



GEULAS YISRAEL

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Pesach: The Night We Remember, The War We Are Living

The Torah assigns the night of Pesach a striking name: *Leil shimurim*. On the simplest level, it describes the condition on the night of Yetziat Mitzrayim itself. After centuries of vulnerability, exposure, and fear, our people finally experienced a night of safety. While death raged through Egypt, the Jewish people sat inside their homes, protected and alive. It was the first *Leil shimurim* our nation had known in centuries.

A LAYERED NIGHT

In truth, this night had already served as a night of protection long before Yetziat Mitzrayim. This evening appears earlier in the life of Avraham Avinu. When he went to war against the four kings who had swept through the region, Avraham pursued them at night and defeated them. The Torah describes his strategy with the phrase “וַיַּחַלֵּק עֲלֵיהֶם” - he divided against them. On a simple level, this refers to a tactical division of his forces, a calculated maneuver designed to overwhelm the larger enemy.

Yet Chazal hear something deeper in the word וַיַּחַלֵּק. The Gemara reads it as a division of time, a splitting of the night

hours. This battle unfolded on the night of the fifteenth of Nisan. Avraham pressed forward until midnight and then halted. The remainder of the night of the fifteenth was reserved for a future deliverance, the night of Yetziat Mitzrayim. The night was divided. The first half served Avraham, and the second half was preserved for us in Mitzrayim.

The layering of this night, shared by Avraham and Am Yisrael, is preserved in the piyyut Vayehi Bachatzi Halailah, which we recite toward the close of the Seder. The piyyut traces a pattern of geulot, each unfolding within this same historic night. Long before we left Mitzrayim, the night of the fifteenth had already been marked and set apart. It was a *leil shimurim* even before it became ours as a nation.

A TEMPLATE FOR TODAY

The term shimurim does not refer only to the protection granted on that night. It also serves as a model for future generations and future events, even those that do not occur on this date. Yetziat Mitzrayim, our first geulah, became a template for later geulot. Chazal teach that when Moshiach comes, our enemies will be struck by a

sequence of events that echo the ten makkot, and the protection of that night will, in some form, return. This night is not limited to what occurred on the fifteenth of Nisan but shapes how future geulah will unfold.

As we move through this current war, our experience partially echoes that first night of Yetziat Mitzrayim. The sounds, the tension, and the sudden turns recall that night. Yet the resemblance remains incomplete. In many respects, we are still far from the fullness of geulah experienced on *leil shimurim*. We are moving toward geulah, but we have not yet arrived. That future night of redemption will carry the clarity and completeness of Yetziat Mitzrayim.

Until then, as we experience Pesach under fire, we remember what that night felt like in Mitzrayim and recognize how our current reality echoes it while still falling short.

WAR IN HEAVEN

The sequence of ten makkot reflected a shift in altitude. The early plagues unfolded at ground level. Water turned to blood, the Nile disgorged swarms of creatures, the land crawled with vermin, and the carcasses of dead cattle lay across the landscape.

Gradually, the arena of the makkot rose from earth to heaven. Beginning with shechin, attention turned upward. Moshe cast handfuls of furnace soot into the air, and it spread across Egypt before descending upon the Egyptians as a skin affliction. Barad followed, with thunder and flaming hail descending from above. Then came the locusts, driven in from the sky, and afterward a dense darkness that settled

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from above. Finally, the angel of death passed through Egypt, moving from home to home.

The plagues did not only intensify. They ascended. The battleground shifted from the ground beneath Egypt's feet to the heavens above.

This shift carried deep monotheistic meaning. Yetziat Mitzrayim introduced monotheistic ideas into a pagan world. Over many generations these ideas would spread, but the direction was set. A central principle of monotheism is the hierarchy between Hashem and man. Paganism blurs that boundary. Man fashions his own gods and imagines that he can influence them through ritual and flattery. Monotheism rests upon an unbridgeable distance between man and Hashem. Hashem is not an extension of human

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experience but stands beyond it.

The clearest image of that hierarchy is the divide between heaven and earth. Hashem in the heavens, beyond human reach, and man upon the earth. By shifting the later makkot to the heavens, the Egyptians were taught that Hashem is not part of their world and not subject to their control.

Our current war has also shifted from the sand dunes of Gaza to the skies above us and above our enemies. Watching these events unfold in the heavens, and experiencing the success we have seen, reinforces the awareness that Hashem is waging these battles on our behalf. It makes no difference where battles are fought. Hashem ish milchamah, Hashem Shemo. Yet the movement into the heavens sharpens that awareness and strengthens our bitachon.

THE DOME OF THE SHECHINAH

On the night of Yetziat Mitzrayim, we were shielded from Makkat Bechorot by the presence of the Shechinah. That night marked the first time the Shechinah revealed itself to an entire nation. The word Pesach is typically translated as Passover, but it also carries the meaning of hovering over. On that night, Hashem's Shechinah descended into history on a national scale and hovered above the Jewish homes.

The Korban Pesach drew the Shechinah down from heaven. As the Shechinah hovered over each Jewish home, the angel of death could not enter, and those homes were passed over. The presence of the Shechinah formed an impenetrable canopy of protection, preventing a single Jew from being harmed.

Today, Hashem has granted us the ability to protect our homes in Israel from missiles of death. The technological ingenuity He has enabled, together with the devotion and courage of our soldiers, has saved hundreds, if not thousands, of lives.

