

# FIRST DAY PESACH



## ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



**Rabbi Reuven  
Tradburks**  
Director of  
RCA Israel Region

This year the first day of Pesach is Shabbat, so we have 7 aliyot.



**1<sup>st</sup> aliya (Exodus 12:21-24)** Offer the Pesach offering, place its blood on the doorposts and remain indoors ‘til the morning. For G-d will pass over the homes identified with the blood and your firstborn will be spared. This law is eternal.

The simplicity of this narrative belies its drama. Take the Pesach, offer it; and they did. The willingness of the people to be defiant of Egypt, to slaughter its god (the lamb) is striking. The slave people listened to their G-d regardless of the risk from their overseers.

And this is the first act of loyalty demanded of the Jewish people by G-d. All of the Torah has been G-d’s promises to us. Now he asks for our hand to be stretched to Him in return. The Holy One could have redeemed us, could have passed over our homes without the blood on the doorposts. But He wanted us to stretch our hand to Him.



**2<sup>nd</sup> aliya (12:25-28)** When you enter the Land and your children ask you what this service is, you will answer that this is a Pesach, as Hashem

passed over our homes. The people did as Moshe commanded.

These simple verses are as dramatic as the first. “When you enter the Land”? What? Slaves in Egypt, living with hope alone, are being told to keep this mitzvah when they enter the Land. The Land of Israel is the farthest thing from their minds, mired in slavery. From the dawn of our history we have dreams and visions of the future, ignoring the grimness of the reality of the moment.



**3<sup>rd</sup> aliya (12:29-32)** At midnight all the firstborn in Egypt are killed. Paro orders Moshe and Aharon to leave and take all the people to their festival and to bless him as well.

While the buildup to this moment took many months, the redemption occurs in a flash. Out. Now.



**4<sup>th</sup> aliya (12:33-36)** The Egyptians urged the Jews to leave quickly. The Jewish people took unrisen dough and gold, silver and clothing from the Egyptians.

Even the Jews, knowing they are going to be redeemed that night, are unprepared for the moment. The anticipation tempers not the astonishment of the moment. They had not prepared provisions. Faithful they were; prepared, not.



**5<sup>th</sup> aliya (12:37-42)** The people left, including 600,000 of military age, many others who joined, and laden with flocks. The dough was baked hastily as they were expelled in haste. The Jews lived in Egypt 430 years; they departed after exactly 430 years. This day that G-d anticipated for their departure remains a noted day for Jews forever.

The Torah emphasizes that this was the day destined from the start for the redemption. From our perspective the redemption was sudden; we were unprepared. But from His perspective, this was in the cards the whole time. He anticipated it before it happened; we mark that day after it happened.



### 6th aliya (12:43-47) The Pesach

**Offering:** Non Jews may not participate, must be eaten in one

home, may not be taken out of the home, no bone may be broken, all Jews participate.

The law that the Pesach may not be taken out of the home sounds an awful lot like the laws that korbanot cannot be taken out of the Mikdash. Our homes become the Mikdash on the Seder night.



7<sup>th</sup> aliya (12:48-51) One who joins the Jewish people and is circum-

cised may join the Pesach; there is one law for all. On that day G-d took the Jewish people out of Egypt.

Circumcision and the Pesach are 2 sides of the same coin – Brit Milah is a sign of the covenant with G-d, while Pesach is our yearly renewal of dedication to that covenant. ■

## MAFTIR

BAMIDBAR 28:16-18

## HAFTARAH

YEHOShUA 5:2- 6:1

The haftarah for today mentions the Korban Pesach, echoing the Torah portion which describes the preparations and the sacrifice done in Egypt under Moshe's leadership.

After thirty days of mourning Moshe's

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passing, Yehoshua tells the people to prepare themselves for the crossing of the Yarden river, he tells the kohanim to carry the Aron Hakodesh in front of the people. Hashem tells Yehoshua that He will show his greatness to the people of Israel “that they may know that as I was with Moshe, so will I be with you”.

Hashem tells Yehoshua to circumcise the Jewish men who had not yet been circumcised due to the desert weather, he does so, reminding them of the previous generation of men, who had gone out of Egypt, who had all been circumcised before partaking of the Korban Pesach. Yehoshua reminds the people of past events, how they had to wait for that generation to die in the desert as they would not be able to enter the Land of Israel. Once everyone was circumcised they waited for all the men to

Yehoshua sees a sword-holding man on the outskirts of Yericho and asks him on whose side he is on. “And he said, No, but I am the leader of the host of the L-rd; I have now come. And Yehoshua fell on his face to the earth and prostrated himself, and said to him, What does my lord say to his servant? And the captain of the Lord’s host said to

Yehoshua, Remove your shoe from your foot; for the place upon which you stand is holy. And Yehoshua did so.”

