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VOLUME 39 | #31

DAF HASHAVUA

שביעי ושמיני
של פסח | 7TH & 8TH DAYS
OF PESACH

Wednesday 8 April

Candles for 8th day Pesach
should be lit from a pre-existing
flame **in London** after 8.34pm

(For other cities, please consult
your local community)

YOM TOV ENDS:

Wednesday 8 April

Jerusalem 7.41pm

Thursday 9 April

London: 8.36pm

Birmingham: 8.45pm

Bournemouth: 8.44pm

Cardiff: 8.51pm

Dublin: 9.05pm

Edinburgh: 9.02pm

Glasgow: 9.06pm

Hull: 8.48pm

Leeds: 8.47pm

Liverpool: 8.57pm

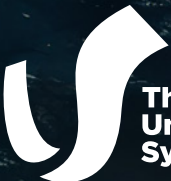
Manchester: 8.51pm

Nottingham: 8.48pm

Sheffield: 8.50pm

Southend: 8.32pm

Southport: 8.58pm



The
United
Synagogue

TORAH READINGS

7TH DAY PESACH

After Pharaoh sends the Israelites out of Egypt, God hardens his heart and he and his army pursue the people, camped at the Sea of Reeds. The Sea splits, saving the Israelites, but then closes on the Egyptians, drowning them. The Israelites and Moshe (Moses) sing the Song at the Sea (*Shirat HaYam*) celebrating God's salvation.

MAFTIR

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

HAFTARAH

Taken from the final section of the second book of Samuel (Shmuel), the Haftarah comprises *Shirat David*, King David's song of gratitude to God for saving him from the many dangers and plots against him described earlier on in the book. It parallels the Song at the Sea.

8TH DAY PESACH

The main theme of today's reading is the mitzvah to appear at "the place of God's choosing", The Temple in Jerusalem, on the festivals of Pesach, Shavuot and Succot, a phrase mentioned seven times. On each of these three festivals, one had to bring special festive offerings to the Temple.

MAFTIR

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

HAFTARAH

The prophet Yeshaya (Isaiah) paints a moving picture of the future redemption, in which justice and righteousness will prevail. Even the animals will be at peace with one another – "a wolf will dwell with a sheep and a leopard will lie down with a kid". The tribes of Yehuda and Ephraim, previously enemies, will unite for the messianic cause. Israel will declare God's Name to the nations of the world and sing His praises.

DAY	TORAH READING	MAFTIR	HAFTARAH
Pesach 7th Day	Shemot 13:17 – 15:26	Bemidbar 28:19-25	II Shmuel 22:1-51
Pesach 8th Day	Devarim 15:19 – 16:17	Bemidbar 28:19-25	Yeshaya 10:32 – 12:6



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United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

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PESACH FATIGUE

BY: **RABBI MEIR SHINDLER**

Cockfosters & N Southgate Synagogue

If you were to ask me what my favourite festival of the year is, I would, without hesitation, say Pesach. The intense preparation that begins weeks in advance, transforming the house into a *chametz*-free zone - builds a unique sense of anticipation. And then comes Seder night, the annual highlight. I spend hours searching for creative ideas to enrich the journey from the first cup of wine all the way to *Chad Gadya*.

The early days of Pesach are completely absorbed by the effort we pour into crafting a meaningful Seder. Afterwards, we settle into the rhythm of the festival, enjoying all the delicious *chametz*-free treats that somehow only taste good on Pesach. By the time we reach the last days, many of us are already dreaming longingly of post-Pesach pizza, bread or a simple bowl of cereal.

So how do we inspire ourselves during these final days? How do

we avoid a heavy dose of "Pesach fatigue" and truly appreciate what these days represent?

The central theme of the last days of Pesach is the miracle of the splitting of the Sea - *Kriat Yam Suf*. But why was this second stage of redemption necessary? Wasn't the Exodus itself enough?

Imagine giving a child a lollipop, taking it away, listening to the inevitable wails, and then handing it back. At first glance, that seems to be what God did: He granted the people freedom, only to send the Egyptian army charging after them days later, snatching that freedom away, and then restoring it with the miracle at the Sea. Why wasn't once enough?

