

## FREEDOM: YES OR NO?

Michael Prell

It seems like a simple question with a simple answer--“yes”--but let us look deeper.

At Passover seders around the world each year, Jews re-enact the Exodus from Egypt--the liberation of Hebrew slaves--by teaching our children; “*We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and G-d took us out of Egypt with a strong hand.*” --Deuteronomy 6:21

So why, according to Rashi, did most Hebrew slaves choose to stay in Egypt as slaves? Writes Rashi, “*There were among Israel of that generation wicked individuals who did not wish to depart from Egypt...only one out of five Israelites departed from Egypt, and the other four fifths died in Egypt.*”

Why did four out of five Hebrew slaves say “no” to freedom?

And what happened to the Hebrew slaves who said “yes” to freedom? Just a few days after the Exodus, these newly-liberated Children of Israel began longing for the ‘good old days’ of Egyptian slavery:

*“What is this that you have done to us to take us out of Egypt? Is this not the statement that we made to you in Egypt, saying, ‘Let us be and we will serve Egypt?’--for it is better that we should serve Egypt than that we should die in the Wilderness!”*--Exodus 14:11-12

What is going on here? Why would anyone choose slavery over freedom?

Rabbi Ken Spiro, the author of “A Crash Course in Jewish History,” writes, “*It’s much easier in many respects to have someone decide for you, which is why the Talmud says that ‘a slave is happier being a slave.’ A slave who is well treated will give up his freedom in exchange for being taken care of and having his decisions made for him.*”

Do you see any evidence in our world today--perhaps right here



in America--of people giving up some of their freedom in exchange for being taken care of and having their decisions made for them? Do you see trace evidence of our natural tendency to put safety, security and certainty ahead of freedom...perhaps in your own life?

When G-d took us out of Egypt, He changed us. He re-wired us to be free. As the Maharal of Prague wrote in *Gevuras Hashem*, “*When the Jewish people came out of Egypt, a tangible, positive change occurred to them, rendering them intrinsically free.*” But G-d knew that our underlying nature would eventually drag us away from freedom and back toward slavery. So He gave us a way to fight our natural tendencies. Right before He took us out of Egypt, right before He gave us freedom, G-d paused the Torah narrative to instruct us, through Moses, to keep freedom alive--in ourselves, in the world and in our families--by teaching the lessons of freedom to our children:

*“And it shall be when your son will ask you at some future time, ‘What is this?’ you shall say to him, ‘With a strong hand G-d removed us from Egypt from the house of bondage.’*” --Exodus 13:14

As Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks wrote in *Freedom’s Defense*: “*What the Torah is teaching is that freedom is won, not on the battlefield, nor in the political arena, nor in the courts, national or international, but in the human imagination and will...thanks to Torah, Jews never forgot...that freedom is a never-ending effort of education.*”

Freedom is not natural. Freedom is the supernatural will of our Creator. G-d chose the Jews to keep freedom alive in the world through “a never-ending effort of education.” The rise and fall of freedom throughout history and around the world seems conspicuously tied to the rise and fall of the world’s Jews--and the degree to which Jews embrace their role as G-d’s “kingdom of ministers” and teachers. *(cont. on reverse)*

## CONGRATULATIONS AND MAZAL TOV

## ENGAGEMENTS

Chaviva Warner and Dr. Alvin Adler  
Carly Weisenberg and Andrew Lebowohl



Miriam and Dr. Shmuel Shields, on the birth of a boy,  
Abba Nachman

Dr. Ellie Carmody and Daniel Stone, on the birth of a girl, Naomi

## MARRIAGES

Shoshana Cooper and Mark Mayer Gottlieb  
Mazal Tov to parents Wendy and Dr. Seymour Gottlieb  
Daniella Salig and Sam Schertz  
Mazal Tov to parents Michelle and Eli Salig  
Bar Osher and Daron Spivack  
Mazal Tov to parents Sharona and Steven Spivack  
Yael Rina Kruger and Moshe Waldman  
Mazal Tov to parents Elyse and Rabbi Reuven Kruger

## BAR/BAT MITZVAH

Caroline and Jennifer Ben Nathan  
Mazal Tov to parents Shelley and Serge Ben Nathan  
Estee Perel Gerber  
Mazal Tov to parents Tracy and Sander Gerber  
Richard (Ricki) Samuel Berman Levy  
Mazal Tov to parents Nan and Peter Levy  
Lily Ariel Snyder  
Mazal Tov to parents Bluma and Dr. Stephen Snyder

