

# *Shiur L'Yom Shishi<sup>1</sup>*

[Friday's Study]

READINGS:      ***Torah Bo:***                              **Exodus 12:14 - 13:16**  
                         ***Haftarah:***    **Jeremiah 46:21-28**  
                         ***B'rit Chadasha:***                              **Romans 12:9-21**

*On that very same day, that the Holy One caused B'nei Yisrael to go forth.*

[Exodus 12:51a]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 89:1-17;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition #12, *Sh'ma Koleinu* – Hear our Cry!

***Vehayah hayom hazeh lachem l'zikaron*** – And this day will be to you a day for remembrance/commemoration ... ***v'chagotem oto chag l'Adonai l'doroteichem*** – and you are to celebrate it as a festival unto the Holy One in all your generations. **Exodus 12:14a.**

This is E-Day - the day appointed for us to make a dramatic Exodus from Egypt. What happens this day will dramatically alter the course of human history. It will be remembered not only as a day to celebrate personal freedom; it will be remembered as a day to *refocus our passion and attention on Who our God is, on who we are, and what our lives on earth are really supposed to be about.* It will be a day we *relive* every year, *l'dor v'dor* (i.e. generation after generation). People from all nations, tribes, and tongues on earth will join us as we enthusiastically tell our children and grandchildren about what happened ... on this very special day.

## ***Gather Around, Children – It's Story Time!***

Gather round, little ones – your mother and I need a word with you. We know that it probably seems that the world is spinning out of control. We know that you are probably afraid. We know the thought of leaving the only home and life you have ever known and heading off into the desert is a bit overwhelming. It is okay to feel sad about that. But look around you! Do you see all the families that we have never even met who have come out this morning, choosing to leave everything they know behind just as we are doing, in order to come with us on the great journey we are undertaking! Look at how many children there are amongst them – children from all nationalities, ethnicities, tribes, and tongues! You will make many, many new friends in the days to come! So just take a deep breath, whisper the prayers your mother and I taught you, think happy thoughts, and stay calm. You trust your *Abba* and *Imma*, don't you? Try to trust our Benevolent Creator the way you trust us. Everything is going to be all right – it

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really is! The Holy One, Maker of the Heavens and the Earth, will make sure of it! You remember the stories I am always telling you about our ancestor Avraham, and how he and his beloved Sarah once were told to leave everything they knew and go on a great adventure that would change the world, don't you? You remember the beautiful land I told you about, where our forebearers settled down, raised children, got to know the Creator well, and had one after another exciting adventure? We are hearing the same call that Avraham heard. And the land to which he had all those adventures is where we are heading as well! So think of what we are doing today as embarking on *our* great adventure – an adventure like unto Avraham and Sarah's - that you will one day be able to tell your children and grandchildren about with the same enthusiasm as I have told you the stories you love so much – stories of Avraham and Sarah, of Yitzchak and Rivkah, of Ya'akov, Rachel and Leah, and of Yosef and his brothers. Your mother has several days' worth of matzah dough for us in the packs on her back. I have skins full of water in the packs I strapped on the donkey. The carts are loaded with vessels full of gold and silver, hidden under garments given to us by our old neighbors. There is nothing here for us anymore. This place has nothing we need – and nothing we want. The land to which we are now taking our journey is a much better land - a land of beautiful hills and valleys, and lush orchards and vineyards! It is a land of milk and honey – a place where we can graze herds and flocks in great numbers, plant barley, wheat, and flax, grow wonderful things to eat in our own garden, and live each one under his own vine and fig tree! That land will be OURS - not some other nation's property. So pay no attention to the angry Egyptian soldiers at their posts – though they glare at us. Do not be frightened by the fearsome weapons they carry. The Holy One has made sure that they cannot – will not - hurt us now. Pay no heed to the taskmasters either – or to the bullwhips that hang menacingly off their belts. The Holy One has made sure that there is nothing they can ever do to us again – as long as we *leave today*, and *never return*. Don't look at them. Don't speak to them. Don't even think about them. Just keep your eyes on Moshe, and help me watch for him to give us the signal that it is time to go. When he moves, we can move. Where he goes, we will go. When he stops, we will stop – but not until. Stay close to your *Imma* and myself as we walk away. Keep your heads down. Whisper the *Sh'ma* when you get tired like your mother and I taught you to. Just keep putting one foot in front of the other. Breathe like normal. And whatever you do, Dear Ones – never, ever look back.

### ***We're Leaving – Leaving Mitzrayim!***

As evening falls to kick off this day we will lay down the burdens the Egyptians have imposed upon us ... and when the morning of this day dawns we will walk away from those burdens forever. Indeed, today the heaviest thing any of us will

take up on our shoulders is the sarcophagus in which Yosef's bones lay at rest. Many, many times on this evening and morning we will stand in awe – but we will not, as has been the case up to now, be standing in awe of the architectural marvel of the pyramids, the impressive features of the sphinx, or the obscene size of Pharaoh's store cities. On this day, from evening through morning, the only thing that will cause us to stand in reverent awe will be the indefatigability of our Bridegroom's Covenant Love.

Soon we will march right out of Egypt, to freedom. Today, accompanied by a mixed multitude of people from many tribes, tongues, and nations, we will walk right past Pharaoh's armed guards without flinching – and we will exit the realm of narcissistic Pharaohs forever. And then, when the sun finally starts to set at the end of this very special day, we will eat – but what we will consume will not be the fish, leeks, and onions that the Egyptians serve on slop plates to their slaves. Today we will eat snacks of *matzah* we have made with our own hands, from wheat drawn from the Hebrew storehouses of Goshen – the last remaining grain supplies in all of Egypt. So let us indeed *sh'mar* – *i.e.* highly value, treasure, cherish, delight in, and carefully guard the memory and significance of - this evening and morning forever!

Oh blessed evening. Oh glorious morning. Oh happy, happy, happy day!  
*Ashirah L'Adonai, ki ga'oh ga'ah!*

### ***Remembering – And Following***

Our aliyah begins with the Holy One giving instructions as to the timing, manner, and protocols of how this very special day of days is to be commemorated. He truly wants the night that introduces the season to be a *night unlike all other nights*.

***Ki b'eitzem ha-yom hazeh hotzeti et-tziv'oteichem m'erezt Mitzrayim***

*for on this very day I will have brought your masses out of Egypt.*

***Ush'martem et ha-yom hazeh l'doroteichem***

*You are to diligently guard and keep this day for all generations;*

***chukat olam***

*it is a Divine instruction for all times.*

**[Exodus 12:17]**

Those are the instructions of our Covenant Partner in Heaven. They do not change. With His own voice the Holy One declared that *Pesach* commemoration was to be “*forever*”. He said that both it and the seven days of eating *matzah* and fasting leaven are something we are supposed to do “*throughout your generations*”. He said these are things we are to ‘*sh'mar*’ – *i.e.* to *treasure*, to *cherish*, to *watch diligently over*, to *guard as something precious*, to *keep pure*

*and inviolate and intact for posterity. He did not say: “Sh’mar them - but only until Messiah comes.” He did not say: “Sh’mar them – but only until the apostolic writings of Yeshua’s talmidim are in place.” He did not say: “Sh’mar them - but only until they is replaced by a celebration of ‘resurrection day’, or ‘advent’, or the Vernal Equinox. He said: Forever - throughout your generations - no matter what happens hereafter.*

What memorable events will the evening part of this particular day hold for us? Moshe has explained:

***Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families,  
and kill the Pesach [i.e. the selected lamb].  
Then take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood in the basin,  
and strike the lintel and two doorposts with the blood in the basin.  
Then none of you are to go out of the door of his house until morning,  
for the Holy One will pass through to strike the Egyptians;  
and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts,  
the Holy One will pass over the door,  
and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you.***

[Exodus 12:21-23]

Quite an evening, eh? And what memorable events of redemption will the morning that follows for us? Ah, let us savor the moment ... and may we, and our children, and our children’s children, always remember these beautiful words:

***Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Sukkot,  
about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children.  
A mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds—a great deal of livestock.  
And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had brought out of Egypt;  
for it was not leavened, because they were driven out of Egypt and could not wait,  
nor had they prepared provisions for themselves.***

[Exodus 12:37-39]

Before the evening and the morning of this day is over we will tremble – but at long last our trembling will have nothing whatever to do with the crack of any Egyptian taskmaster’s whip. Today we will tremble because of the Majesty and Might of the God of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya’akov. Many times this day we will weep – but not, as has been the case before, because Hebrew babies were being ripped from their mother’s arms and angrily cast into the Nile. On this day we will weep for joy because never again will any of our babies will ever drown in that wretched, crocodile infested river.

