



New Light News

Congregation
Ohr Chadash

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A Messianic Jewish Publication

A Pesach Message

Rabbi Dr. Jonathon Sacks

There's a passage in the Haggadah so strange that it cries out for explanation. It says: "Go and learn what Laban the Aramean sought to do to our father Jacob. For Pharaoh issued a decree only against the male Israelite children, but Laban sought to destroy everything."

Consider: on seder night all our efforts are directed towards remembering the night long ago when the Israelites were about to go free after centuries of slavery. We tell the story and relive it, tasting the bread of affliction and the bitterness of servitude. How then does it make sense to say, in effect: "You think Pharaoh was bad? Laban was even worse!" This minimizes the very event we are trying to recapture. Besides which, where is it stated that Laban actually tried to kill Jacob and his family? To be sure, he was less than friendly. But to accuse Laban of attempted genocide goes against the plain sense of the Torah and cuts across the central theme of the Haggadah.

I once heard a beautiful explanation in the form of a parable. The sun and the wind were having an argument as to which was the more powerful. The sun said, "I am the greater power. I give light and warmth to the entire planet. Without me, nothing could live." The wind said, "I am greater. When I blow, rocks crash, trees are uprooted and houses collapse. Against me, nothing can stand."

Just then a farmer came out into his field and began ploughing the ground. The sun proposed a test.

"Let us see which of us can part the farmer from his jacket." The wind agreed. It began to blow, gently at first, and then with increasing force. But the more it blew, the more tightly the man held on to his coat.

Eventually the wind gave up, exhausted. Then the sun came out from behind the clouds. Feeling the warmth, the farmer removed his jacket. The gentle heat of the sun did what the raging wind could not.

So it has been throughout Jewish history. There have been times, many of them, when Jews were persecuted. Yet the Torah says at the beginning of the Book of Exodus, "The more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread." The harder the wind blew, the more Jews held on to their identity. During the many centuries of Jewish suffering, no one ever asked the question, "Will we have Jewish grandchildren?"

What has threatened Jewish continuity has been not the wind but the sun; not poverty but affluence; not slavery but freedom. While Jacob was living with his father in law, it was not Laban's hostility that threatened Jewish survival but the fact that Jacob had become prosperous and might easily have settled there, forgetting his destiny and identity. That is why this passage occurs in the Haggadah, as if to say: "Do not think that the challenge of Pesach ends with the exodus. Leaving Egypt was only the beginning.

There always were two threats to Jew-



"What has threatened Jewish continuity has been not the wind but the sun; not poverty but affluence; not slavery but freedom. "

ish identity. One is physical, the other spiritual. The physical threat is persecution. The spiritual threat is the allure of freedom; and the second is sometimes more devastating in its effects."

As it was then, so it is now. There is only one antidote, and it is provided by Pesach itself. Just as the seder service begins with the questions asked by a child, so we must always put the needs of children first. This means three things: firstly that we create schools and shuls to give our children a sense of belonging and pride; secondly that our families are strong; and thirdly that we tell the story of Jewish identity not only in terms of suffering and persecution but also in the positive language of aspirations and ideals. Pesach was more than the escape from Egypt. It was the beginning of the journey towards Mount Sinai.

The Mishnah says that in telling the story on seder night, "We should begin with the bad news but end with the good." We must tell our children, "Yes, we have eaten the bread of affliction but we also drink the wine of freedom. Judaism is more than a scroll of suffering written in tears. It is also the story of how to serve G-d in joy, see freedom as His blessing, and give thanks for all He has given us." ☆

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Reflection: Successful Failure

Rabbi Raymond Beyda

Rabbi Akiva Tatz says, "There is no intrinsic good or bad in this world. It all depends on how you use something." Many of the things that we look at as intrinsically bad have a side that is really good. Even failing can be positive.

In order to grow and reach new heights Hashem confronts the human being with obstacles and tests. He does not do it to find out what you are going to do in the test situation --He already knows that. The test is an opportunity to grow from the situation--and even failure presents a positive side. If you analyze your defeat you can usually discover a positive learning experience.

Rabbi Tatz adds, "It is not so much what failure does to people as what people do with the events which they perceive as failures." After a fall it is best to say, "I can be successful in the future regardless of what has happened in the past." As King David sang in the Tehillim [Psalms 20:9] "They slumped and then fell, and we stood and

we were strengthened!"

