Kol Rina
An Independent Minyan
Pesach Day VII (Shabbat) & Day VIII
April 19 & 20, 2025***21 & 22 Nisan 5785

The Last Two Days Of Passover
https://www.chabad.org/holidays/passover/pesach_cdo/aid/2748528/jewish/The-Last-Two-Days-of-Passover.htm

The seventh and eighth days of Passover are celebrated as Yom Tov, holidays, capping the weeklong celebration that begins with the first Seder. In Israel, only the seventh day is celebrated (you can read up on why that is so here). In Hebrew, the last two days are known as Shvii shel Pesach (Seventh of Passover) and Acharon shel Pesach (Last of Passover), respectively.
On the 15th day of the month of Nissan, the children of Israel left Egypt, where they had served as slaves for generations. Despite his original stubborn refusal, after 10 debilitating plagues, Pharaoh relented and allowed Israel to leave Egypt for a three-day spiritual retreat in the desert.

Three days later, when the Israelites failed to return, Pharaoh realized that they were gone for good, safely on their way to independence and freedom in the Promised Land. He bridled his best warhorse and called his nation to join him in pursuit of his erstwhile slaves.

After a short chase, the Egyptian army caught up with the Israelites at the banks of the red sea. The Israelites were trapped; there was nowhere to go but into the sea.

Then G-d commanded Moses to raise his staff and the sea split, allowing the Israelites to comfortably cross on dry land. When the Egyptians attempted to follow the Israelites across, the sea came crashing down on them. Chariots, riders and horses all perished in the churning sea.

Overwhelmed with gratitude, Moses led the Israelites in singing the Song of the Sea. Miriam led the women in an additional song of thanks, accompanied by tambourines and drums.

This miracle took place in the wee hours of the morning of the Seventh of Passover.

On the seventh day of Passover we read how on this day the sea split for

the Children of Israel and drowned the pursuing Egyptians, and the "Song at the Sea" sung by the people upon their deliverance (Exodus 13:17-15:26)

On the eighth day of Passover we read Deuteronomy 15:19-16:17. Like the reading for the second day, it catalogs the annual cycle of festivals, their special observances, and the offerings brought on these occasions to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. The Eighth Day's special connection with the Future Redemption is reflected in the Haftorah (reading from the Prophets) for this day (Isaiah 10:32-12:6).

Haftarahs in a Nutshell

Pesach Day VII ** II Samuel 22:1-51.
https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/3617750/jewish/Seventh-Day-of-Passover-Haftarah-in-a-Nutshell.htm

This week's haftorah describes the song King David composed in his old age, echoing the weekly Torah reading, where Moses delivers his parting words to the Jewish nation in song form.

David's song expresses gratitude to G-d for saving him from all his enemies. He starts with the famous words, "The L-rd is my rock and my fortress." He goes on to describe the pain and hardships he encountered and reiterates that he always turned to G-d in his moments of distress. He recounts G-d's reaction to those who tormented him: "The Lord thundered from heaven; and the Most High gave forth His voice. And He sent out arrows and He scattered them, lightning and He discomfited them. . . I have pursued my enemies and have destroyed them; never turning back until they were consumed."

The King attributes his salvation to his uprightness in following G-d's ways: "The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands He recompensed me..."

The song ends with David's expression of thankfulness: "Therefore I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the nations, and to Your name I will sing praises. He gives great salvation to His king, and He performs kindness to His anointed; to David and to his seed, forevermore."

Pesach Day VIII Haftarah ** Isaiah 10:32-12:16
https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/3617754/jewish/Eighth-

Day-of-Passover-Haftarah-in-a-Nutshell.htm

This haftarah is a prophecy by Isaiah regarding the messianic time to come. He foretells of “a staff from the shoot of Jesse,” father of King David, upon whom the Divine spirit will rest and who will be able to judge honestly by way of smell.

The prophet tells us that “the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie with the kid goat; the calf and the young lion will graze together, and a young lad shall lead them.”

He continues to describe how G-d will gather the exiled Jews from all over the world, to bring them back home to the Holy Land. In the newly constituted Jewish kingdom, the ancient rivalry between Judah and Ephraim will end, and they will join forces to subdue their historic enemies.

