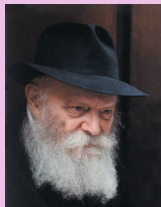


L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

There are two differences between *chametz* (leaven) and matza.

The first difference is in the way they "act." Chametz rises, puffs up. This is symbolic of the inflated ego. Matza remains flat, symbolic of humility and nullification of the ego.

The second difference is in the way these two words are spelled in Hebrew. They both have three letters, two of which are the same. But chametz is spelled with the letter *chet* (ח) and matza with the letter *hei* (ה).

The letters chet and hei are very similar, but the chet is totally sealed from three sides and the hei is open on the top.

And this is where the two differences come together. The person with the big ego/chametz, is stuck in the chet, the only way he can go is down. The person who is humble/matza, is not stuck, because the hei has an opening on the top, he has a way to go out and up, he has an opportunity to improve or amend.

When someone has a big ego, he is always right; it is never his fault, just the opposite he convinces himself that everything he does is good, it is the other person who needs to change. He is stuck. Even more. He finds arguments for his bad behavior and feels justified in doing them.

For example the commandment of *tzedaka* (charity). The egotist doesn't give *tzedaka*, because if G-d wants the other person to have, won't He give to them? In his arrogance he thinks that he is better than the poor person. In his pompousness he asks, "If G-d ordains that they be poor, who am I to get in His way?"

On the other hand, a humble person makes a true calculation that he is no better than the other person, and he knows that G-d wants him to give the other, so he gives.

The same is true of other mitzvot. He can always find excuses for himself. And if all else fails, his self-love covers over his flaws. And so he never says I'm sorry, doesn't correct his past deeds, won't make amends and he doesn't see the need to improve. He is stuck in the chet, and he has no way out other than down. That is chametz.

The humble person doesn't make any of these excuses, he realizes that he is wrong, says I'm sorry and makes amends. He is not stuck, he is in the hei, which has an opening to go up. That is matza.

May we all take the attitude of matza, say I'm sorry and mend our relationships. As matza we will become closer to our families and to G-d. This will surely bring Moshiach closer and this dark and bitter exile to an end, and oh how we need it to end. May it happen soon.

Adapted by Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz from the teachings of the Rebbe, yitzihurwitz.blogspot.com. Rabbi Hurwitz, who is battling ALS, and his wife Dina, are emissaries of the Rebbe in Temecula, Ca.

Leave Egypt – Today!

by Rabbi Berel Bell

One of the central ideas of our reading of the *Hagada* at the Passover *Seder* is that "in every generation, we are obligated to view ourselves as if we personally came out of Egypt."

One obvious difficulty in fulfilling this obligation is that we didn't come out of Egypt, never having been there in the first place.

Furthermore, the Egyptian kingdom dissolved many years ago. Even had our ancestors not been released from Egypt, we would still not be there today!

The statement of the *Hagada* means, however, that we personally experience the Exodus. How can this be possible?

The Hebrew word for Egypt is "*Mitzrayim*," literally "boundaries." In the book *Tanya*, Rabbi Shneur Zalman explains the above obligation as a commandment to free oneself of one's personal "Egypt" – to transcend the many factors that constrict and prevent a person from achieving a more holy way of life.

Personal difficulties – even the very coarseness of physical existence – repress the soul and obstruct it from cleaving to its Divine source. Thus we are given the command, and with it the ability, to break through these barriers and attain a more holy existence.

The Torah therefore wants us to view ourselves as having personally come out of Egypt – because we have actually done so in a spiritual sense.

The problem then arises: having already gone out of one's personal Egypt today, how can one fulfill this command tomorrow? For each new day, the same obligation to leave one's "Egypt" applies, yet our state of boundary was already left behind the day before!

A seeming state of liberation can in itself be imprisonment. This concept can be understood by examining a prior bondage in Egypt.

The Torah describes how Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers and later imprisoned. He was subsequently released and brought before Pharaoh. Having found

favor in Pharaoh's eyes, he was given royal status and appointed second-in-command over Egypt.

When Joseph was taken out of the pit into which his brothers had put him, he certainly was released from a severely restricted environment. He came out of a personal "Egypt," so to speak. However, he was still in a state of limitation. After all, he ended up in jail!

When designated second-in-command to Pharaoh, he went one step further out of his limited state. However, he was still subject to Pharaoh's orders. More so, he was still in Egypt, away from his family, and far from the Holy Land where he wished to dwell.

Each step represented a stage of personal Exodus. When compared with a higher level, though, this state of liberation was actually a state of bondage.

