



THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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The Special Pesach edition is sponsored for the Refuah Shelema of RIVKA BAT MATOUKA Betocho Shaar Cholei Yisrael.

TAL wishes you a Pesach Kasher V'Sameach! May this chag bring joy and light into your homes.

RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



THE NIGHT OF MIRACLES!

The Prince of Mannheim, once approached the 19th century Sage - Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Berlin Zts'l and asked him this question: "Every year at the Seder on Pesach, Jewish children ask 'Mah Nishtana...Why is this night different from all other nights?' But Pesach is not the only time Jews perform unusual commandments. Surely the custom of dwelling in a Sukkah is at least as bizarre as the Seder experience! So why don't your children ask Mah Nishtana on Sukkot as well?"

On the spot, the Rabbi responded to the prince: "Quite the contrary: the experience of sitting joyously with one's family at the Seder table, feasting like royalty, opening the doors wide on a Leil Shimurim – a divinely protected night of safety and security – that's a strange experience for Jews, and prompts a quizzical 'Mah Nishtana?'

But sitting in a sukkah, living in a flimsy hut with no physical security, out in the cold and the rain, buffeted by the winds – this experience has been typical of Jewish history. There's nothing unusual

about it at all; hence there's no need to ask 'Mah Nishtana?'

Unfortunately we are used to Galut – exile. To take just one period as an example: Jews were expelled from England in 1290, and during the next two centuries from almost every country in Europe, culminating in the Spanish Expulsion in 1492, and the Portuguese in 1497. They lived in a state of permanent insecurity. For us that is not unusual. What is unusual however is that we are celebrating like kings and queens on Pesach – that's not the normal way of the Jew!?

In fact Pesach is unique in several ways and the following three questions will help us to a new understanding of this important festival.

Out of all the festivals, the Torah relates only to Pesach as a Shabbat.

When explaining the Mitsvah of Omer, the Torah states that it should be done Mimacharat Hashabat – the day after Shabbat. Our sages explain this to mean the day after Pesach. I.e. Pesach equals Shabbat!

What is the connection?

Furthermore, looking at all the festivals, we note that Hallel – a special prayer of G-ds praise is sung on festivals at different intervals, yet it is never sung at night. Only one festival differs – Pesach. We sing Hallel on Seder night! Why? ►

Pesach 5781 | 6th Nissan

Chag Times

BEDIKAT CHAMETZ 25TH MARCH - 7:13PM
LAST TIME TO BURN CHAMETZ 26TH MARCH - 11:04 AM
SHABBAT & EREV PESACH 26TH MARCH - 6:09PM
LAST TIME FOR EATING CHAMETZ 27TH MARCH - 10AM

PESACH 1ST DAY - 27TH MARCH - 7:13PM
PESACH 2ND DAY - 28TH MARCH - 8:14PM
YOM TOV ENDS - 29TH MARCH - 8:16PM

PESACH 7TH DAY - 2ND APRIL - 7:21PM
SHABBAT ENDS - 3RD APRIL - 8:25PM
YOM TOV ENDS 4TH APRIL - 8:27PM

> UPCOMING EVENTS

- TAL UNTAMED SHOW - Monday Night's 8:30PM
- Parasha Pearls on Zoom Wednesday nights

For our upcoming events check our website www.torahactionlife.com



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Finally the Vilna Gaon notes that the word Laylah ends with a Heh. Normally words that end in a Heh in Hebrew are feminine. Yet when the children ask Ma Nishtana on Pesach – they say Halayla HaZeh (masculine) – not Halayla Hazot (feminine). Why?

In order to understand these questions we must first delve into a unique occurrence in history.

One of the largest armies ever gathered against Judea — 185,000 heads of companies, each leading a battalion with a total army of astronomical number. They laid siege to Jerusalem and were prepared to invade.

Sancheriv, the Assyrian leader of his troops, had no doubt that it was all but over for the Jews of that era. With an army so vast, he was confident of his invincibility. He sent blasphemous letters to Chizkiyahu Hamelech filled with mockery and reeking of arrogance. Jerusalem was devastated due to the siege and thousands of inhabitants were starving.

Sancheriv turned to his generals ridiculing them for having to bring such a large army, “Why did you bring me here, if all our soldiers were to spit in the direction of Jerusalem, it would cover the entire city.”

On Erev Pesach, the righteous Chizkiyahu (known for his resilient support of Torah and service of Hashem) went to the Bet Hamikdash and poured out his heart in Tefilah, pleading with Hashem to save Am Yisrael. He commanded the people to bring the Korban Pesach as usual. The bewildered people, joined faithfully together, and that year produced an unprecedented Korban Pesach. The Leviim sung to their best notes, the people acted with righteousness. When a Jewish traitor called Ravshakeh heard this noise, he came to Sancheriv and told him that he would be better not to attack. Sancheriv dismissed his comments and prepared for battle.

That night, the angel Gavriel descended into the camp of the Assyrians and the massive forces died an inexplicable death: their bodies remained intact but a fire consumed their insides. 185,000 generals died with only three men surviving: Sancheriv and his two sons, one of whom was the evil Nevuchadnetzar. Hashem allowed Sancheriv to survive so that he could suffer the indignity of returning to his capital city of Ninveh in disgrace. He was subsequently assassinated by his own sons.

