# Chabad of Venice & North Port Shalom Times

PASSOVER 5784

A LITTLE NOSH FOR THE SOUL

PASSOVER SEDER AT CHABAD APRIL 22-30 CHABADOFVENICE.COM/SEDER

> BREAD OF FAITH

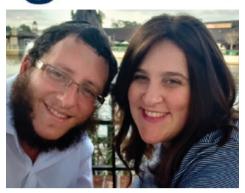
THE JEWISH RESPONSE TO ANXIETY

FULL PASSOVER GUIDE

INSIDE: EDIBLE FAITH

PASSOVER IN

# Shalom!



#### **Shalom Times**

is published by Chabad of Venice & North Port 21560 Angela Ln. Venice, FL 34293 941.493.2770 info@chabadofvenice.com www.chabadofvenice.com

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LEAVE AN ETERNAL LEGACY TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY.

Remember Chabad of Venice in Your Will

There's no holiday on the calendar like Passover: a celebration of our freedom, the time of our redemption. Yet this year, we find ourselves in a mood different from all others.

It's the first Passover in most of our lifetimes where we're expected to celebrate our freedom, while our brothers and sisters the world over are enslaved and held captive. As we all know too well, over a hundred men, women, and children are still in the dark tunnels of Gaza.

While the Torah doesn't rationalize this painful juxtaposition, nor terrorism or tragedy for that matter, it does provide a powerful, overarching instruction: **In dark times, we increase our light.** 

The Sages say that in the days before the Exodus from Egypy, the Jewish people found themselves "naked of mitzvos," lacking in merit, and therefore undeserving of redemption. G-d therefore commanded us to take the paschal sheep, ritually slaughter it, roast it over fire, and enjoy it with family and neighbors, over a meal of matzah and bitter herbs. Outside, the plague of the first born was making its way through each Egyptian home. Inside, it was luminant.

With day break, the Jews stood up, gathered together behind Moshe, and marched arm in arm, out of Egypt - forever.

With this powerful chapter in the Torah, G-d gave His nation the key for redemption in all future exiles, including the one we are in today. No matter how dark the night may get, with the shadow of death literally making its way outside, when we step into His mitzvos, and celebrate His holiday with joy and gladness - when we connect to our essential identity as God's people - the natural consequence of that is...a miracle.

In other words, in the face of challenge, we don't cower and hide; we reveal our unshakable, G-dly core: we pray and connect, we educate our children and ourselves, we celebrate our Judaism. This is the Jewish recipe for redemption. It's the spirit that was palpably felt in the record attendance at Chanukah, Purim, Holocaust remembrance events, adult education classes, and youth programs. Through these actions, we embody the essence of Passover and the enduring spirit of Am Yisrael Chai. In this issue, we explore Passover's modern relevance and provide detailed how-tos for celebrating it. The Exodus showed the world what's possible for God's people. This year, let's step fully into those shoes: let's eat the food of faith, live in line with our G-dly identity, and stand ready for tomorrow's breaking dawn, with true freedom and the coming of Moshiach.

A Kosher and Happy Passover.

Rabbi Sholom & Chaya Rivka Schmerling

## WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

#### ONLINE:

Visit www.ChabadofVenice.com/donate **STOCK & IRA TRANSFER:** Contact us for instructions. **REAL ESTATE:** Contact us for more information. **MAIL:** Mail a check made out to **Chabad of Venice**, 21560 Angela Ln, Venice, <u>FL 34293</u>

#### CAR:

Free Pickup. For more information contact us.

**PLANNED GIVING:** Consider a lasting legacy by including Chabad of Venice in your will.



We are fully responsibly to raise our own budget and are supported by individuals that care.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!** habad of Venice & North Port is a tax-exempt IRS-registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organizatio All donations of real estate can provide you with the maxiumum tax benefits allowed by law

### **MAZEL TOVS**



Birth of Baby Yisroel to the Schmerling Family *October 3, 2023* 



Engagement of Nechama Schmerling to Srolik Sputz *February 2, 2024* 



On the Birth of a Grandson to Dan & Shellie Rubin to Nathan and Arielle Rubin *February* 14, 2024



Bar Mitzvah of Laviv Shevtzov February 17, 2024



On the Birth of a Grandson to David & Larissa Shutovsky to Irena and Adam Parker *March* 3, 2024



Mordechai Schmerling -Hanachas Tefillin (first time putting on Tefillin) *March 17, 2024* 

If you'd like to include your loved ones in a future edition of the Sholom Times, please email us.

#### FORMER SENATOR JOE LIEBERMAN FEBRUARY 24, 1942 – MARCH 27, 2024



Joe was a personal friend and supporter of Chabad of Venice. His commitment to his faith and his community was unwavering, even in the cold walls of Congress. His friendship was a source of strength and inspiration, and we'll remember him always as a true public servant a man of principle.

## FRANK POMERANZ

#### DECEMBER 11, 1944 - OCTOBER 2, 2023

We mourn the loss of Frank Pomeranz, a cherished member of our community since Chabad of Venice's inception in 2005. Frank's dedication was evident in



his consistent presence at classes and Minyan, and his extensive volunteer work, particularly in security.

Frank was more than a member; he was family. With no immediate relatives, we, his Chabad family, feel his absence deeply. In his honor, a security fund has been established at Chabad. We thank everyone who has contributed and invite others to support this cause in memory of Frank.

Frank's legacy of commitment and kindness will always be remembered. May his memory be a blessing to us all.

#### ALIK BATSIAN JANUARY 28, 1947 - JANUARY 27, 2024

We remember Alik Batsian, a dear friend and active member of our Chabad community. Alik and his family have been integral parts of our shul for many years.



A proud Jew and Cohen, Alik's journey from the former Soviet Union to America is a testament to his resilience and strength. He built a successful business but always kept his Jewish heritage and pride at the forefront.

Alik was a fighter, known for his warmth and kindness. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family, his son, children, and grandchildren. May Alik's memory inspire us all, and may it be a blessing to those who knew and loved him.









