



**ALEPH  
INSTITUTE**  
No One Alone,  
No One Forgotten.

# TORAH WEEKLY

T"01

25 - 31 March, 2018  
9 - 15 Nissan, 5778

**Torah** (study\*):  
Leviticus 9:1 - 11:47

**Pesach Day 1 / Shabbat:**  
**FIRST TORAH:**  
Exodus 12:21-51

**SECOND TORAH:**  
Numbers 28:19-25

**HAFTARAH:**  
Joshua 3:5-7; Joshua 5:2 -  
6:1; Joshua 6:27

**Pesach Day 2 / Sunday:**  
**FIRST TORAH:**  
Leviticus 22:26 - 23:44

**SECOND TORAH:**  
Numbers 28:19-25

**HAFTARAH:**  
Kings II 23:1-9; Kings II  
23:21-25

\*The communal Torah reading this Shabbat we will not be the portion of Shemini but rather designated portions relating to Passover. Nevertheless, Shemini is read in synagogues on Monday and Thursday and in the daily segment of the weekly portion learned individually, as instituted by the Lubavitcher Rebbe of sainted and blessed memory. Therefore, Shemini will be studied for the next three weeks consecutively.

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## WHY G-D DIDN'T DELEGATE

I remember the Seder nights of my childhood. Trestle tables and fold-up chairs snaking their way around corners, matzah crumbs decorating the carpets, fantastic smells wafting their way out of the kitchen, and a crowd of us kids spilling grape juice in excitement at all that was happening around.

As the family grew, they changed the venue and menu, subgroups hived off to their in-laws on alternate nights, and every year there were always some cousins interstate or overseas. However, with all the changes, there was always one constant; at the head of the table, the focus of all our attention and resplendent in his long white kittel, sat my grandfather, "Zeida."

Zeida used to lead the Seder every year, and all the family would sing along to the familiar tunes. He'd pause in the same places of the liturgy, and insert insightful commentary to the text, and repeat cherished sayings of his father. Even now, years after he passed away and after nearly 15 years of sitting at other Seders, in my mind I still hear his melodic voice chanting the tunes of my childhood.

There was one particular cadence that I always enjoyed for its soulfulness and simplicity of tune. The

## Parshat Shemini - Passover 1

haggadah quotes a line from the Book of Exodus (12:12) and expands upon it:

I will pass through the land of Egypt, and I will smite every firstborn, and upon all the gods of Egypt I will perform acts of judgment: I, G-d.

The sages queried the frequency of G-d referring to Himself with the personal pronoun, and explained that G-d was promising to do it all Himself:

I'll rescue them, and not send an angel. I, and not a seraph. I, and not a messenger. I'll do it all Myself.

My Zeida would sing the refrain in his own inimitable way, emphasizing the point and counterpoint of the text. The whole family would join in the harmony, and that paragraph has always been one of my Seder highlights.

Just this week, I discovered an insight of the Rebbe on these words. The Rebbe wondered why G-d was so insistent on doing everything Himself. Why not leave something for the angels to do? There is no shame in delegating, so why go to such pains to point out that G-d acted alone?

In a comment that could well sum up my Zeida's philosophy of life and describe his constant care and concern for others, the Rebbe explained that G-d is teaching us how to respond to people in need.

Occasionally we meet people who need our help, and it is our responsibility to

reach out to them in response. It might be uncomfortable or taxing, yet we must be ready to sacrifice personal comfort in our effort to save a fellow Jew. Going "down to Egypt," descending from our position of comfort and ease into an ugly morass of pitfalls and personal danger—nothing is too great a sacrifice.

He did it all Himself, without waiting for angels or agents to play their part. It would be so easy to relax and leave the heavy lifting for others. Sure, I'd play my part, offer my effort to the joint task force; but surely saving the world should be a joint endeavor, and I am content with a bit part of the glory. No one would fault me if I waited for others to join in before I stepped forward.

But that's not the lesson we learn from G-d. He did it all Himself, without waiting for angels or agents to play their part. When you see someone waiting for salvation, don't hang back as part of the crowd, but commit yourself totally to the relief efforts. People in trouble don't have the time or luxury to wait while you quibble over the command structure; they're waiting for you to rescue them from evil.

If we see a problem, it's our job to fix it. If we are made aware of evil, we must go out to fight. Their cause is our cause; their needs are our responsibility. We dare not wait for others to shoulder the burden, but gracefully and gratefully accept our mission

to save a world and build a future.

