

KOL SIMCHA TORAH GAZETTE FOR PARSHA TZAV/PESACH 5785

Volume 9 Issue 29 (Whole #444) 14-22 Nisan 5785/ April 12-20, 2025

Printed L'illuy nishmas Nechama bas R' Noach, a'h

For a free subscription, please forward your request to keren18@juno.com
Past emails can be found on the website ShabbosStories.com under Brooklyn Torah Gazette

11 Ways Passover 2025 Is Unique

By Rabbi Menachem Posner



Art by Sefira Lightstone

This year, 2025, is one of those rare years when Passover begins on Saturday evening, as Shabbat departs. While Passover can technically begin on four of the week's seven evenings—Friday, Saturday, Monday, and Wednesday—this one is by far the most rare, occurring just 11.512 percent of the time. Having Passover begin

after Shabbat presents us with a host of unique observances and opportunities to be aware of.

The Fast of the Firstborn is Advanced

It is customary for all firstborn males to fast (and the prevailing custom is actually to break the fast by participating in a religious celebratory meal) on the morning before Passover. This year, the day of the fast coincides with Shabbat, when fasting is prohibited, so the fast is advanced to Thursday.

We Search for and Burn The Chametz a Day Early

Normally, we search for *chametz* the night before Passover and burn it the following morning. This year, however, that will be Shabbat, when lighting fires is not allowed. Instead, we search for *chametz* on Thursday night and burn it on Friday morning, completing both rituals a day earlier than usual.

We Have an Almost Chametz-Free Shabbat

Normally, we stop eating (or evening owning) *chametz* from just before the burning until after Passover. But in this case, the *chametz* was burned a day in advance and we still need to have some *chametz* upon which to recite Hamotzi at our Shabbat meals. So even though our homes are entirely *chametz*-free, we keep just a few small rolls (pitas are an easy, less crumbly option), which we will very carefully use for our Shabbat meals.

We Eat the Shabbat Meal Early in the Day

To keep things practical, our Shabbat meals are entirely kosher for Passover, aside from the bread which we eat very carefully so as not to leave any crumbs behind. In fact, only after we finish munching our bread, either outside or somewhere else we can be sure not to leave crumbs behind, we sit at our kosher-for-Passover table and finish the meal.

The Shabbat daytime meal must be consumed earlier than usual to ensure that we have eaten any bits of bread before the deadline (any remaining bread must be flushed down the toilet by the prescribed time).

We Prepare for the Seder on Friday

Since we may not prepare on Shabbat for anything that will happen after Shabbat, we prepare for the Seder on Friday, washing and drying lettuce, grating the horseradish, preparing the charoset, cooking our favorite dishes, and getting everything else ready for the Seders.

Everyone Chants the Same Haftarah

The Shabbat before Passover is known as “Shabbat Hagadol,” the Great Shabbat. There is a special Haftarah associated with this day, but many communities, including Chabad, only read it in years like this one, when Shabbat Hagadol is immediately before Passover. So this year, no matter what your custom is, you’ll be hearing Malachi chapter 3 during your (extra early) Shabbat morning services.

We Get to Rest Up for the Seder

It’s no secret that it’s hard work getting ready for Passover. Many of us are exhausted by the time we finally reach Seder night. But this year, with all the work finishing on Friday, we have a blessedly quiet Shabbat to rest, rejuvenate and be ready for the Seder.

We Light Candles Three Times in a Row!

This year, we light candles three nights in a row, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings. In other years, the candles of the first night of Passover should ideally be lit before the onset of the holiday, just like Shabbat candles. This year, however, we may not handle fire until Shabbat has ended. We, therefore, light the candles (from a pre-existing flame) only after night has fallen, the same time we begin other Seder preparations, and include the special Shehecheyanu blessing. This is the case the following night as well.

We Do Yaknehaz

When we lift our wine glasses at the start of the Seder, we are doing triple duty, as we are both saying Kiddush (which welcomes in Passover) and Havdalah (which ushers out Shabbat) AND it is the first of the Four Cups. This unique composite is known as Yaknehaz, an acronym for the order of the blessings said:

Yayin: Blessing over wine

Kiddush: Blessing sanctifying Passover

Ner: Blessing over fire, said while glancing at the festival candles

Havdalah: Blessing marking the end of Shabbat

Zeman: Shehecheyanu blessing, marking the milestone

We Have a Long Chol Hamoed

The intermediate days of Passover are reserved for outings, family gatherings, and delicious Passover meals together. Since Passover begins and ends on consecutive Sundays, there is no Shabbat in the intermediate days, leaving more time for outings and other activities.