The haftorah ends with a message that the city of Yericho was under siege and that Hashem was with Yehoshua. ■

## SEVENTH DAY PESACH



**1<sup>st</sup> aliya (Exodus 13:17-22)** The people traveled away from Egypt toward the sea. Moshe

took the bones of Yosef, as Yosef had instructed them to do. A Divine cloud guided them by day, fire by night.

Yosef was so confident in the redemption from Egypt, he was willing to have his bones remain in Egypt, to be brought out of Egypt when the Jewish people were redeemed. For Yosef, the Divine promise was not mythical; it was a certainty.



**2<sup>nd</sup> aliya (14:1-14:8)** The people camp at the sea; Paro pursues with the elite of his fighting forces.



**3<sup>rd</sup> aliya (14:9-14)** With the sea in front of them and Paro in pursuit, the people are desperate.

They question why Moshe brought them out of Egypt to die in the desert. And state: this is what we said in Egypt. We would rather remain in Egypt to live and work as slaves than leave Egypt to die in the desert. Moshe reassured them.

This is the first we hear of the reluctance of the people to leave Egypt. While the Torah tells the story of the Jewish people leaving slavery, that doesn’t mean that every Jewish

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person was a willing participant. Skepticism is not a modern invention; it is part of the human condition. But, while skeptical, they took their place as part of the Jewish people who were redeemed. Skeptics join the Jewish adventure of redemption, albeit skeptically.



**4<sup>th</sup> aliya (14:15-25)** G-d tells

Moshe to march forward, raise his staff over the water, the water will split and the people will proceed through the water. Moshe does so, the sea splits, the people march through and the Egyptians pursue. By daybreak the Egyptians are stuck in the sea, claiming G-d is fighting the battle of the Jews.

Redemption occurs with water. The first thing in creation was water; verse 2 in the Torah states G-d's spirit hovered over the waters. Water recurs as a symbol of beginnings. The splitting of the sea and the redemption from Egypt closes a chapter of Jewish history and opens a new beginning. It is the beginning of the national march to receive the Torah and to enter the Land of Israel. A new beginning marked by water.



**5<sup>th</sup> aliya (14:26-15:26)** The sea

waters return, drowning the Egyptians. The people sing Az Yashir, the song of thanks. Miriam leads the women in song. The journey into the desert begins.

Redemption brings song. This song creates a religious paradigm. When we are the

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recipients of Divine gifts, we must respond with appreciation and joy. This is reflected in our siddur as well. When we mention the exodus from Egypt in the brachot of the Shema we include that the people sang this shira. What He does must be responded to by what we do. Song. ■

## MAFTIR BAMIDBAR 28:19-25

## HAFTORAH SHMUEL BET 22



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## A SHORT VORT | BY RABBI CHANUCH YERES

Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

“ליל שמרים הוא לה’ להוציאם מארץ מצרים הוא הלילה הזה לה’ שמרים לכל בני ישראל” (יב:מב)

“It was a night of watching for Hashem to bring them out of Egypt. This same night is a night of watching to all the children of Israel throughout their generation.” (12:42)

Why does the Pasuk have to refer to the “night of watching” twice?

Rashi explains the “night of watching” as the night of anticipation, waiting and watching for Hashem to take us out of Egypt.

The Yalkut Shimoni (Shemot 210) answers the question by referring to the double redemption that is to take place. Firstly, the redemption of the Jewish people. Secondly, the redemption, so to speak, for G-d. The word “shemurim” – “watching” appears in the plural form, for we find that throughout our generations, when Israel were enslaved, it was as if G-d too was enslaved with them. Whenever the Jewish people were in exile, G-d went into exile with them, in the same way.

The Michtav M’Eliyahu (Rav Eliyahu Dessler 1892-1953, Mashgiach Ponovez Yeshiva) answers that it is referring to the night of our past redemption and also to our future redemptions. On this night He delivered Chizkiyahu from Sancherev; Daniel was saved from the lion’s den and the eventual final redemption of Mashiach will transpire this night.

Shabbat Shalom and Chag Kasher Vesameach