Today when you get hit with something that you see as failure--stop. Say to yourself "I am certainly disappointed that I did not succeed, but the wisdom I have gained from past experiences which I also thought were failures but which turned out to be o.k. makes me feel that perhaps even now I am misinterpreting these

events. In the end it will all work out and I will be a better performer going forward." It only takes a minute -- but it will put a positive spin on everything that happens and make things brighter for the new stronger you. ✨

*"They slumped
and then fell,
and we stood
and were
strengthened!"*

-Psalms 20: 9



Consider This

There was a man named Nechunyah the digger of wells. He used to dig wells and dedicate them for public use by those who were traveling to Yerushalayim for the Holy Days. One time word went out that Nechunyah's daughter fell into a deep pit. The people went to the holy Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa. The Rabbi told the people after one hour: "She is fine". He repeated his comforting

words after two hours. In the third hour the Rabbi said: "She is already out of danger." The people found out that the Rabbi's words were true and the girl was safe. They asked: "How did you know? Are you a prophet?"

"I am not a prophet nor am I the son of a prophet. I knew that a thing with which a pious man did good could not become harmful to his offspring." ✨

New Light News is Back!

By Michael Grubb

After having been put on the "backburner" for some time, I am very pleased to announce that Congregation Ohr Chadash's very own New Light News is back in publication with a new editor committed to bringing the Good News to all of our friends.

My goal is to consistently produce a Messianic newsletter consisting of topical articles relevant to our faith, congregational news, reader contributions, inspiring messages, and even some humor. I'd love to hear your feedback as we strive to provide a quality Jewish publication centered around the word of G-d and Messiah Yeshua.

If you have any suggestions or would like to contribute any articles, essays, letters to the editor, or ideas, please feel free to contact me at

NewLightNews@gmail.com. ✨



Jewish Rapper "50 Shekel" Comes to Faith

The Jewish world is reeling from news that popular Jewish rapper 50 Shekel has come to faith in Yeshua. The Brooklyn native, whose birth name is Aviad Cohen, came out as a Messianic believer on his website, www.50shekel.com, in mid June.

From an article in *The Messianic Times* by Rebekah Kolber

Born in Tel Aviv and raised in New York, Cohen rose to stardom in the past five years as a leader in the new generation of Jewish hip hop artists. His album "In Da Shul," produced in Los Angeles at Titanium Recording Studios, created a new interest in rap among urban Jewish youth when it was released in 2004.

Cohen, 30, was raised Orthodox and attended yeshiva during his early years, but as a young adult wandered away from Judaism. He studied film at Hofstra University on Long Island and worked in the music video world for years. However, in the aftermath of 9/11 Cohen says he had experiences with anti-Semitism that motivated him to rethink his Jewish identity and eventually he began writing and performing Jewish-themed songs as 50 Shekel.

Cohen quickly became popular both inside and outside the Jewish community. He was profiled in publications such as the Washington Post, the Jewish Daily Forward, and the Village Voice. Features about Cohen have appeared on ESPN, numerous Israeli radio stations, and Jewish stations in the Diaspora, such as WYUR run by Yeshiva University. His music was lauded for helping bridge the gap between African-American and Jewish youth in urban communities.

The testimony posted on the 50 Shekel website in June details his transformation from Orthodox Jewish rapper to faith in Yeshua, which began nearly a year ago. As Cohen tells it, it was Mel Gibson's "The Passion," watched secretly at home on a Shabbat afternoon, which convinced him the New Testament message of hope through faith in Messiah was relevant to him as a Jewish

"If I went out and said I was a Buddhist, everyone would say that's hip. If I said I was a Kabbalist people would think that's hip because it's like Madonna. But if I say that I'm a Jew for Jesus, people freak out."

person. Cohen, through relationships with other believers and attending a congregation, eventually gave his life to Messiah.

That was nine months ago. Until the web site announcement, few in the Jewish world knew that the rapper they lauded as "the world's most kosher M.C." was a believer in Yeshua.

On June 15 an updated version of the www.50shekel.com web site was posted. The new web site includes Cohen's testimony, Bible facts, a page where users can post their own testimonies, and an explanation of the Gospel message. The site also contains much of Cohen's music and lyrics.

Cohen says part of his reason for sharing his story is that he has "a heart for the people who just don't get it yet."

Cohen's revelation hasn't come without consequences. He was forced to let his manager go and

critical articles have appeared in Jewish publications that previously lauded him. But Cohen says the tzuris is worth it.

"If I went out and said I was a Buddhist, everyone would say that's hip. If I said I was a Kabbalist people would think that's hip because it's like Madonna. But if I say that I'm a Jew for Jesus, people freak out," he says.

"This world is clearly in a battle between G-d and Satan," he explained. "If I hadn't come to faith I wouldn't see it or care. The minute one of G-d's children comes home Satan sics everyone on him. That's how I knew that I needed to tell people, to combat the real battle that's going on."

"I want to share this [story of how I came to faith] with people, to be honest about who I am and what's been going on in my life."

