

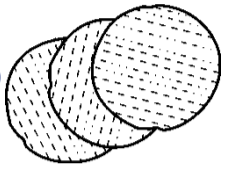
# WISHING YOU A KOSHER & HAPPY PASSOVER



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### WISHING YOU & YOURS חג כשר ושמח A KOSHER & HAPPY PASSOVER

Dear Friends,

As we go to press, we are all experiencing the strange paradox of preparing for Passover, the joyous Holiday of our Freedom while dealing with the fluid Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation. Although our Public Passover Seder plans have obviously been put on hold, the Passover Holiday itself will, with G-d's help, be celebrated in our community to the best of everyone's ability. We are here to help each other - if there is anything we can do to assist you, Passover related or otherwise, please don't hesitate to contact us (see our contact info above).

We are entering the month of Nissan: The Month of Spring, the Month of Redemption, the Month of Miracles. We are celebrating 3,332 of years of Freedom - for 3,332 years G-d has carried us through thick and thin, the ups and the downs. We pray for those who need healing of all types and for a speedy end to this difficult situation, and we do so with absolute confidence in G-d's benevolent protection and blessing. Our unity is our strength; Chazak V'ematz - let us be strong and courageous. May we all soon experience the Ultimate Redemption!

With abundant love & blessings,

*Chabad Lubavitch of Rochester*



## The Passover Story In All Its Brilliant Hues

by Elana Mizrahi

I recently started painting. It's something I've always wanted to do, but never had the time for. Not that I really have the time; I just decided that it's now or never. (I'll never do anything for myself if I keep waiting for the right time to make it happen.) And so, here I finally am, a novice painter.

I look at an object... and what do I see? I see a color and a shape. I look at my tubes of paints. I have all the basics: blue, yellow, green, red, orange, white, purple, black and green. I decide to paint my hand, so I examine its flesh tone. Look at your hand. Try, if you can, to replicate its color.

I mix red and orange, white and yellow. Hmm, I see that I actually need a bit of blue and a bit of green. The peachy flesh consists of more colors than I ever imagined - and this is just the color of a hand!

Now for the simple white sleeve of my shirt. Who knew that to get that color I need purple, black and blue?

Look at the shape. There are curves and angles, lines and circles. I see a finger of rectangles and triangles and squares.

Would you ever have expected to find so many colors and shapes in a hand, a sleeve, a finger?

Think about all the experiences you go through. There are dark moments of black and purple. There are exciting moments of orange, yellow and red. There are calmer moments of green and blue. Some moments mix together to make brown, some make pink or turquoise; some make gray. Even a clear moment or experience is a mixture of many things.

Colors, so many colors. You paint and you realize that your painting isn't complete without a variety of colors.

The trees blossom, and the air, full of pollen. The landscape, full of color. It's springtime, and once again, that means Passover is knocking on my front door. And I ask myself the same thing every year: "Are you ready?" No, I'm not talking about the cleaning, shopping and cooking. I'm not talking about the meal or the checklist of things that we need for the Seder. I ask myself: Am I, Elana, ready? Am I ready to see the variety and depth of all the colors behind the Masterpiece called Purpose, the Master-piece called Life?

It was 13 years ago, Passover time, when I sat down with a full, pregnant belly. My son (who was born a week later, on the seventh day of Passover) was doing somersaults inside. We began

with the portion of the Haggadah that is Maggid (retelling the story of the Exodus): "This is the bread of affliction that our fathers ate in the land of Egypt..." We pointed to the matzah. We - my husband, guests and I - asked (for we did not yet have children) "The Four Questions" about why this night was different than all other nights.

We continued with the recounting. "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt"... "In the beginning our fathers served idols; but now the Omnipresent One has brought us close to His service"... "And I took your father Abraham from beyond the river, and I led him throughout the whole land of Canaan"... "And he [Jacob] went down to Egypt," forced by Divine decree. "The Egyptians treated us badly and they made us suffer, and they put hard work upon us."

I stopped. Why on this night - this night of redemption and freedom and hope, a night of protection and faith - why on this night do we have to bring up all that painful part of our past? Can't we just talk about the good, be happy and move on?

I patted my big belly. The child inside didn't come so easy. It came with many tears and failed treatments. It came with years of injections and countless hours spent waiting in doctors' offices. All that was thankfully behind me. I patted my belly, and I realized that the tears and the failures were an integral part of the story. They were colors in the Masterpiece of the making of this beautiful child, no less than the colors of joy. These are the complex and multiple colors of life.

Now I sit at the Seder table and the emotion that approaches us - the emotion of my son's Bar Mitzvah, his reading of the Torah in a week's time - intensifies and grows. And I ask myself: **•Continued on page 12**

## Unconditional Hospitality

As told by Yanki Tauber

For several years the two saintly brothers, Rabbi Elimelech of Lizensk and Rabbi Zusha of Anipoli, wandered the back roads of Galicia. Disguised as simple beggars, they journeyed from town to town and from village to village inspiring their brethren with words of wisdom and encouragement.

Late one evening, the brothers arrived in the town of Lodmir. Seeing a lighted window in a large, well-appointed home, they knocked on the door and asked for a place to stay the night. "I don't run a hotel," was the irate response of Feivel, the owner. "There's a poorhouse near the synagogue for wandering beggars. I'm sure you'll have no trouble finding accommodations there."

The heavy door all but slammed in their faces, and Rabbi Elimelech and Rabbi Zusha walked on. Soon they came upon another lighted home, whose resident, the town scribe, welcomed them in and put his humble hut and resources at their disposal.

Several years later, the two brothers again visited Lodmir. This time, they were official guests of the community, which had requested that the now-famous rabbis come for a Shabbat to grace the town with their presence and teachings. At the welcoming reception held in their honor and attended by the entire town, a well-dressed gentleman approached them.

"Rabbis!" he announced, "the town council has granted me the honor of hosting you during your stay. G-d has been generous to me, and you'll want for nothing in my home. I've already explained to your coachman how to find my residence, though he's sure not to miss it - everyone knows where Feivel lives..."

The gathering dispersed, and Rabbi Elimelech and Rabbi Zusha went to pay their respects to the town rabbi and meet with the scholars in the local study hall. Feivel went home to supervise the final arrangements for the rabbis' stay but the rabbis did not show up - they had gone to stay with the scribe.

Feivel rushed to the scribe's hut and fairly knocked down the door. "Honored Rabbis," he cried, finding Rabbi Elimelech and Rabbi Zusha before the fire, having a cup of tea with their host. "Why have you done this to me? It was agreed that I would host you!"

"Last time we were here, but without a wagon and horses, you turned us away from your door," said Rabbi Elimelech, "So it is not us you want in your home - we are the same as we were then - but you are obviously impressed by our wagon and horses. You are indeed welcome to host them..."

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# WHY THE SEA NEEDED TO SPLIT

Adapted from the works of  
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson,  
The Lubavitcher Rebbe

by Menachem Feldman



Looking at the sea, all we see is water.

The sea is full of life. It is home to creatures of all sizes and shapes. Yet this abundant and diverse world, submerged beneath the surface, is hidden from our view. All we see is the expanse of water. In fact, more than 95 percent of the underwater realm remains unexplored.

It is for this reason that the Kabbalists use the sea as a metaphor for the "concealed worlds." The spiritual worlds are indeed full of spiritual life - angels, souls, energy, Divine light - yet they are concealed from our eyes. Dry land, by contrast, is a metaphor for reality as we perceive it. If something is tangible enough to be grasped by our five senses, then it is in the realm of "dry land." If it is a spiritual reality that cannot be perceived with the naked eye, it is in the concealed world of the "sea."

This explains the spiritual significance of the biblical story of the Splitting of the Sea. When the Jews left Egypt, they were pursued by Pharaoh and the Egyptians and were trapped at the Red Sea. Miraculously, the sea split before them, and they traveled on dry land in the midst of the sea. The Egyptians followed, and the waters of the sea came crashing down upon them, drowning them.

One look at a map of the Middle East will show that the Jewish people, who were en route from Egypt to Mount Sinai, had no business being at the Red Sea - it's completely out of the way. In fact, according to the commentaries the Jewish people did not cross the sea; rather, they emerged from the sea on the same side they had entered, effectively making a U-turn.

So what was the purpose of the Splitting of the Sea? Was it just a way for G-d to drown the Egyptian army? Couldn't

G-d have found an easier way to punish the Egyptians?

The answer is that in order for the people to receive the Torah, they first needed to experience the Splitting of the Sea.

The sea represents that which is concealed. The sea represents the Divine energy within every created being. The sea represents the spark of holiness that is at the core of every creation.

When the sea split, when the waters were transformed into dry land, then the hidden core within every creation was revealed. As the sea split, all of the concealment of the world was torn open, exposing the truth of the oneness of G-d. As the sea split, each and every individual experienced



with its Divine source.

To split the sea in the world around us, we must first split our own sea. We must first expose the hidden reality of our soul. And then

of the soul was also unveiled. At that moment of revelation, the Jewish people realized that the soul defies definition. They realized that they could express themselves in opposite ways; they could excel in contrasting fields. They could be introverts as well as extroverts, scholars as well as people of action. Both the "right side" and the "left side" are protective walls. A soul is not limited to a single form of expression. A soul cannot be boxed into one model of achievement. As soon as we reveal our essence, there is nothing that we cannot achieve.

The stories of the Torah are not merely stories about the past; they are the stories of our lives. To achieve the purpose of our creation, we too

must experience the three most fundamental events of Jewish history: the Exodus, the Splitting of the Sea, and the Giving of the Torah.

Each and every day, we have the opportunity to escape our Egypt. To escape the enslavement to our perceived limitations. Each and every day, we receive the Torah at Sinai, empowering us to connect creation to its Creator, to reveal the hidden core of the physical. To do so, however, we must first reveal the inner core of our soul, we must split our own sea, reveal our hidden truth, and discover that our essence is indeed limitless.

We must reveal the hidden spark of infinity within our souls.

**In fact, according to the commentaries the Jewish people did not cross the sea; rather, they emerged from the sea on the same side they had entered, effectively making a U-turn.**

**So what was the purpose of the Splitting of the Sea? Was it just a way for G-d to punish the Egyptians? Couldn't G-d have found an easier way?**

a Divine revelation, to the extent that the Talmud teaches that "a maidservant at the sea was able to see what the prophet Ezekiel was unable to see."

When we received the Torah at Sinai, we were charged with the mission to connect the physical and the spiritual, the mundane and the holy, the earthly and the Divine. But how is that even possible? They seem to be polar opposites.

The Splitting of the Sea explains it all.

Before G-d could command the people to connect the physical and the spiritual, they first had to experience the Splitting of the Sea, the tearing open of the concealment. They had to understand that the hidden core of all of creation is indeed the Creator. They had to realize that, in truth, the physical is nothing more than concealed spirituality. Every creation craves to be used as a vessel for a mitzvah, craves to be reunited

we'll discover that the world around us is disguising a deeper truth, a truth waiting to be revealed.

When the Torah tells the story of the Splitting of the Sea, the Torah emphasizes that the waters of the sea became protective walls for the Jewish people. This is not just a physical description, but a metaphor for our souls. As finite beings, we tend to see things in black and white. We often define ourselves in terms of what we can do and cannot do. We tell ourselves that there are certain things we are capable of doing, we're good at, and we're comfortable striving for. Then there are the things we believe to be beyond our grasp. The things that are inconsistent with our nature, ability and inclination. We have a long list of things, we tell ourselves, that we cannot accomplish.

