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Shabbat - 1st Day Pesach,

Sat. 19 - 20 Apr. 2019 - 15th of Nisan, 5779 -

שבת א' פסח

ט"ו בניסן תשע"ט

Issue Number 894

Baal Koreh - Shabbat & Pesach	Mr Michael Ishai Eida	(Page - 354).
Mufteer & Haftarah	Mr Haim L. Eida	(Page-892) (Page -1221).
Baal Koreh - 2 nd Day Pesach	Rabbi Asher Sebbag	(Page - 680).
Mufteer & Haftarah	Mr Adel Darwish	(Page-892) (Page -1222).

Pesach Timetable

פסח לוח זמנים

Passover Pesach (first day)

5779 (Exodus 12:21-51)

Apr 14, 2019 | by [Rabbi Kalman Packouz](#)

GOOD MORNING! Are you happy with who you are? Wish you could change, but don't know how? Wondering how does one make real changes?

The formula is straightforward:

1) Recognize that there is need for improvement. 2) Make a decision to improve. 3) Make a plan. 4) Follow through on the plan.

What holds us back? We think we can't change. Rabbi Noah Weinberg, of blessed memory, the founder of Aish HaTorah, would ask his students, "If God would help you, could you do it?" The answer is obviously "Yes." Then he'd ask, "Do you think the Almighty wants you to change, to improve?" The answer again is obviously "Yes". So, why is it so difficult to change? It's too painful. One doesn't want to take the pain of change. Only through taking the pain

and realizing that time is limited will we change. Whether you think you can or you think you can't -- you're right.

The Midrash tells us that the Jewish people had the same problem in Egypt. Only 1/5 of the Jewish people were on a high enough spiritual level to leave Egypt -- and they were on the 49th level of *Tuma*, spiritual degradation -- and were within a hair's breadth of being destroyed.

Yet, what is amazing is that in the next 49 days they raised themselves to the spiritual level to receive the Torah at Mt. Sinai! Each day we climbed one step higher in spirituality and holiness. Many people study one of the "48 Ways to Wisdom" (Ethics of the Fathers, 6:6 -- found in the back of most *Midrash*, Jewish prayer books) each day in the *Sephirat HaOmer* period between Pesach and Shavuot -- which will be explained below -- as a means to personal and

spiritual growth. This is a propitious time for perfecting one's character!

Rabbi Noah Weinberg created his flagship series of lectures, now available as a book, [The 48 Ways to Wisdom](#). You may also get it on audio at [AishAudio.com](#). I think of this series as the "Jewish Dale Carnegie Course" for getting the most out of life. It will be one of the great purchases in your life!

Q & A: WHAT IS SEPHIRAT HA-OMER?

On the second day of Pesach, the *Omer* offering from the new barley crop was brought in the Temple in Jerusalem. It began a period of counting and preparation for Shavuot, the anniversary of the giving of the Torah and the yearly celebration of re-accepting the Torah upon ourselves. This period is called *Sephirat HaOmer*, the counting of the *Omer*.

Forty-nine days are counted and on the fiftieth day is Shavuot, the Yom Tov celebrating the giving of the Torah. There is actually a *mitzvah* to count each specific day which is done at the completion of *Ma'ariv*, the evening service.

This is a period of national semi-mourning (no weddings or even haircuts). It was during this period that Rabbi Akiva's 24,000 students died for not showing sufficient respect for each other. It is a time for us to reflect how we look upon and treat our fellow Jews as well as the tragedies that have befallen us because of unfounded

(self-justified) hatred. It is a wonderful time to undertake an extra act of kindness; this will help to bring perfection to the world and unity amongst Jews.

There are two customs for observing the semi-mourning period. The first is to observe it from the end of Pesach until the 33rd day of the *Omer* (called *Lag B'omer*). This year *Lag B'omer* is Wednesday night, May 22nd thru Thursday. Many people get married on the 33rd day of the *Omer* for this reason. The second custom is to observe the semi-mourning from Rosh Chodesh Iyar (the beginning of the month of the Hebrew month of Iyar, which begins this year May 4th in the evening) until Shavuot. Unusual for our heritage, one can choose each year which custom to follow. For more on *Sephirat HaOmer* and the 48 Ways go to [aish.com/omer](#).



