



DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

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What is the longest Jewish holiday? Several weeks ago, I wrote here that Purim seems to be the longest holiday on the Jewish calendar, since preparations begin already from *Rosh Chodesh Adar*, and schools have events almost every day leading up to Purim itself. Well, it didn't take long for the phone calls, WhatsApps and emails to start coming in (and even people stopping me on the street!) to tell me that no, Purim is not the longest holiday - Pesach is.

First off, they argued, many start to clean their houses right after Purim, fully a month away from Pesach, and some people do it even earlier than that. Second, if we judge the length of a holiday based on children and their schools, then we should consider how schools have so many days off in Israel for Pesach vacation. Lastly, a few people pointed out to me that Pesach has a special *mitzvah*

to prepare thirty days in advance by starting to learn the laws of Pesach. Included in this learning, the Shabbat before Pesach is called "Shabbat HaGadol," and the Rabbi of the community typically gives a long lecture about Pesach, its themes and laws, to prepare people for the holiday. Some even have the custom to read the Haggadah on Shabbat HaGadol to prepare for the *seder*.

Truth be told, I couldn't really disagree on these points. Given the fact that I have a wonderful family that likes planning in advance and starts cleaning early, we definitely feel Pesach in our house way in advance.

That being said, there is a strange phenomenon every year around Pesach that many people feel. In most cases, preparing in advance should lead to an organized and calm process. Here at the OU, we plan many of our programs well in advance, whether it be *tiyulim*, events, *shiurim*, or our summer camps, leading to beautifully planned and executed programs, *baruch Hashem*. Yet, when it comes to Pesach, despite preparing in advance as many of us do, we often still feel that last-minute pressure. It almost seems like no matter how far in advance we prepare, it is never enough. Many people seem to arrive at the *seder* exhausted after so much activity.

This phenomenon is a shame because it can affect our ability to do a special *mitzvah* of the night. One of the main *mitzvot* is "*higadeta levincha*," teaching your children the Pesach story. It is so much harder to fulfill this *mitzvah* when one is tired and mentally drained.

May the Torah learning
from this issue of Torah Tidbits be
לעילוי נשמה

Leila Manasseh ז"ל

לאה מנוחה בת

צב' וחיה רבקה ז"ל

On her third Yahrzeit - כ"ד ניסן

**Greatly missed by her
children, grandchildren
and great-grandchildren**

**Families Ross, Miller,
Lipnick & Manasseh**

A person could be drinking four cups of wine, eating multiple *kezaytim* of *matzah*, *maror*, *charoset*, and all the while worrying how he is going to be able to give over to his children, his grandchildren, and all his guests, the feeling that they are literally leaving *mitzrayim* and thanking *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* for the incredible miracles the Jewish people have experienced.

Perhaps this is the *bracha* of how Pesach falls out this year, on *motzei* Shabbat. Once Shabbat comes in, we can recover a bit from all the pressure of the preparations. With all the cleaning and cooking basically done, Shabbat is a time when we can hopefully rest, learn, and prepare ourselves without a tremendous amount of *lachatz*. A Shabbat of calm before Pesach is a wonderful thing to have.

It means that we will be able to focus a lot more on the *chinuch* of our children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews and friends' children. When it comes to *chinuch*, Chazal teach us, for example, that we should get "*klayot ve'egozim*", roasted nuts, to keep the children engaged at the *seider*. Today, we probably need to look at other treats and *shtick* to keep the kids excited and awake and asking questions. But the point is, Chazal were thinking of different ways to make sure that we are focusing on the *chinuch* element of the *seider*, and they really help. My family purchases OU-certified little chocolates that are individually wrapped, and the children know that every time they ask or answer a question, they get one of these chocolates. It adds to their excitement for the *seider* night. While there is already excitement surrounding the *matzah*, *maror*, and all the other *mitzvot* they have been learning about, there is no doubt that these little chocolates

that we added at our *seider* have added a tremendous amount of excitement for our children, and help fulfill Chazal's directive of *chinuch* at the *seider*.

When I think of how important those simple chocolates are in my family for the *seider* night, I realize that those who say that Pesach is the longest holiday are right, because I can see how much time and effort the OU puts in to make a truly kosher Pesach for everyone. We are *kashering* factories throughout the year to produce Pesach products, with over 195 factories across Israel, as well as hundreds of others around the world. All of OU Israel programs ran special Pre-Pesach events. Beyond that, we have been busy making podcasts about Pesach in order to help people prepare. I did an episode with Rabbi Ezra Friedman, and another with Rabbi Yissachar Dov Krakowski, under the banner of the Gustave & Carol Jacobs Center for Kashrut Education. We also published our annual OU Israel Pesach Guide, distributing over 35,000 copies across the country. And, of course, we produce the Torah Tidbits's special issue for Pesach. (Note: You can view the podcasts on www.youtube.com/@theouisrael and download a digital version of our Pesach Guide at www.ou.org.)

May the Torah learned
in this Torah Tidbits be
לעילוי נשמת

מרדכי יהודה בן אפרים ז"ל

Mark Jay Steiner ז"ל

On his 5th yearzeit - פ"ב ניסן תש"פ

The Steiner, Shuchman
and Zommer families

I also want to highlight our OU Israel Teen Centers, which have been working with the welfare departments of the local municipalities to have teens come and help poor families in their respective cities before Pesach with painting, refurbishing, installing new appliances, and so on. It's really beautiful seeing teens, who often have difficult family lives, getting together to help families who have even more difficult situations. By turning from receivers to givers, it really influences them and their mindset.

Since we are investing so much time, effort, money, and passion into Pesach, let's ensure we can fulfill the key mitzvot of the Seder - *sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim* and *ve'higadeta levincha* with the right headspace to pass on our love for Torah, Hashem's miracles, and the *mitzvah* of *chinuch*. This year has such an advantage - let Shabbat be a time to think, rest, and learn, with the result of making the *seder* more meaningful and exciting than ever.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat and a *Chag Kasher ve'Sameach*,



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May the Torah learned
in this Torah Tidbits
be לעילוי נשמת

יצחק דוד הלוי ז"ל
David Ira Lerner ז"ל
on his 2nd yahrzeit - יא ניסן
Esther Lerner and Family

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