The answer is profound in its simplicity: the people had not yet *actively participated* in their own freedom; it had been given to them. At the Sea, God challenged them to take ownership of their destiny - to step forward in faith, even when the path ahead looked

impossible. By plunging into the waters, they transformed from passive recipients of redemption into active partners in it.

On the last day of Pesach, we also read the passage at the end of *Parashat Re'eh*, which describes the obligation for every Jewish male to travel to Jerusalem for the three pilgrimage festivals - Pesach, Shavuot and Succot. The Torah states (*Devarim* 16:16-17): "*He shall not appear before God empty handed. Each person shall give according to the gift of his hand...*"

The beauty of this verse lies in its clarity: what matters most to God is not what a person *has*, but what a person *gives*. A poor man who *gives* generously according to his means is held in higher esteem than a wealthy man who gives sparingly according to his.

Together, these two passages teach one overarching truth: the things that come easily rarely bring the deepest meaning. The greatest joy and the richest spiritual experience of the festivals emerge only when we invest effort, intention and heart.

Pesach fatigue sets in when we slip into autopilot. The antidote is simple: infuse these final days with purpose, joy and a touch of sparkle. When we do, the closing days of Pesach become not an afterthought, but a crescendo - a celebration of faith earned, freedom embraced and generosity expressed.





THREE DAYS OR FOREVER?

BY: **REBBETZEN NECHAMA DAVIS**

Israel, Daf Hashavua Editorial Team

When Agam Berger was in Hamas captivity, she had the opportunity to steal. She was starving hungry, partially because she had committed to only eating kosher food. As they were led from one hideout to another, through a private house, she saw tins of tuna. The fellow hostage who was with her remembers how Agam refused to take what wasn't hers. Did she do the right thing? This, of course, is one example of many ethical dilemmas that confronted hostages and soldiers in the recent war, as well as military strategy as a whole.

In the lead-up to the Exodus from Egypt, God tells Moshe that he will take the Jewish people out of Egypt to the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey. God then tells Moshe and Aharon, twice, to tell Pharaoh: "We will go on a three-day journey and offer sacrifices to our God". And in today's Torah reading, God tells Moshe to trick the Egyptians into thinking that the Israelites are lost in the desert! Could it really be that God was instructing Moshe and the Israelites to deceive Pharaoh? When then is deception acceptable?

Ralbag (Rabbi Levi ben Gershon, 1288-1344), on *Shemot* 3:18, says that there was no choice but to be deceptive. God does not push people with a challenge that is beyond their imagination to fulfil. Had Moshe

told Pharaoh that they were leaving permanently, Pharaoh would not have paid him the slightest notice.

Ramban (Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman, 1194-1270), on 3:12, goes further. "I am a lowly shepherd, and Pharaoh is a mighty king," said Moshe to God. "If I tell him that the people are leaving Egypt permanently, he will kill me!"

Ramban continues, "They (*Am Yisrael*) are a wise and perceptive nation", said Moshe. If he had told them he was going to lead them to the land of Canaan - where they would have to conquer the land militarily - would they have been willing to follow him? Better to tell the people that he was only going to get them out of Egypt, hence the "three-day journey" line.

Both of these commentators believe there was deception, but that God himself instructed Moshe to speak in this way, implying that it was morally justifiable to do so.

Shadal (Rabbi Shmuel David Luzzatto, 1800-1865), on 3:18, says that we see how harsh Pharaoh was towards *Am Yisrael*. With the talk of a three-day journey, he made things much harsher - "they can go and find their own straw" (see *Shemot* 5:7) so of course it was permitted to be deceptive - imagine what Pharaoh's reaction would have

“ What emerges from all these commentators is there that was deception at some level and, given the dire situation and the cruel players involved, it was justified.

been if Moshe had told the full truth!

The Netziv (Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin, 1816-1893), on 7:5, adds that the dialogue between Moshe and Pharaoh changed significantly after the plague of darkness, such that, when Pharaoh told the people to leave, no mention was made of their return.

What emerges from all these commentators is that there was deception at some level and, given the dire situation and the cruel players involved, it was justified.

Does it depend on whether the person being deceived was himself flouting the laws of ethical behaviour? Hamas terrorists were holding Agam Berger hostage and she was at risk of starvation! Pharaoh was enslaving an entire nation!

