

THE SEDER EXPERIENCE  
THE ART OF THE FOUR CUPS.  
DOVID RIVEN & AZIK SCHWECHTER

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NOW SHE'S ON A MISSION TO  
IMPROVE THE WHITE SHIRT

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THE 2026 WASHINGTON  
FAMILY GUIDE

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## *Jewish Journal*



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## ISSUE

MARCH 2026



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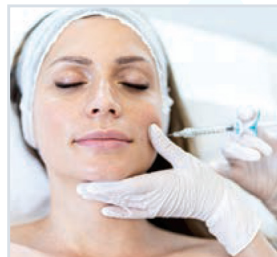
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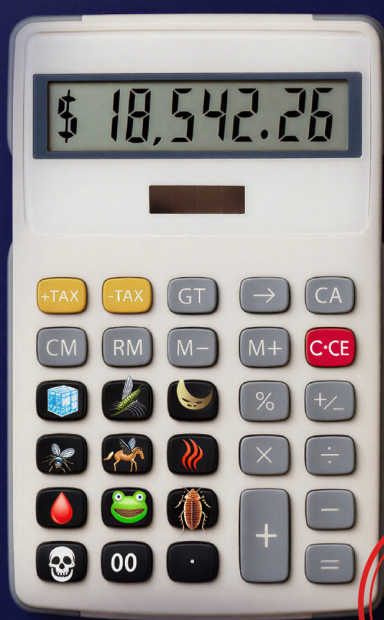
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(Pirkei Avos 6:2)

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# Pesach Zmanim 5786 / 2026

## Wednesday, April 1, 2026 י"ד ניסן תשפ"ו – ערב פסח

Latest Shema - Magen Avraham	9:22 AM	
Latest Shema - Gra & Baal HaTanya	10:02 AM	
Latest Time to Eat Chometz - Gra & Baal HaTanya	11:05 AM	
Latest Time to Burn Chometz - Gra & Baal HaTanya	12:08 PM	
Candle Lighting - 18 min before sunset	7:13 PM	
Sunset שקיעה	Sea Level 7:31 PM	
Midnight חצות הלילה	1:11 AM	

## Thursday, April 2, 2026 ט"ו ניסן תשפ"ו – פסח (Day 1)

Latest Shema - Magen Avraham	9:21 AM	
Latest Shema - Gra & Baal HaTanya	10:01 AM	
Sunset שקיעה	Sea Level 7:32 PM	

## Friday, April 3, 2026 ט"ז ניסן תשפ"ו – פסח (Day 2)

Latest Shema - Magen Avraham	9:20 AM	
Latest Shema - Gra & Baal HaTanya	10:00 AM	
Candle Lighting - 18 min before sunset	7:15 PM	
Sunset שקיעה	Sea Level 7:33 PM	

## Shabbos, April 4, 2026 י"ז ניסן תשפ"ו – שבת חול המועד

Latest Shema - Magen Avraham	9:20 AM	
Latest Shema - Gra & Baal HaTanya	10:00 AM	
Sunset שקיעה	Sea Level 7:34 PM	
Shabbos Ends (3 stars)	8:16 PM	
Rabbeinu Tam (72 min)	8:47 PM	



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## THE FINAL STEP

# Nirtzah: The Moment That Says Everything Without Saying Anything



**RABBI ARI KORETZKY**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
MEOR MARYLAND

**W**e have arrived! After weeks of physical and spiritual preparation leading up to Pesach, and after hours spent around the table immersed in the Seder, we find ourselves at this final stage of the journey.

Yet as a Seder “step,” Nirtzah stands alone: it includes no associated action and fulfills none of the evening’s manifold directives. Rather, it emerges as a declaration of faith and hope – faith that our intensive efforts will find favor before our Creator, and hope that we will merit a fuller expression of the Pesach ritual in future years, in a rebuilt Jerusalem.

Several vital themes emerge from this short but climactic paragraph. At the conclusion of Yom Kippur, standing at Neilah, we often feel that, despite full day immersed in prayer and repentance, we have barely begun to convey our emotions. Rav Soloveitchik zt”l explains that the final shofar blast reflects this sentiment, a primal expression of that which we cannot fully articulate in words. Likewise, as our Seder draws to a close, despite our having invested so much into “living” the Exodus experience, we remain with the sense that we have achieved but a fraction of what we had hoped. Still, we ask G-d that this humble but heartfelt effort be accepted (nirtzah), acknowledging our inherent human limitations but also the sanctity of the little we can offer.

And much as we experience this tension in the personal sphere – pride in our humble efforts colliding with the sense of hopelessness at completing the task – we declare it in communal-national realm as well. We have done everything we can to insert ourselves into the Pesach narrative, to viscerally feel G-d’s hand guiding us out of Egypt toward an ultimate national destiny. And yet, as we emerge from the evening’s ordeal, we are aware that, without a Beis HaMikdash, this national destiny remains unfulfilled. “L’shana haba b’Yerushalayim,” we both announce and appeal – may G-d crown the slight achievements we can offer with the jewel of the final redemption that only He can bring.

Originally from *The Silver Spring Community Haggadah*.

**Rabbi Ari Koretzky** is the energetic and beloved Executive Director of MEOR Maryland at the University of Maryland, where he’s helped inspire more than 18,000 students to discover the depth, relevance, and excitement of Jewish life. Known for his warmth, relatability, and signature ability to connect with anyone in the room, Rabbi Koretzky brings Torah to life through engaging classes, lively discussions, unforgettable trips, and real conversations that resonate. Beyond campus, he’s the voice behind the popular *Jews You Should Know* podcast, introducing thousands of listeners to fascinating Jewish personalities, and the *Iyun* Podcast, where he explores big ideas shaping today’s Jewish world. With his weekly Torah insights and ever-growing online presence, Rabbi Koretzky continues to uplift and energize tens of thousands—making Judaism feel meaningful, accessible, and genuinely exciting. Rabbi Koretzky lives in Silver Spring, Maryland with his wife, Malka, and their children.

# The Best Meals Need The Best Ingredients

## Savory Passover Lamb Stew

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 ½ pounds lamb shoulder, trimmed and cut into 2-inch chunks
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons **De La Rosa 613 Avocado Oil**
- 1 large onion, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 medium carrots, peeled and sliced
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 1 cup **WOW Organic Red Grape Juice (Kosher for Passover)**
- 1 cup gluten-free vegetable or chicken broth (Kosher for Passover) or water
- ½ cup dried apricots, halved
- ½ cup dried figs, quartered
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 bay leaf
- Fresh parsley, chopped, for garnish

**Serves 4 - 6**

**Prep Time: 20 mins**

**Cook Time: 2 hrs 30 mins**



### INSTRUCTIONS

- Heat 2 tablespoons of De La Rosa Avocado Oil in a large Dutch oven or heavy pot over medium-high heat.
- Season the lamb chunks with salt and pepper. Add them in batches to the pot and sear on all sides until browned, about 4 minutes per batch. Remove the lamb and set aside.
- Add the remaining 1 tablespoon of Avocado Oil to the pot. Sauté the onion, garlic, carrots, and celery until softened, about 5 minutes.
- Pour in the Organic Red Grape Juice to deglaze, scraping up any browned bits at the bottom of the pot.
- Return the lamb to the pot. Stir in the cinnamon, cumin, paprika, and bay leaf. Add the broth or water, ensuring the lamb is mostly submerged. Bring the stew to a boil, then reduce the heat to low and cover. Simmer gently for 1 ½ hours, stirring occasionally. Stir in the apricots and figs. Continue to simmer uncovered for an additional 20-30 minutes, allowing the fruit to soften and the sauce to thicken. Adjust seasoning with additional salt and pepper if needed.
- Remove the bay leaf before serving.
- Garnish with chopped parsley.

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# The 4 Cups At The Passover Seder



By Azik Schwechter, Ph.D.  
KosherWine.com

## וְהוֹצֵאתִי

"I Will Take You Out"

### Covenant "The Tribe" Cabernet Sauvignon

This first cup marks the very beginning of our journey, the moment when the possibility of leaving Egypt first stirs hope and anticipation, and when a scattered people begins to imagine itself as a nation.

The Haggadah opens by recalling our most humble origins: "At first our ancestors were idol worshipers." We were fragmented, spiritually and physically, a disparate group without shared direction. Yet as the story unfolds, we retrace our lineage and arrive at a pivotal moment: *Yaakov and his sons descend to Egypt*. What appears to be the beginning of exile is, in truth, the planting of a promise—the fulfillment of the covenant made to the Patriarchs that their descendants would become a great nation."

Covenant "The Tribe" Cabernet Sauvignon mirrors this idea beautifully. The very name "The Tribe" evokes the transition from individuals into a collective identity. As a single-varietal Cabernet Sauvignon, it reflects unity emerging from dispersion: many grapes, drawn together into one cohesive expression. Just as Bnei

Yisrael began to coalesce in Egypt, from isolated families into a single people, this wine expresses focus, structure, and purpose.

This first cup, *V'hotzeiti* – "I will take you out," is not yet redemption, but it is the promise of movement. It is the moment when destiny begins to shift, when exile gives way to becoming, and when disparate people start to take shape as a nation.