The Torah teaches us that as the sea split, as the hidden world came to light, the core

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and elsewhere. Rabbi Nechemia Vogel has the full right to sell and to lease by transactions as he deems fit and proper and for such time which he believes necessary in accordance with all detailed terms and detailed forms as explained in the general authorization contract which have been given this year to Rabbi Nechemia Vogel full power and authority to appoint a substitute in his stead with full power to sell and to lease as provided therein. The above given power is in conformity with all Torah, Rabbinical regulations and laws, and also in accordance with laws of the State of New York and of the United States. And to this I hereby affix my signature on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ in the year 5780 /2020.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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**To avoid having Chametz in your possession during Passover, please fill out the form and mail it to: CHABAD, 1037 Winton Rd. S., Rochester, N.Y. 14618, Attn:Rabbi Nechemia Vogel, Tel. (585) 271-0330 - Fax: (585) 271-0213 and we will take care of it as a public service. Mail early, so that it reaches us NO LATER than Tuesday, April 7. Responsibility cannot be accepted for forms returned later.**

# MIRACLES - WHY DON'T THEY HAPPEN ANYMORE?

by Rabbi Zalman Posner

Miracles - the word itself is hazy. Just what is a miracle? A world-shocking event such as the parting of the Red Sea at the time of the Exodus? Or the constant human act of breathing? Neither of these two phenomena can truly be explained, but one of them is a familiar, ongoing occurrence while the other is an exotic, one-time happening.

Let's talk about miracles for a few moments and see whether miracles have really ceased. The greatest miracle of all is described in the opening words of the book of genesis: "In the beginning, G-d created..." suddenly "nothing" was transformed into "something." We are all familiar with the transformation of matter into energy or of energy into matter, but each of these changes involved a previously existing "something." Where "nothing" exists, there can be no change. Creating ex nihilo - literally, "out of nothing" - is beyond man's capabilities. This is a hurdle of acceptance that must be confronted at the outset. G-d, and G-d alone, can create. The miracle of creation is the miracle of the first order, beyond duplication by man.

The more familiar miracles described elsewhere in the Torah - the parting of the Red Sea, the manna in the wilderness, the oil that burned in the Sanctuary for eight days (the miracle of Chanukah), and so forth - these are all miracles of the second order. They did not entail creation ex nihilo, but merely change. Water, which is liquid, suddenly behaves like a solid; this, in brief, is what happened when the Red Sea was parted to enable Israel to pass through it on dry land. A quantity of oil which normally can only burn for one day burns for eight full days because its rate of combustion has been slowed to one-eighth the ordinary rate. This, in brief, is the story of Chanukah. As the Talmud puts it, "He who ordered oil to burn, and it burns, will order vinegar to burn and it, too, will burn."

But there is yet a third order of miracles - the miracles that are with us every day of our lives. The sages teach us to "praise Him for every breath we draw." We are to give thanks to G-d for our every heartbeat, for the smooth performance of all

our vital functions, and indeed for all the day-by-day workings of nature. "But" I hear someone protest, "That's only nature!" Correct. But the ordinary, the "natural," the every day and commonplace happenings in nature and in our bodies are no less the work of G-d's Hand than the parting of the Red Sea and, for that matter, the act of creation itself.

Thus we see that miracles are indeed still taking place and, in fact, are happening all the time. This, by the way, is the explanation of the miracle of Purim, the deliverance of the Jewish people from Haman's wicked scheming: a succession of events which are not in themselves "supernatural," a series of what appears to be mere "coincidences" but which comes about at a time when it can do, and does, the most good.

The Rebbe once compared the Torah perspective and the non-Torah (we might call it, the "scientific") perspective succinctly: the Torah view seeks the supernatural in the natural; science seeks the natural in the supernatural.

The function of the scientist is to find reasons for all the phenomena of nature, and then to apply his findings to all the natural events he subsequently encounters. He sets out from the premise that that there is a reason for everything; he has faith in cause and effect. If an apparently healthy man suddenly falls sick and dies, the scientist cannot simply attribute it to the inscrutable will of G-d. His job is to find the cause of that illness, perhaps to cure others stricken with a similar disease, or perhaps to prevent the disease from striking others.

Let it be emphasized that all this, in itself, is perfectly consonant with Torah doctrine. What are the physical causes of thunder and lightning, of rainbows, floods, earthquakes, eclipses and famines - indeed, of anything in the universe? An occurrence that seems to defy explanation simply presents that much more of a challenge. "At the present stage in our knowledge we cannot adequately explain this phenomenon," the scientist will note. But the fact remains that, as a scientist, he must find a "natural" explanation for whatever happens in the world in which we live.

Torah imparts a very different perspective. From the vantage point of Torah, everything is "supernatural" - including nature. Nature itself is a miracle, created by the



Hand of G-d; without his charge, "Let there be..." it would have remained nothingness. Do your lungs work properly? If so, give thanks to G-d for that. The natural functions of your body have concealed within them the

**If I would indeed strike the Mississippi River a mighty blow and the waters would really part, what would you say? That G-d sent me? That it was a miracle? Or would you suggest that it was a trick which I performed with the aid of a ton of jello under the levee or some other sleight of hand?**

Hand of G-d; without Him, they would not continue. That tree and that sunset are not just a beautiful tree and a glorious sunset; they are the manifestation of G-d Himself through His creations.

These two perspectives, science and Torah, are, of course, not mutually exclusive. The physician who is a Torah Jew will use all her professional skill to treat her patient, and yet remain sufficiently humble to recite some Tehillim (psalms) as well. Or, we might express the same thought in the reverse; the Torah Jew is a physician who will offer prayers for his patient, but at the same time employ all his medical skills to treat him.

Two different perspectives may both be valid. A physician might see a sunset as a

refraction of light rays, while a painter might view the same scene as a cascade of colors. Reb Hayim Brisker observed a sunset on Yom Kippur and described it as the atoning power of the day of forgiveness slowly sinking below the horizon - an unusual perspective but a perfectly valid one.

Miracles, certainly the miracles of nature, are with us all the time. But, repeating the original question, why don't "supernatural" miracles, the miracles of the second order, happen any more today? Let us try to answer that question without entering into various views on the purpose of the biblical miracles. Take as our case in point the parting of the Red Sea. We are told that Israel "beheld the Hand of G-d" at the Red Sea. The Jews recognized the miracle for what it was. Those generations of the Biblical era to whom it was given to witness miracles had the capability of accepting them as such, and of being impressed. Then, these ancients implemented their recognition of the "Hand of G-d" by living in accordance with the "word of G-d," because they had experienced Him directly and personally.

The generations of antiquity lived in a pre scientific age. G-d wanted to show them that there was a power greater than the wealth and the chariots of Pharaoh, greater than the waves of the sea, and they were prepared to learn the lesson which the miracle had been intended to teach. But people have changed since then. If we were to gather at the banks of the Mississippi River today and I were to promise that, at dawn the next morning, I would strike the river with a staff, and the waters would part, and then, the next morning, I would indeed

strike that river a mighty blow and the waters would really part, what would you say? That G-d sent me? That it was a miracle? Or would you suggest that it was a trick which I performed with the aid of a ton of jello under the levee or some other sleight of hand?

Or, if we were to meet tomorrow at that mountain in the Sinai desert and to hear a voice thundering forth from a cloud, would we declare that this must be the voice of G-d or would we suspect the presence of a hidden loudspeaker or some other gadget? The question we should ask is not whether miracles do or do not happen today, and why, but what effect miracles would have upon us.

Miracles show man that G-d is Master over nature, over the entire world. Miracles are a form of communication, but communication needs two partners. To be sure, G-d can perform miracles, but how would we react to them? Perhaps, when we are ready for miracles, when we are able to recognize a miracle when we see one, it will be given us to witness miracles.

But then, is it really true that the kind of miracles that are described in the Bible never occur today? I am not a military strategist, but how about the Six-Day War of 1967, and then Israel's victory in the Yom Kippur War? And the Entebbe rescue? I have read many explanations for these events, but frankly, I find it easier to perceive them as miracles which reveal the hand of G-d in the history of man than to accept the "rational" explanations...

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There are things that we do because we have an inherent sense of what is right. Then there are things that we do because of what others have taught us; and only after we have integrated them into our lives can we appreciate their value.

The month of the high holidays had concluded with joyful celebration and dancing, heralding the dawn of a new year. What would this year require of me? I wondered as the day drew to a close.

Early the next morning, the phone started to ring. I began to recite the *Modeh Ani* prayer. Initially, after I first learned about this morning prayer, it took some time to make the recitation of it a habit.

Gradually, with time, it became automatic to wake up with the words issuing from my lips. The phone's persistent sound jarred me further toward wakefulness. Before even the rooster would crow, my humanity received its daily reminder, its morning wakeup call, through the words of the *Modeh Ani* prayer: Remember in whose presence this phone rings. One more peal and the phone shut off as I leaned out of the side of my bed to wash my hands. The "unknown number" on the Caller ID hinted of an overseas call. No message. Within minutes, it rang again. I answered it. My father's authoritative voice, measured with care: "You are booked out of Miami on tonight's flight to London." My mother had passed away.

An ordinary day that was now transformed like no other. As the impact penetrated my consciousness, I stead-

ied myself, grateful for the knowledge that G-d was with me in that moment; not because of my innate sense of Him, nor because it offered something to cling to, but through my lips, and with my voice, I had just acknowledged Him. The *Modeh Ani* words, if we could see them, might still have lingered in the air,

**The reservation agent averted her eyes back and forth from her computer screen to the name on my passport. Dread hovered at the edges of my senses. She couldn't match the reservation to the name Lesley on my passport, which I had yet to change. My eyes implored the her...**

The only daughter, 5,000 miles from my mother when she passed on, I was carried in those pre-dawn words that acknowledged my life, and with them her passing. I thank G-d, for He had seen fit for me to live and pray for the soul of my beloved mother as she transitioned to the next world.

In the immediate moments after I replaced the telephone in the handset, I bade my muscles to hold the stillness. My heart throbbed. I examined the sensations. "How am I going to move forward?" I wondered. "Will one foot really step out in front of the other? How am I going to

move out of this space?"

With each inhale of my breath, I imagined a rope reaching up to the heavens. It climbed higher and higher as I held on below. In the exhale, I made room for feeling, for a response. To this day, I am still able to recall the outpouring of love that washed over me; it was unfiltered; it was pure.

Later, at the airport, I handed the reservation agent my passport. Meticulously, my father had attended to each minute detail to ensure that I would be in England the next day for my mother's burial. A pre-paid one-way ticket awaited me at the airline counter, alleviating any pressure that I should have to decide when I would return.

For 40-plus years, I was their daughter, Lesley. In his thoughtfulness, my father had registered the ticket in my Hebrew name, Leah, that I had legally changed to just three years earlier. In the most stringent moments of his personal loss, my father had thought of everything, and attended to each aspect of the arrangements with great care.

