sukkot) that the Children of Israel inhabited in the wilderness.

The main significance of Passover is that it is "the season of our freedom," the time when the Jewish people went out of slavery and became an independent nation. The Torah describes what happened as follows: "G-d has ventured to go and take or Himself a nation from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs and by wonders... according to all that G-d did for you in Egypt before your eyes." The key words are "a nation from the midst of another nation," which express the true uniqueness of the event.

What does it mean that the Jews were "a nation in the midst of another nation"? On the one hand it implies that the Children of Israel were already a "people," in the sense that they spoke their own language, lived in their own land (Goshen), and were careful to wear distinctive Jewish dress. At the same time, they were subservient and dependent upon the Egyptians.

Our Sages likened this situation to a fetus in its mother's womb. The fetus is a separate entity from the mother, with its own head, hands, legs and other limbs. Yet it is not a truly independent being, as it is forced to go wherever the mother goes, derives its sustenance from whatever she eats, etc. In truth, the fetus is completely dependent on the mother.

This accurately describes the Jews' circumstances in Egypt: While recognizable as a separate people, they were completely dependent on the Egyptians - so much so that it appeared as if they, too, were tainted by the Egyptians' idolatry.

The "umbilical cord" was severed when the Jews were commanded to slaughter and eat the Pascal lamb, an animal that the Egyptians worshiped. The courage and self-sacrifice it took to do this was the first step in the Jewish people's liberation from Egypt and its mentality.

This contains an eternal lesson: A person may think that he is free and independent because he has his own thoughts and desires. Upon reflection, however, he may discover that he is connected by an invisible "umbilical cord" to his surroundings and that in reality, he is a slave to whatever non-Jewish mores and conventions happen to be in vogue. Worse still is that he thinks that this is the true meaning of "freedom."

The holiday of Passover endows us with the strength to attain true freedom. The first step is to "slaughter" any "idols" that might be worshiped even subconsciously, and rid oneself of dependency on "what the world thinks." For the Jewish people are servants of G-d and no one else!

The Third Seder Last Days of Passover

By Yanki Tauber

Time is a tyrant. It plants a "One Way Only" sign on the road of life, another dictating "No Stopping, No Standing", and mercilessly enforces both rules without equivocation. It wrenches us away from our past and holds off our future behind a wall of ignorance, making compost of our most treasured moments and a mockery of our predictions.

We might overthrow political dictators, cure diseases, overcome poverty; but if we want to be free, we must conquer time. For of what use would it all be, if we remain imprisoned within a sliver of present, sliced so thin that anything we have and everything we are already was or hasn't yet been?

That is why Passover, the festival of freedom, is predicated upon the power of remembering. Memory is our answer to the tyranny of time. Reclining at the seder, eating the matzah and the maror and drinking the four cups of wine, we ingest history into our very flesh and blood, tasting -- and becoming -- the bitterness of our slavery, the triumph of our Exodus, the faith that carried us from Egypt, and the commitment we entered into at Sinai. Time's bounds fall away that night; the past becomes current, history becomes now.

But if only the roadblock to the past were lifted, ours would be only a partial victory. If time surrendered only one of its frontiers on Passover but maintained its blockade of the future, we'd be only a half-free people, masters of our past but prisoners of the unknowable to-come.

That is why Passover has two parts. The "first days" with its seders and its reliving of history, and the "final days" with its messianic themes -- days that herald the divine goodness and perfection which, the prophets promise us, is the end-goal of creation and the fulfillment of our present-day lives.

There is even a Chassidic custom, instituted by the Baal Shem Tov and further developed by the Rebbes of Chabad, to conduct a "mirror-seder" in the closing hours of the last day of Passover, complete with matzah and four cups of wine. These are hours, say the Chassidic masters, when time relinquishes its last hold upon our lives; when the future, too, can be remembered, and the Era of Moshiach tasted and digested as the Exodus is on the seder night.

Slice of LIFE

One More

The message of Seudat Moshiach

By Elana Mizrahi

My husband and I had been married for three and a half years, and we desperately wanted children. We were living in Jerusalem at the time. Passover was coming to an end, and although we had had a wonderful holiday, there was a sadness that clouded our joy. It had been another Seder without a baby, another week of Chol HaMoed without a child to take around to parks and festive events, another year of asking, "When will our personal redemption come?"

