



DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

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I want to start off by saying that I hope by the time this edition is published that we have finally been greeted by *Moshiach* and are offering our *Korban Pesach* in the *Beit HaMikdash*. If we don't merit the coming of *Moshiach* by seder night, we will begin the Seder with the familiar question, מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות (*Mah nishtanah halailah hazeh mikol haleilot?*) Why is this night different from all other nights? This year, I find myself hearing that question a little differently. Not only why is this night different, but why is this year different? מה נשתנה השנה הזאת מכל השנים (*Mah nishtanah hashanah hazot mikol hashanim?*) What is it about this year that makes the Seder feel so different, so much heavier, and at the same time so much more alive?

In our home, like in so many homes across Israel, this is not a theoretical question. This Pesach comes during a time in which war has entered our homes, our conversations, our *tefillot*, and our hearts. It comes in a year in which families think not only about who is sitting around the Seder table, but who may still come in late, who may need to leave early, and who may be spending part of *Yom Tov* in uniform. It comes in a year in which children know what it means to run to a shelter, and parents know what it means to sleep with one ear open. It comes in a year in which all of us have become more familiar than we ever wanted to be with sirens, headlines, funerals, hospitals, and prayers whispered with tears.

And yet, as painful as this year has been, I keep thinking that it is also a year in which *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* has shown us things that we dare not ignore. We have seen suffering, yes. We have seen sacrifice, certainly. But we have also seen extraordinary strength, extraordinary courage, extraordinary unity, and extraordinary miracles. This year, when we sit down to tell the story of *Yetziat Mitzrayim*, I do not think we can speak only about what happened then. We have to speak, at least a little, about what Hashem is doing for us now.

Perhaps that is exactly what the Haggadah is asking of us. We do not say only that Hashem redeemed our fathers. We say, אשר גאלנו וגאל את אבותינו (*Asher ge'alanu vega'al et avoteinu*). He redeemed us and redeemed our fathers. The *geulah* that began in Egypt did not end there. It continues through Jewish history, and in our generation we have been privileged to see parts of it with our own eyes. The *Mishnah* and *Gemara* already point us in that direction when they discuss how the story of redemption will be told in the future, and when the prophets speak not only of our Father in Heaven Who took us out of Egypt, but of our Father in Heaven Who gathers His children from all the lands where they had been scattered. The message is not that we stop speaking about Egypt. The message is that Egypt was the beginning, not the end. The first great chapter, not the last.

This year, that truth feels very personal

to me. I think about my own parents who brought us on *aliyah*, becoming part of the miracle of Jews returning home after so many centuries. I think about what that means on a night when we sit around the table and tell our children that once we were strangers in a foreign land, and now we have merited to live in our own Land, speak our own language, defend ourselves with our own army, and raise Jewish children in a Jewish state. I think about my own family, and about the many families across this country. Including my own, whose children are serving in the army. Once that is your reality, the Haggadah sounds different. You do not hear only an ancient story. You hear its continuation.

There is another image from this year that I cannot get out of my mind. On the very night when we tell our children that Hashem took us out of Egypt, we are also living through a time in which Jews have been finding every possible way to come home, even through Egypt. What an astonishing thing to say. In earlier generations, Egypt was the place of bondage, the place of narrowness, the place from which we cried out to be redeemed. And in our generation, in one of history's deepest ironies, it has become one of the roads through which Jews return home to *Eretz Yisrael*. Not away from Jewish destiny, but back to it. That image alone should stop us in our tracks at the Seder table. The *Ribono Shel Olam* Who redeemed us then has not stopped redeeming us now.