Our Sages relate (Shemot Rabah 18 – Balayla Hahu) that night was the first night of Pesach. It is referred to as that night! When you want to show something special, you say, that person, that article. This night is a special night designated for greatness.

At the Seder night, we say Hallel, because Seder night takes on a new meaning – it is not a night (representing confusion)

rather even the night takes on the dimension of a day – it’s powerfully shining bright with sanctification.

Every week we are blessed with Shabbat. Shabbat is a day designated from Hashem. Whether we change the calendar or not, Shabbat will always be on the seventh day.

Yom Tov, however is designated by us.

The Sages were given the right to define when Rosh Chodesh (the beginning of the month) occurs. Hence they command when the festivals will be.

Shabbat represents a flow of blessing from above, whilst Yom Tov is a flow of blessing from below.

Pesach is a night where the blessing flows from above. It is a night designated by Hashem, a Leil Shimurim – guarded and loved by Him. He showers blessing down to us on this night.

Now we can understand why we refer to it as Halayla Hazeh in the masculine form. It is a night, but it has the connotations of day. Moreover, just like the male is a giver in relationship, so too is Hashem the giver of bounty on this night.

Pesach we celebrate how Hashem passed over the Jewish houses whilst killing only the Egyptian first born.

Now we have a deeper understanding of Pesach and especially Seder night. It is a night designated by Hashem, the night that Avraham waged war against the kings, the night that Yitschak gave the Beracha to Yakov, the night that Sancheriv’s entire army was miraculously wiped out.

It’s a night of miracles.

We honour this night with the best cutlery, and décor, sitting as kings and queens, yet in reverence of the most important guest – G-d Almighty.

As the Zohar states on this night G-d descends so to speak and listens to what His children are speaking about. We talk about His praise and miracles, we appreciate His essence – and then He too speaks to the heavenly angels and relates our praise.

The prophet Micha (7:15) states “As in the days of your going out of Egypt, I will show you wonders”

Every year we have an opportunity to be directly with the Creator. We have an opportunity to tap into those miracles and let Hashem shine his radiance upon us.

Who can hear this and not move to action? This year lets be prepared – read up on the miracles, relate His greatness.

■ Chag Sameach!

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RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS Z'L

PASSOVER TELLS US: TEACH YOUR CHILDREN WELL

As one nation after another in Africa and the Middle East engages in a fight for freedom, Passover, which begins this week, still has much to teach us about the nature of that fight.

The Jewish festival of freedom is the oldest continuously observed religious ritual in the world. Across the centuries, Passover has never lost its power to inspire the imagination of successive generations of Jews with its annually re-enacted drama of slavery and liberation.

It is vivid, replete with direct experiences like eating matza, the unleavened bread of affliction, and tasting maror, the bitter herbs of oppression. It is a ritual performed not in the synagogue but at home, in the midst of the family, reminding us that, in Alexis de Tocqueville's words, "As long as family feeling is kept alive, the opponent of oppression is never alone." Perhaps its single most striking innovation is that from beginning to end, it is designed to engage and enthrall the mind of a child.

The rabbis who developed the ritual were guided by the Bible itself and the highly counterintuitive narrative it tells in the 12th and 13th chapters of Exodus. Here is the scene: Moses has assembled the people to tell them they are about to go free. Exiled, enslaved, threatened by a Pharaoh who has commanded that every male Israelite child shall be killed, the people have witnessed a series of wonders performed on their behalf. Moses is now about to tell them that soon they will leave and begin their long walk to freedom.

I sometimes ask people what they would speak about if they were in Moses' shoes? Some say they would talk about freedom, others that they would speak about the destination that lay ahead: the "land flowing with milk and honey." Yet others, made of sterner stuff, propose talking about the arduous journey that lay ahead, the march across the wilderness with all its hazards.

Any of these would have been a great speech by a great leader. Moses did none of these things. That is what made him a unique leader. If you examine the text in Exodus carefully, you will see that three times he reverted to the same theme: children, education and the distant future. "And when your children ask you, What does this

ceremony mean to you?" (Exodus 12:26). "On that day tell your son, I do this because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt" (13:8). "In days to come, when your son asks you, What does this mean?" (13:14).

Moses spoke not about freedom but about education. He fixed his vision not on the immediate but on the distant future, and not on adults but children. In so doing he was making a fundamental point. It may be hard to escape from tyranny but it is harder still to build and sustain a free society.

In the long run there is only one way of doing so. To defend a country you need an army, but to defend a civilisation you need education. That is why Moses, according to Rousseau, the world's greatest architect of a free society, spoke about the duty of parents in every generation to educate their children about why freedom matters and how it was achieved.

Freedom is not won by merely overthrowing a tyrannical ruler or an oppressive regime. That is usually only the prelude to a new tyranny, a new oppression. The faces change, but not the script. True freedom requires the rule of law and justice, and a judicial system in which the rights of some are not secured by the denial of rights to others.