Yet this protective shield is not fully sealed. We have still suffered casualties and injuries. Our defenses are powerful, but they remain partial.

We live beneath a dome we have built, strengthened by siyata diShmaya, but we remember another kind of protection, quiet and complete. We await the moment when the Shechinah will once again descend, hovering over our homes and keeping us safe from harm.

SHELTER

The night of Pesach was spent at home. We were instructed not to leave our homes so that we would remain protected. This instruction continued to echo in later years in the way we ate the Korban Pesach. Even when the angel of death no longer hovered above, we were still forbidden to take any of the meat outside our homes.

The home became a place of protection, where families gathered for a festive meal that would launch their departure the next morning.

Over the past month, we too have gathered inside for protection. It has not been around festive tables or in a spirit of celebration. We have been crowded into shelters, waking multiple times each night.

Like Pesach, we have been drawn indoors for safety. Our protection has not been complete, and our sheltering has been tense and unsettled.

HURRIED

The night of Pesach unfolded with haste and compressed schedules. When redemption arrives, Hashem contracts time and accelerates history. Sudden political shifts and rapid timelines signal that geulah is approaching. This was evident in the final year in Mitzrayim and even more on that last night. Within hours, we moved from slavery to freedom, from bondage to destiny, marching toward our homeland. Matzah became the enduring image of that hurried departure. Our geulah was too urgent to wait for. History moved faster than human rhythm.

The past month has carried a similar urgency. We feel history lurching forward. Wars are unfolding in compressed time-frames, and the landscape shifts almost daily. Once again, events outpace us, and we are being hurried along.

Yet unlike Mitzrayim, our urgency is not yet aligned with redemption. An entire nation remains tethered to its phones, moving between routine and shelter, between ordinary life and sudden alarm. In some communities, the distinction between day and night has blurred, as relentless barrages interrupt every rhythm.

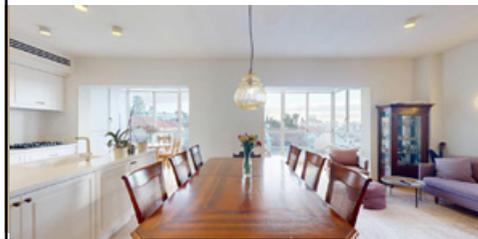
In Mitzrayim, the acceleration carried us forward with clarity and security, driving us toward freedom. Our current urgency feels unsettled. History is pressing forward, but it has not yet reached that final surge toward redemption and stability. We are moving quickly, but we have not yet arrived.

SILENT AND LOUD

The night of Pesach was at once loud and silent. In the Egyptian quarters, it was



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filled with fear and shrieking. Pharaoh roamed the streets of Mitzrayim, searching for Moshe and pleading with him to leave at once. For the Jewish people in Goshen, the night was strikingly quiet.

ולכל בני ישראל לא יחרץ כלב את לשונו

Hashem's Shechinah descended, and even the natural order seemed to respond. The world beyond was chaotic, but the Jewish world was calm and composed. Even the dogs did not disturb the stillness.

We have not known much of that stillness in Israel this past month. Serenity has given way to sirens that wake us at night, interrupt our meals, and cut into our tefillah. In some places there are only seconds to reach shelter. The noise unsettles, and what it signals weighs on us. The sirens are followed by ambulances and security forces rushing to the sites where missiles have struck. Life has become loud and constantly interrupted.

We wait for that quiet to return. We long for a life that feels protected again, where the chaos no longer reaches us.

We have experienced many of the sounds and emotions of the night of Yetziat Mitzrayim. We are moving toward our geulah, but we are still at a distance. Some elements of that night have begun to reappear, while others remain beyond our reach.

NO LONGER DEFENSELESS

Yechezkel (chapter 16) describes our people during the Egyptian experience as a newborn cast into the open field, abandoned and struggling for life:

ואעבור עליך ואראך מתבוססת בדמין

Hashem took us in, raised us, clothed us, and sustained us. That image captures

how exposed and helpless we were in Mitzrayim, without strength and without protection. It reflects the unilateral nature of the geulah from Mitzrayim.

We are no longer that defenseless child. We have a state, an army, and millions of Jews, in Israel and across the world, working tirelessly to defend our people. We depend deeply on Hashem's siyata diShmaya, but we now stand as partners in shaping our destiny.

The Haggadah emphasizes that on the night of Pesach, Hashem alone passed through Egypt and struck down the Egyptians, without any intermediary:

אני ה' אני ולא מלאך, אני ולא שליח

Moshe's name is absent from the Haggadah to underscore this reality. Redemption unfolded directly through Hashem, without human agency.

Today we act as His agents. At this stage of our redemption, we fight, we build, and we protect, often with courage that stretches beyond what we imagined possible. We still long for a moment when Hashem will descend into history and reshape it without the filters of politics and human effort, אני ה' אני ולא מלאך.

Until that moment arrives, we continue as partners with Hakadosh Baruch Hu, acting as His agents in this world, defending the land of our Avot and struggling to rebuild Jewish life in our homeland.

Chag Kasher V'samei'ach ■



Rabbi Moshe Taragin's latest sefer entitled: **Reclaiming Redemption, Vol. II: Faith, Identity, Peoplehood, and the Storms of War**, is available at: mtaraginbooks.com.