It's Now!

The Kabbalists teach us that every moment G-d creates the world anew. This year brings with it new significance and fresh opportunities that have never existed before and will never exist again. Grab the moment and make this a Passover to remember!

Reprinted from the current website of Chabad.Org

Jews and Money: Returning Diamonds

By Sarah Pachter



Photo of a great Kiddush Hashem, sanctifying the name of G-d

A Hasidic Jew in Brooklyn finds a bag with over \$100,000 worth of jewelry and cash

One good way to combat the antisemitic rhetoric spewing forth is by sharing true stories that portray Jews in a positive light, especially when it comes to money.

Last week a young Hasidic Jewish exchange student was at Newark airport when a random taxi driver handed him a backpack, accidentally thinking it belonged

to him. Before the man had time to respond and explain that it wasn't his, the driver sped off.

The young man opened the bag in an effort to identify the true owner of the bag so he could return it.

He was shocked to discover that the bag was full of diamonds, Rolex watches and cash – over \$100,000 worth of jewelry and cash!

He called his mother who advised him to call Shmirah, a Jewish public safety organization whose mission is to help others, staffed by volunteers.

Shmirah investigated the matter and finally found a number that led them to the owner of the bag, a Spanish-speaking man who works in the New York Diamond District.

They called the man and asked him to come to the Brooklyn Shmirah office in order to retrieve his bag.

When the owner arrived to the office he looked worried and concerned that perhaps his precious goods were taken and that the bag would be empty.

When he opened the bag, he couldn't believe that not a single dollar or diamond was taken. His entire face lit up.

Blown away by this exemplary display of honesty he offered a reward, but the Jewish man politely declined.

The 20-year-old Jewish student explained, "This is just what we do." For him, this behavior wasn't anything out of the ordinary.

This story is an example of the lofty Jewish principle called Kiddush Hashem, sanctify Hashem's Name. Jews are charged with the mission to be a light unto nations. We are G-d's ambassadors in the world. When the actions of a Jew impress others as being a paradigm of ethics and commendable behavior, he serves to bring God's light into the world. (The opposite – Hillul Hashem, desecrating G-d's name – is also true.)

Jews are G-d's walking billboards.

One man's diamonds and cash were returned that day, and even more importantly one Jew's morally refined behavior made an impact and was even broadcasted on the local news, casting Jews in a positive light.

Through one positive story at a time, we can slowly change the face of antisemitism.

Reprinted from the current website of the aish.com website

Rav Avigdor Miller on the Jews Being Redeemed in Nissan



QUESTION: Why does it say that בניסן נגאלו ובניסן עתידים להיגאל – that in Nissan we were redeemed from Egypt and that in Nissan are going to be redeemed again?

ANSWER: About Hakodosh Boruch Hu it says: זכר עשה לנפלאותיו – He makes a memorial for His wonderful deeds; He wants us to remember the wonderful deeds He did for us. And therefore, just like He tells us that every 15th of Nissan we should celebrate Pesach because that's when it happened, so too He will make another great Pesach, a great geulah, when He will take us out finally from golus and redeem us.

And according to this ma'amar, when it happens, it will happen in Nissan. Why? Because it will be a new form of Yetzias Mitzrayim. Of course, coming out of Mitzrayim is one of the biggest things in our history, but in the future, when

Moshiach comes and Hakodosh Boruch Hu takes us out of this golus, it will be another geulah and it will be even greater than the geulah of Yetzias Mitzrayim.

The posuk says that in those days they will no longer say, **הי השם אשר הוציא את עמו מארץ מצרים**. They won't praise Hashem anymore about Yetzias Mitzrayim. They will remember the old Yetzias Mitzrayim of Nissan and they will compare it to the new Yetzias Mitzrayim of Nissan and they will say **הי השם** who took us out of all the lands together. So, it will be a new kind of Yetzias Mitzrayim, a going out from the goyim altogether, forever.



And this geulah will be the greatest happiness because living among the goyim is a tremendous misfortune for us. We don't understand how much we are losing by being among the gentiles. Even in Eretz Yisroel you're living among Jewish goyim. And therefore today, the golus is weighing on our minds and on our neshomos; we're imprisoned by gentile attitudes. Of course, we learn Torah and that helps; you're a ben chorin if you learn Torah because it frees your mind from all the wickedness and foolishness of the goyim. But no matter, all around us the avira, the atmosphere, is saturated with shtus and with lies and it has an effect.