I saw the reservation agent avert her eyes back and forth, from her computer screen to the name on my passport. Dread hovered at the edges of my senses. She couldn't match the reservation to the name Lesley on my passport, which I had yet to change. My eyes implored the agent. Don't make me say it. Let's not acknowledge this just yet; the reason I'm standing here.

"My mother passed away," I told her.

"I'm so sorry," she said, "but your passport identification must match the name on the ticket." This was a post 9/11 security gridlock; computer incompatibility. She couldn't do anything, she said. Briefly, I glanced around the airport and assimilated the images that came to mind. My heart full of breaking point, I took a step closer to the counter. My *Modeh Ani* prayer continued to root me

•Continued on page 12

## Modeh Ani: What & Why

A new day, new battles. Actually, one battle that assumes different forms: *I Want* vs. *I Should*. The day's first battlefield is your bed, and the first shot is fired when the alarm clock rings. *I Want* reaches out to hit the snooze button; *I Should* is ready to jump out of bed and take on another day.

That's why the first instruction in the Code of Jewish Law is: "Be strong as a lion when you wake up in the morning to serve your Creator." Because if you win this battle, the rest are lamb chops.

Here's some fodder for your cannon in those early morning forays: Think how, every night, your soul ascends to heaven to recharge. This morning, G-d chose to return your soul to your body and grant you once again the gift of life - a sure sign that there's a little dark corner left in this world for you to come and illuminate. G-d trusts that you are up to the task.

Now verbalize it:

מודה אני לפניך מלך חי וקים  
שהחזרת בי נשמת בי בחמלה רבה אמונתך

**MODEH ANI LE-FANECHA, MELECH CHAI  
VE-KAYAM, SHEH-HECHE-ZARTA BI NISHMA-  
TI BECHEMLAH, RABAH EMUNATECHA.**

I am grateful to You, living and enduring King,  
for having returned my soul to me with compassion.  
Great is Your faithfulness.

#MODEHANI #THANKFULDAILY

(for Modeh Ani audio: [https://www.chabad.org/multimedia/media\\_cdo/aid/692777/jewish/2-Modeh-Ani-Song.htm](https://www.chabad.org/multimedia/media_cdo/aid/692777/jewish/2-Modeh-Ani-Song.htm))

These are the first words we utter every morning- while still lying in bed. Our first conscious moments are spent thanking G-d for the gift of life. It doesn't matter what we did yesterday or last night; nothing can taint those first innocent words that sit at our primal consciousness.

Still having a problem dragging yourself out of bed? Use your imagination. Picture yourself lying there while a king or head of state stands above you, waiting for you to get your act together to execute some critical mission.

Well, actually it isn't a king or president. It is the One who creates kings, presidents, and the entire world at every moment - and you too. Again. Today.

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## No Place Like Home by Menachem Feldman

A 2013 Pew Research study found that the Passover Seder is the most practiced mitzvah by 21st-century Jews in the United States:

*Attending a Seder is an extremely common practice for the group. While only 23% of U.S. Jews said they attend religious services at least monthly, 70% said they participated in a Seder last year.*

*Participation in a Seder is more common among Jewish Americans than any of the other practices we asked about, including fasting for all or part of Yom Kippur (53%) - often considered the holiest day of the Jewish calendar.*

Why is the Passover Seder so important to the Jewish people, even more so than other practices? What message does the Seder capture that, consciously or subconsciously, speaks to so many Jews today?

To understand this, we need to look at the very first Seder, recorded in the Torah, which was celebrated not as a remembrance for a past event, but as a commemoration for an event that was about to take place. The Jews were commanded to prepare the Passover sacrifices, and to celebrate with matzah and bitter herbs on the night before the actual Exodus. But unlike the Passover offerings that would be offered in subsequent years, the very first Passover offering had to be offered not in one central location, but rather in the home of each family. Furthermore, each family was commanded to remain within the confines of the home for the entire night.

They were also commanded to place some of the blood of the offering on the doorposts and lintels of their homes.

*"Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Draw forth or buy for yourselves sheep for your families, and slaughter the Passover sacrifice. You shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip [it] in the blood that is in*

*the basin, and you shall touch from the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and to the two doorposts. You shall not go out, any man, from the entrance of his house until morning."*

Why the blood on the doorposts? Why the need to remain within the home until morning? The conventional answer is that marking the entrance and remaining in the home protected the Jews from the plague of the death of the firstborn. The deeper interpretation, however, is that by using the doorposts and the lintel as part of the mitzvah, the home of every Jew became holy. The commandment not to leave the home is because as a result of offering the Passover sacrifice in the home, the home became a miniature Temple and a haven of holiness.

At the birth of the nation, as the people of Israel were about to emerge from Egypt as a distinct nation, Moses communicated G-d's message to them: the goal of Judaism is to transform every corner of life and every place on earth. The objective of

Judaism is that spirituality and worship not be reserved for imposing monuments, towers or sanctuaries. Judaism seeks to transform each and every home into a place of spirituality, holiness, peace and tranquility.

Granted, the intensity of holiness is indeed stronger in Judaism's most sacred space, on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Thus, in subsequent generations the Pesach offering could be offered only in the traveling Tabernacle, and later in the Temple in Jerusalem. Yet the very first Passover Seder, offered in the critical hours when our nation was being born, served as a symbol to teach us that the essence of Judaism is spreading holiness to every corner of the world, into each and every home.

Thus, intuitively, the Jew feels that to connect to the core of his Jewish identity, more important than experiencing the intensity of holiness in shul on Yom Kippur, he/she must experience holiness as it spreads to the home, where it engulfs in its embrace the totality of the Jew, his home, his possessions, his family and his friends.

## Three Matzot & Four Cups of Wine

by Yitzi Hurwitz

Our sages established that we drink four cups of wine at the Seder, recalling the four expressions of redemption that G-d commanded Moses to convey to the Jewish people: "I will take you out... I will save you... I will redeem you... And I will take you [to Myself as a nation]..."

If these four expressions of redemption are so significant that they should be symbolized at the Seder, why not have four matzahs? After all, the matzahs are a biblical commandment, which the Mishnah tells us is "because our parents were redeemed from Egypt." So why four cups of wine (which are a rabbinical requirement) and only three matzahs (which are biblical)?

Why do we need three matzahs? The simple reason is that two whole matzahs are for the *hamotzi* blessing, just like on every Shabbat or holiday, we make the blessing over two whole loaves. The third, broken piece of matzah (poor man's bread) is for the recitation of the Haggadah.

However, since everything in Torah is perfect, and we know that the reason we have matzah is "because our parents were redeemed from Egypt," the three matzahs must represent redemption as well.

With this understanding, we can conclude that there are two aspects of redemption: One is connected to the number three, represented by matzah, and the other is connected to the number four and is represented by wine.

What are these two aspects of redemption? And why are they represented by wine and matzah?

We are told that the Israelites had sunken to such a spiritual low in Egypt, that if they would have stayed even a moment longer, they would have been totally lost, with no chance of redemption. It was only that G-d pulled them out in the nick of time. In other words, it wasn't

due to their merits or efforts that they were redeemed. Rather it was a unilateral redemption, with G-d doing it Himself.

This is what the Exodus was all about: being redeemed by G-d himself, without our effort. A truly pleasurable experience is one that comes with our input. Since the Exodus was one-sided from G-d without our input, we have no pleasure in it. This is represented by matzah, which doesn't have much flavor. It is poor man's bread, symbolizing that we were poor in understanding and spirituality. We have three matzot, representing the first three expressions of redemption, "I will take you out... I will save you... And I will redeem you..." These are all one-sided, from G-d Himself without our involvement. Since these three actually happened at the Exodus, they are represented by matzah, a biblical commandment.

The fourth, "And I will take you to Myself as a nation," didn't reach completion until we received the Torah at Mount Sinai, after 50 days of working on ourselves. Since it came about through our effort and our merit, we have pleasure in it. It is therefore represented by wine, which has flavor. Since it only reached completion 50 days after the Exodus, it is not totally connected to Pesach, and therefore only a rabbinical enactment.

So you have three that are a given, and the fourth that is developed by the recipient. This will help us understand other things as well:

Our nation has three fathers and four mothers. In producing a child, the part of the father is to give, but the mother takes what she receives, and with her body's effort, develops it into a complete baby. Since three represents giving (seen in the first three verses, connoting G-d's *•Continued on page 12*

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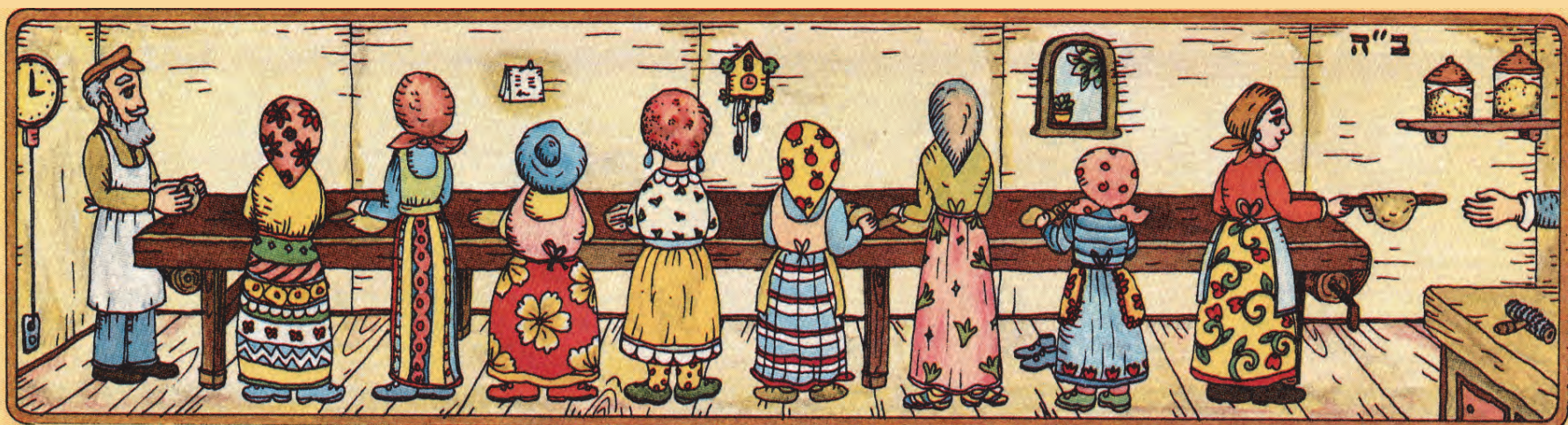
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# Passover Guide 5780 - 2020



## What Is Pesach - Passover?

On Pesach we celebrate the liberation of the Jewish People - not just our physical liberation from Egyptian slavery, but also our spiritual freedom from the 'abominations of Egypt'. The civilization of ancient Egypt was steeped in idolatry and immorality. Beyond that, however, the name 'Egypt' - 'Mitzrayim', in Hebrew - implies 'limitations', or narrow straits. In a very real sense, freedom from the 'abominations of Egypt' is freedom from narrowness of mind, freedom from a constricted heart.

The Torah laws concerning Pesach, besides being G-dly commandments, are to help us experience this spirit of freedom. This guide, though concise, covers some practical details, the significance of the Seder, basic Pesach laws plus useful tips and profound insights to enhance your Passover experience.