## וְהַצַּלְתִּי

"I Will Rescue You"

### Yaacov Oryah – A Place by the Sea

The second cup corresponds to the dramatic turning point of the Exodus: the splitting of the Red Sea and Hashem's decisive rescue of Bnei Yisrael from the final pursuit of the Egyptians. This is no longer the promise of redemption, it is salvation in real time.

The Haggadah lingers on this moment, describing and debating the intensity of the *makos* suffered by the Egyptians at the Sea. Whether counted as tens, fifties, or hundreds, all opinions share a single underlying theme: everything flows from

the "Finger" and the "Hand" of Hashem. Redemption here is not abstract or distant; it is intimate, deliberate, and deeply personal.

That same sense of personal Divine care is captured in the name *A Place by the Sea*. After generations of oppression and spiritual toxicity, the Jewish People are given space to breathe, to stand safely on the far shore, watch their oppressors disappear, and begin healing. It is a



3



profound moment: no longer slaves, not yet fully formed as a nation, but finally free to recover and to grow.

The wine itself reflects this transition beautifully. With balanced acidity and refined tannins, it carries both tension and composure, echoing the drama of the crossing while preparing the palate for what follows. It is structured yet inviting, making it an ideal bridge into the heart of the Seder meal.

V'hitzalti – “I will rescue you” is the cup of clarity: the realization that we were not only taken out of Egypt, but actively saved by Hashem’s guiding hand, and given the space - **A Place by the Sea** - to begin anew.

וְהִצַּלְתִּי

*"I Will Redeem You"*

#### Tishbi Winery – Special Reserve Fortified Dessert Wine

The third cup brings us to the very heart of redemption—*V'gaalti*, “I will redeem you.” The Afikomen, the dessert of the meal, is the final taste meant to linger long after the Seder ends. Yet it is inseparable from the moment that follows, when we open the door to welcome Eliahu

**HaTishbi.** Together, these acts lift us beyond remembrance of past redemption and direct us toward the promise of a future, complete *geulah*.

Eliahu occupies a unique place in the Jewish consciousness, at the Seder, he stands as the bridge between redemptions: from the Exodus and the building of the Beis HaMikdash, through the Davidic dynasty, and forward to the final *geulah* from our current exile following the destruction of the Temple by the Romans. His presence reminds us that redemption is not a closed chapter, but an unfolding story.

The **Tishbi Special Reserve Fortified Dessert Wine** captures this idea with elegance and depth. Sweet and fortified, it is a wine designed not merely to endure time, but to improve with age. That quality symbolizes the eternal nature of the Jewish people: shaped by history, refined through exile, and growing richer as time unfolds. Its sweetness reflects the joy and wholeness of the ultimate *geulah*—a redemption that will not fade, but deepen forever.

This is the cup that tastes like a promise fulfilled, yet still awaited.

וְלִקְחָתִי

*"I Will Take You"*

#### Shiran Hope

As we conclude the Seder, we arrive at Nirtzah, the final section, which gives voice to our hope for the future. It is here that we express our longing to be found worthy, to witness Hashem’s glory through the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash, and to celebrate together, unified, in Jerusalem.

This vision is reflected powerfully in the wine itself. **Shiran Hope** is a blend created by continually adding varietals and fermenting them together, not to preserve their separateness, but to form a new, intentional whole. The goal is not a collection of competing notes, but a harmonious amalgamation, each component retaining its character while contributing to something greater than itself. The result is an off-dry wine that is approachable and carries flavor without weight, its gentle sweetness integrated

into a unified, seamless whole - a wine that invites another sip, completes the arc of the meal, and leaves the palate refreshed rather than fatigued

The blending process mirrors the message of *V'lakachti* – “I will take you to Me as a people.” Our story does not end with rescue or redemption alone, but with belonging. Disparate individuals, tribes, and journeys are drawn together into a single nation, bound by purpose and destiny.

This final cup is therefore not just a closing, but a culmination: a declaration of faith that our uniqueness, when brought together with intention, will allow us to become one people, complete, united, and ready for the future, sweet, redemption we continue to hope for.

4



**Azik Schwechte** is a seasoned wine expert known for his deep knowledge of kosher wines, thoughtful tasting insights, and ability to connect wine, tradition, and storytelling in a way that makes the world of wine both accessible and meaningful.

# Passover Pairing Table

## What to Pour with Passover Favorites



By Dovid Riven  
KosherWine.com

Passover tables are filled with foods we know well. The dishes we remember from bubby's Seder table that feel like part of the holiday itself. This pairing table is meant to meet you right there. Nothing complicated, just thoughtful wine pairings for the traditional foods many of us are looking forward to enjoying.

Think of this as a starting point, not a rulebook. These are expert-guided suggestions designed to help you enjoy wine alongside your Passover meals. If you do not have these exact bottles already waiting in your box, that's perfectly fine. Use this as a guide to find wines that will work well with your favorite dishes. Along the way, we have added a few simple insights to help you recognize why certain wines work, so you can confidently explore other pairings on your own.

Spring is in the air and the holiday is here. There is good food on the table, wine in the glass, and time to enjoy it all. Have fun with it, trust your palate, and let this be the beginning of a relaxed pairing journey that elevates your wine drinking experience and brings those familiar dishes to life.



### Matzah Ball Soup

#### Shiloh Chenin Blanc

crisp acidity cuts through the richness of broth, complements delicate matzah balls. Chenin Blanc is known for its bright acidity and versatility with creamy or savory dishes.



#### Barkan Classic Sauvignon Blanc

light, aromatic, and refreshing, enhancing herbs and vegetables in the soup. Sauvignon Blanc's herbaceous notes mirror the green flavors in the soup.



### Roasted Chicken with Potatoes

#### Shiran Unoaked Chardonnay

the roundness and subtle creaminess from sur lie aging complements roasted chicken without overpowering it. *Unoaked Chardonnay highlights fresh fruit and minerality, perfect for gentle roast flavors.*



#### Psagot Viognier

aromatic, slightly richer, highlights roasted flavors and pairs beautifully with root vegetables like potatoes. *Viognier's floral aromatics and richness bring depth to roasted dishes.*



**Somm's Tip:** Bright whites like Chardonnay and Viognier bring a perfect balance of body and aromatics to roasted chicken, lifting the savory notes while harmonizing with roasted potatoes.

**Somm's Tip:** Light, aromatic whites with crisp acidity elevate the comforting flavors of matzah ball soup, refreshing the palate between sips and bites.





## Brisket



### Galia by Zahav Grenache

soft tannins, juicy red fruit, and a medium body work beautifully with slow-cooked, rich beef. *Grenache's fruit-forward profile balances slow-braised flavors without overwhelming the meat.*



### Eola Hills Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley

elegant, subtle red fruits complement the savory, rich meat. *Pinot Noir's gentle tannins and bright acidity refresh the palate between bites.*

**Somm's Tip:** Slow-cooked brisket pairs beautifully with medium-bodied reds. Wines like Grenache and Pinot Noir enhance the meat's richness while keeping the palate bright.

## Roasted Lamb



### Mia Luce Winery Syrah & Stems

pepper, dark fruits, and moderate tannins complement the richness and earthy flavors of lamb. *Syrah's spice and dark fruit intensity echo lamb's savory, herbaceous notes.*



### Hagafen Napa Valley Cabernet Franc

medium-bodied, structured reds that balance roasted lamb and herbs. *Cabernet Franc's structure and red fruit provide both depth and freshness.*

**Somm's Tip:** Roasted lamb calls for reds with spice, fruit, and structure. Syrah or Cabernet Franc enhance the meat's depth while harmonizing with herbs and seasoning.





## Potato Kugel

**Baron Herzog Sauvignon Blanc**  
crisp, herbaceous, and clean, balances the starchy, savory nature of kugel. *Sauvignon Blanc's bright acidity and herbal notes make it ideal for potato-based dishes.*



**Casa De Cielo Chardonnay**  
mild fruit and gentle body complement roasted or baked potatoes without overshadowing them. *An unoaked Chardonnay highlights the dish without adding heaviness.*



**Somm's Tip:** Light, crisp whites like Sauvignon Blanc and unoaked Chardonnay refresh the palate against potato kugel's soft, savory richness.

## Macaroon

**Yaacov Oryah Alpha Omega Late Harvest Viognier**  
coconut and nutty flavors harmonize beautifully with aromatic sweetness. *Late Harvest Viognier's lush aromatics are a natural match for nutty desserts.*



**Carmel Single Vineyard Late Harvest Gewurztraminer**  
spice and floral notes play well with coconut and almond textures. *Gewurztraminer's exotic aromatics highlight sweet, nut-forward pastries.*



**Somm's Tip:** Rich, sweet macaroons are elevated by late-harvest wines, where the wine's aromatics and luscious texture complement the dessert's nutty sweetness.

## Pavlova

**Teperberg Impression Late Harvest Riesling**  
bright acidity and natural sweetness complement meringue, cream, and fresh fruit. *Late Harvest Riesling balances sweetness with crispness, making it ideal for airy desserts.*



**La Maison Bleue Blanc de Blanc, Demi Sec**  
lightly sweet, crisp, and aromatic, with fine bubbles that refresh the palate and highlight the dessert's airy texture and fruit toppings. *Demi Sec sparkling wines offer gentle effervescence and subtle sweetness that enhance meringue desserts.*



**Somm's Tip:** Sweet wines with bright acidity or gentle effervescence, like a Late Harvest Riesling or a Demi-Sec sparkling wine, enhance Pavlova's delicate meringue and fresh fruit without overpowering it, keeping each bite light and refreshing.



