

THE JOSHUA SERIES

ALUMNI LEADERSHIP LEARNING

SELF-GUIDED STUDY AND DISCUSSION ON

- ❖ **SUKKOT** סוכות
- ❖ **HANUKKAH** חנוכה
- ❖ **PESACH** פסח

שִׁמְעַתְּ חָכָם וְיִוְסֵף לְקַח אֲנָבוֹן תִּחְבְּלוֹת יִקְנֶה:

**THAT THE WISE WILL HEAR AND INCREASE IN LEARNING,
AND ONE OF UNDERSTANDING WILL ACQUIRE WISE COUNSEL**

PROVERBS 1:5

July 2012/ Tammuz 5772

Dear Wexner Heritage Alumni,

We are excited to present you with our pilot program of video learning for Wexner Heritage Alumni. Its title, *The Joshua Series*, alludes to the transfer of leadership from Moses to Joshua. Moses could take the Israelites out of Egypt, guide them through the wilderness, and facilitate the giving of Torah. But approaching the land of their destiny, the Jews needed new leadership to help them realize their promise as a fully responsible people. That was Joshua's task.

So too Wexner alumni are charged with taking your journey to the next level of responsibility. The learning is now in your hands, as is the impact you can have individually and collectively on the Jewish community. *The Joshua Series* videos are meant to serve as a catalyst to help your class continue to gather, study, and think about how the lessons from these texts apply to your personal life, and your life as a lay leader in the Jewish Community.

Hopefully, your group will build on these modules to design more of your own sessions. The Wexner Foundation will continue to support and encourage alumni as you leverage your experience and our network for maximum impact. Please speak to [Angie Atkins](#), Director of Wexner Heritage Alumni, if you need more ideas, or if you have a great model that you'd like to share with the other 1700+ alumni.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PLANNING AND USING THE JOSHUA SERIES:

Each of the 3 segments is discrete and can be used on its own, and they work well as a series.

- **Scheduling:** The Joshua Series is designed for meetings close to Sukkot, Hanukah, and Pesach.
- **Facilitation:** Please select a facilitator for each session who will take responsibility for guiding the discussion productively, and serving as a liaison with the Foundation.
- **Host/Convener:** Please select someone to arrange a time, place, and of course, whatever food your group decides it would like to have as part of your meeting. It is suggested you allow at least two hours for each session.

Suggested schedule for Joshua class gathering:

Read the source material aloud in pairs or in a group (30 minutes or less)

Watch the video (approximately 20 minutes)

Use the discussion questions and consider the lesson as it relates to your responsibilities and goals within your Jewish Community.

There are additional sources at the end of each lesson for further group discussion.

Three times in the opening verses of the Book of Joshua, we read, "*Chazak ve'ematz, Be strong and of good courage.*" May you find the strength of Joshua on your journey of learning and leadership.

Yasher Kochachem,

Rabbi Elka B Abrahamson
President

Cindy Chazan
Vice President

Rabbi Jay Moses
Director, Heritage Program

Angie Atkins
Director, Heritage Alumni

SUKKOT: THE RENEWAL OF SPIRIT

✧ RABBI JAN UHRBACH ✧

Rabbi Jan R. Uhrbach is the founder of NAHAR, a new Jewish experience in Manhattan, the founding Rabbi of the Conservative Synagogue of the Hamptons in Sag Harbor, and a distinguished teacher of Torah. She is a member of the Wexner Heritage faculty, has taught at the Jewish Theological Seminary Rabbinical School, the 92nd Street Y, and the Skirball Center for Adult Learning. She has served as scholar-in-residence in many synagogues, as well as at national conventions such as the Women's League for Conservative Judaism.

Rabbi Uhrbach is currently associate editor of *Siddur Lev Shalem*, a new Shabbat and festival *siddur* to be published by the Conservative movement's Rabbinical Assembly, having served as a member of the editorial committee for *Machzor Lev Shalem*, published in 2010. She is also the author of numerous published essays.

Rabbi Uhrbach received her ordination from JTS, where she was a Wexner Graduate Fellow and the recipient of academic prizes in theology, philosophy, Talmud, and professional skills.

The rabbinate is Rabbi Uhrbach's second career. A graduate of Yale University and Harvard Law School, Rabbi Uhrbach served as Law Clerk to Federal District Judge Kimba M. Wood. She then joined the New York law firm of Satterlee Stephens Burke & Burke LLP, where she specialized in media litigation, becoming a partner of the firm in January, 1996.

BEFORE VIEWING THE VIDEO SHIUR (LESSON), PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE OUT LOUD WITH YOUR GROUP:

Biographical Note: Born in Latvia in 1865, **Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook** ("Rav Kook"), moved to the land of Israel in 1904. He served as rabbi in Yaffa for 10 years, then briefly as Chief Rabbi in Jerusalem. In 1921, he became the first Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of the Jews in the land of Israel, a post he held for 14 years, until his death in 1935.

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, Orot HaTeshuvah, 9:10

י. התשובה וכל ההליכות המעשיות שלה, עם הרוח הכללית השולטת בעיקרה בימים המיוחדים לתשובה עם גודל התועלת שלה לזכך את הנפשות, לערן את הרוח ולטהר את המעשים מכעורם, היא מוכרחת להיות סופגת עמה איזו חולשה, שלא נמלט ממנה אפילו הגבור שבגבורים.
כשמקמצים את הרצון, כשכופפים את עו החיים ע"י הסלידה הפנימית, והנטייה לשוב מכל חטא, מתקמץ ג"כ הרצון של הטוב, ועו החיים הטהורים מתחלש גם הוא. נמצא האדם טובל מטהרתו המוסרית תולשה כזאת, שסובל חולה שהתרפא ע"י הזרמה אלקטרית חזקה, שאמנם גרשה את הארס שבמחלתו, אבל החלישה את הכח החי והכריא שבו. שכים, ע"כ, ימים של שמחת קדש, של חדות הנפש, לקומם את הרצון הטוב ועו החיים הטהור. או תהיה התשובה שלמה.

*Teshuvah**, with all its derivative applications in action, together with the underlying spirit that pervades it especially during the days dedicated to *teshuvah*, bestows a great benefit in purifying souls, in refining the spirit and purging behavior from its ugliness. But together with this it necessarily bears within itself a certain weakness that even the most heroic spirits cannot escape.

When one shrinks the will, when one constrains the life-force through inner withdrawal and the inclination to avoid any kind of sin, there is also a shrinking of the will for the good. The vitality of the virtuous life is also weakened. It turns out that the person suffers from the cleansing of his moral state the kind of weakness experienced by the patient who was cured from his illness through a strong current of electric shock. It may have eliminated the virus of his illness but it also weakened his healthy vitality.

The penitential season [i.e., the month of Elul, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur] is therefore followed by days of holy joy and gladness [i.e., Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret and Simhat Torah] for the self to restore the will for the good and the innocent vitality of life. Then will *teshuvah* be complete.

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, Orot HaTeshuvah, 9:10, translation by Ben Zion Bokser, in Abraham Isaac Kook: The Lights of Penitence, Lights of Holiness, The Moral Principles, Essays, Letters and Poems (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), p. 73.

***Teshuvah** refers to repentance in the traditional sense (apologizing, confessing, making reparations), as well as the deeper process of changing one's character and way of being in the world so as not to repeat the negative behavior. It also encompasses a number of other meanings. Derived from the Hebrew root, *shuv* / שׁוּב, *teshuvah* also means "turning" (from one path or way of life to another), "returning" (to a truer, more authentic self), and "responding" (to a sense of Divine call, demand or obligation).