### Preparing The Home

**What Is Chametz?** Unique to Pesach is the eating of Matzah (*Please Note: Matzah used all year round is not for Pesach use. Only Matzah baked especially for Pesach may be used on Pesach*), and the stringent prohibition of eating or possessing Chametz. Chametz is a general term for all food and drink made from wheat, barley, rye, oats, spelt or their derivatives, which is forbidden on Pesach because it is leavened. Even a food that contains only a trace of Chametz is prohibited and must be removed from our homes.

**Getting Rid of Chametz:** Obvious Chametz - both food and utensils used throughout the year (and not koshered for Pesach) - should be stored in closets or rooms that are not easily accessible (locked or taped shut). It should be sold to a non-Jew by filling out the sale form on page 3.

Clean the entire house thoroughly to remove all crumbs and small pieces of food. Also check for Chametz in the car and office (desks and drawers, etc.) clothes, pockets (especially the children's), pocketbooks, and attaché cases. Vacuum cleaner bags should be discarded or cleaned.

### Kitchen Koshering

To prepare the kitchen for Pesach, we must kosher it from Chametz that has been cooked in it. **Dishes and Utensils:** Have special sets of dishes, silverware, pots, pans and other utensils for Pesach use only. (If necessary, certain 'year-round' utensils may be used provided they are koshered for Pesach. To do so, consult a Rabbi.)

**Stove:** Thoroughly clean and scour every part of the stove. Heat the oven to the highest temperature possible for 1-2 hours. Heat the grates and the iron parts of the stove until they glow red-hot. It is suggested that the oven and stovetop should be covered afterwards with aluminum foil.

**Microwave Ovens:** Clean the oven thoroughly. Fill a clean container (that was not used for 24 hours) with water. Turn on the microwave and let it steam heavily. Turn it off and wipe out the inside. To use the microwave during Pesach, use a flat piece of styrofoam or any other thick object, as a separation between the bottom of the oven and the cooking dish. When cooking, the food should be covered from all sides.

**Sink:** Meticulously clean the sink. For 24 hours before koshering it, do not pour hot water from Chametz pots into the sink. Afterwards, boil water in a clean pot (that was not used for 24 hours), and pour water 3 times onto every part of the sink, including the drain stopper. Afterwards, line the sink.

**Refrigerator, Freezer, Cupboards, Closets, Tables and Counters:** Thoroughly clean and scrub to remove any crumbs and residue. Afterwards, cover with a heavy covering those surfaces that come into contact with hot food or utensils.

**Tablecloths and Napkins:** Launder without starch.

### Shopping For Pesach

While shopping for Pesach we must be careful that the foods we buy are not only kosher but are also kosher-for-Pesach - that is, Chametz-free.

**Starting From 'Scratch':** All fresh fruits and vegetables as well as all kosher cuts of meat and kosher fish are kosher for Pesach - provided they have been prepared in accordance with Jewish law and have not come into contact with Chametz or Chametz utensils.

The prevailing Ashkenazic custom is that we do not eat on Pesach rice, millet, corn, mustard, legumes, (beans, etc.), or their derivatives.

**Commercially Prepared Products:** Nowadays, there are many Kosher-for-Pesach packaged foods available. However, care must be used to purchase only those packaged foods that have reliable Rabbinical supervision which is valid for Pesach.

Obviously, all leavened foods made from wheat, barley, rye, oats or spelt are actual Chametz and are prohibited on Pesach. Examples are bread, cake, cereal, spaghetti, beer and whiskey.

**Check The Medicine Cabinet!** Many medicines, sprays and cosmetics contain Chametz. Consult a competent Rabbi as to which ones may be used on Pesach. The same applies to pet food.

### Pesach Calendar

On the evening before Pesach, make a formal search of the home for Chametz while holding a lit candle. It is customary to distribute ten small individually wrapped pieces of Chametz throughout the home before the search.

**The Blessing:** Recite the following blessing before the search: *Boruch Atoh Ado-noi Elo-hei-nu Melech Ha-olom Asher Kidishanu Bemitzvo-tov Vetzi-vanu Al Bi-ur Cha-metz.* Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by His commandments, and has commanded us to remove the leaven.

**The Search:** Afterwards, hold the lit candle and search for Chametz in every room, as well as any other areas of the home that may have Chametz, such as the basement, attic, garage, or car.

When the search is completed, recite the following: 'All leaven or anything leavened which is in my possession, which I have neither seen nor removed, and about which I am unaware, shall be considered naught and ownerless as the dust of the earth.'

Then take all the Chametz that was found in the search, cover it securely and place it in a conspicuous spot. This Chametz will be burned in the morning. Food intended to be sold or eaten later should similarly be carefully put aside. The search should also be conducted in one's place of business.

**Erev Pesach - Burning The Chametz:** On the morning of Erev Pesach (Passover Eve), Chametz may be eaten only in the early hours of the morning, (see calendar for exact time). Burn the Chametz that was found during the previous evening's search, or that was left over from breakfast and not stored with the Chametz which is sold to the non-Jew. See calendar for the latest time to burn the Chametz.

After the Chametz is thrown into the fire, recite the following: 'All leaven or anything leavened which is in my possession, whether I have seen it or not, whether I have observed it or not, whether I have removed it or not shall be completely considered naught and ownerless as the dust of the earth.'

Only kosher for Pesach foods may be eaten. However, we do not eat Matzah until the Seder.

**The Intermediate Days:** In between the first two and last two days of Pesach, go ahead and function relatively normally. The only exception is, like your mother keeps telling you, you shouldn't work too hard. But keep the wine flowing; it's a custom to drink a glass of wine every day of Pesach.

**Last But Not Least:** On the last day of Pesach Yizkor memorial prayers are recited during services. Following the custom of the Baal Shem Tov, Pesach concludes with the 'Feast of Moshiach' - a festive meal complete with Matzah and, yes, four cups of wine. It begins before sunset and is designed to offer us a 'glimpse' into the Messianic age. Nightfall marks the conclusion of Pesach. Wait a while to give the Rabbi enough time to buy back your Chametz and then eat Chametz to your heart's content!

## The Pesach Calendar 5780 - 2020

Times shown are for the Rochester Area

Date	Activity	Time
April 7	Formal search for chametz	.....at 8:14 p.m.
April 8	Stop Eating Chametz	.....before 10:55 a.m.
	Burn left-over Chametz	.....before 11:56 a.m.
	Light Yom Tov candles and say blessings # 1 & 3	..... at 7:27 p.m.
	Start the Seder. Eat at least 1 oz. of Matzah within 4 minutes	.....after 8:30 p.m.
April 9	Light Yom Tov candles from a pre-existing flame* and say blessings # 1 & 3	.....after 8:30 p.m.
	Start the Seder. Eat the Matzah again	
April 10	Light Shabbat candles from a pre-existing flame* and say blessing # 2	.....at 7:29 p.m.
April 14	Light Yom Tov candles and say blessing # 1	.....at 7:34 p.m.
April 15	Light Yom Tov candles from a pre-existing flame* and say blessing # 1	.....after 8:37 p.m.
April 16	Yizkor	
	Pesach ends	.....at 8:39 p.m.
	Wait one hour before eating your chametz to allow time for the Rabbi to buy it back for you.	

\*A pre-existing flame is a flame burning continuously since the onset of the festival, such as a pilot light, gas or candle flame.

### BLESSINGS FOR FESTIVAL CANDLE LIGHTING:

- Bo-ruch A-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom A-sher Ki-de-sho-nu Be-mitz-vo-sov Vi-tzi-vo-nu Le-had-lik Ner Shel Yom-Tov.
- Bo-ruch A-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom A-sher Ki-de-sho-nu Be-mitz-vo-sov Vi-tzi-vo-nu Le-had-lik Ner Shel Shabbos Kodesh.
- Bo-ruch A-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom She-heh-che-yoh-nu Vi-kiye-mo-nu Ve-he-ge-o-nu Lizman Haze.

**Don't forget to sell your Chametz!  
see page 3**

**1. KADESH - SANCTIFICATION**

**BODY** It's been a busy week, or a busy year. The first step tonight is to forget the noise and leave it behind. Tonight we enter a timeless space, where we experience the Seder together with our great-grandparents and Moses. How do we begin? With a full cup of red wine. A cup filled with generations of rejoicing and tears and celebration and wisdom, and of doing just what we will do tonight.

Fill a cup with wine (or grape juice). That's cup #1. You can have someone else fill your cup. Then return the favor. This way, we are all like nobility, whose cups are filled by someone else. Make sure your cup holds at least 86 mil. (a little more than three ounces).

Everyone stands and says Kiddush together. The rest of the year, one person says Kiddush for everyone at the table. Tonight, each man, woman and child recites every word together.

Drink. And get ready for some serious relaxing. Recline on a cushion to your left side. Remember the ancient times, when we used to recline on our couches while sampling grapes? That's what we are dramatizing by reclining now. Tonight we are free.

**SOUL** Every journey begins with a separation. You've got to leave somewhere to get somewhere else. In this way, separation is the first step to freedom. By ignoring the negative voice of Pharaoh's mockery that says, "Who are you to begin such a journey?", we're ready to leave Egypt behind.

Separation is the first meaning of the word *kadesh* - to transcend the mundane world. Once you've set yourself free from those things that hold you down, you can achieve the second meaning of the word *kadesh* - to return and sanctify it. Spiritual freedom is achieved through sanctifying the material world, using its elements as physical expressions of a higher purpose. The first two steps of the Seder, Kadesh (to separate/sanctify) and Urchatz (purify), describe what we set out to accomplish through this night: to rise above the restraints of our world in order to elevate it.

**Personal Application:**  
**Bondage Mentality:** Look, I'm a down-to-earth kind of person. I'm trying to manage real life. I can't get into this spirituality stuff. Let's just get to the Matzah. **Freedom Mentality:** I can master my world by staying above it. I come to the Seder to get that strength. *Kadesh - Time to split*



**2. URCHATZ - PURIFICATION**

**BODY** Fill a cup with water. You could leave the table to go to the kitchen or you could bring a basin and towel to the table. (What? We just sat down and now we have to get up and leave? Well, that's a fairly standard Jewish migration pattern.)

Pour the water over your right hand three times, then over your left hand three times. That's how the Kohanim (priests) washed when they entered the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Dry your hands.

Throughout the year we wash this way for bread and we would say a blessing at this point, but not now. When we wash the second time before eating the Matzah, we'll say it then.

**SOUL** Our hands are the instruments that allow the mind to interact with its environment. Our hands reflect our mental state, and act according to our emotions: love, fear, compassion, the urge to win, to be appreciated, to express ourselves, to dominate. But too often the aspects of our psyche sit compartmentalized, detached from one another. The mind sees one way, the heart feels another, and our interface with the world is disoriented.

Water symbolizes wisdom. Flowing downward from on-high, everything in its stream is affected by its pure and simple essence. We pour water over our hands so that our heart and emotions may be touched by wisdom, and from there shape our interaction with the world.

A wise rabbi asked, "Wouldn't it make more sense to wash first and then say Kiddush? To first purify, so you can then sanctify?" Then he answered, "First you need to get out of the pit, and then to clean up your act. That's why G-d first took us out of Egypt and only then had us purify ourselves for 49 days in the wilderness to prepare us for the revelations at Mount Sinai."

