

story of our common ancestors who were slaves in Egypt until G-d set them free.

This is nothing short of amazing. Two thousand years of exile has not weakened our inner connection. Dispersal across the globe has not loosened our bonds of shared history and united destiny. With all the fragmentation and factionalism that we all complain about, we are still one people. This is felt at Pesach more than ever.

Rather than focusing on the superficial disparities between communities, look at our internal connection. We are all telling the same story. G-d took us out of Egypt to make us one nation, united by the Torah, our common history and our common goal. Some eat rice, some don't, and it matters not. We are one family, the children of Israel.

Live & Laugh

Two officers call into their police station. "Hello. Is this the Sarge?"

"Yes?"

"We have a case here. A Jewish woman has shot her husband dead for stepping on the floor she had mopped for Pesach."

"Have you arrested the woman?"

"No, sir. The floor is still wet."

A psychiatrist congratulated his patient on making such good progress. "You call this progress?" snapped the patient. "Six months ago, I was Napoleon. Now I'm a nobody!"

What's the difference between matzoh and cardboard??

Cardboard doesn't leave crumbs on the rug!

Thank You! Thanks to your generous contributions to our **Pesach Appeal** we were able to help dozens of families have a more enjoyable Yom Tov. I am so proud of all of you.
Rabbi Yossy Goldman

The Rabbis, Gaboim and Council wish the community a Chag Kosher V'Sameach.

Calendar

SHABBOS 31 March (1st day Pesach)

- ◆ Shacharit: 8.30 a.m.; Shtibl 9.00 a.m.
- ◆ Full Hallel: 9.15 a.m.
- ◆ Tal (Prayer for Dew & Duchening in Musaf)
- ◆ Mincha (stop *Mashiv Haruach*): 5.40 p.m.
- ◆ Full Yom Tov Service: 6.00 p.m.
- ◆ **Welcome Guest Speaker Chief Rabbi Goldstein.**
- ◆ Counting of the Omer begins tonight
- ◆ Candle-lighting from a pre-lit flame after 6.39 pm (Blessing for Yom Tov & Shehecheyanu)

SECOND SEDER TONIGHT

SUN 1 April (2nd day Pesach)

- ◆ Shacharit: 8.30 a.m.; Shtibl 9.00 a.m.
- ◆ Full Hallel: 9.15 a.m.
- ◆ Duchening
- ◆ Mincha: 5:55 p.m.
- ◆ First part of Yom Tov ends (begin *v'Tein Bracha*): 6.38 p.m.
- ◆ Havdallah: Wine only

MONDAY 2 - THURSDAY 5 April

Chol Hamoed - The Intermediate Days

THURSDAY - 5 April

- ◆ **Eiruv Tavshilin:** Artscroll pg 654, Birnbaum pg 586
- ◆ **2nd Part of Yom Tov Begins Tonight**
- ◆ **N.B.** Light a 24-hour candle now for tomorrow night's flame
- ◆ Candle-lighting: 5:44 pm (Blessing for Yom Tov only)
- ◆ Mincha: 5.40 pm
- ◆ Full Yom Tov Service 6.00 pm

◆ **Nathan Fine** of Ideal 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**

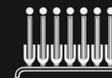
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◆ Please take Good Shabbos Sydenham home if you will only carry it within the Eiruv.



Good Yom Tov SYDENHAM!

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31 Mar & 1 Apr 2018 1st Days Pesach 15 & 16 Nissan 5778

Let My People Go!

By: Rabbi Yossy Goldman

The words ring out again and again. Moses demands of Pharaoh that he finally relent and grant the Jewish people their freedom - *Shalach Ami v'Yaavduni*. "Let my people go that they may serve me" are the precise words G-d told Moses to convey to the stubborn monarch.

It is quite interesting to see how some expressions and phrases become popular, forever memorable and attract a huge following while others just don't seem to catch on. 'Let My People Go' became the theme song for the story of Egypt and the Exodus way beyond our own community. It has been used as a catchphrase for a variety of political causes.

