

PASSOVER

The Story of Divine Providence

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The festival of Passover calls for early and elaborate preparations to make the Jewish home fitting for the great festival. It is not physical preparedness alone that is required of us, but also spiritual preparedness—for in the life of the Jew the physical and spiritual are closely linked together, especially in the celebration of our Sabbath and festivals.

On Passover we celebrate the liberation of the Jewish people from Egyptian slavery and, together with it, the liberation from, and negation of the ancient Egyptian system and way of life, the "abominations of Egypt." Thus we celebrate our physical liberation together with our spiritual freedom. Indeed, there cannot be one without the other; there can be no real freedom without accepting the precepts of our Torah guiding our daily life; pure and holy life eventually leads to real freedom.

It is said: "In every generation each Jew should see himself as though he personally had been liberated from Egypt." This is to say, that the lesson of Passover has *always* a timely message for the individual Jew. The story of Passover is the story of the special Divine Providence which alone determines the fate of our people. What is happening in the outside world need not affect us; we might be singled out for suffering, G-d forbid, amid general prosperity, and likewise singled out for safety amid a general plague or catastrophe. The story of our enslavement and liberation of which Passover tells us, give ample illustration of this. For the fate of our people is determined by its adherence to G-d and His Prophets.

This lesson is emphasized by the three principal symbols of the Seder, concerning which our Sages said that unless the Jew explains their significance he has not observed the Seder fittingly: *Pesach* [the Paschal Offering], *Matzoh* and *Moror* [bitter herbs]. Using these symbols in their chronological order and in accordance with the Haggadah explanation, we may say: the Jews avoid *Moror* (bitterness of life) only through *Pesach* (G-d's special care 'passing over' and saving the Jewish homes even in the midst of the greatest plague), and *Matzoh*—then the very catastrophe and the enemies of the Jews will work for the benefit of the Jews, driving them in great haste out of "Mitzraim" [Egypt], the place of perversion and darkness, and placing them under the beam of light and holiness.

One other important thing we must remember. The celebration of the festival of freedom must be connected with the commandment "You shall relate it to your son." The formation and existence of the Jewish home, as of the Jewish people as a whole, is dependent upon the upbringing of the young generation, both boys and girls: the *wise* and the *wicked* (temporarily), the *simple* and the one *who knows not what to ask*. Just as we cannot shirk our responsibility towards our child by

the excuse that "my child is a wise one; he will find his own way in life therefore no education is necessary for him"; so we must not despair by thinking "the child is a wicked one; no education will help him." For, all Jewish children, boys and girls, are "G-d's children" and it is our sacred duty to see to it that they all live up to their above mentioned title; and this we can achieve only through a kosher Jewish education, in full adherence to G-d's Torah. Then we all will merit the realization of our ardent hopes: "In the next year may we be free; in the next year may we be in Jerusalem!"

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