**Personal Application:**  
**Bondage Mentality:** Just react. Let your instinct be your guide. **Freedom Mentality:** Count to 10. Let your mind and heart talk things over with one another. *Urchatz - It's a clean scene*



**3. KARPAS - THE APPETIZER**

**BODY** Take a small piece of vegetable (onion, potato, parsley). The rest of the year, we would be getting to the meal now. But we're doing things differently tonight, principally to spark questions from the small children. If they ask, "Hey mom and dad! Aren't we supposed to eat real food now? Why the funny green stuff?" - you know you're doing things right.

How do you answer them? "We are doing this so that you will ask questions. You can't learn if you don't ask questions. And the first thing to learn is that not all questions have immediate answers." This is one of the most distinctive elements of Jewish education: more than we teach our children how to answer, we teach them how to ask - and how to be patient in their search for answers.

Dip it into saltwater. These are our tears, and the tears of all our people beginning with the tears of our labor in Egypt. Look at the Hebrew word *Karpas* and read it backwards, *Samach Perekh*. That refers to the backbreaking labor (*Perekh*) of the 600,000 Jewish slaves (*Samach* = 60 x 10,000). Say the blessing that is said over the vegetable, and munch it down. Munch well. You're not going to get much more for a while.

**SOUL** In order to liberate ourselves from Egypt, we need to taste its harshness again, because this harshness prepares us for freedom. This labor gives us the humble spirit to accept wisdom.

About the Seder and the Child: On the night that we left Egypt, we were like a newly hatched chick, breaking out of our shell to discover life and the light of day. It was with those fresh eyes that we were able to experience wonder, to travel forth with faith and innocence and trust. So tonight, again, we enter the mind and heart of a child.

The child is the most important participant at the Seder. In fact, the entire Seder with all its customs revolves around the child. The Mitzvah of the Haggadah is "to tell the story to your child." The child asks, we respond.

But more than the child learns from us, we learn from the child. We awaken the mystical child within us, the place that is still innocent and fresh and able to grow, to be amazed, to sense awe. Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch once said, "If you want to know what it is like to see with the eyes of a prophet, to experience the Divine Spirit resting upon you, look at life the way you did as a child."

**Personal Application:**  
**Bondage Mentality:** I owe, I owe, so off to work I go. **Freedom Mentality:** My work helps me appreciate the higher things in life. *Karpas - For bitter, or worse?*



**Journey To The C**

The Seder may appear like a drawn-out series of rituals, re-ascending into the liberation energy that is present and break free from ascending a spiral staircase - we pass over the sea.

To enhance your Seder, we highlighted its 15 steps, divided into "Body" describes what we do at each step and how; "Soul" suggests an example of it.

**THE SEDER PLATE**

The Seder Plate (Ka'arah) includes most of the ingredients that are eaten during the Seder. Its three matzahs and the six other items are arranged on the plate by their mystical significance and relationship vis-a-vis each other.

Here's how you set it up:

On top of a large plate, tray or cloth place three whole matzahs. Cover the plate with a cloth or tray. On top, position the following six items as pictured:

- 1) "Zeroa" - a roasted chicken bone with most of the meat removed, representing the Passover offering. It will not be eaten.
- 2) "Beitzah" - a hard-boiled egg, representing the festival offering.
- 3) "Maror" - grated horseradish (just the horseradish -- not the leaves and beets added) and/or romaine lettuce, for use as the "bitter herbs".
- 4) "Charoset" - a paste made of apples, pears, nuts and wine.
- 5) "Karpas" - a bit of vegetable, such as an onion or potato (used to dip in salt water).
- 6) "Chazeret" - more bitter herbs, for use in the matzah-maror.

We'll also need a wine cup or goblet for each participant, and a bowl of salt water (in which to dip the Karpas).

Matzah is unleavened bread. It's made from flour (from one of the five grains) and water only - absolutely nothing else - that are swiftly combined, and begin to rise. It looks something like a large, round flat cracker.

Matzah may be flat, but it has many faces: it is the "bread of affliction" as slaves in Egypt. It's the "bread of proclamation" over which we recite the Hallel. It represents our self-abnegating commitment to G-d, and the "bread of healing" to Him. It's the "bread of healing" with which we imbibe spiritual energy.

Shemurah matzah ("guarded matzah") is made from grain that is guarded from contact with even the merest hint of water or moisture. It is baked by hand and used as a vehicle of G-dly connection - to fulfill the mitzvah of eating matzah.

**4. YACHATZ - BREAKING THE MATZAH**

**BODY** Remove the middle Matzah. We need the top Matzah to eat later on. (Blessings are said on whole things.) Break it in two different places. The piece you put back is the "poor man's bread" over which the children only eat a small portion of their bread - saving the rest in case of need.

Wrap the remaining (larger) piece in a cloth. Hide the package until the end of the meal. In many homes, the children hide the Afikoman at the end of the meal. In others, the adults hide it and the children find it. The suspense until the end of the Seder.

Some Sephardic Jews have the tradition of tying the Afikoman in a cloth like that all night, just like when we left Egypt.

**SOUL** Why is so much broken in this world? Why did the Creator create a world where a whole vessel can only contain its measure, while a broken vessel can hold more? Because a whole vessel can only contain its measure, while a broken vessel can hold more. He is low and broken. And it is this being broken that allows us to grow. Perfectly whole, there is no room left for us to grow. When we realize that so much of ourselves is missing - then miracles begin.

**Personal Application:**  
**Bondage Mentality:** I know who I am. Look at what I have achieved. I've only started to grow. *Yachatz - Flat broke... got any bread?*

**5. MAGGID - THE HAGGADAH**

This is it, folks. This is why it's called a Haggadah. Now we get to the story. (As for the other meat & potatoes, you can probably smell them.)

**BODY** Fill your cup with wine (or grape juice). That's cup #2.

There are "four sons" at the Seder table, as described in the Haggadah: the "wicked" child - the "wicked" child. This is the cup the story is told over. The "wicked" child asks the most questions, and the one who can really appreciate it. Children ask the most questions. No children at your Seder? Let an adult ask. There's just one more question: "Why?" Father. While you're at it, ask Him a few other difficult questions for the "wicked" child.

Continue recounting the Passover story in the Haggadah. Hey, you know the story. It's written so that everybody would have something to say. But now it's your turn. Tell every story you know about the Exodus. Examine the Haggadah and see how it fits.

Basic rules of telling the story: 1. Get the children involved. 2. Tell the story in an Egyptian scene until we receive the Torah at Mount Sinai. 3. Tell it in Hebrews. . . say, "When we were slaves in Egypt, the perverse system was set up to keep us in a constant mode of escape. Perhaps that is why Jews have survived. Look at the events of our lives and recognize that they too are miracles. Look at the events of our lives and recognize that they too are miracles. This long by abrogating natural law. The very fact that we are here after 3,327 years is beyond human comprehension.

We say a blessing and drink the second cup of wine at the end of the Seder.

**SOUL** The Exodus is not simply an event that happened to us. It is an event that is happening again and again, in our wrestling match with the forces of bondage in a constant mode of escape. Perhaps that is why Jews have survived.

The experience of leaving Egypt left such an indelible mark on our souls that it ceases to allow his soul to breathe. The story brings our essential self back to life.

**Personal Application:**  
**Bondage Mentality:** I'm free already. I live in a land of freedom. I'm free because my soul is free. *Maggid - Tell the story*



# Center Of The Seder

repeated year after year. But when it is experienced, we tap from our personal bondage. Experiencing the Seder is like time points, but each year we reach a higher level.

Dividing them into "Body," "Soul" and "Personal Application". "Body" explores its deeper meaning; and "Personal Application" shows its effect on our daily lives.

It goes into the making of matzah in a formation dictated by the Torah.

Herbs, one on top of the other, the matzahs with a hole above right: This will represent the splitting of the sea.

Bring. The red stuff that has vine-er herbs" (step #9).

We'll be dipping the bitter herbs in this (steps 9 and 10).

Done in step #3).

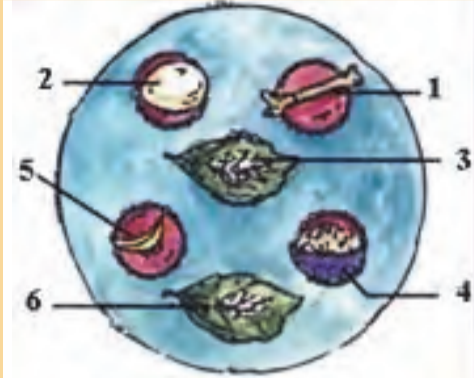
For sandwich (step #10).

Plenty of wine or grape juice (four cups each). And a dish of

of the "five types of grain" - wheat, barley, oats, rye or spelt) and kneaded and baked before the dough has a chance to ferment. It tastes simply delicious.

"affliction" and the "bread of poverty" which our forefathers ate. We tell the story of the Exodus. It's the "bread of humility" that "bread of faith" that embodies our simple faith, trust and devotion. It brings wholeness and wellness into our beings.

It is guarded from the time it was harvested lest it come in contact with the specific intention and awareness that it will be used for eating matzah on seder night. (No machine can do that, can it?)



Remain whole because we'll make a blessing on different-sized pieces. Put the smaller piece back

The tale of our slavery is recounted. Poor people there is no more tomorrow.

Until the end of the Seder when it will be eaten. Afikoman and the adults have to find it at the end. Either way, it keeps the kids awake and in

Under the arms of the children, who carry it

Or make a world where hearts break, lives shatter, beauty crumbles?

The broken one can hold the Infinite. Matzah is called the poor man's bread. It's his way to open his soul and escape his Egypt. As long as we feel that we are just a fragment - that we need the others around us,

Be saved! **Freedom Mentality:** There is so much that I am lacking. I have

Get to the meat & potatoes your soul is longing for in the kitchen. Hold on, we'll get there soon.)

Haggadah. The second cup corresponds to the second. The "wicked" child is the one who needs this. The Four Questions. Of course, they can always ask you? You be the child, and G-d will be the answer for us all.

You're not limited to the Haggadah! That was the chance to get creative. In addition to the Haggadah text, tell the story and get into its deeper meaning. Keep it real - make it profound.

2. Start with Abraham and Sarah and work your way through the story in the first person, in the now. Instead of, "Long ago, the ancient Egyptians crushed our sense of self." Everything that happened in Egypt is now examining our own lives in the dress of ancient Egypt. 4. It's all about the splitting of the sea. These miracles happened so that we would be free. Tell it like it is. We are a people born of miracles, who endured slavery and are now telling this same story to our children in an unbroken chain

of this step.

It is an event that we became. It is who we are. It is the life of each generation in the world, in our struggle with our own selves. We embody freedom. We have always been rebels of society.

our souls that we never stop doing it. A Jew who stops leaving Egypt is like a man who locks himself into the open, and to come face-to-face with who we really are.

Who needs more freedom than that? **Freedom Mentality:** My body



## 6. ROCHTZOH - WASHING FOR MATZAH

**BODY** Fill a cup with water. Again? Yes, again. It's been a long time since the last washing. (And it's good to get up and stretch a little.) Pour the water over your right hand three times, then over your left hand three times. Say the blessing: "Blessed... concerning the washing of the hands." Dry your hands.

