

## **Pesach - Rabbi Yosef Y. Serebryanski**

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### **Making Your Move**

When a person is so proud that he/she won't trust anyone only his/her self, it presents a medium for ego (chametz) to take over. Self-reliance is a good thing. However, when it is exaggerated, it displays itself as a kind of arrogance that says that no one else can handle the situation as well as me. One of the aspects of humility and humbleness when handling a situation is thinking or believing that someone else (even if you do not know who that is) is more suited for the job.

The Jews left Egypt with the uncertainty of not knowing what type of journey was ahead of them. Lack of definition or comfort does not easily allow ego to form. Once a person acclimates to new circumstances, the possibility of over-confidence can arise, yet it does not happen initially.

After a week's travel from Egypt the people came to a large body of water. It was a sea that suddenly revealed a strip of dry land on which they safely travelled onwards. The Egyptians who were following them, drowned.

The slaves who left Egypt did not do so with ego or pride. Thus, in that situation, what was previously concealed became revealed to them. However, the Egyptians who chased them were brimming with pride. That is the reason that in the very same space that the Jewish people were able to find safety, the Egyptians drowned. The ego that was displayed was one in which individuals believed in their own greatness. They held no belief and trust in the higher power beyond their scope of vision.

There are things that are concealed to some at the same time that they are revealed to others. The timing of an event has a direct impact on its result. Thus there are preferable times for sharing or not sharing in kind. There are times to move forward and times to stay put. Everything that happens only does so in its proper time. We must become aware that pursuing our desires can have a converse reaction when we do not maintain focus on the issue of balance in its proper time.

Life takes us on a journey that involves our physical being along with our emotions, thoughts, feelings and senses. This combination is what fuses our physical being with our spiritual self, (those things that represent the soul's consciousness and non-tangible parts of our being), including our relational existence with the entire universe. Movement depends on a reaction based in the viewer or any person's personal point of perception. This can make the difference between forward movement and stagnation.

In the story of Eliyahu (Elijah) the prophet, he confronted the prophets of Baal saying to them (Kings1, 18:21) **“Till when will you continue to vacillate between two opinions.”** Basically, he was asking them to define the issue of whether they would continue to worship idols or whether they would worship the Creator. His use of the word poseach – to vacillate is the same as Pesach – Passover.

Thus, there is another meaning for the holiday of Passover. It represents the vacillation that exists within all of us when we make decisions that are life changing. This season represents special opening for change and growth. We are all faced with the option of exiting those spaces that enslave us.

The journey and decision is not simple. As Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev said, “God, you opened the physical in front of people and concealed the spiritual. If that is the case, why is it that you wonder why they do not choose the spiritual? Open the spiritual and soul in front of people, conceal the physical, and then see what they can do!”

Various powers create rules and laws that seek to control through intimidation and fear. This is why the world continues to wallow in misery and horror. Releasing oneself from that type of stronghold requires commitment to learning the truth. Once that knowledge exists the vacillation disappears.

If we apply the same strength of conviction as a filter to all things, we will be less likely to fall prey to the grip of lies whether it is from mass media, internet, our doctor's office or our pulpits. When leaders decide to promote only truth, they will find that they have more strength and backing than they would have gained through the use of any number of lies.

We need to make a decision on which side we want to be. We must not limit ourselves to the world we see. Instead, we should keep an open door to a future that is beyond our present perception. All the descriptions that people give of the future are based on the results of their own limited abilities. Let them go, and be open to where the Creator and creation will take us.

This was the problem of the Jewish people in the wilderness. Physically, they went on the journey. Yet they were not willing to accept where their God wanted to take them. They wanted to revert to something that they were used to, something that was tangible to them that came from their past. Their desire blocked them. They revealed in satisfaction from being in the space in which they were stuck. It was clearly more desirable to think about returning to their past than it was to travel to an uncertain and thus unguaranteed future.

Now is the time to let go of those attachments and be open to an undefined future. That is the thing that will take us and the whole world into a future with none of the chocked off limitations that currently reside in space which we have become far too comfortable and falsely fattened.