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# When Your Body Slows You Down, Everything Slows Down

*A local provider is rethinking urgent care—bringing faster, smarter treatment directly to the community, so life doesn't have to pause when your body does.*

**By Aaron Jacob, PA-C**

After 25 years in Silver Spring and a long affiliation with the Yeshiva, I've learned a humbling truth: many people know a lot more than me. Similarly, 8 years as a PA seeing thousands of patients has taught me that experience is vast and varied.

Yet, something curious happens when our bodies get sick or injured. Our productivity declines sharply. Whether a successful businessman, brilliant student, or skilled craftsman, the soul's heights are often limited by the body's health. It is a unique partnership, and when the body malfunctions, it brings frustration and anxiety. The modern medical field—with long "urgent" waits—often brings a busy night to a standstill.

With the help of EZMED Urgent Care, based in Timonium, I hope to relieve some of this burden. By offering urgent care services from my home, by appointment, I can make an already difficult experience a little easier. I provide strep/flu testing, nebulizer treatments, suturing, concussion evaluations, and physicals. While I don't have an on-site X-ray, I can examine injuries and order imaging as needed. My goal is to help my friends and neighbors spend less time in waiting rooms and more time fulfilling their potential.



**Aaron Jacob, PA-C**, is a clinician and educator based in Kemp Mill, Maryland. A long-time member of the Greater Washington community, Aaron joined the Yeshiva Gedolah of Greater Washington in 2001 and earned a Master's in Education from George Washington University in 2004. Since receiving his Physician Assistant certification in 2017, he has practiced extensively across urgent care, emergency medicine, and pediatric urgent care. Currently, Aaron serves as a professor at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) PA program. He is also pursuing a PhD in Health Professions Education, with doctoral research focused on the integration of empathy within PA student curricula.



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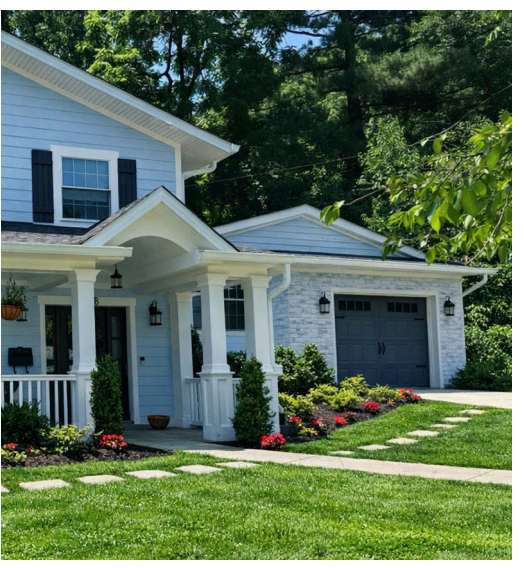
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# The Night Redemption Began “And I Will Redeem Them”

## I. What Is Ge'ulah? The Usage of the Term “Ge'ulah”

“Therefore, tell the children of Israel that I am God;  
and I will take [vehotzeisi] them out from the suffering of Egypt;  
and I will save [vehitzalti] them from their work;  
and I will redeem [vega'alti] them with an outstretched hand and great judgment...;  
and I will take [velakachti] them unto me for a people...;  
and I will bring [veheiveisi] them to the land.”  
Shemos 6:6-8



**RABBI AARON LOPIANSKY,**

*ROSH YESHIVA, YESHIVA OF GREATER  
WASHINGTON-TIFERES GEDALIAH*

**T**he ge'ulah is described as a five-step process. Each expression of redemption encompasses a further step in the process, and each step is directional; that is, it describes from what or to where the Jews will be redeemed. The exception is the middle and pivotal expression, ge'ulah (redemption), which is non-directional.

Another distinction worth noting is that this is the only form of redemption described as a public act: the “outstretched hand” and the “great judgments” are things that are visible and apparent to all.

The Vilna Gaon points out that the various terms of ge'ulah are parallel to the terms used to describe the galus. He explains that galus Mitzrayim included (1) exile to a foreign land, (2) enslavement, and (3) pain and torture of the Egyptians. The five stages of redemption worked backwards. First Israel was redeemed from the hardest aspects of galus Mitzrayim, i.e., the pain and torture. The second was redemption from slavery. Therefore, the third stage, “vega'alti,” was redemption from the foreign land. (The last two stages were positive aspects of redemption: Israel becoming a nation and acquiring a land.)

The Gemara explains that the ge'ulah started at night when the Egyptians told them to go, although they did not leave until the next day. How is the ge'ulah affected by the Egyptians telling them to leave? Should it not be expressed by the act of leaving?

Let us take a closer look at the decree of galus (exile). Avraham was told that his children would be “strangers in a land not theirs.” Yet the Land of Canaan was not theirs, either; as the verse emphasizes, “And the Canaanites were then in the land.” How was Egypt considered “under foreign

dominion” and not Canaan? What was the difference which land they were in as long as it was “a land not theirs”?

## II. Place and Person: The Context of Galus

To answer this question, we must understand the full meaning of galus. A person does not exist in a vacuum. He lives in a specific physical environment and cultural milieu which, to a large degree, determine the person's character and personality. Thus, Moshe Rabbeinu sent the spies to the Land of Canaan with instructions to see what manner of land it was and what kind of people it bred (BeMidbar 13:18, Rashi). Later we learn that wherever klal Yisrael were, they mixed with the nations and learned from their ways (Tehillim 106:35).

Galus is not the simple discomfort of being without a home in an alien environment. Rather, it spells a loss of self, a dilution of identity. Just as the pain the Egyptians inflicted upon the Hebrews robbed them of their physical self, and just as the enslavement robbed them of their achievements and accomplishments, the galus robbed them of “self” in the larger sense. Our sages compare the Jews in Egypt to a fetus in a mother's womb, whose very “self” is inextricably tied up with the mother.

In short, everything in creation exists within context of place (Maharal, Netzach Yisrael 1) and in context of a social-familial framework. Galus places the people of Israel in a foreign land within a foreign society. Thus, galus Yavan is considered an exile because, although the nation of Israel was on its own land, still they were integrated into a larger, overshadowing Hellenistic culture. But Canaan was not considered galus, although the land did not belong to Israel at the time. Canaan had no dominant culture during that period; Israel did not

assimilate into another nation there.

## III. Redemption in the Form of Ge'ulah

What is ge'ulah?

The Malbim explains in several places that the term “ge'ulah” refers to a redemption by a relative whose kinship prompts the aid, whereas pidyon refers to aid rendered where there is no kinship involved and the focus is on the help itself. The Malbim makes two more observations about these terms, the significance of which we will explain later: (1) ge'ulah is usually a verb with an object, whereas pidyon is usually an adjective describing a subject; (2) ge'ulah is usually achieved through open miracles, whereas pidyon is accomplished more subtly (Yeshayah 37:9, Malbim, Biur HaMilos).

Thus we find the term go'el used to describe next-of-kin involvement on behalf of a relative: the go'el hadam (blood redeemer), who avenges his next of kin (BeMidbar 35:2); one who redeems his next of kin's property (VaYikra 25:3); and Ruth's next of kin, who redeemed her (Ruth 4). In all these cases it is the kinship of the go'el that bestows the title upon him.

Let us go a step further and state that galus is being in strange hands, and ge'ulah is the reclamation by one's true relatives. The essence of the ge'ulah lies in the very act of the relative proclaiming, “He is mine!” This is actually the instant of ge'ulah, and the time of the physical redemption is a result of that instant.

Galus, as we said, means the loss of identity. The Egyptians proclaimed, “They are ours.” It follows, then, that the ge'ulah lies in the next of kin announcing, “He is not yours; he is mine.”

Let us take another look at the two properties of ge'ulah mentioned by the Malbim:

## REDEMPTION DEFINED

• Ge'ulah is usually a verb because the essence of ge'ulah is not the alleviation of the victim's plight but the savior's reclamation of the victim as kin. Pidyon is the alleviation of the victim's plight, and, therefore, it is an adjective describing the state of the redeemed one.

• Pidyon is not necessarily brought about with open miracles, for it is the result that is important. On the other hand, the ge'ulah is there to proclaim the go'el, and, therefore, it must be made clear that it is the working of a go'el. A miracle, then, is a proclamation.

Perhaps this is also the reason that the go'el is associated with the name of Hashem. Thus, "ובמביא גואל לבני בניהם למען שמו" and "וגאלנו וגאלנו" "מהרה למען שמך."

#### IV. Ge'ulah in Mitzrayim

Let us turn back to Mitzrayim. The acts of "vehotzeisi," "velakachti," "vehitzalti," and "veheiveisi" required a direction, for that is their definition: the movement of an entity from one state to another. Not so "vega'alti," which requires only the revelation of the go'el claiming the nation as His! This act of ge'ulah cannot be done clandestinely as can the other forms of redemption. It requires an "outstretched hand."

This happened on the night of Pesach, when the Egyptians told them to leave. Although they only left the following day, the ge'ulah began that night, for it was then that Egypt, the pseudo-host of the Jewish people, turned klal Yisrael over to their real Host – HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

Perhaps the essence of ge'ulah is best expressed in David HaMelech's verse, "קרבה אל נפשי גאלה" – Come close to my soul, and thereby redeem it!"

