

In memory of all those brutally murdered in the war on Israel and the fallen soldiers of the IDF. Praying for the safe return of all the hostages.

23 APRIL 2024 | 15 NISAN 5784

VOLUME 37 | #34

DAF HASHAVUA

פסח | PESACH

PESACH TIMES (FOR LONDON ONLY)

Tuesday 23 April

Candles for 2nd night Pesach should be lit from a long-lasting candle, after 9.02pm

YOM TOV ENDS:

Tuesday 23 April

Jerusalem 7.53pm

Wednesday 24 April

London 9.04pm
 Birmingham 9.14pm
 Cardiff 9:22pm
 Dublin 9.35pm
 Edinburgh 9.40pm
 Glasgow 9.43pm
 Hull 9.20pm
 Leeds 9.19pm
 Liverpool 9.26pm
 Manchester 9.23pm
 Nottingham 9.20pm
 Sheffield 9.23pm
 Southend 9.00pm
 Southport 9.31pm



Torah Readings

FIRST DAY TORAH READING (SHEMOT 12:21-51)

This reading is a section of parashat Bo, in which Moshe relates the laws of the Pesach offering. The blood on the door frame will 'indicate' to God to 'pass over' the Israelite houses and to smite only the Egyptians.

The tenth plague strikes Egypt at midnight, leaving no house without a death. Pharaoh searches frantically for Moshe and Aharon (Rashi) and tells them to leave. The Jews take their dough with them before it has time to rise. The Egyptians agree to let them take gold and silver items. The nation travels from Ra'amses to Succot. They bake the unleavened dough and make matzot.

SECOND DAY TORAH READING (VAYIKRA 22:26-33 & 23)

This reading is known as *Parashat Hamoadim* as it contains Shabbat and all the Biblically-mandated festivals – Pesach, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Succot and Shemini Atzeret. It differentiates between the total cessation of *melacha* (creative work) on Shabbat and Yom Kippur and *melechet avodah*, the work forbidden on the other festivals, when cooking and carrying are allowed. However, the main reason for the selection of today's reading is that it contains the Omer offering, brought to the Temple on the second day of Pesach, and the obligation to count the Omer from this day until the festival of Shavuot.

MAFTIR – FIRST AND SECOND DAYS (BEMIDBAR 28:16-25)

Maftir is read from a second Sefer Torah, from the section of parashat Pinchas detailing the extra offerings brought during Pesach.

FIRST DAY HAFTARAH (YEHOShUA 5:2-6:1 & 6:27)

The reading is taken from the Book of Yehoshua (Joshua). 40 years after leaving Egypt, all uncircumcised males (who had been exempt from fulfilling the mitzvah in the harsh conditions of the desert) fulfilled the mitzvah of brit milah in a place called Gilgal. The nation then brought a Pesach offering and ate matzot. The preparations for conquering Jericho then began.

MAFTIR – FIRST AND SECOND DAYS (BEMIDBAR 28:16-25)

See above.

SECOND DAY HAFTARAH (II KINGS 23:1-9; 21-25)

This describes one of the most extraordinary Pesach celebrations in our history. It took place in the reign of King Yoshiyahu (Josiah), towards the end of the First Temple era, a time of nationwide idolatry. Following the discovery of a Torah scroll, the king was moved to sincere repentance, ordered the clearing out of idols in the Temple and across the nation and he recommitted the nation to a life of Torah. He was unique amongst the kings to return to God with all his heart, soul and resources.

United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

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Next year in Jerusalem!



**CHIEF RABBI
SIR EPHRAIM
MIRVIS KBE**

Why during Pesach do we exclaim, “*Leshanah haba’ah biyrushalaim*” – “Next year in Jerusalem”?

Rabbi Nosson Finkel, the ‘Sabba of Slabodka’, used to explain that in Temple times, the primary purpose of making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for festivals, was in order to experience ‘*sasson*’ – elation. He would quote from Psalm 48:3, which declares, “*Mesos kol ha’aretz*,” – Jerusalem gives elation to the world!

Fascinatingly, a Midrash reveals, in the name of Rabbi Yochanan, that when the Temple stood, all

business deals in Jerusalem were made in a business centre which was situated outside the walls of the city. The motivation behind this was a recognition that in business matters it is inevitable that some traders will emerge disappointed or saddened, and there should be no disappointment nor sadness within the walls of the holy city.

Indeed, Jerusalem is not just a place of happiness, it’s a place of elation. And that’s why, in our prayers over the High Holy Days, we declare, “*Simcha l’artzechah vesasson l’irechah*.” – “(Please, God), give happiness to your Holy Land and elation to your holy City of Jerusalem.”