Freedom begins with what we teach our children. That is why Jews became a people whose passion is education, whose heroes are teachers and whose citadels are schools. Nowhere is this more evident than on Passover, when the entire ritual of handing on our story to the next generation is set in motion by the questions asked by a child. In every generation we need to cultivate afresh the habits of the heart that Tocqueville called "the apprenticeship of liberty."

The message of Passover remains as powerful as ever. Freedom is won not on the battlefield but in the classroom and the home. Teach your children the history of freedom if you want them never to lose it.

■ Chag kasher vesameach!

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HEROES IN THE SAND

And gave us the Torah, and brought us into the Land of Israel” (Dayeinu, Pesach Hagaddah)

There is a famous question, asked year after year at almost every Seder table. Why did the Holy One, Blessed is He, give us the Torah in the desert? Why did He not give it to us after He brought us to the Land of Israel? I mean, don't get me wrong – I like sand. And I like sun. But if you're going to receive the 10 commandments, wouldn't you rather be in Herzeliyah Pituach?

Rav Yosef Haim from Baghdad, otherwise known as the Ben Ish Chai, spins us a wonderful yarn, as only he could do. The hero of our story is a young man who came from a rich family. As soon as he came of age, his family tried to set up a shidduch for him with a girl from a wealthy home. But the young man saw that she was foolish and stupid. He refused to marry her and fled to a different town, to avoid being pressured by his relatives into an arranged marriage [some things never change].

When he arrived in the new town, the word spread that there was a single man who had arrived who was a big catch for any girl of marriageable age. He was offered all sorts of potential matches. Ignoring all requests, our hero hears about a girl from a poor home, who was said to be wise, talented and gifted with every virtue. He went to her father and asked permission to meet with his daughter, adding, “If she is suitable for me, I will marry her and make her very rich!”

The father agreed, the two met, and the daughter pleased the young man greatly with her appearance and grace, her wisdom and her intelligence.

He told her father, “Let me marry your daughter, and she will lack for nothing. You too can come with us, and we will support you with dignity in your old age!”

The father silenced him, saying, “Your relatives will never agree to let you marry the daughter of poor people, nor to let you bring me to your estate!”

The young man declared, “If that is so, I will agree to abandon all my wealth and property, and to live together with you in your simple hut!”

The father responded, “Let's see if you really are ready to do so. Take off your expensive clothes and wear simple garments like ours, and be satisfied with our modest meals.”

The young man hurried to do as he was bid, and stayed with the family for a week. The father conversed with him at length, and found him to be a wise young man of refined character. At the week's end, he took the young man to the shed outside his house, whereupon he opened the door. Sitting in the corner, full of cobwebs and looking as old as Methuselah, was a rusty old chest. ‘Since you chose to be with us and to be counted as one of our family, take this key and open the case that stands there.’

The young man approached the case, opened it, and to his utter surprise, found it to be overflowing with diamonds!

The father said to him, “In truth, I am hugely rich. All of these jewels now belong to you. Take them all, and marry my daughter! All my money is reserved for my only daughter. But I concealed my wealth, so that no greedy suitor would pursue her because of her fortune. But you, who valued her true qualities, and were prepared to live a life of poverty for her sake — you deserve to marry her and to gain all of her riches!”

The parable can be explained as follows: The nation of Israel was in Egypt, which was the hub of materialism, secularism, and idolatry. But Israel separated herself from Egyptian culture, refusing to cling to it.

Hashem wished to bestow his holy Torah upon his beloved Klal Yisrael. It is of course well known, that the Torah brings every good blessing of happiness and wealth. But Hashem first wished to test the children of Israel, to see if they desired the Torah for its own sake or for its accompanying blessings.

Therefore, He gave the Torah in the desolate wilderness, where the children of Israel were tent-dwellers without a homeland. When they showed their willingness to accept the Torah and to cling to it with all their heart and soul - then Hashem brought them to the Land of Israel and bestowed upon them every blessing! (Ben Ish Chayil, Section 1, 319)

During this holy festival of freedom, may we all feel gratitude to Hashem Yitbarach, which is the ultimate message of the Seder. When drinking the Four Cups, bear in mind a wonderful saying that I heard recently: Don't worry about whether your cup is half full or half empty – just be grateful that you have a cup, and that you have something in it!

■ Chag kasher vesameach!



CESAREAN'S AND PESACH

Some time ago, a woman I know gave birth for the first time to a baby boy through a Caesarian-Section. Following the Brit I was asked to calculate when the Pidyon HaBen would fall. My attempt to explain to the mother that her baby could not experience a Pidyon HaBen because she had not given birth 'naturally' was not exactly well received. The fact that her baby could not have a Pidyon HaBen was described as 'discriminatory'. And it got me thinking: why indeed does the Torah mandate a Pidyon HaBen ritual only for a baby boy born through a 'peter rehem', opening of the womb, and not through a Cesarean?

