

## Pesach: The Peace Plan

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Hanoach Teller

After Moshe killed the Egyptian who struck a Hebrew slave, he attempted to break up a fight between two Jews. One of the Jews then said, "Will you kill me the way you killed that Egyptian? Moshe responded, "The matter is now known." Rashi explains that Moshe now understood why the Jews were suffering so bitterly. It was their slander and squabbling that had caused the exile. The Chofetz Chaim points out that in Egypt they had sunk to the lowest depths of impurity yet Moshe singled out *machloket* (disputes) as the spark that exploded the powder keg of all their past sins.

In the Pesach spirit, as we rid ourselves of all the *chometz*, let us purge all the *machloket* among us too. Here is a short and effective peace plan: If you get into an argument and you're right and the other person is wrong, give in. Tell Hashem the problem and He'll take care of you. Whatever you say should be pleasing, not spiteful. Focus in on the good. Establish a peace fund and earmark money for peace. Judge others favorably. Many times we think we're right, but we're not. We don't always hear things accurately. There are times

when we can miss one little detail which could change the whole story. Rav Yehoshua Leib Diskin guaranteed that if one judges others favorably one will never come to *loshon hara*. Furthermore nothing gives Hashem more satisfaction and pleasure than *V'ahavta lereicha* (Loving one's fellow Jew). Chazal teach that the way you judge is how you will be judged.

Let this Pesach brings us to new levels of peace and freedom

## The Seventh Day of Pesach

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller

Every physical thing has six sides. Its internal aspect, the part that is invisible to the eye, is symbolized by the number seven. On the seventh day of Pesach, at *kriat yam suf* (the splitting of the Red Sea), we developed sensitivity towards who we really were. The word for oath, *neshbati*, has the same root word as *sheva*-seven. An oath doesn't just mean an affirmation. It's the outer and inner reality, the whole picture. Another word with the same root is *sova*-contentment. Satisfaction is when there's complete integration between the core, your inner desires, and the outside, what you have. There was a feeling of wholeness when we left Egypt. We felt beloved that night by Hashem. But for contentment to be real you have to respond. You have to see yourself moving forward too, not only Hashem moving down. For that we needed *kriat yam suf*.

Hashem told Moshe not to lead the Jews straight into Israel. Battling with the Philistines would break them. Instead he said to lead

them in a circuitous route through the desert till the Red sea. In war, people tend to attribute victory or failure to human force. For the Jews to be whole, they needed a situation where there was no way they could have attributed their salvation to themselves. Our choices on a moral level had to bring down enough merit for the miracle to happen. Hashem didn't let the sea split until we displayed the necessary self-sacrifice and courage. At *kriat yam suf*, the Jews went beyond words to a place of *mesirat nefesh* (self sacrifice) that was so elevated that they burst out in song. Chazal say *Az yashir* is future tense because it is a hint to the revival of the dead. Then the soul will find its fullest possible expression.

Each tribe was born in a different month under a different astral sign which reflects that they each had different destinies and capacities. The 12 different paths which the sea formed relates to the 12 different ways of rearranging the different letters of Hashem's name. Everyone experienced *kriat yam suf* according

to their own *mazal* (destiny). Similarly, everyone experiences Hashem differently through their own personal filter.

Rabbeinu Bachya explains that Hashem presents himself to us in two different ways, with mercy and with judgment. Everything we experience is part of our rectification and stems from Hashem's love for us, but it's sometimes disguised by *din*. Hashem will not give us things we need or expose us to situations that seem unendurable because he wants us to become vessels to receive his compassion. At *kriat yam suf*, the Jews saw Hashem as *ish milchomo Hashem shemo*, (A man of war and His name was mercy). To save the Jews He destroyed the Egyptians, but it all came out of His mercy. The Jews saw who Hashem essentially was in a tangible way. His outside was as His inside. Likewise, *Shevi Shel Pesach*, the climax of Pesach, is taking the knowledge of Hashem and letting it affect us in a complete and meaningful way.



## After the Seder: What's Next

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles

What is our spiritual work meant to be during the week of Pesach? Rav Leff says that the essence of every Jew's soul yearns to do Hashem's will. But just as leaven causes the dough to ferment and rise, the *yetzer hara* brings foreign ideas into our soul and causes us to sin. On the first night of Pesach, Hashem freed us from our inner *yetzer hara* and saved us from the subjugation of the Egyptians. But our evil inclination wasn't really taken away completely until we got the Torah, because only one who has Torah is really free on every level.

In Egypt, the Jews fell to the 49th level of impurity. In order to prevent them from falling to the 50th level, they had to leave ahead of the 400 years after serving only 210 years. Hence there was a longer process of redemption necessary, both immediately following the exodus and more so over the course of Jewish history to compensate for the unfinished bondage and to complete the formation of the Jewish people. The *avodah* we have on Pesach is to reenact the process of redemption, both as individuals and on a collective level, moving towards the clear goal of ultimate redemption.

The Nesivos Sholom explains that we begin *Magid* with the words "*Ha lamcha anya*." The great revelation that comes every year is called *lechem oni* (bread of poverty) because it's not about anything we've done. There was an arousal from above on Pesach and Hashem came down to redeem us. Similarly,

at the seder it is as if we were sitting with Hashem in *gan eden*. *Kol dizrich yesei vyechel* (All who are hungry shall come and eat.) On the night of Pesach everyone can benefit from the great light that comes down again even those that are unworthy.

The Ishbitzer explains the reason for the custom of eating eggs on *leil haseder*. From the outside one cannot see if the egg is fertilized. Likewise, we are all influenced whether we realize it or not by the special energy and light of Pesach. The redemption didn't happen at once. We are like the egg that needs time to develop. The knowledge of Hashem that comes down to us on Pesach is meant to slowly transform us.

Chazal say Nissan is the Rosh Hashana of the kings. It is the month when the kingship of Hashem is revealed. On Pesach we must make Hashem king over every aspect of our life. We have the ability through our actions and intentions to influence goodness and blessing in this world and to sweeten the judgment. The way to achieve this is through humility. The more one's ego fills the space within us the less room there is for Hashem. As we eat our humble portion of *matzah* and contemplate Hashem's kingship over us, let us work to bring humility into our hearts.

The Sifsei Chaim explains that *chometz* signifies the natural process of cause and effect. It's Hashem's concealing Himself within nature. *Matzah* symbolizes that Hashem is above nature, that he rules over us and that

everything is His will. This was the first food Hashem wanted us to eat after leaving Egypt so that it should be imprinted in our souls that Hashem is above the natural order.

The Rosh writes that believing in the first part of the first commandment, *Onochi Hashem* (I am Hashem), is not enough. We must also believe in *hashgacha pratit* (Divine providence), that He took us out of Egypt. This is why so much of Judaism is connected to *yetziat Mitzrayim*. When Hashem took us out he made a clear statement, that there's purpose in creation. He is involved in everything that takes place in our life. We must believe that all that He does is good and that our suffering is meant to bring us closer to Hashem. The real work starts after the seder when we bring these ideas into our life

In the yom tov prayers we say, *Atah v'chartanu* (You chose us). On Pesach, an incredible light comes down to us. We come closer to Hashem on a deeper level. We break our habit of eating. Our only staple is to do Hashem's will. If we take our inclinations, our servitude to our desires and overcome it, that's *geulat Mitzrayim*.

At the end of the seder we say, "*Chasal sidar pesach*." The night of the seder sets us up for the year. It's a time when Hashem gives us an awesome gift, a tremendous energy, that will sustain us for the entire year. We conclude, *kein nizka lasoso*-may we merit to make the experience a part of us.