

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON
Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn. N.Y. 11213
HYacinth 3-9250

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש
770 איסטערן פארקוויי
ברוקלין, נ.י.

FREE RENDITION

By the Grace of G-d
11th of Nissan, 5725
Brooklyn, N.Y.

To my brethren, Everywhere
G-d bless you all.

Greeting and Blessing:

The Exodus from Egypt was ordained¹ by G-d to take place in the month of spring. Moreover, the Torah has ordained² that special care should be taken to ensure that Pesach always occurs in spring, as it is written: Observe the month of spring and keep the Passover unto G-d your G-d, for, in the month of spring, G-d your G-d has brought you out of Egypt by night. (Deut. 16:1)

In order to ensure that Pesach should indeed occur in the month of the spring – in view of the fact that our calendar is based on the moon, and the lunar year is about 11 days shorter than the solar year, while the four seasons are determined by the sun – our calendar provides a “leap year” once every two or three years, with the addition of a whole month, Adar, as this year. In this way, the lunar year is “reconciled” with the solar year, and Pesach always occurs in the spring. All of the other months of the year, and all our festivals, are regulated accordingly, so that they, too, occur in their due season.

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The circumstance of the Exodus from Egypt being in the month of spring is explained³ by our sages as a special Divine benevolence in taking the Jews out of Egypt during the best time of the year. However, as in all matters of Torah, there are here also many significant aspects and lessons, both for the community and for the individual. One⁴ of the aspects, which I wish to bring out here, will become clear in the light of the circumstances preceding the Exodus from Egypt:

For hundreds of years the⁵ Jews had been enslaved by a mighty nation which had subjugated all surrounding nations, imposing its dominion upon them not merely by brute force (its “chariots and horsemen”), but also by its overwhelming preponderance⁶ in science and technology, in all matters which are now termed “culture” and “civilization”.

The culture and civilization of the Egyptians were based on the forces of nature and natural-phenomena, especially the Nile⁷ river. It hardly ever rains⁸ in Egypt; but human ingenuity⁹ developed an elaborate irrigation system which had turned Egypt into a flourishing garden, surrounded by deserts.

These circumstances brought about a profuse idolatrous culture, which was characterized by two main features: the deification of the forces of nature, and the deification of the powers of man who was able to utilize the forces of nature. From here it is but a short step to the dedication of Pharaoh¹⁰ who was personified the Egyptian ideal of the “super man”.

This system, which viewed the world as a conglomeration of many “natural forces,” of which the human element was a component, coupled, as it was, with the philosophy of “my might,¹¹ and the strength of my hand,¹² have made me this wealth” – led to the lowest spiritual, moral and ethical depravity, which also “justified” the most shameless enslavement of, and most vicious atrocities toward, the physically weaker individual and nation.

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The cult and Superstition of the Egyptians reached their zenith¹³ at the time of the annual reawakening of the forces of nature – in the month of spring, the month which was under the zodiacal sign of the Ram (Aries) and the ram was one of the main sacred symbols of the Egyptian cult.

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Suddenly appears Moshe Rabbenu with the Divine tiding: “I have surely remembered you” (Ex. 3:16); the time has come when the G-d of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has willed the liberation of the Jews from Pharaoh’s hands and from Egyptian exile.

Two hundred and ten years had elapsed since the Jews were subjected to Pharaoh; some of them¹⁴ already

were totally immersed in the Egyptian “culture”; no help whatsoever could be expected from the surrounding nations; no single slave¹⁵ had ever succeeded in escaping from Egypt; there simply was no prospect in the natural order of things, of liberating the Jewish people from Egypt – and yet Moshe Rabbenu assures them that the time of liberation has arrived! However, there is one condition:¹⁶ “Withdraw and take unto yourselves a lamb for your families and offer the Passover (sacrifice)!” (Ex. 12:21)

Withdraw – withdraw from the idolatry of the land; and take unto yourselves¹⁷ – take unto yourselves a lamb (that which was held sacred and deified by the Egyptians), and offer it as a paschal sacrifice unto G-d. It is not enough to deny the Egyptian idolatry in the recesses of one’s heart, nor even in the privacy of one’s home, quietly and stealthily; but it has to be done openly,¹⁸ without fear, in accordance with all the details which were connected with the paschal sacrifice in Egypt.

If that is done – Moshe Rabbenu assures, in the name of the Almighty – not only will liberation from Egypt be achieved, but Pharaoh himself will urge them to leave Egypt; and the liberation will come not at a time when the forces of nature are dormant and concealed, but precisely in the month of spring, in the very middle of this month, when nature reveals its greatest powers.

In this way it is emphasized that our world is not a composite of separate worlds – a world of nature, and of natural forces, and a world of the “supernatural” – wherein now one, now the other, attains supremacy. There is but One and Only G-d, Who is the absolute Master of the whole world, and Who unifies the whole world into one.

This recognition came to the highest expression¹⁹ at the Giving of the Torah, the culmination and goal of the liberation from Egypt, which began with the words, “I am G-d your G-d, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; there shall be no other gods”, etc.



Just as in Egypt of old, so also nowadays, there are such who fashion their life on the basis of the deification of the so-called forces of nature, coupled with the philosophy of “my might and the strength of my hand.” Some have found a “solution” in that in their homes they make room also for G-d; however, in their social life they “follow the Joneses,²⁰” and even outdo them.