Additionally, in the *Lecha Dodi* melody that we chant on Friday nights, we sing, “*Yasis alayich Elohayich*” – “(O Jerusalem), may

God give you the elation which is similar to that of a bride and groom under their chuppah.

During the festival of Pesach, we are blessed as individuals, as families, as communities, and as a nation to enjoy the *simcha* of the Yomtov – deep and wonderful happiness. But, in addition, we appeal to Hashem that He will bless us with added joy, and we declare, “*Leshanah haba’ah biyrushalaim*.” – “Please God, next year may we be blessed to be immersed in the exhilaration and elation of Jerusalem.”

Now we can understand the positioning of “Next year in Jerusalem” in the Haggadah, for it appears immediately after we exclaim “*peduyim letziyon berinah*” – “(Please Hashem) enable us to be redeemed in Zion (Jerusalem) with joy”.

This deep-rooted sentiment is all the more relevant this year, as we enter into the festival of Pesach filled with the sadness of our collective experiences since Shemini Atzeret. May Hashem hearken to our heartfelt supplication, “Next year in Jerusalem!”, and enable us to enjoy the ultimate happiness that will accompany the full redemption.



Pesach starts on the **15th** of the Jewish month of Nissan and lasts for 7 days in Israel and 8 days in the Diaspora



The number **4**

comes up a lot. For example, 4 cups of wine, 4 questions and 4 sons!

There are **6** foods on the Seder plate: *Zeroa* (shankbone), *Charoset* (sweet fruit and nut mixture), *Beitzah* (burnt egg), *Karpas* (vegetable), *Maror* (bitter herb), *Chazeret* (another bitter herb)



There are **15** steps of the Seder



American coffee manufacturer Maxwell House has printed over

The oldest Haggadah texts were found in the Cairo Genizah and date back to

10th Century CE

50

million copies of their now famous Haggadah (to put this into perspective, there are only 16 million Jews worldwide...)

This year (5784) marks **3,336** years since we left Egypt in the Jewish year 2448

This year (5784) marks



THE PESACH FESTIVALS IN NUMBERS



ONCE UPON A SEDER PART 2:

Reimagining Imagination



**RABBI
ELI BIRNBAUM**

Head of Community
Development,
Stanmore & Canons
Park Synagogue

Last week, we contrasted the restricted, narrow imagination of the slave with the open-ended imagination of the free person.

Seder night delicately balances the two. As we eat the matzah, referred to as the 'bread of affliction', we lean like kings. The food that is meant to symbolise the very mortar of our slave labour (*charoset*) is the sweetest and most delicious thing on the table! Perhaps it can be said that Seder night therefore speaks to the contrast and paradox thrown up by the enslaved/free mindset. The former is at risk of never being able to dream beyond the parapet of a lived experience totally beholden to the whims of a master. But by the same token, the latter risks losing sight of the wood for all the trees he might imagine.

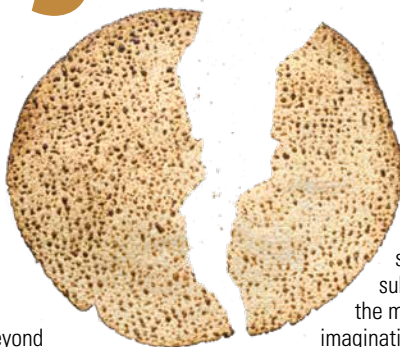
And this brings us to the absolute core of Pesach as a space in time: freedom is not a goal. It cannot be. It is too chaotic, boundless, intoxicating. Freedom awaits on the other side of the Reed Sea, but it is not journey's end. It is merely the start. The true finish line lies forty years in the distance, across deserts, mountains

and rivers. And that finish line resembles more closely a matured version of freedom that has grown beyond the latent embryonic stage: statehood and national responsibility. The hard slog of building a country, culture and faith from nothing.

To begin understanding the process of defining and then refining the free imagination, we must first make the following rather painful observation: the way we encounter stories in the West is many miles removed from Seder night's intention.

Once upon a time, the child within us possessed the ability to build entire worlds! Back gardens turned effortlessly into magical fantasy forests complete with fire-breathing see-saws and knights in shining wellington boots. Imaginary friends competing for time on the best swings.

