# The Pesach Ten

NDD Pesach (Passover) has been read by mystics as a contraction of the words Pe  $\neg \neg \neg$  and Sach  $\neg \neg \neg \neg$  - the mouth converses  $^1$ . It is one of the times when we are encouraged to speak and share many ideas.  $^2$  And while the rituals of Pesach are the same, we are different, so in this short compilation of contemplations I share 10 ideas that were formulated to help you connect to Pesach in the here and now.

As always, I welcome any feedback or thoughts on social media @Rabbi Benji or through my website: <a href="www.RabbiBenji.com">www.RabbiBenji.com</a> and wish you and your family a meaningful festival!

Chag Kasher V'Sameach,

Rabbi Benji

### SOURCE

<sup>1</sup> Pri Eitz Chaim, Shaar Mikrah Kodesh, ch. 4

<sup>2</sup> Maimonides, Sefer HaMitzvot, Positive command 157

Time does not pass through a person

but a person

journeys

through time. 1

אין הזמן עובר על האדם אלא האדם נוסע בתוך הזמן

A key element of Pesach = Breaking Boundaries

Time is

The Hebrew word for Egypt מְצְרֵים – *Mitzrayim* 

has the same letters as the word בְּרִים – *Meitzarim* 

- boundaries <sup>2</sup>

The same **spiritual energy** 

of the miraculous exodus of a band of slaves from their

bondage in Egypt

Just as the first Pesach resulted in liberation from

Egyptian slavery;

we are empowered to break free from the shackles

of our own inner 'Egypt'

etching clo

towards

achieving

our

notential.

# PERMEATES

the festival of Pesach each and every year.

How can we tap into that e n e r g y?

Pick one area that holds you back

break free.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Michtav M'Eliyahu, Vol. II, p. 21

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Torah Or, Beshalach 64a-b

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Haggada

# Spring clean your life

like you do your home.

If you clean well that is...

One of the biggest elements of Pesach happens before it begins.

While many of us end up cleaning everything,

the main objective is to

remove chametz

- food forbidden on Pesach.

The word Chametz

Is related to the word יתחמץ

- embitterment.1

Decluttering makes space.

Some understand this connection as relating to the inclination towards negativity. Just as we are to rid our homes of Chametz,

Remove that which is unnecessary, feeding your evil inclination and slowing you down.

we are to rid our hearts of embitterment and the evil inclination.<sup>2</sup>

Let's clean.

Pick one thing from your heart or mind that you are holding onto.

Something that you know isn't good for you.

Clean it out and

it

80

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Psalms 73:21

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Rabbeinu Bechaye, Kad HaKemach, Pesach 1

He came in during trying times and his own father

wasn't exactly the best role model.

Almost all superheroes have

an origin story:

But he knew

that if the Jewish people remembered where

they came from

and tapped into their origin story,

a bedrock account of the transformative events...<sup>1</sup>

they would be proud of who they are

and live out

their truth.

Pesach is the origin story of the

And they did!

Jewish people: The birth of a nation.

Resulting in one of the greatest Teshuva movements,

Thousands of years have

passed...

where the people returned to the best versions of themselves

Why is that important to us

today?

through remembering where they came from.

In a world that sometimes asks us to be **more ish than Jew** 

Most people have never heard of King Josiah of Judah,

but he changed Jewry during his reign (476-445 BCE)

Let us choose to be Jews.

Choose to be proud of our origin story.

and his superpower was...

The Pesach story.<sup>2</sup>

The story that

made makes

us who we are.

How can you convey your pride in our origin story a little more?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The Superhero Reader, eds. Charles Hatfield, Jeet Heer, and Dr. Kent Worcester

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> II Kings 23:21-23

What came first

Pesach

01

the Exodus from Egypt?

May sound like a silly question right?

Well then,

what's Abraham doing eating Matzah hundreds of years before the Jews were even in Egypt,

let alone leaving it? 1

Abraham knew how to listen. 2

He listened so deeply that he could detect latent energy

beneath the surface.

He could feel the power of freedom and spring that would imbue the exodus.

He acted based on choice and ate the Matzah without having been commanded to.

His choice, in part, led to our obligations.

Ultimately most obligations begin as a choice.

I choose to learn in a particular setting and am obligated to

follow the rules accordingly.

I choose to commit to something or someone which comes with

certain responsibilities.

We don't always get a choice in what we need to do.

