

prepared for you. <sup>17</sup>You shall observe the [Feast of] Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your ranks out of the land of Egypt; you shall observe this day throughout the ages as an institution for all time. <sup>18</sup>In the first month, from the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. <sup>19</sup>No leaven shall be found in your houses for seven days. For whoever eats what is leavened, that person shall be cut off from the community of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a citizen of the country. <sup>20</sup>You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your settlements you shall eat unleavened bread.

<sup>21</sup>Moses then summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go, pick out lambs for your families, and slaughter the passover offering. <sup>22</sup>Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the

<sup>17</sup> וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־הַמִּצּוֹת כִּי בַעֲצֵם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה הוֹצֵאתִי אֶת־עַבְדְּאֹתֵיכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם חֻקַּת עוֹלָם: <sup>18</sup> בְּרִאשׁוֹן בְּאַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ בְּעֶרֶב תֹּאכְלוּ מִצֹּת עַד יוֹם הָאָחֵר וְעֹשְׂרִים לַחֹדֶשׁ בְּעֶרֶב: <sup>19</sup> שִׁבְעַת יָמִים שְׂאֹר לֹא יִמָּצֵא בְּבֵיתְכֶם כִּי כָל־אֹכֵל מִחֻמֶּצֶת וְנִכְרְתָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהִוא מֵעֵדֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּגֵר וּבְאִזְרַח הָאָרֶץ: <sup>20</sup> כָּל־מִחֻמֶּצֶת לֹא תֹאכְלוּ בְּכָל מוֹשְׁבֵיתְכֶם תֹּאכְלוּ מִצּוֹת: פ

<sup>21</sup> וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְכָל־זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם מִשְׁכוּ וּקְחוּ לָכֶם צֹאן לְמִשְׁפַּחְתֵּיכֶם וּשְׁחֻטוּ הַפֶּסַח: <sup>22</sup> וּלְקַחְתֶּם אֵגֶדַת אֲזוֹב וַטְבַּלְתֶּם בָּדָם אֲשֶׁר־בַּסֶּף

as do *Shabbat* and the Day of Atonement. Hence the preparation of food on those festival days is permitted, exempted from the prohibition against labor.

<sup>17</sup> The rationale for this springtime festival is now given.

**You shall observe the [Feast of] Unleavened Bread** Understanding the phrase "*u-sh'martem et ha-matzot*" (literally, "guard the *matzot*") in this way is based on the next phrase—"on this very day"—which takes the word "*matzot*" to mean the festival (*Hag ha-Matzot*). (For a parallel passage, see 23:15.)

**I brought** Better: "I am bringing."

<sup>18</sup> As specified in Lev. 23:32, the duration of all festivals is from evening to evening.

<sup>19</sup> **a stranger** The Hebrew word *ger* is a for-eigner who has taken up permanent residence

among the people Israel. Like his Israelite neighbor, he is required to abstain from possessing leaven for this one week, because its presence within the closely knit community interferes with the ability of others to fulfill their religious obligation. Only the Israelite, however, has the duty to eat *matzah*.

#### INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PESAH ARE RELAYED (vv. 21–28)

Moses conveys to the people the divinely given instructions and supplements them with some clarifications.

<sup>21</sup> **Go, pick out** Either select a lamb from your flock or purchase one.

<sup>22</sup> **a bunch of hyssop** A brushlike plant. This explains how the directive of verse 7 is to be carried out. Three of the hyssop's thin, woody

#### 17. observe the [Feast of] Unleavened Bread

Literally, "guard the *matzot*" (pl. of *matzah*). Traditional postbiblical Jewish interpretation

takes this to mean that one should supervise the process of making *matzot* to ensure that no fermentation occurs at any stage.