(Based on a shiur by Rabbanit Tzipi Egert of Efrat, Israel.)



THE MIMOUNA – A MOROCCAN JEWISH CUSTOM

BY: **RABBI MICHAEL KEDOURIE**

Senior Rabbinical Inspector, KLBD

Mimouna is a joyful and colourful tradition observed by Jews of North African origin, especially from Morocco, which is celebrated on *Motzei Pesach*. It is a time of open doors, sweet foods and communal togetherness, with the traditional Arabic *Mimouna* greeting conveying wishes for success and plenty.

Over the years, on the one hand it has become not only a family tradition but also a symbol of cultural identity; on the other hand, it is a symbol of unity within the broader Jewish community in Israel.

While the tradition's origins are not clear, the word *Mimouna* may derive from an Arabic word meaning "good fortune" or "blessing", referencing the gold and jewellery of the Egyptians washed up on the shore after the crossing of the Reed Sea on the last day of Pesach. The Hebrew word for money or riches is *mammon*.

Alternatively, and perhaps more popularly, it may connect to the Hebrew word *Emunah* (belief).

Another explanation connects the name to Rabbi Maimon ben Yosef, the father of the Rambam,

whose death is believed by some to have occurred around the end of Pesach, thus serving as a sort of *Yahrzeit* meal.

While no single explanation is universally accepted, all interpretations emphasise blessing, faith and renewal.

Historically, *Mimouna* also reflected the close relationship with Muslim neighbours, who would traditionally bring flour, yeast and other ingredients to Jewish families, helping them resume *chametz* baking and cooking. These gifts symbolised mutual respect and trust, and coexistence between the two communities.

Central to *Mimouna* is food, especially sweets. Tables are laid with an abundance of symbolic items and are often covered with a white tablecloth to represent purity and new beginnings. One of the most iconic foods is the *moufleta*, a thin, crepe-like pancake fried and served with butter and honey. Other common foods include honey, dates, nuts, milk, and green plants or beans to symbolise fertility, prosperity and growth. Gold-coloured items or coins are sometimes displayed to represent

wealth and good fortune.

Another key custom of *Mimouna* is hospitality. Homes are traditionally left open, and friends, family and even strangers are welcomed inside to celebrate together. People greet one another with blessings for success, health and happiness in the coming year. Music, singing and dancing often accompany the festivities, adding to the lively atmosphere.

After Jewish communities from North Africa immigrated to countries such as Israel, France and Canada, *Mimouna* travelled with them. In Israel, it has grown into a widely-celebrated cultural event, often marked by large outdoor gatherings and public celebrations that bring together people from diverse backgrounds. Some are not happy with this development, preferring that the *Mimouna* celebration remain in its traditional domestic setting.

In essence, *Mimouna* is more than just a post-Pesach celebration. It is a tradition rich in history and symbolism, celebrating faith, hope, generosity and the enduring bonds between communities.





SONGS OF THE SEA

BY: **RABBI GIDEON SYLVESTER**

US Israel Rabbi



Every Pesach, my family flocked to the Sharon Hotel in Herzliya. On the seventh night of the festival, after our Yom Tov dinner, we joined local residents and tourists wending their way down to the seashore. There, following an Israeli custom, we all sang the Song of Moshe (Moses). This “reenacted” the events of the seventh day after the Exodus from Egypt, when the waters of the Reed Sea parted and the Jews crossed safely, bursting into song as they reached the other side.

The women led by Miriam celebrated with particular joy. Even before the Exodus, they realised that divine redemption was at hand calling for celebration and thanksgiving. They had no time to bake bread before they left, yet they took time to fetch timbrels to accompany the singing and dancing that lay ahead.¹

While most of the Torah is written in prose, our tradition counts ten songs in *Tanach* (the Hebrew Bible).² Most of these follow miracles and victories in

battle, expressing exhilaration and appreciation for God’s deliverance. For example, Devorah, the judge and prophetess, composed a song with images of a cosmic battle in which the whole of nature fights alongside the Jewish people to stave off the attack of their arch enemy Sisera.

