

These are the appointed Festivals of Hashem, the holy convocations... in the first month... in the afternoon is the time of the Pesach-offering to Hashem. (23:4,5)

In his *Chorev* (23), *Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl*, explains why the Festivals, the *Yamim Tovim*, are referred to in the Torah as *Moadim*, which means appointed times. He writes, 'The *Moadim* summon us to submit ourselves entirely to the contemplation and inner realization of those ideals which lie at their foundation. The *Moadim* are days which stand out from among the other days of the year. They summon us from our everyday life to halt and to dedicate all of our spiritual activities to them. They (the *Moadim*) give us the spirit, power, and sanctity for the future by reviving those ideas upon which our whole life is based.'

We have noticed one common misconception with regard to the *Moadim* – and all consecrated milestone occasions, for that matter. We are under the impression that we celebrate the time period designated as *Pesach* (for example) because we were liberated from Egypt at that time. The liberation was the reason for *Pesach*; thus, these days became a *Moed*, time of meeting with Hashem. This is the misconception. When Hashem created the world, He infused specific periods with a unique character, i.e., freedom/rejuvenation; exile/mourning; joy/festivity, etc. During those periods in which a certain spiritual character prevails, Hashem performed specific miracles and occurrences endemic to the "times." Thus, since the month of *Nissan* is *mesugal*, a preordained time for rejuvenation and freedom, it was the perfect time to redeem the Jews from Egypt. This concept is reiterated both by the *Chassidic* masters and Ethicists. The period of time and its character were the precursors for the events that occurred at that time.

Since the first *Moed* (following *Shabbos*) cited by the Torah is *Pesach*, we will use it as the paradigm for establishing the relationship between the "time" and the designated *moed*. The days which we call *Pesach* comprised a special period in the spiritual cosmos even before the Jews were redeemed from Egypt. Avraham *Avinu* triumphed over the four mighty kings on the first night of *Pesach*. It was on this night that Hashem "visited" Lavan and warned him not to harm Yaakov *Avinu*. It was also on this night that Hashem warned Avimelech not to touch Sarah *Imeinu*. (The source for this dateline is the *piyut* in the *Haggadah* – *V'chein vayehi ba'chatzi halaylah*.) Yitzchak *Avinu* blessed Yaakov *Avinu* on the first night of *Pesach*. Avraham was informed on *Pesach* night that Yitzchak would be born. Indeed, Yitzchak was born on *Pesach* night.

Apparently, the days that we traditionally celebrate as *Pesach* have great spiritual significance – a significance which predates *Pesach*! *Horav Elimelech Biderman, Shlita*, quotes *Horav Levi Yitzchak Berdichever, zl*, who says that these are days on which Hashem reveals His love for His People and bestows His goodness on them. The first day of *Pesach* is most *mesugal*, appropriate, for this spiritual flow of beneficence. *Pesach* is a time for miracles. Thus, rather than *yetzias Mitzrayim*, the Egyptian exodus, being identified as the reason that we celebrate *Pesach* on *Nissan* 15, it is just the opposite. *Pesach* occurred when it did because this period of time is most

appropriate for it. On *Pesach*, Hashem's love for His children is more pronounced.

The *Levlover Rebbe* goes on to say that many miracles happen to us in the merit of the holy *Seder* which we celebrate on *Pesach* night. When we are informed of a time in which Hashem is especially close to us, we should take advantage of this news. The *Zohar* teaches that on *Pesach* night Hashem Himself, together with His Ministering Angels, visits every Jewish home and listens to their recital of the *Pesach* story. Imagine if He comes and our "story" is lacking, our involvement in sharing it with our family is deficient. Need I say more? *Horav Shimon Shkop, zl*, would say nothing at the *Seder* but words of Torah, due to the presence of the *Shechinah*, Divine Presence.

One stipulation must be noted. While the *Seder* night is a night designated for miracles, and the opportunity to avail oneself of this good fortune is open to everyone, in order to merit a fortuitous result, one must invest effort. Without effort, it is like having the keys to a car that has no gas. If one does not fill the tank – he is going nowhere.

Horav Leible Eiger, zl, observes that we eat an egg on *Pesach* night for a variety of reasons. He suggests a powerful implication to be derived from the egg. Just as an egg has the potential to become a chicken when it is warmed under a hen, likewise, many great and wonderful things can happen to us on this night. We must, however, bring the warmth, our enthusiasm and joy, to the *Seder*; otherwise, it will remain an egg, unrealized potential. The moment is ripe; the opportunity is there. We must seize the moment!