#### HALAKHAH L'MA'ASEH

**12:19. No leaven shall be found** Because disposing of foods prohibited on *Pesah* could impose financial hardship, Jewish law permits food to be stored away in the home of the owner provided that for the duration of *Pesah* it is neither seen nor used and its ownership is transferred to a non-Jew. This sale of *hametz* (*M'khirat Hametz*) can be arranged through a rabbi. All foods prohibited during *Pesah* that are not sold in this manner must be disposed of before the holiday; otherwise they may not be used after *Pesah* (*hametz she-avar alav ha-Pesah*).



blood that is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and to the two doorposts. None of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning. <sup>23</sup>For when the LORD goes through to smite the Egyptians, He will see the blood on the lintel and the two doorposts, and the LORD will pass over the door and not let the Destroyer enter and smite your home.

<sup>24</sup>"You shall observe this as an institution for all time, for you and for your descendants. <sup>25</sup>And when you enter the land that the LORD will give you, as He has promised, you shall observe this rite. <sup>26</sup>And when your children ask you, 'What do you mean by this rite?' <sup>27</sup>you shall say, 'It is the passover sacrifice to the LORD, because He passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but saved our houses.'"

The people then bowed low in homage. <sup>28</sup>And the Israelites went and did so; just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

branches make an ideal applicator. It is often used in rites of purification.

**None . . . shall go outside** On this night of danger and vigilance, the Israelites would be most secure inside their homes.

**23. Destroyer** The plague, although personified, is not an independent demonic being. It can operate only within the limits set by God.

**24. observe this** Ramban notes that this refers to the slaughter of the passover offering, not to the daubing of the blood.

**25. when you enter the land** Apart from the celebration on the first anniversary of the Exodus, as described in Num. 9:1-5, no further mention of

**26. when your children ask you** This is the origin of the familiar *Seider* custom of having the children present ask the Four Questions. Three references in this *parashah* to telling the story to our children and another in Deuteronomy gave rise to the *Haggadah* passage about the Four Children. Exodus 13:8 ("And you shall explain to your son") em-

והגעתם אל-המשקוף ואל-שתי המזוזות מן-הדם אשר בסף ואתם לא תצאו איש מפתח-ביתו עד-בקר: <sup>23</sup> ועבר יהוה לנגף את-מצרים וראה את-הדם על-המשקוף ועל שתי המזוזות ופסח יהוה על-הפתח ולא יתן המשוחית לבא אל-בתיכם לנגף:

<sup>24</sup> ושמרתם את-הדבר הזה לחק-לך ולבניך עד-עולם: <sup>25</sup> והיה כי-תבאו אל-הארץ אשר יתן יהוה לכם באשר דבר ושמרתם את-העבדה הזאת: <sup>26</sup> והיה כי-יאמרו אליכם בניכם מה העבדה הזאת לכם: <sup>27</sup> ואמרתם זבח-פסח הוא ליהוה אשר פסח על-בתי בני-ישראל במצרים בנגפו את-מצרים ואת-בתינו הציל

ויקד העם וישתחוו: <sup>28</sup> וילכו ויעשו בני ישראל כאשר צוה יהוה את-משה

ויהוה יבן עשו: ס

the observance of Passover appears in the account of the wilderness wanderings until after the crossing of the river Jordan, as recorded in Josh. 5:2-12.

**as He has promised** To the patriarchs. See Comment to Exod. 6:8.

**26-27.** The ritual also serves a pedagogic function. Its oddities arouse the curiosity of children, presenting an opportunity to teach these traditions to the young.

**our houses** The passage of time never diminishes the significance of the events. The national culture is nurtured by their memory and by their repeated re-enactment, a theme later stressed in the *Pesah Haggadah*.

phasizes the parent's role in informing children even if they do not ask, gearing our information to the child's capacity for understanding. It is better to encourage children to ask questions while they are still at home and parents and teachers can respond to them, than to wait until others cause them to doubt and question.



<sup>29</sup>In the middle of the night the LORD struck down all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sat on the throne to the first-born of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the first-born of the cattle. <sup>30</sup>And Pharaoh arose in the night, with all his courtiers and all the Egyptians—because there was a loud cry in Egypt; for there was no house where there was not someone dead. <sup>31</sup>He summoned Moses and Aaron in the night and said, “Up, depart from among my people, you and the Israelites with you! Go, worship the LORD as you said! <sup>32</sup>Take also your flocks and your herds, as you said, and begone! And may you bring a blessing upon me also!”