One of the worst things is the starvation that occurs in the presence of proper nourishment. There is starvation that occurs physically as well as that which occurs emotionally and spiritually. Let us free our bodies, hearts and souls so that we may absorb those "nutrients" that allow our progress.

### **Asking the right question**

If God created the world, why doesn't God fix it? How can people be expected to be responsible for their actions when the God who created them is not? God allows evil and negative to exist keeping people and the world in a cycle that hurts everyone. There are those who are called Holy people, some of them are even worshiped by

people, how come they could not fix the world? Where have we gone off the track in our perspective of this existence? This whole existence seems to be off balance and we always have something that eludes our comprehension.

These and other questions are basic for any person to ask. One reason that some people do not want to ask these questions is because it can cause some people to give up on life and decide it is hopeless. They decide God does not exist or what we do in this life is irrelevant. Most people who give up do so even without these questions. They do so because life appears to them as senseless.

Some circumvent these questions by expecting someone else to be holier and fix it. Yet, another person cannot help to fix your world without your willing participation.

A problem or question must be addressed or the issue will come up again and again till a person finds a way to deal with the question or the question deals with them. Society continues its way with the same issues coming up all the time. While individuals may have learned positive lessons from the past there are those who have an agenda finding ways to keep corruption and imbalance part of the fiber of mankind.

The Israelites left Egypt and still remind themselves of it on a daily basis culminating in and intensifying it with a festival of remembrance. Why was the exodus from Egypt not an eternal redemption, why was it only temporary? It is a memory of a freedom and yet they slave to make it into a festival?

There are four parts to Torah study. They are called Pardes (orchard) which is an acronym for the first letters of the words Pshat (simple meaning), Remez (hinted meaning), Drush (investigative meaning) and Sod (secret meaning). On Passover evening we read a book called the Haggadah.

The parts of the Haggadah are called Seder - order. The Hebrew word Seder has three letters reflecting three ways of Torah interpretation but not the Pshat that refers to simple meaning. This is because on a simple level nothing makes sense. We make sense of things by looking at what it could mean in some way but often skip the simplest perspective because we do not have an answer.

The simple answer is that we do not understand since existence is essentially beyond our comprehension. It comes from a place that we do not comprehend and goes to

a future that we may have no clue of. The wisdom and intelligence of the universe and how each detail is so comprehensive and fits together in a variety of ways is far beyond human imagination. We are able to perceive only a minute amount of it allowing us to know that there is much wisdom there.

One reason we constantly remember the exodus from Egypt is to remind us that it did not serve everyone, only a specific group of people. It was a limited redemption. The redemption that is eternal is when all are redeemed at the same moment. We are here to learn lessons, teach by example, help others and other matters that can happen here but they are all time limited matters. As long as one person is imbalanced or has an agenda, society as a whole will never have a complete redemption.

The Israelites were redeemed to show the way for the world to be redeemed but instead the Israelites are stuck with their own issues and have not been able to give proper guidance to all.

We need to allow our self to live with simplicity. As much as we comprehend, the only way we can truly connect with love and become one is with simplicity that has no description. When all people live that way balance will be restored to all existence. It is not an easy challenge to do that with the world around but within our heart, mind and body we need to restore that purity and simplicity. We now have the wisdom of what happens when imbalance exists. There is no need to be afraid of it any more.

When we restore our own balance on all levels we will then have no question about God. When we become fully responsible for our own inner balance the world around will become more balanced and the questions will answer themselves.

## **Pesach**

With the passage of time many things come and go, some are forgotten or remembered, occasionally buried or resurface. Reflecting on the meaning and idea of Passover, many things actually pass over or under us. The God of the Israelites passes over their doors to save the firstborn. In each moment of our life there are

many things that exist that protect us. We do not see them unless we study biology or see what destruction could happen and doesn't.

For years people have been waiting or worrying about some calamity that might destroy mankind. Yet, at the same time it has not happened. Various experiences happen while we wait to see the bigger picture to eventuate. There is a protective field from the Creator that does not allow complete annihilation to happen.

We are busy with many items that require our attention and so do not have sufficient time to read, see and contemplate all that we would love to follow. This makes us uneasy, impatient or unloved and accepting of decisions that we may not have accepted under different circumstances.