Christianity, Islam, evolution, liberalism – it's all foolishness; there's nothing to it. You see how wicked and how silly their ways are, and how they are ruining themselves because of all of these lies. They are ruining their lives, these wicked people. And the problem is that we live among them and we are being spoiled by them too.

Being among the goyim is a tremendous loss for us; that's what the golus means – suffering from the goyim. But not only suffering physically – even if the goyim will be good to us and will tolerate us, that's even worse. When the goyim persecuted us that was the wall between them and us. But when the goyim gave us liberty and tolerance, that is the worst gezeirah; worse than the gezeirah of Hitler. Millions went lost because of the toleration and equality.

In the good old days when the Jews were in ghettos we couldn't mix. When a Jew went out into the street, they spat on him and they threw him into the gutter. And the result was that the Jew had no desire to mix with the goyim. And therefore, the golus today is worse than it was once upon a time. We're more in a golus today than ever before.

And once upon a time we only had golus among goyim; today we are in golus among yidden too. In Eretz Yisroel, we are in golus among the resha'im. In America too – we're in golus not only among the gentiles, we're in golus among the Reformers and the amei ha'aretz. It's a golus.

Of course, we do our best to fight back against wrong influences, but we're waiting to go free again in Nissan: והקב"ה יקבצנו מן הגוים והצילנו מן הגויים – “Hashem, please save us from the goyim, להודות לשם קדשך – so that we can praise Your holy name, ולהשתבה בתהילתך – and we will make ourselves better by praising You.” By praising You, Hashem, we become better. So please save us from the goyim so that we should be able to do that – give us the opportunity to praise You again in Nissan for Your miracles of the geulah.

And therefore, we have to say: הושיענו אלקי ישענו – “Come help us Hashem, וקבצנו והצילנו מן הגוים – and rescue us from the nations, להודות לשם קדשך – so that we should be able thank You even more.” We ask Hashem: “You take us out of golus again in Nissan like You once did and we will show our gratitude to You.” How will we show our gratitude? By becoming better, improving ourselves. להשתבה means we will make ourselves better; we will improve ourselves, בתהילתך – by our praise of You. And how will we praise You and show our gratitude to You? By emulating You and walking in Your ways forever.

Reprinted from a recent email of Toras Avigdor based on a Thursday night lecture Tape #E-10..

The Powerful Significance of a Tzav or G-d's Command to a Jew

From the Teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, Zt"l



In commanding Moses to transmit the Torah's 613 mitzvot to the Jewish people, we find that G-d used three different expressions: "say" ("emor"), "speak" ("daber"), and "command" ("tzav"). This week's Torah portion is called Tzav, as it opens with the words "Command Aaron and his sons." Rashi, the foremost Torah commentator, explains the word "tzav" as implying "urging on, for the immediate moment and for future generations."

Of the three expressions - "say," "speak" and "command" - the last ("tzav") is most closely associated with the basic concept of mitzvot (literally "commandments"), as both are derived from the verb meaning "to command." Moreover, as will be explained, it is with regard to these particular mitzvot that "urging" and encouragement are most necessary.

According to Chasidic philosophy, the word "mitzva" is related to "tzavta," meaning joining or uniting. The mitzva forges an eternal connection between G-d, the Commander, and the Jew, who is commanded to fulfill the Creator's will.

Connecting to G-d is only possible through mitzvot; a created being is simply not capable of creating a connection with the Infinite on his own. In fact, the only relative "value" man has, comes from the fact that G-d has chosen and commanded him to fulfill His mitzvot. In other words, in giving us the commandments, G-d has provided us with the only means of true "access."

This connection is most strongly emphasized in the mitzvot conveyed through the expression of "tzav," as when a person obeys them it is obvious that he is fulfilling a command or obligation. By contrast, the commandments transmitted through "say" or "speak" do not stress the aspect of compulsion as strongly. Moreover, the G-dly commandment itself ("tzav") creates the connection ("tzavta"), as if the person has already fulfilled it!

Of course, a Jew always has free will whether or not he will comply with a command. Nonetheless, because the mitzvot transmitted through "tzav" penetrate all the way to the innermost levels of the soul (as opposed to the mitzvot conveyed through "say" and "speak," which affect only the outermost aspects of the soul), if, for whatever reason a Jew doesn't comply (G-d forbid), it contradicts the connection he already has with the Commander.