<sup>33</sup>The Egyptians urged the people on, impatient to have them leave the country, for they said, “We shall all be dead.” <sup>34</sup>So the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading bowls wrapped in their cloaks upon their shoulders. <sup>35</sup>The Israelites had done Moses’ bidding and borrowed from the Egyptians objects

שְׂשִׁי <sup>29</sup>וַיְהִי | בַּחֲצִי הַלַּיְלָה וַיַּהֲרֹג ה' כָּל-  
בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבְּכֹר פַּרְעֹה הַיֹּשֵׁב  
עַל-כִּסֵּאוֹ עַד בְּכוֹר הַשָּׂבִי אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵית  
הַבּוֹר וְכָל בְּכוֹר בְּהֵמָה: <sup>30</sup>וַיָּקָם פַּרְעֹה  
לַיְלָה הוּא וְכָל-עַבְדָּיו וְכָל-מִצְרַיִם וַתְּהִי  
צַעֲקָה גְדֹלָה בְּמִצְרַיִם כִּי-אֵין בֵּית אֲשֶׁר  
אֵין-שָׂם מֵת: <sup>31</sup>וַיִּקְרָא לְמֹשֶׁה וּלְאַהֲרֹן  
לַיְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר קוּמוּ צֵאוּ מִתּוֹךְ עַמִּי גַם-  
אַתֶּם גַּם-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּלְכוּ עַבְדוּ אֶת-  
יְהוָה כְּדִבְרֵכֶם: <sup>32</sup>גַּם-צֹאנְכֶם גַּם-בְּקָרְכֶם  
קָחוּ בָאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתֶּם וּלְכוּ וּבִרְכַתֶּם גַּם-  
אֹתִי:

<sup>33</sup>וַתַּחֲזֹק מִצְרַיִם עַל-הָעָם לְמַהֵר  
לְשַׁלְּחָם מִן-הָאָרֶץ כִּי אָמְרוּ כָּלֵנוּ מֵתִים:  
<sup>34</sup>וַיֹּשֶׁא הָעָם אֶת-בִּצְקוֹ טָרֶם יִחְמָץ  
מִשְׁאֲרֵתָם צָרָתָם בְּשִׁמְלָתָם עַל-שִׁכְמָם:  
<sup>35</sup>וּבְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל עָשׂוּ כְּדִבַּר מֹשֶׁה וַיִּשְׁאַלֻּ  
מִמִּצְרַיִם כְּלֵי-כֶסֶף וְכָלִי זָהָב וּשְׁמֵלֹת:

#### TENTH PLAGUE (*makkat b'khorot*) (vv. 29–36)

All the preparations have been completed. The stage is set for the climactic plague, which will secure the release of the Israelites from bondage. The Torah recognizes that the entire Egyptian people is subject to judgment for having tolerated the perverse will of Pharaoh.

#### PHARAOH SURRENDERS (vv. 30–32)

The king himself has to rise during the night, thereby adding to his humiliation at having to surrender unconditionally to Moses’ demands. By summoning Moses and Aaron, he must retract the arrogant threat made at their last meet-

ing (10:28). He asks for their blessing, an ultimate humbling act.

**31. Israelites** Pharaoh uses this term for the first time, thereby at last granting recognition to the Israelites as a national entity. The narrative of the oppression opened with this term (1:1), and now closes with it.

**34. before it was leavened** In verse 39 this note is amplified in such a way as to provide a clear explanation for the eating of *matzot* on Passover. A similar reason is given in Deut. 16:3. Because the eating of the *matzot* was ordained and presumably carried out before the 10th plague struck (v. 8), the present rationale must be a reinterpretation of a pre-existing practice.