The *day of RADICAL DISENTANGLEMENT and UNCOMPROMISING UNLEAVENING* has finally arrived. From what toxic distractions, identity, purpose, and mission distorting -isms, -anities, -ologies, and -ations, and brainwashing systems/sources do we need to disentangle? From what noxious

attitudes, institutionally manipulated opinions, vain imaginations, skewed perspectives, paranoid delusions, false narratives, newspeak-loaded words/catch-phrases/chanted slogans/cliches, and perverse patterns of reaction/behavior do we need to make a clean break? What kinds of ‘leaven’ do we need to eliminate from our consumption-matrix ‘*cold turkey*’? You know what they are, Beloved – and you know how they are choking the life out of not only you, but your family, your community, your generation, your nation, and your world. You know what you need to disentangle from. You know where you need to start with the unleavening process. You just need a reason – and the Holy One’s signal – to break free!

Well, Dear One, the day of breaking free is here! All the reason we will ever need to make our Exodus has been provided. The signal has been given. The bones of Yosef – which have been calling the sons and daughters of the Covenant to make aliyah to the Promised Land for generations – have been hoisted on Hebrew shoulders made strong by forced labor and are leading the way out of mind- and soul-numbing bondage toward the incredible light-ness of freedom. At long last the time to bid good riddance to seductions of the oppressive dominion of darkness that the academics and elites of this world like to call ‘Western Civilization’ has come. Are we ready for this? Blood on the doorposts? *Check!* Firstborn sons living, breathing, and walking beside us? *Check!* Matzah in bundles? *Check!* Hearts awakened to the glorious destiny of sons and daughters of the Avraham Covenant? *Check!* This is *the day the HOLY ONE has made*. At long last we are ready for a *Lech Lecha - i.e. go out for and to find your true identity and purpose* - moment similar to the one our ancestor Avram experienced<sup>2</sup>. We have *countdown*. We have *ignition*. We have *lift off!* Welcome to ‘*the aliyah of dawning freedom*’.

This is a day – and the beginning of seven days - the Holy One has chosen to have us stand front and center, and testify to Pharaoh, to all of Egypt, to the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya’akov in captivity, and to all human beings of every tribe, tongue and ethnicity that will ever live upon the earth – that He alone is God. This is not our day – it is *His*. The events of this day – and surrounding season - are to be *emblazoned upon our memories* – indeed are to *become a major part of our identities* – forever. This is the point at which we embark on *the greatest road-trip adventure in the history of the world*. This is *our season of breaking chains*. This is *our time of coming out and bursting forth*. This is the point at which we exchange a past of *hopelessness for a future filled with hope*. This is the season in which we trade *cowering in fear before a man for basking in the Presence and receiving empowerment from the love of our*

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<sup>2</sup> The reference is to the Holy One’s life-changing initial directive to Avram. Genesis 12:1-3.

*King.*

The Holy One has had this season planned since He watched Adam and Chava exit *the Garden*. He had this in the back of His mind when He called Avram out of his father's house. He was angling toward this each time He appeared to Avraham, and when He came in the dark of night to visit prophetic dreams upon first Ya'akov, then Yosef, then a cupbearer, a baker, and a Pharaoh. He had this season in mind when He set the thorn bush of Horeb on fire and commissioned Moshe as His prototypical Messiah figure. He has had this season in mind each time over the past few weeks that He extended His strong right Arm into the toxic cesspool of Egyptian life to break another band of bondage off of His people. This is one of the moments of earth time that the saints of all the ages will be thinking about when they gather around the Sea of Glass and sing:

*Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty!  
Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!  
Who shall not fear You, O Holy One, and glorify Your name?  
For You alone are holy, and all nations will come and worship before You,  
for Your judgments have been manifested.*

[Revelation 15:3-4; referencing the promise of Micah 7:14-20]

***Remember, Commemorate, and Relive This Seven Days of  
Disentanglement and Realignment Every Year, Forever!***

The seven-day period of *fasting chametz* that begins with the sun going down on *Erev Pesach* is to be three things for sons and daughters of the Covenant. First, it is to be a *zikaron*, or active commemoration of the first seven days of our blending with the mixed multitude to form a new nation. Secondly, it is to be a *chag*, or *celebratory festivity*, in which all generations are to participate and rejoice every year forever. And thirdly, it is to be a *chukat olam*, or perpetual identifying behavior that marks us as *B'nei Yisrael* – deep in our souls as well as outwardly in the eyes of the world. This special season is now a significant part of *who we are*. It is the first of three seasons of '*just us*' that we share with our Creator/King. We are called upon to *remember* it – *i.e.* make it the center of gravity of our meditation, conversation, and activity, and to *actively commemorate it in a celebratory attitude, and to re-enact its disentanglement and realignment protocols*, and to *relive it in our homes annually forever*. Why is this island in time so critical to our Covenant mission? Why are the protocols for commemorating this season the first set of *mitzvot* – *i.e.* culture-producing life instructions – the Holy One gave us? Why are we instructed to aggressively meditate on it and relive it with our families and friends in the 'first month' of the Holy One's 'On Earth as it is in Heaven' Calendar every year, as long as we live? Because it was during this seven-day season that we found out, for the first time, what it means to be *free to be who we were created to be* and to *do what*

*our Creator/King designed and calls us to do.*

The evening that kicks off this grand seven-day commemoration will be remembered as the *beginning of man's grandest adventure*. We will start that evening with lamb's blood on our doorposts and the taste of roast mutton in our mouths. We will stand vigil through the night with our sandals on our feet, our staff in our hands, and our loins girded, ready to move on signal from Heaven. Dry wheat flour for tomorrow's *matzah* will then cover the tables where our first festive meal in many generations concluded. All those things are as they should be – indeed as they *have* to be. But these are not by any means the best part of this night. The best part of this night is that with deep awe toward and love for the God of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov stirring in our hearts we will at last be *free to ignore Pharaoh's ranting, raving, bulling, and threatening*. We will finally be free to do what *sh'ma*-people do – i.e. all the things our Awesome God told us to do. Whatever Pharaoh says, however much he protests or accuses or condemns, we will *keep vigil* to our God throughout the night He has assured us will be unlike any other. We will refuse to obey the last command of our defeated enemy; we will choose instead to *sh'ma* the loving instruction of our Redeemer to *stay in our homes* for one more night. We will go about our business, pack our *matzah*, and burn the uneaten portion of the lamb from our feast the night before. Pharaoh will just have to wait until morning to get rid of us. Not long ago he callously wanted everyone in Egypt to endure one more night with the swamp creatures – well, it has come upon him measure for measure; for tonight he is just going to have to endure one more night with the Hebrews that he so virulently detests. No one is going to rush us out of a place from which our God has delivered us one moment before our Bridegroom King – He Whom our soul now is learning to love - tells us it is time to break some bad habits, shake off some corruptive influences, walk away from some codependent relationships, and awaken to our greater destiny and calling.

### ***The Holy One's Instructions for the Pesach Meal Itself***

The night of the *Pesach* was, by the Holy One's instruction, designed to be thought of and treated as a night of transcendence – a night truly unlike any other night. The special *Pesach* meal – a humble yet festive banquet for the poor, the widow, the fatherless, and the oppressed foreigner - was similarly made to be unlike any other meal. In Egypt, our ancestors were told to eat this meal in a very unique way - with their *outer garment* – i.e. the one they would wear on the journey to they believed was coming - *belted around the waist*; with their *sandals securely fastened on their feet*; and *with their walking stick in one hand*. Though they were going nowhere before sunrise, they were nevertheless to eat the meal *in haste* [Hebrew, *b'chipazon*] – in eager expectation of that which

was to come.