#### V. One Night with Hashem

Why this protracted process of ge'ulah, beginning at night and finishing in the day? Why not leave immediately?

Rav Hutner writes that throughout history klal Yisrael has suffered from the assault of evil. They were born in Egypt, choked by the viselike Mitzri grip. As soon as they were redeemed, they were infiltrated by the eirev rav (mixed multitude), who worked at destroying the Jewish nation from the inside. Marriage, which is established through yichud, is rendered invalid in the presence of a third party; so, too, is the bond between klal Yisrael and Hashem not secured in the presence of the Satan. But the eirev rav did not join Israel until they actually began traveling out of Egypt, as it says, "וגם ערב רב עלה אתם." Thus, one night in our multi-millennium history we were together with HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Freed from the external shackles of Egypt, and uninfested by the poison of the eirev rav, we proclaimed Hashem as ours and He proclaimed us as His, cementing an eternal bond. Indeed, this is the night of redemption – a ge'ulah in its genuine meaning.



With over 20 seforim authored, **Rabbi Aaron Lopiansky** brings to the Greater Washington community and the yeshiva the cumulative impact of decades of learning at the Mir Yerushalayim. He continues the mesorah of his rebbeim, Harav Chaim Shmuelevitz zt"l, Harav Nachum Partzovitz zt"l, and Mir. his father-in-law, Rav Beinish Finkel zt"l (the late Rosh HaYeshiva of the His approach to learning was also deeply influenced by his long association as a close talmid of Harav Moshe Shapiro zt"l. The Rosh Yeshiva's seforim and shiurim can be purchased and accessed at [www.eshelpublications.com](http://www.eshelpublications.com)



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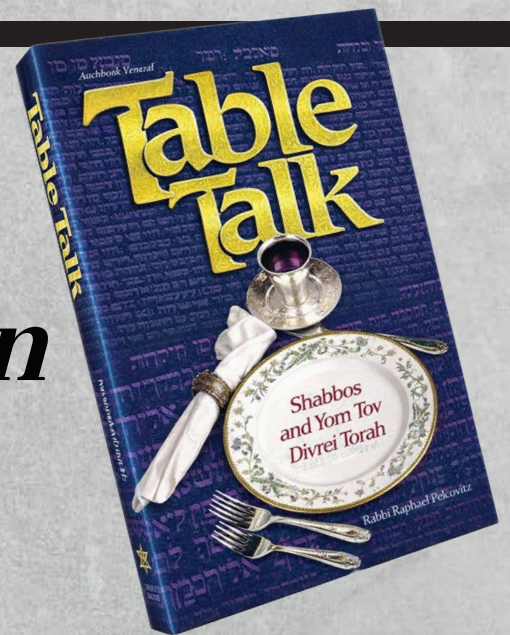
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# The Profound Lesson of Rabbi Gamliel

Rabbi Raphael Pelcovitz



רבן גמליאל היה אומר: כל שלא אמר שלשה דברים אלו בפסח לא יצא ידי חובתו ואלו הן – פסח מצה ומרור “Rabban Gamliel said: Whoever has not explained these three things on Pesach has not fulfilled his obligation; and they are: the *korban Pesach*, matzah, and maror.”

On this Yom Tov of freedom, marking the Exodus from Egypt, Jews celebrate far more than a historic event. We act out the bondage and retell the story of our people’s beginnings, wanderings, travails, and eventual triumph. We rejoice in our deliverance and liberty regardless of our present condition, for even in the night of *galus* (exile), most Jews have never despaired, drawing faith and hope from the story of *Yetzias Mitzraim* (the Exodus from Egypt).

Not all Jews are prepared to ignore their bitter lot in the darkness of *galus* (exile) and declare their faith and trust in eventual *geulah* (redemption). Indeed, the *rasha* (wicked son) asks derisively, “What is this service *lachem* (for you),” for you, who have no freedom, enjoy no rights, and are slaves of new Pharaohs in each generation?

Rabbi Gamliel, who lived in Yavneh after the destruction of the Temple, under the reign of the Roman oppressors, was concerned lest Jews despair and allow the observance of Pesach to fade away. He argued that there is no sense in celebrating a holiday of freedom while living with tyranny – in observing a Yom

Tov of *cheirus* (freedom) during a time of dark oppression.

He therefore urged his contemporaries, in the aftermath of the *churban* (destruction of the Temple), to examine these three aspects of the Pesach holiday: the *korban pesach*, matzah, and maror.

The *korban pesach* symbolizes G-d’s *Hashgachah* (Divine Providence), protection and salvation in the midst of death and destruction. It demonstrates the Almighty’s concern for His righteous children and His justice toward the wicked.

It also represents Jewish heroism – *mesiras nefesh* (self-sacrifice) – the willingness of Israel to give up their safety and security, meager as it may be, in order to fulfill G-d’s will. Rabbi Gamliel taught that we must never lose sight of these two truths – G-d’s constant *Hashgachah* and Israel’s spirit of sacrifice – even in times when matzah, the bread of affliction, and maror, the bitter herbs, reflect the painful reality of Jewish life.

Matzah is *lechem oni* (bread of affliction). It represents periods of bondage, suffering, and persecution. But it is also:

לחם שעונין עליו דברים הרבה

(*lechem she’onin alav devarim harbeh* – “a bread over which much is said”)

This reflects the unique condition of the Jewish people in the world. Jews can

never escape attention; we cannot hide. We are visible – often painfully so. We become the object of scorn, derision, envy, and hostility, the target of criticism and the victims of hatred.

Everyone talks about us, all the time. The U.N. General Assembly has likely spoken more about the State of Israel than about any other nation. Indeed, we are like the matzah over which so much is spoken – and it is *maror* (bitterness), whether in our role as victims or as the focus of condemnation.

However, if we allow ourselves to focus only on these two painful dimensions – matzah and maror – while ignoring the redeeming “Pesach force,” we fail to grasp the full picture of Jewish destiny.

We have not truly fulfilled our obligation unless we explain all three: the belief in G-d’s Providence and Israel’s heroism, even as we relive the experiences of matzah and maror.

Our obligation is to connect all three – to see the full story, not just the pain, but the purpose, the protection, and the promise.

The Lubliner Rav, Rabbi Meir Shapiro, interprets the story of the Sages who were gathered in Bnei Brak in a similar vein, concluding not on a note of despair, but with a cry for a heavenly sign of concern and redemption. These Sages, Rabbi Elazar, Rabbi Akiva, and their colleagues, also lived in a post-

destruction period. It was כל הלילה (*kol halaylah* – “the entire night”), the night of Roman supremacy. Nonetheless, they encouraged themselves by relating the story of *yetziyas Mitzraim* to strengthen their belief that the night of suffering and pain would be followed by the day of deliverance and salvation.

Even in *galus*, even at night, we say *emes ve'emunah* (“truth and faith”), for we recognize the truth of G-d and reaffirm our faith. Their disciples, however, impatiently responded: רבותינו הגיע זמן קריאת שמע של שחרית (*raboseinu higiya zman krias shema shel shacharis* – “Our teachers, the time has come to recite the morning Shema”). The time has come for G-d to help us and bring us into the light so that we can recite קריאת שמע של שחרית (*krias shema shel shacharis* – “the morning Shema”), and say *emes ve'yatziv* (“true and established”). G-d will demonstrate that He is our Redeemer, and that our faith in Him during the dark night has been justified, only when we merit the *geulah sheleimah* (“the complete redemption”).

We have merited in our time to witness the breaking of the dawn, the beginning

of our redemption. The horrible night is past, and we have been *zoche* to the rebuilding of Eretz Yisrael and the rebirth of Torah in the United States, as well as its flourishing in Israel. To a certain extent, “the winter (of bondage) has passed, the deluge of suffering is over... and the time of our song has arrived” (*Shir HaShirim* 2:11). That verse concludes with the words וקול התור נשמע בארצנו (*v'kol hator nishma b'artzeinu* – “and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land”).

There are various interpretations of this phrase. The Ibn Ezra connects it to the root תור (*tor* – “turn” or “queue”), a term still used in modern Hebrew for waiting one's turn. The *pasuk* is thus hinting that the redemption is near – and that Israel's turn has finally come.

For centuries we have waited in the wings, patiently persevering and refusing to despair, refusing to fall into *yei'ush*. As the Kotzker Rebbe says: יאוש שלא מדעת (*yei'ush shelo mida'as* – “despair that comes from a lack of awareness”), meaning that despair only takes hold when a person loses clarity – his *sechel*. But now it is our turn, and with G-d's help, we have not only survived, but prevailed.

Even when we experience matzah and maror periods, we console ourselves with the pesach spirit, following the guidance of Rabbi Gamliel to always focus on the totality of Jewish history. Only by embracing all three do we fulfill our obligation as the *am hanetzach* (“the eternal people”).



