

the self-effacing matzah, but the structure built upon this foundation is as robust and flavourful as a loaf of the richest bread.

Passover marks our birth as a people, the very ground of our existence. As such, it is the festival of the matzah, a time to celebrate our humble faith in our Creator and our commitment to serve Him. Upon that foundation comes the rest of the year, when the bread of life attains its body and consistency, its savour and zest.

Live & Laugh

Dry Bones



Calendar

- ◆ Shacharis 8:45 am
 - ◆ Mincha followed by Seudah Shlishis: 5:15 pm
 - ◆ Shabbos ends: 6:24 pm
- SUNDAY 16 April—2nd days of Pesach**
- ◆ N.B. Light a 24-hour candle now for tomorrow night's flame
 - ◆ Candle-lighting (Blessing for Yom Tov only): 5:33 pm
 - ◆ No Shehechyanu in Kiddush either
 - ◆ Full Yom Tov Service: 6:00 pm

Moshiach's Seudah:

Come and hear the **Rabbis** and our **young people** share ideas on the **Final Redemption.** (Seeff Hall)

By popular demand:

Moshiach's Seudah for Ladies with **Rebbetzins Rochel & Estee** and guests (Elk Hall)

Come along and together let us conclude Yom Tov with good food, song and inspiration.

SYDENHAM SHUL'S "JERUSALEM 50!"

ISRAEL TOUR

18-25 May 2017

34 people are now confirmed.

We have room for a few more!

Speak to Rabbi Goldman or Louis Goralsky in Shul or on 083 310 6140.

◆ **Nathan Fine** of I.deal Furnishers at Midway Mall, Bramley Gardens wishes all congregants a Good Shabbos. Call 011 887 5456/082 854 5706. **Furniture, Bedding & Appliances.**

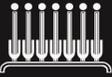
◆ **Vehicles wanted.** Any make, any condition. Best prices. Phone **ARNOLD ORKIN 082 823 7826**

- ◆ Acknowledgements: Chabad.org,
- ◆ Please take Good Shabbos Sydenham home if you will only carry it within the Eiruv.



Good Shabbos SYDENHAM!

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15 Apr 2017

Chol HaMoed Pesach

19 Nisan 5777

Why is Pesach the Most Celebrated Jewish Holiday?

By Chana Weisberg

She doesn't just walk; she practically glides along, with a light-hearted bounce. Her laughter is infectious, her giggle ever-present. Every moment is an opportunity, a learning experience. Her world is a wonder to discover and she feels proud of even her smallest achievements.

She is my four-year-old daughter, soon to be turning five. She's at the age where she's already developed a unique personality. She has gained sufficient maturity to reciprocate in our relationship. But she is still young enough that the heaviness of life's issues has not yet begun to haunt her. Her *joie de vivre* is still intuitive, natural and spontaneous.

And yet, as I eagerly greet her smiling face every morning, I am keenly aware that now and in the immediate years to come--in her young childhood--her self-image is being formed. Every interaction, every exchange will forge an essential impression on her emerging psyche.

Like a delicate seedling in its tender years of maturation, she is now developing an awareness of herself and her place in this world. And with a sudden heaviness, I realize what an integral role I play in whether her lightness and brightness will be enhanced or be diminished.

So, along with wanting to teach her so many things, so many skills, and so much knowledge about the world around her, more than anything, I want to give her the precious gift of self-love. An inherent love, not be-

cause of anything she *knows* or *does*, but because of who she *is*, a creation of G-d.

In these formative years, I want to teach her that her mistakes don't detract from her value. That she can--and should--grow and learn, but she should never allow failures to chip away at her inner core, her cheer or her confidence.

I want to teach her that her accomplishments, talents, great personality and charisma are some of her winning attributes, but that her self-worth is not dependent on these or on how others view her. She is unique. She has a mission that *she*, and only *she*, can accomplish.

And I want to imbue her with the feeling that my love for her is unconditional. Not because she is adorable, capable, bright or sweet, which she is. But just because she is my daughter, forever and for all times.

These are formidable values that I want to impart. And yet, it is in these crucial, youthful years that she will develop this innate awareness of who she is.

Pesach is the holiday when we became G-d's chosen people. In those crucial, first years as a nation, G-d tangibly conveyed His love for us.

We had no mitzvot, nor any merits and we didn't *deserve* to be redeemed. Yet, G-d showed us unconditional love that was not dependent on our spiritual strengths, talents or stamina.

He chose us not because of what we would accomplish in the years and millennia to come.

Not because we would accept His covenant, His rules, and His laws.

Not because of our dedication, self-sacrifice or commitment.

Not because we were to become a light unto all the nations and teach morality and goodness in every country where we would sojourn.

On many other Jewish holidays, we commemorate, celebrate and rejoice in these particular aspects of our relationship and development as G-d's chosen nation.

But on Pesach, in our youthful years as a nation, just as our self-image was being forged, G-d wanted to convey to us His infinite love for us. *Just because we are His.*

Perhaps that is why, of all the many Jewish holidays, the one that is most observed—even by those who profess to be "unobservant"—is Pesach and the Passover Seder.

For it represents G-d's love and connection to us that is timeless, unchanging and unconditional.

A love that is ever-present, irrespective of what we do. But simply because of who we are—His chosen one.

This innate love and self-worth has helped us to survive and thrive as a nation, throughout all of our years of growth and prosperity, and even times of suffering and difficulty—until today.

Because self-worth is something you acquire in your youth.

