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in the land of Egypt,	בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם	and let them ask	וַיִּשְׁאַלֵּוּ
in the eyes of Pharaoh's servants,	בְּעֵינֵי עֲבָדֵי-פַרְעֹה	(every) man of his fellow,	אִישׁ מֵאֵת רֵעֵהוּ
and in the eyes of the people.	וּבְעֵינֵי הָעָם: ס רביעי	and (every) woman of her fellow,	וְאִשָּׁה מֵאֵת רֵעוּתָהּ
4. And Moses said:	4 וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה	jewels of silver	כְּלֵי-כֶסֶף
Thus saith the Lord:	כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה	and jewels of gold.	וּכְלֵי זָהָב:
About midnight	בְּחֻצַּת הַלַּיְלָה	3. And the Lord gave the people favor	3 וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה אֶת-חַן הָעָם
will I go out	אֲנִי יוֹצֵא	in the eyes of the Egyptians.	בְּעֵינֵי מִצְרַיִם
into the midst of Egypt;	בְּתוֹךְ מִצְרַיִם:	Moreover the man Moses	גַּם הָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה
5. and there shall die all the first-born	5 וּמָתָה כָּל-בְּכוֹרֵי	was very great	גְּדוֹל מְאֹד
in the land of Egypt,	בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם		

Rashi — ל"ט

like כחצי הלילה (at about midnight), and they said that Moses said "about (?) midnight," } כְּמוֹ, כְּחֻצַּי הַלַּיְלָה, וַאֲמָרוּ שְׂאֵמַר מֹשֶׁה "בְּחֻצַּת"

which implies near to it, either before it (midnight) or after it, } שְׂמֻשְׁמַע סְמוּךְ לוֹ, אוּ לְפָנָיו אוּ לְאַחֲרָיו,

but he did not say "at" midnight, } וְלֹא אָמַר "בְּחֻצַּת",

lest the astrologers of Pharaoh err } שָׂמָא יִטְעוּ אִיצְטְגֵינִי פַרְעֹה

and say, "Moses is a liar." } וַיֹּאמְרוּ: מֹשֶׁה בְּדָאֵי הוּא,

But the Holy One Blessed Be He (who) knows his times and moments, said: "At" midnight. } אֶבְרַח הַקָּבָ"ה יוֹדֵעַ עֲתִידוֹ וְרִגְעָיו אָמַר בְּחֻצַּת:

(2A)

(3)

שמות, בא י"א, 10-11, 2

CHAPTER XII — י"ב

1. And the Lord spoke	1 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה
unto Moses and unto Aaron	אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל-אַהֲרֹן
in the land of Egypt,	בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
saying:	לֵאמֹר:
2. This month (shall be) unto you	2 הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָּכֶם
the beginning of months;	רֵאשִׁית חֳדָשִׁים

Just as God was precise in saying דָּרָגָה, so should a Jew be precise. Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants us to respond to the demand for precision. To be a good Jew, one has to be a disciplined Jew. And to be a disciplined Jew, one has to develop disciplined time awareness. A Jew should have a built-in timepiece. Judaism walks around with a clock or a stopwatch on its wrist. This is one of the great features of Judaism. It is very precise. It consists of measurements and mathematical calculations. To miss one calculation, one tiny, infinitesimal fraction of time, is identical with treachery with

4) הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רֵאשִׁית חֳדָשִׁים - This month shall be to you the head of the months. The first commandment they were given in Egypt which signaled the commencement of their liberation was to mark time. A slave is relieved of mitzvos asei shehazman gerama, of time-bound positive commandments. This is because the slave lacks time experience. To the slave, time is a curse; he waits for the day to pass. The slave's time is the property of his master. No matter how hard he may try to be productive in time, he will not reap the harvest of his work; therefore, he is insensitive to time. His sense of the movement of time, the passing of hours, days, weeks, is very dull. Life, to the slave personality, is motionless. He lacks the great excitement of opportunities knocking at the door, of challenges summoning him to action, of tense expectations and fears of failure. Any faith which is inseparably bound up with time is inapplicable to him.

אשר יאמר

your hosts	אֶת-צְבָאוֹתֵיכֶם	by every man,	לְכָל-נֶפֶשׁ
from the land of Egypt;	מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם	that only	הוּא לְבָדוּ
therefore shall you observe	וְשִׁמְרֶתֶם	may be done by you.	יַעֲשֶׂה לָכֶם:
this day	אֶת-הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה	17. And you shall observe	17 וְשִׁמְרֶתֶם
throughout your generations	לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם	the unleavened bread;	אֶת-הַמִּצּוֹת
(by) an ordinance for ever.	חֻקַּת עוֹלָם:	for in this selfsame day	כִּי בַעֲצֵם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
		I brought out	הוֹצֵאתִי

Rashi — נט"י

2

unleavened bread, **אֶת הַמִּצָּה,**
 so one may not cause leavening (procrastinate) } **כִּד אֵין מְתַמְיֵצִין**
 (in reference to) a commandment, but if it comes to your hand } **אֶת הַמִּצָּה,**
אֵלָא אַם בָּאָה לְיָדְךָ
 perform it immediately (*ibid.*). } **עֲשֵׂה אוֹתָהּ מִיָּד**
(שם):

