

2 APRIL 2026 | 15 NISAN 5786

VOLUME 39 | #30

# DAF HASHAVUA

## פֶּסַח | PESACH

### Thursday 2 April

Candles for 2<sup>nd</sup> night Pesach  
in London should be lit from  
a pre-existing flame after  
8.23pm, prior to the seder

### Friday 3 April

Candles for Shabbat in  
London should be lit by 7.22pm  
from a pre-existing flame

(For other cities, please consult  
your local community)

### SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 8.27pm  
Birmingham: 8.35pm  
Bournemouth: 8.35pm  
Cardiff: 8.42pm  
Dublin: 8.55pm  
Edinburgh: 8.51pm  
Glasgow: 8.55pm  
Hull: 8.38pm  
Leeds: 8.37pm  
Liverpool: 8.46pm  
Manchester: 8.41pm  
Nottingham: 8.38pm  
Sheffield: 8.40pm  
Southend: 8.23pm  
Southport: 8.48pm  
Jerusalem: 7.38pm



# TORAH READINGS

## 1<sup>ST</sup> DAY PESACH

### 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.

### MAFTIR (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.

### 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.

## 2<sup>ND</sup> DAY PESACH

### TORAH READING (VAYIKRA 22:26-23:44)

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 (BEMIDBAR 28:16-25)

See previous.

### HAFTARAH (II MELACHIM 23:1-9; 21-25)

This reading from II Melachim (Kings) 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.

## SHABBAT CHOL HAMOED

### TORAH READING (SHEMOT 33:12 – 34:26)

In the aftermath of the sin of the Golden Calf, God "inscribes" the Ten Commandments onto a second set of tablets which were carved out by Moshe. He teaches Moshe the 13 Attributes of Mercy and restates the mitzvah of coming to the Temple on Pesach, Shavuot and Succot.

### MAFTIR (BEMIDBAR 28:19-25)

See previous.

### HAFTARAH (EZEKIEL 37:1-14)

The prophet Yechezkel (Ezekiel) relates seeing lifeless bones in a valley. God instructs him to prophesy 'to the bones'. Matching bones come close to each other, eventually reforming into the bodies that they once constituted. God then told Yechezkel to prophesy to the spirits that they should return to their former bodies and live. This event symbolises Israel's future revival.



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Produced by US Education & Events together with the Rabbinical Council of the United Synagogue

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# PESACH – CEREBRAL OR EXPERIENTIAL?

BY: **CHIEF RABBI SIR EPHRAIM MIRVIS KBE**

Fascinatingly, the Torah gives two very different reasons for keeping Shabbat. Each one contains an essential route to a meaningful and uplifted Jewish life.

In the Ten Commandments in *Parashat Yitro*, the rationale for the keeping of Shabbat is explained as follows:

“For God created the heavens and the earth in six days and then He rested on the seventh day.” (*Shemot* 20:11)

By keeping Shabbat, therefore, we have an exceptionally powerful weekly reminder of God’s act of Creation, as we emulate the moment when He ceased His creative work.

However, in *Parashat Va’etchanan*, in the second version of the Ten Commandments, the reason given for keeping Shabbat is:

“You shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore, the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.” (*Devarim* 5:14)

Here, our Shabbat observance

is a way for us to mark our dramatic shift as a people from slavery to responsible freedom.

These two explanations offer two very different ways to appreciate the presence of God in our lives.

The first way is cerebral. In a theological context, while looking to the heavens and appreciating the overwhelming vastness of all life, the universe’s beauty and complexity testifies to a purposeful, intelligent designer. Here, the human capacity for logic is what leads us to a deep appreciation of God.

However, the second version of the Ten Commandments teaches that there is a second way to discover God – through our experiences. Just as the Israelites intensely felt the presence of God during the extraordinary experience of being delivered from slavery in Egypt, so too, as we experience highs and lows in our own lives, His presence is palpably with us.

This second realisation sits at the heart of our Pesach celebrations. By focusing for eight days on the extraordinary experiences of our miraculous exodus from Egypt, our mindsets

are aligned with those of our saved people, about whom the Torah declares: “And they believed in God and in Moses His servant!” (*Shemot* 14:31)

No wonder, therefore, that God at Mount Sinai introduced Himself to the people by declaring: “I am the Lord your God, Who delivered you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage” (*Shemot* 20:2)

With this in mind, our Pesach Seder celebrations encompass both forms of engagement: cerebral and experiential. We study texts, engage in debate and strive to attain fresh depths of knowledge and understanding. Together with that, we enjoy wonderful, emotionally driven moments of spirituality, which make us feel a deep connection to the Divine.

