

# PASSOVER 2018



THE ART OF THANKFULNESS

This year's PASSOVER (Pesach) Festival is fast approaching.

## **It is the annual cycle of YHVH's Feasts.**

YHVH tells us that there is a time-table that we should be aware of.

The celebration of this Feast (in other words, the way that **we respond and react** to YHVH's Will, and the degree to which we reveal His Attributes and Glory), will determine **how** we have defined YHVH's **SPACE**.

The exact date and time define YHVH's concept of **TIME**.

### **Pesach speaks of REDEMPTION.**

It is worthwhile returning to this Bible story ... the one where we learn about the redemption of a nation.

The facts are that the children of Jacob had, of their own free will, moved down to Egypt.

In a sense, we today, are living where we are, working in the place where we are, reacting to the community where we are, of our free will - we have made this choice ... it is our Egypt.

The children of Jacob start off as a "set-apart" people, they live in Goshen.

### **But what happens next?**

Well, the Bible is not clear.

But, we can see that over time, a degree of compromise has crept in.

From being independent herdsman, they seem to have slipped into the position of accepting a job.

### **Maybe the lure of a monthly wage was just too big?**

And then, as we will see later, they changed their diet - from the herbs of the desert and the meat from their flocks, they turned towards the "leeks" of Egypt.

# DO WE NEED REDEMPTION TODAY?

We too, are living in an Egypt ...

The world has been turned on its head.

WORDS such as values / principles and ethics are almost unknown in this generation.

In fact, today we need organizations that have to advocate ethics and values, so that people may become aware of these concepts.



- ◆ Politicians no longer say what they mean nor do they mean what they say.
- ◆ **Violence** has almost become the norm ... however, it is the form of it that is shocking – for example: burning old people with hot irons meant for clothes, points us in a backward direction to the death chambers of the Holocaust.
- ◆ **Abuse** of children and women is on the upward trend.
- ◆ **Corruption** and the misuse of money is so common that we only stop to listen if the amounts are large.

The word for “Egypt” in Hebrew is “*mitzrazim*” and comes from the root word “*Metzar*”.

The meanings that we need to consider are:

- Constricted
- Limitations
- Narrow

## Questions:

- ❖ Are we feeling safe and secure?
- ❖ Are we feeling able to generate financial security?
- ❖ Are we able to build for a legacy?
- ❖ Are we able to believe with confidence that our grandchildren will prosper here?

If you are not able to answer these questions with ease, then it is safe to say - you are in a type of Egypt !!!

Y'shua was speaking just before the crucifixion and He says: *"The end-times will be known be the action of mankind that parallels the days of Noah".*

**Matthew 24:36-39** *"But when that day and hour will come, no one knows — not the angels in Heaven, not the Son, only the Father. **For the Son of Man's coming will be just as it was in the days of Noach.** Back then, before the Flood, people went on eating and drinking, taking wives and becoming wives, right up till the day Noach entered the ark; and they didn't know what was happening until the Flood came and swept them all away. It will be just like that when the Son of Man comes."*

## **Are our times as bad as <sup>1</sup>?**

Without pronouncing judgement, there is one saying that Y'shua used that would seem highly appropriate in our times ...

We see that "lawlessness" abounds:

**Matthew 7:21-23** *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, only those who do what My Father in Heaven wants. On that Day, many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord! Didn't we prophesy in Your Name? Didn't we expel demons in Your Name? Didn't we perform many miracles in Your Name?' Then I will tell them to their faces, 'I never knew you! Get away from Me, you workers of lawlessness!'"*



<sup>1</sup> For further information / in-depth study, please read Today, As in the days of Noah  
<http://www.kanaanministries.org/downloads/?did=233>

# PHARAOH'S JOB

Pharaoh job was to distract the children of Israel from their purpose.

The family of Jacob would have grown up with the generational history and the knowledge that YHVH has made a Covenant with Abraham.

They would also have been told about the unique blessings that had been bestowed on this family and nation - that they would become many, and that they would impact the world.

They would know of the prophecy that they would come to Egypt, would succumb to the lures of this worldly system, but would be able to HOLD ONTO THE PROMISE of a future redemption.

## **Pharaoh had also heard about these promises and blessings ...**

The evil one, Satan, has also heard of the promises and blessings that have been spoken over the lives of all of the “reborn” Sons of Abraham.

