Kol Rina
An Independent Minyan
Shabbat Chol Hamoed Passover
April 27, 2024 *** Nissan 18, 5784

Shabbat Chol Hamoed Torah Reading in a Nutshell: Exodus 33:12-34:26
https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/1019831/jewish/Shabbat-Chol-Hamoed-Torah-Reading-in-a-Nutshell.htm

G-d agrees to Moses' request that His presence only dwell amongst the Jews. Moses requests to be shown G-d's glory. G-d agrees, but informs Moses that he will only be shown G-d's "back," not G-d's "face."

G-d tells Moses to carve new tablets upon which G-d will engrave the Ten Commandments. Moses takes the new tablets up to Mt. Sinai, where G-d reveals His glory to Moses while proclaiming His Thirteen Attributes of Mercy.

G-d seals a covenant with Moses, assuring him again that His presence will only dwell with the Jews. G-d informs the Jewish people that He will drive the Canaanites from before them. He instructs them to destroy all vestiges of idolatry from the land, not to make molten gods, to refrain from making any covenants with its current inhabitants, to sanctify male firstborn humans and cattle, and not to cook meat together with milk.

The Jews are commanded to observe the three festivals — including the holiday of Sukkot, "the festival of the ingathering, at the turn of the year." All males are commanded to make pilgrimage to "be seen by G-d" during these three festivals.

The maftir, from the Book of Numbers, discusses the public offerings brought in the Temple on this day of Sukkot.

Shabbat Chol Hamoed Haftorah in a Nutshell: Ezekiel 38:18-39:16.
https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/1019866/jewish/Shabbat-Chol-Hamoed-Haftorah-in-a-Nutshell.htm

The subject of the haftorah of this Shabbat is the war of Gog and Magog that will precede the Final Redemption. Its connection to the holiday of Sukkot is that according to tradition the war will take place during the month of Tishrei, the month when the holiday of Sukkot falls. In addition, this war is identical to the one described in the fourteenth chapter of Zachariah, the haftorah read on the first day of Sukkot, which concludes by saying that the gentile survivors of this war will be required to go to Jerusalem every year on the holiday of Sukkot to pay homage to G-d.

The prophet describes Gog's war against Israel and G-d's furious response. G-d

will send an earthquake, pestilence, great floods and hailstones and fire—utterly destroying Gog's armies.

"And I will reveal Myself in My greatness and in My holiness and will be recognized in the eyes of many nations, and they will know that I am the Lord. . . . I will make known My Holy Name in the midst of My people Israel, and I will no longer cause My Holy Name to be profaned, and the nations will know that I, the Lord, am holy in Israel."

The haftorah concludes by saying that the weaponry of the defeated armies of Gog will provide fuel for fire for seven years! The Jews "shall carry no wood from the fields nor cut down any from the forests, for they shall make fires from the weapons."

Food for Thought – Passover Edition 2024/5784

Forty Nine Portals to Transformation Pesach 5784 by Rabbi Goldie Guy

https://www.hadar.org/torah-tefillah/resources/forty-nine-portals-transformation

What are we counting towards? In Parashat Emor, God commands us to bring the omer, a grain sacrifice of barley, on Pesah to the mishkan. From that day, God commands us to count seven complete weeks until the holiday of Shavuot, when we are commanded to bring another offering, this time of new grain (of wheat).(1) Our tradition sees significance in the 49 days we count from the omer offering until we can offer new grain, which also mark the 49 days from the Exodus until we received the Torah at Har Sinai. The Zohar teaches that during our servitude in Egypt, Benei Yisrael descended to the 49th level of spiritual impurity—and had we descended further to the 50th level, that would have been a spiritual point of no return.(2) Hasidic masters teach, therefore, that each of the 49 days we count during the Omer parallels our emergence through those 49 levels of impurity, serving to gradually elevate us from tum'ah (impurity) to kedushah (sanctity). The Maggid of Kozhnitz (3) teaches:

Avodat Yisrael on Pesah4 : On the [first] night of Pesah, all of the repairs and grandeurs were illuminated in one moment, in order to take out the Israelites from the "iron furnace" of the 49 levels of impurity to the 49 levels of sanctity. … After yetzi'at mitzrayim, they needed to purify their character traits little by little through their spiritual work, until Shavuot.