# **Purim in Israel**





Purim in Israel was a resounding success, with a turnout of 300 people, including many new faces. The costumes were a highlight of the celebration, with a variety of creative and colorful outfits on display.
We would like to extend our gratitude to the sponsors, staff, and all the volunteers who helped make the event possible. Without their hard work and dedication, the event would not have been such a huge success. It was a memorable celebration, filled with smiles, laughter, and a wonderful sense of community



















# CHABAD OF VENICE: A WARM EMBRACE FOR OUR IDF SOLDIERS



n the past six months, our Chabad of Venice family has embraced a special mission: adopting an IDF army base. This initiative is a testament to our profound gratitude and support for the men and women safeguarding Israel.

Our support has taken various forms, all tailored to make a significant impact in the lives of soldiers:

- 1. Financial Support: We've provided financial assistance to soldiers and their families, including our Purim Gifts to Israel's Poor. For many of these men and women, the gift meant peace of mind - that their families could celebrate with more than just bare essentials.
- 2. Letters of Support: Last month, the teens in our C-Teen program wrote letters of encouragement and gratitude. The message: Israel and the soldiers are in our thoughts and prayers.
- **3. Military Equipment:** Hearing the needs from our liaisons on the ground, we sponsored requested gear, helmets and weapon accessories.

Our goal is to create a connection between our community and the people of Israel. It's a way of showing these brave men and women that Jews around the world, who they may never meet, stand behind them in this pivotal moment - and not just in words, but in meaningful actions

As we continue this journey of support, we invite every member of our community to join us in this heartfelt endeavor. Say a daily prayer, take on a mitzvah, make a donation. Together, we can bring comfort and strength to our soldiers.

We may be the smallest nation, but we're showing the world that we're in fact, the largest family.





# CHABAD OF VENICE PROGRAMS

2024

### TORAH STUDY SATURDAYS: 9:30 AM

We'll examine the weekly Torah reading through the lens of contemporary commentary every Shabbat morning, and you'll be amazed at how topical and relevant the Parsha (weekly Torah reading) ideas and concepts really are. Both mystical and pragmatic, these sessions will truly elevate your spirits and refine your view of the world around you.

## WEEKLY SHABBAT SERVICES

FRIDAYS: 6:30 PM SATURDAYS: 10:30 AM

At Chabad the services are traditional and are conducted in a joyous, casual tmosphere. Many of those who attend cannot read Hebrew, yet everyone feels at home. The prayer book is bi-lingual and various English readings are included in the service. Song and commentary add meaning and participation to the prayers. Children are included and most welcome



Experience an epic summer at Camp Gan Israel! Join us for non-stop fun, exciting adventures, and making new friends. Discover a world of excitement, with amazing counselors, while creating memories that will last a lifetime!

## WEEKLY TEFILLIN CLUB EVERY SUNDAY MORNING AT 9:00 AM

The sages teach us that the merit of this mitzvah serves as a shield against anti-Jewish threats, providing safety for the wearer, his family, and for all of Israel. Join Tefillin Club for an opportunity to learn how to wear tefillin, pray with them, and enjoy fresh brewed coffee and Torah Shmooze. Bring your own Tefillin, or use a set provided by us if you don't have your own.

Bagels, Lox & Shmooze

TUESDAYS AT 12 PM A weekly community social gathering to schmooze and enjoy time together. It's an opportunity to make new friends, see familiar faces and be part of the community.







# A DAY OF REFLECTION: 2024 VENICE REVISITS THE HORRORS OF THE HOLOCAUST

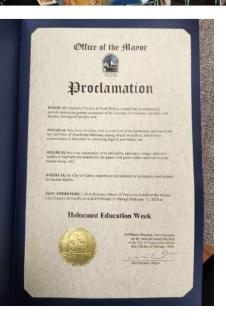
In a post October 7th world, where anti-Semitism is on the rise, the question of what the Holocaust means to our community has never been more relevant. Irene Zysblatt, a survivor of the atrocities of Auschwitz, brought this question to the forefront during her poignant speech at the Venice Community Center on February 15th.

Chabad of Venice had the honor of hosting Irene before a captivated audience of 800. Her heartfelt narrative painted a vivid picture of her life before the war, the devastation that followed, and her miraculous survival. Irene spoke of the dehumanization, the constant fear, and the loss of her family, but also of the resilience, hope, and the bonds formed in the darkest of times.





The event was further enriched by the haunting melodies of renowned concert violinist Vladimir Tsypin, who performed pieces from Schindler's List, adding a layer of emotional



#### depth to the morning.

Venice Mayor Nick Pachota attended the event, bringing with him a proclamation declaring a week of Holocaust Education in Venice, underscoring the community's commitment to remembering the past and learning from it.

The impact of Irene's testimony was profound, as evidenced by the numerous letters and emails from attendees expressing their gratitude and desire to help spread her message. Many shared that it was their first time hearing a firsthand account of the Holocaust, and they were deeply moved.

Chabad of Venice is proud to have facilitated this important event, with the support of our volunteers and sponsors, including the Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee and the Gulf Coast Community Foundation. Irene Zysblatt's words not only honored the memory of those lost but also ignited a collective aspiration for a more compassionate and just world.



JEWISH LEARNING INSTITUTE

# **Transformative Learning:**

#### The Rise of JLI Courses

sanctuary our three these last months, over eighty community members in Chabad of Venice navigated two soulstirring JLI courses: "The World of Kabbalah" and "Jewpernatural." These classes have been more than textbook lessons; they've been eve-opening explorations that have



brought us closer to the mystical heritage, underneath the Torah's surface.

"The World of Kabbalah" was a profound dive into the ancient teachings of Jewish mysticism, offering us a map to navigate the spiritual infrastructure of existence. "Jewpernatural" opened the door to the less-trodden paths of Jewish belief, where dreams, wonders, and the supernatural intertwine with the practicalities of daily faith.

Richard Stiefler, a retired doctor who's become a part of our family here in Venice this year, reflected, "These Kabbalah classes have shown me a new way to see life, a framework to live more fully as a Jew."

Svetlana Kunin, whose roots trace back to the former USSR, found a welcoming space in our "Jewpernatural"





course. She shared, "These JLI classes have opened new dimensions in my life, teaching me to see people and situations with a kinder, more understanding heart."