**Rabbi Raphael Pelcovitz**

רצ"ל, was the beloved rabbi emeritus of the famed “White Shul” in Far Rockaway, he was a master teacher whose warmth, clarity, and depth inspired generations, making

Torah learning both accessible and uplifting. As one of the crown jewels of the American rabbinate, he guided thousands with wisdom and simplicity, leaving behind a towering legacy of faith, leadership, and devotion that continues to illuminate lives worldwide. At his side stood his wife, **Mrs. Shirley Pelcovitz**, a woman of vision and strength who helped pioneer Miami's first Torah community, laying the groundwork for Jewish education there, and later brought her passion and leadership to Far Rockaway. Her courage, grace, and boundless heart built the foundation for generations of Jewish life, turning dreams into reality and inspiring communities for decades with a legacy that will endure for all time.

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# MY MOM WAS A STEEL TRADER.

Now She's on a Mission to Improve the White Shirt.

*David Ramberg*

**H**ow a baalas teshuva brought the discipline of global commodities trading to the shirt worn in yeshiva every day.

Most people never think twice about a white shirt.

In the yeshiva world it's simply part of daily life - worn to learn Torah, to daven, to grow. It's one of the most common garments you'll see anywhere.

But after watching my mom build her company, I learned that making a really good white shirt is anything but simple.

What makes the story even more surprising is that my mom didn't come from the clothing world at all.

For many years, she worked in commodities trading, specifically in steel and pig iron. Her world revolved around cargo ships crossing oceans, contracts worth millions, international negotiations, and high-pressure decisions where every detail mattered. It was a demanding industry built

around numbers, margins, and risk - and she succeeded in a field that was tough, competitive, and about as far from fashion as you can imagine.

But her life began to change in a much deeper way when she became a baalas teshuva.

As Torah moved to the center of her life, her priorities shifted. Business success was no longer the ultimate goal. What mattered most became Torah, Jewish family life, and serving Hashem in a meaningful way.

And that shift eventually led to something unexpected: a white shirt.

That is how Lvorn began.

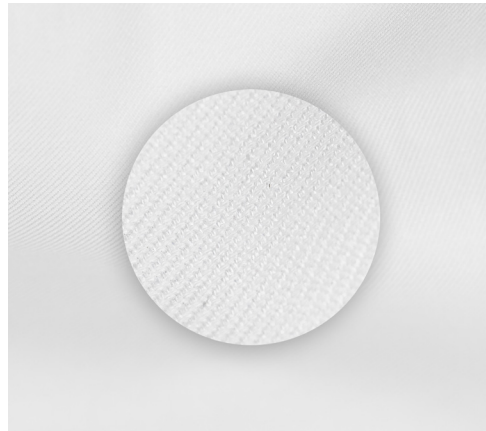
The name itself reflects the idea behind it. Lvorn comes from the word lev - heart. The idea is that **things done with heart are done differently**. They are done with care, attention, and intention.

A white shirt may seem simple, but for



boys in yeshiva it is worn every single day - to learn Torah, to daven, to grow. My mom believed something connected to that daily life deserved to be made with heart.

What I admire most is that she



approached the project the same way she approached trading: with total focus on standards and details. She was not trying to simply sell a shirt. She wanted to understand what actually makes one exceptional.

So she researched everything - fabric quality to find the softest, lightest cotton twill that could still hold structure, non-iron performance so the shirt stays crisp, collar construction so

collar stays don't fall out in the wash, buttons that are easy to fasten but durable enough for everyday wear, and fit engineering so the shirt looks polished but still feels comfortable.

If she was going to make something for yeshiva boys, it had to be done right - comfortable, durable, polished, and built to a higher standard.

But for her, this was never just about clothing. She wanted to build a company that could truly serve the Jewish people.

That is why Lvorn is not just another

brand. From the very beginning, she made a permanent commitment that 20% of profits go directly to yeshivos. This is not a promotion or a marketing angle. It is part of the company's purpose. When someone buys a Lvorn shirt, they can choose which yeshiva receives the donation.

That idea says a lot about who my mom is.

She wanted to create something practical and beautiful, but also something with real values behind it. In a world where many companies focus only on selling more, she wanted her business to support Torah learning - because she believes Torah is the foundation of our people.

Lvorn may look like a white shirt.

But to me, it represents something much deeper: my mom's journey, her standards, her emunah, and her desire to build something with heart that gives back to the community in a real way.

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# RENEWAL

Aviva Waxman

**P**urim is now behind us with all its fun and candy and we are now fully on our way to Pesach and spring. As we all know, one of the names of this upcoming holiday is Chag Haaviv, The holiday of spring, one of the reasons being that this Chag must take place in the spring. I think it's a fascinating idea that spring, which has a natural feeling of renewal, is when the holiday of our renewal as a people takes place.

Back then, Egypt was the world's super power. As the epicenter of wealth and power the Jews were enslaved with no hope of freedom as I have heard that the midrashim say it was impossible for a slave to escape Egypt. And then, in a most stunning and miraculous feat, during the spring in broad daylight the Jews left Egypt. We left behind slavery to become free servants to God, as one people. This was a renewal of our people, from an enslaved nation to a free and unified people chosen by God.

The season of spring in its very nature is a time of renewal. During the spring the flowers begin to bloom, crops begin to grow, and animals wake up from hibernation. The cycle of life begins again with the arrival of spring. Similarly, people suddenly begin to feel a sense of renewal and a desire to refresh during this season. The term "spring cleaning" follows this theme that we finish the cold winter months and we now want to make our home fresh and new. Our desire to refresh helps us with our holiday cleaning preparations

and makes this time an extremely popular season to start home projects.

The idea of renewal culminates in the holiday with a feeling of hope and excitement at our chance to complete this holiday as new and better people with great resolutions to enter the summer months. I think this concept gives great perspective to the

holiday preparations. Although the Pesach preparations can feel arduous and burdensome, if we tap into the spiritual and natural cycle of renewal we can enjoy the process.



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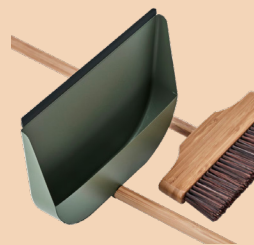
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# PREPARING FOR PESACH: Removing the Chametz Within



**Rabbi Dr. Avichai Pepper**  
Director of Educational Advancement and Community Relations at the Yeshiva of Greater Washington

*"But Rabbi, Why do I need to get rid of all of my Chametz and clean the house?"*

This question is asked often. Rather than just simply stating an answer, here is a deeper, more meaningful and philosophical answer leading to more thought and discussion.

The Torah tells us that no chametz should be found in our homes on Pesach. As the Torah says: "שִׁבְעַת יָמִים. שֶׁאֵר לֹא יִמָּצָא בְּבֵתֵיכֶם" "Seven days no leaven bread shall be found in your houses" (שמות י"ב:י"ט).

Similarly, the Torah commands: "וְלֹא יֵרָאֶה לְךָ שֶׁאֵר לְךָ שֶׁאֵר בְּכֹל גְּבֻלְךָ" "No chametz shall be seen by you, and no leaven bread shall be seen by you in all your borders" (שמות י"ג:ד).

This mitzvah is somewhat perplexing. When we build a sukkah, we are not commanded to tear down our regular homes. Yet when it comes to the mitzvah of matzah on Pesach, it comes with the complete exclusion of chametz so much so, that the Torah forbids even its presence in our homes.

There is a well known explanation given by the Zohar HaKadosh. The Zohar in Parshas Bo teaches that chametz represents the יצר הרע, the evil inclination. When yeast is added

to dough, it fills with air and expands, appearing larger than it truly is. The same is true of the yetzer hara. It convinces us that we are greater than we truly are and that our desires are more important than they really are, blinding us from reality.

Chametz therefore symbolizes גאווה, arrogance and inflated self-importance. Matzah, by contrast, is simple and humble.

The Maharal (גבורות ה' פרק מ"ח) notes that this symbolism is a perfect parallel. Chametz expands beyond its natural measure, while matzah remains in its original form. Arrogance functions in the same way: a person inflates himself beyond what he truly is. Pesach therefore demands that chametz be removed entirely, reminding us that the foundation of redemption is humility.

It is therefore on the holiday that marks the birth of our nation that we remove this symbol from our homes. By eliminating chametz, we symbolically strip away arrogance and illusion, allowing us to focus on who we truly are and who we are meant to become, in a primitive way, children and servants to Hashem.

An additional perspective is found

in the writings of the בני יששכר. He suggests that the destruction of chametz represents the destruction of idolatry and false religions in the world.

The בני יששכר notes a striking connecting between Pesach and the removal of idolatry found in מלכים ב'. This Pasuk describes the Pesach celebrated during the reign of King Yoshiyahu: "כִּי לֹא נַעֲשֶׂה כְּפֶסַח הַזֶּה מִיָּמֵי הַשְּׁפֹטִים אֲשֶׁר שָׁפְטוּ לֹא נַעֲשֶׂה כְּפֶסַח הַזֶּה מִיָּמֵי הַשְּׁפֹטִים אֲשֶׁר שָׁפְטוּ לֹא נַעֲשֶׂה כְּפֶסַח הַזֶּה מִיָּמֵי הַשְּׁפֹטִים אֲשֶׁר שָׁפְטוּ" "For such a Pesach had not been made since the days of the judges who judged Israel" (מלכים ב', כ"ג:כ"ב).

In that same context, the Navi



describes Yoshiyahu's sweeping destruction of idolatry: "וְגַם אֶת הָאִבּוֹת וְאֶת הַיְדֻעִימוֹת וְאֶת הַתְּרָפִים וְאֶת הַגִּלּוּלִים... בְּעֵר יוֹשִׁיָּאֵהוּ" - "And also the necromancers, the idols, and all the abominations... Yoshiyahu eradicated them" (כ"ג:כ"ד).