WATCH THE VIDEO

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Rav Kook's discussion of Sukkot is based on the notion that the annual Jewish holiday cycle is an integrated whole, leading us through an emotional/intellectual/spiritual journey. Each holy day draws from and responds to the previous festival, and then leads organically to the one that follows.
 - Does Rav Kook's interpretation resonate with your own transition from Yom Kippur to Sukkot?
 - What might you do in your preparations and celebrations to better experience each holiday as part of a larger whole?
2. This teaching also focuses on the importance of thinking systemically and holistically about ourselves and our roles in organizational life. Rav Kook highlights the role that Judaism can play in helping us to achieve balance over the course of a year (and a lifetime!), in both our personal lives and in our roles as leaders.
 - When are we out of balance in our personal lives? When are we out of balance in our leadership?
 - What energy do you typically bring to your leadership?
 - How do you know when your energy as a leader is out of balance either with your own needs, or the needs of the organization of which you are part?
 - How can we access the Jewish tradition to help us be more discerning of and responsive to our needs for balance, both internally and externally?
3. As we emerge from the intensity of the High Holy Days, Rav Kook reminds us that Sukkot is a good time to focus on the particular need to balance the demands of our work as Jewish leaders (whether as leaders within an organization, or simply as "leaders" of our own lives and souls) with the restorative power of joy.
 - Is there enough joy in your life? What about in the organizations you serve?
 - Is there a difference between fun or entertainment, and joy?
 - What are the implications of thinking of joy as a spiritual need and practice, both for individuals and organizations?

4. The Wexner experience shares certain similarities with the High Holy Days. It involves increased work, discipline and commitment, and is hopefully also a period of intense learning and growth on many levels. It also mirrors the “incubator-like” experience of the time spent in the synagogue on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, in which each of us and the group as a whole focuses inward, partly for its own sake, and partly in order to change the way we participate in the world “out there.”
 - What re-balancing is now called for as your Wexner group has transitioned out into the next phase?
 - Is there a particular need for joy now, along the lines of what Rav Kook suggests regarding Sukkot?
 - Are there other aspects of Sukkot which might be instructive in this moment?

5. Sukkot is associated with the theme of “integration” in general. Thus, for example, the four species of the *lulav* and *etrog* are said to symbolize either the totality of the parts of the human being, or alternatively the totality of different types of Jews, brought together in one integrated whole. Sukkot also has a very universalist theme, anticipating the day when all the nations of the world will come together as one.
 - Thinking back on your Wexner experience thus far, can you identify specific learning or growth that you personally feel you now need to integrate? What about the group as a whole?
 - Has your learning through Wexner helped you to experience your Judaism in a more integrated, organic way? If so, can you articulate for yourself some of the general and specific ways in which that is so?
 - Has your Wexner experience affected the way you relate not only to your Jewish identity, but to your humanity?

6. One of Rav Kook’s greatest contributions to our understanding of *teshuvah* is his insight that *teshuvah* is not only an individual process, but occurs at every level: organizations, communities, nations, all humanity, even creation as a whole engage in *teshuvah* (Kook calls this “general *teshuvah*,” as opposed to the “particularized *teshuvah*” of the individual).¹
 - Have you ever participated in or witnessed an organization or other group doing “collective *teshuvah*”? You might wish to discuss as a case study what led to that happening, what was the process, and what was its impact.
 - What do the organizations you serve do to check in with their own spiritual health? What do they/you do when there is a need for *teshuvah* within the organization?
 - Can you think of a specific example where organizational *teshuvah* might be necessary? You may want to choose one or two examples, and brainstorm about the kind of leadership necessary to enable that *teshuvah* to happen.
 - Do you think Rav Kook’s teaching about the need for joy to restore the will after the work of *teshuvah* would be applicable at the organizational level? What form might that joy take?

1 See, e.g., Orot HaTeshuvah 4:3 (Kook, p. 49):

General *teshuvah*, which involves raising the world to perfection, and particularized *teshuvah*, which pertains to the personal life of each individual . . . they all constitute one essence. Similarly, all the cultural reforms through which the world rises from decadence, the improvements in the social and economic order through this redress of every form of wrongdoing, from the most significant to the minutest ordinances of later sages and the most extreme demands of ethically sensitive spirits -- all of them constitute an inseparable whole.

OPTIONAL TEXTS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION USE THESE AS YOU SEE FIT

A) Sukkot and Joy:

Deuteronomy 16:14-15

14 ושמחת בתעגך אתה ובנך ובתך ועבדך ואמטך והלוי והגר והיתום והאלמנה אשר בשעריך: 15 שבועת ימים תהג ליהנה אלהיך במקום אשר יבחר יהוה כפי ברכך יהנה אלהיך בכל תבואתך ובכל מעשה ידיך והיית אף שמח:

You shall rejoice in your festival, with your son and daughter, your male and female slave, the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow in your communities. You shall hold a festival for Adonai your God seven days, in the place that Adonai will choose; for Adonai your God will bless all your crops and all your undertakings, and you shall have nothing but joy.

2. Mishnah Sukkot 5:1, 4

כל מי שלא ראה שמחת בית השואבה, לא ראה שמחה מקמיו:

“Whoever has not seen the rejoicing of the Beit HaSho’evah has never seen rejoicing in his life.”

חסידים ואנשי מעשה היו מרקדים לפניהם באבוקות של אור שבידיהן, ואומרים לפניהן דברי שירות ותשבחות. . . .

The pious and men of good deeds would dance before them, holding burning torches in their hands and would recite before them words of song and praise. . . .

3. B. Sukkot 53a²

חסידים ואנשי מעשה כו'. . . תניא, אמרו עליו על רבן שמעון בן גמליאל כשהיה שמח שמחת בית השואבה היה נוטל שמנה אבוקות של אור, וזורק אחת ונוטל אחת ואין נוגעות זו בזו. וכשהוא משתחוה נועץ שני גודליו בארץ ושוחה, ונושק את הרצפה וזוקף, ואין כל בריה יכולה לעשות כן. וזו היא קידה. . . . לוי הוה מטייל קמיה דרבי בתמני סכיני. שמואל קמיה שבור מלכא בתמניא מזגי חמרא. אביי קמיה (דרבא) (מסורת הש"ס: [דרבה]) בתמניא ביעי, ואמרי לה בארבעה ביעי.

“The pious and men of good deeds.” . . .

It was taught: They said of R. Shimon ben Gamaliel that when he rejoiced at the Rejoicing at the place of the Water-Drawing, he used to take eight lighted torches [and throw them in the air] and catch one and throw one and they did not touch one another; and when he prostrated himself, he used to dig his two thumbs in the ground, bend down, kiss the ground, and draw himself up again, a feat which no other man could do, and this is what is meant by Kidah... Levi used to juggle in the presence of Rabbi with eight knives, Samuel before King Shapur with eight glasses of wine, and Abaye before Rabbah with eight eggs or, as some say, with four eggs.

2 All translations of Talmud are based on the Soncino translation.

B). Biblical References to Sukkot as a Place Name or Booth

Study suggestions:

Each of the following Biblical texts (and text 1a, an 18th century comment on the Biblical text) contains a reference to someone (Jacob, the Israelites, Jonah) being in Sukkot or in a Sukkah. In some of these texts Sukkot appears to be a place name, while in others it seems to refer to the booth; in some cases it could have either meaning. In each case, however, a reference to “sukkot/sukkah” appears in connection with some transformative experience, occurring either immediately prior to dwelling in the sukkah/sukkot, or in the sukkah/sukkot itself. Through studying these texts (and if you feel ambitious, you might want to read the context in your Tanakh in which they appear), can you derive any general ideas about the function of a sukkah that might make this festival of Sukkot more meaningful to you?