TORAH PORTION OF THE WEEK

Pesach -- Exodus 12:21-51

This Shabbat coincides with Pesach (Passover). Therefore, there is a special reading for Shabbat of Pesach which supersedes the usual weekly Torah portion. The Torah portion reading includes: The Passover offering, the 10th plague (death of the firstborn Egyptian), Pharaoh's surrender, the Exodus from Egypt, and additional laws of the Passover offering. Also read is

Numbers 28:16-25 including: the laws of Pesach, the offerings of the holiday and the designation of Pesach as a seven day holiday.

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Dvar Torah

adapted from The Passover Survival Kit by Rabbi Shimon Apisdorf

During the Passover Seder we ask the Four Questions. So, why IS this night different? Because on this night we experienced our freedom. Because only on this holiday do all of the special observances, *mitzvot*, apply only at night. On Rosh Hashanah we blow the shofar only during the day. On Sukkot we sit in a Sukkah during the day or night. Only on Passover do so many *mitzvot* apply only at night. Why is this the only night of the year so brimming with *mitzvot*? Because on the night of Passover we not only commemorate the moment of our birth, but we express the very meaning of our existence as a people.

Our sages tell us, "For the *mitzvah* is like a candle and the Torah a light." The purpose of Jewish existence is to be a source of light where otherwise darkness would hold sway. No matter how dark the world around us seems to grow, no matter how dim humankind's future may seem -- the Jewish nation never gives up. Deep inside we all know that things can be different. Deep

inside we feel the call to cast a light on a darkened life, or to illuminate a clouded corner of the globe.

As dark as our lives may seem, we still believe in the power of light -- the Torah -- to illuminate our lives and our potential and to be a radiant force for all mankind. This is our message and our goal. We will not rest until the dark night again shines like the day.

* * *

Dvar Torah:

What does it mean to be free? "Free" means not having outside control over your actions, thoughts, behavior. There are different levels of freedom: 1) the freedom over physical actions -- where you go, what you do. 2) the freedom over what you think about 3) the freedom to make moral decisions. Deciding whether you are going to have chocolate or vanilla ice cream is not on the same level as deciding whether or not to return a lost wallet.

Moral decisions are a lot more difficult to make than physical ones. With physical decisions where one is enslaved, there is no choice because of physical restraint. With moral decisions it is the conflict between your free will and your body's desire.

Pirke Avot, Ethics of Our Fathers (6 chapters of succinct wisdom found in the back of most *siddurim*, (prayer books) asks,

"Who is the mighty person?" and answers, "He who conquers his passions." The free-est person is the one who controls his passions and his desires in order to make moral decisions.



Shabbat Shalom,
Kalman
Rabbi Kalman
Packouz

Condolences to: Ben Benaiah and family on the passing away of his wife Miriam, conformation of the burial will follow. We wish him and all her family long life and free of sorrow.

Dear All: A Hachnasat Sefer Torah is a celebration that centres on the dedication of a new Torah scroll.

The family of our president Ghassan Cohen together with his brothers and sisters are happy to dedicate a new Sefer Torah and Sefer Haftarah to the Ohel David Eastern Synagogue, on Monday 27th May 2019, (bank holiday Monday). We will update you with further details nearer the time. We look forward to seeing you all.

Birkat Hailanot: can be recited in the month of **Nissan** in front of the Synagouge.

Kolel every Sunday: We are still having a Kolel every Sunday at the Synagogue hall from 09.30am - 12.00pm. Everyone is welcome.

THE KEHILLA WISHES חיים ארוכים "LONG LIFE"
TO THE FOLLOWING WHO HAVE YAHRZEIT

02 Nissan Mr Norman Ezekiel	12 Nissan Mrs Berta Lawy
03 Nissan Mr Solly Yona	13 Nissan Mrs Suzette Lagnado
04 Nissan Mr Benjamin Sadka	14 Nissan Mr Joseph Laniado
05 Nissan Mrs Shila Twena	15 Nissan Mr Richard Reuban Hannuna
07 Nissan Mr Abraham Cohen	19 Nissan Ms Angelique Burman
07 Nissan Mr Dhia Cohen	20 Nissan Mr Simon Jacob
07 Nissan Mr Farid Cohen	22 Nissan Mr Meir David Lanyado
07 Nissan Mr Nabeel Cohen	25 Nissan Mr Robbie Rahimian
09 Nissan Mr Reuben Ezekiel	25 Nissan Mrs Homa Sarah Rahimian
09 Nissan Mrs Marcelle Benjamin	28 Nissan Mr Moses Jacob
10 Nissan Mrs Judith Silas	29 Nissan Mr Benny Benaiah
10 Nissan Mrs Esther Silas	

“ Quote of the Week ”

**Freedom is the responsibility
to fill our lives with meaning**