Most importantly, Satan has heard that every reborn son of Abraham will, if they are prepared to be “clean and Holy”, become Priests in the Living Stone Tabernacle ... together with Y’shua the Great High Priest, according to the Order of Melchizedek.

One of the worst things that a son of Abraham can do, is to forget that which YHVH has done for us.

Forgetfulness is the worst of all sins ... not because we are doing things against His Will, but the mere fact that we choose to live life NOT reflecting **His glory**.

As soon as you forget the Goodness of YHVH, you start off on a path to complain about the lack of water, the manna that is tasteless, and so on ...

**Deuteronomy 8:11-17** *“Be careful not to forget ADONAI your God by not obeying His mitzvot, rulings and regulations that I am giving you today. Otherwise, after you have eaten and are satisfied, built fine houses and lived in them, and increased your herds, flocks, silver, gold and everything else you own, you will become proud-hearted. Forgetting ADONAI your God — who brought you out of the land of Egypt, where you lived as slaves; who led you through the vast and fearsome desert, with its poisonous snakes, scorpions and waterless, thirsty ground; who brought water out of flint rock for you; who fed you in the desert with man, unknown to your ancestors; all the while humbling and testing you in order to do you good in the end — you will think to yourself, ‘My own power and the strength of my own hand have gotten me this wealth.’”*

# IT IS TIME FOR A SECOND EXODUS

The first Exodus took us physically out of Egypt.

- ◆ It was about walking far distances, probably sore feet at the end of every day.
- ◆ It was about the heat of the desert sun in the day, and the bitter cold nights of that desert.
- ◆ It was about the dust in the face from all those who went before you.
- ◆ It was about the fear of the unknown.
- ◆ It was about a nagging concern of the reaction of the Pharaoh left behind ...

**This second Exodus, may I suggest, should take us out of Egypt / this world system, SPIRITUALLY.**

**Spiritual freedom is found in our character.**

Inner freedom / liberty is revealed in how we reveal THANKFULNESS / GRATITUDE, in our daily actions / deeds.

The Hebrew words for gratitude is - "***hakarat hatov***" - and carries the meaning:

*Recognising the Good*

- If you have to mow the lawn - praise YHVH that you are healthy and have a home.
- If you have to make use of very little water (the drought in Cape Town), praise YHVH that you are still alive.



Take a hard look at all small things that seem to be a grind / hard work / effort, and then consider what your blessing is within that circumstance.

# SOME PRINCIPLES OF INGRATITUDE

While we wish to focus on gratitude as a positive attribute, we need to first identify the other end of the measuring line.

On one side, we have *thanklessness*.

As we move across the spectrum we start to be able to recognize the “good” things in our lives that we can enjoy.

We then begin to express our gratitude by living a lifestyle of praise to YHVH, of seeking to bless others, and also of expressing joy in difficult circumstances.

The far extreme of our measuring line is taken up by people who express words of praise that are insincere and meaningless.

## 1. Gratitude cannot live / co-exist with:

- a) arrogance,
- b) resentment ,
- c) and with selfishness.



If you test your heart and find any of these attitudes prominent in your life, you can be sure that people will experience you as an ungrateful person.

## 2. People who are ungrateful will normally be filled with PRIDE. Those who are full of their own importance will:

- Never acknowledge their debts to others.
- Never “pay-back” one good deed with another.

# HOW DO WE REVEAL GRATITUDE?

Let us first remember: gratitude is recognizing the good!

## A. Gratitude is revealed in the TORAH by the principle of “*bikkurim*”.

As we read in Deuteronomy, we see that YHVH expects us to INDIVIDUALLY present ourselves before Him in Jerusalem.

- (i) It is there that we make a prophetic declaration that YHVH has been good to us, and therefore ...
- (ii) We honour YHVH by bringing a **FIRSTFRUITS OFFERING** to Him, and we ...
- (iii) Take JOY in all of the good that YHVH has given us..

