

HAVURAT YISRAEL WEEKLY NEWS

3 Shevat 5785

SHABBAT BO

February 1, 2025

Shabbat Shalom!

4:54 pm Candle Lighting
 5:00 pm Mincha, Kabbalat Shabbat and Maariv
 8:45 am Mishnayot class
 9:00 am Shacharit
 9:35 am Latest Shema
 Parasha p. 340 Haftorah p.1151
 4:15 pm — Gemara Class and Parasha — Rabbi Algaze
 4:50 pm Mincha
 5:53 pm Maariv & Havdalah

Kiddush is sponsored by Zahava Harary commemorating the Yahrzeit of her father Raphael Eliyahu ben Eliyahu Raphael Z"L.

Seudah Shlisheet sponsorships available.

Upcoming Sponsorships

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The Havurat Yisrael Kiddush

One of the most characteristic features of Havurat Yisrael is the time we spend together. Even after the food is gone and the tables are clean, people still stay to chat and mingle, thus developing the special bonds that unite us. It is sad to see that some Shabbatot go without a sponsor. Please consider sponsoring a kiddush so that all our dates are filled with sponsors' names.

Thank you to the following people who contributed to the purchase of the new computer for the Havurat Yisrael office: Louis Ordentlich, Marc Rose, Rabbi Avrohom Levitt, Mark Silverman, Irving Prus, Ira Kleiman, Pinhas Contreras, Yaakov Simchayev, Yehuda Mendieta, David Sosnowik, Jack Goldhaber, Todd Hausman and Jonathan Rieu.

Special thanks to the people who built it: Jake Ordentlich, Zachary Kleiman, Zachary Hausman & Rabbi Levitt.

Mark Your Calendar!

- ◆ Friday March 7 — Shabbat Across America
- ◆ Thursday June 12 — Journal Dinner

TU BISHVAT SEDER

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 12TH — 7 PM
 WITH RABBI LEVITT

Welcome the new Year of the Trees

Chinese Dinner, Kumzitz Music,
 Plants and Seeds

Cost \$10 p/person



Thanks to the sponsors of this event: Rabbi David & Tamara Algaze, Jerry & Jennifer Revich, Louis & Rachel Ordentlich, Mark & Gail Silverman, Shimon and Sarah Mizrahi, David & Debbie Sosnowik and Rachele Alkalay.

Havurat Yisrael is proud to present a

Youth Leadership Shabbat for Shabbat Shira - Parshas Beshalach

Saturday February 8th 2025.

Organized by Rabbi Levitt

Shabbos Morning davening will be run by our Youth.
 Following davening will be a special lunch in the shul to honor our Youth Leaders.

Sponsorships are welcome, if anyone wants to sponsor please contact the shul office. Lunch is \$20 per person.

New program at Havurat Yisrael

Lunch and Learn
 with Rabbi Levitt



Thursday February 13th at noon

Contribution \$5 p/person

Organized by the HY Event Committee

SUNDAY February 2 / 4 Shevat	MONDAY February 3 / 5 Shevat	TUESDAY February 4 / 6 Shevat	WEDNESDAY February 5 / 7 Shevat	THURSDAY February 6 / 8 Shevat	FRIDAY February 7 / 9 Shevat
8:00 am Shacharit 9:00 am Breakfast 9:30 am No Torah Class — R. Algaze	6:30 am Gemara class 7:00 am Shacharit 7:00 pm No Class with — R. Algaze	6:30 am Gemara class 7:00 am Shacharit 7:00 pm Parasha Class with R. Levitt	6:30 am Gemara class 7:00 am Shacharit	6:30 am Gemara class 7:00 am Shacharit 8:00 pm Class with R. Levitt at the Boukharion Synagogue 106-16 70th Ave, 2nd floor	6:30 am Gemara class 7:00 am Shacharit 5:03 pm Candle Lighting 5:05 pm Mincha, Kabbalat Shabbat

HAVURAT YISRAEL

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FUNDAMENTAL TRANSFORMING OF THE SYMBOLS OF SLAVERY

By Rabbi David Algaze

“They shall eat the meat on that night, roasted over fire, and matzahs with bitter herbs they shall eat it.” (Exodus 12:8)

On one of the most solemn days in the Jewish calendar, the night of the Passover Seder, we follow a ritual that was prescribed to our forefathers since the last night of the Egyptian enslavement. At the time when the Temple was standing, the meal consisted of the actual paschal lamb eaten together with the matzah and the maror, the bitter herbs. Today, as our Temple lay in ruins, we are prevented from eating a roasted lamb so that we do not mistake our condition and think that the Temple still stands. However, we still keep a symbol of that lamb on the Seder plate, usually in the form of a roasted shank bone which we are careful not to eat that night. The rite was first practiced in Egypt with these three symbols closely intertwined: the roasted lamb was eaten in conjunction with the matzah and the maror. Why was the lamb prescribed and why in this very particular form of being roasted? Moreover, what is the significance of the combination of these three elements and what do they represent?

Rabbi S.R. Hirsch (Frankfurt, 1808-1888) has a very profound insight into this commandment by explaining that the three symbols correspond to three levels of suffering experienced by Israel. When G-d foretold Abraham, at the Covenant Between the Pieces, that they would be slaves in an alien land, He said, “Know with certainty that your offspring shall be aliens in a land not their own—and they shall serve them and they will oppress them...” (Beresheet 15:13) Thus, Israel was going to endure three distinct stages of oppression. The first is that they were going to be strangers in a land not their own, the second that they were made into slaves and the third that they would be subjected to torture and affliction. The tripartite oppression was that they would be strangers, slaves and oppressed which meant that they would be deprived of a home, of freedom and of the power of resistance. The purpose of these symbols at the Seder was to remind them that even at the last hour of their slavery, these three elements of degradation were still present.