On the seventh day of Passover, we ate what I thought was going to be the last holiday meal in the mid-morning, and I settled down to read and enjoy the last hours of Passover. (In Israel, Passover is celebrated for seven days; outside of Israel, an eighth day is observed as well.) All of a sudden, I heard a knock on my door. Two friends had come to visit. One of them was single, and the other newly married. "Elana, come. We're taking you to my mother in-law's cousin. She's married to a great tzaddik (righteous man)." Here was an opportunity for me to receive a blessing for children.

We wound our way through the twisted alleyways of a very religious neighborhood in Jerusalem, until we arrived at the tzaddik's home. His wife, the rebbetzin, opened the door. She greeted us as though we were old friends, although she didn't even know who I was or why I was coming to meet her and her

husband. She rushed us to the dining room table, which was laid out with salads and delicacies. Before I knew it, I was sitting at the table, surrounded by this incredible family and being served tons of food.

Now, just as a side note, by this point in the week I had had my full of meat and chicken and potatoes. I definitely was not hungry, and had no idea that I was going to be eating yet another (mind you, delicious) Passover meal. I thought that I was done already. But no, the rebbetzin informed me that we were taking part in the Seudat Moshiach (Meal of Moshiach). I had no idea what she was talking about. She then turned to me and said, "I'm not trying to be nosy, but do you want a blessing from my husband for children?"

I nodded yes. I had already received various blessings; undergone many, many treatments; and tried dozens of things to become pregnant. How could one more blessing hurt?

And, a year later to the day, I gave birth to my son. A few months after his birth, my single friend got married, and five years later she gave birth to her second son, also on the last day of Passover. So, what is the Seudat Moshiach? What is its power?

G-d took the Jewish people out of Egypt, and seven days later they stood before the Red Sea. The Egyptians were almost upon them, and there was nowhere to go. They felt desperation. Should they go back to Egypt? Should they fight? What now? Moses stretched out his arm and raised his staff to the sea. Nothing happened. Then one man, Nachshon the son of Aminadav, jumped into the sea. Nothing happened. He kept walking until the

water was up to his chest, then up to his neck, then his nose. And then it happened. The sea split, and the nation of Israel passed through. Once they reached the other side, their enemy came chasing after them, and the wall of water crashed down, drowning the Egyptian soldiers in the stormy sea.

What would have happened if Nachshon hadn't jumped in? What would have happened if he hadn't kept walking into the waters? Would G-d have split the sea open? I don't know. Maybe, maybe not.

What would have happened if you decided you couldn't meet "one more" person? What if you had turned down that opportunity to go on "one more date," the one where you met your husband? Would you be married now? I don't know. Maybe, maybe not.

What would have happened if you decided that you had had enough, and you were done trying to conceive? What if you decided this when you had only one more chance to ovulate? Would you have a baby now? I don't know. Maybe, maybe not.

And what it's about "one more" if you were tired of dealing with rejection and sending out resumes? If you hadn't sent out that last one, would you be working now? Maybe, maybe not.

The last day of Passover, when we have the Seudat Moshiach, is about the "one more." The one more meal, one more blessing, one more date, one more try. It's about the one more good deed that will tip the scales and bring the redemption.

And for me, it will always be about the blessing I received on the last day of Passover, and the precious baby I was given on that day—my Avraham Nissim, for nissim means "miracles."

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WEEKLY VIDEO



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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Doubts and Arguments, Part Two

As for your doubts about the basics of Yiddishkeit [Judaism] -- there is a whole body of literature classical and contemporary (including in English) that deals with the subject. Much of it is based not on faith but on fact.

Suffice it to mention here, by way of example... that the Divine Revelation at Sinai, when G-d pronounced the decalogue and gave us the Torah, is one of the most scientifically established events in human history. It is based on the evidence and personal experience of 600,000 male adults, besides women and children, which has been transmitted in identical form from parents to children throughout the generations in an uninterrupted chain of tradition, further authenticated by virtually identical daily observances of the same mitzvot by Jews in all generations and in all countries of the world, and with such devotion and commitment that they were ready to make every sacrifice, even martyrdom, in their loyalty to the One G-d, one Torah, and one Jewish people.