**35.** The silver and gold given (not lent) by the Egyptians constituted a protest against the policies of the royal tyrant. They demonstrated a renewal of public conscience. Similar gifts were given to the Jews leaving Babylonia to return to Judea (Ezra 1:4). Had the Israelites left Egypt with nothing after so many years of suffering, the hatred in their hearts toward the Egyptians would have been never ending. The

Torah wanted the Egyptian people to send them off with gifts, so that it would be easier for the Israelites to fulfill the *mitzvah* “you shall not abhor an Egyptian” (Deut. 23:8). (This comment is by Benno Jacob, who was born and grew up in Germany and had to escape to England after the Nazis came to power. He understood that the purpose of the commandment was to cleanse our memory of bitterness and hatred.)



of silver and gold, and clothing. <sup>36</sup>And the LORD had disposed the Egyptians favorably toward the people, and they let them have their request; thus they stripped the Egyptians.

<sup>37</sup>The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, aside from children. <sup>38</sup>Moreover, a mixed multitude went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds. <sup>39</sup>And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had taken out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, since they had been driven out of Egypt and could not delay; nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves.

### THE EXODUS (vv. 37–42)

**37. Raamses** This city served as the assembly point for the departing Israelites. See Comment to 1:11.

**Succoth** A one day's journey from the royal palace at Raamses. This probably was the site known as Tjeku in Egyptian, the capital of the eighth province of Lower Egypt in the eastern part of the delta. The region is known to have served as pasture land for Semitic tribes and was the Egyptian gateway to and from Asia.

**Six hundred thousand** Women, children, and the elderly are not included. This number of men on foot would mean there was a total Israelite population of more than two million. The eastern part of the Nile delta or the peninsula of Sinai could not sustain such a vast population with water and food, not to mention the logistics involved in moving two million people together with their

וַיְהִי־נָתַן אֶת־חֵן הָעַם בְּעֵינֵי מִצְרַיִם <sup>36</sup>  
וַיִּשְׁאַלֻּם וַיִּנְצְלוּ אֶת־מִצְרַיִם: פ  
וַיִּסְעוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִרַעַמְסֵס סֹכַתָּה <sup>37</sup>  
בְּשֵׁשׁ־מֵאוֹת אֶלֶף רַגְלֵי הַגְּבָרִים לְבָד  
מִטָּף: <sup>38</sup>וְגַם־עָרֹב רַב עָלָה אִתָּם וְצֹאֵן  
וּבָקָר מְקֻנָּה כְּבֹד מְאֹד: <sup>39</sup>וַיֹּאפּוּ אֶת־  
הַבֶּצֶק אֲשֶׁר הוֹצִיאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם עֹגֶת מִצּוֹת  
כִּי לֹא חֲמֵץ כִּי־גִרְשׁוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם וְלֹא יָכְלוּ  
לְהִתְמַהֵמָה וְגַם־צֹדָה לֹא־עָשׂוּ לָהֶם:

cattle and herds across the Sea of Reeds with the Egyptian chariots in hot pursuit. In response to these problems, it has been suggested that the Hebrew word *elef*, usually rendered "thousand," here means "clan" or that it signifies a small military unit—the number of fighting men levied from each tribe. Another theory construes the total number as envisaging the Israelite population at the close of the "Exodus era," which culminated with the completion of the Temple by King Solomon: 600,000 adult males would be a realistic statistic for that period.

**38. a mixed multitude** Varied groups of forced laborers seem to have taken advantage of the confused situation and fled the country with the Israelites. Note that the Hebrew word translated as "mixed multitude" (*eirev*) is from the same root (ערב) as the plague in 8:17, suggesting the rabbinic tradition that these people were a major source of the troubles in the desert.

This practice of the Egyptians sending the Israelites off with gifts of gold and jewels anticipates the law (Deut. 15:13) that one who frees a slave must not send him or her away empty handed. According to the Midrash, there were three kinds of people among the Egyptians. One third wanted to keep the Israelites as slaves. They died in the plagues. A second group supported Israel's bid for liberation and rose in revolt against Pharaoh's stubborn policies. These were the Egyptians who gave Israel gold, silver, and jewels as they prepared to leave. Their "lending" these gifts to the Israelites was part of the public nature of

the Exodus. The Israelites did not sneak out furtively under cover of darkness. A third group of Egyptians celebrated the *Pesah* with Israel and then left with them, as we read (v. 38), "a mixed multitude went up with them" (Exod. R. 18:8).