And then, at some point in our development, we stopped imagining. We abandoned the art of dreaming and outsourced our imaginations to television and film studios, to publishing houses and record labels. To make matters worse, we pay them handsomely



for the privilege!
In the era of the infinite scroll, Reels, Shorts, streams and subscriptions, the marketplace of imagination is so very

crowded and so very noisy that it becomes very difficult to hear our own internal voice, to understand which narratives we genuinely share, and which are simply foisted upon us by the automated algorithms of wider society.

Pesach urges us: reimagine how you imagine.

It does this right at the end of the *Maggid* stage of the Seder, when we are so hungry even the matzah and *maror* (bitter herbs) look appetising. There, we quote the Mishnaic sage Rabban Gamliel (*Pesachim 10:5*):

"In every single generation, every person must see themselves as if they personally left Egypt, as it is written (*Shemot 13:8*): 'And you shall tell your child on that day, saying: "For the sake of this, God did this for me when I left Egypt"'".

In the next edition, we will conclude by exploring the deeper meaning of this teaching, as well as the contrast between the type of narrative we in the West are weaned on, and the narrative that Pesach encourages.

A Downward Spiral?

Sefer Melachim (Kings) I: Chapter 10



**PNINA
SAVERY**

Ma'ayan and
US Educator

At the beginning of our chapter, the Queen of Sheba visits Shlomo HaMelech (King Solomon) in Jerusalem. She has heard rumours of Shlomo's wisdom and wants to see it for herself. Interestingly, we see the *Kiddush Hashem* (sanctification of God's name) that Shlomo is creating with his wisdom. The Queen of Sheba acknowledges a number of times that Shlomo's wisdom comes from God (see verses 1 and 9).

In fact, towards the end of the chapter, we are told that "the whole world wanted to see Shlomo and hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart" (v.24). Such a global recognition of the Jewish God is an incredible achievement. It shows that Shlomo is performing his role as king very well.

On the other hand, this chapter contains many indications that

Shlomo's reign is on a downward spiral. We are no longer hearing descriptions of his serving the people and performing *tzedek u'mishpat*, social justice. Instead, we have lengthy descriptions of his wealth: the gold, spices and pure ivory throne. Shlomo's throne is described with the words: "nothing like it had been made for any of the kingdoms" (v.20).

The text records that Shlomo has 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horses, with details about the trade agreements made with Egypt to gain this large number (vv.26-29). Whilst we would expect Shlomo's armed forces to contain significant cavalry, this seems like an unnecessarily large amount. We already discussed that this is against the law set out in *Devarim 17:16* that a king may not have too many horses (see our article on ch. 5). However, this time is an even greater violation. Not only does the Torah in *Devarim* forbid the king from having too many horses, it also states that one should not go to Egypt in order to acquire them.

It is hard to understand what

Shlomo's motivation for acquiring all this wealth might be. Certainly, we have said before that Shlomo needs to have a certain amount of splendour in order to glorify the Name of God. However, at what point does it go too far? When does this become wealth for its own sake?

Rabbi Alex Israel (Alon Shvut, Israel) points out that the word "gold" appears 17 times in chapters 9 and 10. In contrast, it does not appear even once in chapters 3-5. This is indicative of something going wrong in Shlomo's kingdom, with a clear contrast between the earlier and later part of his reign. For the most part, he has been a wonderful king, guiding the people with focus, direction and true service of God. However, there now seems to be an overemphasis on wealth, suggesting that the power and position have gone to his head.

Perhaps the message is that none of us is immune to the corrupting influence of power. In our next article we shall see the drastic consequences of this sin.

This chapter contains many indications that Shlomo's reign is on a downward spiral. We are no longer hearing descriptions of his serving the people and performing *tzedek u'mishpat*, social justice.

What's the Deal with Shemurah Matzah?



**BENJI
DONOFF**

Tribe Madrich

We all know the quintessential story of why we eat matzah on Pesach: we commemorate the historical fact that Bnei Yisrael (the Israelites) didn't have enough time to bake bread and wait for it to rise as they were leaving Egypt.

We also know that during our Seder it is a mitzvah to eat matzah and during the whole of Pesach we are forbidden from eating chametz; thus matzah is a constant reminder of the magnitude of the Exodus story.

There are two kinds of Kosher-for-Pesach matzot that are available. One is made using regular flour, and is usually made by a machine and square-shaped; the other, "*Shemurah matzah*", is made with special grain that has been "watched" from the time of harvest to ensure that it hasn't become

chametz, and is sometimes hand-made and circular in shape, though it can also be machine-made and square.

