

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

PESAH

APRIL 6-14, 2012

15-22 NISAN 5772

DEDICATIONS : Happy birthday Dad and Happy Birthday Chantelle

Sephardic Congregation Passover Schedule

Friday, April 6, 2012; Ereb Yom Tob

First Night Passover

Morning Services Shaharith: 7:00AM * followed by Seudath Siyyum & Breakfast for First Born: 8:00 AM

Rabbi Mann will be with us to assist in the Sale of Hamess

Stop Eating Hamess (leaven): 10:21 AM

Burn Hamess: 11:40 AM - **We need volunteers to prepare the salads and help set up for the Seder**

Candles: 7:08PM - Afternoon and Evening service (Minha/Arbith): 7:00 PM

Seder for those with confirmed Reservations: 8:00 PM Sharp

Saturday, April 7, 2012; Shabbat/ Yom Tob

First Day Passover

Morning Service (Shaharith): 9:00 AM

Class with Rav Aharon: 5:45 PM - Concurrent Children's program with Rabbi Colish

Minha: 6:30 PM

Seudah Shelishi and a Class with Rabbi David at 7:00 PM

Evening Service (Arbith): 8:00 PM

Light Candles after 8:09PM- First Night of Omer

Seder for those with confirmed Reservations: 8:10 PM Sharp

We need volunteers to help set up as soon as Shabbat is over

Sunday, April 8, 2012; Yom Tob

Second Day Passover (Seudat Esther HaMalkah)

Morning Service (Shaharith): 9:00 AM

Afternoon & Evening Service (Minha/Arbith): 7:00 PM

Holiday Ends: 8:10 PM

Monday- Thursday, April 9-12, 2012

Hol HaMoed/ Passover Days 3-6

Morning Service (Shaharith) 7:00am

Thursday, April 12, 2012; Eve of Yom Tob

Sixth day of Passover

Candle lighting & Erub Tabshilin 7:14PM

Afternoon & Evening Service (Minha/Arbith) 7:15PM

Friday, April 13, 2012; Yom Tob

Seventh Day of Passover

Morning Service (Shaharith): 9:00 AM

Candle Lighting: 7:15PM

Afternoon & Evening Services (Minha/Arbith) 7:15PM

Saturday, April 14, 2012 Shabbat/ Yom Tob

Eighth Day of Passover

Morning Service (Shaharith): 9:00AM

Childrens program at 5:30 with Rabbi Colish

Minha: 6:30 PM

Seudah Shelishi and a Class with Rav Aharon at 7:10 PM

Evening Service (Arbith): 8:10 PM

Holiday Ends: 8:18PM – Please wait til 11PM to give Rabbi Mann a chance to buy back the Chametz

please reply to
ShabbatShalomNewsletter@gmail.com

Advance Notice: We are organizing a community wide Yom Hashoah event at the Young Israel. Sephardic/Young Israel/Temple Israel/Bach

SPEAKER Rabbi Shmuel Burstein, a holocaust scholar - Author of "The War Against God and His People," by Targum Press. He is a Holocaust Studies educator and lecturer, and interviewed members of the families for this story. The British Government paid tribute to Leopold Socha in their permanent exhibition on the Holocaust, located in London's "Imperial War Museum." There, the manhole cover from Lvov, used by Socha, can be seen. A fuller account of this story can be found in "In the Sewers of Lvov," by Robert Marshall. Krystyna Chiger's memoir, "The Girl in the Green Sweater: A Life in Holocaust's Shadow," will be released September 30, 2008. 4th grade boys from HALB will be choir that evening.

Date:

Editors Notes

Pesach is here. I need to begin by thanking each and every one of you for the incredible response we had from the readers in support of our Maot Chittin and Passover fund. Some of your notes brought tears to my eyes. I particularly enjoyed your stories recounting your own experiences in your parent's or grandparent's homes. Your stories of strange guests and of those less fortunate are inspiring.

With the terrific help of my associates in the Synagogue Yosef Colish and Sam Shetrit and the tremendous work of my wife Chantelle who last Saturday night

took the Social Hall and storage closets apart with the assistance of Mikhayla, Moses and Mariyah and with the support of those who came on Sunday, we're almost ready for our communal Seder. It's definitely much more work than anticipated.