Needless to say, the layman cannot be familiar with all the sources and has no way of verifying the facts. But what does a layman do in other areas, medical science for example? A patient may well have his doubts about the efficacy of a drug prescribed by his physician. Will he refuse to take it until he has been able to attend medical courses and learn all that his doctor has learned in his lifetime of studies and experience? Will he not rely on the authority of the medical specialist? If he has doubts about the expertise of one doctor, he can obtain a second opinion, and a third; but when all agree that he needs that medicine and the prescribed medical regimen, would he refuse to take that expert advice even if he still has "strong doubts" about it?

By the same token, if you will ask any "specialist" in Yiddishkeit -- a person who has dedicated his life to the study of Torah and actually lives by the Torah and mitzvot in his everyday life and conduct, what is the right thing for you to do, the answer will be the same, because Jews have only one Torah and one halacha [Jewish law].

Indeed, if in matters of physical health it is logical that na'aseh [we will do] must come before nishma [we will listen] -- how much more so in matters of the eternal soul (with which the well-being of the body is intimately connected).

I have taken time out to write to you at some length, even though it is also common sense, and it is not original with me, for you can find it, and more, in such sources as the Kuzari and other works of our great Jewish philosophers, because I have in mind the saying of our Sages, "There is no point in bewailing the past."

I trust the wrong actions you are contemplating and have already initiated as a result of your woefully erroneous conclusion, may yet be reversed, and that this letter may help you see your way clear to do what is good and proper, good and proper also for you and your family; which is also why this letter is being sent via Special Delivery...

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

With Rabbi Aron Moss

Heads or Fairy Tales?

Question: Every year we end the Seder by saying, "Next year in Jerusalem!" Every year we open the door for Elijah the prophet to come and announce the arrival of Moshiach—the long-awaited Messiah. And after more than 3,000 years, it still hasn't happened. Isn't there a point in time when we realize that Moshiach isn't coming? Haven't we learned our lesson by now? How many years of disappointment do we need to endure before we give up on this messianic dream and wake up to reality?

Answer: Imagine I take out a coin from my pocket and ask you, "Heads or tails?" You say heads. I flip it, and it lands on tails.

So I give you another chance and flip it again. Again it comes out tails. But you wanted heads, so I keep going. Ten more times, then another ten times, and another, and it never lands on heads, until I have flipped this same coin 99 times, and every single time it lands on tails.

You examine the coin. It is a legitimate coin, heads on one side, tails on the other, equally weighted and not tampered with. There is nothing dodgy here. And yet it landed on tails 99 times in a row.

Before flipping it again, I ask you, "Heads or tails?" And I offer you a million dollars if you get it right, or you lose a million if you get it wrong.

What are the chances that on the 100th flip, it will land on heads?

The answer is, exactly the same chances as the first flip and every flip: 50/50. The fact that it landed on tails every time until now has absolutely no statistical bearing on the next flip. It could be tails 999,999 times, and there would be no reason why the millionth time wouldn't be heads.

Just because something didn't happen yet, that doesn't make it less likely to happen soon. Moshiach is going to come. The fact that he didn't come last year or the year before in no way limits the likelihood of him coming this year.

In fact, the contrary is true. A coin may never fall on heads; it could theoretically fall on tails ad infinitum. But Moshiach has to come—G-d has promised it. So each year he doesn't show up makes the next year more likely to be the one when he will.

But it's more than just a game of chance. A coin won't land on heads because you want it to, but our faith—and our practical actions—actually helps make the messianic future a reality. When we open the doors for Elijah to come, when we pray to be in the rebuilt Jerusalem, we bring Moshiach a step closer.

It's not just in our heads. We will live to tell the tale.

A WORD

from the Director

While the two Seders on the first two evenings of Passover are the most widely celebrated festive meals in Judaism, there is another festive meal also on Passover that is also traditional albeit lesser known.

It was the custom of the Baal Shem Tov to partake of three meals on the last day of Passover. The third meal, which took place late in the afternoon, was known as the "Festive Meal of Moshiach," or Moshiach's Seuda, for - he explained - on this day the radiance of Moshiach is openly revealed.

Moshiach's Seuda was instituted on the eighth day of Passover, as the number eight is connected to the Redemption (being one more than seven -- symbolic of the natural order) and the Haftorah read on the eighth day of Passover contains many of the Messianic prophecies.