Genesis 33:12-18

וַיֹּאמֶר נִסְעָה וְנִלְכָה וְאֵלֶיךָ לְנַגְדָּךְ: ¹³ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲדֹנָי יְדַע כִּי־הֵילָדִים רַפִּים וְהַצֹּאן וְהַבְּקָר עֲלֹת עָלַי וְדַפְקוּם יוֹם אֶחָד וּמָתוּ כָּל־הַצֹּאן: ¹⁴ יַעֲבֹר־נָא אֲדֹנָי לִפְנֵי עַבְדְּךָ וְאַנִּי אֶתְנַהֵלָה לְאַטִּי לְרִגְלֵי הַמְּלֹאכָה אֲשֶׁר־לִפְנֵי וּלְרִגְלֵי הֵילָדִים עַד אֲשֶׁר־אָבָא אֶל־אֲדֹנָי שְׁעִירָה: ¹⁵ וַיֹּאמֶר עֲשׂוּ אֲצִיגֶה־נָא עִמָּךְ מִן־הָעֵם אֲשֶׁר אֵתִי וַיֹּאמֶר לָמָּה זֶה אֲמַצְאֶחֶן בְּעֵינַי אֲדֹנָי: ¹⁶ וַיֵּשֶׁב בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא עֲשׂוּ לְדַרְכּוֹ שְׁעִירָה: ¹⁷ וַיַּעֲקֹב נִסְעָה סִכְתָּה וַיָּבֹן לוֹ בַּיִת וַלְמִקְנֵהוּ עָשָׂה סִכְתֹּת עַל־כֵּן קָרָא שְׁם־הַמְּקוֹם סִכּוֹת: ¹⁸ וַיְבֹא יַעֲקֹב שָׁלֵם עֵיר שְׁכֶם . . .

He [Esau] said, “Let us start on our journey, and I will proceed at your pace.” But he [Jacob] said to him, “My lord knows that the children are frail and that the flocks and herds, which are nursing, are a care to me; if they are driven hard a single day, all the flocks will die. Let my lord go on ahead of his servant, while I travel slowly at the pace of the children, until I come to my lord in Seir.” Then Esau said, “Let me assign to you some of the men who are with me.” But he said, “Oh no, my lord is too kind to me!” So Esau started back that day on his way to Seir. But Jacob journeyed on to Sukkot, and built a house for himself and made sukkot for his cattle; that is why the place was called Sukkot. Jacob arrived *shalem* in the city of Shechem . . .

1a. Or HaHayyim on Gen. 33:17

נסע סכותה פירוש וטעם קריאת שמה סכותה בשביל שלמקנהו עשה סוכות על כן וגוי ולא אמר לסוכות, שאז תבין שקודם בא יעקב היתה נקראת סוכות ולא כן הוא וא"ת וכי בשביל שעשה שם יעקב סוכה יקרא למקום כן, אולי כי עשה דבר חדש בחמלתו על המקנה מה שלא עשה כן אדם קודם, שיכין סוכה לבהמות ולשינוי חדש קרא המקום עליו:

“He journeyed to Sukkot.” Why is the name of the place referred to as *Sukkotah*? Because, it is due to [Jacob’s] having made sukkot for his flocks, that the place was therefore named “Sukkot.” And the text doesn’t say *I’Sukkot* [“to Sukkot”], for then one might think that before Jacob arrived there the place was called Sukkot, and that is not the case. And if you say, “Just because Jacob built booths there for his flocks, the place is so called?”, perhaps it is because he did something new, out of his compassion for his animals, which no person had ever done before, that he set up booths for his beasts, and the place was named for this innovative change.

2. Exodus 12:37

³⁷ וַיִּסְעוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִרַעְמֶסֶס סִכְתָּה כַּשְׁש־מֵאוֹת אֶלְפֵי רִגְלֵי הַגְּבָרִים לְבַד מִטָּף:

The Israelites journeyed from Rameses [in Egypt] to Sukkot, about six hundred thousand men on foot, aside from the children.

3. Leviticus 23:42-43

בַּסֻּכּוֹת תֵּשְׁבוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים כָּל־הָאֶזְרָח בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשְׁבוּ בַסֻּכּוֹת: ⁴³ לְמַעַן יֵדְעוּ דַרְתֵיכֶם כִּי בַסֻּכּוֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהוֹצִיאֵי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

You shall live in booths seven days; all citizens in Israel shall live in sukkot, in order that future generations may know that I made the Israelite people live in sukkot when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I am Adonai your God.

4. Jonah 4:5-11

⁵ וַיֵּצֵא יוֹנָה מִן־הָעִיר וַיֵּשֶׁב מִקֶּדֶם לָעִיר וַיַּעַשׂ לּוֹ שֵׁם סֻכָּה וַיֵּשֶׁב תַּחְתֶּיהָ בְּצֹל עַד אֲשֶׁר יֵרָאֶה מֵהַיָּהוּהָ בְּעִיר: ⁶ וַיִּמְן יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים קִיקְיוֹן וַיַּעַל מֵעַל לְיוֹנָה לְהַיּוֹת צֶלַע־לְרֹאשׁוֹ לְהַצִּיל לוֹ מִרְעָתוֹ וַיִּשְׁמַח יוֹנָה עַל־הַקִּיקְיוֹן שֶׁמָּתָה גְדוּלָּה: ⁷ וַיִּמְן הָאֱלֹהִים תּוֹלַעַת בַּעֲלֹת הַשָּׁחַר לְמַחֲרַת וַתֵּךְ אֶת־הַקִּיקְיוֹן וַיִּיבֹשׁ: ⁸ וַיְהִי כַזֶּרֶחַ הַשָּׁמֶשׁ וַיִּמְן אֱלֹהִים רוּחַ קָדִים חַרְיִשִׁית וַתֵּךְ הַשָּׁמֶשׁ עַל־רֹאשׁ יוֹנָה וַיִּתְעַלֵּף וַיִּשְׁאַל אֶת־נַפְשׁוֹ לָמוּת וַיֹּאמֶר טוֹב מוֹתִי מִחַיִּי: ⁹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־יוֹנָה הֲהֵיטֵב תָּרַהֲלֶךָ עַל־הַקִּיקְיוֹן וַיֹּאמֶר הֵיטֵב תָּרַהֲלִי עַד־מוֹת: ¹⁰ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵתָּה חֲסַמְּךָ עַל־הַקִּיקְיוֹן אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עָמַלְתָּ בּוֹ וְלֹא גִדַּלְתָּ שָׁבוּ־לִילָה הִנֵּה וּבֹו־לִילָה אָבָד: ¹¹ וַאֲנִי לֹא אֲחֹס עַל־נִינְוָה הָעִיר הַגְּדוֹלָה אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁׁבָהּ הַרְבֵּה מִשָּׂתִים־עֶשְׂרֵה רְבֹו אָדָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יֵדַע בֵּין־יָמֵינוּ לְשִׁמְאֹלָו וּבִהְמָה רַבָּה:

Now Jonah had left the city and found a place east of the city. He made a *sukkah* there and sat under it in the shade, until he should see what happened to the city. Adonai Elohim provided a ricinus plant, which grew up over Jonah, to provide shade for his head and save him from discomfort. Jonah was very happy about the plant. But the next day at dawn God provided a worm, which attacked the plant so that it withered. And when the sun rose, God provided a sultry east wind; the sun beat down on Jonah's head, and he became faint. He begged for death, saying, "I would rather die than live." Then God said to Jonah, "Are you so deeply grieved about the plant?" "Yes," he replied, "so deeply that I want to die."

Then Adonai said: "You cared about the plant, which you did not work for and which you did not grow, which appeared overnight and perished overnight. And should not I care about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not yet know their right hand from their left, and many beasts as well!"