What is most difficult is that I feel I am becoming a bit of a scrooge. We had a final cut off day for reserving a seat as Sunday. At that point we made arrangements for the food, matzah, grape juice and wine, set up the tables, planned the seating and thought we were set. A few people changed their plans on Monday and then Tuesday and we were able to adjust.

But in the last 24 hours other people began to wake up and what does one do? This family has nowhere to go and needs to join us and that family needs a place or they won't have a Seder. Do we tell them, sorry, we have no room and we can't sponsor anyone else? Or do we scramble and get more of everything and try to figure how to squeeze them in?

Years back, I gave a class on the Korban Pesach. One of the unique features associated with the Korban Pesach was the institution of the Chabura. We are defining a Chabura as a company - usually an extended family together with friends and neighbors - united to offer and eat the Korban Pesach as a group. By the time the Korban Pesach was to be slaughtered, all were required to join such a Chabura. Every Chabura had to acquire a sacrificial animal, a male lamb or goat, one year old or less, for the express purpose of using it for a Korban Pesach. The representative of each group entered the Azara or courtyard with their Korbanot in three shifts. Once the courtyard was filled, the

gates were closed. "When the first group went out, the second group came in; and when the second group went out, the third group came in. As it was performed with the first group, so did they do with the second and the third..." (Pesachim 5:7 and OU website). No more than three shifts were admitted.

So what happened when the third group was done and a caravan shows up at the gates of the Bet HaMikdash? "Wait, we need to prepare our Pesach offering", they shout to the Kohanim. "We were held up on the road. Our donkey had a flat tire. And there was construction at the junction of the two valleys. And a tourist bus from Greece got stuck in front of us. But we're here now and we need to eat tonight." No matter the excuse, they are simply too late to sacrifice their goat. And they can't even join another group as they weren't on the list prior to those offerings being slaughtered. They are out of luck. They need to come back in a month and observe Pesach Sheni. ("The second Pesach is the back up Pesach for those who missed out on the first one).

And with that in mind, Mr. Scrooge told me to shout out, it's too late!

But this really leads me to another question. Since as we explained the Pascal Sacrifice must be eaten only by the pre-designated shareholders, how is it that we begin the Seder by declaring aloud, "anyone who is needy, let him come eat with us; anyone who requires, join in our Pesach offering." At that point it's a ridiculous invitation. You cant invite anyone! And understanding the law, no one would have ever made such an invitation at the Seder. It was clearly forbidden to do so! So what are we all saying and why?

Rabbi Dr. Fox on his blog, A Thought On Parsha, quotes Rabbeinu Chaim Paltiel (13th century – France) who explains that the Hagada has another intention. The declaration which we make refers to the eating of the matzo which is the remnant which we still have of the ancient Biblical Pesach ritual. The reason that we make the public invitation is because we are permitted, and are encouraged, to bring others in to that aspect of the Pesach observance. No one should eat alone. No one is allowed to eat alone. What we intend is to declare that this is the closest we can come to observing the Pesach spirit. In earlier times too, we would have made overtures to include the needy and other guests, although that would take place far before the actual meal. The way which we should read the declaration, according to Rabbeinu Chaim Paltiel, is, "in our times we have only the matzot and we invite all who are in need of affiliation to join us, to feel that you belong. In earlier times, we also turned to others, not only to the needy, to gather together and form a family-like group in order to purchase and share in a korban Pesach."

So as much as I want to play scrooge and tell these people, "Sorry, its too late", what can I do? As much as I want to tell my wife to tell them that we have no more room, I guess I have to listen to my wife and figure out how to make room. No one should eat alone. No one is allowed to eat alone. And if we accommodate them, you can do it too. So take a look down the block, think of the widow or the neighbors, think of those cousins who you don't really speak to and even if it means messing up the plans a bit, give them a call, invite them and tell everyone to squeeze a bit. Because that's

what Passover is all about. It's about being together. It's about unity. It's a little bit of suffering and lots of joy! AND don't forget to buy some more Matzah!