We're now at the threshold of a new adventure: "Advice for Life." This series, drawn from the Lubavitcher Rebbe's rich wellspring of wisdom, is a

chance for everyone, no matter their previous knowledge or experience, to find practical and profound guidance for life's many questions. Whether it's seeking meaning in our work, fostering harmony in our homes, or looking for strength in times of challenge, this series is designed to be accessible and life-affirming for all.

Our community at JLI Chabad of Venice is more than a collection of individuals; we are a family that grows together. As Dr. Stiefler so aptly put it, "JLI classes have been a beacon of light, bringing me closer to my faith and my community." And Svetlana's experience is a powerful reminder that "Each class is a step deeper into the heart of Judaism."

So, **we warmly welcome you to join "Advice for Life."** Come as you are, with your curiosities and life experiences, and let's embark on this journey together. No prior learning is

required—just an open heart and a curious mind.

Get ready to transform your daily life with us, starting ...... Sign up at chabadofvenice.com/jli and be part of a community eager to explore, learn, and grow. We're excited to see where this new path will lead us—together.



# from the LUBAVITCHER REBBE

IRRELEVANT POINTLESS CONFUSION DDIFFING

**IGNORANCE** 

DESPAR

AIMEESS

PURPOSE
MEANING
CLARITY
CLARITY
DIRECTION
INSIGHT
FAITH
MISSION

# SIX TUESDAYS, BEGINNING

MAY 14TH 12:30-1:45 PM LUNCH AT 12:00 PM REGISTER AT: WWW.CHABADOFVENICE.COM/JLI OR 941.493.23770

MISSING A CLASS? EVERY CLASS WILL BE RECORDED AND EMAILED TO REGISTERED STUDENTS.







#### 1. MEANING AT WORK

EARNING A LIVING CAN PROVIDE MEANING BEYOND THE PAYCHECK. DISCOVER A UNIQUE UNDERSTANDING OF HOW WORK AND FINANCIAL DECISIONS CONNECT TO LIFE'S PURPOSE.

#### 2. FAMILY BLISS

HOW CAN WE CREATE A WARM AND HEALTHY HOME? UNCOVER A GOLDMINE OF CLARITY ON FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS, DOMESTIC HARMONY, EDUCATION, AND CREATING A HEALTHY HOME ENVIRONMENT.

3. WHOLESOME HEALTH DISCOVER THE REBBE'S ANSWERS FOR PATIENTS, PHYSICIANS, AND PROFESSORS SEEKING GUIDANCE ON QUESTIONS OF HEALTH AND TREATMENT. EXPLORE HOW PHYSICAL HEALTH CONNECTS TO EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING.

4. THE POWER OF POSITIVITY EXPLORE HOW THE REBBE'S UNENDING POSITIVITY OFFERS A ROADMAP FOR BUILDING A HEALTHY SELF-CONCEPT AND NAVIGATING A CONTEMPORARY WORLD AWASH WITH ANXIETY AND MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES.

#### **5. ABOVE ADVERSITY**

BUCKLING UNDER THE STRUGGLES OF HEALTH, LIVELIHOOD, RELATIONSHIPS, OR RAISING CHILDREN, THOUSANDS TURNED TO THE REBBE FOR THE STRENGTH TO CONTINUE. SEE HOW THE INNER MEANING OF CHALLENGES CAN BE THE KEY TO MANAGING THEM.

#### **6. SPIRITUAL HEIGHTS**

DISCOVER A UNIQUE PATH TO YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY: SEE HOW TO SET INCREDIBLE GOALS AND REALIZE YOUR MOST PROFOUND POTENTIAL WHILE KEEPING BOTH FEET ON THE GROUND.

In Person at Chabad of Venice or Via Zoom  $\mathbf{O}$ 

# YOUR PASSOVER GUIDE TO THE ULTIMATE REDEMPTION STORY

#### **OUR STORY**

The yearning for freedom is woven into the fabric of our being, forming a central theme in the story of humanity. Passover commemorates the Israelites' emancipation from slavery in ancient Egypt and has since become the definitive model for redemption, both historically and personally.

#### YOUR FREEDOM STARTS HERE

In our daily journey through life's obstacles, we invoke the Exodus as we endeavor to liberate ourselves from the constraints of our limitations, aiming for personal liberation from old habits and narrow perspectives. The journey from slavery to freedom continues, as echoed by our sages: "Every person should see themselves as if they left Egypt."

#### **LEAVING LIMITATIONS**

In Hebrew, Egypt, where our ancestors were enslaved, is called Mitzraim. This word shares the same Hebrew meaning for limitations, narrowness, and self-imposed boundaries. Egypt is thus not only a geographical location but also a "state of mind."

Artwork by Yehuda Lang. View the full Yehuda Lang gallery online at www.yehudalang.com

#### **TOXIC PHARAOH**

The Egyptian ruler who enslaved our ancestors, Pharaoh, credited himself as the Creator of the Nile River that sustained his region. Pharaoh famously said he was a self-made man, claiming he had no birth parents and was like a god. This ego-centric way of thinking traps our hearts in a land of selfishness and enslaves our minds to the harsh, narrow-mindedness of a toxic "me."

#### THE PHARAOH DETOX

As our ancestors hastily departed from Egypt, their dough had no time to rise, and we commemorate the Exodus with unleavened matzah. This "bread choice" plays a pivotal role in our redemption narrative. During Passover, the Torah prohibits chametz bread or any fermented grains, as they symbolize the inflation of the ego that binds us. In contrast, G-d directs us to eat matzah, the humble bread, embodying the virtues of humility and faith that ultimately free the human spirit.

#### **MOSES THE SHEPHERD**

Moses, the humble, faithful shepherd who confronted Pharaoh, was chosen by G-d to lead the Jews out of Egypt because of his unique ability to shepherd the unbreakable spark of faith buried deep in the hearts of the oppressed Jews. Even enslaved people crushed under Pharaoh's rule can eventually find redemption, but it takes Moses to show us what's possible when we ignite our inner spark of faith.

### **ARE YOU SCARED?**

Moses feared facing the Pharaoh, so at the burning bush, G-d told him, "Come with me to Pharoah." In other words, G-d tells Moses you will not be alone in your challenges; you'll be "with Me"; My blessings are already with you, and you will succeed.

This episode reminds us that at every turn, every new challenge, every new day, G-d is with us and blesses us with everything we need to succeed.

