

PESACH *Thoughts from Jeremy Symons*

How many of us like to take some time out and relax with a good book? Stories are important, especially ones that can relate to our own Jewish past. They help us reach out over the centuries and, in a sense, take part in the experiences of our ancestors, generating an awareness of our heritage, enabling us to draw inspiration in order to face our own situations as Jews today. This is what the Seder Service and the festival of Pesach is all about.

In the Haggadah we read about *בין הבתרים ברית* how Hashem promises Avraham that his children will be slaves, but ultimately redeemed. Can you imagine Avraham's reaction to such a strange promise? Oh, great, my offspring are going to be slaves, how comforting!! Why did Hashem have to tell me this? Why couldn't he just tell me that one day they will reach the spiritual heights of becoming 'Hashem's Chosen Nation'?

There are many answers to these questions. The simplest being 'Life isn't easy', and Hashem wanted to prepare us for that. In order to become a great nation, we first are required to experience difficulties and hardships so we can educate ourselves how to deal with them in order to make us more resilient and robust.

There are a lot of reasons for struggles and strife - Primarily because that is how we grow. We can see an interesting comparison when we look at nature. Take a seed for example. We first inter it in the dirt and water and nurture it until it rises up out of the ground and blossoms into a beautiful flower. Only through the means of burying it first, can it ultimately grow healthy, vibrant and strong. Which brings me nicely to another reason relating to Hashem's promise.

The best way to relate to someone in order to help them in their desperate time of need is to acknowledge their difficulties and teach them that there always will be a light at the end of the dark tunnel because we have once been there too and managed to overcome it. We can say, "Hey, we were once strangers in a strange land and enslaved too, but do not despair! Hashem saved us and set us free. Hang in there. I know you are struggling and in huge pain now but with Hashem's help, everything will eventually turn out ok.

Everyone faces hard challenges and difficulties throughout one's life but it is how you deal with the situation that is important. Hashem needed us to struggle. Sometimes suffering hardships is a good thing as it makes us appreciate better the times when things are going well. They were designed specifically for us, to help us work on the things that we need to work on and improve especially when dealing with spiritual matters and connecting ourselves to Hashem.

If there is one thing I learn from the Seder night and Pesach it is that "No situation is so desperate that it cannot be turned back too good" No matter how bad things get or seem to be, the situation can always turn around and improve.

This is a very important message that Hashem in his wisdom wanted to convey, so we can truly say we have been redeemed.

Chag Sameach!
Jeremy Symons

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MAZEL TOV! *A hearty Mazel Tov from the SWHC Community*

Gordon & Muriel Rosenberg celebrating their Platinum (70th) Wedding Anniversary
Andrew Levene celebrating his 83rd Birthday

PESACH *We have pleasure in welcoming back Rabbi Motti Schochet for the first two days of Pesach. Rabbi Schochet will also be leading the 2nd Seder Night Communal Seder.*

Erev Pesach – Friday 30th March (Bank Holiday)

Shabbat & Pesach begins/Candle Lighting **7:08pm**
Mincha & Ma'ariv **7:10pm**

1st Day Pesach Shabbat 31st March

Morning Service **9:30am**
Musaf 'Tefilat Tal' - Prayer for Dew **11:30am**
Mincha & Ma'ariv **7:20pm**
2nd Night Communal Seder - Shul Hall **8:15pm**
Candle Lighting **8:21pm**

The candles must not be lit before this time. Candles must be lit from an existing flame

2nd Day Pesach – Sunday 1st April

Morning Service **9:30am**
Mincha **7:20pm** Ma'ariv, Yom Tov ends **8:23pm**

Chol Hamoed Monday 2nd (Bank Holiday), Tuesday 3rd & Wednesday 4th April

Morning Service **8:30am**
Mincha **1:45pm** Ma'ariv **8:45pm**

Thursday 5th April Erev Shevii Shel Pesach – Eruv Tavshilin

Morning Service **8:30am**
Candle Lighting **7:18pm** Mincha & Ma'ariv **7:20pm**

Shivii Shel Pesach – Erev Shabbat Friday 6th April

Morning Service **9:30am**
Shabbat begins/Candle lighting **7:20pm**
The candles must be lit before this time. Candles must be lit from an existing flame.
Mincha & Ma'ariv **7:20pm**

Acharon Shel Pesach – Shabbat 7th April

Morning Service **9:30am** 'Yizkor' Memorial Service approx **11.15am**
Mincha **7:20pm** Ma'ariv, Yom Tov ends **8:34pm**

Wednesday 11th April, 7pm | Yom Hashoah Memorial Candle Lighting to the 6 million who perished in the Holocaust followed by film "Murderers Among Us" starring Sir Ben Kingsley as Simon Weisenthal, an Austrian Jew who is interned in the Mauthausen concentration camp. THERE WILL BE A SHORT INTERMISSION FOR MA'ARIV & TEA & COFFEE AT 8.45PM. Donation £5 to AJR.

Wednesday 18th April | Yom Hazikaron/Yom Ha'atzmaut Celebrating 70 years of Israel's independence! Entertainment from members of our community. Donation £5 in advance to include "Sass's Falafel". Grand Raffle on the night. All proceeds to the British Friends of Israel War Disabled. Tickets from the Synagogue Office or Marilyn Salt.

Save the Date – Thursday 3rd May Lag B'Omer Community BBQ