## BIRTHS

Michal and Marc Arkovitz, on the birth of a boy,  
Vicki and Daniel Ekstein, on the birth of a girl, Leah Rivkah  
Mazal Tov to grandparents Marta and Joseph Braun  
Sarah and Eitan Becker, on the birth of a girl,  
Hadassah Leah (10/16/12)  
Mazal Tov to grandmother Rissi Zweig  
Shira and Naphtali Buchwald, on the birth of a boy,  
Mazal Tov to grandparents Aidel and  
Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald  
Ariela and Yisrael Mordechai Friedman, on the birth of a boy,  
Daniel  
Mazal Tov to grandparents Vardi and Dr. Lenny Jacober  
Jamie and David Shubak, on the birth of a boy,  
Judah Marvin Shubak  
Mazal Tov to grandparents Shari and Maurice Gluckstadt  
Meryl Degen and Albert Louzoun, on the birth of a girl,  
Nili Hayne

## CONDOLENCES

Mordechai Beilis, on the loss of his mother, Aviva Beilis  
Lynne Doynow, on the loss of her mother Jacqueline Doynow  
Richard Dukas, on the loss of his mother, Bernadette Dukas  
Brandon Dunn, on the loss of his mother, Phyllis Dunn  
Norton Goodman, on the loss of his sister, Lillian Donow  
Rivkah Gorin, on the loss of her father, Manuel Urquijo  
Roberta Hadi, on the loss of her father, Sam Fink  
Allan Leicht, on the loss of his mother Florence Leicht  
Rachel Lewis, on the loss of her mother, Lillian Lewis

## SPEEDY RECOVERY/REFUAH SH'LAIMA

Rivah Leah bat Devorah, Linda Slove  
Elisheva Channa bat Miriam Yocheved

## TSETCHEM L'SHALOM (To live or Study in Israel)

Haviva Zahava Korenblit on joining IDF  
Michael Prell

## CONGRATULATIONS

Dr. Marc Arkovitz on passing the exam for *milah* (circumcision) from the Israeli Rabbinate  
Dr. Michelle Friedman Belfer and Ben Belfer and family who were honored at the Ohr Torah Stone Dinner  
Mem Bernstein, Wendy and Brandon Dunn, Tracy and Sander Gerber, Robin Gordon, Sandra and Howard Hoffen, Carolyn and Marc Rowan and Michelle and Eli Salig, who were honored at the recent NJOP 25th Anniversary Tribute Dinner  
Tracy and Sander Gerber upon being honored at the 14th Anniversary Dinner of Yeshiva Ohavei Torah  
Lori Paul for being honored at the Jewish Renaissance Center in memory of Robert Schecter, *ob"m*  
Dr. Shmuel Shields on the publication of his new book “*L'chaim: 18 Chapters to Live By*”  
Valerie Tocci for being honored as a Super Lawyer Matrimonial Law  
Reuven Wannenmaker on his nomination to the NY State Board of Medicine  
Professor Ira Weinstock of Touro College, Department of Political Science, on his appointment to the Faculty Senate  
**TODAH RABBAH**  
The team that helped pack the Beginners materials for the move to the new building: Manny Zareh, Adam Herbst, Chaviva Warner, Moshe Jennings, Assaf Alster, and Roberto Novig  
Shira Fishkin and Jerry Greenberg for the wonderful Purim entertainment  
Chaviva Warner and Dr. Leonard Davidman for their all-around helpfulness

## SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

**Fri March 22, 2013 - 11th of Nisan**

Morning Services ..... 7:10 & 7:50 AM  
Candle Lighting ..... 6:52 PM  
Mincha ..... 6:55 PM

**Sat March 23, 2013 - 12th of Nisan Tzav****SHABBAT HAGADOL**

Morning Services ..... 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM  
Mincha & Shabbat HaGadol Drasha ... 6:25 PM  
Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends ..... 7:52 PM  
Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv ..... 7:00 PM

