

Parashat Bo 5778

P'SHAT

Ex. 13:3 And Moses said to the people, "Remember this day, on which you went free from Egypt, the house of bondage, how the Eternal freed you from it with a mighty hand: no leavened bread shall be eaten.

4 You go free on this day, in the month of Abib. ⁵ So, when the Eternal has brought you into the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which God swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, you shall observe in this month the following practice:

Ex. 13:6 "Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a festival of the Eternal One. ⁷ Throughout the seven days unleavened bread shall be eaten; no leavened bread shall be found with you, and no leaven shall be found in all your territory. ⁸ And you shall explain to your son on that day, 'It is because of what the Eternal did for me when I went free from Egypt.'

Ex. 13:9 "And this shall serve you as a sign on your hand and as a reminder on your forehead—in order that the Teaching of the Eternal may be in your mouth—that with a mighty hand the Eternal freed you from Egypt. ¹⁰ You shall keep this institution at its set time from year to year.

3 וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-הָעָם זְכוֹר אֶת-הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר יֵצְאתֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבַּיִת עֲבָדִים כִּי בְחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיא יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם מִצֵּיט וְלֹא יֵאָכֵל חֶמֶץ: 4 הַיּוֹם אֲתֶם יֵצְאִים בְּחֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב: 5 וְהָיָה כִּי-יָבִיֵאֵל יְהוָה אֶל-אֶרֶץ הַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַחִתִּי וְהָאֱמֹרִי וְהַחִוִּי וְהַיְבוּסִי אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם לָתֵת לָהּ אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וְדָבָשׁ וְעָבַדְתָּ אֶת-הָעִבְרָה הַזֹּאת בְּחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה: 6 שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תֹּאכַל מַצֹּת וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׂבִיעִי חַג לַיהוָה: 7 מִצּוֹת יֵאָכֵל אֶת שִׁבְעַת הַיָּמִים וְלֹא-יֵרָאֶה לָּךְ חֶמֶץ וְלֹא-יֵרָאֶה לָּךְ שָׂאֵר בְּכָל-גְּבֻלָּךְ: 8 וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר בְּעֵבֹר זֶה עָשָׂה יְהוָה לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם: 9 וְהָיָה לָּךְ לְאוֹת עַל-יָדְךָ וּלְזִכָּרוֹן בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ לְמַעַן תִּהְיֶה תּוֹרַת יְהוָה בְּפִיךָ כִּי בְיַד חֹזֶק הוֹצִיאֲךָ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרָיִם: 10 וְשָׁמַרְתָּ אֶת-הַחֻקָּה הַזֹּאת לְמוֹעֲדָה מִיָּמִים יָמִימָה: ס

KEY KOSHI: What's the spiritual practice of remembering Egypt? Or for remembering? What's the spirituality of the Passover Seder?

בָּרַךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְעֲסוֹק בְּדִבְרֵי תּוֹרָה.
 Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'civvanu laasok b'divrei Torah.
 Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, who hallows us with mitzvot, commanding us to engage with words of Torah.

REMEZ

RASHI...

“Remember this day” [13:3]: This teaches that one must make mention of the Exodus from Egypt every day (Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael 13:3; cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 27:9).

את העבודה הזאת – “this practice” [13:5]: that of the Paschal offering. But IBN EZRA says it's “Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread” [v. 6]. NAHUM SARNA notes: The Hebrew is a word play on “bondage” in v. 3. Service of God in freedom in Israel's own land is contrasted with the service to the pharaoh in Egyptian slavery.

“And you shall tell your son” [13:8]: Referring to a son who does not know how to enquire. The text teaches you that you yourself must open up the conversation with stories that will attract the heart (cf. Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael 13:14:1; Shabbat 87a).

והיה לך לאות – “It shall serve as a sign” [13:9]: The Exodus from Egypt shall be a sign...

על ירך ולזכרון בין עיניך – “on your hand and as a reminder between your eyes” [13:9]: Meaning, that you shall write these paragraphs (verses 1—10 and 11—16) and bind them upon the head and upon the arm.

But RASHBAM explains: According to the straightforward sense at its most profound level, it should be a reminder *as permanent as if* it were written on your hand. We find a similar syntax in Song of Songs 8:6, “Let me be a seal upon your heart, like a seal upon your hand.”