(Based on the teachings of the Rebbe)



Passover is the gift of freedom, a reminder that redemption can become a reality even in seemingly impossible circumstances. Passover recounts our historical redemption and serves as a timeless reminder of the potential for redemption in our lives today. Through its rituals and observances, Passover empowers us to turn our dreams and aspirations for redemption into tangible outcomes.

#### THE FUTURE REDEMPTION

Passover encapsulates our nation's Exodus from Egypt and foretells our future redemption. Its traditions empower our quest for freedom and guide us toward humanity's ultimate liberation. On Passover, we celebrate the past and future redemption promised by G-d, and by observing its mitzvot, we nurture an unwavering faith that redemption is not only attainable but inevitable. •

# **30 DAYS C**

If leavened bread symbolizes ego then this is the month when we go on a major ego diet. For the next 30 days we deploy the search and destroy team to find and get rid of our bad habits. Get ready to eat bread of faith and healing and experience true freedom.

### **Passover Schedule**

#### at Chabad of Venice

Sunday, April 21 Search for Chametz: after 8:22 pm

Monday, April 22 - Passover Eve Finish Eating Chametz: before 11:17 am Sell & Burn Chametz: before 12:22 pm

Light Candles - Blessings 1 & 2\*\*: 7:40 Community Passover Seder at 7:30 pm Eat the Matzah after: 8:22 pm

#### Tuesday, April 23-1st Day of Passover Shacharit Service: 10:00 am Light Candles- Blessings 1 & 2\*\*: after 8:35 pm

Wednesday April 24 - 2nd Day of Passover Shacharit Service: 10:00 am

Saturday, April 27 - Shabbat Chol Hamoed Torah Study: 9:30 am Morning Services: 10:00 am

> Sunday Chol Hamoed Shacharit: 9:00 a.m.

Sunday April 28 - Eve 7th Day of Passover Light Candles - Blessing 1\*: 7:43 pm

Monday, April 29 - 7th Day of Passover Shacharit: 10:00 am Light Candles - Blessing 1\*: after 8:38

Tuesday, April 30 - Final Day of Passover Shacharit: 10:00 am Yizkor: 12:00 Minchah & Yizkor: 6:30 pm Moshiach Meal: 7:00 p.m. Holiday Ends: 8:39 pm

#### SUNDAY

TUESDAY

rect A

ORDER SHMURAH MATZAH

Traditional hand-made shmurah matzah is

this sacred tradition with your friends and family. You can place an order via

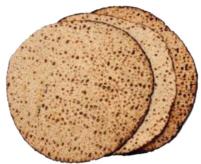
www.chabadofvenice.com/matzah

recommended for seder use. Include handmade

shmurah matzah at your seder table and share

## WHAT IS CHAMETZ?

Chametz is "leaven" — any food that's made of grain and water that have been allowed to ferment and "rise." Bread, cereal, cake, cookies, pizza, pasta, and beer are blatant examples of chametz; but any food that contains grain or grain derivatives can be, and often is, chametz. Practically speaking, any processed food that is not certified "Kosher for Passover" may potentially include chametz ingredients.



#### APRIL 21 | 13 NISSAN

APRIL 28 | 20 NISSAN

Chol Hamoed\*

After nightfall:

No tefillin

Enjoy a glass of wine

Girls and women light candles

At night count the Omer: Day 6

18 minutes before sunset.



## APRIL 22 | 14 NISSAN

Eve of Passover



Fast of the firstborn.

Girls and women light candles 18 minutes before sunset.

Tonight: The First Seder

#### APRIL 29 | 21 NISSAN Seventh Day of Passover

The Reed Sea split on this day in the year 2448 (1313 BCE)

Girls and women light candles after nightfall.

At night count the Omer: Day 7

#### <u>APRIL 23 | 15 NISSAN</u> First Day of Passover

On this day G-d spoke to Moses at the burning bush (a year before the Exodus)

Girls and women light candles after nightfall. (from pre-existing flame)

Tonight: The Second Seder

At night count the Omer: Day 1

#### APRIL 30 | 22 NISSAN Last Day of Passover

Yizkor service Yizkor is a special memorial prayer for the departed, recited in the synagogue following the Torah reading.

Enjoy a Mashiach meal

Havdalah after nightfall

At night count the Omer: Day 8

## **Candle-Lighting Blessings:**

[1] Baruch Atah Ado-noi Elo-hei-n u Melech Ha-olam Asher Ki-de-sha-nu Be-mitz-vo-sav Ve-tzi-vanu Le-had-lik Ner Shel (on Shabbat: Shabbat Kodesh) (on Holiday: Yom Tov).

[2] Baruch Atah Ado-noi Elo-hei-nu Melech Ha-olam She-heh-che-yah-nu Ve-kiye-ma-nu

Ve-he-ge-ah-nu Liz-man Ha-zeh.



WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SHABBAT
Since it is prohibited to possess chametz on Passover, any chametz left undisposed must be sold to a non-Jew. All such chametz, as well as all chametz utensils that were not thoroughly cleaned, should be stored away. The storage area should be locked or taped shut for the duration of the holiday. Since there are many legal intricacies involved in this sale, a rabbi acts as our agent both to sell the chametz to the non-Jew on the morning before Passover, and also to buy it back the evening after Passover ends. Sell your chametz at www.chabadofvenice.com/chametz			
APRIL 17   9 NISSAN On the agenda this week: <ul> <li>Clean for Passover</li> <li>Shop for Passover foods</li> <li>Prepare Kitchen for Passover</li> <li>Invite guests</li> </ul>	APRIL 18   10 NISSAN	APRIL 19   11 NISSAN The Rebbe's Birthday Girls and women light candles 18 minutes before sunset.	APRIL 20   12 NISSAN Shabbat Hagadol Torah Portion: Metzora Shabbat Kiddush Havdalah after nightfall
<b>APRIL 24   16 NISSAN</b> Second Day of Passover	APRIL 25   17 NISSAN Chol Hamoed* No tefillin Enjoy a glass of wine	APRIL 26   18 NISSAN Chol Hamoed* No tefillin Enjoy a glass of wine Girls and women light candles	APRIL 27   19 NISSAN Chol Hamoed* Shabbat Kiddush Havdalah after nightfall
Havdalah after nightfall At night count the Omer: Day 2	At night count the Omer: Day 3	18 minutes before sunset. At night count the Omer: Day 4	At night count the Omer: Day 5
MAY 1   23 NISSAN	MAY 2   24 NISSAN	MAY 3   25 NISSAN	MAY 4   26 NISSAN
At night count the <b>Omer</b> : Day 9	At night count the <b>Omer:</b> Day 10	Girls and women <i>light candles</i> 18 minutes before sunset. At night count the <b>Omer</b> : Day 11	Torah Portion: Acharei Mot Bless the new month Shabbat Kiddush Havdalah after nightfall At night count the Omer: Day 12

S Visit www.ChabadofVenice.com/passover for complete calendar of events and how-to guides.