The Bnei Yissaschar highlights a similar idea found directly in the Torah. After the Torah prohibits idolatry: "לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ פֶסֶל" - "You shall not make for yourself a graven image" (שמות כ"ד:), the Torah later introduces the mitzvah of matzah and the removal of chametz. He explains that through destroying chametz we symbolically participate in the destruction of false beliefs in the world.

This theme also appears at the end of the Seder when we recite: "שְׁפוּרָה חֲמַתֶּךָ" - "asking Hashem to reveal His justice to the nations who oppose Him."

Halachah further teaches that one must even check their pockets before Pesach to ensure that no chametz remains there. The obligation of בדיקת חמץ requires searching anywhere chametz may have been brought (ש"ע או"ח סימן תל"ג).

This practice too carries deeper symbolic meaning.

In שמואל א' after the Jewish people engaged in a powerful movement of repentance, Shmuel instructed them: "אִם בָּכַל לְבַבְכֶם אִתֶּם שָׁבִים אֵלַי - הִסְרִיחוּ אֶת הָאֱלֹהִים הַנִּכְרָרִים מִתּוֹכְכֶם" - "If you are returning to Hashem with all your hearts, then remove the foreign gods from among you" (שמואל א' ד':ג').

This Pasuk seems to be contradictory, if a complete Teshuva was done, why were there remaining idols?

Shmuel Hanavi was teaching an important lesson. Often when we repent, we do take meaningful steps in the right direction. Yet the yetzer hara persuades us to hold onto a small remnant of our wrongdoing, something hidden away like crumbs left in a pocket.

Pesach is the time when we search even our pockets, removing every last trace of our chametz. As Rav Hutner noted, the yetzer hara rarely appears all at once. It begins with small expansions that slowly grow larger, much like Chametz that rises. By removing chametz completely, we symbolically reject that gradual spiritual inflation.

It is not coincidental that these messages are embedded specifically within Pesach. Many holidays celebrate the redemption from Egypt, but Pesach uniquely begins with the declaration that we begin by recalling the slavery itself and celebrate the hardships.

That suffering was not accidental. At the בריית Hashem told Avraham: "יָדַע תְּדַע כִּי גֵר יִהְיֶה" - "Know with certainty that your descendants will be strangers in a land not their own, and they will enslave them and afflict them" (בראשית ט"ו:י"ג).

The slavery in Egypt was part of the process of forming the Jewish nation. In order to appreciate the beauty of a Torah life, we first needed to understand the depth of life without it. The pain and suffering was an investment.

When we find ourselves holding onto something outside of Torah life, Pesach reminds us that we have already fulfilled that investment. The exile, the suffering, and the slavery prepared us to embrace the beauty of a life filled with תורה and מצוות.

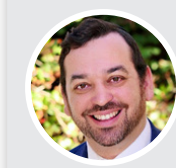
As we burn our chametz each year, we are not merely cleaning our homes. We are participating in a profound spiritual and symbolic act of removing arrogance, eliminating remnants of wrongdoing, and reaffirming our rejection of false and misled ideologies.

In a world increasingly filled with confusion about truth and faith, the message of Pesach remains timeless. Even during a year like this one, a year filled with an unimaginable rise in hatred and antisemitism, a year where we can feel the invasion of evil and suffering by those whose beliefs are to eradicate Beni Yisrael from the world, we remove the Chametz. As we reflect on the emotions of the past few months and pour our feeling into the words נִשְׁבְּחֶךָ, דָּוָר וְדָוָר עֹמְדִים עֲלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ, we pray for strength, humility, and וְהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְצִילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם.

May we see the sincerity of our efforts and fulfill the words we proclaim at the Seder אֶל ה' הַגּוֹיִם... כִּי אֶכֶל אֶת יַעֲקֹב וְאֶת נְוֹהוּ הַשָּׁמוּ



May the removal of chametz signal the removal of arrogance and falsehood from the world, and may we soon merit the day when all humanity recognizes the truth of Hashem and we see the openness of וְהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְצִילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם. במהרה בימינו אמן.



**Rabbi Dr. Avichai Pepper** is a seasoned educator with a rich academic and professional background. A graduate of the New England Rabbinical College in Providence, RI, he has devoted his life to teaching Torah and to Jewish communal growth. Rabbi Pepper holds a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Liberty University, alongside a master's degree in educational leadership from Bellevue University and a master's degree in counseling from Liberty University. Currently serving as the Director of Educational Advancement and Community Relations at the Yeshiva of Greater Washington as well as an educational coach and presenter at Lomdei, Rabbi Dr. Pepper leverages almost 30 years of dedicated service in Jewish education and community development.

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## THE BRIEFING

### Apple Buys Another Israeli Brain

When Apple wants the future, it shops in Israel. Apple Inc. acquired Israeli audio-AI startup Q.ai for around \$1.6 billion – another quiet but telling move. Israel has become a consistent source of deeply integrated tech – where hardware, AI, and human experience meet. Apple doesn't chase trends. It absorbs precision.

Which makes you think – is innovation about building something new... or recognizing it before everyone else does?



### Class of '27-'28 Gets the Class We Always Talk About

You know that line everyone says at some point: "Why didn't they teach us this in high school?" In California, they finally are. Governor Gavin Newsom announced that starting in the 2027-28 school year, students will take a personal finance course – with budgeting, credit, debt, and how money actually works. By 2031, it's required to graduate. Which almost makes you wonder – how many things in life aren't that complicated... just taught too late?



## Kennedy's Battle Against Food Dyes Hits a Roadblock: M&M's



This is moving faster than people expected – and it's turning into something of a color test for the industry. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has already pushed major brands to commit to removing synthetic dyes by 2027. But M&M's – and the broader candy industry – are holding their ground, arguing the color is the product. So now it's not just a health debate. It's a market signal. And the real question becomes – do industries change when they're told to... or when what people value quietly starts to shift underneath them?

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## THE BRIEFING

### Google's \$32B Israeli Checkmate

Google closed its \$32 billion acquisition of Israeli cybersecurity firm Wiz – one of the biggest signals yet that when digital risk rises, the smartest move is to go where defense is already proven. Israel isn't just building startups – it's building reflexes, speed, and clarity under pressure. This deal isn't about growth. It's about staying ahead. And maybe the real question is – in a world of constant threats, is the advantage innovation... or instinct?



### Commanders' \$3.7B Vision

The Washington Commanders are moving ahead with plans for a 70,000-seat, domed stadium at the former RFK site, targeting a 2030 debut. Designed by HKS with a \$3.7 billion investment, the sweeping "Pringle-chip" roof and white-column façade aim to create a year-round destination – not just a game-day venue. It's bold. It's modern. It's momentum for the city.

And if the rumors are true, DMV fans are already asking the real question: will there be kosher stands from Oh Mama's and Char Bar? Because nothing says fourth-quarter comeback like brisket under a translucent roof. Stadiums may host eras – but concessions win loyalties.



# Bethesda's Biotech Boom

The I-270 corridor is filling with new lab space as biotech firms expand near NIH. High-wage jobs follow. So do higher rents. Maryland wants to be the East Coast's life sciences capital. Innovation is expensive – but stagnation costs more.

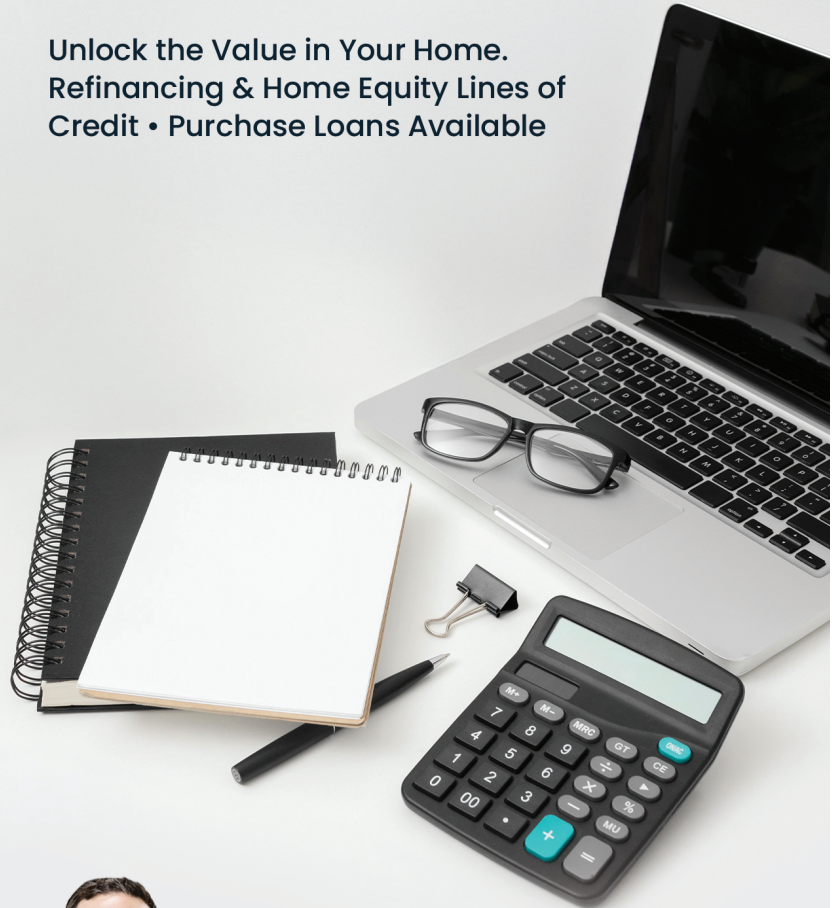


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# Chol Hamoed Guide

## Silver Spring And Greater D.C



### Maryland Science Center

A hands-on science museum in Baltimore, MD with interactive exhibits, a planetarium, and fun activities for all ages.