And if the miracle of return is extraordinary, the miracle of Jewish courage may be



even greater. One of the greatest miracles of this past period has not only been what happened to our enemies, but what happened to us. We have watched hundreds of thousands of Israelis leave behind homes, businesses, schools, *yeshivot*, and families and run toward the front. Not away from danger, but toward it. We have seen women send husbands, sons, and fathers back to reserve duty with tears in their eyes and strength in their hearts. We have seen mothers carrying homes, children, work, fear, and uncertainty on their shoulders with breathtaking dignity. We have seen Jews from Israel and from around the world give of their money, their time, their energy, and

In loving memory of
our dear Father and Grandfather

MOSHE KAHAN ז"ל
ניסן משה בן יצחק אייזק ז"ל
On his 9th Yartzeit - כ' בניסן

May the Torah learned from
this issue be in his merit

*Channie Kahan, Yonatan Ledee,
Elizabeth Kahan Ledee,
Yitzchak Ledee & Zev Ledee*

their hearts. They have come with hot food, with equipment, with care packages, with support, with presence, and with love. Some boarded planes into a war zone. Others searched for every possible route home. At *Kriyat Yam Suf*, Hashem split the sea before us. In our generation, He has planted *betoch Am Yisrael* a spirit of *gevurah*, *achdut*, and willingness that no analyst and no statistic can fully explain.

Perhaps that is the real miracle of our generation. At the sea, the miracle was revealed from Above. In our days, the miracle is being revealed through the hearts of Jews. Through soldiers who keep returning for a fourth or fifth round of service. Through families who continue to carry impossible burdens. Through a nation that, despite exhaustion and grief, keeps standing up again. Through a people that refuses to let fear define it. We sometimes think miracles only count when nature is shattered. But Purim taught us otherwise. Chanukah taught us otherwise. *David HaMelech* taught us otherwise. המאזר רני חיל. מלמד די למלחמה (*Hame'azreni chayil. Melamed yadai lamilchamah.*) You are the One Who girds me with strength. You are the One Who trains my hands for battle. The strength may look human. The courage may look natural. But the believing Jew knows where it comes from.

At the Seder, however, we do not only

speak about our salvation. We also speak about the downfall of those who rose against us. We recite the ten *makkot*, and then the Haggadah itself expands them. Ten, fifty, two hundred, two hundred and fifty. *Chazal* are teaching us that when *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* judges evil, what appears to us as one blow may in truth be many blows. This year, that language feels alive again. We have seen not only that *Am Yisrael* survived, but that those who sought to surround us with terror have been struck again and again. We have seen heads of murderous organizations eliminated. We have seen chains of command broken. We have seen terror infrastructure destroyed. We have seen tunnels uncovered and collapsed, rocket systems dismantled, missile stockpiles hit, and the very centers of power of those who dreamed of Jewish destruction shaken to their core.

And now, as if to make the message even clearer, the blows have not fallen only on the hands of the terror empire, but on its head. For decades, Iran stood behind so much of the hatred, bloodshed, weaponry, and terror directed at *Am Yisrael*. It armed, financed, trained, and inflamed. It built rings of fire and believed that the Jewish people could be threatened from every direction into weakness and fear. And this year, on the eve of Pesach, we have seen that the One Who struck Egypt still knows how to humble those who rise against His people. We have watched the architects of evil themselves be struck. We have watched senior figures who imagined that they could threaten the Jewish people from a safe distance discover that even they are not beyond the reach of *din Shamayim*.

לעילוי נשמות

בת שבע בת יעקב אריה ע"ה

Bat Sheva Rubinstein a"h
On her 32th yearzeit 26th Nisan

Mark & Livia Rottenberg

We have seen thousands of points of terror infrastructure hit. We have seen the snake itself wounded, not only its tail. When we sit this year and speak about the ten *makkot*, or the fifty, or the two hundred, or the two hundred and fifty, how can we not think about the many blows that have fallen upon those who rose to destroy us?

Of course, the challenge is that אין בעל הנס מכיר בניסו (*ein ba'al hanes makir b'niso*). The one living through the miracle does not always recognize it. When the sea splits, everyone sees the hand of Hashem. When salvation comes clothed in fighter pilots, intelligence, strategy, sacrifice, resilience, and a nation that refuses to break, it is easier to call it military success. But the Torah asks more of us than that. The Torah asks us to see deeper. It asks us to understand that miracles do not become smaller because they are clothed in the natural world. Sometimes they become greater, because they require from us not only amazement, but *emunah*.