If we consider the process of a woman bringing a child into this world we will find something quite paradoxical. One who walks past a delivery room hearing all the screams and shouts and not knowing that this is a room in which women bring babies into the world, would think that the person inside is about to die. And in truth, a woman giving birth is close to death. Although today it is relatively rare for a woman to die during childbirth, historically it was not uncommon. But this is the way the human body has been incredibly designed. What looks and sounds like death is actually life. A woman who looks and sounds like she is experiencing the pangs of death is actually bringing life in to this world.

Indeed, this is a microcosm of the natural history of the world. Often the very same thing that looks like destruction and devastation ends up being the very same force that generates life. Pesach is a classic example. Egypt is described as being the 'Iron Crucible'. The first mention in the Torah of us as a nation is at the beginning of the book of Shemot introducing us to the Israelite persecution at the hands of the Egyptians. It was all gloom and darkness. It seemed there was no hope. But from that very same darkness sprouted redemption: leaving Egypt, becoming a nation of G-d and experiencing the Divine Revelation at Sinai. A few weeks ago we celebrated on Purim the fact that from the clutches of annihilation we were transferred overnight to have immense political clout in Persia. But perhaps the greatest example of this concept in Jewish history is the Holocaust. It was easy to write off Jewish continuity in 1945. But astonishingly, just three years later, after being exiled for over two millennia, the Jewish people returned to their homeland.

This is the reality of the world we live in. A seed is sown in the ground. In order to sprout, it must first rot. But then miraculously it grows into a budding tree; a source of life of new fruit. Thomas Kuhn in his book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* demonstrates this point with science. Scientific Discovery, he argues, begins with the awareness of an anomaly - the recognition that nature has violated the expectations that govern normal science. The emergence of a new theory is generated by the persistent failure of the puzzles of normal science to be solved as they should. The failure of existing rules is the prelude to a search for new ones. When everything makes sense and there are no anomalies then there is no need for scientific discovery.

The rite of Pidyon HaBen is to commemorate G-d's intervention in Egypt in ensuring that although the Egyptians firstborns were killed, the Jewish firstborns were spared. How were the Egyptian firstborns punished and the Israelite firstborns saved? This, we read in the Hagadah, was not through any emissary but directly through G-d. There was a clear manifestation of G-d's involvement in the tenth plague, the plague through which our redemption began. This was G-d Himself behind the 'natural miracle' of life. G-d Himself transforming a century of slavery and servitude into the beginning of a new nation, free to worship G-d.

A natural birth through the womb without human intervention represents the natural miracle and lifecycle of life. The mother was so close to dying and yet she was spared, and from that near death experience more life was created. That is Egypt: G-d's direct and immediate involvement in transforming darkness into light. Any other form of birth that involves human intervention breaks the 'natural miracle' of birth. Such a child's birth is an expression of nature not working as it was supposed to and human beings saving the day. As such it does not express the same direct connection to the miracle of 'birth' that we experienced on Pesach night in which G-d Himself brought about the Redemption without the instrumentality of men.

To be sure, I am in no way suggesting that a Cesarean birth is in any way less special than a natural birth. But it certainly is a different type of birth. It is one that requires human instrumentality as opposed to a complete natural order of birth. In a way, the birth of such a child expresses something deeper and more powerful: that G-d granted the miracle of healing to humans to varying degrees. But that is not Pesach but Shavuot which celebrates human achievement. And so perhaps this is why Pidyon HaBen, which is to remind us of Egypt, only applies to a baby born through a natural birth.

This is a powerful idea and one we should think of during the course of Pesach. Pesach essentially is G-d gratuitously taking darkness and transforming it into light. It is the light that one sees from the sunrise, where the sun appears in the horizon extinguishing the doubts and dangers of the night.

And this is why the festival of Pesach gives us such hope. Pesach reminds us, exactly as we say in the Hagadah, that in every generation attempts are made to destroy us. Anti-Semitism is nothing new. But, as history has proven time and time again, it is from these dark moments in history that redemption sprouts and we see that the darkness itself was the beginning of something new. And that out of uncertainty, fragility, difficulty and despair, emerge redemption, liberation and freedom.

■ Chag Someach



OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI ABDALLAH SOMECH

Enormously knowledgeable, never compromising, and conducting himself with humility that was proverbial, Rabbi Abdullah Somech was the teacher of the Ben Ish Hai. He was also the teacher of Rabbi Yaakov Chaim Sofer, the author of the famous work Kaf HaChayim, that monumental Shulchan Aruch and necessary reference book in all yeshivas and sacred study centers in Israel and throughout the world.

Rabbi Abdullah Somech was, without doubt, a Torah giant that the Jewish people can be proud of. The teacher of the Ben Ish Hai, he is part of the inestimable and everlasting dynasty of Babylonian Sages, whose wisdom clarifies every page of the Talmud.