At that time, Israel will sing G-d’s praises, thanking Him for all that he did and does for them, even that which had once appeared to be punishment but has now been revealed to be goodness in disguise.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Bones We Carry by Abigail Uhrman
https://www.jtsa.edu/torah/the-bones-we-carry/

On the seventh day of Pesah, we recount some of the most dramatic and transformative events in our people’s history: the splitting of the Red Sea, Miriam’s joyous song and dance, and the Israelites’ movement from slavery to freedom. Yet, amidst this grand narrative, one particular verse caught my attention:

> And Moses took with him the bones of Joseph, who had exacted an oath from the children of Israel, saying, ‘God will be sure to take notice of you: then you shall carry up my bones from here with you.’ (Exod. 13:19)

Consider the scene: after hundreds years of slavery, the Israelites, at long last, are preparing to depart. They are frantically gathering their belongings—gold, silver, all their earthly possessions—and scrambling to prepare food for their journey. In this urgent rush, Moses, rather than attending to the needs of the people and their immediate concerns,

embarks on a singular mission: to retrieve the bones of Joseph, fulfilling a centuries-old promise. It begs the question: Why, in the midst of these epic events, does the Torah highlight this seemingly minor detail? What is the significance of Moses's dedication to this task, his resolute commitment to honoring a promise made generations ago?

Moses's decision here is profound. In a defining moment he demonstrates that even in death, and especially in life, we never—ever—leave anyone behind. Moses, it seems, understood a fundamental and universal truth: our actions matter. Our behaviors express our deepest commitments, and his action embodies our most central and essential conviction: the sanctity of human life. It's not happenstance that the Israelites' journey from slavery to freedom begins here, with Moses modeling this foundational tenet.

It's also not coincidental that, as referenced earlier, the story of Joseph's remains doesn't end here. Although the details remain elusive in the biblical text, it is clear in Sefer Yehoshua (the book of Joshua) that Joseph's remains are carried throughout the desert and, eventually, reach the Promised Land:

> The bones of Joseph, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem, in the piece of ground which Jacob had bought for a hundred kesitahs from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, and which had become a heritage of the Josephites. (Josh. 24:32)

The Talmud continues to fill in the story:

> And all those years that the Jewish people were in the wilderness, these two arks, one a casket of a dead man, Joseph, and one the Ark of the Divine Presence, i.e., the Ark of the Covenant, were traveling together . . . (BT Sotah 13a)

To understand this powerful pairing, we must first confront the origin of these bones, the place from which they were carried. Our experiences in Egypt are central to our collective story. We know the depths of slavery, both physical and spiritual. We, like Joseph, understand what it means to be cast into a pit, yearning for light and dreaming of return. This pain teaches us the fundamental lessons of our people: to care for the

vulnerable and to champion justice. Our past, even its most painful chapters, travels with us.

But as we learned, the ark holding Joseph's remains didn't travel alone; it found its companion in the Ark of the Covenant. With the Ten Commandments encased inside, we have been blessed with God's revelation and Divine wisdom; we have been bequeathed the tools for building a holy, just community and the belief in its possibility. Together, these two arks remind us that we can hold both immense pain and unwavering hope.

In these difficult days, I'm finding new strength in these lessons:

Even in moments of great struggle and unprecedented change, we must never abandon our fundamental obligations. And in recent months, we have borne witness to this principle. It has been nearly 600 days since October 7, 2023, yet day in and day out, week after week, throughout Israel, the streets are filled demanding the release of the hostages in Gaza. (Indeed, these calls are echoed in communities throughout the world.)

The people's persistence embodies the legacy of Moses's leadership: a refusal to abandon those who have been taken; an enduring commitment to human dignity; and a staunch resolve to act with conviction and integrity, however dark the current moment. This resilience and relentlessness are also what it means to carry both arks: to hold our pain and our promise, our memory and our vision.

On the seventh day of Pesah, we commemorate not just the miracle of the Sea splitting, but also the courage required to step into uncertain waters. The Israelites moved forward with the history of their bondage and the hope for freedom. Today, may we have the courage to do the same—to move forward while carrying the full weight of our past with the belief that a different and better reality is not only possible but within our grasp. *(Abigail Uhrman is Assistant Professor of Jewish Educatioin at JTS)*

[Pesach: On Moving from a Place of Fear to a Place of Love
By Rabbi Lauren Tuchman
https://truah.org/resources/lauren-tuchman-pesach-moraltorah_2025_/](https://truah.org/resources/lauren-tuchman-pesach-moraltorah_2025_/)

The central grand story of the Jewish tradition is undoubtedly the Exodus from Egypt. We end our observance of the holiday by re-reading the story of the splitting of the Sea of Reeds, when the Israelites faced a profoundly unnavigable obstacle. This moment is traditionally considered the greatest miracle to have occurred for the Jewish people. But the story doesn't end there.