PS... Saw this story in a newsletter Torah Tavlin ... One of the richest men in Turkey was a religious Jew named Abu Hayim (father of Chaim). His one and only son Chaim was his pride and joy and he lavished his entire estate and everything he owned on this one child. Chaim, to his credit, was a good-hearted lad, who often used the money his father gave him to assist others. His father, Abu Hayim, was nothing like his son. He was a miser of the highest degree. Not one single penny of his vast wealth was given to charity and even the beggars and collectors who would go from house to house didn't bother; there was no reason to even attempt to get money out of the rich man.

One beggar, though, came up with a plan. On the night of Pesach, he made his way to the front door of Abu Hayim's mansion. He listened and waited. The family was sprawled out on magnificent cushions, their Seder table bedecked in the finest tableware, cutlery and silver goblets. Each member sat in his or her place - to say they looked like princes and princesses would not be a stretch of the imagination; an air of royalty was certainly in the air.

"Ha Lachma Anya - this is the poor man's bread," called out Abu Hayim, as he began to recite the Hagaddah. At that exact moment, the beggar began knocking on the door – after all, he was poor man and they were talking about his bread! "Kol Dichfin Yataiy V'Yaichol - whoever is hungry come and eat," Abu Hayim said. The knocking became louder,

more incessant, and this time good-natured Chaim stood up and began walking to the door to let the beggar in. "Sit down! Where do you think you're going?" asked Abu Hayim, as he watched his son stop in his tracks.

"Why, father, I was going to let the poor man in. You just said whoever is hungry should come inside and eat with us." Abu Hayim calmed down a bit and responded, "This is the result of youthful impetuosity. Had you waited a few more minutes, you would have heard me say, 'Avadim Hayinu L'Pharaoh B'Mitzrayim' - we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. And it is from Pharaoh himself, that I learned how to deceive with my words. You see, Chaim, it was Pharaoh who said, 'I will send the Jews out' early on but he never did; so, too, I invited the poor to eat with me ... but I never will!"

The Rambam writes: "On Yom Tov, one who locks his doors and eats his fill without giving to the poor and hungry, is not fulfilling *cuy ouh ,jna* (joy of the holiday) but rather *uxhrf ,jna* (joy of his stomach)!" Don't be like Abu Hayim - and definitely don't act like Pharaoh!

PSS ... When I was thinking about the Seder, I thought, "What's the Most Important Thing about it?" Well Gil Locks writes, "Although the holiday of Passover is, by far, the most memorable and beloved holiday of the entire Jewish calendar, it also brings the greatest number of details, requirements and restrictions. Observing each of these elements is crucial during this week of preparation and especially for the Seder itself. To list them all would (and does) fill an entire book.

“There are the Torah commandments and there are the rabbinical commandments. There are also the customs that, surprisingly, vary tremendously between the Sephardim and Ashkenazim. There are the unique customs that have developed around the diaspora. For example, Indian Jews eat different foods on Passover than Temanni Jews, and some Jews will dip their matzah in their soup, while others would be aghast at such a move! Some will eat beans, and some would never do such a thing. There are strict requirements as to the minimum amounts of matzah, bitter herb and wine that must be consumed, and only within a specific period of time. And perhaps most important of all are the amazingly strict requirements not to have any leavening or related products in our possession for the entire week. Confusing this even more is that some authorities say certain foods are leavened while others swear that they are not.

“On and on, the list of requirements that ensure a successful Seder can certainly seem overwhelming. It is no wonder that the favorite question a sharp student will ask his rebbe right before the Seder is, “What is the most important thing that I must watch out for?”

“Last Pesach, right before leaving the Kotel to rush home for the Seder, a rabbi friend of mine asked me that very question. To his great surprise, I immediately answered, “Make sure that the children have a good time.” He looked at me as if I might be joking; his face was all twisted up. He wanted to know some great Kabbalah about the four cups of wine, or maybe how to lean to the side when drinking them. Or maybe I could give him some great Chassidic teaching on how to do teshuva (repentance) while

trying to gulp down that impossibly hot horseradish. AAGHHHH! But, no, I simply said, “Make sure that the children have a good time.”

“The next afternoon, he came up to me, smiling. He’s a smart guy and he took my words to heart. He said, “It was the best Seder ever. The kids were great. Everyone was laughing. We all enjoyed ourselves tremendously. But tell me, how can you really say that keeping the kids happy was the most important thing to watch out for? After all, this is a very serious holiday.”

