



From the Rabbi's Study

THE RETURN TO OUR ESSENCE

In contrast to the Egyptian's reliance on military strength, the Torah records that Israel faced the Egyptian ruthlessness with a distinctly different approach: *"greatly frightened, the Israelites cried out to Hashem"*.

Rashi understands that the Jews did not cry out to G-d as some blind act of terror but as a return to their essence and true calling in the world. He points out that each of the Avot - the three Patriarchs - were exceptional precisely in their attention to matters of spirit, piety and faith. All three ancestors turned to G-d as their core.

Consumed by the inferno of Egyptian slavery, the Jews had forgotten their own true purpose, thinking instead that they were to be a people like any other. But in the drama of their liberation, they rediscovered what it has always meant to be Jewish: to be part of a people who can cry out to G-d, a people whose emotional orientation is towards heaven.

The reality is that a person who retains his own essential character can never completely be enslaved; while conversely, a person who has no independent self-image can never truly be free.

Throughout the millenia, Jews have survived not by ignoring the reality of life, nor by escaping from the often cruel and disappointing events of everyday existence. Instead, our ancestors were able to endure and thrive by tapping into wells of supernatural strength, linking themselves to G-d by elevating their perspective beyond their own limitations.

Even in the aftermath of 9/11 and more recently Madrid, the nations of the world don't seem to realise what we as a people endure every single day. Yet over the centuries, the Jewish People have learned to measure their lives with a divine yardstick, to seek comfort by living in accordance with G-d's way and by crying out when necessary to our Father in Heaven!

This surely is a profound Pesach message for us all today as a congregation and ultimately as a nation. The year may be 5764 and the place Hale Cheshire, but we too - being greatly frightened - must follow in the footsteps of our ancestors to connect once again with our own essential character.

How can this be achieved?by ensuring now more than ever before, that our beautiful new shule and Bet Hamidrash are filled to capacity for Tefilla - for davening - the time when we speak to G-d as well as for Torah - for learning- the time when G-d speaks with us.

Above all, Pesach should serve as a reminder to return to our essence; to use our freedom as an opportunity to express the liberty of our souls by embracing G-d's Mitsvot as we cry out again to our creator.

Ruthie and I together with the Children wish you all a Pesach Kasher Vesameyach - a Happy and Kosher Pesach..... Leshanah Haba'ah Biyrushalyim Hab'nuyach!!