DARKNESS AND LIGHT: THE ESSENCE OF HANUKKAH

✧ **RABBI ETHAN TUCKER** ✧

Rabbi Ethan Tucker is co-founder and Rosh Yeshiva at Mechon Hadar and chair in Jewish Law. Ethan was a faculty member at the Drisha Institute for Jewish Education, where he taught Talmud and Halakhah in the Scholars Circle. Ethan was ordained by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and earned a PhD in Talmud and Rabbinics from the Jewish Theological Seminary and a B.A. from Harvard College. A Wexner Graduate Fellowship Alumnus, he was a co-founder of Kehilat Hadar and a winner of the first Grinspoon Foundation Social Entrepreneur Fellowship. In 2011 and 2012, he was named one of the top 50 rabbis in America by *Newsweek*.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ❖ This session will consist of three parts: Preparatory learning of text, a video presentation, and follow-up discussion.
- ❖ Participants should read the first six texts below. These texts may seem disjointed, but they make up the shared vocabulary we will use to understand the longer piece that we will learn together starting with the video presentation. Guiding points on these texts can be found in the table below. The main goal is to absorb the central point of each text. Take **20 minutes** for this section.
- ❖ During the video presentation, we will learn the main piece by R. Hutner together, seeing how he synthesizes these different texts into a unified approach to Jewish history and Jewish learning.
- ❖ Following the presentation, participants should gather for reflection, using the guiding questions to channel the ideas we have learned into a more practical conversation about leadership.

BEFORE VIEWING THE VIDEO SHIUR (LESSON), PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING PASSAGES OUT LOUD WITH YOUR GROUP:

Text of "Al Hanisim

When the wicked Greek kingdom stood against your people Israel in order to make them forget your Torah and to cause them to stray from your desired laws...

נוסח "על הנסים"

קִשְׁעֵמְדָה מְלָכוֹת יוֹן הִרְשָׁעָה עַל עַמְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהַשְׁכִּיחַם
תּוֹרָתְךָ וּלְהַעֲבִירָם מִחֻקֵּי רְצוֹנְךָ...

Bereishit Rabbah 2:4

R. Shimon b. Lakish explained the [first] verses [of the Torah] in light of the various exiles: "The earth was *tohu*"—this refers to the exile of Babylonia... "and *bohu*"—this is the exile of Media... "and darkness"—this is the exile of Greece, which darkened Israel's vision with their decrees... "over the abyss"—this is the exile of the wicked kingdom [Rome], which cannot be fathomed, like an abyss... "and the spirit of God was hovering"—this is the spirit of the Messianic King...

בראשית רבה (וילנא) פרשה ב:ד

ר"ש בן לקיש פתר קריא בגליות, והארץ היתה תהו זה גלות בבל שנאמר (ירמיה ד) ראיתי את הארץ והנה תהו, ובהו זה גלות מדי (אסתר ו) ויבהילו להביא את המן, וחושך זה גלות יון שהחשיכה עיניהם של ישראל בגזירותיהן... על פני תהום זה גלות ממלכת הרשעה שאין להם חקר כמו התהום... ורוח אלהים מרחפת זה רוחו של מלך המשיח...

Mishnah Avot 1:1-4

Moshe received Torah from Sinai and transmitted it to Yehoshua, and Yehoshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets transmitted it to the Men of the Great Assembly...Shimon Hatzaddik was one of the last people remaining from the Great Assembly...Antignos of Sokho received traditions from Shimon Hatzaddik...Yose b. Yoezer of Tzradah and Yose b. Yohanan of Yerushalayim received traditions from them...

Mishnah Hagigah 2:2

Yose b. Yoezer says: One should not lean [upon an animal when offering it as a sacrifice on Yom Tov]. Yose b. Yohanan says: One should. Yehoshua b. Perahiah says: One should not. Nitai Ha'arbeli says: One should. Yehudah b. Tabbai says: One should not. Shimon b. Shetah says: One should. Shemayah says: One should. Avtalyon says: One should not. Hillel and Menahem did not disagree. Menahem left and Shammai entered. Shammai says: One should not. Hillel says: One should...

Talmud Bavli Menahot 99a-99b

Said Reish Lakish: Sometimes the cancellation of Torah is its very foundation, as it is written: "Which you shattered (*asher shibarta*)" —The Holy and Blessed One said to Moshe: "More power to you (*yishar kohakha*) that you shattered them!"

Talmud Bavli Eruvin 54a

And said R. Elazar: What is meant by "engraved on the tablets"? Were the first tablets not shattered, the Jewish people never would have forgotten Torah.

Talmud Bavli Temurah 16a

Said Rav Yehudah said Shmuel: 3000 halakhot were forgotten during the mourning period for Moshe...Said R. Abahu: Nonetheless, Otniel b. Kenaz restored them through his dialectic...

Talmud Bavli Eruvin 13b

Said R. Abba said Shmuel: For three years, Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel argued; each said the *halakhah* followed their view. A heavenly voice descended and said: Both are the words of the living God, but the *halakhah* follows Beit Hillel.

משנה אבות א:א-ד

משה קבל תורה מסיני ומסרה ליהושע ויהושע לזקנים וזקנים לנביאים ונביאים מסרוה לאנשי כנסת הגדולה...שמעון הצדיק היה משירי כנסת הגדולה...אנטיגנוס איש סוכו קבל משמעון הצדיק...יוסי בן יועזר איש צרדה ויוסי בן יוחנן איש ירושלים קבלו מהם...

משנה חגיגה ב משנה ב

יוסי בן יועזר אומר שלא לסמוך יוסי בן יוחנן אומר לסמוך יהושע בן פרחיה אומר שלא לסמוך ניתאי הארבלי אומר לסמוך יהודה בן טבאי אומר שלא לסמוך שמעון בן שטח אומר לסמוך שמעיה אומר לסמוך אבטליון אומר שלא לסמוך הלל ומנחם לא נחלקו יצא מנחם נכנס שמאי שמאי אומר שלא לסמוך הלל אומר לסמוך...

בבלי מנחות צט.-צט:

אמר ריש לקיש: פעמים שביטולה של תורה זהו יסודה, דכתיב: +שמות ל"ד+ אשר שברת - אמר לו הקב"ה למשה: יישר כחך ששברת.

בבלי עירובין נד.

ואמר רבי אלעזר: מאי דכתיב +שמות ל"ב+ חרות על הלחת - אלמלי לא נשתברו לוחות הראשונות לא נשתכחה תורה מישראל.

בבלי תמורה טז.

אמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל: שלשת אלפים הלכות נשתכחו בימי אבלו של משה...אמר רבי אבהו: אעפ"כ החזירן עתניאל בן קנז מתוך פלפולו...

בבלי עירובין יג:

אמר רבי אבא אמר שמואל: שלש שנים נחלקו בית שמאי ובית הלל, הללו אומרים הלכה כמותנו והללו אומרים הלכה כמותנו. יצאה בת קול ואמרה: אלו ואלו דברי אלהים חיים הן, והלכה כבית הלל.

THE WEXNER FOUNDATION

STRENGTHENING JEWISH LEADERSHIP

Text	Context	Central Point
1. "Al Hanisim" Prayer	Recited multiple times daily on Hanukkah in the regular Amidah prayer and in the Grace after Meals	Greece's goal in the Hanukkah story was to make Israel forget (שכח/להשכיחם) Torah
2. Bereishit Rabbah	A midrashic text from ancient Eretz Yisrael, here citing the words of a Sage from the 3 rd c. CE	Greece is associated with darkness (חשך/החשיכה)
3. Babylonian Talmud Menahot 99a-b	The Talmud cites the words of a Sage from the 3 rd c. CE	According to Reish Lakish, Moshe is congratulated for breaking the first set of tablets , having given the Torah a firmer foundation by abrogating it.
4. Babylonian Talmud Eruvin 54a	The Talmud cites the words of a Sage from the 3 rd c. CE	According to R. Elazar, the breaking of the first tablets is associated with massive loss of Torah via forgetting .
5. Babylonian Talmud Temurah 16a	The Talmud cites the words of a Sage from the 3 rd c. CE	Laws forgotten can be restored through intellectual creativity.
6. Babylonian Talmud Eruvin 13b	The Talmud cites the words of a Sage from the 3 rd c. CE talking about the schools of Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel, which date from the 1 st c. CE	Both sides of a dispute are valued as capturing some essential truth.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Greece's goal in the Hanukkah story was to make Israel **forget** (שכח/להשכיחם) Torah
2. In the midrash, Greece is associated with **darkness** (חשך/החשיכה)
3. **Yose b. Yoezer** and **Yose b. Yohanan** are pre-rabbinic figures who live at the time of the Hasmonean revolt
4. **Yose b. Yoezer** and **Yose b. Yohanan** are the earliest pair of (pre-) rabbinic figures who have a debate over law. After their time, debates continue unabated, culminating in the culture of Shammai and Hillel and their disciples, who exemplify a culture of **dispute** and disagreement.
5. According to Reish Lakish, Moshe is **congratulated for breaking the first set of tablets**, having given the Torah a firmer foundation by abrogating it.
6. According to R. Elazar, the **breaking of the first tablets** is associated with massive loss of Torah via **forgetting**.
7. Laws **forgotten** can be **restored** through intellectual creativity.
8. Both sides of a **dispute** are valued as capturing some essential truth.