This dual path to God is the secret of enduring Jewish faith: to know Him through the mind and to meet Him through the heart!

**“ This dual path to God is the secret of enduring Jewish faith: to know Him through the mind and to meet Him through the heart! ”**



# PESACH IN ISRAEL

## WHY IS THIS YEAR DIFFERENT?

BY: **RABBI BARUCH DAVIS**

Editor-in-Chief, Daf Hashavua

This Pesach will carry special significance in Israel, with the return of the body of the final hostage, Ran Gvilli Hy'd, two months ago. The freedom we experienced from slavery over 3000 years ago did not erase the horrors of our time in Egypt, but it did enable us to begin the process of becoming God's special nation, receiving the Torah and the journey towards the Land of Israel.

The return of all the hostages taken on Simchat Torah two and a half years ago does not erase the trauma of their suffering, nor that of the nation as a whole, and neither does it bring total consolation to the bereaved families. But it does mean that the process of collective healing can begin.

Even last Pesach, in the midst of the war and with many hostages still in captivity, Pesach in Israel still carried a special air, where one had a sense that the whole country was taking part.

Every Pesach, supermarkets transform weeks in advance, filling up with *kosher lePesach* products, and spring cleaning takes on a new meaning! Schools close a week beforehand, and sites for burning one's *chametz* and for *kashering*

pots and cutlery are set up across the country.

During *chol hamoed*, parks and nature reserves are filled with people, as many take off the entire week of the festival from work. Pesach is in the springtime, when the Israeli landscape is at its most beautiful, with wildflowers in bloom in many parts. Last year was warm and sunny and we wandered through parks in Jerusalem filled with many families enjoying *kosher lePesach* barbeques.

Many thousands of people converge daily on the *Kotel*, sometimes so many that the police have to enforce a one-way system for pedestrian traffic! The highlight comes with the public *Birchat Kohanim* (Priestly blessing) during *chol hamoed*. Just before the *kohanim* recite their blessing, in front of a totally-packed *Kotel* plaza, with many people also on the balconies and rooftops of surrounding buildings, there is almost total silence, with just the birdsong continuing. These beautiful blessings are then chorused aloud by hundreds of *kohanim*, in a scene not experienced since Temple times!

The Seder night (one night!) feels particularly meaningful, especially

during songs like *Dayenu*, which depicts our journey from Egypt to the Land of Israel and also, of course, when we sing the song *LeShana Haba'a Birushalayim*, Next Year in a Rebuilt Jerusalem.

Returning to our opening theme: this Pesach, like the last two, there will be special *sedarim* for injured soldiers, trauma victims, and widows and orphans. Last year Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Rimon, the rabbi of Gush Etzion, hosted over 400 families - who had lost husbands and fathers during the war - for a few days, including the Seder, at a hotel near the Dead Sea. This initiative, due to be repeated this year, offers comfort, support and a sense of togetherness for those facing Pesach after unimaginable loss.

Rabbi Rimon will lead the Seder, assisted by a choir and leaders - and accompanied by a team of 30 therapeutic staff there to provide professional emotional support. The programme aims to create a space that balances deep pain with joy, community and belonging, something we do each Pesach.

We celebrate with wine, matzah, leaning and great food, but we also recall the hard times with bitter herbs and salt water.



# VA'AMARTEM ZEVACH PESACH

## RECOGNISING OUR TURNING POINTS

BY: **SHIRA JACKSON**

US Educator

The songs at the Seder are really beautiful and inspiring. *Va'amartem Zevach Pesach*, written by the great 7th-century poet Elazar Kalir, is a new favourite of mine. Its refrain is lifted from *Sefer Shemot*: "And when your children ask you, 'What is this service to you?' you shall say, 'It is the Pesach offering to Hashem...'" It is the Torah's instruction to answer the child who wants to understand why we gather on this night at all. But Kalir's answer is far broader than the simple "because it's Pesach." His poem invites us to ask: what *is* Pesach, really?

Kalir gathers a list of events that span centuries; from the earliest moments of our national story to the brink of the Second Temple period. Each occurred on Pesach, and as you move through the verses, a striking pattern emerges.

At the *Brit Bein Habetarim*, the Covenant between the Parts, Avraham, still childless, is told that his descendants will suffer exile and affliction – but will ultimately leave with great wealth, and their oppressors will fall. This revelation takes place, says the *Midrash*, on Seder night – precisely 430 years before the Exodus.