RASHBAM continues: “Between your eyes,” like a precious jewel (or amulet) which one places on one's forehead as a decoration.

IBN EZRA ADDS: Think of them and speak of them frequently.

CHIZKUNI: “It shall be a symbol, (tangible reminder) for you on your hand (and arm);” all of this is part of what you are to tell your son. It is inscribed on the first parchment inside the phylacteries. Logic dictates that first and foremost the phylacteries are to serve as historical reminder for you (sing.) on your arm (where not everyone can see it, but once you have put on phylacteries as a historical reminder for yourself, it must also serve as such for all the other Jews, (and gentiles) i.e. you must wear another one of the phylacteries on your forehead to trumpet this message to all who see you. Thus will be fulfilled what is written in Deuteronomy 28,10: וראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם ה' נקרא עליך, “and all the nations of the earth will see that the name of the Lord has been proclaimed upon you.”

SARNA on “Teaching of the Eternal” [13:9]: While this first appearance of this biblical phrase cannot yet refer to canonized Torah, it does presuppose a fixed text that can be memorized and recited.

DRASH



The Next Wave of Jewish Feminism: Questions for an Unfinished Revolution BY TAMARA COHEN

I didn't attend the First National Jewish Women's Conference in New York in 1973. My mother wanted to bring me, her two year-old daughter, but the conference organizers asked her to either stay home with her baby or attend the conference alone. Although she resented the choice, she went to the conference without me.

Over the years, my two sisters and I have embraced a feminism we feel takes my mother's feminist thinking to the next step. So it is with a deep respect for her, and the feminism with which she raised me, that I voice the following, somewhat critical, observations and questions.

Is Jewish feminism about finding new images for God, ordaining women as rabbis, generating new *midrash* and developing new ritual? Or is it about becoming partners with women of color, protesting the human rights abuses in the West Bank, and demanding changes in an unfair economy?

The answer to both of these questions must be yes. Jewish feminists have made significant changes to the fabric of Judaism and the shape of the Jewish community. While we continue that work, we must also acknowledge with equal creativity and energy our responsibility to the broader questions of feminism, seeing other women's issues as our own...

I want a Jewish feminism that lays claim both to the heritage of [Jewish socialist] Bundist women—as well as the women who wrote *tekhines* (Yiddish petitionary prayers); that acknowledges both the women of the Emma Lazarus Federation (secular American socialists) and the women of *Ezrat Nashim* (who lobbied for Conservative women's ordination). It's time for Jewish feminists to refute the dichotomies of secular and religious, insisting rather that feminism is always political as well as spiritual. It's time to recognize that the liberation that is central to Jewish feminism is seriously compromised if our commitment to our own spiritual enrichment is not coupled with a commitment to societal change specifically aimed at improving the lives of less privileged women...

From the January 2000 issue of *Sh'ma, A Journal of Jewish Responsibility*. Tamara Cohen is a Jewish feminist writer and educator currently living with her partner in Gainesville, Florida. She is the spiritual leader of a community in Litchfield County, CT and is on the board of Brit Tzedek V'Shalom: The Jewish Alliance for Justice and Peace.

SOD



More than 80 Jewish clergy members and activists were arrested on Capitol Hill on Wednesday for protesting President Donald Trump's plan to end a program that protects hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants who came to the United States as children.

More than a hundred rabbis and activists, some wearing prayer shawls and yarmulkes, gathered in the center of the rotunda in the Russell Senate Office Building on Wednesday morning. They sang songs, shouted cheers and made statements of support for the young undocumented immigrants, known as Dreamers, a group of whom were watching the action from a balcony one floor up.

Police arrested 82 protesters, U.S. Capitol Police communications director Eva Malecki told HuffPost. The protesters were charged for "crowding, obstructing, or incommoding" in a public building...

Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, was among the clergy members arrested Wednesday.

"This is no time for business as usual," Pesner said in a statement ahead of the protest. "In the Torah, we are called 36 different ways to love the stranger, the orphan, and the widow. We were strangers in the land of Egypt, and know what it means to be turned away from places we thought of as home."

The rabbi added: "Today, we say there is no more time to waste. We insist that Dreamers be recognized as the Americans that they are."

[Huffington Post, 1/17/2108]

Video of R' Pesner quoting Micah 6:8 on his way to the Capital:

<https://www.facebook.com/TheRAC/videos/10155034326267115/>