The "tzav" commandments thus require more "urging" and encouragement. For once the essence of the soul is uncovered, the Jew will discover how in reality, his very being is fundamentally connected to G-d, and his own inner desire is only to fulfill G-d's will.

Reprinted from the Tzav 5752/1992 edition of L'Chaim. Adapted from Volume 7 of Likutei Sichot.

Rabbi Berel Wein on Parshat Tzav and Shabbat Hagadol 5785



This year, as is true in most years of the Jewish calendar, the Torah reading of Tzav coincides with the Shabbat preceding Pesach – Shabbat Hagadol. Since on a deep level of understanding there are really no coincidences in Torah matters, the connection between Tzav and Shabbat Hagaol should be explored and explained.

The word “tzav” is one of a mandatory command. It does not present reasons or explanations and does not brook discussion or argument. It is representative of military discipline, of service to a higher purpose even if all of the participants in the project are not really aware of the workings of that higher purpose. A necessary part of living in society is the mandatory obligations, which are part of everyone’s life.

If it were not for these rules, mores and practices imposed upon us, life would become so chaotic as to be unlivable. It is the “tzav” part of life that allows all of the other more freedom-of-choice opportunities to be present in our lives. An ordered society demands that there be commands, not only recommendations or suggestions. There is an understandable reflex built into our emotional system that resists and resents commands from others. Any parent of a three-year old can easily testify to

the truth of this observation. Nevertheless, the young child must eventually respond to commands in order to grow, mature and become a successful human being. So, “tzav” plays a vital role.

Perhaps there are no two areas of Jewish life and law that are as complexly intertwined with mandatory commands and laws, as are Shabbat and Pesach. The concepts behind these holy days and their observances represent noble values – serenity, leisure, freedom and independence. But noble ideas alone, without detailed instructions as to their realization, are useless in a practical sense.

The sons who appear in the Torah and the Haggadah all ask the same question – “What relevance do these laws have in our time?” Is it not sufficient that we honor the ideas that Shabbat and Pesach represent and then ignore all the mandatory commandments that accompany these days, their values and ideals. Without mandatory commandments no commemorative day, no matter how well meaning and well planned will stand the test of time and changing circumstances. It is the “tzav” component of Shabbat and Pesach that make this Shabbat the Shabbat Hagadol – the great Shabbat that it is.

It is an historical fact that those movements and individuals that ignored or rejected mandatory observances associated with Shabbat or Pesach eventually slipped out of Jewish life and continuity entirely. Again, without “tzav” there can be no Shabbat Hagadol. This is the basic issue that divides much of the Jewish world today. The avoidance of mandatory commandments, attractive and popular as this idea may initially appear, is a sure recipe for Jewish extinction. Shabbat Hagadol comes to remind us of this lesson.

Shabbat shalom and Chag kasher v’sameach

Reprinted from the current website of rabbiwein.com

Thoughts that Count for Pesach

And here, the child asks (from the Hagada)

Said Rabbi Aaron of Karlin, in the name of his father, Rabbi Asher of Stolin: "Here," on the night of the seder, every Jewish child may request of his Father in Heaven anything he wishes, and he will receive extra strength and vitality for all of his needs. (Beit Aharon)

Four cups of wine

The four cups of wine at the Passover seder are symbolic of the four kingdoms that have oppressed the Jewish people throughout history: Babylon, Medes, Greece and Edom (Rome). They also allude to the "four cups of retribution" G-d will give the nations, and the "four cups of consolation" the Jews will be given to drink. (The Jerusalem Talmud)

The wicked son says: What is this service to you? ...You may tell him: If he had been there [in Egypt], he would not have been redeemed (The Hagada)

What purpose does it serve to tell the wicked son that had he lived in those days he would not have been worthy of Redemption? The answer: Although it is true that the wicked son would not have been redeemed from Egypt, he will be redeemed with Moshiach in the Final Redemption! Unlike all other historical redemptions, every single Jew will go out of our present exile. This is the implicit message of the Hagada on the seder night. (Peninei HaGeula)

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, Who brings forth bread from the earth (the "HaMotzi" blessing)

Why do we thank G-d for "bringing forth bread from the earth" when in reality it yields wheat, which must then be baked into bread? According to the Talmud, when Moshiach comes the earth will produce ready-made bread. Our Sages instituted the blessing with these particular words in anticipation of the Messianic era. (Toldot Yitzchak)

Reprinted from the Tzav 5752/1992 edition of L'Chaim.

An Unusual Guest at Our Model Seder

by Rabbi Zushe Greenberg



Rabbi Zushe Greenberg

Preparations were well under way for our first Passover in Solon, Ohio. We decided to offer a model seder for members of the community as one of our educational programs.