Sadly, the last Hebrew word of the very same phrase somehow got lost in the shuffle. *V'Yaavduni - that they may serve Me* - never quite made it to the top of the charts. The call to Freedom excites the human spirit. The challenge of service and commitment, however, doesn't seem to elicit as much enthusiasm. We must never forget that the purpose of leaving Egypt was to go to Sinai, receive G-d's Torah, and fulfil Jewish destiny.

I remember back in the early 70's when Jews the world over were demonstrating for their oppressed brethren in the then Soviet Union. They demanded of the Russian government that they allow Jews the freedom to leave if they wanted to, and the rallying cry was 'Let My People Go!' Sadly, they left out the *v'Yaavduni - that they may serve Me*. We were so concerned about political liberties that we forgot a primary purpose of being free, name-

ly to enjoy religious freedom and live fulfilled Jewish lives.

Indeed, for so many of our Russian brethren, obtaining their exit visas and acquiring freedom of movement did little to help them practice their faith. 70 years of organized atheism behind the Iron Curtain left its toll. We are delighted that they can live in Israel but while many organisations dedicated themselves to helping Russian Jews spiritually, the fact remains that far too many are still outside of the Jewish community and its spiritual orbit.

Natan Sharansky once told me that the very first time he landed in Israel his first stop was the Kotel, the Western Wall in Jerusalem. He jumped into the first taxi he saw and said, "the Kotel." The driver was a fellow Russian Jew who had been living in Israel for a few years, but he had absolutely no idea how to get to the Kotel. He'd never been there! Sharansky was devastated.

In our own backyard, here in South Africa, this idea has become blatantly obvious. We have now had a democratically elected government since 1994. There have been free and fair elections where all citizens have had the opportunity to cast their ballots. It was a long, hard struggle but political freedom has been achieved.

And yet, millions of people in our country are still suffering from the very same hardships they endured under apartheid - ignorance, poverty and poor health. Even Archbishop Desmond Tutu has castigated the country's leaders for allowing a situation where a small number of well-

connected blacks have become enriched while the masses remain impoverished. Clearly, political freedom alone without a positive and practical way forward, is seriously inadequate.

Political freedom minus spiritual purpose equals disillusionment. Leaving Egypt without the vision of Sinai would be getting all dressed up with nowhere to go. It is not enough to 'let our people go.' We must take them somewhere. *That they may serve Me* means that we need to use our physical and political freedom to experience the freedom of faith and a life of spiritual direction. Understanding that our lives have a G-dly purpose and mission gives us a sense of fulfillment, meaning, inner peace and true freedom.

The Nile Syndrome

By Rabbi Yanki Tauber

The prophet Ezekiel describes Pharaoh (of Passover fame) as "the giant crocodile who couches in his rivers, who proclaims, 'My river is mine, and I made myself...'"

I made myself? Sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? Somehow, I had this impression of Pharaoh as a pretty smart guy. Why would a smart guy come out with a ridiculous statement like, "I made myself"?

But we do that all the time. We couch in our rivers proclaiming: 'I made myself. I invented myself. I define myself!'

We go even further, setting our self-definition as the standard against which everyone else is measured.

I define life—we proclaim—for myself, and for everyone else. When does life begin? When I decide it's "wanted." When should it end? As soon as I decide it's not "worth" living.

What is a "productive" life? A life that produces things that I think are important and desirable. What is a "wasted" life? Ditto in reverse.

What should I be doing with my life? The one to ask, obviously, is the one who made me — me.

"In every generation," says the Talmud—"and each and every day," adds the Tanya—"a person should see himself as if he, himself, has come out of Egypt."

We dumped Pharaoh in the Red Sea more than 3,300 years ago, but we're still *schlepping* him with us wherever we go. For we each embody our own private Pharaoh. We couch in our rivers proclaiming: "My river is mine, and I made myself!"

Liberating ourselves from Pharaoh is a daily challenge. Not because we failed yesterday, but precisely because we succeeded. Yesterday we liberated ourselves from the blatancy of our ego. So what was yesterday's subtle ego is the blatant ego of today's more refined self.

All of life's challenges ultimately flow from the Nile Syndrome, the ego's cry of "my river is mine, and I made myself." And all of life's rewards are but variations of the daily Exodus in which we climb one level higher in the life-long journey out of Egypt.