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What elements of our institutional memory help stabilize and preserve us? What elements freeze us in place and would better be forgotten?
2. Which policies and procedures would we reconstruct if we were starting over now, without the benefit of received tradition?
3. Have you ever had a moment where you “broke the tablets?” If yes, what was it? If not, why not?
4. Have you ever exercised leadership by generating new policies and approaches? If yes, when? If not, why not?
5. How might you use R. Hutner’s words at the end to inspire seizing moments of crisis as an opportunity for reconstructing your leadership and those you lead?
6. What leaders are mentioned in these texts? What are their distinctive qualities and actions?
Leaders:
Moshe, Otniel b. Kenaz
Yose b. Yoezer/Yose b. Yohanan
Editors of the views of the Houses of Shammai and Hillel

RAV HUTNER’S TEXT AND RABBI TUCKER’S SYNTHESIS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION: USE AS YOU SEE FIT

Pahad Yitzhak, Rav Yitzhak Hutner, Hanukkah, Essay 3

Based on a translation by Aryeh Bernstein

...[The Midrash says about the word “darkness”, which appears in the second verse of the Torah:]

“‘Darkness’ – this [alludes to] Greece, which darkened Israel's eyes with their decrees”...

We have a tradition that Yose ben Yo'ezer and Yose ben Yoḥanan, who lived during the days of the [Hasmonean] conflict with Greece, were the first ones to engage in a dispute of Torah law. In other words, on account of Greece's darkening of Israel's eyes with its decrees "to make them forget Your Torah", this darkening-forgetting led to the first dispute in the Sanhedrin...In this sense, the ongoing proliferation of opinions and dissenting positions...continues directly from the darkening of Israel's eyes via the forgetting of Torah caused by the decrees of Greece. In this way, a superficial glance leads one to perceive the proliferation of opinions and dissenting positions as a remaining holdout from the redemption from Greece, for even with the whole redemption and salvation of the Hasmonean victory, the very same sorrow which was born in the polemic with Greece still remains with us.

However, from the words of the Sages, we learn a deeper perception in the heart of the matter... "Sometimes, the canceling of Torah is its fulfillment, as is said, '...which you broke' – 'More power to you for breaking them'" (Babylonian Talmud Menahot 99b). The act of breaking the tablets is an act of fulfilling the Torah by way of canceling it. But the Sages also said that "had the tablets not been broken, Torah would not have been forgotten from Israel" (BT Eruvin 54a). We find, then, that the breaking of the tablets also had an aspect of making the Torah forgotten. We learn an amazing innovation from here – that it is possible for Torah to be proliferated via the forgetting of Torah, such that in this manner it is possible to receive a "Yishar Koah" on account of forgetting Torah. Go out and see what the Sages said, that "300 Halakhot were forgotten in the days of mourning for Moshe Rabbenu...and Otniel ben Qenaz restored them with his dialectics" (BT Temurah 16a). Those words of Torah, recovered through dialectics– those are themselves words of Torah that were proliferated only via the forgetting of Torah. Moreover, every matter of dispute in Halakhah exists only via the forgetting of Torah. Nevertheless, so taught the Sages, "Even though these say pure and those say impure, these invalidate and those validate, these exempt and those obligate...these and those are the words of the living God" (BT Hagigah 3b, Eruvin 13b). We find that all differences of opinion and disputes are an expansion and embellishment of Torah that draws its strength specifically from the forgetting of Torah.

An even greater innovation emerges from this, for the power of Oral Torah is much greater in the context of difference of opinion than in the context of agreement. For included in that statement that "these and those are the words of the living God" is the principle that even the opinion rejected from *halakhah* is a Torah opinion, provided that it is said according to the boundaries of the give-and-take of Oral Torah...should [the proponents of this view] arise as the majority later on and decide according to the rejected opinion, henceforth, the *halakhah* would change in its essence...the disputes that arise in Torah are a positive creation of new Torah values, the likes of which cannot be found in regular words of Torah...

And so we return to the beginning. The reality of debate in Torah, which continues until our own day, was indeed born in the darkness of Greece. Nonetheless, this reality is not a holdout from our redemption from Greece. On the contrary! The redemption of Hanukkah by the Hasmoneans

constituted a victory over the darkness of Greece by producing light out of the darkness itself. May the Torah be magnified and exalted—by way of the forgetting of Torah. Its cancellation is its fulfillment. While the fall of Babylonia and Media helped heal the subjugation of the Jewish people, the fall of Greece contained within it a remedy prepared from the wounds itself. “When the wicked Greek kingdom stood against your people Israel to make them forget the Torah”—from the forgetting itself new wellsprings of Torah opened up by way of dialectical reconstruction, pursued in order to clarify the Torah that was being forgotten...

R. Hutner’s Synthesis

- A surface glance at Jewish history shows that we began arguing over matters of law in the time of the Greek’s persecution of us and we still do so today. Didn’t the Greeks succeed in causing us to forget the Torah? Isn’t our redemption from this historical persecution still incomplete?
- The breaking of the first tablets is both congratulated and associated with forgetting. This means that forgetting Torah can contribute to Torah’s proliferation and rejuvenation. In fact, some original contributions to Torah only happen because other Torah was forgotten.
- Disputes are fundamentally about lacking the truth and the right information. And yet, in rabbinic discourse, both sides of a dispute are valued. This demonstrates the value of forgetting Torah even further; those new values would never have otherwise been uncovered.
- This entire process of dispute, and the forgetting that enables it, originated for the Jewish people during the Hanukkah story. And yet, even after our triumph over the Greeks, we retained the mode of argument and engagement that their persecution bequeathed to us. What we truly celebrate on Hanukkah is our ability to create opportunities for creativity and survival out of the very forces that threaten us. We adapt, so does Torah, and we and Torah emerge much richer.

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF PESACH:
ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR JEWISH LEADERSHIP**
❧ RABBI AARON PANKEN ❧

Rabbi Aaron Panken, Ph.D., has taught Rabbinic and Second Temple Literature at Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion in New York since 1995. Before his return to full-time teaching and research in 2010, he served as Vice President for Strategic Initiatives from 2006-2010; as Dean of the New York campus from 1998-2007 and as Dean of Students from 1996-1998. An alumnus of the Wexner Graduate Fellowship, he earned his doctorate in Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University, where his research focused on legal change in Rabbinic Literature. He currently serves on faculty for the Wexner Foundation, on the International Council of the New Israel Fund, on the Editorial Board of RJ Magazine, and he has served on the Rabbinical Placement Commission, the birthright Education Committee, the CCAR Ethics Committee and in a variety of other leadership roles within the Reform movement and greater Jewish community. His publications include *The Rhetoric of Innovation* (University Press of America, 2005), which explores legal change in Rabbinic texts, and he is currently at work on a book-length history of Hanukkah.