**SOUL** As long as we live in the world, freedom remains elusive. While moving forward, we are free. Stop, and we are fettered again.

That is why freedom is something that you cannot buy or steal. Never can you put freedom in your purse and say, "Freedom is mine forever!"

Spiritual freedom is like a marriage between our finite selves and the Infinite, providing the power to transcend the material world while working inside of it. It is a marriage of heaven and earth, spirit and matter, soul and body. And like marriage, it is kept alive through constant renewal.

Our release from slavery was only the first step of our Exodus. We were granted eternal freedom - the power to perpetually transcend Egypt.

That's the order of the Seder tonight: Kadesh, Urchatz - Transcend and Purify. Over and over. Rise higher, then draw that into deeds. Rise higher again, draw even more. Never stop rising. Never stop applying.

### Personal Application

**Bondage Mentality:** Passover? Been there, done that! **Freedom Mentality:** Each year at the Seder, I discover new things that I just never saw before.

*Rochtzoh - Free your mind and the rest will follow*



## 7. MOTZI - THANK G-D FOR BREAD

**BODY** Grab all three Matzos - the top one, the broken middle one and the bottom one - and pick them up. Say the blessing: "Blessed...Who brings bread out of the earth."

This blessing, "Who brings bread out of the earth," may seem ordinary, even odd. But think about it: The earth upon which we tread germinates all the nutrients a human being needs to survive - it is the substance that powers our thoughts, creativity, music, art, philosophy, meditation, and prayer.

**SOUL** We feel an affinity with foods we eat: we too are a miracle out of the earth. We share a common journey with bread. The bread begins as a seed buried beneath the ground. And then, a miracle occurs: as it decomposes and loses its original form, it comes alive, begins to sprout and grow. As Spring arrives, it pushes its way above the earth to find the sun, and then bears fruit for the world.

We too begin buried in Egypt, our identity all but lost. But that furnace of oppression becomes for us a firing kiln, a baker's oven, and the womb from whence we are born as a nation in the Spring. In our liberation, we bring our fruits of freedom to the world.

### Personal Application

**Bondage Mentality:** I'm stuck here under the ground. Life is rotten. **Freedom Mentality:** My challenges in life help me discover the strength of my soul. *Motzi - You eat what you are*



## 8. MATZAH - BLESSING & EATING

**BODY** Carefully release the bottom Matzah. Recite the blessing on the top Matzah and the broken middle matzo: "Blessed...and commanded us concerning eating Matzah." Hold it! Didn't we just say a blessing on the Matzah bread? That blessing was for giving us what to eat. Now we bless G-d for connecting us to Him through the Mitzvah of eating Matzah.

Break off a piece from each of these two Matzos for yourself and for each of those sitting at your table. Pass them around. Everybody eats at least two thirds of a Matzah (one ounce from each Matzah - to do this, they will need to help themselves to an auxiliary reserve of Matzah.) Hey, it's a Mitzvah after all! Lean to the left while you munch.

**SOUL** Since the destruction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, Matzah is the only opportunity we have to actually eat a Mitzvah. That's right, the Matzah you are eating is pure G-dliness.

The Zohar calls Matzah, "Bread of Faith" and "Bread of Healing. "Faith?"

Well, actually, that's a rather feeble translation. "Emunah" is a word in Hebrew, and it means a lot more than "I believe." Faith can often be something people claim when they don't care to think too much. Emunah is when you go beyond thinking to a place your mind could have never brought you.

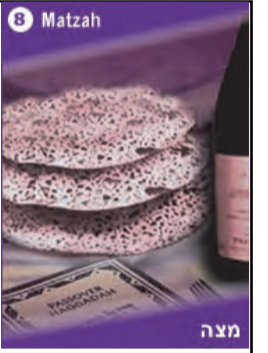
Emunah means touching the place where your soul and essence of the Infinite Light are One. It's a place that nothing can describe. Where there are no words. No doubts, no uncertainty, no confusion, nothing but a magnificent Oneness before which nothing else exists and the challenges of life withdraw.

Eating Matzah is a way of tapping into that reservoir. Your physical body digests the Emunah of your soul, everything is integrated back into One, and your body and soul are whole and harmonious.

How on earth can a mixture of water and wheat baked in an oven contain such a spiritual cure? Welcome to Judaism, where there is no dichotomy of spirit and matter, soul and body. Where the spiritual transforms into the physical, and material objects become spiritual in a perpetual chemistry of exchange. Where the body is healed through empowering the soul, and the soul is nourished with the rituals of the body. (After all, we live in the world of One G-d.)

### Personal Application

**Bondage Mentality:** Sure, I'll eat a little Matzah because that's the tradition. **Freedom Mentality:** I can't get enough of this stuff! Feed me Matzah! Feed my soul! *Matzah - Soul food*



## 9. MAROR - THE BITTER HERBS

**BODY** Grab some of that bitter herb (horseradish, romaine lettuce or both). Take enough to make the size of an olive if you were to crunch it into a ball (one ounce). Dip the bitter herb in the Charoset. Shake off any excess.

It's a careful balance: you want bitter herbs, but you want to sweeten the bitterness. But it still has to be bitter herbs - not a sumptuous Charoset hors d'oeuvre.

Say the blessing: "Blessed... and bonded with us through the eating of bitter herbs." Eat the bitter herbs without reclining. (Don't worry if it doesn't taste that great - it's not supposed to.)

**SOUL** We can never get used to Egypt. We never belonged there. We can never say, "They



(Continued next page)

are the masters and we are the slaves and that's the way it is." It must remain something we remain bitter about, something that is unjust and needs to change.

If we get used to Egypt, it is very hard to leave. In fact, many Jews said, "Egypt is our land. How can we leave it?" And they stayed and died there.

As for the rest of us, when Moses came and told us we were going to leave, we believed him. It was our bitterness that had preserved our faith. This is the sweetness we apply to the bitter herb: bitterness alone, without any direction, is self-destructive. Add some life and optimism to it, and it becomes the springboard to freedom.

**Personal Application:**

**Bondage Mentality:** Look, this is what I'm used to. I can't change. **Freedom Mentality:** I don't belong to my habits. *Maror - Perception or possibility?*

**10. KORECH - THE SANDWICH**

**BODY** Break the bottom Matzah into two pieces. If you've followed the instructions until now, the bottom Matzah should still be whole. Take an ounce of the bitter herbs (horseradish, romaine lettuce or both) and dip it into the Charoset. Shake off any excess.

Now you know what the second pile of bitter herbs on the Seder plate is for. Place the bitter herbs in between your two pieces of Matzah. Say the words: "This is what Hillel did when the Holy Temple stood. He wrapped some Pesach lamb, some Matzah and bitter herbs and ate them together." Hillel understood the words of the Torah about the Pesach lamb, "with Matzah and bitter herbs you shall eat it," in their literal sense. And so he invented the sandwich. (Or should we call it a Hillel?) Lean to the left while you eat.

**SOUL** The world, when viewed from within Egypt, looks to be a mass of fragments. It's a "Passoverly Challenged" perspective. Plain materialism.

Mitzvahs appear to be a mishmash of dos and don'ts; the Jewish people are a collection of irreconcilable individuals; daily life is a cacophony of hassles and just, well, stuff.

Once we escape materialism's gravitational pull, we look back and see a whole new perspective. Mitzvahs are multiple expressions of a single spiritual path; Jews are multiple faces to a single soul; elements of today's journey harmonize together as a delicate symphonic melody.

After we make ourselves into a temple for the Divine, then the bitter, the sweet and the tasteless responsibilities of life wrap together in a single package.

**Personal Application**

**Bondage Mentality:** I have to take care of career, family, health, hobbies, handball, friendships, parents, taxes, the house, the car, the cat... **Freedom Mentality:** I am a conductor and the world is my orchestra to play a symphony for its Creator. *Korech - All together now...*



**11. SHULCHAN ORECH - THE FEAST**

**BODY** Time to really eat. You know how to do this, right? Oh, don't forget the tradition of eating the boiled egg on your Seder plate, dipped in some saltwater. Most do this at the very beginning of the meal. A boiled egg is a sign of mourning and symbolizes the cycle of life. On every festive occasion, we mournfully remember the destruction of our Temple and Jerusalem. Note: The chicken neck is not eaten at the Seder.

**SOUL** This step, along with Korech before it, marks the re-entry we mentioned at the beginning (in Kadesh). We've escaped Egypt and reached a higher vision. But freedom consists of more than escape. Complete freedom is when you can turn around and liberate all the elements of your world from their pure material state, and make them transcendent as well.

That's what we do when we eat every day - we take foods grown from the earth, say a blessing over them and bring them into our journey as human beings. And when it's a Jewish holiday or Shabbat, we elevate them further, into the realm of pure spirituality. As for tonight, this meal is going to be truly Divine.

So don't imagine we're just feasting. We're reaching a higher state. And it's a great way to do it.

**Personal Application**

**Bondage Mentality:** I am a slave to food. I live to eat. **Freedom Mentality:** I am a food liberator. I eat to live. *Shulchan Orech - Feed your head*



**12. TZOFUN - OUT OF HIDING**

**BODY** Grab that last bite. Be sure you've eaten enough, because the only thing to pass our lips after this step of the Seder tonight is another two cups of wine (Oy!). Retrieve that hidden Matzah. If you can't find it, you may have to enter into negotiations with your kids to get it back. Eat another two-thirds of a Matzah. Lean to your left.

With the first Matzah, we fulfilled the Mitzvah to eat Matzah. This one is also in place of the Pesach lamb, which is meant to be eaten on a full stomach.

**SOUL** There is the body, there is the soul, and then there is the essence. If the soul is light, then that essence is its generator. The Kabbalah teaches that this essence remains elusive. It is called "Tzofun," meaning hidden, concealed, locked away and out of reach. It is unlikely to experience it.

We dance around the essence-core, like a spacecraft in orbit, unable to land. We can be inspired, we can meditate, we can pray, but to touch this inner core - the essence of our soul - takes a power from beyond.

On Passover night, we have that power. But only after all the proper steps: destroying our internal chametz, preparing our homes for liberation, the previous eleven steps of the Seder. Then, when we are satiated with all we can handle, connecting every facet of ourselves to the Divine, that's when the power comes to us. Whether we sense it or not, tasteless as it may seem, the Matzah we eat now - the Matzah of Tzofun - reaches deep into our essence and transforms our very being.

Those things you find inspiring and nice may take you a step forward. But to effect a real change, you need to do something totally beyond your personal bounds.

**Personal Application**

**Bondage Mentality:** Seeing is believing. **Freedom Mentality:** Believing is seeing. *Tzofun - Now find the power*



**13. BAIRACH - GRACE AFTER MEAL**

**BODY** If you're still awake now, you know it's getting late. Adults are falling asleep. Kids are having a great time taking advantage of that. But it's not over. There are songs and wine, and Elijah the Prophet is on his way...

Fill your cup with wine (or grape juice). That's cup #3. Say the Grace After Meals as printed in your Haggadah. Say a blessing on the wine and drink it all down. Lean to your left.

**SOUL** The theme of the Grace After Meals is confidence. Confidence in a Higher Force that is with us in our daily lives. Why did miracles happen in Egypt? Because we believed they would. Those who didn't believe in miracles saw only plagues. To see a miracle, you need an open heart and mind, open enough to receive the Infinite. That is the opening we make when we thank G-d for the miracle of our food.