Hillel's Passover Sandwich: A Dose of Positivity

By Rabbi Dovid Zaklikowski

Thus did the [sage] Hillel during the time when the Holiday Temple [in Jerusalem] was standing: He would combine [in a sandwich] the Passover offering, the matzah and the bitter herbs and eat them together...

Sitting at the festive Passover service, the "seder," we eat some bitter herbs to remind us of the enslavement of the Jewish nation in Egypt. The *Haggadah* text, from which we conduct the *seder*, directs us not to recline while eating the bitter herbs even though we do recline while eating the other traditional foods. This is because reclining represents freedom, and bitter herbs are a reminder of slavery.

Now the *Haggadah* shares some history with us:

The great sage Hillel did not eat the bitter herbs separately. Nor did he eat the *matzah* alone. Hillel lived at the time of the Holy Temple, when eating the Passover sacrifice

was a part of the Passover obligations. Instead of eating the three foods separately (*matzah*, bitter herbs, meat from the sacrifice) he would make a sandwich combining the three, and eat it while reclining. To commemorate Hillel's sandwich ("korech"), Jews do the same today, eating the Hillel sandwich (minus the meat) while reclining.

Symbolized in the sandwich is Hillel's positive approach to all the hardships in his life.

The sandwich is comprised of *matzah* and bitter herbs. *Matzah* is the thin bread that represents the freedom we have been granted, as opposed to being slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt. Inside the two pieces of *matzah* we place the bitter herbs, symbolizing life's hardships.

Hillel viewed the bitter parts of his life, particularly the hardships of poverty that G-d bestowed upon him, positively. So, while his life appeared difficult, he was able to understand that it was G-d's will and ultimately for a good reason. Therefore he placed the bitterness (bitter herbs) inside the freedom (*matzah*) and ate it while reclining.

The Kitniyot Debate: Are We Not One People?

By Rabbi Aron Moss

Question:

I am Ashkenazi (Jew of Eastern European descent) and my wife is Sephardi (an Oriental Jew). She grew up eating rice on Pesach, which my family custom would never allow. Every Pesach, we have the same discussion: how can it be that one group of Jews can eat rice on Passover and another group can't? Aren't we all part of the same religion? Isn't this an example of how the Torah can be interpreted in so many ways, and there is no one true Judaism?

Answer:

Actually, when you compare the way Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews celebrate Pesach, you will be astounded not by the differences, but by the similarities. The discrepancies are so minor and external that they just prove the rule—we are one people with one Torah.

Jews are forbidden by the Torah to eat or even own leavened products on Pesach. This means

any product made from the five grains (wheat, barley, spelt, rye, oats), other than *matzah*, cannot be eaten or in your possession for the eight days of Pesach. Jews living in certain areas took on an extra stringency and forbade rice and legumes on Pesach.

The Jews of the Orient, however, did not take on this custom. Perhaps the conditions of growing and storing those products in their lands did not warrant this extra precaution. This means that the Seder menu of a Jewish family from Iraq or Yemen will vastly differ from the fare served at a table of German or Hungarian Jews. The former will eat rice, peas, beans and corn; the latter will not.

But that's just the menu. If you look at every other aspect of the Seder, it is almost identical from one community to another. To illustrate this, imagine the following scenario:

Take a 9th century Persian Jew, and transport him through time and space to 19th century Poland. After traversing the globe and jumping a thousand years forward, he arrives in a time and a land that are totally foreign to him. He walks the streets in a daze, completely lost and out of place.

But take him to a Seder, and he will feel completely at home. His host family may look different in colour and dress, and they may eat Ashkenazi foods that are unfamiliar to his Persian palate, but the Seder itself will be exactly the same as his family Seder back home. He will hear the children ask the same four questions that his own children ask him. He will eat the same *matzah* and bitter herbs, drink the same four cups of wine, and read the same prayers and biblical quotes. Even the songs, while sung to different tunes, will have the same Hebrew lyrics.

Most importantly, he will hear the exact same story, the story every Jewish family has told every year for over three thousand years, the

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