Prior to teaching at the College-Institute, he served in congregations including Congregation Rodeph Sholom in New York City and Westchester Reform Temple in Scarsdale, NY. A native of New York City who graduated from Johns Hopkins University's Electrical Engineering program, Rabbi Panken is also a commercial rated glider, land and seaplane pilot, ham radio operator and sailor, and lives with his wife and two children in the New York area.

**BEFORE VIEWING THE VIDEO SHIUR (LESSON), PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING
PASSAGE OUT LOUD IN HEVRUTA PAIRS:**

In studying two biblical texts and one rabbinic text on Passover, we will be looking for similarities and differences in approach to this ancient festival. Many core elements continue through the texts and link them closely. At the same time, there are some clear and fascinating differences between these texts that indicate Jewish leadership with significantly different concerns and priorities, which will be accessible through close reading and comparative analysis.

Exodus 12 provides the first biblical account of Passover, telling the story of the first paschal sacrifice in Egypt, and its use as a paradigm for all future Pesah observances. Deuteronomy 16 tells of the celebration of Pesah in a context of centralized worship, in “the Place where God will choose to have the Divine Name dwell.” The Mishnah (written *circa* 225 CE in Israel) provides us with a far later viewpoint of how Passover was celebrated in a post-Temple context after the destruction of 70 CE, including our earliest glimpse of anything like a *seder*.

As you read these texts over in *hevruta* pairs, please keep in mind the following questions, and compare the answers you find in each text:

- 1) Where and when was the Passover sacrifice celebrated?
- 2) What are acceptable types of animals for the sacrifices, who sacrifices these animals, and what happens to their blood?
- 3) How is the animal cooked? How is it eaten?
- 4) What educational elements are present in the telling/retelling of the story?
- 5) What would you say are the key priorities of the ritual in each passage?

Exodus 12:1-28/39-47

וּמִתְּחִלָּה הָיוּ לָכֶם לְחֻדְשֵׁי רֵאשֹׁן הוּא לָכֶם לְחֻדְשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה: ³ וְדִבְרוּ אֶל־כָּל־עַדְתֵּי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר בַּעֲשׂוֹר לְחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה וַיִּקְחוּ לָהֶם אִישׁ עִשָּׂה לְבֵית־אָבֹתָהּ עִשָּׂה לְבֵיתָהּ: ⁴ וְאִם־יִמְעַט הַבֵּית מִהֵיכָל מִשְׁחָה וְלָקַח הוּא וּשְׂכָנֹו הַקָּרֵב אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ בְּמִכְסֵת גֹּפְשֹׁת אִישׁ לְפִי אֹכְלוֹ תִּכְסֹו עַל־הַשָּׂה: ⁵ עִשָּׂה תָמִים זָכָר בְּו־שָׁנָה יִהְיֶה לָכֶם מִן־הַכֹּבָשִׁים וּמִן־הַעֲזִים תִּקְחוּ: ⁶ וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת עַד אַרְבַּעַה עָשָׂר יוֹם לְחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה וּשְׁחֹטוּ אוֹתוֹ כָּל־קֶתֶל עַד־תִּישָׂאֵל גִּיּוֹן הָעֲרָבִים: ⁷ וְלָקַחוּ מִן־הַדָּם וְנָתְנוּ עַל־שְׁתֵּי הַמְּזוּזוֹת וְעַל־הַמְּשָׁקוֹף עַל הַבְּתִיִּם אֲשֶׁר־יֹאכְלוּ אוֹתוֹ בָּהֶם: ⁸ וְאָכְלוּ אֶת־הַבָּשָׂר בְּלִילָה הַזֶּה צְלִי־אֵשׁ וּמִצּוֹת עַל־מֶרְרִים יֹאכְלוּהוּ: ⁹ אֶל־תֹּאכְלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ נָא וּבִשְׁלֵל מִבִּשְׁלֵל בְּמַיִם כִּי אִם־צְלִי־אֵשׁ רֵאשֹׁן עַל־כַּרְעֵיו וְעַל־קַרְבּוֹ: ¹⁰ וְלֹא־תוֹתִירוּ מִמֶּנּוּ עַד־בֹּקֶר וְהַגִּתָּר מִמֶּנּוּ עַד־בֹּקֶר בָּאֵשׁ תִּשְׂרְפוּ: ¹¹ וְכִכָּהֵן תֹּאכְלוּ אוֹתוֹ מִתְּנִיכֶם חֲגָרִים גַּעְלֵיכֶם בְּרַגְלֵיכֶם וּמְקַלְכֶם בְּיָדְכֶם וְאָכַלְתֶּם אוֹתוֹ בַּחֲפֹזוֹן פֶּסַח הוּא לִיהוָה: ¹² וְעִבְרַתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ־מִצְרַיִם בְּלִילָה הַזֶּה וְהַפִּיתִי כָל־בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מֵאָדָם וְעַד־בְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל־אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֲעַשֶּׂה שְׁפָטִים אֲנִי יְהוָה: ¹³ וְהָיָה הַדָּם לָכֶם לְאֹת עַל הַבְּתִיִּם אֲשֶׁר אֲתֶם שֹׁם וְרֵאִיתִי אֶת־הַדָּם וּפְסַחְתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם וְלֹא־יְהִיֶה בְכֶם נֶגֶף לְמִשְׁחִית בְּהַפְתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: ¹⁴ וְהָיָה הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לָכֶם לְזִכָּרוֹן וְחַגְתֶּם אוֹתוֹ חַג לִיהוָה לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם חֻקַּת עוֹלָם תִּחְגַּגְהוּ: ¹⁵ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים מִצּוֹת תֹּאכְלוּ אוֹתוֹ בַּיּוֹם הָרֵאשֹׁן תִּשְׁבְּבוּ אוֹתוֹ שְׁבַע יָמִים מִצּוֹת תֹּאכְלוּ אוֹתוֹ בַּיּוֹם הָרֵאשֹׁן תִּשְׁבְּבוּ: ¹⁶ וּבַיּוֹם הָרֵאשֹׁן מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׂבִיעִי מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם כָּל־מְלָאכָה לֹא־יַעֲשֶׂה בָהֶם אוֹתוֹ אֲשֶׁר יֹאכְל לְכָל־נֶפֶשׁ הוּא לְבָדוֹ יַעֲשֶׂה לָכֶם: ¹⁷ וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־הַמִּצְוֹת כִּי בְעֲצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה הוֹצֵאתִי אֶת־צְבָאוֹתֵיכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם חֻקַּת עוֹלָם: ¹⁸ בְּרֵאשֹׁן בְּאַרְבַּעַה עָשָׂר יוֹם לְחֹדֶשׁ בְּעָרֵב מִצַּת עַד יוֹם הָאֶחָד וְעֵשְׂרִים לְחֹדֶשׁ בְּעָרֵב: ¹⁹ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים שָׂאֵר לֹא יִמְצָא בְּבֵיתְכֶם כִּי כָל־אֹכֵל מִחֲמַצָּת וּנְכַרְתֶּה הַגֹּפֶשׁ הוּא מְעַדֵת יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּגֵר וּבְאֶזְרַח הָאֶרֶץ: ²⁰ כָּל־מִחְמַצָּת לֹא תֹאכְלוּ כָּל־מוֹשְׁבְּתֵיכֶם תֹּאכְלוּ מִצּוֹת: פ ²¹ וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְכָל־זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם מִשְׁכּוֹ וּקְחוּ לָכֶם צֹאֵן לְמִשְׁפַּחְתֵיכֶם וּשְׁחֹטוּ הַפֶּסַח: ²² וְלָקַחְתֶּם אֲזוֹב וּטְבַלְתֶּם בְּדָם אֲשֶׁר־בַּפֶּסֶף וְהַגַּעְתֶּם אֶל־הַמְּשָׁקוֹף וְאֶל־שְׁתֵּי הַמְּזוּזוֹת מִן־הַדָּם אֲשֶׁר בַּפֶּסֶף וְאֲתֶם לֹא תִצְאוּ אוֹתוֹ מִפֶּתַח־בֵּיתוֹ עַד־בֹּקֶר: ²³ וְעִבְרַתִּי לְנֶגֶף אֶת־מִצְרַיִם וְרָאָה אֶת־הַדָּם עַל־הַמְּשָׁקוֹף וְעַל שְׁתֵּי הַמְּזוּזוֹת וּפְסַח יְהוָה עַל־הַפֶּתַח וְלֹא יִתּוּ הַמִּשְׁחִית לְבָא אֶל־בְּתֵיכֶם לְנֶגֶף: ²⁴ וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה לְחֻק־לָזְכָר וּלְבִנְיָה עַד־עוֹלָם: ²⁵ וְהָיָה כִּי־תָבֹאוּ אֶל־הָאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יִתּוּ יְהוָה לָכֶם כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־הַעֲבֹדָה הַזֹּאת: ²⁶ וְהָיָה כִּי־יֹאמְרוּ אֲלֵיכֶם בְּנֵיכֶם מַה הָעֲבֹדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם: ²⁷ וְאָמַרְתֶּם זֶכַח־פֶּסַח הוּא לִיהוָה אֲשֶׁר פֶּסַח עַל־בְּתֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִצְרַיִם בְּגֹפְוֹ אֶת־מִצְרַיִם וְאֶת־בְּתֵינֵנוּ הִצִּיל וַיִּקַּד הָעָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ: ²⁸ וַיִּלְכוּ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן כִּן עָשׂוּ: ²⁹ וַיֹּאפּוּ אֶת־הַבָּצָק אֲשֶׁר הוֹצִיאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם עִגַּת מִצּוֹת כִּי לֹא חִמַּץ כִּי־גִרְשׁוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם וְלֹא יִכְלוּ לְהַתְּמַהֵמָה וּגַם־צִדָּה לֹא־עָשׂוּ לָהֶם: ⁴⁰ וּמוֹשֵׁב בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁבּוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם שְׁלֵשִׁים שָׁנָה וְאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה: ⁴¹

וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וָאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה וַיְהִי בַעֲצֹם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יֵצְאוּ כָּל־צִבְאוֹת יְהוָה מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: ⁴²
לֵיל שְׁמֵרַיִם הוּא לַיהוָה לְהוֹצִיאֵם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הוּא־הַלֵּיל הַזֶּה לַיהוָה שְׁמֵרַיִם לְכָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
לְדֹרֹתָם: פ ⁴³ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן זֹאת חֻקַּת הַפֶּסַח כָּל־בֶּן־יֶגְדֵר לֹא־יֹאכֵל בּוֹ: ⁴⁴ וְכָל־עֶבֶד אִישׁ
מִקְנֵת־כֶּסֶף וּמִלְתָּה אֹתוֹ אִזּוֹ יֹאכֵל בּוֹ: ⁴⁵ תוֹשֵׁב וְשֹׁכֵר לֹא־יֹאכֵל־בּוֹ: ⁴⁶ בְּבַיִת אֶחָד יֹאכֵל לֹא־תוֹצִיא מִן־
הַבַּיִת מוֹ־הַבֶּשֶׂר חוּצָה וְעֵצִים לֹא תִשְׁבְּרוּ־בּוֹ: ⁴⁷ כָּל־עֵצֵת יִשְׂרָאֵל יַעֲשׂוּ אֹתוֹ: ⁴⁸ וְכִי־יִגֹּדֵר אֶתְּךָ גֹּר וְעָשָׂה
פֶסַח לַיהוָה הַמּוֹל לּוֹ כָּל־זֶכֶר וְאִזּוֹ יִקְרַב לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ וְהָיָה כְּאֹזֶרַח הָאָרֶץ וְכָל־עֶרְל לֹא־יֹאכֵל בּוֹ: ⁴⁹ תִּזְרַה אַחַת
יְהוָה לְאֹזֶרַח וְלִגֵּר הִגֵּר בְּתוֹכְכֶם: ⁵⁰ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶת־אַהֲרֹן כִּן עָשׂוּ:
ס ⁵¹ וַיְהִי בַעֲצֹם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה הוֹצִיא יְהוָה אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עַל־צִבְאוֹתָם: פ

Exodus 12:1

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: ² This month shall mark for you the beginning of the months; it shall be the first of the months of the year for you. ³ Speak to the whole community of Israel and say that on the tenth of this month each of them shall take a lamb to a family, a lamb to a household. ⁴ But if the household is too small for a lamb, let him share one with a neighbor who dwells nearby, in proportion to the number of persons: you shall contribute for the lamb according to what each household will eat. ⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a yearling male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶ You shall keep watch over it until the fourteenth day of this month; and all the assembled congregation of the Israelites shall slaughter it at twilight. ⁷ They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they are to eat it. ⁸ They shall eat the flesh that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs. ⁹ Do not eat any of it raw, or cooked in any way with water, but roasted -- head, legs, and entrails -- over the fire. ¹⁰ You shall not leave any of it over until morning; if any of it is left until morning, you shall burn it. ¹¹ This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly: it is a passover offering to the LORD. ¹² For that night I will go through the land of Egypt and strike down every first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and I will mete out punishments to all the gods of Egypt, I the LORD. ¹³ And the blood on the houses where you are staying shall be a sign for you: when I see the blood I will pass over you, so that no plague will destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

¹⁴ This day shall be to you one of remembrance: you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD throughout the ages; you shall celebrate it as an institution for all time. ¹⁵ Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread; on the very first day you shall remove leaven from your houses, for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day to the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. ¹⁶ You shall celebrate a sacred occasion on the first day, and a sacred occasion on the seventh day; no work at all shall be done on them; only what every person is to eat, that alone may be prepared for you. ¹⁷ You shall observe the Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your ranks out of the land of Egypt; you shall observe this day throughout the ages as an institution for all time. ¹⁸ In the first month, from the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. ¹⁹ No leaven shall be found in your houses for seven days. For whoever eats what is leavened, that person shall be cut off from the community of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a citizen of the country. ²⁰ You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your settlements you shall eat unleavened bread.

²¹ Moses then summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go, pick out lambs for your families,

and slaughter the passover offering.²² Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and to the two doorposts. None of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning.²³ For when the LORD goes through to smite the Egyptians, God will see the blood on the lintel and the two doorposts, and the LORD will pass over the door and not let the Destroyer enter and smite your home.²⁴ "You shall observe this as an institution for all time, for you and for your descendants.²⁵ And when you enter the land that the LORD will give you, as God has promised, you shall observe this rite.²⁶ And when your children ask you, 'What do you mean by this rite?'²⁷ you shall say, 'It is the passover sacrifice to the LORD, because God passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when smiting the Egyptians, but saved our houses.'" The people then bowed low in homage.²⁸ And the Israelites went and did so; just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

³⁹ And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had taken out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, since they had been driven out of Egypt and could not delay; nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves.⁴⁰ The length of time that the Israelites lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years;⁴¹ at the end of the four hundred and thirtieth year, to the very day, all the ranks of the LORD departed from the land of Egypt.⁴² That was for the LORD a night of vigil to bring them out of the land of Egypt; that same night is the LORD's, one of vigil for all the children of Israel throughout the ages.⁴³ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron: This is the law of the passover offering: No foreigner shall eat of it.⁴⁴ But any slave a man has bought may eat of it once he has been circumcised.⁴⁵ No bound or hired laborer shall eat of it.⁴⁶ It shall be eaten in one house: you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house; nor shall you break a bone of it.⁴⁷ The whole community of Israel shall offer it.