Sarah was baking *matzot* when the angels announce Yitzchak's (Isaac's) long-awaited birth, as is Lot when he is rescued from Sodom. It continues to the night we know best: the original Pesach

in Egypt, when the firstborn were struck and our ancestors finally walked free. Forty years later, on the anniversary of taking the lamb for the *Korban Pesach* (Paschal Sacrifice), the nation crossed the Jordan river, as the waters split once again. That year their matzah was baked from the grain of the Land of Israel; immediately after Pesach, the walls of Jericho fell.

Kalir continues through Jewish history: Gideon's victory over Midian, the downfall of Sennacherib, the writing on the wall at Belshazzar's feast – also on Seder night. Esther's fast and Haman's hanging both take place on Pesach. After each verse comes the refrain: *Va'amartem zevach Pesach* – tell your children, this too is Pesach.

What ties all these moments together? Each is a turning point. Each is a moment of dread; the people involved believe their story is ending. Avraham felt a "deep, dark dread." Lot risked everything to leave Sodom. Our ancestors fearfully painted blood on their doorposts. Daniel prophesied the death of a king who could kill him. Esther begs for our lives. Every one of them chooses action over paralysis – and only afterwards realises that this was the moment everything changed.

A "Pesach moment," then, is not just a date on the calendar. It is the point at which fear gives way to

“ A “Pesach moment,” then, is not just a date on the calendar. It is the point at which fear gives way to courage, and courage becomes the catalyst for redemption.

courage, and courage becomes the catalyst for redemption.

We saw something similar on Erev Pesach 2024, when Israel faced a barrage of missiles from Iran, and many feared the worst. The night of our imminent destruction instead became the beginning of our enemies' downfall. The writing was on the wall for Haniyeh, Sinwar, Nasrallah and so many more; they had no idea and neither did we.

Kalir could only trace the pattern using hindsight. We, standing inside our own stories, rarely recognise the turning point as it happens. But Pesach teaches us that such moments come, and when they do, we must seize them.

So, as this Pesach ends, imagine yourself one year from now. What decision would you like to look back on and say: *that was my turning point? Va'amartem zevach Pesach* – that was my "Pesach moment".

# PESACH FUN FACTS

## FROM AROUND THE WORLD

1

There is a very widespread custom that from the beginning of the month of Nisan (when Pesach falls), one avoids eating matzah, so the taste is fresh come first night Seder.

2

There is a Hungarian custom of decorating the Seder table with jewellery, especially gold and silver, which harkens back to the material wealth the Jews acquired upon leaving Egypt.

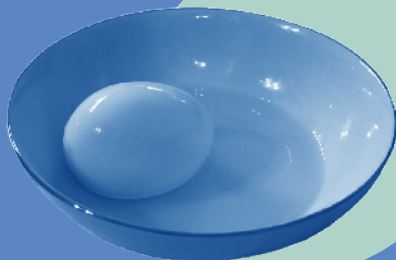


3

In Mumbai, India, there are some Jews who will put a bit of lamb's blood on their hands, smear it onto some paper, and stick it to their doorposts, in memory of the instruction for the Jews to smear their doorposts with it the night before they left Egypt, to protect them from the tenth plague.

4

It is a very common custom, mainly amongst Ashkenazi Jews, to eat a boiled egg in salt water after the *Korech* sandwich. There are a few reasons for this: remembrance over the destruction of the *Batei Hamikdash* (Holy Temples), in remembrance of the *korban chagigah* (festival offering) and also the round shape of the egg represents the cycle of life – as Pesach celebrates of the birth of the Jewish people as a free nation.



5

Another common custom in Ashkenazi households is for the leader of the Seder to wear a *kittel*, a white garment, symbolising purity and spirituality.



## CHAMETZ? WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?



BY: **AVI GROSE**

Tribe gap year student

The Torah teaches us three mitzvot regarding *chametz* that we are required to fulfill on Pesach. The first is **בל יראה ובל ימצא**, which means that a Jew may not own *chametz* during Pesach. The second mitzvah is **תשביתו**, which is the obligation to destroy all *chametz* in one's possession before Pesach. The third mitzvah is the **איסור אכילה**, the prohibition of eating *chametz*, which is expanded to include deriving benefit from

*chametz* on Pesach. These can be neatly summarised as ownership, destruction and benefit.