### Smithsonian National Zoological Park

A free, family-friendly zoo in Washington, DC featuring hundreds of animals and spacious outdoor exhibits.



### National Air and Space Museum

Located in Washington, DC, this museum showcases iconic aircraft and spacecraft with engaging exhibits.



### Wizard of Oz themed playground (Prince George's County, MD)

A whimsical playground in Prince George's County, MD inspired by the classic story, complete with a carousel.



### National Children's Museum

An interactive museum in Washington, DC designed for kids, blending play with science and creativity.



### KID Museum

A hands-on makerspace in Bethesda, MD where kids can build, design, and explore STEM.



**Brookside Nature Center**

A peaceful nature center in Wheaton, MD with trails, wildlife exhibits, and family programs.



**George Washington's Mount Vernon**

A historic estate in Mount Vernon, VA featuring beautiful grounds and insights into George Washington's life.



**Cabin John Ice Rink**

An indoor ice rink in Rockville, MD with sessions and lessons for all ages.



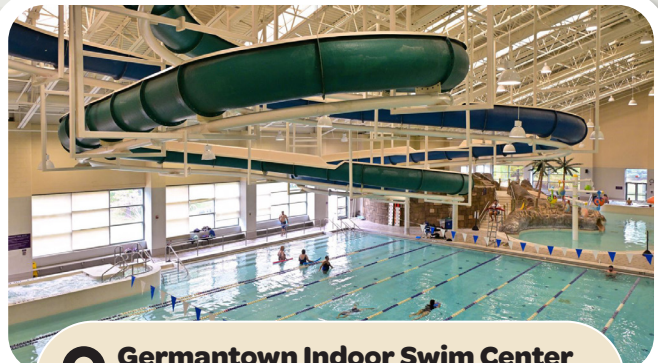
**Wheaton Ice Arena**

A popular skating spot in Wheaton, MD offering public ice skating for all skill levels.



**United States National Arboretum**

A scenic outdoor destination in Washington, DC with gardens, trails, and beautiful views.



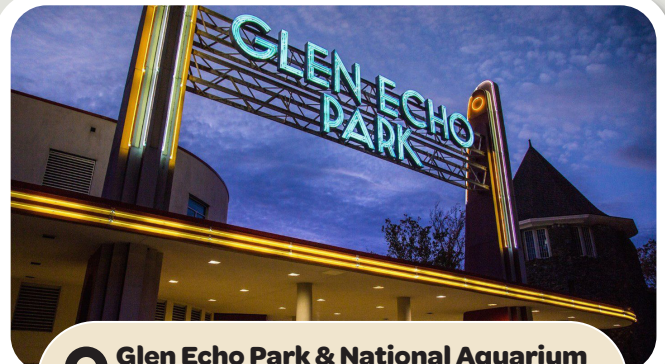
**Germantown Indoor Swim Center**

A large aquatic center in Germantown, MD featuring pools, slides, and family-friendly fun.



**Lake Needwood**

A relaxing park in Rockville, MD offering walking trails, boating, and picnic areas.



**Glen Echo Park & National Aquarium**

A charming arts park in Glen Echo, MD with a historic carousel, plus a visit to Baltimore's renowned aquarium featuring marine life exhibits.



**Smithsonian Institution – Natural History & American History Museums (Washington, DC)**

Free, world-class museums in Washington, DC with fascinating exhibits on nature, culture, and innovation.



**National Building Museum**

A unique museum in Washington, DC focused on architecture and design, known for its grand interior.



**United States Botanic Garden**

Beautiful gardens in Washington, DC and Wheaton, MD, perfect for a relaxing stroll and seasonal blooms.



**Planet Word Museum**

An interactive museum in Washington, DC dedicated to language, words, and storytelling.



**Assateague Island National Seashore**

A scenic coastal destination in Maryland and Virginia known for its wild horses, beaches, and outdoor adventures.



**Crayola Experience**

A colorful, hands-on attraction in Easton, PA where kids can create art and explore interactive exhibits.

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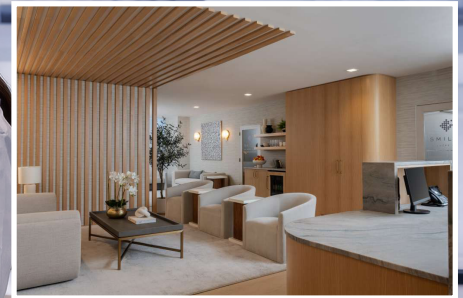
BEN YEHUDA PIZZA - YOUR EASIEST MEAL THIS SPRING.



# Your Smile, Simplified

## 10 Smarter Dental Habits Every Family Should Know

Dr. Despina Markogiannakis




**1** **Electric toothbrush – worth it, or overrated?**

I always recommend an electric toothbrush. It's much more efficient—for both adults and children.



**2** **What does a healthy daily routine actually look like?**

Flossing, brushing, mouthwash—twice a day, every day.



**3** **Water flossers – game changer or just extra?**

A water pick is a great addition. It helps clean areas people miss.

**4** **Is oral health really connected to the rest of the body?**

The mouth is connected to the rest of the body. Many times, it's the first area we see what's then to come—whether it's diabetes, heart disease, obesity, fatigue... there are so many connections we're able to see in the mouth.

**5** **What's the biggest mistake families make with dental care?**

Don't wait for there to be pain. Chances are, there's not going to be pain until the bacteria has reached the bone or the nerve.

**6** **How often should kids really be seeing a dentist?**

At least twice a year—but if they're not doing a good job at home, we need to see them more often so we can clean the areas they're missing.

**7** **What's your #1 tip for parents raising kids with good dental habits?**

Bring them in. Let us do the hard part for you.

**8** **What should families focus on long-term when it comes to dental health?**


Make sure you have that relationship with your dentist and your team. Every stage of life brings a new challenge—and we want to be there to guide you through it.

**9** **How do you personalize care for each patient?**

We really take the time to understand what's important to our patients—High Holidays, fasting, family commitments. What's happening in their life helps dictate their treatment plan.

**10** **What's the one thing patients don't realize about their dental health?**

Most patients come in saying, 'I have pain' or 'I need a cleaning.' They don't always know what they need—that's where we listen and really fine-tune a plan that's right for them.

★★★★★ **DR. MARKO'S Must-Haves**  **Dr. Despina Markogiannakis** is the owner of Smiles of Chevy Chase and a top-rated dentist in the D.C. region. Recognized by Washingtonian, Potomac, and Bethesda magazines, she specializes in restorative, cosmetic, general, and implant dentistry with a reputation for expertise, compassion, and trust.

**Electric toothbrush + floss + mouthwash daily. | Don't wait for pain. See your dentist regularly.**

# High Blood Pressure Tips



**ADAM SRAGG**  
ADULT PRIMARY CARE  
NURSE PRACTITIONER



**H**igh blood pressure (hypertension) is one of the most common conditions that I manage in primary care. It occurs when the force of your blood pushes against the walls of your blood vessels, which can lead to serious complications including heart attack or stroke. When the pressure of the blood flowing in the arteries increases, that damages the inner lining of the arteries. This process allows fats to enter and collect in the damaged arteries, leading to life threatening conditions.

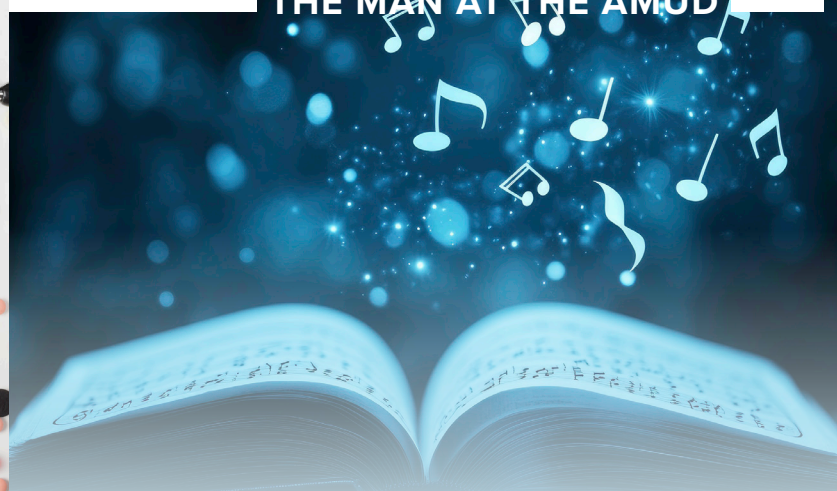
Unfortunately, I have met patients as young as 45 years old who have had strokes because of uncontrolled blood pressure. Some important risk factors for hypertension include age, family history, obesity, poor diet, lack of exercise, smoking, and alcohol use. If these risk factors are applicable, then I recommend you purchase a blood pressure arm cuff and check your blood pressure regularly. I recommend the omron-3 series blood pressure cuff, which is a worthwhile investment. It is important to recognize the normal and abnormal blood pressure values. The perfect blood pressure value is 120/80. Between 130-139/80-89 is considered hypertension type 1 and a value of 140/90 or greater would be considered hypertension type 2. In hypertension type 1, there needs to be close monitoring and rigorous lifestyle changes but not immediate medication intervention. In hypertension type 2, the patient needs to consider medication management to decrease their blood pressure.