“I explained, “There is only one reason we have the Seder at all: to remember the Exodus from Egypt. And there is only one reason why we must remember the Exodus from Egypt: so we will remain Jews. If we forget our past, there will be no reason to go on as a people. There is only one way for us to remain Jews, and that is to raise Jewish families. Without the children coming back next year, there won’t be any Jewish families. It’s for the kids’ sake that we go through all this each year and, God willing, we will get to do it for them again next year, too. And if they have a good enough time, then surely someday we will even get to do it for their kids.”

Have a happy Pesach. It’s essential”

Chag Kasher VeSameyach
Tizku LeShanim Rabot,

David Bibi

EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

“This is the bread of affliction.”
(Haggadah of Pesah)

On the Seder night we open up the Haggadah and we begin the great misvah of telling over the story of Passover. Why does the first paragraph have to be in Aramaic? I saw a beautiful answer brought down by Torah Ladaa’at. The Midrash (Midrash Shir Hashirim) states that Moshe Rabenu’s name is almost completely omitted from the Haggadah. What is the reason for this? After all, Moshe was a main player in the story of the Exodus from Egypt. The reason is that the Haggadah wants to emphasize the concept that only Hashem Himself took the Jews out of Egypt and did not use a helper to do it. Therefore, Moshe’s name is omitted to teach us that only Hashem took us out. In addition to this, the Torah says, “I passed through Egypt, I, Hashem,. And not an angel.” We learn now that angels are excluded from the miracles of Egypt. So even though we always invite the angels every Friday night to our home to join us for our Shabbat meal, we do not want to invite them to the Seder, in order to show that they weren’t partners with Hashem in the Exodus. The paragraph of Ha Lachma is an invitation to the poor to join us for the Seder. The Sages wrote that invitation in Aramaic because the Talmud says (Shabbat 12b) that angels don’t understand Aramaic and we don’t want to invite the angels in!

The Ketav Sofer, in a similar vein, explains the question of the wicked son, “What is this work (service) that you do?” He means, why do you do all this work yourselves; you have servants that can do all of this work. So we answer him, “This is the offering of the Pesah that Hashem passed over the Jewish homes in Egypt.” Hashem also could have used helpers; nevertheless, he saved us

Himself. We also don't use servants and we do it ourselves.

How wonderful are the Jewish people on this holiday who dedicate all of their strength in the service of Hashem. Happy Holiday. Rabbi Reuven Semah

We say in the Haggadah "Arami Obed Abi" - that Laban the Aramite wanted to destroy my father [Ya'akob] and Ya'akob ultimately went down to Egypt. How did Laban try to kill Ya'akob, and what is the connection with Ya'akob going down to Egypt?

We can understand this by remembering that Laban was a very effective sorcerer, steeped in all forms of tum'ah (impurity). The Rabbis tell us that not only did Laban want to hurt us physically, but even spiritually, using magic and impurity, did he attempt to destroy us. He was able to affect us through his daughters Rachel and Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah, because some of his impurity was passed on to us through his children. Hashem, with His infinite wisdom, saw that the only way we would be cleansed from Laban's influence was to go to Egypt and work for all those years, thereby eradicating any trace of impurity from Laban. The Torah calls Egypt "kur habarzel," - the Iron Furnace, and the Rabbis say that the word "barzel" is an acronym for "Bilhah Rahel Zilpah Leah," thereby hinting that the furnace of Egypt was to purify us from any effect passed down to our matriarchs from Laban.

This answers another very fundamental question. We celebrate Pesah as the time of our freedom from Egypt, and thank Hashem for it profusely. However, didn't He bring us to Egypt in the first place? If so, why such gratitude for taking us out? According to the above,

Hashem brought us to Egypt so that we would be purified and cleansed from Laban's influence, thereby allowing us to become His nation, untainted by any negative influence. We therefore celebrate Pesah with gratitude to Hashem both for bringing us down to Egypt and for taking us out. We should likewise have full appreciation for everything Hashem does for us, even if we do not see the good in it. Happy Holiday and Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

TELL ME ABOUT IT

"And everyone who discusses the Exodus from Egypt at length is praiseworthy." (Haggadah)

Instead of saying that the person is praiseworthy, it should have said he performed the misvah in a splendid manner.

