

MAR 27 2010 12 Nisan 5770 Parshat Tzav - Shabbat Hagadol

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## Shabbos Hagadol

What makes this coming Shabbos great, aren't they all?

First, let's look at what happened on the first Shabbos Hagadol. The *pasukim* say (*Shmot* 12, 3-6) Moshe was told to tell the Jewish people to take a lamb into each Jewish home on the tenth day of the month of Nissan. On the fourteenth of Nissan, they were to slaughter the same lamb as the *korban Pesach*. Our sages point out some amazing things here, the 10th of Nissan was Shabbat, and the lamb was the god of the Egyptians. Combined, these events make for one great miracle in the midst of all that was happening in and to Egypt at the time. (The 10th of Nissan came between the ninth plague of darkness and the tenth death of the first born Egyptians.) The Egyptians saw the Jews take the lambs into their homes and tie them to their beds and were prevented from retaliating, as we can imagine they wanted to.

So we can understand why the events that happened that day are great and why the fact that it was Shabbat makes those events even greater. But there is still a nagging question about all of this: Why did Hashem want all of this to happen on Shabbat? Especially since capturing a live animal and tying it down are not exactly recommended Shabbat activities.

Yes, the fact that it was Shabbat makes the miracle of Egyptian impotency in the face of such Jewish *chutzpa* even more memorable. But it seems like there is something deeper going on.

My family and I moved to Los Angeles from Santiago, Chile, about two months ago. Many rabbis from the US and Israel have passed through Chile over the last 25 years. The best known was Rabbi Shimshon Pincus, z"l. For many reasons, I always felt very drawn to his lectures and books. There are many lectures and 2 books available by Rav Pincus about Shabbat. One of them is even available in English under the title, "*Nefesh Shimshon, Shabbos Kodesh: Making the Most of Shabbos*", it is truly wonderful. I want to use Rav Pincus' explanation about Shabbat and see if it helps us understand the extra greatness of Shabbat Hagadol.

Rav Pincus often said, speaking even about his own neighborhood in Israel, that so many Jews keep Shabbat every week without ever knowing what Shabbat is all about. They only know what we can't do, without realizing the profound nature of the day. He often pointed out that the end result of this problem is feeling like Shabbat is a jail.

So what is really going on every week on Shabbat? The divine presence is there to be found. We often say that Shabbat is the source of all blessing during the week and in the world. What does that mean? The Zohar says that one of Hashem's names is Shabbat. What is a name? If a person lived alone in

the dessert, he wouldn't need a name. The point of a name is that, through it, someone or something can be recognized by others. And the name reveals to others what and who the name belongs to.

So Shabbat is exactly the name of Hashem, because through Shabbat, we can recognize Him. Is Shabbat the source of all blessing? Not exactly. G-d is the source of all- but Shabbat, as G-d's name, is the gate through which all of G-d's bounty flows into the world.

I would like to *posit* that this is why Hashem wanted the events of *Shabbat Hagadol* to take place on Shabbat, and specifically the Shabbat before the exodus. The exodus marked our becoming a nation, but not just any nation. In order to claim our inheritance as G-d's nation, left to us by our forefathers; we needed to show that we wanted to and were ready to become great. This was done through the *korban Pesach*. But first, we needed *Shabbat Hagadol*- unparalleled access to G-d that every Shabbat offers combined with an act that completely demonstrated our readiness and desire to gain that access (like taking an Egyptian god hostage for four days). Then we were ready to perform the *mitzva* of the *korban Pesach*, to leave *Mitzrayim* and to become G-d's chosen people.

What makes this coming Shabbos great, aren't they all? Yes, every Shabbat is great. And it is the greatness of every Shabbat that made *Shabbat Hagadol* so powerful.

Have a great Shabbos,

**Rabbi Shimon Vinger**  
NCSY West Coast  
Regional Director

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חג כשר ושמח



## UPCOMING EVENTS @ OU WEST COAST

*Check our website for Convention lectures & panel discussions*

➤ Annual Manny Stern, z"l, Synagogue Leadership Seminar Sunday, April 18, 5pm

with

Rabbi Shlomo Einhorn

"Storm-winds:

*Program Ideas That Will Blow Your Mind"*

&

"On Fire:

*Sparking Immediate Shul Growth"*

for OU Shul Rabbis/Presidents/Board Members/Exec & Youth Directors & Yeshivot Personnel, too.