One might ask, what is the point of eating an actual, physical meal that relates to the subject of Moshiach?

This festive meal causes the image and the feeling of the future Redemption to penetrate not only all the faculties of a person's soul, including his capacity for action, but his physical body as well - by means of the physical food that becomes part of his very flesh and blood. Partaking of this festive meal is intended to draw down the radiance of Moshiach into every aspect of one's daily life throughout the year.

This simply means - as an anticipatory echo of how the world will appear after the Redemption - that holiness should permeate all of a person's activities, including his physical activities, to the point that he is prepared to sacrifice the innermost core of his soul. This is the yechida within his soul, the element of Moshiach in his soul.

The Rebbe once explained, "The four cups of wine on the Seder night are the cups of Moses our teacher; the four cups of wine at Seudas Moshiach on the last day of Passover are the cups of our righteous Moshiach."

J. I. Gutterman

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

A Miracle in Baghdad

I will cut off a man's head with a sword, and then put him back together and make him live!

By Nuta Yisrael Shurack

It was midday when an elderly traveler entered the Jewish quarter of Baghdad. The marketplace, where merchants from many lands sold their fabrics, spices and other wares, seemed strangely empty for such a day. He sighted the grandest building in the section, and determined that must be the great synagogue. He continued his trek towards it until he entered its courtyard and sat down to rest, opening his small sack to take out a few dried figs to refresh his strength. Yet no sooner had he started his lunch than he became aware of a commotion from within the sanctuary. He peeked inside, and beheld a moving spectacle—hundreds of Jews fervently chanting Psalms amidst tears and sobs.

"What has happened?" he asked of the first Jew whose attention he could grasp.

Hurriedly, and in a voice of desperation, the man told him the story as best he could. The Sultan had decreed that the Jewish people of Baghdad must produce a leader who could perform miracles as Moses had done. Since Moses was the leader of the Jewish people in Egypt, and he was able to do miracles, the Sultan expected the same from the leader of the Jews of Baghdad. If they would not produce such a miracle-maker, the Jews would be expelled from Baghdad. Therefore, all of the Jews were fasting and praying to G-d for salvation.

In his calm and patient disposition, the wise traveler approached yet more Jews, until he had finally pieced together the entire story:

The Sultan's chief advisor, Mustafa, was a vicious Jew-hater whose mission it was to destroy the Jews, or at least to have them banished from Baghdad. He had convinced the Sultan that the Jews were not only infidels for denying the prophet Mohammed, but that they were thieves and liars as well, deserving immediate expulsion. At first the Sultan was hesitant to believe Mustafa; however, the Sultan was told about what had happened when the Jews left Egypt and what Moses did to Pharaoh. He began to worry that perhaps one of the Jewish leaders of Baghdad would attack him with plagues, and decided he did not want to take any chances. Therefore, he issued a decree that the Jews had to produce a leader like Moses, or leave Baghdad immediately.

The wise, elderly traveler sat in contemplation for several moments, and then approached one of the rabbis at the front of the synagogue and whispered in his ear. Soon all the leaders of the community were talking quietly, and then suddenly there was a loud clap on the lectern, and one of them spoke. "This man who is visiting our town says that he has a plan. He will travel to the Sultan immediately to try and save us. If he is successful, we will rejoice. However, if he fails, he will tell the Sultan that he acted alone. Meanwhile, we will continue to pray for his success!"

The man headed for the palace, pounded on the entrance gate, and said, "I am a Jew who can do miracles, and I demand to see the Sultan immediately." Before long, he found himself face to face with the ruler of Baghdad. "So," said the Sultan, "You claim you can do miracles like Moses. What can you do?"

Dozens of people, from the baker and the court jester to the royal guards and advisors, stared at the old man with the white beard and piercing eyes. "If you would be so kind," said he, "I will perform a miracle akin to those which Moses himself did. Before your very eyes, I will cut off a man's head with a sword, and then put him back together and make him live!"

The Sultan smiled nervously and glanced around, not knowing what to think or make of the situation. Perhaps the fellow was completely crazy. Or perhaps he was telling the truth. After all, he seemed extremely confident, and spoke with such conviction. What if he was telling the truth? If he doubted him, then who knows what kind of wrath would be unleashed on the Sultan and his kingdom.