When one witnesses an unusual event it is common for the observer to recount it to his friends. As time passes on, there is a decline in his enthusiasm, until he finally no longer repeats it the way he saw. However, when a person or his family experiences a miracle, he talks about it his entire life. In addition, he conveys it to his children and his descendants continue to relate the episode which occurred to their ancestor.

The Haggadah is teaching that if in contemporary times one still discusses the Exodus at length, he is praiseworthy - of prime quality and pedigree. It is an indication that he is a descendant from those who were in Egypt and not a member of a family who converted to Judaism at a later date. (Ki Yishalcha Bincha)

ANY DAY NOW

Breaking the middle matzah

What is the significance of hiding the larger piece of the broken matzah for later?

The matzah represents redemption, since it commemorates the Jew's exodus from Egypt, when they ate matzah. Though we were redeemed from Egypt, we are still in exile anticipating the ultimate redemption through Mashiah. Putting the larger piece away for later indicates our belief that Mashiah will come and that when he redeems us we will witness even greater miracles than at the time of the redemption from Egypt. Hiding it alludes that exactly when this will happen is concealed from us, but nevertheless we are able to endure the exile because we live with the faith that his hidden moment will be revealed speedily in our times. (Ki Yishalcha Bincha)

IN QUESTION

"Why is this night different?" (Haggadah)

Where is there an allusion in the Torah to specifically the four questions of the Ma Nishtanah?

The words Tevillah, Umatzah, Umaror, Vehasebadipping and matzah and bitter herbs and reclining- have the numerical value of 737, which is exactly the numerical value of Vehaya ki yishalecha bincha machar- When your son will ask you tomorrow. (Ki Yishalcha Bincha)

BE MY GUEST

"All who are hungry, let them come and eat." (Haggadah)

An invitation to guests is proper on all festivals, but it is particularly appropriate on Pesah.

Various explanations are given. Among them are:

If this were literally an invitation to guests, it should have been made during the day or in the synagogue, not in the privacy of our own homes, after the Seder is already underway. Rather, this passage is a further illustration of why matzah is the ‘bread of poverty.’ In Temple times, guests could not be invited while the Seder was in progress, because the Pesah offering could be shared only with prearranged participants. That we are now, at the Seder, still permitted to invite guests to join our meal is because, in our spiritual poverty, we have no Pesah offering. Thus our call to guests is to emphasize that we are in exile.

Pesah recalls not only G-d's kindness to the Jewish people, but also kindness that Jews extend to their fellow Jews. Our Sages tell us that the Jews merited redemption from Egypt because no Jew ever informed on another to the Egyptian authorities, no matter how cruel the persecution and how lowly the state of Israel. To the contrary, they made a covenant among themselves to preserve whatever they had learned from the Patriarchs and to render kindness to each other.

As we relive that special moment, we invite all people to join our celebration and share with them our bountiful blessing. Thus we begin our Seder with an act of benevolence. (The Sephardic Heritage Haggadah)

SPECIAL THANKS

“Thus, it is our duty to thank, to laud.” (Haggadah)

Why is it necessary to give an introduction explaining

why it is proper to say Hallel this night?

The Gemara says that Hallel isn't said over a miracle which took place outside of Eress Yisrael. If so, the Gemara asks, why do we say Hallel on Pesach? The Gemara answers that this rule took effect only after the Jews entered Eress Yisrael, but before that it was appropriate to say Hallel over miracles that happened in any land. The Maharsha explains that the difference between a miracle which occurs in Eress Yisrael proper and one which occurs in any other land is that the former is performed through Hashem Himself while the latter is through an angel.