Location: OU Headquarters  
Includes dinner - RSVP

A program from OU-West Coast Community & Synagogue Services

**Hold-the-Date**

**Tuesday, May 4, 2010**

**Tefilla Enrichment Initiative**

*A one-evening seminar featuring speakers who will inspire and encourage us to achieve meaningful tefila experiences.*

*This program will take place at B'nai David-Judea.*

*Watch for more details.*

➤ OU Annual Awards Banquet Tuesday, June 22

Honoring

David & Debbie Schultz

Seth & Ruth Berkowitz

Dr. Steve & Linda Tabak

## OU SYNAGOGUES AROUND THE REGION

### **Beverly Hills: Cong. Beth Jacob** (310) 278-1911

- **Shabbat Hagadol Drasha 6:50pm:** Rabbi Kalman Topp
- **SUNs APR 18-JUN 20, 10am-12pm:** MaTan's Mother-Daughter Bat Mitzvah program with Rebbetzin Jordana Topp. Call to register.

### **Beverly Hills: Young Israel of North B.H.:** (310) 276-7650

- **Shabbat APR 9-10:** RZLA w/Rabbi Yosef & Dr. Rivka Blau, Solly Sacks
- **Shabbat APR 17:** AIPAC w/ LA Director Catherine Schneider
- **Shabbat APR 24:** Guest, Hon. Israel Con Gen'l Yakov Dayan

Calabasas Shul: (818) 591-7485

### **Canada-Calgary: House of Jacob-Mikveh Israel** (403) 259-3230

- **WEDS JUNE 2:** Annual Dinner & Installation of Rabbi Yisroel Miller

Canada-Edmonton: Beth Israel (780) 488-2840

Canada-Vancouver: Schara Tzedek (604) 736-7607

Denver, CO: BMH-BJ Cong (303) 388-4203

Denver, CO: EDOS (303) 322-7943

Irvine, CA: Beth Jacob (949) 786-5230

LA: Adas Torah (310) 203-9659 [www.adastorah.com](http://www.adastorah.com)

LA: Aish Hatorah (310) 278-8672 x 305 or [tsullivan@aishla.com](mailto:tsullivan@aishla.com)

### **LA: B'nai David-Judea** (310)-276-9269 or [amram@bnaidavid.com](mailto:amram@bnaidavid.com)

- **Shabbat Hagadol Drasha 5pm:** Rabbi Yosef Kanefsky
- **SUN JUNE 6:** Annual Tribute Dinner

LA: Etz Jacob (323) 938-2619

### **LA: Mogen David Cong.** (310) 556-5609

- **SUN APR 11, 9am:** Annual Yom Hashoah Program/Breakfast--Holocaust Remembrance Day with survivor Sol Berger

### **LA: Young Israel of Century City:** (310) 273-6954

- **Shabbat Hagadol MAR 26-27:** S-I-R Rabbi Mark Dratch

LA: Young Israel of Hancock Park: (323) 931-4030

### **LA: Yeshiva of LA (YOLA)** 310-203-3197 [yeshivarabbi@juno.com](mailto:yeshivarabbi@juno.com)

- **MINCHA/MAARIV:** SUN-THURS, 15 minutes before Shkiah;
- **LATE MAARIV:** SUN-THUR 10pm. M-TH am/pm: adults/students chavrusas

Laguna Woods, CA: Beth Torah (949) 587-1967 (a retirement community)

### **La Jolla: Adat Yeshurun** (858) 535-1196

- **SUN JUNE 6:** Banquet Gala

Las Vegas, NV: Shaarei Tefila (702) 384-3565 (Mikva 384-3317)

Oakland, CA: Beth Jacob (510) 482-1147

Palm Springs, CA: The Desert Synagogue (760) 327-4848

### **Palo Alto, CA: Emek Beracha** (650) 857-1800 (Mikva 493-5555)

- **MAY 9: Annual Dinner.** Guest speaker Hadassah Lieberman

Phoenix, AZ: Beth Joseph (602) 277-8858

Portland, OR: Kesser Israel (503) 222-1239

### **Sacramento, CA: Keneset Israel Torah Center** (916) 481-1159

- **Shabbat Hagadol Drasha 6pm:** Rabbi Ian Bailey
- **SUN MAY 23:** "An Evening in Eden"-Farm Fresh Food Gala & Silent Auction

