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Passover 1984

By Dr. Marc H. Tanenbaum

The Jewish people throughout the world began last week the observance of Passover, the oldest and undoubtedly the most influential of Jewish festivals. Known in Jewish tradition as *Zman Cherutenu*, the season of our freedom, Passover commemorates the liberation of the Israelites from bondage to Pharaoh in Egypt.

The Exodus from Egypt was simultaneously an event of physical and spiritual liberation that decisively transformed the religious and moral orientation of mankind. To the Ancient Israelites, the spiritual liberation was more than a religious piety. It involved a monumental struggle in actual daily life against the spiritual values of ancient Egyptian civilization.

Egyptian life was characterized by cruel human slavery and idolatrous submission to a Pharaoh who was regarded as a god, who was the source of all law but never the servant of the law. The rejection of Egypt by Moses and the Israelites was thus a life-shaking victory in the struggle for human dignity and spiritual authenticity.

But Passover celebrates not only the redemption from slavery and oppression as a past event — it is celebrated as much through the colorful Passover seder as a present-day experience. At Passover services this year, uppermost on Jewish minds will be reflections on the rise of anti-Semitism in America, France, Germany, Latin America and elsewhere, the promotion of peace between Israel and her Arab neighbors, and concern for Jews in Iran, the Soviet Union, Ethiopia, and elsewhere.

Beyond all else, there will be the spirit of hope for a better, more decent world symbolized by the prayer, "Next Year in Jerusalem."

Behind The Scenes

At The United Nations

By David Horowitz

A World-Union Press Feature

Passover — Biblical Miracles Continue

UNITED NATIONS, (WUP) — "As in the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show him (Israel) wondrous things." (Micah 7:15).

During this Passover season 5744 it is well for all of us to turn our hearts to our age-long historic tradition and reflect on the significance of Micah's prophecy.

We are motivated to cite this prediction in the light of what we have been blessed to witness in our times — "wondrous things", indeed! We have lived to see the fulfillment of the numerous prophecies telling of Israel's return to the ancient homeland, of the reestablishment of the Third Hebrew Commonwealth set in motion — but not initiated — by the UN Partition decision of 1947 —

a *nes* in itself by virtue of the narrow margin of the vote — 33 for, 13 against, 10 abstention. The miracle happened!

No one dares dispute that Israel, anciently and now, is a land of miracles. They occur daily in the fields of science, Medicine, desert fructification, archaeology, spiritual renewal, etc. The child in Israel is also a phenomenon, a *nes*.

This world organization, by the medium of UNICEF, is performing a vital work on behalf of children throughout the globe. 1979 was designated "The Year of the Child." It is as yet little known, however, that among the recent miracles in Israel is one which relates to children. This *nes* involves a rapidly-growing enterprise which, in the view of this writer, may well serve as a pilot project for the UN Agency, and this by the very fact that it not only educates, feeds and houses children. It also heals them from childhood abuse, rescues them from homelessness and saves them from drugs and other evil temptations.

This miracle is *Migdal Ohr*, a "Tower of Light" headquartered in Galilee between Afula and Nazareth and founded by the young miracle-Rebbe, Rabbi David Isaac Grossman, renowned throughout the *yishuv* as the phenomenal rescuer of thousands of boys and girls who may well have been lost in the degrading slums if not for this

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TELL TALES

"One Man Plus The Truth
 Constitutes A Majority"

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abusing a Jew... an act which forced him to flee to Midian.

Memory and Punishment

But why would he have such feeling for his people if he had been reared as an Egyptian from infancy? First, his natural mother was his nurse until he was quite a lad, giving her the chance to instil in him the belief in one God. We assume she also told him the sacred traditions of Israel and the Divine promise to deliver the Jews from Egyptian bondage. In addition, as the adopted son of a princess, he must have had the best education available — probably at Heliopolis, which helped him become a leader of men. We can only assume that when the priests wanted to initiate him into their idolatry, he remembered his mother's teachings and resisted.