According to this understanding, the transformation we had to undergo as a people, from slavery to freedom, and from Egypt to Har Sinai, needed to be gradual. As in any transformation we undertake as individuals, change doesn't happen overnight. If we desire change in ourselves, in our communities, and in the broader world, we know it will be a product of many small steps to get there. For Benei Yisrael to transform from a nation of slaves to a nation of God, we

needed to do critical spiritual work on each of the 49 days. Each day brought us one step closer to being able to receive the Torah, and become vessels for translating divine will into the world.

R. Hayyim Vital (5) teaches that, just as the Jewish people as a whole underwent a gradual process of transformation during these 49 days, the Omer also presents a unique opportunity for each of us to embark on journeys of transformation on an individual level. Echoing teachings of the Arizal, R. Vital understands that each day of the Omer corresponds to specific divine attributes (sefirot), and so each day contains unique potential for us to practice self-refinement in those areas of our lives:

Sha'ar ha-Kavanot, Pesah 11 During these 49 days it is good for a person to intend to repair any missteps in relation to the seven [lower] sefirot. For example, during the first week they should intend to repair where they have missed the mark in relation to the attribute of hesed. In the second week they should intend to repair where they have missed the mark in relation to the attribute of gevurah (strength), and so on through the seven weeks.

In this way, throughout the Omer, there is a heightened sense of potential inherent in each day. Every day of the seven-week count represents another portal to greater introspection and self-knowledge. The Omer lays out 49 days of intention and mindful action, resulting in a seven-week-long path to walk toward personal transformation. Each day, each action, each step along the path is critical to the effectiveness of the process.

The Omer is a mitzvah that orients us toward greater awareness of time and of the potential inherent in each day. R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik, in his essay "Sacred and Profane," argues that the mitzvah was given to Benei Yisrael after the Exodus because being conscious of time and in control of one's own time is fundamental to the experience of freedom.(6) Counting the Omer was thus an initial expression of our freedom: we could not miss a day of counting ("seven complete weeks"), and so had to develop an appreciation for each day, and all seven weeks in their accumulation. A person who can sense the power of their days is a free person, a person who is ready to choose a life of commitment to Torah.

The spiritual journey—from slavery to freedom and from the Exodus to receiving the Torah—that is built into the seven weeks of the Omer is also reflected in the offerings that bookend the Omer count. The omer offering, which marks the start of the Omer period, is made of ground barley flour. Barley is seen as the simplest and roughests of grains, and flour is a simple, unbaked product. We offer this gift to God at the start of the Omer because it represents where we are in the process of liberation: at the very beginning, having only basic ingredients in our hands. Over the course of the Omer and our journey from Egypt to Sinai, we evolve. We

make the choice each day to develop ourselves a little more, to dedicate ourselves to making mindful choices and taking mindful action in the world. When we arrive at Shavuot at the end of the seven weeks, we are able to offer the two loaves of bread baked from our harvested wheat. That korban is a complex product born of human investment and ingenuity, one that wouldn't have been possible without the process of evolution over the Omer, the daily introspection and growth of 49 days.(7)

The Omer is a 49-day story of our daily choices. After we had fallen to the 49th level of spiritual opacity, God still redeemed us from Egypt, granting us an unearned chance at a new start. Then God told us to count the Omer, offering us with this mitzvah an invitation to begin a new story. If at the Seder we tell a story of unearned liberation, counting the Omer is a story of what we choose to do with each day, and the power to craft our own narrative by committing to growth, and to giving back to God and to the world. On Pesah, God granted us the gift of freedom, and through the Omer we make a statement of what we intend to do with our freedom. In this journey of transformation, we see the potential each day holds. Each day is a door to open, a threshold to cross, a chance to make mindful choices and take chances. The liminal space of the Omer offers us a space to transform. What will we make of the gift God has given us? Who will we be in seven weeks? What kind of world do we want to shape? *(Rabbi Goldie Guy is the Director of Hadar Chicago. She was ordained by Yeshivat Maharat in 2017.)*