Can you imagine the excitement in the homes? After brushing a copious amount of blood on the lintel and two doorposts of the home, the head of the household would say to his family something like: “*Come children, we must hurry. We must be ready to move when the Holy One delivers us*”. He would then go to each child, one by one, checking: “*Is your waist belted? Are your feet shod? Where is your staff?*” The smell of roast mutton would then fill the house. The light of the fire upon which it was roasted would illumine our faces. Fathers and mothers would demonstrate what it meant for a Hebrew, a son/daughter of the Avrahamic Covenant, to pray, keep vigil, and wait upon the Holy One. This would, after all, be the night the prayers of the Hebrews were answered - the night of the Divine Visitation of which Yosef prophesied.

### ***Father ... Why Is This Night Unlike All Other Nights?***

In the course of the commemoration of the events we study today it has become a tradition of our people to have the youngest child in the household ask the father or leader of the Seder: “*Ma nishtanah ha-lailah hazeh mikol ha-leilot?*” It means “*Why is this night unlike all other nights?*” Nowhere in Torah are we commanded to have the youngest child in the house ask this specific question. It is just a tradition, based upon the fascinating prospect raised by Exodus 13:14. If the idea of tradition offends you, you certainly do not have to follow it. But why would you not want to? It is, after all, *a very, very good question!* Why indeed is this night *unlike all other nights?*

There are *two facets* to the answer to this question. One facet has to do with *what is coming to a traumatic end* – and the other facet has to do with *what is being birthed out of the trauma*. We will speak of both of these facets in time. For now, however, let us consider the first – what is coming to a traumatic end.

### ***One Door Shuts; Another Bursts Open***

Up until this day, despite all the signs and wonders the God of Avraham, of Yitzchak and of Ya’akov has wrought in Egypt, He has amazingly taken very few, *if indeed any*, human lives. The only lives that have been taken in any numbers thus far belonged to the Hebrews – those the Egyptians dismembered on birthing stools, threw into the Nile, and worked and/or beat to death in the slime pits and brick factories. The Holy One did not take these lives – that was the work of a cruel Pharaoh and his willing minions. Soon however the air will be filled with screams from Egyptian rather than Hebrew throats. Soon the stunning reality of sudden death will be felt in fine Egyptian palaces instead of Hebrew hovels. Soon every dwelling in the land of the Pyramids – except those



in which the head of the household ‘took’ for their family a male animal without blemish and smeared its blood upon their doorposts as the Holy One instructed – will grieve for their firstborn son.

Why must this happen? Not because the Holy One has any malevolent intent toward Egypt or toward any Egyptian. It must happen because Egypt’s Pharaoh, its noblemen, and its people have made abundantly clear that they will yield to no less severe a blow of discipline. Diplomacy has been tried ten times – and all diplomatic possibilities have been exhausted. The Holy One negotiated in good faith; the Egyptians did not. The Holy One made only one demand. It was not for Egyptian land, for ransom money, for apology, or even for religious conversion. All He asked was for Pharaoh to allow the bruised and battered Hebrew slaves suffering under Egypt’s cruel and oppressive regime to participate in a three-day festival in the desert. Egypt’s king, noblemen, and population would not even listen. Pharaoh’s store city projects - and the people of Egypt’s insane, occult delusions of racial superiority – got in the way of the most basic form of human kindness and compassion.

The Holy One does not - will never - inflict even discipline, much less life-threatening judgment, upon human beings without good reason. Men, women, and children are the crown jewel of His Creation. Every human being is designed and lovingly molded by Him to carry His own image into the world. Before He ever allows harm to a human being in any way, therefore, He always provides both a series of warnings and a clear and ample way of escape. He always offers a diplomatic solution. At first the Creator’s warnings are always quiet and gentle. He specializes in gentle nudges. He excels at nuance, suggestion, and inclination. If the Holy One’s initial overtures – i.e. His quiet and gentle warnings - are not heeded, however, He proceeds further. He reaches out with gradually increasing power and urgency. Only those who choose not to hear or see or sense what the Ruach is saying ignore the warning signs the Holy One gives along any pathway, train of thought, or course of action that is leading one of His beloved human beings toward destruction. That is just Our Creator’s Nature – and His Way. He is out to redeem, restore, and nurture – not to destroy. He only sighs and turns loose the Death Angel when someone or some people group, despite warning after warning, stubbornly persist in arrogantly, obstinately, and violently deceiving, enslaving, and oppressing the people He is trying to redeem. The only question that should arise in the minds of men after a judgment phase reaches the level of the Death Angel is *‘how much worse would it have been for the earth if the Holy One had NOT imposed the judgment of death when He did?’* Any other question is the product of a confused mind - one given over to folly.

In those very rare situations<sup>3</sup> when the toxicity of those who reject the Holy One's ways and harden their hearts against His warnings make judgments involving death absolutely necessary, He never tries to cover up or gloss over what He has done. He is right up front about it, and is willing, and able, to take the heat for it. He actually makes it a point to record the narrative of His death-decree judgments blow-by-blow in a Great Book. He calls upon all people of the world, in all generations, among all nations, to pause and reflect upon both the reasons for which He inflicted each and every death sentence and the righteous and surgically precise manner in which He did so. He does this to help subsequent generations understand the folly – and the risks – associated with forsaking the Covenant pathway of life, health and peace in order to dally with the same perverse lifestyles, idolatrous mindsets, and self-centered behavior patterns which have been demonstrated in the past to necessitate a Divine judgment involving a sentence of death.

***A Day of Two Kinds of Doorways –  
Will You Be Coming In, or Will You Be Going Out?***

This day is going to be a day of deliverance for multitudes. But for those who choose to ignore His offers of *shalom* and reject His clearly outlined ***protocols of deliverance*** it is also going to be a day of death and bereavement. There will be doorways of celebration, around which the aroma will be of *roasting mutton* and *baking matzah*; but there will also be doorways of mourning, where the aroma will be the stench of death.

Since this is going to be a day of fatal blows by the death angel as well as the opening up of the wells of salvation and deliverance, all the events leading up to this day are going to be written in a Great Book for all posterity to ponder. This day is to be forever etched in the memory of Creation - and in the DNA of the sons and daughters of the Holy One – as not only our day of deliverance but the day those who rejected the ways and warnings of the Holy One perished by Divine Judgment. Those who perished did not have to perish. They had other, much better options available to them. They eschewed those other options time and time again. They made critical choices at critical times that rendered their continued presence on earth so fraught with toxicity to the Created Order and the Grand Plan of Redemption of Man as a species that their removal from earth was simply the most humane thing the Holy One could possibly do.

This day is going to be *a day of two kinds of doorways*. The Holy One is going

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<sup>3</sup> Events such as led to the Great Flood, to Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction, and to the slaying of Egypt's firstborn of, and will lead to the fall of the Great Prostitute called 'Mystery Babylon'.

to shut this day the doorways that have been leading humanity into a pit of poisonous vipers. But He never shuts a door without opening another. The doorways He is going to open this day will lead humanity to life, health, and peace. Closing will be the dark doors that lead to oppression, corruption, and bondage, and opening is the door that will offer all who would walk through it a *more excellent way*. Some will have eyes to see and ears to *sh'ma*; others will not. What about you, Dear Reader? Which of the two kinds of doorways will you choose?

### ***But How Exactly Are We Supposed to Sh'mar this Season of Disentanglement and Realignment?***

Torah gives us specific instructions on how we are to *commemorate Pesach/Chag-ha-matzah* each year once the redemption is accomplished. There are several facets to these instructions. The Holy One tells us:

***Seven days you are to eat matzah;  
even the first day you are to cause seor to cease from your houses,  
for whoever eats chametz from the first day until the seventh day,  
that soul will be cut off from Yisra'el.***

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***In the first month, beginning on the fourteenth day of the month at evening,  
you are to eat matzah [i.e. unleavened bread],  
until the twenty-first day of the month at evening.  
Seven days there is to be no se'or [i.e. yeast, leavening agent] found in your houses,  
for whoever eats chametz [i.e. food that contains/is affected by leaven],  
that soul will be cut off from the congregation of Yisra'el,  
whether he be a foreigner, or one who is born in the land.  
You are to eat no chametz. In all your habitations you are to eat matzah.***

Let's break these direct instructions from the Holy One concerning His day down a little.