# THE WONEN OF PASSOVER

By Shira Gold (Based on the teaching of the Rebbe)

# The Talmud says, "Our ancestors were redeemed from Egypt on the merit of the righteous women."

In Egypt, while the men succumbed to despair, disheartened by the hardships of slavery and unwilling to bring children into such a world, the women remained steadfast in their optimism.

The brave wives of the enslaved never wavered in their belief in G-d's redemption. They saw beyond the darkness of the present, confidently anticipating a brighter future. In their resilience, they took action, inspiring their husbands and nurturing a generation of children who would witness the Exodus and the wonders of Passover.

These women had faith, courage, and wisdom. For example, when Pharaoh ordered the Jewish midwives, Shifra and Puah, to kill every newborn baby boy, they defied the order and refused to obey.

The midrash recounts how the Jewish leader in Egypt, Amram, had separated from his wife, Yocheved, due to Pharaoh's decree to kill male infants, and his followers had followed his lead. His daughter Miriam quickly challenged him, highlighting that his response also impacted females. Counterintuitively, Miriam argued for not diminishing but multiplying, even in times of darkness. This girl's strategy worked, and her little brother Moses was born.

Moses would face off with Pharaoh and lead the Jews out of slavery, yet his name highlights his gratitude to another woman at the heart of the Passover story. Originally, Moses's birth parents had named him Tuvia, and later when he was rescued from the Nile River by Batya, the daughter of Pharaoh, she named him Moses. The Torah's choice to only call him Moses is a sign of honor and respect to the woman who adopted and raised him.

Artwork by Yehuda Lang. View the Lang gallery online at www.yehudalang.com

It's not just Passover that's in the merit of women. The victory and story of Purim is centered almost entirely around a Jewish woman named Esther, who saves the Jewish nation from Haman's genocidal plot.

Technically, Chanukah, too, shares a special bond with

women, primarily because of Yehudit, the Jewish woman who bravely seduced the enemy general and, after feeding him cheese and wine, killed him. The ensuing chaos helped turn the tide that would end with the Maccabees winning the war.

In other words, it wasn't a coincidence that we left

Egypt in the merit of the women, instead, it's a message to clarify the purpose of our liberation and subsequent victories.

According to Chasidic teachings, tracing Jewish lineage through the mother not only serves a practical function but also illuminates Judaism's inherent goals and purpose.

The Torah and our tradition have been priming us to notice this feminine impact on Jewish life starting from a verse in Genesis (21:12), "G-d said to Abraham...whatever [your wife] Sarah tells you, listen to her." This "listening" helps us understand our origin and destiny.

Looking forward, we see the feminine power shining bright in Jeremiah's prophecy of the future redemption: "[In the days of Moshiach], a woman shall rise above a man." Recently, in the 1990's, the Rebbe saw the rise of feminism and modern society's advancement of women's rights as the beginning stages of Jeremiah's prophecy. But why is the feminine mystique so central to Judaism, and why must the woman "rise above" and light the way forward?

In answering this question, the Chasidic masters describe masculine and feminine energies as two divine modalities that make up all of reality. For example, the life-giving soul is seen as male, while the body that houses and develops it is female. Practically, your initial vision for your new business is "male" while your ability to develop and execute it is "female."

This "female" advantage looms large on the Jewish mission to make this "lower" physical world an abode for the Divine. The key is understanding that the ethereal soul and its vivifying energy need a tangible body of expression. Our otherworldly souls can sometimes be oblivious to the value of concrete action and the realities of this material world. Therefore, the Torah reminds us that the real-world experience of the feminine "body" contains great wisdom and purpose.

THE BRAVE WIVES OF THE ENSLAVED SAW BEYOND THE DARKNESS OF THE PRESENT, CONFIDENTLY ANTICIPATING A BRIGHTER FUTURE.

In Judaism, our collective Divine mission is not to retreat to Heaven but to transform the world. This transformation must come through physical activity within the material human experience. So, G-d tells the soul to listen to his wife.

This mighty feminine power enabled the Jewish people to

survive the harsh Egyptian slavery and the darkest times of Jewish history. It also teaches us about the world's final redemption, reminding us that our faith and spiritual light must be practical and infuse meaning into every situation.

Indeed, great men have done great things, but

the feminine mystique is what got us out of Egypt and will ultimately accomplish the Jewish mission of making this world an abode for the Divine.

>> Shira Gold is a staff writer at Chabad Magazine. She lives with her husband and children in Southern California.

### **BELIEVE IN MIRACLES!**

On Passover, women are obligated to drink four cups of wine—just like the men (even though it is a time-bound commandment, in which women are generally not obligated)—because they, too, were redeemed from Egypt.

The Sages teach that women were not only part of the miracle but also its cause. As our Sages say, "Our ancestors were redeemed from Egypt on the merit of the righteous women."



What was the catalyst for the miracle of redemption? The belief that the Jewish women had that they would indeed be freed.

# Today, I will strengthen my belief that G-d can do miracles—both for me and the Jewish people.

(Excerpt from Thought Streams, meditations for Jewish women, based on the teachings of the Rebbe)



>> Sara Blau is a teacher and extracurricular director at Beth Rivkah High School. She is a wife, mother, and author of *Thought Streams*.

# FREEDOM TO QUESTION

By Rabbi Asher Crispe

Passover, or Pesach in Hebrew, has several definitions, one of which is *pesicha* meaning to jump or skip. In slightly more technical terms, jumping or skipping refers to non-linearities or discontinuities.