Though both are definitely "Kosher for Pesach", it is preferable to eat *Shemurah matzah*, in particular on Seder night. There is huge importance in the "*Shemurah*", the watching over of the grain from the time of harvesting and the carefully monitored 18-minutes of baking. Just like Moshe (Moses) originally asked Bnei Yisrael to guard and watch over the matzah as we were leaving Egypt, we recreate that same dramatic moment in history by carefully watching the clock count down as water is mixed with the special flour and baked for no longer than 18 minutes.

The wheat is harvested on a clear, dry day and from the moment it is harvested, it is inspected to ensure there is no moisture which could cause the wheat to become chametz. From this point onwards, the grains are watched carefully as they are transported to the

mill, which itself is meticulously inspected to ensure every piece of equipment is absolutely clean and dry. After the wheat is milled, the flour is again guarded whilst making its way to the bakery. So, from the moment of harvesting until the actual baking of the matzah, the wheat is carefully watched to prevent any contact with water.

This careful guarding gives the *Shemurah matzah* an added infusion of faith and sanctity. In fact, as matzah is being made, those involved constantly repeat, "*L'shem matzot mitzvah*" - We are doing this for the sake of the mitzvah of matzah.

Whilst we can decide to observe the mitzvah of eating matzah in its minimum requirement, *Shemurah matzah* makes us stop for a moment and think about the importance of this mitzvah in its historical context. It deepens our connection to our freedom story and in doing so, perhaps gives us a little context, and a much better appreciation for all of the blessings we have in our lives.

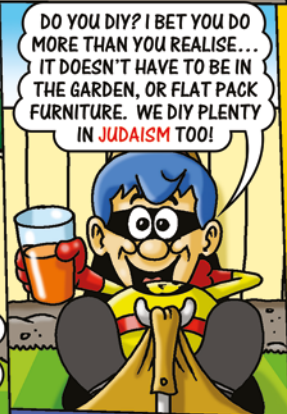
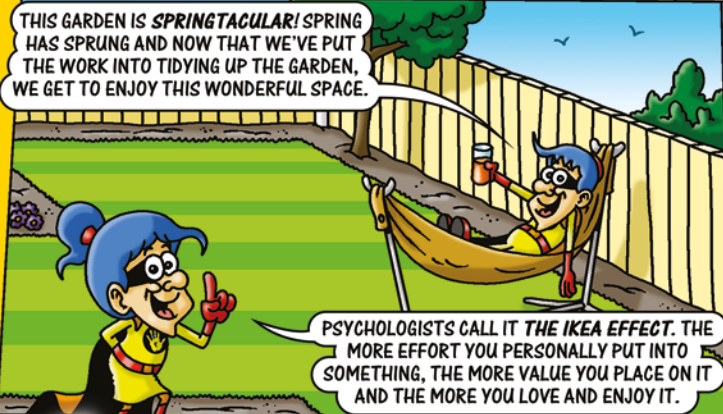
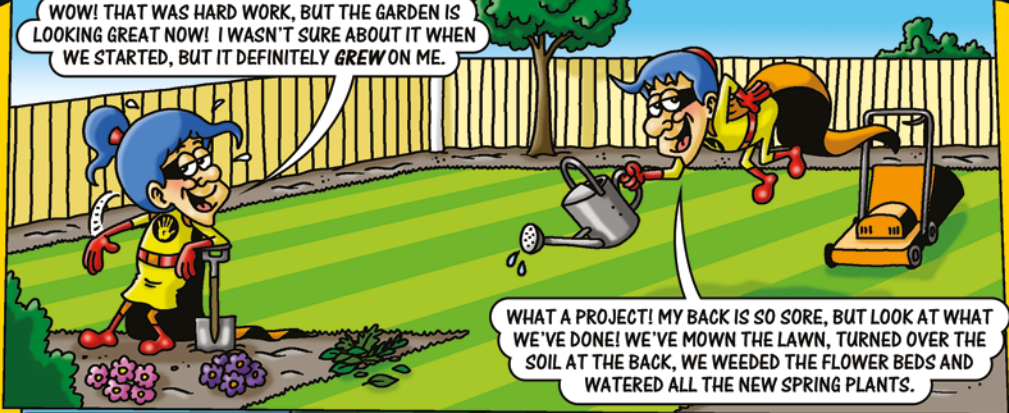
Pesach Anagrams

1. PETY G
2. ASL PEGU
3. REEDS
4. AZHATM
5. ATEOSHCR
6. ACEHSP
7. MATCHEZ
8. HASHRUME



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PESACH: DIY!



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Tribe is the Young People's Department of the United Synagogue: Creating a future for our community through engaging, educating and inspiring the next generation.

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