Rabbi Abdullah Somech -'7' was born in Baghdad in 1813. He was the son of Rabbi Abraham Somech, himself a descendant of Rabbi Nissim Gaon, head of the famous Babylonian yeshiva at Nehardea, as well as the author of the Vidui (confessional) prayers for Yom Kippur. The sons of Rabbi Nissim Gaon were Yehoshua, Yosef, and Yehezkel. Yehoshua named his first and second sons Abraham and Abdallah, respectively, names that one finds in the family from generation to generation, including today. As for the family name Somech, in Hebrew it means "support", "backing", and it probably comes from the fact that one member of the family, Yehezkel, was a Somech (assistant) of the synagogue's Chazan (Cantor) during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

From his earliest youth, Rabbi Abdullah Somech had been entrusted by his father to one of the greatest teachers of the era, namely Rabbi Yaakov Harofeh. He therefore didn't stop studying Torah day and night, year after year, until he himself became an uncontested teacher for generations of students. One among them, Rabbi Shlomo Bechor Chotsin, wrote as follows: "If I were to praise him, even just the slightest bit, all the pages in the world would be insufficient. What's more, this would no doubt displease him, for he was extremely humble and wanted nothing less than fame."

Besides the Shulchan Aruch of his student, Rabbi Yaakov Chaim Sofer, we owe to Rabbi Abdallah Somech a great number of rulings, particularly in matters of Shechita (ritual slaughter) and Treifot. All these rulings have been published in the work Zivchei Tzedek. As soon as they were disseminated, no one dared to turn aside from them by one iota, exactly as if they had come from Mount Sinai.

As we have seen above, Rabbi Abdullah Somech was the teacher of Rabbi Yosef Haim, the Ben Ish Hai. When the latter began to give public lessons in the great synagogue of Baghdad, Rabbi Abdullah Somech would come and attend, each time that he could, specifically to hear his student. Another mark of this Torah giant was that when his student, the Ben Ish Hai, made his entry into the synagogue, he would rise before him, just as all present would.

Because of the manner of the teacher, everyone understood the greatness of the student.

One day, policemen came to bring him to the walli (governor), who desired to speak with him after he had dismissed a dayan (rabbinic judge) who had proven to be unsuitable for his position. Yet when the policemen had hardly entered Rabbi Somech's home, they froze in seeing him seated among bearded scholars who were listening to his teachings. He himself appeared to them like an incarnation of an angel come from heaven, and this site impressed them so much that they hastened to turn around and leave the premises. To the governor who asked them why they had not brought Rabbi Somech, the policemen replied, "Do you know who you sent us to get? The prophet Moses himself!"

The governor therefore dispatched persons of honor to Rabbi Abdallah to persuade him to go back on his decision. Rabbi Abdallah replied, "My decision was made in accordance with the Torah of Moses. I therefore cannot change it."

The governor perfectly understood this point of view and agreed. It goes without saying that this incident only added to Rabbi Abdallah's prestige.

It was on the eve of Shabbat on the 18th of Elul, 1889 that Rabbi Abdullah Somech left this world. However, astonishing events weren't late in occurring around his tomb, events whose echoes rang out not only in Iraq, but all the way to Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul) and even to London and Paris. For example, following an outbreak of leprosy, the mayor of El Krach decided to forbid the burial of Rabbi Abdallah next to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Yehotzedek, who had been a Kohen Gadol (High Priest). Infuriated, the Jewish community (who, naturally, disregarded the prohibition) requested the help of Baghdad's mayor, a man who didn't hide his sympathy for the Jews. This had the result of dividing the population into two camps: Jewish and Arab. Certain Muslims had, in fact, falsely accused the Jews of having struck them. The anti-Semitic mayor of El Krach took advantage of the situation to imprison several Chachamim (Sages), and the local Jewish community therefore sent delegations to influential people in Constantinople (to the Sassoon family), to London, and to the Alliance Israélite Universelle in Paris. At the end of it all, the anti-Semitic mayor was fired from his position. All this took about a month. Nevertheless, in order to ease people's nerves, the Jewish community resigned itself to exhuming the remains of the deceased illustrious Rabbi. Several Rabbis descended into the tomb and asked mechila (forgiveness) from Rabbi Abdallah. However, they were utterly astonished when they noticed that the body of their revered teacher had remained completely intact, exactly as on the day he died.

His Hilloula is Elul 18. ■



PESACH QUESTIONS

1. How many mitzvot are associated with Pesach and how many of these can we do nowadays?
2. What are the mitzvot of the seder night?
3. Why is it called “Seder (order) night” when the things that happened then were extraordinary and miraculous?
4. There are many things on the seder night that have to do with the number four. What are they and what is the significance of them being seen in the number four?
5. In the Torah it is called “Chag hamatzot”. Why then do we call it “Pesach”?
6. What lesson can we learn from the difference between chametz and matza?
7. Why is it called “Yetzias Mitzrayim” that literally means the going out of the Egyptians – not the Jews!?
8. In tefilla we call Pesach as “Zman Cherusenu”, the time of freedom. How does this describe Pesach?
9. Pesach is called “Leil Shemurim”. Why?
10. How do we reflect the “Leil Shemurim” aspect in things that we do on the Seder night?
11. What is the Megila read by Pesach (usually on Shabbos Chol Hamoed) and what does it have to do with Pesach?
12. What is the idea of the question and answer format found by the seder night?
13. We are told throughout the year to remember leaving Mitzrayim. How then is the remembering it on seder night different?
14. What happened on Sheviyi Shel Pesach?
15. How many miracles happened by the splitting of the sea?
16. Why is the last day out of Eretz Yisrael called “Acharon Shel Pesach” (the last day of Pesach) and not the eighth day of Pesach?
17. Is there a difference between the mitzvot of matza and chametz during the days of Pesach?
18. If chametz is such a terrible food then why not prohibit it throughout the whole year?
19. Why is chametz stricter than other forbidden things during the year – it is forbidden even the smallest amount?
20. What actions do we do on seder night to express freedom?
21. What else happened on Pesach and we should do something to celebrate it?