Such singing is highly prized because it expresses human appreciation of God’s help. Failure to express this gratitude in song is deemed a glaring omission. King Hezekiah, sadly, missed the opportunity to sing after his victory over Sennacherib. Had he sung, the rabbis suggest, the Messiah might have come. In other words, as we receive God’s bounty, we should not be passive bystanders; we should take note and respond.

As well as the singing that takes place after major events, the Torah encourages us to imbue our daily lives with song, because we shouldn’t only turn to God in moments of ecstasy and exhilaration, we should also recognise the smaller miracles that

happen every day.³

So, King David in his Psalms speaks constantly about the importance of song and today’s haftarah is *Shirat David*, the Song of David (II *Shmuel* 22), in which he recognises God’s hand in all his many achievements. The Levites in the Temple sang on a daily basis. Even the great Song at the Sea is not treated as a one-off event. Our rabbis saw it as an example to which we should all aspire. They teach us to recite it daily in our morning prayers, and they advise us to chant it with joy, imagining that we too crossed the sea that day.⁴

And Moshe’s song has a place in the future too. The rabbis note that the Torah introduces it using the future tense, “Then Moshe and the Children of Israel will sing”. This, the rabbis suggest, is a hint to a future era. A time when our enemies are defeated, the world is at peace, and Moshe will sing again, celebrating God’s justice, kindness and miracles.⁵

¹ *Mechilta de-Rabbi Yishmael, Beshalach, Masechta De Shira* 10, cited by Rashi, *Shemot* 15:20.

² *Midrash Tanchuma, Beshalach* 10.

³ See Ramban, *Commentary to Shemot* 13:16.

⁴ *Mishna Brura*, 51:17.

⁵ *Yalkut Shimoni al HaTorah*, 241.

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PESACH

1-9 APRIL | 15-22 NISAN

DO IT WITH FIRE!



BY: **RUBY
WEISSBART**

Tribe gap year
student

Pesach marks the *Bnei Yisrael's* (Children of Israel's) freedom from slavery in Egypt. When we think of slavery we often think of harsh conditions, whereas freedom is associated with a lack of rules. What would be the first thing you would do if your school decided to go rule-free? How long would it be until school stopped feeling so fun?

When the *Bnei Yisrael* left Egypt, they needed rules. God commanded them at first to offer the Pascal Lamb, eat it with matzah and maror, and, soon afterwards they received laws at

Mara and with the Manna and then received the Torah seven weeks after leaving Egypt. Rabbi David Milston, the head of Midreshet Harova, the seminary where I am studying, writes in his book *'Ki Va Moed'* about the symbolism of the matzah. Surely bread would be a better representation of freedom, as it rises to its full potential! Rabbi Milston writes, 'Matzah means control. Don't let the bread rise. Kosher matzah certainly has the potential to become bread but the ingredients causing the bread to ferment are being controlled.'

This alludes to the idea of control within Judaism. Our freedom isn't denied through control - it's created through it.

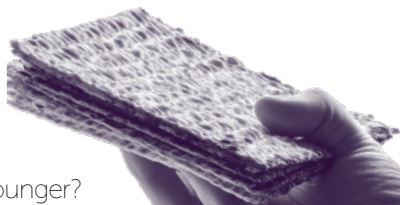
Often it can be hard to see non-Jewish or less-observant friends doing things we aren't permitted to do. Being able to

eat non-kosher food whenever and wherever you want might seem like freedom, but through the mitzvah of keeping kosher we prove that we can control our physical desires. In the book *'Shabbat: a day to create yourself'*, South Africa's Chief Rabbi, Warren Goldstein, writes that 'when physical desire controls us, we become overwhelmed by it, unable to even enjoy it; but when we can control physical desire, it brings us joy!'

When we see Judaism as restrictive and oppressive, it can be hard to find meaning and enjoyment in our actions. It's when we start seeing the rules as freeing that we find meaning in our actions. This is what the matzah on Pesach symbolises - only through living a life with restrictions and control can we attain real freedom.

Questions to ponder:

1. Do you find that certain mitzvot feel more freeing than they used to when you were younger?
2. Have you ever been in a situation where you felt you had too much freedom?
3. What do you think is the right balance of having rules vs having more autonomy?





THE TRIBE SCRIBE

PESACH 2: STEP FORWARD!



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