

FREE TRANSLATION

By the Grace of G-d  
11th of Nissan, 5729  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

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

Greeting and Blessing:

The Yom Tov Pesach, "head" of the Three Festivals<sup>1</sup> (Pesach, Shvuos, Succos) and first of all festivals, with its central theme of Yetzias Mitzraim (Liberation from Egypt) and the birth of the Jewish nation<sup>2</sup>, are of special significance as an historic event of comprehensive and enduring consequences<sup>3</sup>. Hence all details connected with this event are also comprehensive in their instruction, and, of course, eternal by nature<sup>4</sup>, like all matters of Torah, which is eternal and not limited in time and place.

We will dwell here on one aspect of Korban Pesach (Pesach sacrifice) and Yetzias Mitzraim.

A prerequisite of Korban Pesach, and thus connected<sup>5</sup> with it, is the Mitzvah of Milah (Circumcision), as it is written: "Every male shall be circumcised and then shall he draw near to make it (the sacrifice)...and no uncircumcised shall eat of it"<sup>6</sup>. Moreover, our Sages declare<sup>7</sup> that the whole event of Yetzias Mitzraim came to pass in the merit of the two Mitzvos: Korban Pesach and Milah.

There is an inner connection between the two Mitzvos<sup>8</sup>:

Bris Milah (Covenant of Circumcision), taking place on the eighth day after birth, constitutes the Covenant between the Jew and G-d right at the beginning<sup>9</sup> of his lifetime, to the effect that his whole life<sup>10</sup> should be lived in accordance with G-d's will.

Korban Pesach is a Mitzvah which was commanded, first of all, to the head of the family ("Each man shall take a lamb according to the paternal household, a lamb for each household..according to your families"<sup>11</sup>). Furthermore, in connection with the first Korban Pesach it is written: "Draw out (i.e. withdraw - from idolatry) and take unto you"<sup>12</sup> a lamb for the Korban Pesach. We are thus reminded that at this stage of life there is a past, and it is possible that the past was not as it should have been, and requires to be rectified.

Applying the above mentioned concepts in the daily life, we are taught as follows:

Each minute<sup>13</sup> of life is the beginning of a new sequence of hours and days, and at the same time also the continuation of the previous living. To put it in general terms:

There are times and seasons when a person begins new things, and there are times and seasons when a person continues and works on previous matters.

Since life's purpose is, as it has been said: "I was created to serve my Creator"<sup>14</sup>, and, moreover, since we owe subservience to G-d because He liberated us from Egyptian bondage ("I am G-d, your G-d /because, I am He/ Who brought you out of Egypt, from the house of bondage"<sup>15</sup>) - the above mentioned concepts of Bris Milah and Korban Pesach reflect two general modes of serving G-d: the service of a Tzaddik, whose main preoccupation is with new things and new achievements; and the service of a Baal-Teshuvah (repenter), whose main endeavor is in the area of repairing and rectifying the<sup>16</sup> past. Also in the higher aspect of Teshuvah - return to the Source - there is the obvious implication that there was a time when the individual was closer to the Source but had moved away. Indeed, the soul, before its descent to a life on earth, was purely spiritual, and the purpose of her descent is not merely that she remain spiritual when it inhabits the body, but that she should spiritualize also the body and the animal soul in man<sup>17</sup>.

In more specific terms, in the every-day life of every Jew: 18, Immediately upon rising in the morning, he is like a new creature<sup>18</sup>, beginning a new life with the declaration: "I thank Thee, O Living and Eternal King," etc. And at the end of the day, before retiring to bed, there is cheshbon hanefesh<sup>20</sup> (soul searching) of the bygone day, during the reading of the Shema before going to bed, prior to commending his soul into G-d's care: "Into Thy Hand I entrust my spirit."

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This is also the concept of Zeman Cheiruseinu (Season of Our Liberation) and Yetzias Mitzraim as a daily experience: To be free and unobstructed by limitations and confines (metzorim ugvulim) of one's own nature, as well as of subservience to the spiritually alien environment. This requires avodah (service) on two levels<sup>22</sup>: on a level similar to that of a Tzaddik - to continually initiate new good things, do good; and on the level of a Baal Teshuvah, turn away from evil and do good - to repair what is to be repaired of the past, and to strive and rise ever closer to one's primordial Source in G-dliness.