But we always get a choice in

how we approach

what we need to do.

So whether looking at voluntary or obligatory areas of your life,

intentionally

consider how you approach them.

What choice

will you make?

Choose one important obligation in your life that you sometimes do begrudgingly.
Can you approach it differently?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Genesis 19:3; Genesis Rabba 48:12

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Mishna, Kiddushin 4:14

## Life is full of unknowns

## but sometimes it is in the unknown

in taking risks

that we allow ourselves to GROW.

When the Jewish people left Egypt they were faced with

unknowns.

Following God into the wilderness,<sup>1</sup>

without their usual vanities<sup>2</sup> or homes.

But out of that unknown a nation was born. Our nation.

Pesach is a powerful time

leap

split

it

Like Nachshon ben Aminadav

who went into the Red Sea

where our willingness to take a of faith into the unknown

can lead to rebirth, growth and a step closer towards

and the Jewish Nation

who went out into the desert without knowing what lay ahead.

the realisation of our potential.

Imagine what opportunities are around the corner waiting for you to take the risk to grab them.

Take one calculated risk in an area that is important to you.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Jeremiah 2:2

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Sfat Emet, Leviticus, 565

You are what you do.

While not always the best approach,

there is truth in the statement

'fake it till you make it'.

External actions have a powerful effect on our inner lives.

It is for this reason that so many actions we undertake at the Seder

are symbolic acts of free people

\_like reclining.

Even if there is something 'enslaving'

us, we still act free.

Because acting free is a step in the direction towards becoming free. <sup>1</sup>

Want to change your life?

Start with how you live it.

What area of your life do you want to change? Approach it with the confidence of someone who embodies that change.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Sefer HaChinuch, Mitzva 16

**Wisdom - knowledge = EXPERIENCE** 

Everyone loves the Afikomen – the piece of Matza that we designate early on to be the last thing we eat.

For some it's because it symbolizes receiving gifts and for others it is because it is the last thing we eat.

- for a reason.

The taste is meant to *linger* in our mouth. 1

It's not enough to connect with family, appreciate freedom, empathize or introspect within Pesach itself.

The lessons need to accompany us even when we've eaten our

last piece of Matza.

When we fail to apply what we learn we lose out on the potential to GROW.

Pesach, with its myriad of lessons, gives us chances to become more of what we want to become.

As the festival concludes, we need to ask if anything else has

CHANGED other than our diet.

What lesson from the Seder would you like to *linger* on?

Source

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Mishna, Pesachim 10:8

The only time you ever own is the *present*.

It's human nature to focus on the future or past.

Anywhere but the HERE AND NOW.

We worry about things that may never happen and things that we cannot change.

We forget that the only time we truly have control over is the present.

Imagine thinking only of the *moment* you're in.

Being so focused on the here and now you enter

the z o n e.

In the Haggada we learn of the 5 Rabbis who were so present in their Seder,

they had to be told it was time for the morning prayers.

They truly entered the z o n e.

You choose where your focus lies.

Place it in the one place where action happens

- THE PRESENT.

Pick one relationship you have.
Consciously be more PRESENT with that person.

You are the sum of your closest friends

- so choose wisely.

Egypt may have been the greatest civilization of the time.

But it had some of the worst values imaginable.

And we were not immune to our surroundings. <sup>1</sup>

Some people think they can watch what they like, eat what they like and associate with whoever they feel like.

But these things INFLUENCE us.

The people you surround yourself with can make you a BETTER person.

*Or* they can prevent you from reaching your potential.

Choose wisely.

Consider the people you spend most of your time with and how they make you a BETTER PERSON.

Source

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Shenei Luchot HaBrit, Aseret HaDibrot, Pesachim, Matzah Shemurah 44

We ran out of Egypt.

And we did it so *fast*, the dough didn't even have time to rise. 1

But when you are told to do something and you do it *quickly*, you don't always cultivate intrinsic **CHANDE**.

The Israelites were taken out of Egypt, but Egypt was not yet taken out of the Israelites.

Real change requires work and to be truly f r e e we need to do the work.

What can be achieved was revealed. But they needed to **OWN IT.** 

Pesach is an opportunity to remember what we can achieve.

We then need to become what we know is best for us.

And the Omer helps us do it one step at a

**MAKE IT COUNT!** 

What element of freedom do you need to work at?

Source

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Haggada