#### **1. Causing Leaven [Hebrew, se'or] to Cease from our Homes**

The first thing we are to do to in order to *sh'mar Pesach* and *HaMatzot* is to make a dramatic change in the way we run our houses - and thus our lives. The Holy One gives us this specific empowering life instruction: ***B'yom ha-rishon*** – i.e. *On the first day - tashbitu se'or m'bateichem* – i.e. *you are to make the leaven process cease from your houses. Exodus 12:15.*

The Holy One does not specifically tell us in Torah how we are supposed to 'make the leaven process cease' from our houses. It leaves that to our unique circumstances. Hence some colorful and useful traditions have developed over the millennia in that regard. For instance, by tradition, on the evening before Passover the head of the household calls everyone to conduct a careful search for anything that would constitute leaven. Often lights are turned out and the search is conducted by candlelight. Whenever leaven is found it is scooped up with a

feather, removed from the house, and burned in a bonfire. Such traditions are memorable family adventures – but they are not the only way to fulfill Torah’s injunction. The key is to make the leaven process cease in our houses in a way that brings the Holy One’s instructions to life for your family. He does not want you just to blindly follow a tradition – He wants you to work with Him in your own unique way to accomplish the objective. But one thing we know - He wants the leaven gone from our houses at the start on the day He calls ‘*yom ha-rishon*’.

#### ***A. Identifying and Setting Apart Yom Ha-Rishon [the ‘first day’]***

The first task this empowering life instruction of the Holy One requires us to partner with the Divine Bridegroom of Heaven in doing is to *identify, define* and *mark off as special* what the Holy One calls ‘the first day’ [in Hebrew, *yom ha-rishon*]. The day we identify as *Yom Ha-Rishon* in relation to the observance ***Pesach*** is important because it will determine the timing and sequence of the entire spiritual adventure. The term ‘*yom ha-rishon*’ could mean the *yom ha-rishon* that comes on the first day of the month in which Pesach will be observed - i.e. the day of the new moon for the month of Nisan/Aviv. This day is usually called the *rosh chodesh* in sacred writings, however, not ‘*yom ha-rishon*’. Another thing the Holy One could have been talking about as the starting point for the leaven extraction process was the *yom ha-rishon* that comes on the first day of the calendar week in which Pesach will be observed – viz. from sundown at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath through the next sunset. The first day of the week is indeed called *yom ha-rishon*. More likely however the *yom ha-rishon* in question relates to the first day of the *moed* [Divine appointment] itself – i.e. the day starting at the sunset which brings the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Nisan/Aviv to a close. Due to the context [the surrounding instructions are all concerning the *moed*, and are not about a month or a week], the last of these potential alternatives has traditionally been accepted. The 24-hour period beginning at the sundown which brings the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Nisan to a close is, by tradition, called ‘*the Day of Preparation*’.

#### ***B. Identifying What We Are to Cause to Cease from the House***

The Divine Instruction is to cause something to cease from our houses on *yom ha-rishon*. What are we to cause to cease? In Hebrew what we are told to remove on *yom ha-rishon* is called *seor*. *Seor* is a word consisting of the Hebrew letters *sin, alef, and resh*, which refers to something that *remains* or is *left over* or *stored up*. In the context of the daily task of bread-making ***seor*** was the name that came to be applied to that *remnant of dough that a baker pulled from the batch he had just baked, to start the next batch*. Because the remnant pulled from the prior batch of dough had already fermented and become acidic, the smart baker knew he could mix it with a fresh batch of dough and not only speed

up the process of rising in the new batch greatly, but actually carry forward the flavor of the preceding batch into the succeeding one. The baker was able thereby to maintain continuity of his bread's odor, flavor, appearance and consistency from batch to batch.

The Hebrew verb our English Bibles translate as 'remove' in this verse is *shabbat*<sup>4</sup>. This is the verb from which the word 'Sabbath' and 'Sabbatical' are derived. As a verb it means to *pause a process, to interrupt a routine, to cease an activity or behavior pattern, and hence to come to rest*. From this we derive that even while we are, in making our preparations for *Pesach*, focusing upon eliminating all physical items in our house which have been touched by the *seor* process of 'fermentation', we should also be examining our lives for and bringing to a halt to all *thought processes, routines, activities, and behavior patterns in our lives that tend to make us feel proud, better than others, or part of any select group, movement, culture, class, or worldly political system*.

### **C. Seven Full Days of Eating One Thing and of Fasting Another**

The Holy One specifically says the observance of this day is to last 7 days – not just the night of the *Seder* of Passover. The night of the Passover feast merely introduces the changes to our diet that are to last for seven days. There is something we are specifically instructed TO EAT during the seven days of the *moed* – and there is something we are specifically instructed NOT TO EAT during that very special period.

#### *1. Eating Matzah*

What are we instructed to eat for seven days? We are to eat something the Hebrew text calls *matzah*<sup>5</sup>. The noun *matzah* is derived from an ancient Hebrew verb that means to *suck out, drain, or suckle/nurse*. *Unleavened bread* is like this. It sucks and drains out flavor from other foods. Dry and flat, it is perfect for dipping in liquids, because when immersed it sucks up and takes on – yet does not dilute - the flavor of whatever one dips it in, be it herb mixtures, broth, soup, etc. *Matzah* causes the flavor of whatever it is dipped in to linger – enabling the eater to savor that flavor in a special way.

#### *2. The Fasting of Chametz*

What are we instructed not to eat during the seven days of the *moed*? We are specifically warned not to ingest something the Hebrew text calls *chametz*<sup>6</sup>. The noun *chametz* is derived from a verb root that means to *be sharp of taste* – hence to be *sour or vinegar-like*. We are to take this literally, and change our food

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<sup>4</sup> Shabbat is *shin, bet, tav*. It is Strong's Hebrew word # 7673.

<sup>5</sup> Matzah is Hebrew word #4682. It is written *mem, tzade, hey*, and it is pronounced *mawtz'-ah*.

<sup>6</sup> Chametz is *chet, mem, tzade sofit*. Strong's Hebrew word #2557, it is pronounced '*chawm'-aitz*'.

intake accordingly<sup>7</sup>. But should we not also take these instructions to a deeper level – as Yeshua taught us to take all the *mitzvot* of Torah<sup>8</sup>. Should we not, for the entire seven days of the *moed*, avoid anything that might birth or stir up in us a ‘*root of bitterness*’? Should we not take special care to not let our attitudes, conversations, or relationships ‘*sour*’? Should we not take extra precautions not to be unpleasant or ungrateful in any way? Should we not eschew all grumbling or complaining? Should we not banish all whining, arguing, and *k’vetch*-ing from our conversations? Should we not control our urge to engage in opinionated sermonizing and the expression of critical judgments against others.

As we were told, we ate *matzah* dipped in bitter herbs on the night of the *Pesach* in order to remember the unpleasantness of the bondage from which we have been delivered. But because of what happened that night a dramatic transition has occurred. We are now free. We are to remember and focus upon the bitterness no more. Our focus is now not upon what we have endured and survived but upon the glorious destiny and joyous adventure to which we are called. Hence after the remembrance of bondage phase of the *Pesach* meal is completed we are only to dip our *matzah* in foods that are sweet to the taste. Our time to mourn has become our time to dance.

**D. Making *Miqra Kodesh* [Old English, ‘Solemn Assembly or Holy Convocation] on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> days**

On both the first day of *Chag Ha-Matzah*– i.e. the fifteenth day of Aviv/Nisan – and the seventh day – i.e. the twenty-first day of Aviv/Nisan – the Holy One instructs us to do something different than on the other 7 days of eating *matzah*.