**39. nor had they prepared** They had two weeks to prepare for the Exodus. Does this suggest a certain lack of confidence that God would in fact redeem them? Or does it reflect the slaves' mentality of living day to day and not planning for the future? Perhaps it testifies to their faith, willing to march into the desert without having prepared food in advance.



<sup>40</sup>The length of time that the Israelites lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years; <sup>41</sup>at the end of the four hundred and thirtieth year, to the very day, all the ranks of the LORD departed from the land of Egypt. <sup>42</sup>That was for the LORD a night of vigil to bring them out of the land of Egypt; that same night is the LORD's, one of vigil for all the children of Israel throughout the ages.

<sup>43</sup>The LORD said to Moses and Aaron: This is the law of the passover offering: No foreigner shall eat of it. <sup>44</sup>But any slave a man has bought may eat of it once he has been circumcised. <sup>45</sup>No bound or hired laborer shall eat of it. <sup>46</sup>It shall be eaten in one house: you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house; nor shall you

**40-41.** This historical summation does not accord precisely with the 400 years of Egyptian oppression predicted in Gen. 15:13. Perhaps that round number and its division into nearly symmetrical periods of time—as explained by some of the rabbis and medieval commentators—are intended to be rhetorical rather than literal; i.e., they underline the biblical concept of history as the fulfillment of God's design. In the worldview of the Bible, history is not a series of disconnected and haphazard incidents.

**42.** The final night in Egypt, the night of redemption, is described as one of vigil for both God and the Israelites.

#### EXCLUSIONARY REGULATIONS (vv. 43-49)

This final section has its own title: "The Law of the Passover Offering." It largely defines who is ineligible to celebrate the festival. The primary emphasis is on the practice of circumcision. As the physical token of God's covenant and a symbol of commitment to a life lived in the full awareness of that covenant, it is the indispensable prerequisite for males who wish to participate in the paschal offering. This requirement was forcefully expressed in 4:24-26, when Moses set out to return to Egypt to commence his mission

<sup>40</sup>וּמוֹשֶׁה בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יָשְׁבוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם  
שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וָאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה: <sup>41</sup>וַיְהִי  
מִקֵּץ שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וָאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה  
וַיְהִי בַעֲצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יֵצְאוּ כָל-עֲבָדֹת  
יְהוָה מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: <sup>42</sup>לַיֵּל שְׁמֵרִים הוּא  
לַיהוָה לְהוֹצִיאָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הוּא-  
הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה לַיהוָה שְׁמֵרִים לְכָל-בְּנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל לְדֹרֹתָם: פ

<sup>43</sup>וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן זֹאת  
חֻקַּת הַפֶּסַח כָּל-בֶּן-נֶכֶר לֹא-יֹאכַל בּוֹ:  
<sup>44</sup>וְכָל-עֶבֶד אִישׁ מִקְנֵת-כֶּסֶף וּמִלֶּתָה אֹתוֹ  
אֹז יֹאכַל בּוֹ: <sup>45</sup>תּוֹשֵׁב וְשָׂכִיר לֹא-יֹאכַל-  
בּוֹ: <sup>46</sup>בְּבֵית אֶחָד יֹאכַל לֹא-תוֹצִיא

of liberation, and it is stressed once again at the moment of the successful fulfillment of that mission.

**43. foreigner** The Hebrew term *ben nekhar* refers to a non-Israelite who resides in the land temporarily, usually for purposes of commerce. He does not profess the religion of Israel and does not identify with the community's historical experiences. He is, therefore, exempted from the religious obligations and restrictions imposed on Israelites.

**44.** Once the privately owned slave is circumcised (per the law of Gen. 17:12-13) he is treated as a member of the family and may participate fully in the paschal offering. The link between Passover and circumcision is also found in Josh. 5, a companion to this passage designated as the *haftarah* for the first day of *Pesah*.

**45. bound or hired laborer** These are two categories of non-Israelite wage earners who do not have the status of members of a household.

