



Congregation Orach Chaim

ק"ק ארת חיים

# OC BULLETIN

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## RABBI'S MESSAGE

*"To Recite, To Respond"*

One of the names that is used in the Bible to describe the Passover matzah is "Lechem Oni", the bread of affliction (Deuteronomy 16:3). Rashi in his commentary tells us that the Passover matzah reminds us of the suffering of our forebearers in Egypt.

The Talmud (tractate Pesachim 36A) tells us that the Passover matzah is called "Lechem Oni" - Sheonim Alav Devarim Harbei – because there is much to be said about the matzah and much to be learned from the matzah.

The Passover matzah not only reminds us of our suffering but also causes us to recite and proclaim the miracles of freedom which Passover represents.

The phenomenon of freedom after centuries of slavery and degradation requires a positive response on the part of all who are the beneficiaries of "MeiAvdut L'Cheirut" from slavery to freedom.

Rashi in his commentary to this Talmudic passage tells us that one fulfills "Onim Alav Devarim Harbei" by reciting the entire Hallel prayer and by reciting the Hagadah.

Herein lies a basic Jewish value and principle of our faith. For the Jewish people, history is not solely about events that happened to others some time ago. Jewish history not only records events, it also calls for a response to these events.

- ◆ What have we learned?
- ◆ What have we transmitted to our children?
- ◆ What are our responsibilities as a result to all that has transpired to our people throughout the ages?

To be part of Passover history is to play a positive, not a passive role.

In reciting the Hagadah of our people, we begin with a number of questions "Ma Nishtana" – why has our history and treatment been so different from other nations and peoples? It is through the recitation of the Hagadah by parents and children, family and friends throughout the centuries that we have remained faithful to our traditions and heritage, maintained family bonds and have begun to recite Hallel at the rebirth of Israel and the ingathering of our people from the far corners of the earth.

The weeks immediately following Passover provide a profound opportunity to recite the Hagadah and Hallel relating to the unique events of the recent Jewish history.

It behooves us to respond properly to the responsibility and opportunity Jewish history has placed upon us.

**Yom Hashoah** – Monday, April 12, commemorates an epoch and events for which we can only ask "Ma Nishtana" and though for this question there is no satisfying answer, we must with reverence hallow the day.

**Yom Hazikaron - Yom Ha-Atzmaut** Monday and Tuesday, April 19 and 20, requires and deserves a recitation of the Hagadah of Jewish heroism, sacrifice, wisdom and foresight in the face of overwhelming odds and world indifference. The founding of the State of Israel and the rebirth of Jewish nationhood following the destruction of the Shoah certainly merits the recitation of Hallel in synagogue and school, home and heart.

**Yom Yerushalayim** – Wednesday May 12, a day on which we celebrate the reunification of the Eternal Capitol City of the Jewish people and the miracles and heroism attendant to the Milchemet Sheishet Haymim – the Six Day War – is fully deserving of a Hagadah of its own and the recitation of the complete Hallel.

May the observance and celebration of the laws, rituals and customs of Pesach be a source of pride, joy and inspiration to the House of Israel.

My wife and family join me in wishing you and your families a Chag Kasher V'Sameach- A joyful and spiritually uplifting Passover holiday.

*Rabbi Dr. Michael Shmidman*