(1) Vayikra 23:15-16. (2) Zohar Hadash, Yitro, 39a. (3) R. Yisrael Hopstein, 18th-19th century Poland, was a student of the Maggid of Mezritch and R. Elimelekh of Lizhensk. (4) Translated by R. Daniel Raphael Silverstein. (5) R. Hayyim Vital, 16th-17th century Safed and Damascus, was the leading disciple of the Arizal, R. Isaac Luria (a founding figure of Kabbalah). (6) Gesher3:1 (1966), p.16. See also the essay of R. Michael Rosensweig, "Reflections on Sefirat ha-Omer," available here: h5p:// torahweb.org/torah/1999/moadim/rros_se)ra.html. (7) This framing of the korbanot is based on the writing of R. Rebecca Blady, h5ps://rebeccablady.wordpress.com/category/theomer/.

Today and Tomorrow: The Role of the Future Generation in Present Events

by R. Avital Hochstein

https://www.hadar.org/torah-tefillah/resources/today-and-tomorrow

The story of the Exodus from Egypt, as told in the book of Shemot chapter 12, unfolds on two interwoven planes. One is the historical Exodus from Egypt, and the other consists of the events of commemoration and future remembrance of the Exodus. In the language of our Rabbis, it is said that the chapter describes both "Pesah Mitzrayim" (the Pesah in Egypt), including the original pascal sacrifice and the experience of the Exodus for those who were there, and "Pesah Dorot" (the Pesah of the generations), the one that would be celebrated every year in the

future. This interweaving likely reflects the belief, hope, and perhaps even a sense of destiny, that this event would transcend the present and become etched in history. It imbued the ancient participants with a profound awareness, even in the midst of the unfolding events, that they were witnessing something momentous, something that would demand remembrance for generations to come. The Torah's description creates for us the impression that the participants in Egypt transcended their immediate experience. They lived through their present moment, while simultaneously imagining the future, envisioning themselves being remembered by generations to come.

Shemot 12 comprises a command from God to Moses and Aaron that takes place at the beginning of the month of Nisan. Verses 2-13 refer to the two weeks between that first day of Nisan and the night of the Exodus, telling Moses and Aaron how the Israelites must prepare and offer the pascal sacrifice in real time. Here, the first jump to the future occurs—God commands these same people to celebrate this day in the future as well: "And this day shall be for you a memorial, and you shall celebrate it as a festival to God throughout your generations" (12:14). From there, there is a move back to the present: "And Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, 'Go and take for yourselves sheep'" (12:21), and then again back to the future: "And you shall keep this matter as a statute for you and for your children forever…" (12:24). This back-and-forth occurs a third time in the chapter with a return to the description of the present: "And it came to pass at midnight" (12:29), and then again to the description of the future: "this is the night of God's watch over all the children of Israel throughout their generations" (12:42). The future is described in the chapter using many different words: "This day shall be to you one of remembrance: you shall celebrate it as a festival to God throughout the ages; you shall celebrate it as a law for all time" (12:14). "You shall observe this as a law for all time, for you and for your descendants. And when you enter the land that God will give you, as promised, you shall observe this rite" (12:24-25). These words are significant for several reasons. They create a certain perception of the future. It includes descendants—children, generations—and is characterized by life circumstances different from the present: "when you come to the land." The focus on memory is an assertion of the aspiration that the future will be perceived as meaningful. These future-oriented words create a dynamic interplay within the chapter, moving not just between present and future, but across past, immediate future, and distant generations. The variety of time frames in the story of the Exodus is also evident in the different appearances of the root ש.מ.ר.(to guard or observe) in the chapter. This root is the source of one of the names given to the night of the Exodus: "leil shimmurim - the Night of Watching." The act of guarding and the root ש.מ.ר. are

significant in the chapter. They accompany the movement through time—forward and backward—and indicate three basic characteristics of the present and the future.