Seder in Hebrew means order. For most people, 'order' seems to imply serialization or following a linear progression.

Here is where the strange twist comes in: taken together, the expression Pesach Seder means a non-linear order or a sequence that jumps around, breaking down the conventions of step-by-step logic. For anyone who has ever partaken of such a meal, the text of the Haggadah, as well as the customs of the Seder itself, seem to almost randomly skip all over. Logicians could never plan such an event.

Part of the underlying teaching that comes from ingesting so much non-linearity is the experience of true wonderment inherent in asking questions. Questions remove us from the familiarity of our constricted surroundings and begin to lead us out into ever-expansive uncharted horizons, much like the transition of the Hebrew slaves from Egypt to the desert and then on to the unknown promised land.

Jewish consciousness posits the need to dedicate a meal or meals with abundant food for thought that nurtures and inspires the questions in everything. Furthermore, robust questions are not put to bed with an answer but possess a certain fecundity.

In Kabbalah, the question and the response play the role of the parents of the subsequent question, which in turn seeks to mate with another response ad infinitum.

Similarly, the Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas often distinguished between the totalizing answer, which effectively kills off the query, and the infinite response, which serves to catalyze ever more questions.

Since the sages of the Talmud enjoin us to view ourselves as having exited from the Egypt of our constricted consciousness each day, it follows that we can decipher the question-response relationship within the structure of this time frame.

In Genesis (1:5), we find the phrasing "G-d called the light day and the darkness He called night. It became evening, and it became morning, one day." On a mystical level, all of this refers to states of consciousness. The psychological mapping is fairly straightforward: the darkness of night, which precedes the light of day, is likened to the confusion

of the question followed by the lucidity of the response. Each day is another still or frame of consciousness.

On a relative scale, as we grow, the thoughts of yesterday were the Egypt of restriction as compared with the expanse of today. Yet, as today turns into yesterday, the process repeats itself over and over again. What was once liberating is now felt to be confining, and we must experience the Exodus all over again.

In Egypt, according to the Zohar, speech was in exile. It is as if to say that 'I can't find the right words' or that 'we have lost all communication.' Recovering both our collective and personal voices or means of expression is the start of liberation from the wall of silence. If only 'I' or 'we' knew what to say or how to say it. Alienation, be it psychological or social, may be overcome by entering into effective communication.

QUESTIONS REMOVE US FROM THE FAMILIARITY OF OUR CONSTRICTED SURROUNDINGS AND BEGIN TO LEAD US OUT INTO EVER-EXPANSIVE UNCHARTED HORIZONS...

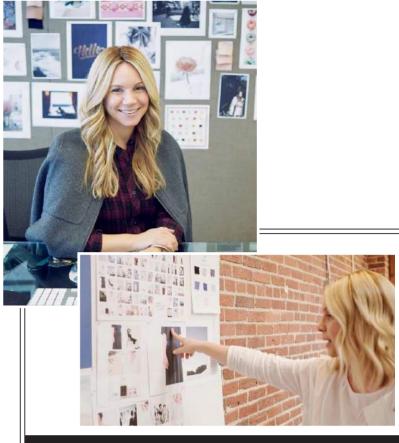
The solution presented on Passover or Pesach is hinted at, according to the Arizal (16th-century kabbalist Rabbi Yitzchak Luria), in that the Hebrew word may be divided into two parts—*peh-sach*—meaning a 'mouth that speaks.' Consistent with the previous interpretation of Pesach (Passover) as jumping, language itself implies a non-linear leap from self to other which proceeds by fits and spurts in a way that defies linearity. Thus, the freedom of Passover is the newfound freedom of speech. The mouth opens and our mind, body, and soul are released with the questions that pour forth.

Excerpt with permission from an article on Interinclusion.org



>> Rabbi Asher Crispe is a technology futurist who advises companies and organizations on advances in A.I., Robotics, Biotech, AgTech, Neuroscience, Organizational Psychology, Materials Science, and Complex Systems. Additionally, Rabbi Crispe is the Co-Director of Interinclusion.org, a social mosaic which perpetuates the Arts and Sciences through Jewish tradition and he lectures worldwide on Hasidut and Kabbalistic philosophy. Rabbi Crispe lives in Danby, Vermont with his family where they run Jewish experiential retreats and programming.

"body" contains great wisdom and purpose.



### FAITH & FASHION

Meet Joyce Azria, daughter of the late Max Azria, is a fashionably Jewish former Creative Director of BCBGeneration and Founder of Avec Les Filles and Amazon's ROHB brand. Born in Paris and raised in Los Angeles, Azria's life story of Chanel to Shabbat tells of her shift from creating value-driven brands to driving brands through her values as a Jewish woman.

"In my life, the sense of consistency was always the lighting of the candles and kiddush on Friday night. I had tried an Indian healing lady, meditation, group therapy, or one-onone therapy. I had done so many things, and nothing quite filled that void.

I had tried everybody else's path, and now it was time to try mine. When the time was right, I approached a rabbi, and I found a cure within the Torah for every ailment I had.

When I travel for business, I tell people I can host them at a Kosher restaurant, but I can't go to that restaurant. True entrepreneurs and leaders respect people who hold to their values. I'm so proud of who I am. I'm proud to cover my hair. I'm proud to keep Shabbat. I'm proud to raise my children as Jews."

Read more at www.joyceazria.com

# AL JAFFE DRAWING ON INSPIRATION By B

By Ben Sherman

#### Al Jaffee is the legendary American cartoonist who holds the Guinness World Record for the longest career as a comic artist from 1942 to 2020.

Born Abraham Jaffee in 1921 in Savannah, Georgia, Al Jaffee faced a tumultuous upbringing as the eldest of four children of Lithuanian Jewish immigrants. Jaffee attended the High School of Music & Art in New York City and formed connections with future MAD colleagues.

Jaffee began his illustration career under Stan Lee at Marvel Comics and later at MAD Magazine. He found solace in the comic book industry's predominantly Jewish landscape. Here, Jewish identity flourished. MAD, celebrated for its ironic humor and Yiddish flair, embraced Jaffee's sharp wit and sardonic storytelling, reminiscent of tales from his Lithuanian Jewish upbringing.