**Sun March 24, 2013 - 13th of Nisan**

Mincha/Ma'ariv ..... 7:00 PM  
*Bedikat Chametz* ..... after 7:44 PM

**Mon March 25, 2013 - 14th of Nisan****TA'ANIT BECHORIM**

Morning Services with Siyum  
..... 6:45 & 7:30 AM  
Latest time to eat *Chametz* ..... 10:21 AM  
Latest time to burn *Chametz* ..... 11:32 AM  
Candle Lighting ..... 6:56 PM  
Mincha ..... 7:00 PM  
Begin Seder ..... after 7:45 PM

**Tues March 26, 2013 - 15th of Nisan****1st DAY PESACH**

Morning Services ..... 8:00 & 9:00 AM  
Mincha ..... 7:00 PM  
Light Candles & begin Seder ... after 7:56 PM

**Wed March 27, 2013 - 16th of Nisan****2nd DAY PESACH**

Morning Services ..... 8:00 & 9:00 AM  
Mincha ..... 7:00 PM  
Ma'ariv/Yom Tov ends ..... 7:57 PM  
Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv ..... 7:00 PM

**Thurs March 28, 2013 - 17th of Nisan****CHOL HAMOED PESACH**

Morning Services ..... 7:00 & 7:40 AM

**Fri March 29, 2013 - 18th of Nisan****CHOL HAMOED PESACH**

Morning Services ..... 7:00 & 7:40 AM  
Candle Lighting ..... 7:00 PM  
Mincha ..... 7:05 PM

**Sat March 30, 2013 - 19th of Nisan****CHOL HAMOED PESACH**

Morning Services ..... 8:00 & 9:00 AM  
Mincha ..... 6:50 PM  
Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends ..... 8:00 PM

**Sun March 31, 2013 - 20th of Nisan****CHOL HAMOED PESACH**

Morning Services ..... 7:00 & 8:30 AM  
Candle Lighting ..... 7:02 PM  
Mincha ..... 7:05 PM

**Mon April 1, 2013 - 21st of Nisan****7th DAY PESACH**

Morning Services ..... 8:00 & 9:00 AM  
Mincha ..... 7:05 PM  
Light candles ..... after 8:02 PM

**Tues April 2, 2013 - 22nd of Nisan****8th DAY PESACH - Yizkor**

Morning Services ..... 8:00 & 9:00 AM  
Mincha ..... 7:05 PM  
Ma'ariv/Yom Tov ends ..... 8:03 PM  
Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv ..... 7:10 PM

**Fri April 5, 2013 - 25th of Nisan**

Earliest Candle Lighting ..... 6:04 PM  
Regular Candle Lighting ..... 7:07 PM  
Mincha ..... 7:10 PM

**Sat April 6, 2013 - 26th of Nisan Shmini**

Morning Services ..... 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM  
Beginners Mishnayot ..... 5:25 PM  
Talmud/Pirkei Avot ..... 5:40 PM  
Bible Class ..... 5:55 PM  
Mincha ..... 6:55 PM  
Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends ..... 8:07 PM  
Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv ..... 7:15 PM

**Wed April 10, 2013 - 30th of Nisan****ROSH CHODESH**

Morning Services ..... 7:00 & 7:40 AM

**Thurs April 11, 2013 - 1st of Iyar****ROSH CHODESH**

Morning Services ..... 7:00 & 7:40 AM

**Fri April 12, 2013 - 2nd of Iyar**

Earliest Candle Lighting ..... 6:11 PM  
Regular Candle Lighting ..... 7:14 PM  
Mincha ..... 6:45 & 7:20 PM

**Sat April 13, 2013 - 3rd of Iyar****Tazria-Metzora**

Morning Services ..... 7:40, 9:00 & 9:45 AM  
Beginners Mishnayot ..... 5:35 PM  
Talmud/Pirkei Avot ..... 5:50 PM  
Bible Class ..... 6:05 PM  
Mincha ..... 7:05 PM  
Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends ..... 8:14 PM  
Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv ..... 7:20 PM

**Tues April 16, 2013 - 6th of Iyar****YOM HA'AZMA'UT**

Morning Services ..... 7:00 & 7:50 AM

**Fri April 19, 2013 - 9th of Iyar**

Earliest Candle Lighting ..... 6:16 PM  
Regular Candle Lighting ..... 7:21 PM  
Mincha ..... 6:45 & 7:25 PM