The Prisoners

By Rabbi Aron Moss

The saintly Rabbi Aryeh Levin was known as the Father of the Prisoners. In the 1930's, when Israel was under British rule, the prisons were full of Jews, mostly members of the Jewish underground organizations. They all knew that this kindly Jerusalem rabbi would regularly visit them, offering support and strength, a listening ear and a soft word of

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encouragement. Even the most hardened criminal would warm to his gentle nature and sincere love for his fellow.

One time during Pesach, Rabbi Aryeh went to visit his beloved inmates. They greeted him warmly and he asked, "Tell me friends, how was your Seder?"

One of the inmates replied, "We had a fantastic Seder! We did all of the traditions and followed all of the customs, except one. There was one tradition that the prison guards did not let us perform."

The rabbi was taken aback. According to British law, even prisoners are allowed freedom of religion and can practice as they please. So he asked, "Which tradition did they not let you do?"

The prisoner responded with a bitter smile, "We ate the Matzah with no problems, and we had plenty of bitter herbs. But when it came to opening the door for Elijah the Prophet, we wanted to do it, but we weren't allowed..."

"I guess," continued the inmate, "even on the Festival of Freedom, some people aren't free."

With a sympathetic smile, the rabbi said, "True freedom comes from opening the doors of your heart. It doesn't matter where in the world you're sitting, if your heart is open you are free. Our souls are stuck in a prison of materialism, of selfishness, pettiness and emptiness. When you liberate your soul and allow yourself to connect to G-d, to do good in the world and to be your true holy self, then no matter how many doors are locked in front of you, you are truly free."

This is the power of the Seder. It has kept us free, because no matter what else may be happening in our lives, no matter what doors may be closed to us, the doors to our heart are always ours to open.

Two Old Horses

By Rabbi Yossi Winner

During Napoleon's invasion of Russia, a group of his highly trained soldiers got stuck in a snowstorm and had to spend the night in the home of a pious Jew. Although Napoleon's cavalry was the best of their kind, the heavy winter snow would not allow them to journey on any further.

As they were getting accustomed to their new

surroundings, one of the soldiers gazed out the window and saw an extraordinary sight. An old man was sitting in a carriage being led by two very old horses. They were trekking through the evening snowstorm with ease. Puzzled, a soldier turned to his new host and asked: "How is it possible that our highly trained horses could not make it through the snowstorm, while these two very old horses seem to be moving along without a problem?"

The host took a look outside and smiled as he recognized his neighbor enjoying his evening ride.

"You see," said the man, "I know this man for many years. He has owned these horses since they were born. They both grew up on the same farm and have always been inseparable. What is unique about them is that they feel each other's pain. When the man whips one horse, the other horse feels the pain of his friend and therefore pushes harder as well. It's the effort of both horses working in tandem that allows them to weather any storm."

The Torah tells us that it was during the difficult exile in Egypt that G-d saw the unity that the Jewish people displayed. When one slave finished his daily backbreaking quota, he would help his neighbor complete his workload. The unity inspired G-d to deliver them from the mighty Egyptian empire.

No Bread

By Rabbi Yanki Tauber

Bread is life. There are other components to the human diet, and technically we can subsist on other foods. But there is something about bread which marks it as the quintessential food, and as the metaphor for all that nourishes our existence. Yet for eight days and nights each spring, the Jewish home is transformed into a bread-free zone. For the duration of the festival of Passover, not a breadcrumb crosses our lips, and every trace of the offending substance is removed from our domain. On Passover, bread is more *treif* than pork.

Of course, it is not bread per se that we banish from our lives, but rather *chametz*, or leaven. Passover has its own version of bread: matzah. Matzah is bona fide bread, made by mixing flour with water and baking it in an oven. The difference is

that instead of being allowed to ferment and rise before baking, matzah is mixed, rolled and baked in a lightning-fast process that produces the flat, cracker-like bread we encounter on the Seder table. Matzah is bread without the body, without the sponginess, without the flavour. In a word, bread without all the things that make bread "bread."

Chassidic teachings explain that leavened bread represents ego and self-aggrandizement, while matzah represents humility. Thus, matzah is called "the bread of faith" and "the bread of healing." The person who is pumped full of self, whose being is swelled by pride, leaves no room for a higher truth to enter his or her life. Instead, the bloat of ego becomes the festering ground for every spiritual and material ill. On the other hand, the humble soul is a soul receptive to faith, and humility is the healing force that restores the person's spiritual health and neutralizes the maladies of material life.

And yet, nothing is more critical to a life of meaning and productivity than a sense of self and self-significance. The Talmud tells the story of how the sages of Israel, identifying the ego as the source of all evil, decided to kill the inclination for selfishness in the heart of man—until they realized that if they succeeded in this endeavour, the world would quite literally grind to a halt.

Hence the paradoxical nature of our relationship with bread—with the leavened sort, that is. On the one hand, for eight days each year it is eschewed, banned, eradicated. Yet for the rest of the year it is consumed, embraced, even celebrated.

When ego and self-interest form the basis of our lives, then everything built upon that foundation will be flawed, unsustainable, and ultimately corrupting. Life must be predicated on the acknowledgement that we exist in order to serve something that is greater than ourselves. Once that foundation is in place, we must erect upon it an edifice that includes an appreciation of our own significance, a confidence in our abilities, a conviction that we can make a difference in our world, and the joy and satisfaction that come with a life of achievement and purpose. The foundation may be as flat as