**Deuteronomy 26:1-12** *“When you have come to the Land ADONAI your God is giving you as your inheritance, taken possession of it and settled there; you are to take the firstfruits of all the crops the ground yields, which you will harvest from your Land that ADONAI your God is giving you, put them in a basket and go to the place where ADONAI your God will choose to have His Name live. You will approach the cohen holding office at the time and say to him, ‘Today I declare to ADONAI your God that I have come to the Land ADONAI swore to our ancestors that He would give us.’ The cohen will take the basket from your hand and put it down in front of the altar of ADONAI your God.”*

**Deuteronomy 26:5** *“Then, in the presence of ADONAI your God, you are to say, ‘My ancestor was a nomad from Aram. He went down into Egypt few in number and stayed. There he became a great, strong, populous nation. But the Egyptians treated us badly; they oppressed us and imposed harsh slavery on us. So we cried out to ADONAI, the God of our ancestors. ADONAI heard us and saw our misery, toil and oppression; and ADONAI brought us out of Egypt with a strong Hand and a stretched-out Arm, with great terror, and with signs and wonders. Now He has brought us to this place and given us this Land, a Land flowing with milk and honey. Therefore, as you see, I have now brought the firstfruits of the Land which you, ADONAI, have given me.’ You are then to put the basket down before ADONAI your God, prostrate yourself before ADONAI your God, and take joy in all the good that ADONAI your God has given you, your household, the Levi and the foreigner living with you.”*

**Deuteronomy 26:12** *“After you have separated a tenth of the crops yielded in the third year, the year of separating a tenth, and have given it to the Levi, the foreigner, the orphan and the widow, so that they can have enough food to satisfy them while staying with you;”*

## **B. Gratitude is revealed in your life as a son of Abraham in the following actions:**

1. *As a son of Abraham, you start accepting the imperfections that you discover in your own life*

We will be able to list the deficiencies / lack in our lives.

As soon as we measure up against others we will see that we are not as clever, not as fast, not as pretty as others.

We will also soon identify character traits that we lack—not as patient, not as long-suffering - not as so-and-so, not as such-and-so .... and the list goes on.

### **You are a product of your family / tribe / nation.**

Work to identify your shortcomings and make plans to improve in these areas.

However, whilst there may be imperfections, without doubt there will also be strong points.

Take these and **focus** on how you can impact the community and bring YHVH the Glory.

2. *As a son of Abraham you attempt to live a FULL Life*

All too often we spend our lives desiring other things / attributes.

We can then fall into the habit of moaning and groaning about the unfairness of our circumstance.

**BUT!!!** : at that moment when you realize that:

- ◆ You are EQUAL to all others, BUT UNIQUE in your composition of attributes and abilities - as determined by YHVH at your creation.
- ◆ You have received a SET of gifts that are a special / unique combination, and these gifts are a critical element that is needed in the Body of Messiah.
- ◆ You are the only one best qualified to reveal that combination of gifts to the world, and to impact those close to you In the community where you stay.

Then you will develop an attitude of thankfulness. You will know that you have value in your own right, and therefore, you will strive to achieve the fullness of the potential that YHVH has placed within you.

## Freedom of Choice

We are also given the right to exercise our freedom of choice - each choice that we make is entirely our responsibility.



If we choose to work 16 hours a day, chasing after material things, while failing to make time to see the amazing sunsets, enjoy the panoramic views of nature, go for walks along the beach ... that's your choice.

A full life means that you have been able to reach the potential in every area of your life i.e. your marriage, parenting, grand-parenting, role-modelling, mentoring, etc.

Being super-great in one area does not mean that you have had a full life, and certainly means that you would have missed many other opportunities.

3. *As a son of Abraham you "cry out" to YHVH for a redemption*

We have been placed here on earth with a mandate ... to keep and guard the garden!

**Genesis 2:15** *"ADONAI, God, took the person and put him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and care for it."*

This mandate requires of us that we will be good stewards and that we will act as watchmen on the wall.

It also means that we should be developing new strategies to reflect the Glory of YHVH.

If we see (as watchmen) that the world is becoming more and more evil - surely, it's time for us to start to "cry out".

It may well be that our numbers are small to begin with, but as we take a stand against any form of social injustice (abuse of women, human trafficking, corruption) and we take a stand against dictator-type leadership by clearly articulating exactly what Biblical servant-leadership is, our numbers will grow.

It takes a Son of Abraham to set the benchmark by a set-apart lifestyle, to choose;

- ◆ not to be silent,
- ◆ to choose to speak out
- ◆ to choose to make a difference ... no matter how small it may be.