The memory of these same moral laws must have caused him to kill the Egyptian that flogged a Hebrew slave. Moses was filled with compassion as he watched his people groaning beneath their burdens. However, even the princess would not have been able to save him from punishment, so he fled to Midian in the south-eastern part of Sinai, beyond Egyptian jurisdiction.

God's Agent

King of One Liners



HENNY YOUNGMAN
 ...Man of Many Talents.

We know a girl who was chased out of a nudist colony because she had something on her mind.

Moses became a shepherd to the flocks of the pagan priest, Jethro, and married his daughter. We are taught that God never gives an exalted office to a man unless he has first been tested in small things. Moses saw a lamb escape from the flock to a stream where it quenched its thirst. He said: "Had I known that thou wast thirsty, I would have taken thee in my arms and carried thee thither". A Heavenly voice resounded: "As thou livest, thou art fit to shepherd Israel". (Midrash) In the episode of the burning bush, he was also nominated as God's agent to liberate his people. When Moses was told by God to plead with Pharaoh to let his people go, he felt completely unfit for such a task. Already an old man of eighty, God rebuked him for he had God's assurance that He would be with him. Moses was also hesitant because he was not eloquent, having spent years in the great silent spaces of the desert, and he could only stammer forth the message of freedom.

However, he was commanded to return to Egypt to ask Pharaoh to set the slaves free, with his brother Aaron as spokesman. The Midrash tells us it took God seven days to convince him. Leaving the calm of the desert he plunged into the whirlpool of history. Despite their bondage, the Jews were not really ready to leave Egypt any more than Pharaoh was ready to let them go. The ten plagues followed one another rapidly and in the end not only the Jews left hurriedly, but a number of non-Jewish slaves went with them, racing against time to escape Egypt and Pharaoh's wrath. When the Jews safely crossed the Red Sea, Moses began to sing — the most lyrical poem in Scripture.

The Revelation

Seven weeks later, came the unique event when God spoke directly to Moses at Mt. Sinai and revealed His Law. He spoke not of theology or the wonders of the universe He had created, but of man's relationship to man, of one's duties towards others. When Moses returned to his people with the Ten Commandments and found them worshipping the Golden Calf, he was so angry he was ready to kill... he never knew what to expect from this "stiff-necked people" he was leading. They had seen God at work and learned nothing from it. Perhaps sharing something with assimilated Jews today, they still yearned for the fleshpots of Egypt!

Moses castigated his people often and severely. But he also defended them against their enemies, and at times even against God. He was both God's emissary to Israel and Israel's to God. Yet he remained a human being, with many flaws — he had not supernatural powers. He had a temper, and he was punished for it. He lived according to the Biblical count to one hundred and twenty, and spent his last hour blessing the tribes of Israel. He and his generation were forbidden to enter the Promised Land but he died overlooking the Land. Then, escorted by the priest Eleazar and his son Pinhas, followed by Joshua, he climbed Mount Nebo. The Midrash tells us he left them behind, climbed to the top and lay down and God silently kissed his lips. "And the soul of Moses found shelter in God's breath and was swept away into eternity". Nobody knows his resting place and nobody was present at his death.

Moses was the most solitary and most powerful hero in Biblical history. Among comparisons made by historians, one of the most interesting is with Muhammad because of the many roles both undertook. Moses had an immense task and he changed the course of history — after him, nothing was ever the same again. He has been immortalized repeatedly in theology, literature, poetry, painting and sculpture.

A Man of Flesh and Blood

As we sit around the Seder table, re-telling the story of the Exodus, we can only be awed at this man and his achievements. He was a man both of faith and of action. He had a passion for social justice and national freedom. He knew both triumphs and bitter disappointments. He was a poet and gifted strategist with a complex personality. No one ever accomplished so much. The Law bears his name and Moshe Rabbenu — our Master Moses — remains the only man ever to see God face to face. Every other religion transforms its founder into a semi-god, but Moses remains a fallible man and his greatness lies in his humanity!