That is why I keep thinking this year about the soldiers who will not experience the Seder in the usual way. Some will be on base. Some over the border. Some in command rooms. Some in the skies. Some in places where they may not be able to fulfill every detail of the night as they would wish. And yet perhaps they are among those living the message of the Seder most deeply. For nearly two thousand years, Jews could not defend themselves as a sovereign people in their own Land. We lived at the mercy of others. We prayed to survive their moods, their decrees, and their hatred. And now Jewish soldiers stand guard over a free Jewish people in *Medinat Yisrael*. That itself is one of the great reversals of Jewish history.

I also think this gives new meaning to *והגדת לבנך (Vehigadeta levincha)*. This year, telling our children the story means more than reading what is printed on the page. It means helping them understand that they are living in the continuation of that story. It means telling them where their grandparents came from. It means telling them about *aliyah*, about *kibbutz galuyot*, about Jewish courage, about Jewish tears, about Jewish resilience, and about Jewish return. It means telling them that their people did not only survive. Their people came home. Their people stood up. Their people fought back. Their people refused to surrender to fear. Their people carried one another. Their people sang even while crying. Their people still believed.

Perhaps that is the deepest meaning this year of *את אדם לראות את (B'chol dor vador* עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים *chayav adam lirot et atzmo k'ilu hu yatza miMitzrayim)*. It means seeing that the *geulah* that began in Egypt is still unfolding. It means understanding that Hashem is still gathering our exiles, still bringing His children home, still planting courage in the

May the Torah learning from this issue of Torah Tidbits be לעילוי נשמת

Leila Manasseh a"h

לאה מנוחה בת

צבי וחייה רבקה ז"ל

כ"ד ניסן - On her fourth Yahrzeit

*Greatly missed by
her children, grandchildren
and great-grandchildren
Families Ross, Miller,
Lipnick and Manasseh*

heart of His people, and still striking those who seek our destruction. It means understanding that this year, as we sit at the Seder, we are not only remembering redemption. We are living close enough to it to be frightened by it, humbled by it, and grateful for it all at once.

So this year, tell the story of Egypt. Of course. But do not stop there. Tell your children where your family came from. Tell them about grandparents who dreamed of this Land and children who now defend it. Tell them about Jews who crossed oceans to return home. Tell them about families who carried impossible burdens with faith and strength. Tell them about the courage of our soldiers and the greatness of our people. Tell them that even the roads through Egypt have become roads of return. Tell them that the heads of the terror empire that rose against *Am Yisrael* have been struck. Tell them that miracles do not belong only to the distant past.

And when the child asks this year, מה נשתנה (*Mah nishtanah*), perhaps one answer is this: this year is different because this year the words of the Haggadah no longer feel only ancient. This year they feel like the language of our lives. This year, with all the pain and all the greatness, we have

May the Torah learning
in this issue be לעילוי נשמת
מנחם מנדל בן
אברהם ליפה הכהן ז"ל
Manny Wollman ז"ל
On his 20th yahrzeit - י"א ניסן
All the family

seen again that בכל דור ודור עומדים עלינו לכלור מידם תינו והקדוש ברוך הוא מצילנו מידם (*b'chol dor vador omdim aleinu l'chaloteinu v'HaKadosh Baruch Hu matzileinu miyadam*). This year, perhaps more than many other years, we are being asked not only to remember redemption, but to recognize it.

May we merit this Pesach to sit at the Seder with hearts open enough to hold both grief and gratitude. May we pray for our soldiers, for the wounded, for the bereaved, and for all those still waiting to come home. May we be worthy to see the miracles of our generation and not dismiss them because they come clothed in history rather than in split seas. And may we merit to sing a true *shir chadash* for the miracles Hashem has done for our fathers and for us, the safety of all who defend our people, comfort for all who mourn, and the complete redemption of *Am Yisrael* במהרה בימינו (*bimheirah b'yameinu*).

Wishing you all a Chag Kasher v'Sameach,



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