***In the first day make miqra kodesh– [i.e. participate in a prophetic rehearsal]- and in the seventh day make miqra kodesh; no manner of work is to be done on those two days, except that which every man must eat, that only may be done by you.***

Our English Bibles usually translate the Hebrew word ‘*miqra kodesh*’ – which our Covenant Partner instruct us to ‘make’ on the first and seventh days of *Chag Ha-Matzah* - as ‘*solemn assembly*’ or ‘*holy convocation*’. This is unfortunate. Modern Westerners think of a solemn assembly/holy convocation as an organized meeting, officiated by clergy such as a rabbi, bishop, or pastor. But that is a Western idea – just an unfortunate offshoot of our Western, pseudo-intellectual approach to and infatuation with ‘spectator religion’. A *miqra*

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<sup>7</sup> This is one of only four Divinely instructed fasts – the other three being [1] the instruction to fast the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of ‘good’ and ‘evil’; [2] the total fast and self-denial of Yom Kippur, and [3] the directives of Leviticus, repeated in Deuteronomy 14 not to eat the flesh of any *tamei* creature. While other suggestions for fasting have been passed down to us by Jewish Halakah on the one hand and Christian tradition on the other, the ‘ingest no chametz’ and ‘eat no *tamei* animal’s flesh’ are the only fasts that are specifically commanded by the actual Words of our Creator.

<sup>8</sup> See Matthew 5:21-48,

*kodesh*, however, is not a spectator event. It is not a meeting of people for the purpose of having fellowship with one another, either. To the extent the idea of a ‘meeting’ is implicated by the Hebrew word *miqra*, it is focused on a *vertically-oriented encounter* – each man meeting with the Holy One – rather than on any horizontally-oriented assembly of men meeting with one another. The focus of a *miqra*, you see, is not on what men do [ministry activities, sacraments, and services officiated by clergy], but is instead *on what the Holy One has decreed to be done*. What a *miqra* is intended to be is a *prophetic rehearsal*, or *commemoration* - a *zikaron* – i.e. a time for pausing to remember, celebrate, and recount to our children and neighbors what the Holy One has done for us. It is a time to retell the story out loud, with great excitement, in the presence of our family members and friends. It is a time to re-live, and try to personally experience, what our ancestors experienced on this day in the year of the Exodus. It is a time to take note of what the Holy One has done – is doing – and will do for us as well. See you at the *Seder*!

Oh, but some may protest “*I’m not Jewish*”. The instructions the Holy One gives concerning the observance of Pesach are not solely for “*natural Israel*”. The Holy One specifically tells us that they are for the “*foreigner*”<sup>9</sup> as well<sup>10</sup>.

### ***Preparing for Our Day of Divine Visitation***

After receiving these instructions regarding future remembrance/observance of the *Pesach*, Moshe sets about preparing the people for the final plague the Holy One is going to unleash upon recalcitrant Egypt.

*Then Moshe called for all the Zakenim of Yisra'el, and he said to them,  
"Draw out, and take lambs according to your families, and kill the Pesach.  
Then to take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin,  
and strike the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood that is in the basin;  
and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning.*

***For the Holy One will pass through to strike the Mitzrim;***

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<sup>9</sup> *Foreigner* is the traditional rendering of the Hebrew noun *ger*, Strong’s Hebrew word # 1616.

<sup>10</sup> But some say, what about the passage that says a foreigner, if uncircumcised, shall not ‘eat of it’? **Exodus 12:43**. Read that passage *carefully*. A foreigner shall not eat of WHAT? The context – especially verse 46 - makes it clear what is being spoken of – *i.e.* what the uncircumcised foreigner may not eat of - is the special lamb itself – the lamb sacrificed for the household in accordance with Torah at the brazen altar in the Temple. There has not been a Temple or an altar in almost 2000 years [since 70 C.E], nor has there been a lamb sacrificed for the household in accordance with Torah since that time. No lamb meeting the requirements of Exodus 12 can presently be served on any Seder plate anywhere in the world. Hence I believe that the ‘foreigner’ who truly desires to may participate fully in the *miqra* of Pesach at this point in time, whether or not he was circumcised on the eighth day in accordance with Torah. He can sit at the table with the native-born Jew or the convert. He can drink of the cup, and eat of the matzah, bitter herbs, and charoset, and indeed of every other dish, including the meat. Even if the main course is lamb, I believe the foreigner may eat, because the lamb that is served will not have been sacrificed at the altar of the Temple in Jerusalem.

*and when he sees the blood on the lintel, and on the two side-posts,  
the Holy One will pass over the door,  
and will not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you.*

Something reminiscent of this – some striking of the lintels and side posts of the doors of our dwellings – is to take place each 14 Nisan forever. For Moshe says, regarding the striking of the doorposts: *You are to observe [Hebrew, sh'mar] this thing for an ordinance to you and to your sons forever.*

The process of striking the doorposts of individual homes on the first night of *Pesach* has not been a traditional part of the observance, primarily because the Torah tells us, later, that no *korban* [approach offering] is to be slaughtered anywhere but at the altar of “the Place the Holy One shall choose to place His Name” - Temple Mount, in Jerusalem. In place of the physical blood of a physical *seh* it has now become customary – by tradition - to substitute *wine*, which is merely symbolic of the blood. We drink from four cups, one for each of the strokes our forefathers placed upon the doorposts and lintels.

### ***Yeshua Rabbeinu’s Observance and Affirmation of Pesach***

Yeshua affirmed the use of wine and *matzah* in connection with *Pesach* on the last night of His life on earth, when He ate *matzah* and bitter herbs with His talmidim and shared with them “the cup”. It was then that He instructed us “*as oft as you do this*” [meaning *at all future observances of Pesach*] we should take the *matzah*, bitter herbs, and wine “in remembrance of Him”. Institutional forms of Christianity teach that when He took the cup and the *matzah* Messiah was establishing something they refer to as a *sacrament* – which some call ‘*the Eucharist*’, others call “*Communion*”, and still others like to call the “*Lord’s supper*”. But neither the word *sacrament* nor the idea of any new religious ritual – nor for that matter any intention on the part of Yeshua to start a new religion - are found in any Biblical account. All the Master was doing was observing and teaching about the deep spiritual meaning of *Pesach*. He was not replacing the ancient Covenant-sealing ceremony – He was rejuvenating and perpetuating it. He was *leading His talmidim in the commemoration that Torah prescribed*. Most importantly however, in taking up the *matzah* and wine of *Pesach*, and identifying personally with both, Yeshua was identifying Himself as the *seh* whose blood is to adorn our doorposts and lintels, as successors, in the renewed covenant context, to the covenant rights and responsibilities of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya’akov.

### ***The Effect of the Visitation Upon Those Who Have Chosen Not to Avail Themselves and Their Households of the Blood***

When the Divine Visitation finally came, today’s aliyah tells us, *there arose a great outcry in Egypt, for there was no house where there were no dead. Exodus*



12:30(b). It happened in the house of Pharaoh as well. And in his grief over his own firstborn son, Pharaoh finally released – indeed *cast out* – the Holy One’s firstborn son, Israel. The message from Pharaoh was clear and unmistakable. We were not going to be *permitted* to leave – we were *commanded* to leave ... ordered out, just as the Holy One had prophesied would happen. This time there was no clever diplomacy. This time there were no ‘conditions’. For the first time ever Pharaoh recognized us for who we are – the *descendants of Avraham, of Yitzchak, and of Ya’akov/Yisrael*. And Pharaoh will make it clear that he did not want us in his country even *one more day*. Here is how Torah records Pharaoh decree on the night of the Passover:

***Kumu tsz'u mitoch ami***

*'Get up!' 'Get out from among my people -*

***gam-atem gam-b'nei Yisra'el***

*you and the descendants of Yisrael!*

***uleichu ivdu et-Adonai kedaberchem***

*Go! Worship the Holy One just as you demanded!*

***Gam-tzonchem gam-bekarchem***

*Take your sheep and cattle*

***keichu ka'asher dibartem valeichu uverachtem gam-oti***

*just as you said! Go! And bless me too!*

[Exodus 12:31-32]

The Egyptian people felt the same way. They demanded us to go *right then*.