The order of the meal on Passover night is said in a tone of command, not Kiddush but kadash, not rochatzim but oorchatz, etc. Rabbi Avrohom Kook explains that it teaches us about daily life. We need to sanctify each moment of our daily life. In order to create the proper environment that can be sanctified we need to clean house including our self. Yet we have physical needs like eating so therefore "Karpas" we initially eat that which is minimal to live from and only later do we have a full meal.

Rabbi Kook explains "Maggid" telling us how we need to go through all the ups and downs of life to come to where we are. It is through that knowledge that we can find the proper balance in each moment and make it Holy. In the end we come to "Nirtzah" were everyone comes out fine just as the Creator wishes.

The journey is not easy, it is exhausting and often we do things that have to be done rather than things we choose to happen. Before Passover we spend a lot of time cleaning and clearing the physical existence that we live in as a preparation for allowing everything to be what it is. Passover is about allowing God to run God's world and for us to reflect on running the world we know. By listening and focusing on the Creator in all creation we elevate our self and the world around us.

## **Exodus**

The movements of our planet communicate in silence. We are constantly surrounded by the vibrations and frequencies of the noise that we create, preventing us from hearing the silence.

Sitting in silence and taking no action does little to improve our life or the lives of others. Wise words may provide guidance, yet many use words to cover for actions not taken or to create a false picture for themselves and others.

While actions speak louder than words, the general society continues to be glued to the words which may sound constructive but are, in fact, destructive. They continue to vote into power or support those who promote that destructiveness. The words they use may sound convincing, yet they are chosen purposefully to cover corruption and deception. They often prey upon innocents who are pure and helpful, exploiting their connections and ideas to propel themselves at the expense of others.

We are woefully unfulfilled. We suffer from emptiness, with the feeling that something is gnawing at us from within. Our food source has become tainted by those things that increase the profits of others. The diminishing nutritional value of our foods denies us proper nourishment, despite promotion to the contrary. Although we attempt to compensate by consuming more or importing exotic foods from elsewhere, we are hungry and never truly satiated.

This is just as true when it comes to our souls. We may try to fill it with personal selections from many different belief systems. We may run after different ways of life as the result of being denied the truth and beauty that has been hidden from us. Try as we might, we cannot obtain proper peace of soul, heart and/or mind from all of those forays. The truth is that if the issue of our identity is not ironed out at the core, we may add layer upon layer, with no true growth and/or gains.

Some people search for clarification by seeking messages from past lives or turning to people who claim to see their futures. Having a “clue” about those things may seem to resolve their issues temporarily. Yet in the long run the answer is the ability to balance in the present. Achieving that balance can actually provide corrections and resolutions to the past as well as to the future. **FOCUS ON THE PRESENT!**

What we are truly searching for is not something we generally collect or dispatch from our communications and language. We must learn to listen to our inner sense and feelings, our hearts and our souls. Words are not the “be-all, end all” of communication. Rather, they are but an external and distant relationship to our true abilities in communication.

In ancient times when people were open to their spirits they did not require the use of (physical) words in order to effect communication. They built the tower in Babylon by being a cohesive “one,” utilizing their knowledge of all forms of communication. That they were using this knowledge in a destructive manner caused them to be separated from each other in the issue of communication.

From that time until the present we have thus been limited and closed off in the issue of know-how in the myriad of potential forms in which we could otherwise communicate. It is true that we are (currently) able to express many things in words for which the ancients had no form of expression. Despite that, comparatively speaking, we are “stuck” in a much more limited space.

Many people speak of various levels of existence. Among other descriptions and qualities, each is an expression of a different level of communication. As children we are open to communicating in silence. As we develop into adults we are taught not to be as intuitive. We are told that we must block our ties to the intangible in order to become productive members of (the corrupted) society. Have we ever noted that it is precisely the blocking of our natural tendencies in this area that allows the corruption to multiply in its greed, and to conquer even those who champion its existence?

What would it look like if we did not utilize our language skills for the purpose of further obscuring the true reality of this world? What would it be like if we did not have a need for words to communicate? The very need for words and descriptions shows that we are not truly one. We exist within an illusion of creation. That illusion has become the reality of society.