1. Guarding in the Present: Slaves live in the present. They have no future or past. Therefore, the demand for the Israelites to prepare themselves and to pay attention to time is radical. It constitutes a first step in their departure from the consciousness of slavery. In other words, guarding in the present takes place in Egypt on the eve of the Exodus, between 10 th and 14 th Nisan. At this time, the Israelites are commanded to guard the lamb ("and it shall be for you a safeguard"; 12:6). The change in consciousness from slaves to free people is facilitated by the demand to prepare for the Exodus. As a result, despite the power of God's actions, the Israelites are not passive. Their activeness is highlighted and expressed through the act of guarding, which takes place over time. Thus, an act in the present becomes, in essence, an act that is oriented towards the future. 2. Guarding in the Future: Guarding is an act that is required in the future in order to remember the past. As the verse states: "You shall observe the [Feast of] Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your ranks out of the land of Egypt; you shall observe this day throughout the ages as a law for all time" (12:17). Memory is not a passive phenomenon; rather, it is an active process unfolding in the present and operating in relation to the past. It is not something that is occasionally drawn upon, but rather an ongoing action occurring in the present that can lend meaning and significance to the past.

3. Guarding the Past: Guarding not only accompanies the present and the future, but also provides perspective—drawing back before the present: "The length of time that the Israelites lived in Egypt was 430 years. At the end of the 430 th year, to the very day… It was for God a night of vigil to bring them out of the land of Egypt; that same night is God's, one of vigil for all the children of Israel throughout the ages" (12:40, 42). Thus, the present itself is understood and given meaning from the historical context—it is not just a starting point, and it does not occur in a vacuum. Its significance is derived from its connection to the past. The essence of the commemoration that the Book of Exodus teaches us in this chapter is expressed by a vibrant and dynamic young generation, addressing the future in relation to its past. The core of this future remembrance, achieved by future generations taking on the responsibility of "guarding" the memory, is revealed through a dialogue set in the future: "When your children ask you, 'What does this service mean to you?' You shall say, 'It is a pascal offering to God, Who passed over the houses of the Children of Israel in Egypt" (12:26-27). This passage reveals a fascinating perspective on the future through three key points:

(a) An enduring future: The text expresses an optimistic and remarkable belief in a

future generation, even amidst crisis and uncertainty. It assumes a continuing lineage, where future Israelites will carry the torch.
(b) A distant memory: The future generation will be so far removed, at least in their understanding, from the historical context of the Exodus. They won't inherently grasp the significance of the commemorative rituals.
(c) Critical descendants: These future descendants will end up questioning the practices of the commemoration. While it suggests the need to actively re-engage with the past in every generation, it also opens the possibility of a dynamic and evolving relationship with the past.
Since the horrible attack on October 7 th , I have personally felt that we are in a moment in history that has similarities to the Pesah Mitzrayim of so long ago. What is happening to the Jewish people—what we have been involved in over the last six months—feels historically significant. But the moment feels so weighty and overwhelming that it's easy to be swallowed up by it. It's easy, at times, to feel overpowered and unmoored by the turbulence of the storm we're in. That's why now more than ever the experience of the Israelites in Egypt is so crucial. Like they did so long ago, we can anchor ourselves in the context of our distant past, and reshape our present by imagining what we intend to bestow upon generations to come. And perhaps, just as for our ancestors so long ago, this act of creating remembrance can be a powerful source of hope for us once more. *(Dr.Rabbi Avital Hochstein is the President of Hadar in Israel.)*

Kitniyot: Not Quite Hametz by Jeffrey Spitzer
https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/kitniyot-not-quite-hametz/