When Joseph was freed from prison, he could be considered liberated. In comparison with where he wanted to be, however, he was still in bondage.

The same applies to the ongoing spiritual Exodus referred to in the *Hagada*.

When the soul is allowed to express itself through the unencumbered pursuit of spiritual matters, it goes through a form of spiritual Exodus. In comparison with a more complete level of spiritual expression, however, it is still in "Egypt."

As long as the soul is here in the physical world, it is still subject to limitation. The Jewish soul is a spark of G-dliness; a reflection of its infinite source. As long as it is confined in a physical body, it is still in a kind of "Egypt."

We must always strive to release ourselves from our limitations, breaking away from the elements which restrain us from living holy lives. However, we should not be disappointed to discover that our newly attained spiritual liberation is still considered "bondage" when compared with higher spiritual levels.

Our continued spiritual growth, the *Hagada* tells us, is to come every day out of our personal "Egypt."

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SLICE OF LIFE

Zaidy's Passover Seder

by Baila Olidort



Few holiday rituals are as child-centered as those of the Passover seder. It is an event that packs customs and narratives enough to stimulate a child's imagination all year round. Like so many other families for whom the seder is a multi-generational experience, our family would flock to our Bubby's and Zaidy's home where we'd celebrate the seder with aunts and uncles at a long table that vanished somewhere in the distance.

I loved the bustle and the noise of the cousins. The older ones missed no opportunity to dupe us younger ones with tall tales. They gave us a full account of Elijah's visage, which they had seen because they knew not to blink when he came knocking. Eyes wide open, holding my breath, I'd run with them to greet the invisible prophet. With practice, I too finally saw Elijah, his radiant mien and flowing white beard exactly as my cousins had described.

As soon as the door closed we raced back to the dining room where Elijah worked his wonders: a torrent of walnuts came falling out of thin air. My Zaidy pulled the feat off so skillfully, none of us ever caught him in the act. We scampered under the table to catch the walnuts, filling our skirts and pockets to bursting. Then we laid them out and counted our harvest to see which

of us had gotten the most.

But first we all had a turn to ask the *Mah Nishtana*, showing off our fluency in Hebrew and the Yiddish translation we learned in school. And there were the *Hagada* songs and the four cups, and of course, the *afikoman*. By the seder's end we fixed our eyes in wonder on Elijah's cup which, we all noted in agreement, was no longer as full as it was when we started out. The soothsayer had evidently enjoyed a few sips during his cameo appearance.

In retrospect, the seders at Bubby's and Zaidy's played profoundly to our sense of belonging and identity. There were other cousins, second cousins, but they didn't do Passover. My grandfather and his two sisters, ravenous for the freedom these shores promised, came to the US from Poland in 1921. For many who finally escaped the anti-Semitism of Eastern Europe, America beckoned with the invitation to assimilate.

Zaidy's elder sister thought my grandfather a fool for sending his children to yeshiva. She reminded him that he was no longer in Sokolow, Poland; she reminded him that here you had the freedom to be like everyone else; here you send your kids to public school. Here, you Anglicize your name and learn to say Saturday instead of Shabbos, and if you try hard enough, maybe your kids will blend in perfectly.

But my grandfather didn't want to be like everyone else. He didn't want his children and grandchildren to "blend in." He thought a "*Yiddishe ponim*" beautiful; a little boy with a *yarmulke* and *tzitzit* was for him a joy to behold. Zaidy spoke English well enough, but made sure to speak to us in Yiddish. America offered him the chance to raise fearlessly Jewish children – a hard-won freedom that he wasn't going to squander.

Over time, my grandfather's sister had a change of heart. By then it was too late. Her children had assimilated. They had moved away from her and from the traditions that bridged the generational gap. She sometimes visited her brother's boisterous house, joining us for brissim and bar mitzvahs, Shabbos, Passover and other family simchas that drew us together.

My grandfather passed away more than 40 years ago, but I think often of his courage and the strength of his convictions. Zaidy wasn't a social activist waging a war against cultural hegemony, but the pressures he resisted must have been considerable as he bucked the trend and kept his focus on the future he wanted: children and grandchildren who would be as competent in their knowledge of Torah, as comfortable in a shul, at a seder, and in the pages of a chumash, as we would be anywhere else as good Americans.

I think of him each year at the Passover seder when we retell the story of the Jewish people who, say the sages, were redeemed because even in Egypt, mired in the den of paganism, they hewed closely to their families, their faith and their traditions. I think of him when we sing the *Dayenu!* and give thanks for the blessings of our Jewish existence. I was only an adolescent when my grandfather died and didn't know then how much to cherish the sacrifices he and my grandmother made, much less thank him. I thank him now.