17. And you shall observe the unleavened bread } **17 וְשִׁמְרֶתֶם אֶת-הַמִּצּוֹת.**
 so that it shall not reach the state of leavening. } **שְׁלֵא יָבֹאוּ לְיַדֵי חִימוּץ;**
 Hence (our Rabbis) said, } **מִכֵּאן אָמְרוּ:-**
 "(If the dough) rises she (the kneader) should moisten it with cold water." } **תִּפְּחַ תְּלַטוּשׁ בְּצוּגָן,**
 Rabbi Josiah says, } **רַבִּי יוֹסֵיָה אָמַר:-**
 "Do not read **הַמִּצּוֹת** (the unleavened bread) } **אֶל תְּהִי קוֹרָא, אֶת-הַמִּצּוֹת,**
 but **הַמִּצּוֹת** (the commandments), } **אֵלָא אֶת הַמִּצּוֹת**
 — just as one may not leaven } **- כְּדֹרֶךְ שֶׁאֵין מְתַמְיֵצִין**

שלוש רגלים • עמידה לשחרית, מנחה ומערב

3

וְטִהַר לְבָבוֹ לְעִבְדֶּךָ בְּאֵמֶת.
וְהִנְחִילָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ (בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרַצוֹן)
בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְשִׂשׂוֹן (שֶׁבֶת ו) מוֹעֲדֵי קִדְשֶׁךָ
וְיִשְׂמְחוּ בְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִקִּדְשֵׁי שְׂמֶךָ.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מִקִּדְשׁ (הַשֶּׁבֶת ו) יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַזְּמַנִּים.

4) **מִקְדֵּשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַזְּמַנִּים** Who sanctifies Israel and the festive seasons. Rabbi Barukh HaLevi Epstein, author of *Torah Temima*, suggested that this ending is a copyist's error. The blessing should be specific to each festival, concluding: "Who sanctifies Israel and [festival name]." This explanation is incorrect. The names of each holiday are not specified here because the three festivals of Pesah, Shavuot and Sukkot all reflect the identical sanctity as relates to the prohibition of *melakha*, and all three share the same quality constituting a "holy assembly" (*mikra kodesh*). The generic term *zemanim*, festive seasons, is thus used because in a sense the three festivals represent a single unit of sanctity.

5) Maimonides says that as we start the recital of *Maggid* over the second cup, we say, "*Bi-vehilu yaza'nu mi-Mizrayim*, We departed from Egypt in a hurry." Does it make much difference whether the Jews departed from Egypt slowly or in a hurry? Yet, it is so important that Maimonides apparently made it the symbol of the great freedom of the Exodus. It refers to our acquisition of time-consciousness - the Exodus can happen now, and may not happen later. This sense of time was the shibboleth of our ancestors when they left Egypt. The first commandment they were given in Egypt, marking the commencement of their liberation, was to mark time: "This month shall be to you the beginning of months" (Ex. 12:2). *Bi-vehilu yaza'nu mi-Mizrayim* - we have gained the consciousness of time, and hence we are free.

(Festival of Freedom)

3)

When the Jews were delivered from the Egyptian oppression and Moses rose to undertake the almost impossible task of metamorphosing a tribe of slaves into a nation of priests, he was told by God that the path leading from the holiday of Passover to *Shavu'ot*, from initial liberation to consummate freedom, leads through the medium of time. The commandment of *sefirah* was entrusted to the Jew; the wondrous test of counting forty-nine successive days was put to him. These forty-nine days must be whole. If one day is missed, the act of enumeration is invalidated.

A slave who is capable of appreciating each day, of grasping its meaning and worth, of weaving every thread of time into a glorious fabric, quantitatively stretching over the period of seven weeks but qualitatively forming the warp and woof of centuries of change, is eligible for Torah. He has achieved freedom.

(Sacred and Profane)

2)

In anticipation, man moves from reminiscing to expectation, from memories to visions. To live fulfillingly in time requires both a worthy past and a promising future. Time-awareness is not only for dreaming. This, in turn, suggests that we have the freedom to make decisions and the moral commitment to intervene. We derive from retrospection the moral imperative to act now in order to realize our visions for the future. The *Haggadah* opens with *Avadim Hayinu* (retrospection) and it concludes with *Nishmat Kol Hai*, which is an anticipatory vision of the future, moving from hindsight to foresight.

3)

"The night preceding my operation I prayed to God and beseeched Him to spare me. I did not ask for too much. All I wanted was that He should make it possible for me to attend my daughter's wedding, which was postponed on account of my illness - a very modest wish in comparison with my insane claims to life prior to my sickness. The fantastic flights of human foolishness and egocentrism were distant from me that night." (Our of the Whirlwind, 131-32)

כ"ה אדר א' תש"ז

4)

[כ] רבי טרפון אומר: היום קצר, והמלאכה מרובה, והפועלים עצלים, והשכר הרבה, ובעל הבית דוחק.

5)

On Rosh Chodesh many recite the following verse after *Hallel*:

ואברֹהם זקן בא בימים, ניהוה פֶּרֶךְ אֶת אֲבֹרֵהֶם בְּכֹל.

6)

ג' אדר א' תש"ז

אמר רב יוסף אן מאברהם ניקום וניגמר אמר רבא תנא גמר מאברהם ואן לא גמרין מיניה דתניא (ויקרא יב, ג) וביום השמיני ימול בשר ערלתו מלמד שכל היום כשר למילה אלא שהזריזין מקדימין למצות שנאמר (בראשית כב, ג) וישכם אברהם בבקר ויחבוש וגו'