Since previously the Haggadah states clearly that the miraculous redemption from Egypt was entirely through Hashem and no one else, consequently, we say “Lefichach”- thus- it is proper to offer praise to the One Who personally performed miracles on our behalf, even though the miracles were outside of Eress Yisrael. (Ki Yishalcha Bincha)

RABBI ELI MANSOUR Visit DailyHalacha.com,

Earning Redemption, Then and Now

The period of persecution that Beneh Yisrael endured in Egypt was foretold already in the time of Abraham Abinu. We read in the Book of Bereshit (15:13) that God told the patriarch, “You shall know that your offspring will be foreigners in a land that is not theirs, and they shall enslave and torment them for four hundred years.” It is stated explicitly that this period of suffering was to last for 400 years. Yet, as we know, Beneh Yisrael did not spend 400 years in Egypt, as God brought

them from slavery after 210 years of bondage. This period is alluded to in Yaakob Abinu's instructions to his sons when he told them to go to Egypt and purchase grain: “Redu Shama” (“Go down there” – Bereshit 42:2). The numerical value of the word “Redu” is 210, alluding to the 210-year period of exile that began that year, when Yaakob and his family relocated in Egypt.

The question thus arises, why did Beneh Yisrael leave early? If God had decreed a 400-year period, why did He release the nation after just 210 years?

Several well-known answers have been suggested for this question. One is based upon the Gemara's comment in Masechet Megila that God accompanies the Jewish people in exile. God endured the exile together with Beneh Yisrael, as it were, and His “participation” counted for almost half the designated period – 190 of the 400 years – allowing the nation to be set free after 210 years. Another famous answer is that as a result of Beneh Yisrael's supernatural propagation in Egypt – as Hazal teach, the women conceived six children at a time – they collectively endured the equivalent of what they would have suffered in 400 years had they reproduced at a natural rate. Additionally, it has been suggested that the severity of the 210 years of persecution equaled 400 years' worth of “moderate” enslavement.

There is, however, another reason for why Beneh Yisrael were taken from Egypt after 210 years. The root cause of the Egyptian exile was strife and contention. Yaakob's family ended up in Egypt because of the quarrel between Yosef and his brothers, which resulted in the brothers' selling Yosef as a slave. Yosef was then brought to Egypt,

thus triggering the process that led to the Egyptian exile. This aspect of the Pesah story is, unfortunately, often neglected, but it is a crucial part of the story that we study and commemorate on Pesah night. In fact, the Ben Ish Hai (Rav Yosef Haim of Baghdad, 1833-1909) writes that the dipping of the Karpas in saltwater at the Seder commemorates the brothers' dipping of Yosef's special cloak in blood at the time they sold him as a slave. As we speak about the exile and the redemption, we must begin with the root cause of it all, the internecine fighting within our family. And thus even before we begin Maggid, before we start telling the story of slavery, we recall the unfortunate circumstances that led to the period of persecution.

As this was the cause of the exile, its reversal was the cause of the redemption. Once Beneh Yisrael rectified this flaw and came together in unity, the term of enslavement could come to an end. God took Beneh Yisrael from Egypt "early," before the prescribed period of 400 years, because He saw the unity, fraternal love and harmony that existed among them.

Proof of this unity can be drawn from the Torah's brief account of Beneh Yisrael "borrowing" clothing and utensils from their Egyptian neighbors before the Exodus. Beneh Yisrael said they were leaving for a three-day excursion, but in truth, they had no intention of returning with the Egyptians' belongings. Remarkably, not one member of Beneh Yisrael divulged this secret. Among a nation numbering some three million people, there was not one traitor, nobody who foiled the plan by disclosing this information. The people were fully devoted and loyal to one another. There was

no backstabbing; nobody was out to try to ruin his fellowman. When God saw the extent of the people's unity and sense of togetherness, He brought the redemption – 190 years before this was supposed to happen.

As mentioned, this is a crucial aspect of the Exodus story, and it must be part of what we teach our children at the Seder. The root cause of the Egyptian exile was brotherly strife, and it ended in the merit of brotherly love. Our current exile, too, was caused by baseless hatred, and it will end, please God, in the merit of our unity and harmony.

Unfortunately, we are very far from the unity we need to bring our redemption. And no one individual is going to resolve all the many conflicts and mend all the fractures that plague the Jewish nation. But the effort begins in the home, and in our immediate surroundings. Husbands and wives, parents and children, siblings, neighbors, partners, associates, employers and employees – this where we can and must make a difference. If we improve the way we treat and deal with those close to us, at home, in the office and in the community, we can succeed in spreading loving kindness and friendship throughout the Jewish people, whereupon we will once again be worthy of redemption, speedily and in our days, Amen.