He continued, "There is but one condition. The man whose head I cut off must be truly wise. In fact, he must be the wisest man in the realm. If not, his head will not properly re-attach."

Intrigued, the Sultan decided he must see for himself if the Jew was telling the truth. He looked around the room until his eyes fell on Mustafa, his chief advisor and the wisest man in the kingdom. Before the Sultan said a word, Mustafa cried out, "No, he is lying! The Jew is an impostor! He can't really cut someone's head off and re-attach it." "That might be true," said the Sultan, "but what if he is telling the truth and we don't accommodate him? Surely you don't want to put the whole kingdom at risk! After all, were you not the one who had advised me to expel the Jews, lest we be put in danger?"

"Bring the sword immediately," cried the Sultan. "Mustafa has volunteered!" With that, Mustafa began to tremble and yelled out, "No, I admit it. I was both wrong and very foolish. The Jewish people do not have extraordinary powers!" Mustafa ran out of the palace, never to be seen again. The Sultan annulled the decree, thanked the Jew for coming, and said that the Jews were welcome to live in Baghdad as long as they desired.

The man returned to the synagogue to share the good news. Immediately, there was unbelievable rejoicing, and a banquet was held in honor of the miracle that G-d had done for His people. Then quietly and quickly, the old man slipped out and left the town before anyone could even get his name. Some people say that he was Elijah the Prophet. Some say he was a great mystic. Yet others believe that he was just a Jew who simply cared about his fellow Jews as much as he did about himself.

This story helps elucidate a very interesting aspect of the Passover observance. Every holiday is marked by mitzvahs. Yet, many of these mitzvahs are not equally fulfilled by all. For example, most of us hear the shofar from someone else who blows it, and on Chanukah, many have the custom that the head of the household kindles the menorah as a representative of the entire family. Yet, on Passover, everyone must eat his or her own matzah. On Passover, we are all equally significant.

The Exodus was the time when our people came together as one. Leaving Egypt united as one people set the stage for the mitzvah that Hillel considered to be the core of the entire Torah: love for a fellow Jew. The hero of this story actualized that which we all know to be true, that each of us is complete only when we do all that we can to ensure that every single Jew is being taken care of as well.

This is why the Passover haggadah begins with an invitation, "All who are hungry, let them come and eat." Our table is complete only when it is open to others!

LAST DAY OF PASSOVER HAFTARAH IN A NUTSHELL

This haftarah is a prophecy by Isaiah regarding the messianic time to come. He foretells of "a staff from the shoot of Jesse," father of King David, upon whom the Divine spirit will rest and who will be able to judge honestly by way of smell.

The prophet tells us that "the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie with the kid goat; the calf and the young lion will graze together, and a young lad shall lead them."

He continues to describe how G-d will gather the exiled Jews from all over the world, to bring them back home to the Holy Land. In the newly constituted Jewish kingdom, the ancient rivalry between Judah and Ephraim will end, and they will join forces to subdue their historic enemies.

At that time, Israel will sing G-d's praises, thanking Him for all that he did and does for them, even that which had once appeared to be punishment but has now been revealed to be goodness in disguise.

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Pesach Day 7		Shabbos Pesach Day 8
	5th	6th	7th
	Begins	Lighting	Ends
Melbourne	5:50	5:49	6:44
Adelaide	5:47	5:46	6:40
Brisbane	5:24	5:23	6:14
Darwin	6:29	6:29	7:18
Gold Coast	5:29	5:21	6:13
Perth	5:50	5:49	6:42
Sydney	5:29	5:26	6:20
Canberra	5:35	5:34	6:48
Launceston	5:39	5:37	6:35
Auckland	5:52	5:50	6:45
Wellington	5:49	5:47	6:44
Hobart	5:37	5:36	6:34
Byron Bay	5:21	5:20	6:12

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ACHARON SHEL PESACH • 21 NISSAN • 6 APRIL

THURSDAY:	MINCHA	5:55 PM
	MAARIV	6:30 PM
FRIDAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9:28 AM
	SHACHARIS	10:00 AM
	MINCHA	5:55 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS	6:30 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9:28 AM
	SHACHARIS	10:00 AM
	MINCHA	5:20 PM
	FOLLOWED BY MOSHIACH SEUDAH	
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA	5:45 PM
	MAARIV	6:35 PM