The lamb had to be roasted under very specific conditions which the Torah prescribes in careful detail. It could not be eaten raw or cooked in water and every piece of the body had to be roasted simultaneously. These unusual and very strict requirements call for an explanation. While some commentators, Abarbanel and Itzhak Arama among them, suggest that the roasting in a public place of the whole animal was intended to demonstrate their rebellion against their oppressors, Rabbi Hirsch proposes a very different and ingenious solution. He departs from the idea that food is usually cooked in pots and that the Torah’s insistence that this not be the case with the lamb implies that a symbol is at play here. At a time when the Jewish people were about to enter a period of exile on account of their sins, there were some who comforted themselves with the idea that they would be protected from the fire and declared, “This city is the caldron and we are the flesh.” (Ezekiel 11:3) To them Ezekiel preaches that they were mistaken, that the city [Jerusalem] would not be there to protect them like a caldron but that they were to taste the bitterness of exile. Therefore, the absence of a caldron in the paschal lamb, the fact that it was roasted suspended over an open fire without any grounding, signifies that they were homeless, strangers without any moorings or ground to call their own.

The second symbol, the matzah, is clearly the “bread of the slaves.” As they toiled for long hours in adverse conditions, their cruel slavedrivers never allowed the time to make leavened bread, always rushing and hustling them. Thus, the eating of the matzah was a reminder of their state of slavery. The unleavened bread is reminiscent of bondage, as we say in the Haggadah, “This is the bread of affliction which our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt.”

The third symbol, the bitter herbs, is a clear allusion to the bitterness of their affliction. Their condition as slaves was made harsher by the ruthlessness of their torturers, the utter disregard for their privacy, their lives and their bodies. The bitterness in the mouth harked back to the unpleasant times when they felt despondent and downcast.

Thus, on this night we find a reminder of the three stages of their oppression: being strangers, slaves and oppressed. Why would it be necessary, on this night before their liberation, to taste again the experiences of their enslavement in all its three dimensions? Rabbi Hirsch comments that this was

done to remind them that they were still slaves and at the mercy of Egypt and that only G-d would be able to set them free.

However, this explanation seems to contradict other passages in our literature where the night before the Exodus was considered already as the beginning of liberation. Moreover, our celebration over the centuries, consisting of the same symbols, and celebrating our freedom, would not fit this theory. A different view would be to see these symbols as being transformed on the night of the Seder. Instead of representing the slavery and its tripartite oppression, these symbols now acquire a different meaning. The eating of the paschal lamb, roasted not cooked, could be seen as implying open spaces, such as one has in one’s own territory. No longer would it be necessary to stealthily cook a meager portion of meat away from other people’s eyes, but rather to do it openly, freely and unafraid.

The second symbol, the matzah, is transformed from the bread of affliction into the symbol of G-d’s miraculous alacrity in speeding us out of Egypt. Rather than remembering the cruel jostling of the torturers, the matzah has come to represent G-d’s infinite love for us by not wasting one minute in freeing us from our torturers so much that He did not allow us even to leaven our bread. As the Haggadah explains the eating of the matzah as, “Because the dough of our forefathers did not have time to become leavened before the King of Kings revealed Himself to them and redeemed them.” The matzah, once reminiscent of bondage, now reveals itself as the harbinger of sweet taste of freedom and the love of G-d.

The bitter herbs are mellowed by adding a bit of the sweet haroset, the mixture of nuts, apples and other fruits, in order to show that G-d assuaged our pain and covered our bitterness. The bitter herbs lose some of their pungency, thus symbolizing G-d’s kindness toward us.

Thus, the symbols most associated with the occurrence of slavery and suffering, now become translated into symbols of G-d’s love for us. The ritual of the Seder represents a fundamental transformation of the experience of slavery into the incidence of G-d as liberator. This would be a fitting continuation of the Covenant with Abraham who is told that after the slavery, “They will leave with great wealth.” (Beresheet 15:14) We suffered; we felt the homelessness of exile, the indignity of being slaves and the meanness, malice and brutality at the hands of our torturers. However, now we have been freed by G-d and our sadness has turned into joy. Thus, the symbols that once proclaimed the sadness have now been transfigured into symbols of joyfulness and exultation. This transformation is clearly the message of the Haggadah, “He brought us forth from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to joy, from mourning to celebration, from darkness to a bright light and from bondage to redemption.”

This is a powerful lesson for our lives too. We have the capacity to transform symbols that once had negative connotations into symbols containing new and positive messages. The transformation of the negative into the positive is one of the most important forces in the character of Man and the fountain of eternal happiness and serenity.

New Way to Pay!

Use this QR code to easily make a shul payments.



Refuah Shlema Alte Ester Riva bat Devorah Shifra, Chava Naomi bat Doba Chana, Yaakov ben Leah, Tzvi ben Sara, Talia Leah bat Sarah, Miriam bat Rivka, Reuben ben Malka, Baruch Chaim ben Bascha, Malka bat Simcha and, Hannah bat Yehudit, Binyamin Baer ben Chana, Hillel Zvi Yehuda ben Tzina, Joseph David ben Rachel, and Abraham ben Devorah Shifra, Tamara bat Gabriela.