The people begin to express fear and displeasure, as the Torah describes. "In the wilderness, the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The Israelites said to them, 'If only we had died by the hand of Adonai in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, when we ate our fill of bread! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to starve this whole congregation to death.'" (Exodus 16:2-3)

In just a month, the Israelites have forgotten the miracle and are caught in a cycle so many of us know intimately. Change is hard, and one can only imagine that this is even more true for those who have been deprived of agency over their lifetime. In response, God tells Moses that God will rain down manna from the sky to see if the people will have the requisite trust to go out and gather it. In this way, the people will know in their bones that it was God who brought them out of Egypt and that they need not fear nor strive for control which is so often out of reach.

At a time of tremendous uncertainty and anger, many of us find ourselves ceaselessly striving for certainty and control. Though we know deep down there are no guarantees, the future before us feels so perilous and the present so unbearable that it is understandable that we are doing all we can to create some semblance of certainty. Like the Ancient Israelites, we can feel adrift and terrified. We get caught up in stories and in assigning blame.

The felt reality of what we're experiencing right now can feel unbearable, short-circuiting our nervous systems. How are we supposed to celebrate a holiday that is all about the possibility of redemption at this time? On my hardest days, when the enormity of the rupture and destruction we're going through pulls me under, I think back to our ancestors who were so caught in their despair that they couldn't find it within themselves to go out and gather the aforementioned manna. They couldn't imagine a future

for themselves.

There is great wisdom here for us. Passover is centrally about the possibility that in a moment, things can radically change. Yet, simultaneously, radical change cannot magically stay with us. No event lasts without an intention to integrate its lessons. Thankfully, the arc of the Torah doesn't end with the Israelites complaining in the desert.

Though their context is dramatically different, the daughters of Zelophehad may offer us a pathway forward. Perhaps the paradigmatic example of community organizing in the Torah, the five women — Milcah, Hoglah, Tirzah, Noa, and Mahlah — gather themselves together and go to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. Before Moses and the elders, the daughters make their case for justice. Their father had no son and died of natural causes. Why shouldn't they rightfully inherit his portion of the land? Moses is unusually stumped and says that he must go to God to judge. God tells Moses that the women are in the right — they speak rightly. They have every right to inherit their father's portion. Though the story ends with a bit more nuance in Numbers 36 (the women can inherit so long as they marry within their tribe) where it leaves off in chapter 27 is a tremendous step forward for women's rights within the Torah's time and context.

A few pieces of this story ring out. The women are each named — an all-too-rare thing in the Torah — and they come together as one voice. Imagine their fear, approaching the powers of their day with their request which would change the law as it had been to that point. With one voice and one resolve, acting from a place of deep tenderness and love, the women change their political arrangement. It wasn't easy. It took tremendous belief in themselves and an unshakeable sense of spiritual fortitude. As we move towards the end of Passover, I am holding onto this narrative as an offering. And even if the ending is a bit more complex than we'd like, we are still left with a major political change, brought about by grassroots ordinary citizens with their moral compass firmly intact. So may it be for us. *(Rabbi Lauren Tuchman is a Jewish educator based in the Washington, DC area.)*

Our Passover story is a complex tale that addresses over 400 years of history. During the Passover seder, we retell a story that begins with Abraham, the wandering Aramean, and ends with our ancestors' arrival in the Promised Land. Much of our storytelling and almost every ritual, including matzah (the bread of affliction), maror (the bitterness of slavery), and salt water (the tears of our ancestors) represents our many years of enslavement.

Yet, there is one modern ritual that typically occurs during the middle of the seder that celebrates our freedom. Many Reform and liberal Jews pour water into a cup to remember Miriam, a prophet and leader of our community in her own right.

In Exodus 15:20-21, we read:

> Then Miriam the prophet, Aaron's sister, picked up a hand-drum, and all the women went out after her in dance with hand-drums. And Miriam chanted for them: Sing to Adonai, for God has triumphed gloriously; Horse and driver God has hurled into the sea.

