



**ALEPH
INSTITUTE**

No One Alone,
No One Forgotten.

TORAH WEEKLY

T"01

14 - 20 April, 2019
9 - 20 Nissan, 5779

First Torah* - Passover:

Exodus 12:21-51

Second Torah - Passover:

Numbers 28:19-25

Haftorah:

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

** Although the weekly Torah portion is Acharei Mot, the reading for the first day of Passover is read.*

■ FAMILY PROGRAMS

Do you have family on the outside who are struggling, please contact or have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

■ GRAPE JUICE & MATZAH

Aleph offers free Grape Juice and Matzoh for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll, it is available to all prisons.

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THE STORY OF THE DIVINE PROVIDENCE

A LETTER WRITTEN BY THE
LUBAVITCHER REBBE OF
SAINTED AND BLESSED ME-
MORY.

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

On Passover we celebrate the liberation of the Jewish people from Egyptian slavery and, together with it, the liberation from, and negation of the ancient Egyptian system and way of life, the “abominations of Egypt.” Thus we celebrate our physical liberation together with our spiritual freedom. Indeed, there cannot be one without the other; there can be no real freedom without accepting the precepts of our Torah guiding our daily life; pure and holy life eventually leads to real freedom.

It is said: “In every generation each Jew should see himself as though he personally had been liberated from Egypt.” This is to say, that the lesson of Passover has always a timely message for the individual Jew. The story of Passover is the story of the special Divine Providence which alone determines the fate of our people. What is happening in the outside world need not affect us; we

Parshat Acharei Mot - Passover

might be singled out for suffering, G-d forbid, amid general prosperity, and likewise singled out for safety amid a general plague or catastrophe. The story of our enslavement and liberation of which Passover tells us, give ample illustration of this. For the fate of our people is determined by its adherence to G-d and His Prophets.

This lesson is emphasized by the three principal symbols of the Seder, concerning which our Sages said that unless the Jew explains their significance he has not observed the Seder fittingly: Pesach [the Paschal Offering], Matzoh and Moror [bitter herbs]. Using these symbols in their chronological order and in accordance with the Haggadah explanation, we may say: the Jews avoid Moror (bitterness of life) only through Pesach (G-d’s special care ‘passing over’ and saving the Jewish homes even in the midst of the greatest plague), and Matzoh—then the very catastrophe and the enemies of the Jews will work for the benefit of the Jews, driving them in great haste out of “Mitzraim” [Egypt], the place of perversion and darkness, and placing them under the beam of light and holiness.

One other important thing we must remember. The celebration of the festival of freedom must be connected with the commandment “You shall relate it to your son.” The formation and existence of the Jewish home, as of the Jewish people as a whole, is dependent upon the upbringing of the young generation, both boys and girls: the wise and the wicked (temporarily), the simple and the one who

knows not what to ask. Just as we cannot shirk our responsibility towards our child by the excuse that “my child is a wise one; he will find his own way in life therefore no education is necessary for him”; so we must not despair by thinking “the child is a wicked one; no education will help him.” For, all Jewish children, boys and girls, are “G-d’s children” and it is our sacred duty to see to it that they all live up to their above mentioned title; and this we can achieve only through a kosher Jewish education, in full adherence to G-d’s Torah. Then we all will merit the realization of our ardent hopes: “In the next year may we be free; in the next year may we be in Jerusalem!”

*Rabbi Menachem M.
Schneerson*

A RAY OF LIGHT

Recently, there have been some major blackouts of electrical power across vast stretches of the United States. I still remember the essay I wrote in high school on the great blackout back in the 60’s. In Johannesburg, where I now live, we experience localized power failures on a far too frequent basis. Sometimes it may even prevent us from enjoying a hot cholent on Shabbat afternoons.

All these blackouts are but minor inconveniences, though, when compared to the Great Blackout in Egypt before the Exodus. Plague #9 was Darkness, and from the Biblical account, it would seem to make today’s power failures pale into insignificance.

There was thick darkness over the entire land of Egypt for three days. No man could see his brother, nor could any person even rise from his place for three days. And to the Children of Israel there was light in all their dwellings (Exodus 10:22-23).

According to the commentaries, it was not merely an absence of light but a tangible fog that got worse with time. The first three days they could not see. The next three days they could not even move. But, miraculously, just down the road in the Jewish neighborhood of Goshen there was light!

This verse, To the Children of Israel there was light in their dwellings, prompted the saintly Rabbi Israel of Ruzhin to offer the following beautiful homiletic interpretation. Every Jew is a ray of light. It only depends on his or her "dwellings." The environment in which Jew finds himself may sometimes cast a shadow over the spirituality and light he innately possesses. In no way, however, does this detract from the G-dly light inside every single Jew. Not every environment is conducive to the light. Sometimes a Jew may be negatively affected by his surroundings. But intrinsically, every Jew is a ray of light.

Do you believe in G-d? That's not enough. You have to believe in Jews too. Don't even be cynical about cynical Jews. I know it isn't always easy, even for those of us who, philosophically, identify with this concept. Often I have to argue with members of my Shul's daily minyan on this point. A fellow comes in to say Kaddish after losing a loved one, and the Shul regulars sometimes have their little private wagers: will he stay the course and recite Kaddish for the year or will he disappear after the initial mourning period? Some of the guys are cynical, admittedly from past experience. They quote the old Yiddish adage, "the malach hamoves (angel of death) feeds the synagogues." I often have to play the role not only of defender of the faith but of defender of the flock. Never give up on any Jew, I always tell them. Indeed, many a time we are pleasantly surprised when a Jew for whom the Shul experience was completely foreign goes on to become one of our committed regulars.

I admit there are also times when I have to remind myself never to become cynical and to stand by my own ideological beliefs. One particular incident some years ago stands out in my mind. We were invited by friends to join them at home to watch a new drama-documentary on the Holocaust. It was a long production and we were quite a few people. We decided to have an interval. The break also gave us a chance to pray minchah (the afternoon prayers). Among the invitees was an uncle of our hostess, a well-known, successful diamond merchant also known to be an avowed atheist. I wasn't sure what to do about him. Should I offer him a siddur (prayer book) or not? Would he consider it a provocation and get upset? In my uncertainty, I decided to do nothing.

Later, when I looked around he was nowhere to be seen. Sure enough, the next day his niece confirmed my suspicions. He was upset that he was not invited to join the prayers. "Am I not a Jew, too?" he asked her. He was justifiably hurt and I made special efforts in the weeks ahead to pacify him, assuring him that I truly believed he was as Jewish as I am.

I learned an important lesson from that episode. Never write off a single Jew. Never be cynical of the cynics. Every Jew is a ray of light. All we need do is make the environment a little more conducive, and the inherent light will shine forth.

By Rabbi Yossy Goldman

PASSOVER (Important)

Passover falls unusually late this calendar year, given that the Jewish calendar year is a leap year. This being the case, we are not permitted to eat the Matzoh and read the Hagadah before 8:40 PM.

If your institution is not permitting a seder at that time, please be sure to take Matzoh and a Hagadah to your housing unit so you can eat and read at the appropriate time.

We have sent every institution Shemurah Matzoh. Please (preferably) take the Shemurah Matzoh for the seder nights.

In Jewish History

Sunday, 9 Nissan, 5779 - April 14, 2019

Seven Day Feast Begun (366 BCE)

Following his 180 day feast for all his international subjects, which ended a day earlier, King Achashverosh began a seven-day feast for his subjects living in Shushan, his capital. This feast ended with the death of his queen, Vashti.

Tuesday, 11 Nissan, 5779 - April 16, 2019

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.