The freedom he found that allowed him to live as a Jew in America was, for my Zaidy, blessing enough (*Dayenu!*). He didn't get to see how the Rebbe's emissaries – his grandchildren and great-grandchildren among them – would transform the experience for Jews around the world. How miraculous, he would say, that today you could find yourself on a mountaintop in Nepal and still have a full blown seder! That would have been enough for him (*Dayenu!*).

How marvelous, I imagine him saying, that today, in Samara or San Francisco and a thousand other places, you've got Jewish schools where your children learn to begin their day with the *Modeh Ani* prayer and end it with the *Shema Yisrael*. How fortunate, he would say, tears filling up in the corners of his eyes, that today, no matter where you live, you don't have to fight so hard to make sure your grandchildren will be Jewish.

For my Zaidy, that would have been a blessing enough (*Dayenu!*).

Baila Olidort is Director of Communications at Chabad-Lubavitch World Headquarters and Editor-in-Chief of Lubavitch.com/Lubavitch International. Reprinted from lubavitch.com.



Passover on the Go

More than 600 yeshiva students have arrived at different locations around the world including Brazil, China, Zimbabwe, and Europe to lead Passover Seders under the auspices of Chabad-Lubavitch. Groups of rabbinic students have also arrived in Romania, Poland, Germany, and Moldova to help the Chabad emissaries in those countries who have been overwhelmed with thousands of refugees from Ukraine under their care. This project, founded by the Rebbe, is under the direction of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch.

Jewish Underground 2

Jewry was experiencing a dark period of all-out war against Judaism by the Communist Party in Russia. However, one courageous Jew fought back and stood fearlessly against the radicals. Volume II of *The Jewish Underground* is the continuation of the previous Rebbe's heroic struggle to keep Judaism alive in the FSU. Published by *Malchus Hakeser*



Today Is...

15 Nissan

Rabbi Shneur Zalman declared: The matza of the first evening of Pesach is called the Food of Faith; the matza of the second evening is called the Food of Healing. When healing brings faith ("Thank you, G-d, for healing me") then clearly there has been illness. When faith brings healing, there is no illness to start with.



The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Translated from a letter of the Rebbe
11 Nissan, 5723 (1963)

Passover is the first day of Jewish independence, and the first festival in the history of our Jewish people.

It is first in rank and significance, for it brought the liberation of our people from enslavement and made it possible for them to live a free and independent life as a nation, governed only by the Torah and its commandments dictated by G-d alone.

As such, Passover is especially meaningful for our Jewish people, and for every Jew individually, at all times and in all places.

For this reason also, every aspect of the festival and every detail attending the historical Exodus from Egypt, has a special significance in the way of a timeless message and practical instruction for the individual, the community and our people as a whole.

One of the important details of the Exodus is the haste with which the Exodus took place.

When the hour of liberation struck, the Jewish people left Egypt at once, losing not a moment, or, as our Sages express it – not even a “heref ayin,” “the batting of an eye-lid.”

They add, moreover, that if the Jewish people had tarried and missed that auspicious moment, the opportunity of the liberation would have been lost forever.

This seems incomprehensible.

For it was already after the Ten Plagues, which prompted the Egyptians to virtually expel the Jews from their land.

The situation was thus “well in hand.”

Why, then, the teaching of our Sages that if that moment had been missed, the whole liberation would have been in jeopardy?

Above all, what practical lesson is contained in this detail, so that the Torah makes a point of revealing it to us with particular emphasis?

The explanation is as follows:

When the end of the road of exile is reached, and the moment arrives for the liberation from the “abomination of Egypt,” the opportunity must be seized at once; there

must be no tarrying even for an instant, not even to the extent of “batting an eye-lid.”

The danger of forfeiting the opportunity lay not in the possibility of the Egyptians changing their mind, but in the possibility that some Jews might change their mind, being loathe to leave their habituated way of life in Egypt, to go out into the desert to receive the Torah.

The practical lesson for every Jew, man or woman, young or old, is:

The Exodus from Egypt as it is to be experienced in day-to-day life, is the personal release from subservience to the dictates of the body and the animal in man; the release from passions and habits within, as well as from the materialistic environment without.

This release can only be achieved by responding to the call of G-d, Who seeks out the oppressed and enslaved and promises, “I shall redeem you from bondage... that I may be your G-d.” As at the time of the first liberation, true freedom is conditional upon the acceptance of the Torah and mitzvot.

This call of freedom never ceases.