There are five grains, and five grains only, that, according to Jewish law, can ferment and become hametz (any food that is leavened or has a leavening agent). These are wheat, barley, spelt (also known as farro), oats, and rye. These are also the only grains that can be made into matzah. Traditional Jewish law forbids eating, owning, or deriving benefit from these five grains in any amount and in any form throughout the holiday (other than when they are baked into matzah). On its own, this rule requires fairly extensive effort to observe, but it is, at least, quite clear. For the past 700 years, however, Ashkenazic Jews have complicated Passover observance by avoiding rice, millet, and legumes. These are collectively known as kitniyot , from the Hebrew word katan (little). (In recent years, the discovery of the New World food quinoa, which most Jews now consider kosher for Passover, has eased the kitniyot burden somewhat.)
The Talmudic Discussion of Kitniyot: Although the earliest mention of the custom to prohibit kitniyot dates from the 13th century, the discussion concerning their use goes back to Tannaitic times. The second century Rabbi Johanan ben Nuri

considered rice and millet to be close enough to the five grains that one could use them for matzah:

"Our Mishnah [which defines the five grains that can leaven and can therefore be used for matzah] disagrees with R. Johanan b. Nuri, who holds: Rice is a species of grain, and one is punishable for [eating it in] its leavened state. For it was taught: R. Johanan b. Nuri prohibits rice and millet, because it is close to leaven" (Bavli Pesach im 35a).

Here, the Talmud points out that Johanan b. Nuri's approach disagrees with the Mishnah. A later Talmudic discussion mentions that the amoras (rabbis of the third to sixth centuries) R. Huna and Rava used to put rice on the seder plate, from which behavior, Rav Ashi concludes, "We do not pay attention to the opinion of R. Johanan b. Nuri" (Bavli Pesachim 114b).

Reasons for Prohibiting Kitniyot: During the 13th century, rabbis in France began to refer to a custom of prohibiting kitniyot, including rice, dried beans, millet, and lentils, although most of the reasons explaining (or justifying) the prohibition were developed later. The 13th-century talmudist Rabbenu Peretz b. Elijah of Corbeil suggests that people might get confused because hametz and kitniyot are boiled similarly, and in some places they make kinds of "bread" out of kitniyot. People might wrongly assume that what is permitted for rice or beans might also be permitted for the five grains. In the 14th century, R. Jacob b. Asher, the author of the Arba'ah Turim, suggested that grain might be mixed up with kitniyot during storage.

Reasons for Allowing Kitniyot: On the other hand, the custom has been widely criticized. As the Israeli Masorti (Conservative) Rabbi David Golinkin has shown, not only is the custom contrary to the opinions in the Talmud, but more than 50 different early sages reject it outright. One of the earliest sages to mention the practice, the 13th-century Samuel b. Solomon of Falaise, considered it a "mistaken custom," and others called it a "superfluous stricture" or even a "stupid custom." Some authorities consider it obligatory to abolish a stupid custom. The 18th-century Rabbi Jacob Emden wrote that he would have abolished the custom had he had the authority to do so. In the 19th century, R. Israel Salanter, the founder of the Musar (ethics) movement in Lithuania, ate kitniyot on Passover in public during a time of scarcity, dramatically demonstrating that kitniyot were not the same as hametz (which he clearly did not permit).

Although scarcity has not been a serious issue in recent times, modern arguments against the custom focus on how it raises the cost of observance, how it detracts from the joy of the holiday, and how it divides the Jewish community, especially in Israel, where there is a significant split between Ashkenazic Jews who observe the custom and Sephardic Jews who do not.

Reasons for Maintaining the Custom: A 700-year-old custom, however, should not be lightly abandoned. Rabbinic sources abound with warnings not to remove the boundaries set by previous generations. Indeed, many customs ultimately develop legal force. While in Israel most "kosher for Passover" products are made for people who eat kitniyot, in North America, it is almost impossible to find kitniyot products that reliably do not have hametz.

Furthermore, since most Jews in North America are Ashkenazic, there is little basis for an argument that maintaining the custom divides the Jewish community. To the contrary, wholesale abandonment of the prohibition on kitniyot might contribute to further divisiveness.