In the 1980s, Jaffee openly reconnected with his Jewish roots through illustrations for The Moshiach Times, a popular Chabad youth magazine. His recurring character, the Shpy, navigated adventures against the "Yetzer Hara" or evil inclination. The Shpy also told the story of Jaffee's Jewish journey and pride, the resilience of 20th-century Jewry, and how one artist demonstrated the art of using his talents for a Divine purpose.

Jaffe died on Passover (2023) at age 102.



Al Jaffee's characters prepare horseradish for bitter "Maror" herbs used at the Passover Seder.



Al Jaffee's Shpy character takes his lunch at his desk as he fights the evil Yetzer Harah in *The Moshiach Times*, a magazine published by Chabad's youth movement Tzivos Hashem

# **ART & SOUL**

There's a timeless truth that action breeds blessings. The Torah's words, "G-d will bless you in all you do," are a profound reminder that blessings are not merely bestowed upon us passively. We must actively engage with the world around us, taking purposeful steps towards a better world.

Whether you're a budding entrepreneur, a seasoned professional, or an aspiring artist, success lies in using your G-d-given talents to bring Divinity and unity to a fractured world.

The Torah assures us that utilizing the skills gifted to you by your Creator will unlock a cascade of blessings that ripple through every aspect of your life. So, grab your paintbrush and take action, knowing you're paving the way for more Divine blessings."

-The Rebbe



# BREAD OF FAITH AND HEALING

"Why do we eat matzah? Because our ancestor's dough had no time to rise when G-d revealed Himself and redeemed them for Egypt." --THE PASSOVER HAGGADAH

The traditional Passover Matzah has no sugar, salt, yeast, or eggs, yet surprisingly, it packs all the essential Divine ingredients we all need. The following are hand-selected tasty gems on the significance of eating matzah on Passover. Enjoy!

#### HUMBLE BREAD

This matzah "bread choice" plays a pivotal role in our redemption narrative. During Passover, the Torah prohibits chametz bread or any fermented grains, as they symbolize the inflation of the ego that binds us. In contrast, G-d directs us to eat matzah, the humble bread, embodying the virtues of humility and faith that ultimately free the human spirit. Humility is not weakness; it empowers us. Humility is an awareness that we have limitations, but G-d doesn't. This humility empowers Moses to face Pharaoh and David to face Goliath. True humility manifests in a newfound strength from knowing that an infinite G-d is performing wonders through you.

#### EDIBLE FAITH

Matzah is an edible faith when eaten with a blessing on Passover night. The matzah's unique ingredient is the Divinity within the commandment to eat matzah. This editable Divinity enhances your Divine connection and trust in G-d. Eating has an advantage over seeing, reading, or even meditating on the Exodus; as we physically digest the matzah, we internalize holiness and experience true freedom.

#### FAITH & HEALING

Matzah is the Divine mitzvah that you can digest. The Zohar calls matzah "bread of faith" and "bread of healing." The humble matzah helps you discover your powerful inner faith in G-d. The matzah inspires a faith "that not only heals but also prevents illness.

#### DAILY EXODUS

In your personal life, eating the biblically mandated Matzah ensures year-round adherence to other Jewish mandates. Likewise, the Rabbinic enactment to eat Maror encourages personal safeguards around your Jewish progress. Finally, the symbolic shank bone that recalls the Temple's Passover offering inspires you to infuse holiness and meaning into your everyday life.

#### THE AFIKOMAN-DESSERT

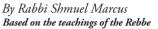
Like the Passover offering, Jewish law requires us to eat the afikoman on a full stomach as an enjoyable dessert. This tells us that your hunger and need for G-dliness have brought you this far, but ultimately, your Divine service should go beyond your own needs. Savor this more selfless and heightened Afikoman service like a dessert that stays with you long after the meal ends.

#### BROKENNESS

Any story of freedom will have damaged parts because we become whole through our brokenness. We begin telling the Passover story by first breaking the matzah. This demonstrates how our brokenness is only a beginning chapter in our tale of complete redemption.

#### REMEMBER THINKING IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE?

"This is the bread of affliction" that our ancestors ate when they thought redemption was impossible. But it happened, and now it will happen for you.





# SHMURAH MATZAH?

It only takes eighteen minutes for wet flour to become leavened or chametz. So, Shmurah Matzah, or guarded matzah, is made from verified wheat that's "guarded" from moisture during the entire process, from harvest to final product. Hand-made Shmurah Matzah is produced and baked quickly in increments of less than eighteen minutes from when the water comes in contact with the flour. The human touch infuses the process with the intended purpose of being baked for a mitzvah.

# THE JEWISH ANTIDOTE TO ANXIETY

By Leah Hildeshaim and Shaindle Sharfstein

Mom, postpartum, four months in. Dad, fired, job over. Fourteen-year-old, social pressure, hates school. Anxiety is the most common mental diagnosis in the United States, affecting 40 million adults and one in eight children.

In 1080, an Arabic-speaking Jewish scholar addressed anxiety in a chapter or "gate" in his magnum opus: *Al Hidayah ila Faraid al-Qulub* — or — Guide to the Duties of the Heart, titled **The Gate of Trust**.

The chapter on trust, or *bitachon*, was an instant success and has since been a gift of joy and tranquility to its readers for the last 1000 years.

Although its author, Rabbeinu Bachya Ibn Pakuda of Andalusia (now Spain), did not know about social media or elevator anxiety, he didn't need to. The work is based on the philosophical idea that trust in G-d breeds calm. So, basically, it's evergreen.

Throughout his leadership, the Rebbe prescribed studying **The Gate of Trust** as a practical method of reducing anxiety and living a joyful life.

To one individual seeking counsel, the Rebbe wrote: "I am shocked at your low spirits and inability to strengthen your trust in G-d. I recommend that you study **The Gate of Trust** a few times."

Now in English the **Fellig Edition of The Gate of Trust**, is a seven-chapter, 304-page book with insights from the Rebbe, that takes a deep dive into how to trust G-d — causing people to relax and genuinely focus during life's most trying moments.