PESACH ANSWERS

1. There are sixteen mitzvot that are associated with the korban Pesach that we cannot do nowadays. We can do three positive mitzvot: dispose of our chametz on Erev Pesach; eat matzos on the night of Pesach; tell over to our children the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim. There are five negative mitzvot: not to eat chametz after midday on Erev Pesach; not to eat chametz all seven days of Pesach; not to eat mixtures of chametz all seven days of Pesach; not to see and not to find chametz in your possession for the duration of Pesach.

2. On the first night of Pesach there are two positive commandments required by the Torah with an additional three mitzvot added by the Rabanan, Sages. The two positive Torah mitzvot are the eating of matza on the first night of Pesach and relating the story of the exodus from Egypt. The three additional rabbinical mitzvot on this night are the drinking of four cups of wine; the eating of the maror, bitter herbs; the reciting of the Hallel (Psalms of praise).

3. The reality is that all things are miraculous only that we do not see it living in a world of teva, nature. Therefore the real order is what happened on Seder night.

4. To name a few: four cups; four questions; four sons; four expressions of redemption. The idea of four expresses separation and spreading out, seen in the four directions. This idea expresses golus. However, the four expressions of Geula come to bring us back. This is reflected in the question and answer format, see answer 12.

5. Hashem performed miracles for the Jews. Each party calls the festival after the special act done by the other. The Jews call it Pesach after Hashem jumping over the houses to save the Jews while Hashem in the Torah calls it Matzos describing the Jews racing out of Mitzrayim to do Hashem's bidding.

6. Chametz and Matza have the same ingredients and the only difference is time that allows the dough to blow it up with air pockets. This bloating represents the evil inclination that distorts the facts – known as “seor shebisa – yeast in the dough”. We can learn from here that in life we can one

situation that can be good or bad depending on how we deal with the evil inclination. Matza is where the dough is not allowed to rise reflecting the limiting of the evil inclination.

7. This shows us the low spiritual level that the Jews had sunk to. Externally it looked like the Mitzreiyim were the ones going out! However, the pintele Yid internally was the source for the great difference.

8. It is not simply expressing the physical freedom from the slavery of the Egyptians. Rather it is expressing the spiritual freedom of now becoming servants of Hashem as opposed to servants of Paro. This is why the taking out of Mitzrayim was the beginning stage that went on to lead to Matan Torah **בְּיָרֵד מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם** . אין בן חורין אלא מִן שְׁמִימִים .

9. The literal translation of “Leil Shemurim” is the “night that is guarded”. This reflects the nature of the miraculous night where the Jews are naturally protected from the evil forces. This was most clearly seen in Mitzrayim when the Jews left.

10. Some places the Leil Shemurim aspect is seen in are: the shorted shema before going to bed (omitting the added versus that come to protect us from evil forces); we have four cups and are not worried about zugious; like this year when it falls Friday night the usual Mogen Ovos is omitted; salt is not put on the table before washing.

11. It is Shir HaShirim. This is because it talks about the great love between a man and woman reflecting the great connection between Hashem and the Jewish Nation that was started and seen by the miracles of Pesach.

12. It expresses the foundation of our belief – exile, reflected in the question where we lack clarity, and then the answer reflects the redemption when all becomes clear and is answered.

13. Throughout the year it is a general remembrance. However, on Seder night when the same time in the year of the redemption happens we are required to discuss it much

more in depth with the historical narrative. It also comes in a unique question and answer format.

14. The splitting of the Red Sea took place on the seventh day of Pesach as seen in that being the Torah Reading on that day.

15. In the Hagoda it brings a few opinions – 50, 200, 250 miracles by the splitting of the sea.

16. Perhaps this expresses our desire for it to be the last Pesach in exile, as we end off the seder with exclaiming that next year we should be in Yerushalayim!

17. The Torah obligation is to have a kezayis of Matza on Seder night. The rest of Pesach eating matza is not obligatory but is rewarded. However, the prohibition for chametz remains the same throughout the duration of Pesach.

18. Perhaps it is like emergency treatment that due to our spiritual lowliness we need to stop all contact with chametz that represents the evil inclination. It is only after finishing a week of this treatment then we return to the chametz and as reflected in the sacrifice on Shavuot and Matan Torah we can deal with the evil inclination being properly incorporated within certain guidelines into our lives.

19. Rashi says it is because of the severe punishment of kores and people are not naturally scared to eat it because they are used to chametz and therefore chazal imposed an extra stringency.

20. We do leaning; we have others pour us the four cups of wine; we are meant to put out our most expensive vessels on display.