The response from his fans so far has been supportive, says Cohen. "There have been some nasty emails but I give them grace. I write back [and say] 'investigation before condemnation. You should ask G-d to tell you the truth, don't just ask your rabbi.' And some have written back and said, 'you're right, I'm sorry for what I said.'"

New fans, ones from the Messianic community and the Church, are also quickly discovering Cohen's music. "I'm finding a whole new audience now," he says. "It's nice battling for the right side, for G-d's side."

For now Cohen is continuing to write music, but from a new perspective. One of his most recent songs, "Hooked on the Truth," deals with some of the fallout from his decision to go public:



Jewish rapper 50 Shekel

Figure it out Jesus is the Jewish Messiah/Yeah I had no idea about this either yo/ Believe me I had to suffer just to keep with the truth/ But it's OK whatever I give my life over to G-d/ That's a big move for real."

Other new songs, such as "Feel Like Praising G-d," incorporate 50 Shekel's trademark tongue-in-cheek style: "The Truth is out there it's no X-file/ Some Jews finally got it, yeah, took us a while/ Some Gentiles they bee on Him like honey/ Provoked us to jealousy ha ha funny."

While the aftermath of Cohen's public statements about his faith have yet to be fully realized, the rapper says he is excited about the opportunity to share Yeshua through his music and says he has a message for his fans: "It takes a lot of matzah balls to see the truth, but if you seek after G-d and really want to know, then you'll find G-d and you'll discover that the truth is so much better than what you've been living." ✡



Schedule of Events

- April 28—Rosh Kodesh Dinner 6:30



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28 Rosh Kodesh Dinner 6:30	29
30						

Sign Up For An eLetter

If you would prefer to receive this newsletter in an email attachment (as a pdf file), please send an email to NewLightNews@gmail.com. Please remember to include you name and address in the email so that your name is removed from the mailing list. ✨

The Synagogue Needs Your Help!

In the foyer of the synagogue you will notice a new notebook. In the notebook are lists of small tasks that need to be done around the synagogue. These are things that one person can do and which can be done outside of a sanctioned work day, such as washing the kippas or changing light bulbs. You'll be able to volunteer for a task at your convenience by signing up in the notebook and coordinating the date and time with Rabbi. This is a great way to get some small things done around the synagogue in-between work days. As always, your time and help

are greatly appreciated.

“So is now the time for you to be living in your own paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins?”

Therefore here is what Adonai-Tzava’ot says: ‘Think about your life! You sow much but bring in little; you eat but aren’t satisfied; you drink but never have enough; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who works for a living earns wages that are put in a bag of holes.’

Here is what Adonai-Tzva’ot says: ‘Think about your life! Go up into the hills, get wood,

and rebuild the house. I will be pleased with that, and then I will be glorified,’ says Adonai.

-Hag’gai 1:4-8



Help rebuild our house!

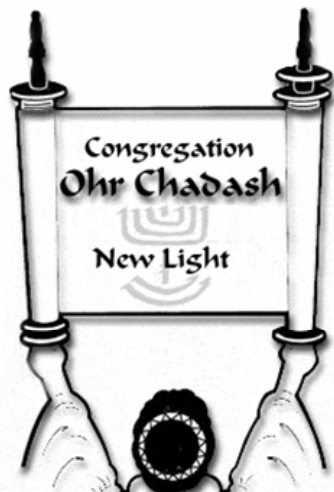


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Pesach and Easter Fun Facts

This year Pesach falls on April 12 and Easter is on April 16. Below are some fun facts about the holidays compiled from various websites.

- During Passover, the Coca-Cola bottling company of New York makes Coke that is kosher for Passover. Sugar is used instead of corn syrup, because corn is not considered kosher for Passover in the Ashkenazi community.
- In medieval times a festival of egg throwing was held in church, during which the priest would throw a hard-boiled egg to one of the choirboys. It was then tossed from one choirboy to the next and whoever held the egg when the clock struck 12 was the winner and retained the egg.
- The first Easter baskets were made to look like bird's nests.
- Ninety million chocolate Easter bunnies are produced each year.
- Chocolate bunnies should be eaten ears first, according to 76% of Americans. Five percent said bunnies should be eaten feet first, while 4% favored eating the tail first.
- Americans consume 16 billion jellybeans at Easter, many of them hidden in baskets. If all the Easter jellybeans were lined end to end, they would circle the globe nearly three times.

Oneg Schedule

April 14	Morel
April 21	Twardzik
April 28	Kolosey
May 5	Schutz
May 12	Turnage
May 19	Morel
May 26	Twardzik



After 39½ years of wandering in the desert, Mrs. Moses secretly asks for directions.