"In G-d we trust" is easy to say, but sometimes it's more challenging in practice. For example, Mrs. Sara Bluming of Chabad in Potomac, Maryland is the mother of a lone soldier who was stationed in Gaza post October 7th. Naturally, when communication with her son became scarce, she worried. To keep calm, Bluming used a secret weapon: **The Gate of Trust**. Staying engulfed in a spiral of panic could have been easy. Instead, Bluming applied the book's guiding principles and reaffirmed its foundational message: "G-d is in control."

Bluming created a magnet with seven meditations from the book and shared it on a support group for mothers of lone soldiers.



A while later, a mom sent Bluming a picture of the magnet on her fridge, saying: "As I face the unknown, this has become a daily reminder that G-d's love exists. It's a tremendous source of inspiration and comfort."

Although numerous authors, gurus, and motivational speakers teach similar techniques, The Gate of Trust is the authentic Jewish approach.

## THROUGHOUT HIS LEADERSHIP, THE REBBE PRESCRIBED STUDYING THE GATE OF TRUST AS A PRACTICAL METHOD OF REDUCING ANXIETY AND LIVING A JOYFUL LIFE.

"Some people view the world with blind faith," shares Rabbi Yitzchok Yarmush, the book's translator, "but this work is not about living in the unknown but facing the unknown. This work teaches readers how to apply our innate Jewish faith in real-life situations."

Yarmush has witnessed how eager and excited people are when they discover the secret behind trust and the calm it brings:

"Take Chapter Three's lesson in job hunting. It says to seek jobs that utilize our G-d-given talents and leave the rest to G-d. This is career coaching years before it became a concept."

In Hebrew, trust is *bitachon*. Its root is *tach* (cement), symbolizing an anchored knowledge that our Divine relationship is cemented.

**The Gate of Trust** is recommended to be enjoyed in daily doses, but to be clear, it isn't a medicine or a replacement for therapy.

Trust is a spiritual muscle we all need to exercise, and **The Gate of Trust** has been the long-time manual for balancing personal responsibility and Divine surrender.

Today, Rabbeinu Bachya Ibn Pakuda's words speak loudly to the modern world, encouraging us to take action based on complete trust and faith. Knowing that we do our part and the rest is in our compassionate G-d's hands empowers us with newfound calm and tranquility.

#### The Gate of Trust, with commentary from classical and chasidic sources is published by Kehot Publication Society and available at www.kehot.com.

# BITACHON MEDITATIONS FROM GATE OF TRUST

#### By Sara Bluming

- 1. G-d loves me and has compassion for me.
- 2. G-d watches over me always. He never abandons nor neglects me.
- 3. G-d is invincible and smarter than anyone or anything. He can do anything, even find solutions for problems that seem impossible to solve.
- G-d knows what is best for me, even better than I myself know. He has a perfect plan for me.
- 5. G-d is in constant control. I am under His exclusive loving care from the moment of my birth and throughout my life, from beginning to end.
- 6. G-d is in complete control. Nothing and no one can help or harm me, except with the permission of G-d.
- G-d loves me unconditionally and has deep compassion for me, even when I am undeserving or unworthy.

>> About the author: Rabbi Bachya ben Yosef ibn Pekuda (c. 1050–1120), was the rabbinical authority and leader of the Jewish community of Zaragoza (Iberian Peninsula). He chose not to identify himself in his work, but subsequent authors and biographers have confirmed his identity. While deftly summarizing the book's "gates," the author conveys his name in code, using the first letters of each stanza to spell Bachya bar Yosef.

"body" contains great wisdom and purpose.

Meet Jeff Astrof, the producer of Starz's *Shining Vale*, starring Courteney Cox, and the veteran television writer who famously worked on *Friends*. In Jewish circles, Jeff is famous for his Shabbat observance and being the first producer to have Warner Brothers shut down production of a show in honor of a Jewish holiday.

#### Tve never doubted the existence of G-d. It wasn't because of my religious upbringing. Growing up, my point of reference for the Almighty was the off-screen character who gave Charlton Heston the Ten Commandments in the movie of the same name.

Nor was my belief forged by deep intellectual curiosity. I was content not questioning how trees made apples, where ideas came from, and why people in Australia don't fall off the planet (yes, "gravity" — but why does gravity work?). I was told I had

"The G-d Gene." I guess like detached earlobes and being able to curl my tongue, I was born with a predisposition to believe in a Higher Power. Since I wasn't born with the "tall gene" or the "athletic gene," I was happy that my DNA at least had this.

One would think having a genetic predisposition to believe in G-d would lead me to explore my deeper purpose. But one would be wrong. I saw the Creator of the Universe like the Wizard of Oz — to be approached with fear and trepidation and only for my most important needs. In fifth grade, I asked G-d to make the new girl like me. Some thirteen years later, I returned to ask to get hired as a writer for a TV show called "Blue Skies." For the record, I went one for two — it was rumored Becky Goldberg did, in fact, think I was cute, but I did not get an offer on "Blue Skies." In G-d's infinite wisdom, the Almighty instead

put me on a new show called "Friends." Then I met my wife. Unlike me, Shawni was spiritual and saw G-d not as a rich, fickle uncle but as a Loving Father. One weekend, we attended a Jewish seminar that offered "proof" of G-d. Over three days, we heard lectures from rabbis, scientists, and various experts showing countless examples of G-d's handiwork, from the miracle of two cells merging to create a person to, yes, how a seemingly dead sliver of wood is pre-programmed to decompose and be reborn into a tree that makes apples. Perhaps the One who programmed the seed gave me this G-d gene? Perhaps, behind it all, G-d has a Larger Plan.

On the other hand, in an infinite universe, couldn't there be one planet where people and apples can evolve without being part of a Larger Plan? Is there a role for randomness? I think not. As the Watchmaker Analogy goes, if you found a pocket watch in the desert, you wouldn't assume it was formed by millennia of randomly blowing sands you'd assume it was created. How much more so for beings as complicated as people?

So, how do I find my deeper purpose? It turns out that G-d put it in a Book and gave it to Moses — in front of three million people so no one would question G-d's existence. In fact, they made a movie about it... starring Charlton Heston. ●



by Jeff Astrof

<sup>&</sup>gt;> Excerpt from Elevator Pitches for G-d: 70 One-Page Essays by Thought Leaders on Why They Believe, edited by Bruce Licht and Ron Kardos. Available wherever books are sold.



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Dignity\*

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