Even if a person finds himself, G-d forbid, in a situation similar to Galuth Mitzraim of old, when many undesirable alien things encrust the soul, he can quickly free himself by making a resolute decision to belong to G-d<sup>23</sup>. His declaration, "G-d, our G-d (elokeynu, our strength and vitality<sup>24</sup>), G-d is One," will bring the immediate response, "I am G-d your G-d, Who brought you out of Egypt" - and still does, now as then. Thereupon, his enslavement to "Pharaoh" and "Mitzraim" abominations is nullified, and he climbs out of the quagmire, repairs the past, and begins a new life, a truly Jewish life, attaining true freedom through Torah and Mitzvos.

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May G-d grant that all the above should be as, in the time of the first Yetzias Mitzraim - with a "raised hand"<sup>25</sup>, "with a lofty spirit, song and joy,

Thereby<sup>26</sup> bringing closer and hastening the fulfilment of the prophetic promise<sup>27</sup>: "As in the days of your coming out of Egypt, I will show him wonders" - with the true and complete redemption through Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

With blessing for a  
Kosher and joyous Pesach

/Signed/ Menachem Schneerson

- (1) ר"ה, ד, א. (2) ראה מפרשים ליחזקאל טז. (3) כי הוא (יצ"מ) יסוד גדול ועמוד חזק בתורתנו ובאמונתנו כו' (חינוך מצוה כא). (4) בכל פרטי' (ולא רק הציווים שבה), שהרי צ"ל ברכת התורה - "נותן התורה" ל' הווה (לקו"ת ויקרא כג, א) - גם בנוגע לכתוב ואחות לוטן תמנע וכיו"ב (ראה סנה" צט, ב). פיה"מ להרמב"ם ר"פ חלק יסוד השמיני: ואין הפרש כו'. (5) שמות יב, מח. (6) ופסח לא בא מתחלתו אלא לאכילה (משנה פסחים עו, ב). (7) פדר"א פכ"ט. (8) להעיר ג"כ אשר פסח ומילה שניהם מ"ע שיש בה כרת (כריתות בתחלתה). (9) ועד יום השמיני כאלו הוא עדיין בבטן (האם) - מו"נ ח"ג פמ"ט. וראה דב"ר רפ"ו. נדה לא, ב. ויק"ר פכ"ז, י. ס' הבהיר ש' קסח. (10) יומתק ע"פ המבואר במ"א אשר מילה היא פעולה נמשכת, וכדמוכח במנחות מג, ב. (11) שמות יב, ג. שם כא. (12) שמות יב, כא. מכילתא שם. (13) לבד הראשון - שאין שם עבר והאחרון - שאין שם עתיד. ואכ"מ. (14) משנה סוף קידושין. (15) רש"י שמות כ, ב. וראה מכילתא שם. שמו"ר פכ"ט, ג. (16) ראה תניא פל"א (ומבאר שם: היא בחי' יצי"מ כו'). ובלקו"ת ר"פ האזינו: הנה עיקר התשובה הוא כו'. (17) ראה תניא פל"ז (מח, סע"א) וכל ניצוץ כו'. (18) ראה שו"ע אדה"ז חאו"ח (מהדו"ק) ר"ס ד. (19) וסיומו רבה אמונתך - ע"פ מש"כ חדשים לבקרים רבה אמונתך (מדרש תהלים כה). (20) ראה ד"ה אין עומדין ה'תש"ב (בקונ' ביקור שיקאגא) ובכ"מ. (21) כי בכל יום חייב אדם לראות עצמו כאילו הוא יצא היום ממצרים (תניא רפמ"ז). (22) ראה ד"ה שה תמים (בס' המאמרים תרכ"ט) בביאור הענין שקרבן פסח הי' מן הכבשים ומן העזים. וכן במילה - הסרת הערלה (שאינו ערל. סור מרע), שהוא מהול (מ"ע). ואכ"מ. (23) ראה תניא פמ"ז. (24) ראה טוש"ע או"ח ס"ה. לקו"ת במדבר עג, ב. (25) שמות יד, ח. (26) ראה שם בפדר"א (פכ"ט) שבזכות מילה ופסח נגאלו ממצרים "ובזכותם אתם עתידין ליגאל בסוף". (27) מיכה ז, טו.