By Rabbi Elisha Greenbaum

## ASK. ANSWER. ADVANCE.

There is an old myth about an impoverished Jew who visited a rabbi to complain about his desperate circumstances: house full of kids, too much mother-in-law and not enough food or bedding to satisfy any of them. The story goes that the rabbi advised him to bring his farmyard animals into the house for a while, so that when he finally receives permission to eject them, he would appreciate the space and quiet.

(Incidentally, I never understood the legend. How was the pauper helped by the advice? He'd learnt that it could always get worse? So what? Did this knowledge in any way alleviate the actual chronic overcrowding? If you saw someone hitting his head against the wall just so he could report how good it feels to stop, would you automatically conjecture that this was a man following rabbinical advice or would you be more likely to assume that he'd forgotten to take his medication?)

In this week's Parshah we read how the Jewish slaves were commanded to bring a sheep into their hovels, keep it there for four days, and then slaughter it and smear some blood on the doorpost. Now I never grew up with animals around the house (Mum, if you're reading this, it's not too late to buy the dog we used to nudge for...) but my understanding about livestock is that they make less than perfect houseguests. Even if G-d had wanted the Jews to prepare a sacrifice for Him, surely he didn't need to afflict them four days in advance?

Obviously the justification for their indoor animal husbandry was more than just helping the Jews appreciate their blessings. Like much of Judaism this was an exercise in conspicuousness. We brought sheep into our homes specifically so that our non-Jewish neighbors should witness and wonder.

The Egyptians used to worship sheep. To take their god, the object of their veneration and their icon of protection, and publicly announce one's intention to eat it took a special kind of conviction and courage.

We, too, are often called on to capture and slaughter the sacred cows of contemporary society. To live a life of religion and morality, to project faith in the face of the overbearing popular culture, demands strength of purpose and self-belief. This ability to stay true to one's convictions, rejecting the slings and arrows of trendy tyranny, is an ability we inherited from our forbears.

Just as their courage for G-d, exhibited in a foreign land, proved them worthy of redemption, so too will we walk firm in our ways for now and until eternity.

Eat Matzah & Morer after night fall! On Friday and Saturday night (Passover). 8:10PM Pittsburgh, Check correct time at [www.alephne.org/calendar](http://www.alephne.org/calendar).

In the Haggada we find  
A short history lesson  
From Terach Avraham's father  
To Yaakov in Mitzrayim

Why does it start with Terach  
Who was an idol worshipper  
Wouldn't start with  
Avraham  
Who served Hashem be better

This teaches us about aveiros  
(sins)  
That although we may have  
done them  
We can still do teshuva (repent)  
And be connected to Hashem  
To say aveiros are okay  
Is not why its there  
But after it happened  
You are able to repair

***Everyone is required to sell their Chometz before Passover, if you have not done that, please have your Rabbi/Chaplain contact our office for the form. There is no charge.***

### *In Jewish History*

***Tuesday, 11 Nissan, 5778 - March 27, 2018***  
**Mass Circumcision (1273 BCE)**

Following the Jewish nation's crossing of the Jordan into the land of Canaan (see entry for "Nissan 10"), and in preparation for the bringing of the Passover Offering, all the men were circumcised under the guidance of Joshua.

Due to the weather conditions in the desert which were not conducive for the healing of wounds, throughout the forty year desert sojourn only the Tribe of Levi circumcised their sons.

**Passing of Nachmanides (1270)**

11 Nissan marks the passing of Nachmanides ("Ramban", Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman, 1194-1270) -- Torah scholar, Kabbalist, philosopher, physician and Jewish leader -- in 1270.

**Passing of Sheloh (1630)**

Rabbi Isaiah Halevi Horowitz was a noted kabbalist, famous as the "Sheloh Hakodosh" (the saintly Sheloh) the acronym of his magnum opus, Shnei Luchot Habrit.

He held Rabbinical positions in various communities in Europe, before emigrating to Israel. He passed away in Tiberius at the age of 70.

**Lubavitcher Rebbe Born (1902)**

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of righteous memory, was born on this date in 1902.

***Friday, 14 Nissan, 5778 - March 30, 2018***  
**Maimonides Born (1135)**

Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, Talmudist, Halachist, physician, philosopher and communal leader, known in the Jewish world by the acronym "Rambam" and to the world at large as "Maimonides", was born in Cordova, Spain, on the 14th of Nissan of the year 4895 from creation - 1135 of the Common Era.