Customary Confusion: Each year, more questions are asked about kitniyot than are asked about hametz, which makes some rabbis concerned that our educational focus has lost its sense of priority. One rabbi reports how a well-meaning but ill-informed congregant "knew" that string beans were a prohibited legume, but planned on making lasagna (with regular wheat pasta) since it's flat and doesn't rise. Regular pasta is, of course, outright hametz according to all authorities (though special kosher-for-Passover pasta is sold these days).

While incidents like these argue for a re-evaluation of what is taught, they also indicate that the concerns about popular confusion are quite real. Nevertheless, the widely held and generally correct perception that the rules about kitniyot seem to change from year to year is probably the most significant factor contributing to the confusion.

Kitniyot May Not Leaven, but the Prohibition Expands: In addition to what has already been mentioned, items that have been considered prohibited by some community or other include peas, caraway, fennel seed, mustard, garlic, corn, soybeans, and peanuts. Another way in which the customary prohibition has expanded has been to limit the use of derivatives of kitniyot, including derivatives that could not be confused with grain or flour, like soybean oil and peanut oil.

Potatoes provide an interesting contrasting case. Unlike peas, potatoes do make a flour that is used quite effectively in Pesachdik (Yiddish for "Kosher for Passover) cakes and brownies. Nevertheless, potatoes are not prohibited. Indeed, one of the leading halakhic (Jewish legal) authorities of the 20th century,

Rav Moshe Feinstein, has argued that potatoes were initially not prohibited because they simply weren't known in Europe. Once they became known, they weren't prohibited because there were early authorities that considered the kitniyot prohibition a "foolish custom." On this basis, Rav Feinstein permitted peanuts; he also permitted peanut oil with the additional reason that it was a derivative.

According to this line of thinking, items that were traditionally prohibited could

continue to be prohibited, but there was no basis for expanding upon the list of prohibited items (Igrot Moshe, Orah Hayyim 3.63).

Over the past decade, peanut oil has become far less available for Passover. Safflower oil, which had also been considered acceptable, is also hard to find. The most commonly available oil now is cottonseed oil. But that oil will also probably disappear from our shelves, since many Israeli rabbinic authorities have declared it unacceptable. Ignoring Rav Feinstein's reticence to expand the prohibition, most kashrut authorities in North America are quick to adopt new strictures.

Kosher, but Perhaps Educationally "Unacceptable":On the other hand, some commercially produced foods that use potato starch and/or matzah cake meal to create imitations of regular, hametz foods — such as Pesach noodles, breakfast cereal, and cookies — while technically Pesachdik, might be avoided for precisely the same reason that kitniyot originally were. How is one to teach a child (or an adult) what hametz is if many of the primary forms of hametz in a child's diet are also available in fairly indistinguishable forms on Passover? Surely, technology will soon yield Pesachdik sliced bread! Foodies will quickly aver that Passover noodles are inferior and will never be confused with the real item, but then, what is the point of buying them in the first place?

Some Final Thoughts:While one is prohibited to own, use, or benefit from hametz, Ashkenazic tradition for kitniyot only applies to consumption. One does not have to sell one's kitniyot along with one's hametz. Furthermore, one can continue to use cornstarch-based bath powder. Even medicines that use corn starch as a binder are permitted.

Especially in Israel, where there is a substantial Ashkenazic minority, kitniyot can be a very divisive issue. North America has far fewer Sephardim, but the dual trends of expanding lists of prohibited items and a backlash among liberal Ashkenazim, who are limiting or abandoning their observance of avoiding kitniyot, can lead to serious divisions in the Jewish people. Therefore, people should be aware that someone who does not eat kitniyot may still eat from the dishes of someone who does eat kitniyot. It is appropriate to be strict on Passover; it may not be appropriate to make "little things" into such a big thing that it separates Jew from Jew.

Yahrtzeits

Russett Feldman and Nikki Pusin remember their Adoptive Stepmother Freda Mowshowitz Pusin on Saturday April 27th.

Burt Solomon remembers his Natural Mother Lilian Ginsburg Solomon and his Mother Gertrude Nadler Solomon, both on Thursday May 2nd.