



# NHS Sedra Sheet

## Pesach – R. Jonathan Shooter (reprint)

ט"ו ניסן תשע"ו – 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2016 – שבת יום א' של פסח

It is commonly thought that Pesach is a celebration of our freedom from the Egyptian bondage, how with Hashem's might and miracles, the Jews were released from slavery. Whilst this is one aspect, there is another entirely different facet to the Yom Tov. Chazal say that in Nissan we were redeemed, so too in the future it will be in Nissan when we will be redeemed, as in the verse: "As in the days when you left the land of Egypt I will show it wonders" (Micha 7:15).

Even before Pesach, on Shabbos Hagadol we are reminded of this idea with the haftorah where it speaks about the event of Moshiach, how the wicked will be downtrodden and justice will be done. One of the reasons that Shabbos is referred to as 'great' is because of the final verse of the haftorah "Behold I send you Elijah the prophet, before the great and awesome day of Hashem".

These verses tell us that whilst we are about to celebrate the exodus from Egypt and what took place in the past, yet there is another exodus coming that is even greater. It is also interesting that the verse speaks "Behold I send", in the present tense. The Chofetz Chaim says that the idea is that we can be redeemed at any given moment, even now. Yet it's upon us to bring it about. How then do we go about it then? We shall return to this question later.

According to the commentators, the seder itself is split into two. Before the meal we remember the past, as we start, "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt" and end with "In every generation one must see himself as if he went out of Egypt". This seems to wrap up the section dealing with the exodus from Egypt, which is followed by the Hallel before the meal. This part of Hallel is all in the past tense, as we say "When Yisroel went forth from Egypt" (Tehillim 114). After the meal the tone is very different as we say, "Pour out Your wrath upon the nations", that Divine retribution should come for all they inflicted upon Yisroel. The Hallel after the meal relates to the future, as we say "Not for our sake...but for Your Name's sake give glory, for Your kindness and for Your truth" (Tehillim 115:1). The Psalm 'Ahavsi' (Tehillim 116) is described in the gemora to be all about the revival of the dead. It is interesting that we read on Shabbos Chol Hamoed the haftorah of Yechezkel and the valley of dry bones. The bones were of the 200,000 members of the tribe of Ephraim who left Egypt prematurely but were then slaughtered by the Philistines. Rashi says that their resurrection was thus the completion of the going out of Egypt. Also, we have a tradition that the revival of the dead is to occur on Pesach, therefore it is fitting to mention this event which is the same miracle. The Kuzari says that the reason this occurred through Yechezkel was because the people had just seen the destruction of the Temple. They were given encouragement by seeing that just as these dry bones came to life, so too they should not lose hope as their eventual redemption would come.

This idea comes to a climax on the last days of Pesach. The piyut during Maariv lists the contrasts between Pesach Mitzrayim and Pesach in the future. Finally the Haftorah of the eighth-day mentions how "A wolf will dwell with a sheep and a leopard will lie down with a kid". It then says how "the earth will be filled with knowledge of Hashem, as the water covering the sea bed". It goes on to say how the Yisroel will understand their painful and bitter history, and they will go on to thank Hashem. Clearly this theme of the future redemption runs strongly from before Pesach, up until the end. We are meant to put Pesach in its perspective as the harbinger of the future redemption.

We open the door during the seder for Eliyahu Hanavi and recite "Pour out Your wrath on the nations". Why do we say this in particular when Eliyahu comes in? Reb Wolf Kitzus was a talmid of the Baal Shem Tov. He planned a trip to Eretz Yisroel and before he left he visited the Baal Shem Tov. His Rebbe gave him one bit of advice: 'When someone asks you a question you should answer with seichel. Always remember this.' Reb Wolf was disturbed as to why he gave him this advice; it didn't seem very practical, yet he accepted it and went on his way.

Weeks later he arrived in Eretz Yisrael. He visited Yerushalayim, Tzfas, Tiveria and spent the last Shabbos in Chevron. After Shabbos he had Melava Malka at the home of the town Rav. At the table were other guests. One of them asked him, 'Tell me, what's the situation of the Jews in Russia, I hear there's much suffering, is it true?' Reb Wolf answered that it was untrue; 'We're holding strong, we have Talmudai Torah and are managing well.' The other guest persisted: 'But I hear there are decrees against you, like the one against shechita?' He replied, 'Yes its true but we manage and get round them. Hashem looks after us'. The questioner persisted but once again was given the same answer. A few weeks later he was back in Russia and returned to the Baal Shem Tov. On seeing him, his Rebbe said 'Didn't I tell you that when someone asks you a question you should answer it with seichel? What happened in Chevron on Motzei Shabbos?' He tried to think and finally remembered and told him about the elderly man and his questions. The Baal Shem Tov said, 'The Zohar says that the neshama of Eliyahu Hanavi circles around the cave of Machpela along with the Avos and on Motzei Shabbos Eliyahu reveals himself. He is always trying to pray and awaken mercy for Yisroel. He asked what is the situation in Chutz Laaretz. If you would have said 'there is a bitter golus, they are after us, its terrible and we cant take it anymore' then he would have taken this and prayed for mercy. Yet you said everything is fine, so he has nothing to pray for. You missed an opportunity.' Similarly when Eliyahu comes on seder night, we immediately tell him everything's not fine, there is a bitter golus, we feel it and miss Yerushalayim. We try not to make the same mistake as in the story. As long as we feel comfortable about being in exile, then its hard for it to end. If we realise what we are lacking, and imbue it in our hearts than we should merit to see Moshiach speedily and in our days.