Miriam is remembered for her connection to water. We learn in the Torah that Miriam saved Moses as his basket washed down the Nile River and provided a well of water to the Israelites during their 40-year journey in the wilderness. Moreover, after the Egyptian army perished in the Sea of Reeds, Miriam gathered the women at the water's edge and sang songs to the Eternal.

This was not the only singing and dancing that occurred after Pharoah's demise. In Exodus 15:1, we read that, "Moses and the Israelites sang this song to Adonai. They said: 'I will sing to Adonai, for God has triumphed gloriously.'"

The Hebrew grammar in these sentences is very convoluted. Moses and the Israelites sang a song to God, but the word for sang, yashir, is written in the singular, not the plural. As the great biblical commentator Ibn Ezra teaches, "Moses composed the song by himself. He then taught it to all of Israel."

With Miriam's song, the word for singing, shiru, is plural. Miriam and all

the women gathered as one to sing their song.

The modern midrash "Shiru" by Rabbi Tamar Duvdevani suggests a reason for this discrepancy:

> What was the song of Moshe? 'I shall sing to the Eternal.' This is a song of one voice that does not join with a chorus of voices and melodies. Moshe sought to bring forth from each person's heart and to redeem each person's song. But the song of redemption was not complete.

Rabbi Duvdevani then looks at Miriam's song:

> What is the song of Miriam? 'Sing to the Eternal.' In the plural.
>
> Miriam taught: 'The Eternal spoke these words to your entire assembly […] with a great voice, which did not cease.' (Deuteronomy 5:18).
>
> What is the meaning of 'a great voice?' It means that it contains within it a multitude of voices, accents, languages and sounds. For the voice is the voice of the Divine, and the image is the image of Divine - made up of each person, each unique in form and thought.

At the seder, many Reform and liberal Jewish homes will have Miriam's cup sitting prominently on their Passover tables. One of the most beautiful minhagim (customs) is to ask each person at the table to pour a little bit of water from their own cups into Miriam's cup. This ritual serves as a reminder that each one of our voices matters and strengthens the community. May we listen to the voice of every one of us so that we can continue the journey together towards freedom and redemption for all, just as Miriam taught us. *(Rabbi Andy Gordon is the spiritual leader of Bolton Street Synagogue in Baltimore, MD)*

Sefirat Ha'omer – Counting The Omer by The Accidental Talmudist
https://www.accidentaltalmudist.org/holidays/2024/05/08/all-about-the-omer/

What is Sefirat Ha'omer?

The second night of Passover is the beginning of Sefirat HaOmer, the

Counting of the Omer. During the Omer period, we are commanded (Lev. 23:9-21) to count seven complete weeks, for a total of 49 days. After we finish counting seven weeks, we observe the holiday of Shavuot (lit. “weeks.”)

On Passover we celebrate our liberation from slavery and on Shavuot we celebrate receiving the Torah so the Omer count takes us from redemption to revelation. A Jew counting the days until the joyful holiday of Shavuot is akin to a child counting the days until summertime. We prepare ourselves to receive the Torah anew by refining our character and strengthening our faith and trust in God. Before leaving Egypt, the Jewish slaves were at a spiritual low point amidst the godless culture all around them. But forty-nine days later, they were so holy that they were compared to angels when they stood at the bottom of Mount Sinai ready to receive God’s laws. So too we can elevate and purify ourselves so that we are ready to accept the Torah once again.

When the Holy Temple in Jerusalem was still standing, special grain offerings were brought during the Omer period and on Shavuot. They were waved in different directions, similar to the waving of the lulav during Sukkot, as a reminder that God is everywhere.

How do we count the Omer?

The count should be done at night, standing up, as soon after evening prayers (Maariv) as possible. Before counting we say a blessing in Hebrew which translates as “Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe who has sanctified us with your commandments and commanded us to count the omer.”

If you forget to count one night, you can count the next morning without reciting the blessing, and continue counting as usual with a blessing that night. However if you forget to count at night or the next morning, you should continue counting but without saying a blessing.

Omer Restrictions

The first part of the Omer period is a solemn time because it is the anniversary of a terrible tragedy in Jewish history, the death of 24,000 students of the great sage Rabbi Akiva. They died of a plague that ended on the 33rd day of the Omer. Because of this, we observe certain mourning practices during this time, refraining from getting married,

cutting our hair, listening to instrumental music, and purchasing and wearing new clothing. There are certain exceptions and customs that vary by community so it's best to consult with your rabbi.