**Sat April 20, 2013 - 10th of Iyar****Acharei Mot-Kedoshim**

Morning Services ..... 7:40, 9:00 & 9:45 AM  
Beginners Mishnayot ..... 5:40 PM  
Talmud/Pirkei Avot ..... 5:55 PM  
Bible Class ..... 6:10 PM  
Mincha ..... 7:10 PM  
Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends ..... 8:21 PM  
Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv ..... 7:30 PM

**Fri April 26, 2013 - 16th of Iyar**

Earliest Candle Lighting ..... 6:22 PM  
Regular Candle Lighting ..... 7:29 PM  
Mincha ..... 6:45 & 7:35 PM

**Sat April 27, 2013 - 17th of Iyar Emor**

Morning Services ..... 7:40, 9:00 & 9:45 AM  
Beginners Mishnayot ..... 5:50 PM  
Talmud/Pirkei Avot ..... 6:05 PM  
Bible Class ..... 6:20 PM  
Mincha ..... 7:20 PM  
Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends ..... 8:29 PM  
Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv ..... 7:35 PM

**Fri May 3, 2013 - 23rd of Iyar**

Earliest Candle Lighting ..... 6:27 PM  
Regular Candle Lighting ..... 7:36 PM  
Mincha ..... 6:45 & 7:40 PM

**Sat May 4, 2013 - 24th of Iyar****Behar-Bechukotai**

Morning Services ..... 7:40, 9:00 & 9:45 AM  
Beginners Mishnayot ..... 5:55 PM  
Talmud/Pirkei Avot ..... 6:10 PM  
Bible Class ..... 6:25 PM  
Mincha ..... 7:25 PM  
Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends ..... 8:36 PM  
Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv ..... 7:45 PM

**Wed May 8, 2013 - 28th of Iyar****YOM YERUSHALAYIM**

Morning Services ..... 7:00 & 7:50 AM

**Fri May 10, 2013 - 1st of Sivan****ROSH CHODESH**

Morning Services ..... 7:00 & 7:40 AM  
Earliest Candle Lighting ..... 6:32 PM  
Regular Candle Lighting ..... 7:43 PM  
Mincha ..... 6:45 & 7:50 PM

**Sat May 11, 2013 - 2nd of Sivan****Bamidbar**

Morning Services ..... 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM  
Beginners Mishnayot ..... 6:05 PM  
Talmud/Pirkei Avot ..... 6:20 PM  
Bible Class ..... 6:35 PM  
Mincha ..... 7:35 PM  
Ma'ariv/Shabbat Ends ..... 8:43 PM  
Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv ..... 7:50 PM

**Tues May 14, 2013 - 5th of Sivan****EREV SHAVUOT**

Candle Lighting ..... 7:47 PM  
Mincha ..... 7:55 PM  
Torah Classes beginning ..... 11:30 PM

**Wed May 15, 2013 - 6th of Sivan****1st DAY SHAVUOT**

Morning Services ..... 5:10 & 9:00 AM  
Book of Ruth ..... 6:55 PM  
Mincha ..... 7:55 PM  
Light Candles ..... after 8:47 PM

**Thu May 16, 2013 - 7th of Sivan****2nd DAY SHAVUOT Yizkor**

Morning Services ..... 8:00 & 9:00 AM  
Talmud & Book of Ruth ..... 6:55 PM  
Mincha ..... 7:55 PM  
Ma'ariv/Yom Tov ends ..... 8:47 PM

**SAVE THE DATE**

Beginners Shabbat Luncheons

Sat., 12:30 PM - \$20

May 4, June 1

Beginners Schmooze - Free

Mon., 8:15 PM

May 6

All Night Shavuot Learn-a-thon

Tues., May 14, 11:30 PM - 7:00 AM

**FREEDOM (cont. from reverse)...**

The first step in teaching the world about freedom is to teach our children about freedom. That is the reason for the Passover seder.

This Passover, when our children ask, "Why is this night different from all other nights?" and the questions continue as to why on this night we eat matzah, on this night we eat bitter herbs, on this night we dip twice and recline to the side... Tell them why.

Because G-d took us out of Egypt to teach the world that, even though freedom is not natural, we can rise above our nature, learn from the Exodus, and choose to accept the freedom G-d gave us.

*Michael Prell has written for Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, Canada's Prime Minister Stephen Harper, the Jerusalem Post, the New York Times, CNN, Fox News, and he is a regular contributor on Shalom TV. His book Underdogma explains campus anti-Israel hatred, and is available at [www.under-dogma.com](http://www.under-dogma.com)*