Rabbi Wein The Fifth Son

Many of us are aware that there is a detailed discussion amongst the commentators to the Seder night Hagadah regarding the possibility of a fifth cup of wine as part of the Seder service. Some are of the opinion that the cup of wine that is designated as the Cup of Eliyahu serves as this fifth cup.

Be that as it may, I wish to discuss another foursome that in our time may have developed into a fivesome.

We are taught in the Hagadah that there are four categories of children in the Jewish world. They are: the wise son, the wicked son, the naïve and simple son and the son who knows nothing and cannot even begin to ask anything intelligently.

We are all acquainted with the wise son. He has had a thorough Jewish education and is intelligently loyal to the Torah and its values system and traditional way of life. We unfortunately are able to clearly identify the evil child amongst us – the apostate, the self-hater, the one who is addicted to anti-Jewish ideologies and practices.

The simple son is also known to us. He has no real animus towards God and Torah though he certainly may be repelled by the behavior and statements of those of us who arrogantly claim to represent Him and His Torah. He only asks: "What is this all about?" It is a legitimate if somewhat depressing question. After all, after 3500 years of Jewish life and history, that son should, by now, have an inkling of what it is all about. Nevertheless there is still hope for this son – life and its events and the non-Jewish world will eventually help explain the matter to him.

And finally the son who knows nothing, not even what to ask can also be salvaged by education, warmth, direction, role models and proper mentoring. Even the evil son can be corrected and redeemed but apparently not without pain and discomfort. After all it was Stalin that basically cured the Jewish communists of their malignant Marxist disease and made them Jews once again.

But there is a fifth child that sits at the Jewish Seder table in our time. He has no qualms about marrying a non-Jew, he is probably liberally pro-Palestinian, he has never visited Israel, though he knows it to be a racist and apartheid place, he considers himself to be part of the intellectual elite, he has no real knowledge of Torah or Judaism and yet considers himself an expert on these matters.

He knows the best policy for Jews and Israel to follow and he is so convinced of his rectitude and astuteness that he is willing, nay even demanding, to use all types of force to coerce the Jewish people and its small national state to adopt his will. He is out to fix the world and is willing to sacrifice Israel, Judaism and Jews in the process. He sits on boards of Jewish organizations, he chooses rabbis and proclaims himself to be a faithful Jew. Yet he will contribute generously to general non-Jewish charities but gives only a pittance towards Jewish educational projects. He is not an evil son nor is he a wise one.

He certainly will deny that he is somehow simple or naïve and he certainly claims that he knows what questions to pose. Yet he may be the most tragic of all of the sons, for though he is able to pose the questions he is unwilling to hear the answers. In the words of the prophet Isaiah "the heart of the people is overladen with fat and their ears are stopped up."

It is this hedonistic, intelligent, but very deaf son that troubles us so deeply. For we have developed no plan or method to deal with him – either to exclude him from the Jewish society completely or to somehow redeem him and bring him closer to Jewish reality and positive participation in Jewish life. It is certainly not clear

to us how to accomplish this second option.

So perhaps we will have to rely on the inspiration represented by the fifth cup of wine – on the miraculous powers of the prophet Elyahu and on his unfailing faith in the restoration of Jews and the Jewish people generally. Pesach teaches us never to say never. It is the holiday of rebirth and constant renewal. So will it be for all of our different children all of whom we gather and embrace around our Pesach Seder table.

**Sir Jonathan Sacks
Chief Rabbi of the United
Hebrew Congregations
of the Commonwealth**

The story of Pesach, of the Exodus from Egypt, is one of the oldest and greatest in the world. It tells of how one people, long ago, experienced oppression and were led to liberty through a long and arduous journey across the desert. It is the most dramatic story of slavery to freedom ever told, one that has become the West's most influential source-book of liberty. "Since the Exodus," said Heinrich Heine, the 19th century German poet, "Freedom has always spoken with a Hebrew accent".