The Exodus must be achieved every day; each day the opportunity beckons anew.

Unfortunately, there are individuals who tarry and consign the opportunity to the “three solemn days” of the year, Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur; others, at best, postpone it for Shabbat and Yom Tov, still others, who recall and experience the Exodus in daily prayer, fail to extend it to every aspect of daily life.

What is true of the individual, is true also on the community and national levels, except that on these levels the missing of the opportunities is, of course, even more far-reaching and catastrophic.

As in the days of our ancestors in Egypt whose exodus was not delayed even for a moment, whereby they attained full liberation of the body and full liberation of the spirit with the acceptance of the Torah at Sinai, which was the purpose and goal of the Exodus.

May G-d grant that every Jew seize the extraordinary opportunity of the present moment, to achieve self-liberation and to help others in the same direction; liberation from all manner of bondage, internal and external, and above all, liberation from the most dismal bondage – the idea of “let’s be like the rest.”

And when we return to the ways of Torah and mitzvot in the fullest measure, we will merit the fulfillment of the promise: When the Jewish people return, they are redeemed at once, with the true and complete redemption through our righteous Moshiach.

serve to tell the wicked son that had he lived in those days he would not have been worthy of Redemption? The answer: Although it is true that the wicked son would not have been redeemed from Egypt, he will be redeemed with Moshiach in the Final Redemption! Unlike all other historical redemptions, every single Jew will go out of our present exile. This is the implicit message of the Hagada on the seder night. (Peninei HaGeula)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

This coming Friday night, April 15, the holiday of Passover begins and we celebrate the first Passover seder. Among the many customs and laws that surround the seder is the obligation to drink four cups of wine, to recall the four expressions of redemption written in the Torah.

When G-d told Moses that He would free the Jewish people from Egyptian enslavement, He used four different terms:

“V’hotzeiti – I will take you out,”

“V’hitzalti – I will save you,”

“V’ga’alti – I will redeem you,”

“V’lakachti – I will take you.”

These four expressions correspond to the four decrees that Pharaoh issued against the Jews: the decree of hard labor, the decree that the midwives should kill all male children, the decree that all baby boys should be drowned in the Nile, and the decree to withhold from the Jews the straw necessary to make bricks, even though the quota of bricks to be filled wasn’t decreased. For each additional act of cruelty, G-d promised to free His people.

However, if we continue reading the Torah, we come across yet a fifth expression of redemption, “V’heiveiti – I will bring,” meaning that not only will G-d take the Jews out of their misery, but He will continue to take them out until they have reached the land that He has promised to them. This is considered the last term of redemption, the one that will be fulfilled with the coming of Moshiach. This fifth term is also symbolized by a cup of wine at the seder, Elijah’s cup.

This year, may we see the fulfillment of our anticipation as we conclude the seder with the words, “Next year in Jerusalem,” when G-d will fulfill His fifth and final promise with the revelation of Moshiach and the Redemption.

Shmuel Butman

L’ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA לזכרון חיה י מושקה

The name of our publication has special meaning. It stands for the name of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson (obm), wife of the Rebbe.



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MOSHIACH MATTERS

In the Hagada we read: “The wicked son says: What is this service to you? ...You may tell him: ‘If he had been there, he would not have been redeemed.’” What purpose does it

IT HAPPENED ONCE



By Rabbi Zalman Chanin

I was born soon after my parents, Rabbi Chaikel and Chaya Leah Chanin, were relocated from a refugee camp to two cramped rooms in a Paris hotel rented by the Joint Distribution Committee. We shared a kitchen and two bathrooms between the 10 families that lived on our floor. Once my father began to establish himself, he was able to rent a more fitting space in the home of Rabbi Zalman Schneerson, a distinguished rabbi, Chabad Chasid, and elder of the Paris community.

Rabbi Schneerson was a wonderful teacher and guide to professionals and students alike, who, in spite of his poverty, was devoted to helping his fellow man. When someone was in need, he held nothing back, as the following story will illustrate.

One evening, Rabbi Schneerson asked my father to come into his office. When my father came in, he saw that the rabbi's wife, Rebbetzin Sara Schneerson, was also there. As soon as they entered, she began to speak. "Reb Chaikel," she said, "I want to call my husband to a 'Din Torah' (Rabbinical Court) and I want you to be the arbitrator."

My father tried to escape the task, claiming that it was beyond his abilities, but the rebbetzin was insistent that his decision would be better than that of any experienced rabbi. The rabbi and his wife made the appropriate commitments to abide by my father's ruling and the Rebbetzin began to tell her side of the story.