The DASH diet is the best for controlling blood pressure levels and includes foods such as whole-grain bread, brown rice, quinoa, lean meats, chicken, fish, vegetables, fruits, low-fat dairy products, almonds, flaxseeds, lentils, and avocado. Regular exercise helps make the heart stronger, which allows the heart to pump more blood with less effort, decreasing blood pressure. If you are concerned about your blood pressure, you should reach out to your primary care.

**Adam Sragg** is a nurse practitioner. After working in surgical nursing for multiple years, he earned a master's degree from Simmons University's family nurse practitioner program, allowing him to focus more on preventative medicine. Adam has worked as an adult primary care nurse practitioner for over four years with a diverse patient population.

Adam has done clinical work at a variety of local hospitals including Holy Cross Hospital, Adventist Healthcare White Oak Medical Center, Medstar Montgomery Medical Center, Children's National Hospital, and other local primary care facilities.

His nurse practitioner position gives him the opportunity to maintain his nursing passion and act as the patient's advocate in a provider role. His main goal is to provide focused and individual patient care with an emphasis on education, compassion, concern, and encouragement. Adam has experience with helping children and adults of physical and mental disabilities in reaching their health goals.



# Importance of a Hazzan



**ADIR HAIM**

**T**he word Hazzan comes from the root "LaHazot", to see. It means a Hazzan is not meant to be in place on account of voice but rather his ability to see Ratzon Hashem in his daily life.

The Peleh Yoetz talks about the ideal Hazzan. He says, "When choosing a Hazzan, don't go after a pleasurable voice... rather pick a Shliach Tzibbur with wisdom and fear of sin preceding his wisdom and he is complete with good middot".

We often associate a Hazzan with a beautiful voice, but the obligation of the Hazzan is to send the Tefilot of the Kahal to Shamiam with the utmost Kavanah. This is why it is very important/customary to have someone respected and loved by the community leading the services.

The Gemara in Berachot 6a quotes "במקום רנה שם תהא תפילה". In a place of song, there will be Tefillah. A Hazzan's mission is to bring melody into the davening in a way that connects each individual to Hashem.

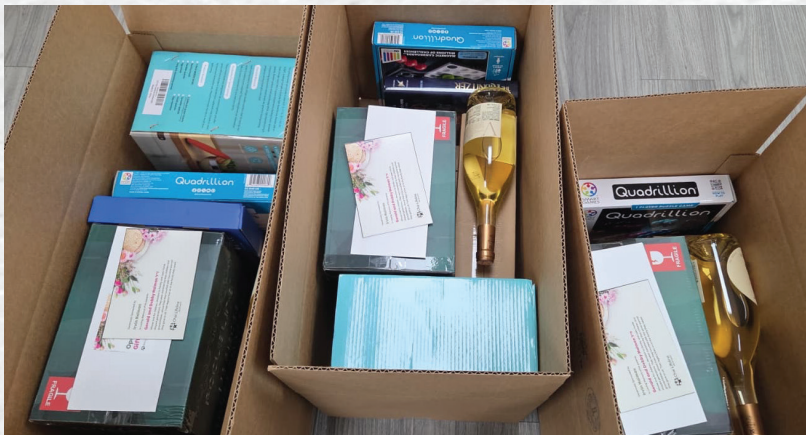
**Adir Haim** is a distinguished Sephardi chazzan, widely recognized across communities as a sought-after voice for Shabbat, Yamim Noraim, and prominent communal events. Known for his refined delivery and emotional depth, he is regarded as a trusted and familiar presence in Sephardi synagogues nationwide.

He graduated from the University of California, San Diego (Class of 2021) with a degree in Applied Mathematics, and currently serves as a Senior Consultant at an award-winning global tax services and software firm—the largest organization in the world dedicated exclusively to business taxation. He currently resides in the Washington, D.C. area with his wife and children.

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[www.chailifeline.org/ma-pesach](http://www.chailifeline.org/ma-pesach)



Thank you so much for the Pesach gift package. I am so touched. I have not been able to keep myself out of bed today, just all the Pesach prep this year feels so much and I feel so uplifted and thought of.  
Thank you.

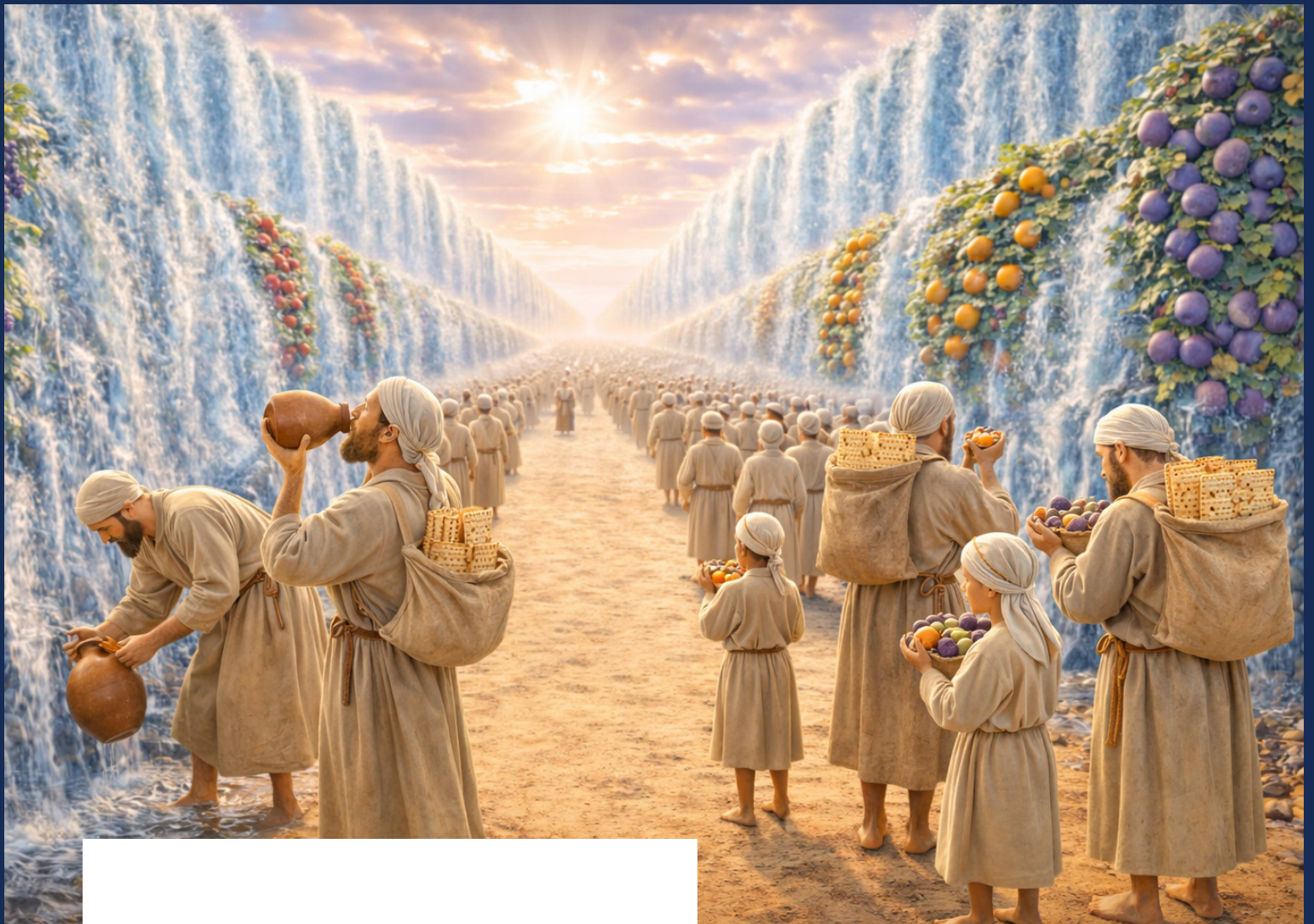
Thank you so much!  
So very kind of you!  
Warms my heart and  
gives me koach!  
Mi kamcha Yisrael!

Just received the most special package!! I wish you were here to see the excitement!!

Wow, our Pesach gift from Chai Lifeline was delivered and as always, we can't thank you guys enough for the incredible kindness and thoughtfulness you put into your gifts.

Wishing you and your family a Chag Kasher V'Sameach. Thank you so much for the extremely generous and thoughtful Passover gifts. It is appreciated more than you know!

Really appreciate these lovely packages. They add a little sparkle to life.



## *The sea split.*

**But Hashem did more than that.**

Chazal teach that the walls of the Yam Suf provided fruit and fountains for those walking through.

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