Lag B'omer

The 33rd day of the Omer period is a festive day when we celebrate the end of the plague that killed so many of Rabbi Akiva's students. Customs of the day include listening to music, singing and dancing joyfully, and attending public bonfires. Lag B'Omer is significant for another reason: it is the yahrtzeit (anniversary of death) of the great mystic Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. For this reason many people celebrate the holiday in Meron, where Rabbi Shimon is buried. On the day he died, he told his students to observe the date as the "day of my joy."

Seasons of Love by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z"l (2014)

https://rabbisacks.org/archive/seasons-love-extract-koren-sacks-pesach-machzor/

(Extract from the Koren - Sacks Pesach Machzor)

Shir HaShirim, is not the only biblical book about love. It is a complex emotion that cannot be defined from a single perspective, nor do all its dimensions become apparent at the same time. In a way that is subtle and richly complex, the Shalosh Regalim, the three pilgrimage festivals, all have their special book, each about love but about different phases of it.

Shir HaShirim, the Song of Songs, on Pesach is about love as passion. The lovers are young. There is no mention of marriage, a home, children, responsibility. They have no thought for the morrow nor for others. They are obsessed with one another. They live conscious of the other's absence, longing for the other's presence. That is how love should be some of the time if it is to be deep and transforming all the time.

The book of Ruth, the scroll we read on Shavuot, is about love as loyalty: Ruth's loyalty to her mother-in-law Naomi, and Boaz's to Naomi, Ruth, and the family heritage. It is about "lovingkindness," the word coined by Myles Coverdale in his Bible translation of 1535 because he could find no English word that meant chessed. Beginning as it does with death, bereavement and childlessness, and ending with marriage and the birth

of a child it is about the power of love to redeem grief and loneliness and "make gentle the life of this world." It is about what Shir HaShirim is not: about marriage, continuity and keeping faith with "the living and the dead" (Ruth 2:20). That too, in Judaism, is a significant part of love, for we are not just selves: we are part of the living chain of generations.

On Succot we have a third story about love: love grown old and wise. Kohelet, Ecclesiastes, is a book easy to misread as a study in disillusionment, but that is because of sustained series of mistranslations of its key word, hevel. This is variously rendered as "vanity, vapour, meaningless, futile, useless," leading readers to think that its author finds life without purpose or point. Hevel does not mean that: it means "a fleeting breath." It is about the brevity of life on earth. It begins with the author seeking happiness in philosophy (chochmah), pleasure, laughter, the accumulation of wealth, fine houses and pleasure gardens, the perennial secular temptations. He discovers that none of them can defeat death. Objects last but those who own them do not. Wisdom may be eternal, but the wise still die.

We defeat death not by seeking a this-worldly immortality but by simcha, the spiritually and morally textured exhilaration about which William Blake wrote, "He who binds to himself a joy / Does the winged life destroy. / He who kisses the joy as it flies / Lives in eternity's sun rise." Kohelet learns that happiness is to be found not in what you own (bind to yourself) but in what you share. It exists not where you invest your money but where you give of yourself. It lives in work and love: "Enjoy life with the woman you love all the days of this fleeting life you have been given under the sun, all the fleeting days, for that is your portion in life and in all your labor under the sun" (Eccles. 9:9). This is love that has grown from passion to responsibility to existential joy: the joy of being with one you love.

The essential message of Judaism is contained in not one of these books but in the combination of all three. Eros is the fire that gives love its redemptive, transforming, other-directed quality. Marriage is the covenantal bond that turns love into a pledge of loyalty and brings new life into the world. Companionship, experience, and a life well-lived bring simcha, a word that appears only twice in Shir HaShirim, not at all in Ruth, but seventeen times in Kohelet.

Love as passion; love as marriage and childbirth and continuity; love as abiding happiness: three stages of love, traced out in the course of a life and the course of a year and its seasons: Shir HaShirim in spring, Ruth in harvest time, Kohelet in autumn as the days grow colder and the nights longer. With a wonderful touch of serendipity, Kohelet ends with the advice, “Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, 'I find no pleasure in them'” (Kohelet 12:1), thus leading us back to youthfulness, spring, and the Shir HaShirim where we began.

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Yahrtzeits

Burt Solomon remembers his Natural Mother Lillian Ginsburg on Tuesday April 22, and his Mother Gertrude Nadler also on Tuesday April 22.