**Personal Application**

**Bondage Mentality:** I thank G-d for giving me what I need. **Freedom Mentality:** I thank G-d for letting me know what He "needs" from me. *Berach - A new opening*



**14. HALLEL - SONGS OF PRAISE**

**BODY** Now fill your cup with wine (or grape juice). That's cup #4. Yes, you can handle it.

The kids open the front door to welcome Elijah the Prophet. Recite the prayer, "Pour out Your wrath..." from the Haggadah. Watch Elijah enter. (Can't see him? Maybe you've had too much wine.)

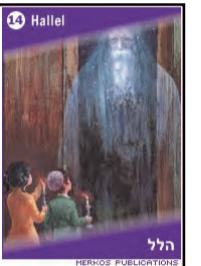
Tonight is called "Leil Shimurim" - a night of protection - when we are secured by G-d's gentle hand. We open our front door in the middle of the night with confidence and trust that no harm will befall us. On that very first Passover in Egypt, we were redeemed in the merit of our trust that He would redeem us. Tonight we are liberated again, and again we demonstrate our trust. It's all there, in your Haggadah. Sing whatever Psalms you know a song for.

At the end, say a blessing and drink the fourth and final cup of wine whilst leaning to you left (after four cups of wine the leaning comes naturally!).

**SOUL** The ancient rabbis clued us in on a key principle in the cosmic function: whatever G-d tells us to do, He does Himself. Of course, there's a difference. We do it in our little human world, while He does it on a grand cosmic plane. He told us to open our door on the night of Passover. So, tonight, He opens every door and every gateway of the spiritual cosmos to all of the Jewish people. To each one of us, regardless of what we have been doing the rest of the year, tonight is our chance to reach the highest of spiritual levels.

**Personal Application**

**Bondage Mentality:** Since it's Passover, I'll make a little change. **Freedom Mentality:** Since Passover, I totally changed. *Hallel - The designated drinker*



**15. NIRTZAH - ACCEPTANCE**

**BODY** This last step of the Seder is easy: expect a miracle. (This is His job now.) Look up from your wine. The table's a delicious mess. Uncle Irving is snoring in his Haggadah, serenaded by the first chirping of dawn. As you carry the little ones to their beds, the sound of Matzah crunching beneath your feet, you wonder, "Who will carry me to bed?"

Was it the best Seder that could have been? Look, it had its highlights. A few times, the kids got a little over-excited. And the horseradish and chicken soup didn't mix too well. Grandpa told some great stories, but we heard them last year. We all had fun with the songs. We told the tale again, with new embellishments, just like we have for 3,329 years. We did what we are supposed to, in our own human way.

And now, let the Creator do what He has promised to do: a rerun. Starring us, in the Ultimate Redemption. With lots of miracles. But this time, forever.

**SOUL** If G-d wanted us to be perfect, why did He create such imperfect beings?

Because what He wants of us is our very humanity. Sometimes we do good. Sometimes we fall. But we keep on struggling, and eventually make some real change in order to create a perfect world. And then, once we have done all we can, like a kind parent helping with the homework, He makes sure to touch up our work and make it shine.

For 3,329 years we have been leaving Egypt. For 3,329 years we have been doing our human job of transforming the darkness of His world into light. And now it is His turn to banish darkness forever, to make our work shine.

**Personal Application**

**Bondage Mentality:** Yaaaa-wwwn! Well, there goes another Passover night under the belt. **Freedom Mentality:** I'm done with Pharaoh; I'm through with Egypt. Take me to Jerusalem! *Nirtzah - Discover your miracle*



# Mysticism, Modern Physics & The Unity Of The Universe

by Gedaliah Shaffer

The reciprocal transformation of matter and energy is a major theme of both modern physics and Jewish Mysticism. These thought-provoking parallels give us a holistic picture of ourselves as Jews participating in the greater universe.

## Parallels of Mysticism and Science

The secularization of Western man's world viewed during the course of the 'scientific revolution' of the past three centuries has engendered a profound dichotomy between man's religious/mystical beliefs and his intellectual/scientific perspective. The more recent dramatic discoveries in the physical sciences have not as yet profoundly affected this aspect of modern man's basic weltanschauung. However, if one explores the philosophical ramifications of some of these discoveries, what emerges from this analysis is a scientific perception of the universe which has, to a great extent, converged on that of the traditional mystical viewpoint that is central to religious thought.

## Matter-Energy Duality; Underlying Unity of Physical Reality

In classical mechanics, a basic distinction was maintained between matter and energy. The various manifestations of energy (electrical, chemical, thermal, gravitational, etc.) may be transformed into one another as may the various states of matter. However, the realms of matter and energy remain entirely disjointed - each realm retains its own integrity and is subject to its own conservation law. This kind of duality of the physical (matter) as separate from the analogue of the spiritual (energy) is central to classical physics.

In contrast, a cardinal tenet of modern physics is the complete unity of the universe. Matter and energy are just different manifestations of the same underlying physical reality. As predicted by Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity, matter can be transformed into energy and vice versa.

This synthesis is even more dramatically demonstrated by the theory of Quantum Electrodynamics. The picture which Quantum Electrodynamics portrays of the underlying ground of reality - of the very nature of space itself - is profoundly different from the static conception of classical theory. The universe is seen as continuously involved in transformations in which matter and energy are spontaneously created and destroyed. Matter in the form of particle-antiparticle pairs instantaneously comes into being and disappears. Although this fundamental dialectic is not directly



**Quantum Mechanics, however, takes a completely opposite view and posits that such a duality no longer obtains. The observer (subject) and observed (object) can only be described as parts of a total all-encompassing system... In Jewish Mystical Philosophy there is a similar profoundly holistic image of man as part of the plenum of reality...**

observable, its manifestations become apparent in such phenomenal as vacuum polarization, *Zitterbewegung* (extremely high frequency oscillations in the expected value of the velocity), and the Lamb Shift - phenomena which make Quantum Electrodynamics one of the most precisely verified theories in all of physics from an experimental standpoint.

## Ratzo V'shov

This picture strikingly parallels the Torah perspective. In Jewish Mysticism the ultimate dialectic of the physical universe is described as a continuous process of *Ratzo* and *Shov*. The *Ratzo* signifies the mystical union of the finite with G-d - the loss of

identity, sense of self and ultimately the voiding of the physical which accompanies a spontaneous plunge into the Infinite Transcendent Source of the universe. *Shov* signifies the return to physical reality, the coming back down into the material universe as a differentiated entity brought into being by the dictates of the Divine Will. Although the Torah perspective provides a far deeper insight into the dynamics of the process described (Divine purpose as opposed to spontaneous inexplicable fluctuations), at the phenomenological level the descriptions of this ultimate dialectic are remarkably close.

Of course, the ultimate unity of all things as manifestations of Divine Will is the central image of Jewish Mysticism. Just as the potential for the infinite, the abstract, the amorphous - the spiritual and its physical analogue - energy emanates from Him, so also does the potential for the finite, the limited, the categorized - the material. Thus the physical and spiritual, matter and energy, are both manifestations of the Divine Will underlying reality and hence can be freely interchanged and transformed. Here also, we have an almost exact parallel to the matter-energy duality of Special Relativity.

## Subject-Object Duality

A further instance of duality which pervaded classical physics is the sharp differentiation made between the observing subject and the observed object. To classical mechanics, man - the subjective observer - can be idealized as being wholly apart from the object of his observation. His interactions with this object are incidental to the observing process. Man's internal, subjective life is disparate from the external, objective reality of the universe around him.

Quantum Mechanics, however, takes a completely opposite view and posits that such a duality no longer obtains. The observer (subject) and observed (object) can only be described as parts of a total all-encompassing system. The process of observation itself alters the state of the system - the conditions of the very thing to be observed. Internal life and the external universe, man and his environment constitute one indissoluble entity. Any idealized separation, any duality so distorts the actual situation as to make the resulting system meaningless.

In Jewish Mystical Philosophy there is a similar pro-

foundly holistic image of man as part of the plenum of reality. To some extent this is expressed by the microcosm-macrocosm apposition in which the universe - the macrocosm - is regarded as a reflection and manifestation of the archetype - man -

while simultaneously man reflects and manifests the structure of the universe.

The theory underlying this reciprocal relationship is that every aspect of the universe is a revelation of Divine creative energies. Hence at every

•Continued on page 12



## Caution: Too Much Science May Make You Religious

by Prof. Velvl Greene

Before birth, a baby lives in its mother's womb surrounded by water. It doesn't breathe. Its lungs are collapsed, folded between the two upper chambers of the heart. There's a hole in its heart so the blood circulates. And there's a tube connecting the aorta to the pulmonary artery.

Within ten minutes of birth, its lungs have to expand, the hole in its heart has to heal, the tube has to seal off.

In fact, 67 different steps have to happen in sequence so that the baby can go from a creature that lives in water to an oxygen-breathing baby. Miraculously, these things take place routinely every minute of every day.

That is science, when we understand what happens. And we know that no human being or scientist could have developed or engineered this sequence. If a company tried to build it, it wouldn't work.

Indeed, if we knew what goes on in our very own lives, if we knew what goes on in the birth of a baby, we would thank G-d forever. All of the vast scientific studies that have been made over the past hundred years keep pointing to the concept of order and sequence, and therefore, in my opinion, a Creator.

A professor of mathematics came into my study one day. He was a real atheist. He said to me, "I've just calculated that it's impossible to have the human eye evolving in

the five billion years that they give us." He said, "The person who believes in evolution, that is the person making the leap of faith."

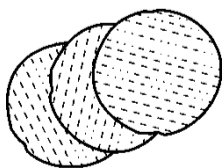
Science doesn't contradict the Torah. Science teaches us that when the Torah says, "I have created the world," "I will care for you," "I will heal you," and "I will provide," you know what? G-d is right. In 1998 it was reported for the first time in human history that enough food has been grown to feed every living person on the planet. Theoretically, no one on this earth should have to starve. And there's a statement in Psalms that says, "You open your hands and you give to all living things its needs." G-d provides. And that's what science says: You know what? He is right. When a doctor heals a patient, science says: You know what? He is right. G-d provides.

There has never been a rabbi who has ever said to a scientist, "stop searching." There's never been a rabbi who has said, "quit looking." Because the ultimate believer of truth, and the Torah is all truth, will ultimately believe that anything you find in nature that is true will reflect the truth of G-d.

When I was younger, I worked for the NASA program. And I looked for life on Mars. We spent hundreds of millions of dollars looking for life on Mars - for which, if you haven't been thanked as taxpayers before, let me thank you. During that time I

•Continued on page 12

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3 MATZOT & 4 CUPS  
Continued from page 6



giving to us Jews, irrespective of our collective lowly spiritual state), there are three fathers. And, since four represents taking and developing through our own effort (seen in the fourth verse, after effort on the Jew's part), there are four mothers.

The same is true with the two parts of Torah. The written Torah is called, "The musar [discipline] of your father," because it is given to us completely by G-d, with us having no input. It is similar to redemption from above, symbolized by matzah, a biblical commandment.

However, the Oral Torah (the Mishnah and the Talmud) is called, "The Torah of your mother," because our great rabbis developed and fleshed out its details, showing the importance of personal involvement in the Torah.