For some people, silence is the only place that has provided a medium for healing. It is in that space that many have found an opportunity to heal and become one with all of existence.

With Passover at hand we are busy recounting the memories and details of the ten plagues. It occurs to me that while doing so there is something that generally has escaped our attention. We have totally missed the point if we fail to recognize that they (the plagues) signify the fact that that a higher power is in charge on each of the (ten) levels of existence.

The Maharal of Prague points out that the first plague was in the water, (which flows to) the lowest place. The next plague was with something that emerged **from** the water; **frogs**. Then came the **lice** (which existed on a level above frogs) **pestilence** on the land, **boils**. Then came things from the higher strata; **hail**, which was followed by something flying; **locusts**. Next came a level beyond that, which brought; **darkness**. The final plague directly touched the souls of people; **the death of all first born**.

The greatest freedom is actually in seeing that everything is an intrinsic part of the one life force. Freedom is often defined by the successful acceptance of the limitations about things that we can do and/or control. We must let go, at least temporarily, of all expectations, purposes and ideas that limit and block us from the ability to acquiesce to the natural order to which we are destined. That act allows us to function within the mode that is exhilaratingly freeing for our whole being.

As we recall the various types of slavery society has been through, we find that we are, ourselves, in a society of slaves. Although the names have been changed, we still are not truly liberated. Slavery and freedom exist on many levels.

Spend time in silence to enable yourself to become open to reclaiming your personal freedom. We don't want freedom to Passover us, we want it to pass through us.

Let us make certain that the symbolic changes we are making will spur us to making those changes within that will make all the difference. Then the spirits that guided us in the past can usher us into our proper maturity. It is up to each one of us to get to that meeting space on our own.

## **Passover**

When the Jews were in Egypt most not all were slaves. Slaves especially after many years do not have their own mind. They simply follow. They were told to leave Egypt they and other slaves with them followed. They saw Moses as the miracle man. In the wilderness they followed and during the forty years nearly all the people who left Egypt died.

It was a new generation that entered Israel but they still had some residue of slave mentality. In the time of Samuel, they wanted a King; they still needed someone to follow.

It is fascinating that this festival is called Passover. Passover represents G-d passing over the doors of the Jewish people. This saved the first born of the Jewish people while the first born of the other people died. It should be called the festival of the Exodus from Egypt. Perhaps it is because we refer to it as Passover that the reality is that the Jews have still not “left Egypt.”

Egypt represents limitations. We are still stuck there. It is time to move forward, yet who is going to spark this opening or forward movement? Anyone who tries is called a heretic by the religious world. Religion never moves beyond its own walls. Perhaps the time has come for G-d to create a new miracle. It may occur by changes that affect the nature of the entire earth. This is the type of cataclysmic change that happened when the Jews went out of Egypt.

Here are some notes regarding Passover and the Passover meal.

Wine is used possibly because grapes are crushed to make wine. And if you drink too much what is inside you may come out also. This represents that as humans we are crushed for deeper parts of ourselves to come out. It represents an inner self-coming out whether for good or for bad.

When we search for the chometz, we are searching inside ourselves. When we go out of Egypt we symbolically leave our own prisons. It is not just about reliving history. During Pesach we are to leave our own captivity. We must probe the present to explore our past and our future. We introspect to change and grow and to transcend ourselves. Contemplation can ultimately unite you with the Creator. Yet the Creator is infinite, thus the search is never ending.

We make matzoh with flour and water, without flavoring, because when the Jews left Egypt there was no flavor in what they were doing.

Some Chabad customs are:

We do not steal the afikoman. We do not dip with our fingers while we recall the ten plagues.

The wine represents anger and indignation. It is poured from a regal cup into a broken vessel that symbolizes evil. Through our understanding, the wine that enters

the broken dish dissipates the evil. The wine remaining in the cup after the tenth pouring then represents wine of joy.

Controlled anger is a lesson here. This is about the accepting of human emotions and using them appropriately.

We all ask the four questions because we are all children of God.

On the first night the matzah is considered bread of belief. On the second night it is considered bread of healing.

The entire Passover festival is one of tremendous belief in the fact that when you believe you are able to heal faster.