***V'techeizak Mitzrayim al ha-am l'maher l'shalcham min ha-aretz***

*Egyptians were also urging the people to hurry and leave the land.*

***ki amru kulanu metim***

*For they said: "We are all dying".*

[Exodus 12:34]

At least the Egyptians who decided to stay behind recognized themselves for what they were. ‘*We are all dying*’ they said. They were quite correct. Egypt was, after all, *obsessed with death*. Egyptian culture and religion were all about death. Egyptian philosophy and worldview was all about preparing for death, and about embalming, mummifying and entombing those who were dead. There was no place in such a country for the descendants of Yisrael. So, pursuant to the Holy One’s instructions, our ancestors asked the Egyptians for, and were given, articles of gold, articles of silver, and fine garments – and thus was the prophecy the Holy One had given to Avraham many generations previously fulfilled.

*Know for a certainty that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs,  
and will serve them, and they will afflict them.*

*Four hundred years will pass,  
and the nation whom they serve I will also judge;*

*afterward they will come out with great possessions.*

[Genesis 15:13-14]

Have you ever wondered why – for what practical reason - the Holy One had the Egyptians give gold, silver, and fine garments to a bunch of escaping slaves, headed off on a long trek through the desert? It will be with these very ‘gifts’ that we will, not many days hence, build *the Tabernacle* of the Holy One on earth. But we are getting ahead of ourselves. For now, we have to deal with the details of leaving the only home we have ever known.

### ***Not So Fast, Pharaoh!***

Just because Pharaoh orders us to go does not mean we should beat a hasty retreat in the middle of *this* night. Hurrying is for slaves, who operate on someone else’s time, doing someone other man’s bidding. We are now acting on a Higher Authority; the Holy One, Maker of Heaven and Earth, has declared: ***v'atem lo tetz'u ish mipetach-beito*** – i.e. *Not a single one of you is to go out the door of his house - ad-boker* – i.e. *until morning*. Exodus 12:22. Your will, Pharaoh, will never again control us. This night all that changes. This night is not to be a night of hurried packing and hasty retreat. It is, instead, to be a night of *keeping reverent vigil*. We are not to leave our dwellings *for any reason* – including the expulsion decree of a madman. We are acting *under orders from the Most High God*. We have to stay here through the night, and be here in the morning – *whether Pharaoh likes it or not*. There is only one reason we are leaving Egypt – and that is *because the Holy One our God has set us free*. We are not leaving Egypt in obedience to any human decree. Pharaoh’s voice, we now know, is the ‘voice of another’, to whom we will no longer listen. We now listen to the Voice of One much greater than Pharaoh. We no longer have to *sh'ma* Pharaoh’s commands – or those of his taskmasters - ever again. We will instead *sh'ma* the Holy One’s words of life.

### ***The End of a Long Season – And the Beginning of a New One!***

With today’s aliyah the long chapter of the history of the Holy One’s people Biblical history called the *Egyptian exile* finally comes to an end. Simultaneously a glorious new chapter – with its own set of challenges of course – officially begins.

The solemn night of *Pesach* is about saying goodbye to the season that is ending. The joyous week of *Matzah*, on the other hand, is about greeting and embracing the new season that is beginning.

### ***Understanding the Essence of the Corruption Torah Calls Egypt***

Ever since *Yosef* [Joseph] – as the forerunner of all the Holy One’s people - was sold into the house of Potifar by Yish’maeli traders [Genesis 39:1] the seed of

Avraham has been in a state of exile. At first, at least after Yosef was joined by the rest of the covenant family it was a *pleasant sort of exile*. In latter centuries however that exile has taken on an increasingly malevolent character, degenerating into *cruel captivity, brutally enforced backbreaking labor, and systematic programs of genocide*. Egypt, it turns out, is *not a good place for people in covenant to live* – at least not for any extended period of time. Egypt is not where heirs to the covenant made by the Holy One with Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya’akov belong. Why? What exactly is it about Egypt in particular - and about Egyptian-influenced cultures in general - that is so toxic to the *zera* [seed] of Avraham?

The original text of the Bible, etched in the Hebrew tongue, does not refer to the land from which the Holy One redeemed us as *Egypt*. The Hebrew Scriptures instead all call that land *Mitzrayim*<sup>11</sup>. I believe the secret to the incompatibility that exists between Egypt and the Holy One’s people lies in the Hebrew meaning of that name. *Mitzrayim* is the plural or multiplied form of the noun *matzor*, meaning *limitation, constraint, or restriction*. *Mitzrayim* is sometimes, therefore, translated figuratively as ‘*straits*’, meaning *a series of tight, narrow channels of water*<sup>12</sup>. Literally translated, however, the word *Mitzrayim* – the name the Bible gives to the land we know as Egypt – means *multiple levels of limitations, constraints, and restrictions*. Why such a name? What does this name *mean*? *Mitzrayim* means that that the geographical area we know as Egypt – and absolutely everything arising under the occult influence of ancient Egyptian culture – is under, and projects onto everyone and everything it touches, *a spirit of bondage*. The predominant characteristics of the land, the culture, the religion, the prevailing spiritual climate as well as the dominant worldview and philosophies of life of the area known to us as Egypt<sup>13</sup> are *limitation, constraint and restriction*. This would not, of course, in the long run, make Egypt a particularly pleasant place to be for *anyone* – except perhaps for people who are ‘into’ bondage. For children of the Avrahamic covenant, however, it means that

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<sup>11</sup> *Mitzrayim* is *mem, tzade, resh, yod, mem sofit*.

<sup>12</sup> According to the *Merriam-Webster On-line Dictionary*, the English word *strait* [singular for straits] means: “1 a: a *narrow space or passage* b: a *comparatively narrow passageway connecting two large bodies of water*, 2: a situation of perplexity or distress - often used in plural, such as in the phrase ‘in dire *straits*’. See: <http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary>.

<sup>13</sup> It should be pointed out that Egypt today is populated by very different people groups than the *Mitzrayim* of the Exodus story and most of Biblical history. The last native Egyptian dynasty fell to the Persian empire in 341 BCE. The Persians changed the topography of Egypt forever by digging the predecessor of the Suez canal, and thereby connecting the Red Sea with the Mediterranean. Since that time, Egypt has been conquered, and repopulated, first by the Greeks, then by the Romans, then by the Byzantines, by the Persians again, and then in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century CE, by Moslem Arabs. More recently, in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, Egypt fell by conquest to the Ottoman Turks. Whoever seems to populate Egypt, however, the bondage seems to remain. Limitation, restriction, and constraint seem to hang over the land itself – and all people and tangible things associated with it - like a dark cloud.

Egypt - and all things Egyptian – are *absolutely toxic*. The covenant with Avraham, you see, is a covenant of *b'racha* – blessing. From a Hebraic standpoint, to 'bless' [*b'rach, beit, resh, chet*] means *to release the object of the blessing from restrictions and limitations*. A people of *blessing* is therefore the exact opposite of, and polar extreme from, a people of limitation, restriction and constraint. Hence because the blessing spoken by the Holy One over the Hebrew people and the spirit and essence of *Mitzrayim* are completely opposite and incompatible, the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov do not belong – and cannot remain – in Egypt.

### ***Egypt As Our Nation's Womb***

So why did the Holy One ordain that Avraham's descendants would go to Egypt in the first place? And why did He bring about – or at least allow - a famine in the latter years of the life of Ya'akov to coincide with the rise of Yosef to prominence in Egypt, such that sojourning in Egypt became necessary? The answer to this question is found in the words the Holy One spoke to Ya'akov in his last recorded God-encounter. As Ya'akov pondered in his heart if it was the right thing to do for him and his family to go to Egypt the Holy One appeared to him and said:

***Al-tirah*** [i.e. *do not be afraid*] ***to go down to Egypt,***  
***for I will make you into a goy g'dol*** [great nation] ***there.***  
***I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again.***  
[Genesis 46:3b- 4b]

It was in order to make Yisrael's descendants a 'goy gadol' [i.e. *great nation*] that the Holy One had them go to *Mitzrayim*. The Holy One wanted to *birth a nation* from the seed of Yisrael. As Avraham had employed Hagar – an Egyptian - as a surrogate mother for his firstborn child [Yishma'el], so the Holy One employed Egypt as the surrogate mother for His firstborn nation. The 'straits', or series of tight, narrow channels that characterized *Mitzrayim* would function for the Holy One's firstborn as a *birth canal*. The restrictions, constraints, and limitations the name *Mitzrayim* described would function for the nation the Holy One desired to birth as the *birth pains of hard labor*. As from the womb of Hagar the Egyptian issued forth Avraham's first child so from the loins of the nation of Hagar issued forth multitudes of Avraham's seed.