About a week before our model seder, I was approached by a woman while standing in a local supermarket.

"Excuse me, sir," the woman asked, "are you a rabbi?"

When she learned that her guess was right, the woman, named Connie, told me she was studying the Book of Exodus at her church in Hudson. She was very interested in seeing how the Jews (she used the term "Chosen People") celebrate and commemorate the Exodus.

I told her she would be welcome to attend a model seder at the Chabad Jewish Center of Solon a few days before Passover. She said she would try to come.

That Saturday night, when the model seder was about to begin, Connie walked in together with Pam, a friend from her Bible class.

The evening began with a Havdala service, marking the end of the Sabbath, and I was surprised to see that Pam seemed vaguely familiar with the service. During the seder, Pam made educated comments about various traditions. She knew why matza was eaten, the significance of the bitter herbs, and even seemed to recognize the sweet taste of charoset.

I wondered about such a traditional Christian woman being so informed about Judaism. When we took a break for the "Shulchan Aruch Meal" where we served Passover refreshments, she asked me, "What is your background, Rabbi?"

I explained to her that I grew up in Israel but my parents had immigrated from Russia when I was an infant.

"Oh, my parents are also from the Soviet Union," the 40-year-old woman said. "From Russia?" I wondered aloud. "Yes," she replied. "And actually, they were Jewish too!"

Seeing my surprised look, Pam explained that she had grown up in Los Angeles, with Jewish parents but a very limited Jewish education or participation. She recalled attending services periodically for Shabbat and holidays.

As a teenager, her strong urge for spirituality was not satisfied by her local rabbi. Through friends, she got involved in a nearby church, and before long she decided to convert to Christianity.

"This is the first Jewish event that I attended for the last 20 years," she said.

Now it was my turn to surprise her. "According to Jewish law, you are still Jewish," I told her. "Once a Jew, always a Jew. All the conversions in the world cannot take away one's Jewish soul."

Much of the rest of the evening was spent discussing Jewish philosophy with Pam and other participants. As the hour grew later, we decided to proceed with the seder. Upon reaching the last part of the seder and the afikoman, Pam was moved to tears.

Before Pam left I asked her if she would like to be put on our mailing list, and she said yes.

Six months passed. It was Yom Kippur eve. The room was full of solemn worshippers as the first prayer of the holiest day of the year, Kol Nidre, was about to begin.

I noticed a woman whom I vaguely recognized walk through the door. It was Pam.

After the services, Pam apologized for not telling us that she was coming. She had been tossing the idea of attending services back and forth for weeks. At the last

minute, she couldn't keep herself away. "Of all the prayers and Jewish ceremonies," she said, "the Kol Nidre tune has haunted me all these years." She had just wanted to hear it sung once again.

That evening, Pam also asked my wife Miriam if she would teach her how to read Hebrew. They set up a weekly lesson.

Not long after, Pam's husband, who was not Jewish, was transferred and the whole family moved away. We kept in contact with her off and on.

Three years passed. The third time Pam came into our lives was via a telephone call. She was living in New York and wondered if we could hook her up with the local Chabad rabbi. It seemed that her daughter was showing an interest in learning Hebrew.

Looking for a happy ending? Well, since then we have not heard from Pam again. But meeting her those times made a famous Chasidic expression come alive for me. The Lubavitcher Rebbe often emphasized, "One must never underestimate a Jewish soul."

Each and every Jew possesses a Divine soul, which is "part" of G-d above. The soul is constantly searching and striving to get closer to G-d, and to its Jewish roots.

This is actually what Passover is all about. Passover is the festival of liberation. Our Sages teach us "In every generation, and every day, a Jew must see himself as if he had that day been liberated from Egypt."

Freedom was not a one-time thing. It needs constant guarding because every environment carries its own equivalent of "Egypt" - a power that undermines the freedom of a Jew.

Perhaps the most potent threat comes from the individual himself. Every day he must personally "go out from Egypt," he must escape the limits, constraints and obstructions that his physical existence places in the way of his spiritual fulfillment.

I hope that this year, Pam will leave her "personal Egypt" and once and for all rejoin the Jewish nation as we celebrate Passover, the Festival of Liberation.

Rabbi Zushe Greenberg is the spiritual leader of Chabad Center of Solon, Ohio

Reprinted from the archives of L'Chaim (March 22, 2002/9 Nisan 5762), a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization in Brooklyn, NY.