21. Homon was hung and his property was handed over to Mordechai on the second day of Pesach. This is to be celebrated by adding an additional food to the meal on the second day of Pesach.

RECIPE

GLUTEN FREE BROWNIES

by Tanya from Garlic & Ganache

- 300g dark chocolate, roughly chopped
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 2 tsp vanilla sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1/2 cup ground almonds
- 3/4 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/3 cup oil
- Preheat your oven to 180°C/350°F



Melt the chocolate over a double boiler/ a baine marie on low heat, just before fully melted, add in sugar and vanilla sugar and mix until fully melted

Add in rest of ingredients, one by one until fully incorporated

Pour into a lined baking dish and bake for 30-35 mins until desired 'doneness' - I like it slightly underdone.

Leave to cool completely before cutting and devouring them all.

For more delicious recipes go to my Instagram account @garlic.and.ganache

PESACH CHOCOLATE CHIPS COOKIES

By Tanya from Garlic & Ganache

- 1.5 cups sugar
- 2 tbsp vanilla sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup oil
- 400g ground almonds
- 1 cup potato flour
- 1 packet of chocolate chips



Preheat oven to 180°C/350°F

Beat the sugars and eggs until light and creamy.

Mix in the oil until just combined.

Slowly add in ground almonds and potato flour.

Stir in chocolate chips.

Leave dough to firm up in the fridge for about 15 mins.

Form dough into balls.

Bake until golden

Enjoy!



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PESACH 2021 – TIMELINE

1. THURSDAY MORNING – TA'ANIT BECHORIM – FAST OF THE FIRSTBORNS

This year, Ta'anit Bechorim moves earlier to Thursday 12th Nissan. The siyum which is customarily held to allow bechorim (firstborns) to break their fast will be held on Thursday morning.

2. THURSDAY NIGHT – BEDIKAT CHAMETZ

Bedikat Chametz takes place 24 hours earlier than usual, on Thursday evening 12th/13th Nissan after Arvit.

Minhag to take ten pieces of bread and hide around the house as usual. Make sure to write down where you have placed them. Good idea to make sure it's a small amount and wrapped in foil.

The Beracha is recited as though the search was taking place at its usual time.

After the bedika, **כל המירא** is recited.

3. FRIDAY MORNING – BURNING CHAMETZ

Chametz that will not be eaten over Shabbat is burned on Friday morning at the same time as one would usually do so on Erev Pesach (before 10.45 am in London).

כל המירא is not recited at this time. As Friday night and Shabbat morning meal will have Chametz. The final Kal Chamira will be recited on Shabbat morning.

Although one should burn the Chametz on Friday morning, if this is not possible it may be burned at any time until the onset of Shabbat.

4. FRIDAY – PLANNING FOR CHAMETZ/PESACH SHABBAT MEALS

Food for this Shabbat should be planned carefully. The following points are relevant:

Hamotzi must be made at the first two Shabbat meals. Since regular Matza is prohibited on Erev Pesach, the most advised is to make Hamotzi on Pita bread and ensure that every last bit is finished or destroyed. Pita will minimise the risk of crumbs.

Care should be taken when making Hamotzi to avoid dispersing crumbs.

Chametz should be eaten in a napkin or tissues.

Food for Shabbat should be cooked in Pesach utensils, but care needs to be taken to ensure that the utensils and food leftovers do not become contaminated with Chametz. It is therefore advisable that the table be cleared after eating Chametz and before bringing any other utensils to the table.

Kiddush and Hamotzi can be made in the garden or another location to avoid Chametz being introduced to Pesach dining areas and to avoid contaminating Pesach food/dishes. If you will move during the meal, you should have this in mind when you make Hamotzi.

5. FRIDAY AFTERNOON – PREPARING THE SEDER FOODS

Checklist:

- Open Matza and wine
- Wash lettuce for Maror
- Prepare Charoset
- Roast Zero'ah (bone) and egg for Seder plate

Prepare salt water

6. FRIDAY AFTERNOON – PERMITTED ACTIVITIES

Although on Erev Pesach afternoon, haircuts and cutting nails are usually forbidden, this year these Halochot do not apply. Hair and nail cutting are permitted on Friday afternoon as they are on a regular Erev Shabbat.

Ironing and laundry are similarly permitted as on a regular Erev Shabbat.

7. FRIDAY NIGHT & SHABBAT DAY MEALS

- As above, Hamotzi should be made over two Pitot
- These should be eaten carefully ensuring to facilitate removal of any remaining Chametz.
- Any crumbs should then be flushed down the toilet.
- The rest of the meal should then take place on Pesach utensils or using disposables.

8. SHABBAT MORNING – FINISH EATING CHAMETZ

- Sof zman achilat Chametz is at 10 am GMT in London. (There are other opinions that it is at 9.25/9.35am) After this time, Chametz may not be eaten.
- Shacharit should be finished with enough time to allow Chametz Shabbat meals to be concluded and cleaned up by sof zman achilat Chametz.
- Before sof zman achila, one should wash and clean out their mouth. Flossing is permitted if you will not bleed; eating something hard will also be helpful to clean out the mouth.