San Diego, CA: Cong. Beth Jacob (619) 287-9890

San Diego, CA: Kehillat Ahavat Yisrael-KAY (858) 633-0181

San Francisco, CA: Adath Israel (415) 564-5665

Seattle: Bikur Cholim Machzikay Hadath (206) 721-0970

Seattle: Ezra Bessaroth (206) 722-5500

### **Seattle: Sephardic Bikur Holim** (206) 723-3028

- **Shabbat Hagadol Luncheon, MAR 27**

### **Valley Village, CA: Shaarey Zedek Cong.** (818) 763-0560

- **MON APR 12:** Annual Banquet honoring Perla & Herman Muhlstein

- **SUN APR 25, 10am-5pm:** Israel & Jewish Culture Day Fair

Venice, Pacific Jewish Center-The Shul on the Beach:(310)392-8749

Washington-Mercer Island: Shevet Achim (206) 275-1539

### **Woodland Hills: Beit HaMidrash** (818) 999-2059 (5850 Fallbrook Ave.)

- **SUNs @ 6:15pm:** Pre-Mincha-Shiur-Baba Kama w/Rabbi Yaakov Rechnitz

West LA: Westwood Kehilla (310) 441-5288x30 [director@kehilla.org](mailto:director@kehilla.org)

## NCSY-JSU-YACHAD ANNOUNCEMENTS/EVENTS



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Want to help run a chesed project? call Solly at 310-557-6582

**MAY 29-31:** Spring Regional

**CITY NCSY:** Call Solly @ 310-557-6582 or [Shess@westcoastncsy.com](mailto:Shess@westcoastncsy.com)

**DNL--MONs 7-8pm:** @ Pizza World 365 S. Fairfax Ave.

**Latte&Learning-TUES 7:30pm:**@CB&T-233 S. Beverly Dr. w/R'Josh Horwitz

**JR. NCSY:** (6-8 grade) Call Josh 310-694-2976 or [ncsyjosh@gmail.com](mailto:ncsyjosh@gmail.com)

... **NCSY Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutoring available.** Talmud Torah classes.

**YACHAD:** Call Perri @323-228-4191. Ongoing activities.

## B'NEI AKIVA OF LA ANNOUNCEMENTS

→ **Office:** 310-248-2450 [bneiakivaLA@gmail.com](mailto:bneiakivaLA@gmail.com)



### → **MON Evening APRIL 19: Annual Community Yom HaZikaron & Yom Haatzmaut Ceremony**

Mincha: 6pm—Program: 6:20pm--@ at BJ--Culminates in Jacob's Garden with music, food, dancing.

Upcoming Events:

Chevyra Bet (9-12 grade) NY Shabbaton; Israeli Day Parade, NY

## OU COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

### ▶ **ONGOING: OU'S WOMEN'S TORAH NETWORK (WTN)**

*Classes with Geri Wiener – Spring Sessions coming up!*

→ **MONs-Valley (private home):**

→ **WEDs-City (OU Hdqtrs):**

### ▶ **SUN APR 18<sup>th</sup> @ UCLA: NCSY's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Basketball**

**Tournament\***

Sign your team up today by calling 310 229-9000 ext. 226

\*Sponsorship opportunities available.

### ▶ **Yom Haatzmaut-MONDAY EVENING-APR 19, BNEI AKIVA @BJ**

### ▶ **Yom Haatzmaut-APR 19, 7pm, presented by Consulate General of Israel & Saban Theater – Hold-the-Date**

## ISRAEL'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORLD

### **Protecting California's grape crops with ice**

Californian vineyards are turning to an Israeli company to protect their valuable grape crops from frost damage with a freezing 'igloo' that coats the grapevine buds in ice.

### **US MBA students study Israel business 101**

Visiting MBA students from Indiana University this year chose Israel as their focus for a better understanding of international business that goes beyond news reports. **Israel's top 10 airport security technologies**

No-one understands security like the Israelis, that's why some of the world's best new innovative airport security technologies are being developed in Israel. We bring you a list of "Israel's top 10 technologies."

### **Let the Web content roam free**

Amobee hopes to enable content creators to survive today's free Internet culture by providing their output in exchange for embedded advertising. Is this Google's next acquisition?

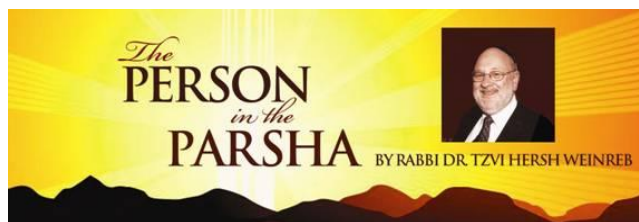
### **Big brother IS watching**

An Israeli startup has developed a potentially game-changing surveillance camera that can both monitor a panoramic field and zoom in on details.

### **Israel's ancient trees tell their tales**

They've been growing for hundreds of years and have many stories to tell, now the Jewish National Fund is working hard to ensure that Israel's oldest trees will continue to thrive for the benefit of generations to come.