We read in the maggid section of the Haggadah of Rabbi Gamliel who said that one who did not discuss the Pesach lamb, the matzah and the bitter herbs had not fulfilled their obligation of the Seder. Why these three things are clear: The Pesach lamb, a food of luxury, symbolises freedom. The bitter herbs represent slavery due to their sharp taste. The matzah combines both. It was the bread the Israelites ate in Egypt as slaves. It was also the bread they left when leaving Egypt as free people.

It is not just the symbolism, but also the order these items are spoken about in the Haggadah that is interesting. First we speak of the Pesach lamb, then the matzah and finally the bitter herbs. But this seems strange. Why do the symbols of freedom precede those of slavery? Surely slavery preceded freedom so it would be more logical to talk of the bitter herbs first? The answer, according to the Chassidic teachers, is that only to a free human people does slavery taste bitter. Had the Israelites forgotten freedom they would have grown used to slavery. The worst exile is to forget that you are in exile.

To truly be free, we must understand what it means to not be free. Yet 'freedom' itself has different dimensions, a point reflected in the two Hebrew words used to describe it, chofesh and cherut. Chofesh is 'freedom from', cherut is 'freedom to'. Chofesh is what a slave acquires when released from slavery. He or she is free from being subject to someone else's will. But this kind of liberty is not enough to create a free society. A world in which everyone is free to do what they like begins in anarchy and ends in tyranny. That is why chofesh is only the beginning of freedom, not its ultimate destination.

Cherut is collective freedom, a society in which my freedom respects yours. A free society is always a moral achievement. It rests on self-restraint and regard for others. The ultimate aim of Torah is to fashion a society on the foundations of justice and compassion, both of which depend on recognising the sovereignty of God and the integrity of creation. Thus we say, 'Next year may we all be bnei chorin,' invoking cherut not chofesh. It means, 'May we be

free in a way that honours the freedom of all'.

The Pesach story, more than any other, remains the inexhaustible source of inspiration to all those who long for freedom. It taught that right was sovereign over might; that freedom and justice must belong to all, not some; that, under God, all human beings are equal; and that over all earthly power, the King of Kings, who hears the cry of the oppressed and who intervenes in history to liberate slaves. It took many centuries for this vision to become the shared property of liberal democracies of the West and beyond; and there is no guarantee that it will remain so. Freedom is a moral achievement, and without a constant effort of education it atrophies and must be fought for again. Nowhere more than on Pesach, though, do we see how the story of one people can become the inspiration of many; how, loyal to its faith across the centuries, the Jewish people became the guardians of a vision through which, ultimately, 'all the peoples of the earth will be blessed'.

I wish you and all your family a Chag Kasher v'Sameach

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL

The most basic idea of Passover is that Hashem took Us, His Nation, out of 210 years of bondage in Egypt. As the pasuk states "Asher hotzetecha me'erezt mitzrayim". However the pasuk continues "lehiyot lachem Lelokim", which means, in order that you will serve Me. From this we see clearly that Hashem took us out of slavery from Egypt in order to serve Him.

The primary lesson and yesod (foundation) which manifests itself on Pesach and on which our Torah is built is Gratitude, Hakarat Hatov. Recognizing and acknowledging all of the tremendous gifts of kindness that Hashem is bestowing upon us and our families.

This underlying principle is realized right in the first of the Ten Commandments which was heard by our Nation directly from Hashem. "I am Hashem your G-d that took you forth from Egypt from the house of slaves."

The question is asked, why didn't Hashem introduce Himself as "the Creator of heaven and earth"? Because the Bnei Yisrael did not witness the Creation of the Universe. We did experience slavery and brutal treatment at the hands of the Egyptians for 210 years. The scars were still fresh on our backs and on our children.

It is for these reasons, and in order to teach us the great principle of feeling Gratitude to the Benefactor who has redeemed us, that Hashem connects the time of the birth of our Nation and our redemption from Egypt to the First Commandment.

Hakarat Hatov, Gratitude, is at the root of all true service of Hashem.

Just keep in mind that your body, your mind, your parents & children & wife, all of your possessions, the ability to make a living and your soul/life have all been given to you as a gift from Hashem. For the purpose of recognizing these special gifts, scrutinizing them as you would any diamond. Now you are ready to Thank Hashem every day for 120 years in many ways, the minimum being through observance of His Torah & Mitzvot.

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