What is the difference between these mitzvot? Are they not the same, practically?

Let's imagine that the only mitzvah was the first – the mitzvah not to own *chametz*. You might think that you could keep *chametz* in your house, as long as it was ownerless. Similarly, it could be inferred that you would be able to eat the *chametz* of a non-Jew, if you made a condition that you eating it wouldn't change the non-Jew's ownership of it.

What if we consider only having **תשביתו**, the second mitzvah – to destroy all one's *chametz*? Would

that suffice? One might conclude that once Pesach starts, one would be able to buy *chametz*, or even eat it, as the obligation to destroy it falls beforehand, and does not tell us anything about a prohibition during Pesach itself.

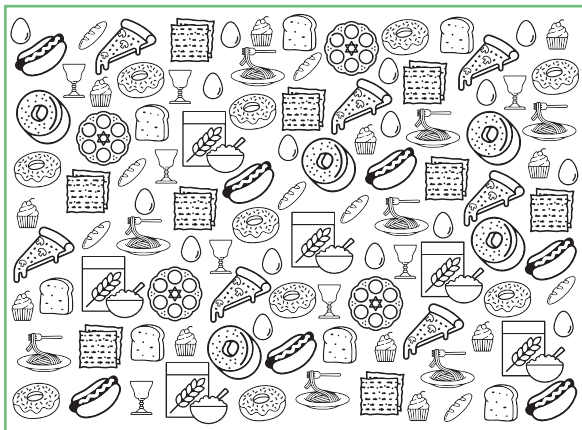
Finally, what if we only had the **איסור אכילה**, the prohibition of eating (and other forms of benefitting from) *chametz*? Well, one might think that they would be permitted to own *chametz* as long as they avoided eating it.

Therefore, we see that all these mitzvot come to teach different things. If we had only one or two of the three mitzvot, we could end up with a very different looking Pesach indeed.

### I Spy!

A challenging *bedika*! See how many items of *chametz* you can find.

1.  ?
2.  ?
3.  ?
4.  ?
5.  ?
6.  ?
7.  ?
8.  ?
9.  ?





# THE TRIBE SCRIBE

PESACH I: BOOK STORY!



It is one of the oldest **Haggadot** still around! **Jewish** parents and children read from it hundreds of years ago – telling the very same **Pesach** story we share at our **Sedarim** today.

The beautifully illustrated **Sarajevo Haggadah** is over 600 years old! It's a medieval **Haggadah**, written in **Spain** in the 1300s – in the days of knights, castles and long journeys on foot.



When **Jews** were expelled from **Spain** in 1492, the **Haggadah** travelled with them. Families risked their lives to carry it with them to new lands. They didn't just pack clothes; they packed their story.



During **World War II**, the Nazis tried to destroy **Jewish** books and history. A brave museum curator secretly smuggled the **Haggadah** out and hid it in a village mosque to save it.



Eventually the **Haggadah** found a new home in **Sarajevo's National Museum**. It was bought by the museum in the 1800s and kept as one of its most precious treasures.



Decades later, bombs fell on **Sarajevo** during the **Bosnian War** of the 1990's. Once again the **Haggadah** was rushed to safety – this time in a bank vault.

IMAGINE IF THE **HAGGADAH** COULD TALK! IT HAS 'LIVED' THROUGH **HENRY VIII**, **COLUMBUS** DISCOVERING **AMERICA**, STEAM TRAINS AND SPACE ROCKETS. THE **HAGGADAH** SURVIVED BECAUSE BRAVE PEOPLE TOOK GREAT RISKS TO PRESERVE A SYMBOL OF FREEDOM.

OVER THE YEARS, OUR STORY HAS BEEN TOLD EVERYWHERE: AT GRAND TABLES, IN TINY HOMES, IN SECRET HIDING PLACES AND HOLIDAY HOTELS ALIKE.



AND THAT'S THE **PESACH** MESSAGE. NOT JUST THAT WE LEFT **EGYPT** ONCE – BUT THAT WE NEVER STOP TELLING THE STORY. FROM **SPAIN** TO **SARAJEVO**... AND NOW TO OUR TABLES.



WHEN WE READ THE **HAGGADAH**, WE JOIN THAT UNBROKEN CHAIN. FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, THE STORY OF FREEDOM AND **JEWISH** IDENTITY HAS KEPT TRAVELLING FORWARD, BECAUSE WE KEEP PASSING IT ON. WHERE WILL YOU SHARE IT NEXT?



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