[www.Israel21c.org](http://www.Israel21c.org)



## Parshat Tzav – Shabbat Hagadol

March 27, 2010 – 12 Nisan 5770

To read more articles and essays by Rabbi Weinreb, visit his blog at [www.ou.org/rabbi\\_weinreb](http://www.ou.org/rabbi_weinreb)

### " Shabbat HaGadol as Independence Day"

I remember well when the age at which one could vote or drink was 21. From my perspective when I was a child, and frankly eager to do these things, it seemed to be an injustice to set the age bar so high. Twenty-one seemed a long way off.

As time progressed, the age for all of these things became lower and lower. By that time, I was well past the age of 21 and was critical of allowing children these privileges prematurely.

That's just one example of how our perspective changes with regard to the age-old question of who is a child and who is an adult. At what age does one pass from the status of a minor into majority?

From the point of view of Jewish religion things seem quite clear. Traditionally, boys become men at age 13. Recognizing that females mature earlier, our rabbis defined age 12 as the age of majority for a girl.

So it is with regard to the performance of *mitzvot* and other religious functions. A girl celebrates her bat mitzvah at age 12, and boys wear *tefillin* and are counted as part of a *minyan* at age 13. Before the age of 13 he is a *katan*, a minor. Afterwards, he is a *gadol*.

*Gadol* can mean adult, or it can mean large or great.

This Shabbat, the last one preceding Passover, is known as Shabbat HaGadol. How are we to translate it? Is it the adult Shabbat, the large Shabbat, or perhaps the great Shabbat? Or does the word *gadol* mean something entirely different in this context?

Many have a custom to do a preliminary reading of the Passover Haggadah on this Shabbat. Those of us who do so, and I count myself among them, will have an opportunity not just to read the ancient words but to study some commentary upon them. Thus, we will have the opportunity to familiarize ourselves with one of the dozens of "new" *haggadot* on the market.

I would like to recommend one of them. It is called *The Royal Table*, and it is written by Rabbi Norman Lamm, the Chancellor of Yeshiva University.

I recommend this work in its entirety, but I would like to draw your attention to his creative approach to the meaning of the word *gadol*, and not just in the context of Shabbat HaGadol.

Rabbi Lamm points out that in the Talmud, *katan* does not always mean minor, nor does *gadol* invariably connote an adult. In certain contexts, Rabbi Lamm informs us, a person's status is not a question of age but a question of independence. In the words of the Talmud, "A *katan* who does not rely upon his father's table is a *gadol*. A *gadol* who is dependent upon his father is a *katan*."

This piece of Talmudic wisdom allows us a definition of *gadol* with entirely new vistas of insight and understanding. A *gadol* is someone who is self-reliant, who can stand on his own two feet, not just intellectually but in every other sense as well.

Thus, Rabbi Lamm teaches us that this Shabbat is called HaGadol because it marks our independence as a people. It was on this day that we were able to demonstrate to our Egyptian slave masters that we no longer feared them and were about to declare ourselves religiously, culturally, and physically independent.

I find myself taking the implications of Rabbi Lamm's insights much further than he does. Nowadays, we refer to those Torah sages whose authority we revere and to whom we look for guidance as *gedolim*", the plural of *gadol*.

I have often struggled with the question, as I am sure many of you do, as to what makes a *gadol*. Is it just his piety and erudition? Surely these are the necessary prerequisites for the status of *gadol*.

But reflection upon the great sages of Jewish history reveals that the outstanding *Gedolim* of the generations had streaks of independence, which they asserted in unique and often courageous ways.

Take Maimonides, the Rambam. His Torah scholarship and personal spirituality were unparalleled. Yet he embarked, quite intentionally, upon many new paths in his life. He undertook significant positions of community leadership, delved into areas of study of which his own teachers never knew, and did not fear to express his independence of thought even when he differed from some of his predecessors.

Or consider Rabbi Moshe Sofer, known as the Chatam Sofer, who is generally thought to have been an ardent traditionalist. Yet he too demonstrated great independence when he formulated his own approach to combating the heretical movements of his time. He invented new ways to fight old battles.

The Chofetz Chaim and Rav Moshe Feinstein, to take two twentieth century *gedolim*, did not merely mimic their teachers and peers but undertook new approaches, new emphases, and dealt with unprecedented issues relying upon their profound scholarship for sure, but also were confident in their independent judgment. Rav Moshe even committed to writing some of his thoughts about the necessity of a *posek*, a halachic decisor, not to fear to express his independent thoughts when he was confident that they were correct.

Shabbat HaGadol gives us the opportunity to cherish our independence in so many ways. We must never abandon our Torah and tradition, but we must realize that there is a place for independence when it is appropriate.

Passover is the holiday of freedom and independence. Our sages teach us that no one is as free as he who studies Torah deeply. Independence of thought and creativity are values which are cherished by our tradition, and Passover is the time for us to celebrate those values.