This is similar to the redemption through our effort, symbolized by wine, a rabbinical enactment.

You may ask, the fourth is only one, so why do we have four cups of wine?

Because, through our effort, we reveal that the essence and the purpose of the first three is for the fourth, so our effort begets all four. Hence four cups of wine.

May we soon merit to see the final redemption, which we deserve and earned. The time has come.

*Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz - father of seven, husband of Dina, and spiritual leader at Chabad Jewish Center in Temecula, Calif. - has been rendered immobile by ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease). Unable to speak or type, he uses his eyes to write heartfelt thoughts on the weekly Torah portion.*



MYSTICISM, MODERN PHYSICS  
Continued from page 11

level of the cosmogenic process there is expressed the pattern of the same primal Divine creative energies - a "homoeomorphism" - at the level of the individual, human society and the totality of the universe.

**Outer and Inner Environment:**

**A Reflexive Relationship**

Another major way in which Jewish mysticism vitates the artificial subject-object distinctions is in its representation of man as the one who internalizes his environment. Man cannot remain a separate, objective observer. He internalizes all external experiences to which he is exposed and incorporates them into his very being.

When exposed to the potential for evil in the world man does not remain aloof. He assimilates part of that evil within himself, thus making his efforts to overcome his grosser nature that much more difficult. The nature of the environment within which man lives profoundly affects his perception and understanding of the world around him. On the other hand, man's actions - the manner in which he comports himself in his world - profoundly affect on a physical as well as metaphysical level the very nature of the world around him.

In marked contrast to most mystical systems, Jewish Mysticism is profoundly action oriented. The most exalted flights of metaphysical speculation, the most sublime states of ecstatic mystical union are a valueless perversion of man's purpose if they are not coupled with a *B'chein* - a constructive, practical consequence with respect to man's life and relationships in the here and now - the material world around him. Whether it is to sensitize him in his relationships with his fellow man or to re-inspire him to higher devotion to his Creator through his actions (mitzvot) on this world, some positive behavioral modification is of crucial importance.

Man, the internal subject, and his universe, the external object, must become a synthesized whole.

*Gedaliah Shaffer attended the M.I.T. as an undergraduate, and received his M.A. in theoretical physics at Princeton University. He passed away in a tragic accident in March 2007.*



MODEH ANI  
Continued from page 5

to the ground with its insistence that a merciful G-d is in every moment. The flight was full. The supervisor wouldn't let me buy another ticket in the name of Lesley, to match my passport. Please let this be smooth, I beseeched G-d. Maybe there was another airline going out that evening, or maybe not. Did I really want to start traipsing around the airport, with my emotions trapped, detained from where I ought to be?

Calling on the name of my mother, Jochebed, mother of Moses who brought our great nation the Torah, I proffered a smile. "Leah is my Hebrew name," I said. "I am Jewish, and I must arrive in England tomorrow morning to be at my mother's burial." Another exchange or two with the supervisor, and then a few minutes later I headed for the gate.

In class, I learned to say *Modeh Ani* to kick-start the day. I learned the words, how

to punctuate them, and what they mean. "Your faithfulness is great." Faith in me, that is. G-d has faith enough in me that today I will make my life worth His while, that I will cleave to Him today, that I will do His will, that I will keep His laws, and that I will be where I need to be. G-d has faith enough in me to give me life today. Just as the Divine order in nature causes the sun to rise and set, so does His will give me life. My teacher taught it so thoroughly that a day does not begin without this short recitation.

G-d's presence was visible to me in every instant, at the most heart-wrenching, devastating time. *Modeh Ani* brought G-d into the moment in which I woke to the news of my mother's passing; it stayed with me in each part of the journey that landed me on English soil, and in every moment since. *Modeh Ani* changed the way I live and the way I see life. It is the bridge between living and being alive.

TOO MUCH SCIENCE  
Continued from page 11  
asked the Rebbe, "Is this right? Can I really do this?"

Other religions say you shouldn't search. And the Torah doesn't say there's life on Mars." The Rebbe replied in Yiddish, "Professor Green, you should look for life on Mars. And if you don't find it there, you should look elsewhere. And if you don't find it there, you should look else-

where. Because for you to sit here and say that G-d didn't create life elsewhere is to put limits on G-d, and no one can do that."

*A former Fulbright scholar and pioneer in exobiology, Professor Velvl Greene spent years working for NASA searching for life on Mars. He continued to lecture right up until his passing in 2011.*

STORY - BRILLIANT HUES  
Continued from page 2

"Elana, are you ready?" Are you ready to sing on this special night? To sing praise to G-d - not just for the salvations and the miracles that we experience on a daily basis, but for the dark colors

that help us identify and make contrast to the bright light. Are you ready to see the whole picture - to appreciate all those beautiful hues and tones? Are you ready to recognize that the black is as much a part of the Masterpiece as the white?

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# Moses Or Pharaoh: Which Mindset Are You?

by Hanna Perlberger

You have a decision to make. Before you lies a conflict you haven't been able to resolve, or a new reality that is causing anxiety and stress. Or maybe something in your life is asking you to take a leap of faith, change your perspective or become a bigger version of yourself.

Are you willing to open up to new possibilities? Or will you shut down and stick with what you know? Are you searching for truth or defending an agenda? That choice may depend on how you define yourself, your mission in life - and what you are willing to see.

The Torah tells us about two polar opposite personalities - Moses and the Pharaoh - one who committed one of the most transcendent actions recorded in the Torah, and the other, who committed one of the most heinous.

One was a servant of G-d, who brought redemption and light; the other a self-proclaimed "god" who served his own agenda and brought destruction and darkness. Yet they shared something in common: the word, "Behold!"

With that one word, both Moses and Pharaoh had paradigm shifts, and they both set into motion world events consistent with their respective visions.

## What Have You Done For Me Lately?

The Torah introduces us to Pharaoh as a "new king who did not know Joseph." It is patently impossible that any Egyptian ruler would not have known the "Joseph

Story" and how the Jewish people came to be in Egypt. At first, the Jews were honored guests and invited to settle in Egypt as appreciation for Joseph having not just saved Egypt from famine, but filling Egyptian coffers beyond imagination as the entire civilized world showed up on Egypt's doorstep in need of grain.

But there is a dark side to appreciation.

For someone like Pharaoh, who considered himself all-powerful and divine, it was mortifying to feel indebted to the Jewish people - and their G-d. And so, with the death of Jacob, Joseph and all his brothers, Pharaoh shirked off any vestige of gratitude. It was, therefore, not a case of "not knowing," but creating a new historical/political narrative that recast a people that had been meaningful contributors to society into a so-called threat to that very society.

As any good despot knows, the shortest road to power is to create an enemy and then dedicate yourself to its destruction.

## The Process Of Dehumanization

The Torah records Pharaoh's words and we see in those words the blueprint for anti-Semitism (in fact, it is said that Hitler modeled his propaganda machine after Pharaoh's strategy). "Behold! The people, the Children of Israel are more numerous and stronger than we. Come, let us outsmart it lest it become numerous, and it may be that

if a war will occur, it may join our enemies, and wage war against us and go up from the land." To refer to the Jewish people as an "it" is to dehumanize them.

Brené Brown defines dehumanization as "the psychological process of demonizing the enemy, making them seem less than human and hence not worthy of humane treatment. Once we see people on 'the other side' of a conflict as morally inferior and even dangerous, the conflict starts

**Moses and Pharaoh shared something in common: the word, "Behold!"**  
**With that one word, they both had paradigm shifts, and both set into motion world events consistent with their respective visions.**  
**Behold! The moments of life ask for your response. What will you see?**

being framed as good versus evil." Thus, we are free to "behold" any perception or narrative we want to create and nothing is off the table - oppression, subjugation, slavery, genocide, etc.

## My Way Or The Highway

What this can look like in a relationship is the "my way or the highway" attitude - an



ultimatum to "take it or leave it," where the other person must conform or suffer the consequences.

In asserting our absolute autonomy, if we come home late without a heads up, we may blow away our upset partner for being "controlling." Our sense of time prevails; the thermostat is set at our comfort level. We make unilateral decisions since we don't see other people's opinions or feelings as worthy of consideration.

## The Way of Moses

While tending the flock of his father-in-law, Moses noticed one of the sheep was missing. Concerned for its safety, he was in hot pursuit when he came upon an unusual sight: "Behold! The bush was burning in the fire but was not consumed." That in itself required a level of awareness for Moses could easily have been too preoccupied with looking for the sheep to see that there was something very peculiar about a common brush fire. But Moses had a history of "noticing."

The first time we meet him as an adult, Moses is the "Prince of Egypt." Removed from the confines of the palace, he witnessed the suffering all around him, and when he observed a taskmaster viciously beating a Jewish slave, he took action and killed the man. Fleeing Egypt, Moses arrived in Midian, and when he saw a group of women being tormented by shepherds he came to their

rescue. While we're usually in touch with our own suffering, seeing it in others is not so common.

G-d did not call out to Moses until Moses made a point of showing his willingness to enter this unknown territory - "to turn aside and look." Then, G-d summoned him, "Moses, Moses!" to which Moses replied, "Here I am." This pivotal moment was built on a lifelong pursuit of truth, no matter where it led.

Behold! For everything in life asks for our attention. That's the challenge. It is a struggle to remain open and not grow numb when negative news pounds our psyche daily. On the other hand, there is a price to pay when we cannot see the suffering of others. Says neuroscientist Rick Hanson, "You miss information about the nature of life, miss chances to have your heart opened, miss learning what your impact on others might be." And closer to home, "Small issues that could have been resolved early on grow until they blow up. People don't like having their pain overlooked."

As a servant of G-d, Moses was always ready to serve the moment, whether saving a lost sheep or an entire nation. "Here I am," went his refrain. By being selfless, he had everything! In contrast, Pharaoh served only himself - and wound up with nothing.

Behold! The moments of life ask for your response.

What will you see?




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*...I enjoyed all of the sessions and I especially enjoyed seeing the Rebbe's office and study as it reinforced my great admiration of the Rebbe as very humble and scholarly man with the capacity for great love for the Jewish people. ... The bottom line was that I wanted to spend some quality time improving my understanding of the Yiddishkeit of Chabad - the fact is that I learned more than I thought I would and I am eager to go again this year. I hope to see you there!! - Rick S. Geiger*

*A wonderful way to get to know Crown Heights and learn about the Rebbe. Everyone made us feel very welcome and grateful to be there. We've been to the Ohel before, but this trip gave us a much deeper perspective. And almost as important as all the above, the food was fantastic! - Steven & Olga Bann*

*My experience with Shabbat In The Heights was highly meaningful and enjoyable. It was a whirlwind of amazing activities and opportunities - from staying with a lovely family to attending prayer services and informative lectures by noted rabbis and educators. ... Throughout the weekend the food was endless and delicious at every turn... My favorite moment was to return to the shul to privately pray late in the evening, and look down from above to observe some students studying in the yeshiva. The entire trip was an opportunity to be a true part of the community and to feel a close connection to prayer and to Hashem. It was an incredible experience to simply be in Crown Heights, to walk through the wide open main streets and to watch the closeness of the community in action. I felt safe, connected and enriched. I am truly glad to have had this experience. - Lisa A. Fogel*