**46. in one house** This logically connects with the preceding verses, which stress that only those included within a household may participate. None may leave the house because every Israelite must be accounted for and prepared when the signal is given to depart.



break a bone of it. <sup>47</sup>The whole community of Israel shall offer it. <sup>48</sup>If a stranger who dwells with you would offer the passover to the LORD, all his males must be circumcised; then he shall be admitted to offer it; he shall then be as a citizen of the country. But no uncircumcised person may eat of it. <sup>49</sup>There shall be one law for the citizen and for the stranger who dwells among you.

<sup>50</sup>And all the Israelites did so; as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

<sup>51</sup>That very day the LORD freed the Israelites from the land of Egypt, troop by troop.

מִן־הַבֵּית מִן־הַבֶּשֶׂר הוֹצֵה וְעַם לֹא  
תִשְׁבְּרוּ־בּוֹ: <sup>47</sup>כָּל־עֵדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל יַעֲשׂוּ  
אֹתוֹ: <sup>48</sup>וְכִי־יִגְוֹר אֹתָךְ גֵּר וְעָשָׂה פֶסַח  
לִיהוָה הַמּוֹל לּוֹ כָּל־זָכָר וְאִם יִקְרַב  
לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ וְהָיָה כְּאֶזְרַח הָאָרֶץ וְכָל־עַרְל  
לֹא־יֹאכַל בּוֹ: <sup>49</sup>תּוֹרָה אַחַת יְהִיָּה לְאֶזְרַח  
וְלִגֵּר הַגֵּר בְּתוֹכְכֶם:

<sup>50</sup>וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה

אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶת־אַהֲרֹן בֵּן עָשׂוֹ: ס

<sup>51</sup>וַיְהִי בְּעַצְם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה הוֹצִיא יְהוָה

אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עַל־

שְׁבִיעִי צְבֹאתָם: פ

**break a bone** Presumably, to suck out the marrow.

**48-49.** These instructions relate to the situation envisaged above in verse 25. Strangers in ancient Israel enjoyed numerous rights and privileges, such as the benefits of *Shabbat* rest, the protection afforded by the cities of refuge, and access to a share of certain tithes and to the produce of the sabbatical year. They could even offer sacrifices if they so wished and participate in religious festivals. They were obligated to refrain from certain actions that could undermine the social, moral, and spiritual well-being of the dominant society—such as immorality, idolatry, blasphemy, and the consumption of blood. They were not

required to celebrate *Pesah*; but if they desired to do so, and thus identify themselves and their families with the national experience of Israel, the men first had to undergo the rite of circumcision. Having done so, no discrimination between them and citizens was allowed. An uncircumcised Israelite was also excluded from participation.

**50.** This refers to the eating of the paschal offering.

**51.** This verse resumes the narrative of verses 37-41. It is connected to the next chapter by the traditional scribal division of the Torah, to indicate that the subsequent law of the firstborn came into effect on the very day of the Exodus.

**48.** The person of non-Jewish origin who chooses to join the Jewish people, the *ger*, is welcome to celebrate *Pesah* even though his or her ancestors were not literally slaves in Egypt and did not leave with Moses, even as immigrants to the United States sing, "Land where my fathers died."

**49.** This may be taken as a major statement of the innate worth of all human beings and their right to equal treatment under the law.

Every spring at the *Pesah Seider*, every week

when we pause on *Shabbat* to demonstrate that we are free people and not slaves (praising *Shabbat* in the *Kiddush* as "a reminder of our liberation from Egypt"), indeed every day, the Jew is to recall that Jewish history began with God's intervening on behalf of an enslaved people, leading them to freedom, and giving them the Torah. That memory is to be personal, not a fact of ancient history. (Exod. 13:8: "It is because of what the LORD did for me when I went free from Egypt.")

#### HALAKHAH L'MA'ASEH

**12:49, one law** The non-Jew, though not subject to all the duties and privileges of Jewish law, must nevertheless be treated fairly and justly in all business and legal dealings, and Jews are commanded to care for all who are sick or poor, including non-Jews. (BT Git. 61a).