Comes the festival of Pesach, with the reminder once again: “I have surely remembered you” – you have no choice in the matter.²¹ The Almighty remembers you, and you must obey the order of “withdraw” – to reject the idolatry of the land, in whatever form it expresses itself, and to do so openly, without fear, and with dignity. Then you must also fulfill the “take unto yourselves” – to take yourself and all that you possess, all your capacities and powers, and dedicate them to your true, eternal Jewish self.²²

Moreover you must do all this in the month of spring. You must not allow yourself to be confused by misleaders, who would have you believe that since there is a flourishing world around us, with man in its center, endowed with supremacy of might and power – then “these are your gods, O Israel!”; this is your idol to which you are enslaved, and there is no room (Heaven forbid) for G-d. Rather the contrary.²³ “In the month of spring G-d your G-d has brought you out of Egypt”²⁴ – G-d, Who is your G-d, takes you out of slavery in the month of spring, while the world in blossom with all its wonders upon wonders, helps you to see the truth even more clearly, and this is that G-d is the source of all life and being, or – to quote the blessing which we recite in the spring²⁵ – that “G-d our G-d (Who is) King of the universe, has not made the world deficient of anything.”



May G-d grant that Pesach, “the Season of Our Liberation, should bring to every Jew and Jewess, in the midst of all our Jewish people, real liberation from all hindrances and limitations, in order to serve the Almighty with a perfect heart,

And that the liberation of the individual should lead to the liberation of the whole Jewish people, to the true and perfect Redemption through our righteous Moshiach, speedily in our time.

With blessing for a
Kosher and Happy Pesach,
Menachem Schneerson

ואין רואים את האמת, כי הנה בחושך יבסה ארץ וערפל לאומים ועליך יורה ה' וכבודו עליך יראה (ישעי' ס, ב).
(25) ברכות מג, ב. והנה לכמה אחורונים (אוי"ח סריכ"ו) ניסן לאו דוקא, אבל י"א דדוקא הוא (שד"ח אסיפת דינים מע' ברכות רס"ב, וש"ג). והנה אדמו"ר הזקן בלוח ברכות הגתנין (הראשון) כי דאחר ל' יבדך בלא שם ומלכות (מוכח דניסן לאו דוקא), אבל בסדר ברה"ג (שכניסדורו פ"ג סי"ד) השמיט זה, ואף ש"ל בדוחק דטעמו מפני דס"ל דאין לברך כלל אלא פעם אחת (ועדיין יקשה למה לא ביאר דברי השו"ע "בימי ניסן" דהיינו לאו דוקא – כמו שהוסיף ביאר בכמה דינים שבברה"ג), י"ל – דהשמיט מפני דבמשנה האחרונה ס"ל ד"בימי ניסן" כפשוטו – בדוקא, וא"כ א"א "לאחר ל'". ואכמ"ל.

לשאל.
(18) ראה שו"ע רבנו הזקן ר"ס תל.
(19) כמש"נ בהוציאך את העם מצרים תעבדון את ה' וראה תניא פ"א שם.
(20) יחזקאל כ, לב.
(21) יחזקאל שם. תנחומא נצבים ג. נתבאר בקונטרס ומעין מ"א, פ"ג.
(22) ראה שמו"ר פט"ו, כג: לכם הה"ד יהיו לך לבדך ואין לורים אתך.
(23) להעיר מלקו"ת במדבר (ג, א). סד"ה החדש הזה – לכ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר – בס' המאמרים ה"ש"ת.
(24) לילה, וכן גם עתה אין להתרשם מזה שלאחרים לילה

(8) ראה רש"י ויגש מז, י. דברים יא, י.
(9) רש"י ר"פ מקץ.
(10) שמו"ר פ"ח, ב. תנחומא שם.
(11) דברים ת, יז. וראה סמ"ג מל"ת סד: וארא בחלום כו' שכחת את העיקר כו' והתבוננתי כו' והנה יסוד גדול הוא כו' (12) ויקרא יח, ג ובתו"כ (ובפרש"י) שם. ובקה"ר עה"פ והארץ לעולם עומדת דמצרים דוגמת ערוה באדם.
(13) רמב"ן וצורו המור שם.
(14) שמו"ר פ"ד, ג. וראה תניא פ"א.
(15) מכילתא יתרו ית, יא.
(16) שמו"ר פט"ו, ב: כל זמן כו' משכו כו' שבכך כו'.
(17) למשפחותיכם (דוקא), ובהודעת משה בבנינו ובבנותינו – כל הארבעה בנים (ובנות), מן החכם ועד השאניו יודע

(1) ראה שמות רבה פט"ו, יא: החדש הזה כו' כשכבר ביעקב ובניו קבע כו'. אור התורה (להצ"צ) ע"פ זה (ע' רסד).
(2) דברים טו, א. ולרמב"ן (לשרש הא' להרמב"ם) ולבעל ההלכות – זוהי מ"ע (לעבר שנים, או – מושמרת את החוקה). וראה סמ"צ סוף מ"ע קנב: באו רמזים כו' שמור כו' הורה כו'. וביד הל' קדה"ח בתהלתו ורפ"ד.
(3) מכילתא לשמות יג, ד (הובא בפרש"י שם).
(4) ראה רמב"ן בא (יב, ג), צורו המור שם (יב, א), ועיין חז"ג (רנא, א).
(5) מכילתא לבישלה יד, ה: ה' פרעה שולט מסוף העולם ועד סופו. וראה חז"ב ג, א.
(6) ראה חז"א קבה, סע"א.
(7) יחזקאל כט, ג.