9. SHABBAT MORNING – DESTROYING CHAMETZ

- Zman biur Chametz (last time for destroying Chametz) is at 10.45 am GMT in London. (Other opinions is at 11.04am)
- Before this time, you should:
 - Wipe-off any remaining Chametz from any utensils or disposables
 - Flush away left-over Chametz down the toilet

Recite **כל המירא**

- After this time Chametz is muktze.
- If Chametz is accidentally left over, it should not be removed but should be covered until Chol HaMo'ed, when according to many opinions it should be burned.

10. SHABBAT AFTERNOON – SEUDAH SHLISHIT

- Mincha Gedola should be prayed. So that Seuda Shlishit will follow Mincha.
- In order to retain an appetite for the Seder, care should be taken to avoid over-eating. Seudah Shlishit should be started before Sho'oh Asiris (3.15 pm GMT London).
- Dates, grapes pomegranates – part of the Shivat Haminim, other fruit and vegetables, fish, chicken, meat and rice (according to Sephardi custom) can be used for Seudah Shlishit.
- There are opinions that permit egg matsa, again this should be eaten earlier than 3.15pm.

Recite the special text of Seder Korban Pesach. (can be found in many Machzorim). This text consists of passages from the Humash and Mishna that outline the procedure for the Korban Pesach – the paschal offering that was brought on Erev Pesach during the times of the Bet Ha'mikdash.

11. FIRST NIGHT PESACH

Preparations for the Seder may not commence until nightfall on Motsei Shabbat 7.17 pm GMT in London.

Before beginning preparations, one should say

ברוך המבדיל.

Vatodienu is added in Arvit.

Women should light Yom Tov candles from a pre-existing candle. Set this up erev Shabbat with a two/three day yartseit candle.

Women recite the Beracha, "Asher Kideshanu Be'misvotav Ve'sivanu Le'hadlik Ner Shel Yom Tov." Our practice is not to recite "She'he'heyenu" at the time of Yom Tov candle lighting.

As per the relevant text in the Hagada, Havdala should be recited as part of Kiddush at the first Seder night, and a candle taken from an existing flame should be used.

When reciting the Beracha of "Havdala", remember to conclude with the words "Ha'mavdil Ben Kodesh Le'kodesh."

12. BRITISH SUMMER TIME – CHANGING THE CLOCKS

- British Summer Time commences at 2am on the first Seder night.
- Clocks may not be adjusted on Shabbat or Yom Tov in most circumstances.

Members of the Kehilla are advised to carefully check their Yom Tov timetable to ensure that they correctly read the times for prayer, the time for **סוף זמן**

חצות הלילה and the time for **קריאת שמע**.



KidsTime

SLAVERY

Here I am in Egypt, facing another day of slavery. I did not even sleep in my house last night. Paroh made me sleep in the field so I could begin to work gathering the straw as soon as I woke up. No matter how much straw I gather I still cannot make enough bricks.

One of my own fellow Jews watches over me, counting the bricks I make. If there are not enough bricks, they hit me. Ouch, stop beating me, it really hurts.

Worse than that, I have seen them put a baby in the wall that we are building in place of the missing bricks. We do not even have any satisfaction from our work. As soon as we build something, it falls down. I am so tired; I need to take a break.

However, I am a slave, and a slave never gets a break. I want to be home tending to the children, instead of out here making bricks. My husband is taking care of the home. Yesterday, my friend gave birth to a baby boy and they threw him in the Nile River.

They say that Paroh has a skin disease and needs to bathe in blood twice each day. They kill 150 of our children to make a bath of blood for him. This slavery is terrible. How can we ever escape?

FREEDOM

Those cruel Egyptians have no water to drink. The entire Nile River turned to blood. They are so thirsty.

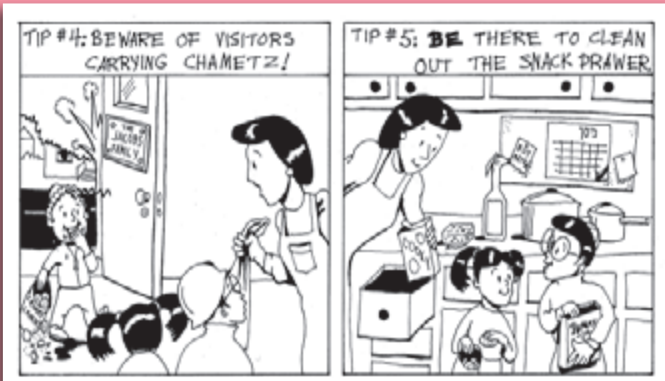
I saw them trying to draw water from a barrel. It had also turned to blood. We, the Jews, are the only ones who have water here in Egypt. An Egyptian tried to take water from my barrel.

For me it was water but for him it was blood. They have no power over us. We control all of the water. If they buy water from us, it does not turn to blood. We can ask whatever price we want for the water. They have no choice but to pay it. They are at our mercy.

There they are, washed up on the shores of the Red Sea. All of those Egyptians who oppressed us are now dead. I see the one who used to beat me so cruelly.

He died a terrible death. He was tossed up and down in the water many times before he drowned. We are free from their oppression at last.

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