#### 4. *As a son of Abraham you determine to leave a legacy*

Fathers and Mothers often think of the inheritance (the money / possessions / the things) that they will leave behind.

But a legacy of:

- a role-modelled lifestyle reflecting GODLY Attributes: patience, long-suffering,
- parenting that instills GODLY Character traits, fairness, equity,
- a leadership style that reveals the heart of a servant - empowering others,
- words of wisdom spoken at the right moment and
- being a peacemaker,

**will continue from one generation to another.**

Each one of these actions get imprinted on the minds and the very DNA of a child / grandchild and becomes a part of their makeup, whether they want it or not. These GODLY Attributes continue to grow, and in time, become more powerful in the next generation.

C. Gratitude is revealed when, like Leah, you can declare your gratefulness even when you personally feel "rejected".

The story of Leah is quite interesting.

- We read that Leah always felt like a second-hand wife.
- Jacob loved Leah. However, she always felt rejected because Jacob loved Rachel much more.
- When Judah is born, she understands / recognizes that YHVH has been good to her.
- As a result, she responds and brings the offering of joy before YHVH.

By **virtue of the name, Judah** (she makes a declaration of THANKFULNESS, she says "*I am grateful – this time - in these circumstances*").

**Genesis 29:35** "*She conceived yet again, had a son and said, "This time I will praise ADONAI"; therefore she named him Y'hudah. Then she stopped having children."*

The result of this action by Leah will eventually mean that this son, Judah, would receive the  ***blessings of leadership*** .

Not only would he lead, but this tribe will maintain the TORAH, will maintain a set-apart lifestyle, will maintain the Shabbat, will maintain the calling to “return” to the Land of Canaan.



**Genesis 49:8-12** *“Y’hudah, your brothers will acknowledge you, your hand will be on the neck of your enemies, your father’s sons will bow down before you. Y’hudah is a lion’s cub; my son, you stand over the prey. He crouches down and stretches like a lion; like a lioness, who dares to provoke him? The scepter will not pass from Y’hudah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his legs, until he comes to whom belongs; and it is he whom the peoples will obey. Tying his donkey to the vine, his donkey’s colt to the choice grapevine, he washes his clothes in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes. His eyes will be darker than wine, his teeth whiter than milk.”*

# A FINAL THOUGHT

Y'shua tells us that His Yoke is light.

Anything that “looks-like” ritual, traditions, or which causes controversy, will become heavy.

Opinionated people and boss-like leaders will cause our lives to be a pain.

Such things need to be avoided at all cost.

**Matthew 11:27-28** *“My Father has handed over everything to Me. Indeed, no one fully knows the Son except the Father, and no one fully knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son wishes to reveal Him.”*

**Matthew 11:28** *“Come to Me, all of you who are struggling and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*

This Passover let us focus on REMEMBERING - and then make a determined effort to live this one life that we get given in expressing GRATEFULNESS ...

... **“seer todah” at every opportunity!!**

Amanda and I have moved to a small village along the coast line called “The Garden Route” - so called for its beauty - The Garden of Eden.

We now have the privilege of taking long walks along the most beautiful beach - we so enjoy our new surroundings - what a blessing to have this new season in our lives!!



We are so GRATEFUL for all our ABBA Father has done for us - and so we have named our new home: “**See’r Todah**”- EXTREMELY GRATEFUL!!

*(We added the apostrophe to make it sound like the sea (“see”) ... for the Afrikaans speaking people - Die see is tot DAAAAAR!!?)*



**Consider the words of the SHEMA carefully.**

May these Godly attributes be so well written onto your hearts that they are reflected in the actions that you take daily as you go about your life in the community.

**Deuteronomy 6:4-9** *“Sh’ma, Yisra’el! ADONAI Eloheinu, ADONAI echad [Hear, Isra’el! ADONAI our God, ADONAI is One]; and you are to love ADONAI your God with all your heart, all your being and all your resources. These words, which I am ordering you today, are to be on your heart; and you are to teach them carefully to your children. You are to talk about them when you sit at home, when you are traveling on the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them on your hand as a sign, put them at the front of a headband around your forehead, and write them on the door-frames of your house and on your gates.”*