### ***The Morning After the Plague: Making Our 'Exodus' at Last***

The morning after the vigil of *Pesach* we lit fires to burn all traces of the Passover lamb we consumed the night before and prepared to leave our Egyptian homes forever. We would take our children. We would take our animals. We would take the gold, and the silver, and the ornate fabrics the Egyptians showered upon us as we left. And we would also take something else very special – we would take dough for matzah. ***Vayisa ha-am et-betzeiko terem*** - i.e.

the people took their dough before it could rise - **Yech'matz mish'arotam tzrurot** - i.e. They wrapped their dough in robes - **b'simlotam al-shichmam** - and they carried it on their shoulders. **Exodus 12:34.**

The image of the bundles of dough wrapped up in robes, carried on the shoulders of the people, is a powerful image, Beloved. Stop for a moment and try to get this picture in your mind. You are a *slave, suddenly set free* - after a lifetime of servitude. Imagine you now have *no place to stay*. You now have *no way to earn a living*. You now have *no way to know where you are going to go or how long it will be before you get there*. Imagine you face the future with *no way to feed yourself or your children* - except with whatever you can carry with you on your back and shoulders as you take your leave. See yourself *gathering all the flour you can, and preparing dough* as hurriedly as you know how, and carefully *wrapping it up in your robe*, so as not to lose a precious ounce of what you knew would be the substance of life for you and your family for who knows how long. If you can picture this in your mind, and if you can sense in your spirit what this experience was like, perhaps you can appreciate why it is with fondness that pursuant to the Holy One's instructions we eat *matzah* - unleavened bread, made from dough like our ancestors carried in their robes out of Egypt - seven days each year beginning on *Pesach* [Passover]. If we are in a country of exile we eat *matzah* not only to remember how our nation began but to keep in the forefront of our minds the realization that at any moment *we could be ordered out of our homes and countries just as our ancestors were*. And if we dare look deeper into the *matzah* we realize that it provided for us a beautiful picture of Messiah - the true Bread of Life. As the *matzah* enabled us to transition from Egypt's leeks and onions to manna from Heaven, and from following Moshe to following the Manifest Presence of the Holy One in the pillar of fire and cloud, Messiah similarly enables us to transition from the *milk* of the Holy One's Word to the *meat* of it, and from the bondage of the flesh and pseudo-intellect to our glorious freedom in the Ruach HaQodesh. See **John 16:7-15** and **Romans 8:7-17**.

### ***The Number of the Redeemed***

Torah speaks of the number of the persons the Holy One redeemed from Egypt in connection with the **Passover** deliverance as follows: **V'yis'u b'nei Yisra'el** - i.e. the sons of Israel traveled - **m'Ramses Sukotah** - i.e. from Rameses toward Sukkot. **K'shesh-me'ot elef ragli ha-gevarim levad mitach** - i.e. there were about 600,000 adult males on foot, besides the children. **Exodus 12: 37**. If you consider that male Hebrew children had been under a death-sentence for over 80 years you realize that women far outnumbered men. Hence, it is believed that between 2,000,000 and 3,000,000 Hebrew souls - including women and children - left Egypt together. Have you ever thought about how do would go about *feeding* 2,000,000 to 3,000,000 people? Have you ever considered how you would go

about providing enough water for them to drink, and wash, cook with – *in the desert*? Have you ever imagined how you would handle things like *sanitation* for that many people?

Ah Dear Reader, if you thought the *otot* [signs] the Holy One performed in Egypt were awesome, you need to realize that the *real* miracles are just about to begin. Before we consider that, however, you might want to take a look to your right and to your left. You may be a little surprised at who is walking beside you.

### ***Don't Look Now, But a 'Mixed Multitude' Just Got Grafted-In!***

It was, of course, not only natural 'Israel' that was delivered out of Egypt by the Holy One's Mighty Right Hand. As the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov marched out of the land of the pyramids they found themselves joined by a mixed multitude of people from many nations who decided it was time for them to leave Egypt as well. The Torah tells us plainly that when Moshe led the people out: *V'gam-erev rav alah itam* – *i.e.* a great mixture [of nationalities] left with them. **Exodus 12:38(a)**. Who *were* these 'mixed multitude' people? Where did they come from? Why did they come with us when we left? Torah does not specifically answer these questions. If you think about it however you will realize that, even in the day of Yosef, Egypt had been a nation that thrived on human trafficking. There were people of all ethnicities and from all nations who the Egyptians had captured in their wars, purchased from the Midyani and Yish'maeli, or just oppressed into abject poverty; it was by no means just Hebrews Egypt had subjugated, it was the whole world. Now, by reason of all the plagues, all Egypt's enslaved and impoverished cultures were suddenly out of work too. As Pharaoh's advisors had recently pointed out, *Egypt was 'destroyed'*. Much like what occurred in the 'dust bowl' era in the United States, a great migration – a population shift – was to be expected. And if you are leaving anyway, why not go with those who appear to have some place to go – especially, as is the case here, if it is obvious that God is with them. See Zechariah 8:20-23 for a picture of how this process will be repeated in a future day.

So our ancestors did not leave Egypt alone. Ever since the day the Holy One has made for deliverance, the hungry and thirsty of the nations have *always had an inheritance in and been a part of Israel*. By the conclusion of our readings for today we will see a beautiful sight, prophetic of an even greater day yet to come – as the physical descendants of the patriarchs will sit down with great numbers of *newly-engrafted foreigners* and enjoy a meal of freedom together. Let all who are thirsty come. And let those who have no money come and buy.

### ***One Small Step for Man ...***

The people who followed Moshe out of Pharaoh's world, with its culture and its (until recently) booming economy, had been *born in Egypt* and had lived in Egypt all their lives. We had always told ourselves that we *were* Egyptians, and that Egypt needed us. We had *talked* like Egyptians, *walked* like Egyptians, *thought* like Egyptians, and *worked alongside* Egyptians for Pharaoh since our birth. We had *lived* like Egyptians in virtually every way. But we suddenly realized what 'they' had known all along - that we were *not*, had never been, and would never be Egyptians. No matter how hard we worked. No matter how hard we tried – we would never be accepted. We would never be trusted. We would never be welcome. We *did not belong* in Egypt. We belonged somewhere else. So be it! Egypt's spell over us was broken at last. So, at the first light of morning after the ***Pesach*** vigil, approximately three million descendants of Ya'akov, together with a mixed multitude of ***goyim***, *departed the slave camps* and *headed into the desert*. Not knowing what lay before us, only that it was time to go, we set out on a journey that would literally change the world.

### ***One Last Look Around***

On the way out of Egypt Torah tells us that our ancestors passed through the city of Rameses, which they built for Pharaoh (**Exodus 1:11**) with their labors. By the sweat of our brow we had constructed the building there. Many of our countrymen died in the process. Then this city had been full of noises: grinding noises; hammers; picks; chisels; the shouts of the taskmasters; the groaning of slaves. That was what it was like *then* - but not now. Now the footsteps of two-to-three million people on the stones in Rameses' deserted streets echo through empty alleys and half-finished buildings.

One last look around. There is *nothing for us here*. Turn the page. Close the book. We will never pass this way again. We are free at last.