"It is a few days before the holiday of Passover and we have nothing in the house that we will need to celebrate. We have no matza, no wine, no meat, and no fish. In fact, we don't even have the few crumbs of bread to hide in order to conduct the search for the *chametz* (leaven). Actually, if we did have a morsel of bread, I would eat it right now with a glass of tea for supper.

"I asked my husband today if he had some money for me to buy what we need for the holiday and he told me he didn't even have any small change. But I myself saw a few days ago that someone gave him an envelope full of US dollars! My husband answered that he had used the funds to distribute to the poor for them to buy food for Passover.

"'But what about us,' I cried, 'Are we not also poor? Even if you wanted to help all the other needy, could you not have left a little money for us also to buy what we need for the holiday?'"

My father's first thought was that the heartfelt claims of the rebbetzin were correct, but he needed to give the rabbi an opportunity to respond. How would the rabbi justify his behavior?

"I did indeed receive a very generous payment of \$5,000 from a wealthy man for whom I conducted a long and drawn out procedure to allow him to remarry after his wife became mentally ill. While the envelope of money was still warm in my pocket, a young man came into my office. I can't tell you his name, but he has a large family and has no money to provide their basic food, clothing and other necessities. He tried very hard not to let his family become depressed about their situation, so he hides it, but now before the holiday he really needed a large sum to allow them to celebrate the holiday, and he broke down in front of me as he told me that he really needed help before it would be too late."

"Now what was I to do? Reb Chaikel, what would you have done in such a situation? I had never had this type of money in my life before, and now by Divine Providence, here was a pressing need that presented itself just as I actually had the ability to help. Wasn't that the whole reason that I was in this particular position to help? With a sum of this size, I would not only be able to ensure that the family would not starve, but I would be able to help the young man get back on his feet and set him straight for the future. So, before I had a chance to regret my decision, I handed him the whole envelope, without even an extraneous thought about taking out a little for myself.

"What would be with our own Passover? G-d would help. I figured that, if the worst happened and we were left without, when our neighbor Reb Chaikel would begin his Seder and open the door and recite the opening words, 'All who are hungry should come in and eat' we would walk in and join him and he would not send us away."

When my father heard the rabbi's side of the story, he was speechless. On the one hand he was impressed at the rabbi's dedication and selflessness, but still the rebbetzin's complaint was justified. He thought it over and he came to his decision.

My father would give the rebbetzin from his own funds what she needed for the holiday purchases, but on condition that the rabbi would agree to make him, my father, a partner in his acts of selflessness and that my father could receive half the reward for the charity that the rabbi had given.

My father and the rabbi formally closed their "business deal" and all the parties walked out satisfied at the decision. The rebbetzin had what she needed to fund her Passover purchases. The rabbi was happy that his wife was no longer upset about his generosity. And my father was happy because he had received a share of the reward for such an important mitzva.

THOUGHTS

THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion



The Seder

The Hebrew word "seder" means order or arrangement, alluding to the fact that everything that has ever happened to the Jewish people, from the Exodus until today, has unfolded according to Divine plan. Nothing occurs by accident, even if we don't always understand why an event must take place. (*The Maharal*)

G-d, our L-rd brought us out from there. (Hagada)

The redemption from Egypt came as an act of Divine beneficence, and not as a result of the Divine service of the Jewish people. To compensate for this lack of service, there were subsequent exiles in which the redemption depended on the Jews' efforts. (*The Rebbe*)

"All the days of your life" as including the Era of Moshiach. (Hagada)

Le'havi translated as "including" literally means "to bring." Thus, this Talmudic passage, quoted in the Hagada, can be interpreted as a directive: All the days of your life should be permeated by a single intention: to bring about the coming of the Era of Moshiach. (*Previous Rebbe*)

Elijah's Cup

The custom of a goblet for Elijah is first mentioned by our rabbis of the 16th century. Why is this so? This custom is an expression of the Jews' belief in the coming of Moshiach and Elijah, who will herald the imminent Redemption. The closer we are to the time of the Redemption, the more keenly is this faithful anticipation felt in the heart of every Jew. (*Likutei Sichot*)

7:17 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area

14 Nissan/April 15 – 7:17 pm

15 Nissan/April 16 – light candles after 8:19 pm

16 Nissan/April 17 – first days of holiday end 8:20 pm

20 Nissan/Apr 21 – 7:23 pm

21 Nissan//Apr 22 – light candles at 7:24 pm

22 Nissan//April 23 Shabbat/Passover ends 8:27 pm



לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח ר' חיים בן הרה"ח ר' שמואל גרשון ניסן
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