### ***Our First Stop on the Great Journey: Sukkot!***

Leaving this dark chapter of their lives behind, our ancestors then journeyed to what is probably the first place they have ever been outside of Egypt - a place they call '*Sukkot*' [i.e. temporary dwellings, or transient shelters]. And there, without Pharaoh's guards watching our every move, we sat down and we ate *matzah* baked in the open air from the wheat flour that we had ground and bundled up in haste the preceding night. And there in the desert at *Sukkot* we ate our first meal as *free men*. Had we known what lay ahead of us, some of those who made the trek might never have gone - especially the mixed multitude of *goyim* that did not have to go to escape genocide. But we did not know. Probably none of us who made the Exodus had ever been to Kena'an. Most of us had no idea where

Kena'an was, what it was like, or how long it would take to get there. For that matter, many of us did not even know at that time that a place called Kena'an even existed. Certainly none of us had any concept of what it was going to take to possess that land as our own. When we ate *matzah* at *Sukkot*, you see, we were not pilgrims looking for a promised land - we were merely refugees, fleeing from a madman, just happy to have escaped genocide. But *matzah* never tasted so good. After all, it bore *the taste of freedom*.

***Am Yisrael Chai!*** [*The people of Israel live!*]

The *matzah* we ate at *Sukkot* not only tasted like freedom – it tasted like *life itself*. Life without rationed out leeks and onions acquired at the high price of one's dignity. Life without the seductive comforts of an Egyptian-style home. Life without the soul-numbing anesthesia of Egyptian-style entertainment. Life focused upon something besides the chicness of Egyptian-style clothes, trinkets and toys. *Real life*. Life *without a Pharaoh*. Life *without having to walk in perpetual fear of displeasing the taskmaster*. Life that provided an opportunity to become who the Holy One created us to be, and fulfill *the destiny for which we were born* rather than merely to do what Pharaoh wanted in order for Egypt to flourish. Life - *Chayim*. Life the way *the Holy One meant us to live it*. For as Moshe put it:

***This will be an ot for you on your hand, and for remembrance/commemoration between your eyes, that the Torah of the Holy One may be in your mouth, for b'Yad Chazakah – i.e. with a Mighty Hand – the Holy One brought you forth from Egypt.***  
[Exodus 13:9]

Tonight as you make *kiddush* for *Erev Shabbat* - before you say the *HaMotzei* you may wish to look at one another and smile, and say just under your breath – thinking of some long, lost ancestor<sup>14</sup> - “*L'chayim!*”- *To Life! Am Yisrael Chai!*

### ***Questions For Today's Study***

1. The remainder of parsha *Bo* deals with the actual details of the First Exodus. After generations of comfortable existence in a land not their own, followed by a series of “birth pains” of increasing hostility and bondage imposed by the people they once considered their friends, the sons and daughters of Ya'akov and of Yosef finally load up their meager belongings and their children and leave.

[A] What happened at midnight that insured that the remnant of Israelites, who had painted their doorposts with lamb's blood, could not stay in Egypt?

[B] Who was it that struck down the firstborn of Egypt?

[C] Pharaoh summoned Moshe and Aharon for one last confrontation. List each of Pharaoh's final “commands”.

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<sup>14</sup> Or perhaps some ‘foreigner’ of the future who wishes to join us as did the mixed multitude of Moshe's day.



[D] As the remnant of Israelites who had painted their doorposts with lamb's blood hastened, in the middle of the night, to obey Pharaoh's final commands, for what did they ask their Egyptian neighbors?

[E] What attitude did the Egyptian people have toward the remnant of Israelites who were leaving Egypt in the middle of the night at Pharaoh's command? [Be careful to read verse 33 as well as verse 36 before you answer].

[F] For what were the items given by the Egyptian people to the remnant of Israelites in the middle of the night eventually used?

2. Today's aliyah also details the *first day's journey* and *first meal* of the First Exodus.

[A] Who were the "many other people" who went with Moshe and the Israelites, and why do you think they went?

[B] Where do you think the "large droves of livestock" that went out with Moshe, the Israelites, and the mixed multitude of "many other people", came from? [Before answering, read **Genesis 47:11-21**].

[C] List the instructions the Holy One gave Moshe and Aharon regarding the eating of the Pesach meal in subsequent years.

3. The concluding haftarah reading for the week *Bo* is full of vivid prophetic imagery, as the Holy One tries to convey through His prophet, Yirmayahu, what will befall "the daughter of Egypt", the other lands in which Israel has been exiled (i.e. the "goat nations"), and Israel itself, in the day of His final judgment.

*The daughter of Mitzrayim shall be disappointed;  
she will be delivered into the hand of the people of the north.*

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*But don't be afraid you, Ya`akov my servant, neither be dismayed, Yisra'el:  
for, behold, I will save you from afar, and your seed from the land of their captivity;  
and Ya`akov will return, and will be quiet and at ease, and none shall make him afraid.*

***Don't be afraid you, O Ya`akov my servant, says the Holy One; for I am with you:  
for I will make a full end of all the nations where I have driven you;  
though I will not make a full end of you,  
I will correct you in measure, and will in no way leave you unpunished.***

[A] How were the Egyptian armies "like fatted calves in the stall"?

[B] What was making the "sound of a serpent" and why?

[C] How does the Holy One say He will deal with the nations in which Israel is exiled [most notably, Egypt, Babylon, Rome, England, France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Poland, Russia, and America, if you are counting]?

[D] What does the Holy One say He will do with *Israel*?

4. In the concluding passage of the B'rit Chadasha reading for the week Shaul of Tarsus urges us to live a *life* of *tzedakah*. His instructions cannot be understood

outside a knowledge of Torah. Shaul's words are not a "new" religion or ethical code. These words merely punctuate the revelation given by the Holy One to His Betrothed "kingdom of priests" on Mt. Sinai.

*Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil. Cling to that which is good.*

*In love of the brothers be tenderly affectionate one to another;*

*in honor preferring one another; not lagging in diligence;*

*fervent in spirit; serving the Holy One;*

*rejoicing in hope; enduring in troubles; continuing steadfastly in prayer;*

*contributing to the needs of the holy ones; given to hospitality.*

*Bless those who persecute you; bless, and don't curse.*

*Rejoice with those who rejoice. Weep with those who weep.*

*Be of the same mind one toward another.*

*Don't set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble.*

*Don't be wise in your own conceits. Repay no one evil for evil.*

*Respect what is honorable in the sight of all men.*

*If it is possible, as much as it is up to you, be at shalom with all men.*

*Do not seek revenge yourselves, Beloved, but give place to the Holy One's wrath.*

*For it is written, "**Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay,** says the Holy One."*

*Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him.*

*If he is thirsty, give him a drink. For in doing so, you will heap coals of fire on his head."*

[A] To what does he compare the followers of Messiah as a group?

[B] To what does he liken individual followers of Messiah?

[C] What is his point?

*May you see clearly the way of life before you.*

*May you walk away from everything that leads to death. And may you never look back!*

### ***The Rabbi's son***

## ***Meditation for Today's Study***

Psalm 89:1-17

*I will sing of the lovingkindness of the Holy One forever.*

*With my mouth, I will make known your faithfulness to all generations. indeed declare, I "Love stands firm forever. You established the heavens. Your faithfulness is in them."*

***"I have made a covenant with my chosen one,***

***I have sworn to David, my servant, 'I will establish your seed forever,***

***And build up your throne to all generations.'" Selah.***

*The heavens will praise your wonders, Oh Holy One; Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the holy ones. For who in the skies can be compared to the Holy One?*

*Who among the sons of the heavenly beings is like the Holy One?*

*A very awesome God in the council of the holy ones,*

*To be feared above all those who are around him?*

*Oh Holy One, God tzva'ot, who is a mighty one, like you?*

*Oh Holy One, your faithfulness is around you. You rule the pride of the sea.*

*When its waves rise up, you calm them. You have broken Rachav in pieces,  
like one of the slain. You have scattered your enemies with your mighty arm.  
The heavens are yours. The erez also is yours; The world and its fullness.  
You have founded them. The north and the south, you have created them.  
Tavor and Hermon rejoice in your name.  
You have a mighty arm. Your hand is strong, and your right hand is exalted.*

*Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne.  
Lovingkindness and truth go before your face. Blessed are the people  
who learn to acclaim you. They walk in the light of your presence, Oh Holy One.*