Deuteronomy 16:1-8

שְׁמוֹר אֶת־הַחֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב וְעִשִׂיתָ פֶּסַח לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי בְחֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב הוֹצִיאָךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִמִּצְרַיִם לַיְלָה:¹ וּבַחֹדֶשׁ פֶּסַח לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ צֹאן וּבָקָר בְּמִקְוֵם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר יְהוָה לְשַׁבֵּן שְׂמוֹ שָׁם:² לֹא־תֹאכַל עָלָיו חֲמֵץ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תֹּאכַל־עָלָיו מִצֹּאת לֶחֶם עֲנִי כִי בַחֲפוּזוֹן יֵצְאתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְמַעַן תִּזְכֹּר אֶת־יוֹם צֵאתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם כֹּל יְמֵי תְּנִיחָךְ:³ וְלֹא־יִרְאֶה לְךָ שְׂאֵר בְּכָל־גִּבְלוֹךָ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים וְלֹא־יָלִין מִן־הַבֶּשֶׂר אֲשֶׁר תִּזְבַּח בַּעֲרֵב בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן לְבָקָר:⁴ לֹא תֹכַל לִזְבַּח אֶת־הַפֶּסַח בְּאֶחָד שְׁעָרֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ:⁵ כִּי אִם־אֶל־הַמִּקְוֵם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשַׁבֵּן שְׂמוֹ שָׁם תִּזְבַּח אֶת־הַפֶּסַח בַּעֲרֵב כִּבּוֹא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ מוֹעֵד צֵאתְךָ מִמִּצְרַיִם:⁶ וּבִשְׁלֵתָ וְאָכַלְתָּ בְּמִקְוֵם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בּוֹ וּפְגִיתָ בְּבָקָר וְהִלַּכְתָּ לְאֵהָלֶיךָ:⁷ שִׁשַּׁת יָמִים תֹּאכַל מִצֹּאת וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׂבִיעִי עֲצַרְתָּ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה מְלָאכָה:

Deuteronomy 16:1-8

Observe the month of Abib and offer a passover sacrifice to the LORD your God, for it was in the month of Abib, at night, that the LORD your God freed you from Egypt.² You shall slaughter the passover sacrifice for the LORD your God, from the flock and the herd, in the place where the LORD will choose to establish His name.³ You shall not eat anything leavened with it; for seven days thereafter you shall eat unleavened bread, bread of distress -- for you departed from the land of Egypt hurriedly -- so that you may remember the day of your departure from the land of Egypt as long as you live.⁴ For seven days no

leaven shall be found with you in all your territory, and none of the flesh of what you slaughter on the evening of the first day shall be left until morning.⁵ You are not permitted to slaughter the passover sacrifice in any of the settlements that the LORD your God is giving you;⁶ but at the place where the LORD your God will choose to establish the Divine name, there alone shall you slaughter the passover sacrifice, in the evening, at sundown, the time of day when you departed from Egypt.⁷ You shall cook and eat it at the place that the LORD your God will choose; and in the morning you may start back on your journey home.⁸ After eating unleavened bread six days, you shall hold a solemn gathering for the LORD your God on the seventh day: you shall do no work.

Mishnah Pesahim chapter 10

[א] ערבי פסחים סמוך למנחה לא יאכל אדם עד שתחשך ואפילו עני שבישראל לא יאכל עד שיסב ולא יפחתו לו מארבע כוסות של יין ואפילו מן התמחוי :

- 1) On the day before Passover from before the Minḥah a person should not eat until it gets dark. Even the indigent in Israel should eat only reclining; and he should not be given less than four cups of wine even if this is from the soup-kitchen.

[ג] הביאו לפניו מטבל בחזרת עד שמגיע לפרפרת הפת הביאו לפניו מצה וחזרת וחרוסת ושני תבשילין אף על פי שאין חרוסת מצוה רבי אליעזר בר צדוק אומר מצוה ובמקדש היו מביאים לפניו גופו של פסח :

- 3) They bring [food] before him, he dips it into the lettuce before he reaches the *parperet ha-pat* [the breaking of the bread; others say: the bread condiment (=bitter herbs)]. They set before him matzah, lettuce and ḥaroset and two dishes, even though the ḥaroset is not a mitzvah. Rabbi Eliezer bar Zadok says that it is [indeed] a mitzvah. And in Temple [times] they would set before him the body of the paschal lamb.

[ד] מזגו לו כוס שני וכאן הבן שואל אביו ואם אין דעת בבן אביו מלמדו מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה הלילה הזה כולו מצה שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות הלילה הזה מרור שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין בשר צלי שלוק ומבושל הלילה הזה כולו צלי שבכל הלילות אנו מטבילין פעם אחת הלילה הזה שתי פעמים ולפי דעתו של בן אביו מלמדו מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח ודורש מארמי אובד אבי עד שיגמור כל הפרשה כולה :

- 4) They mix him a second cup. Here the son asks his father, and if the son does not know how his father teaches him: 'In what way is this night different from all other nights? On all other nights we eat ḥametz or matzah, [but] tonight only matzah. On all other nights we eat any vegetables, tonight maror. On all other nights we eat meat roasted, stewed or boiled, [but] tonight only roasted. On all other nights we dip once, [but] tonight twice.' According to the son's understanding the father teaches him, beginning with shame and ending with praise. And he expounds midrashically from 'My father was a wandering Aramean' until he concludes that whole section.

[ה] רבן גמליאל היה אומר כל שלא אמר שלשה דברים אלו בפסח לא יצא ידי חובתו ואלו הן פסח מצה ומרור פסח על שום שפסח המקום על בתי אבותינו במצרים מצה על שום שנגאלו אבותינו במצרים מרור על שום שמררו המצריים את חיי אבותינו במצרים בכל דור ודור חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים שנאמר (שמות יג) והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים לפיכך אנחנו חייבין להודות להלל לשבח לפאר לרומם להדר לברך לעלה ולקלס למי שעשה לאבותינו ולנו את כל הניסים האלו הוציאנו מעבדות לחירות מיגון לשמחה ומאבל ליום טוב ומאפילה לאור גדול ומשעבוד לגאולה ונאמר לפניו הללויה :

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- 5) Rabban Gamliel would say: Anyone who has not mentioned these three items on Passover has not fulfilled his duty; they are: the Paschal lamb, Matzah and Maror. The Paschal lamb - because God passed over the homes of our ancestors in Egypt; Matzah - because our ancestors were redeemed in Egypt; Maror - because the Egyptians embittered the lives of our ancestors in Egypt. In every generation [each] person must look upon himself as if he had left Egypt, for it says: And you shall tell your son on that day, saying [that I do this] because of what God did for me when I left Egypt [Exodus 13:8]. That is why we have the duty to praise ... God who performed for our ancestors and for us all these miracles: God brought us from slavery to liberty, from wretchedness to joy, from mourning to festivity, from darkness to a great light, and from enslavement to redemption: so let us say before God, Hallelujah.

ח) ואין מפטירין אחר הפסח אפיקומן ישנו מקצתן יאכלו כולן לא יאכלו ר' יוסי אומר נתנמנו יאכלו נרדמו לא יאכלו :

- 8) We do not conclude [the eating of the] paschal lamb with an Afikoman [from the Greek word for “after party” – a “dessert feast with drinking and music,” or, others say: “revelry”]. If some fell asleep they may eat, but if all of them slept they may not. Rabbi Yosé says that if they dozed they may eat but if they fell asleep they may not.

 WATCH THE VIDEO 

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) When elements continued throughout all the texts that we read, what do you think motivated such continuity? (examples: education as a focus of the celebration; *matzah* and *maror* as key elements, seven days of unleavened bread, etc.)
- 2) When elements changed, what do you think motivated such change? (examples: location shift from home to centralized communal worship to home; changes in animals sacrificed from smaller cattle (sheep/lambs) to larger; move from sacrifice to Seder, etc.)
- 3) What do the different priorities of the various manifestations of Pesah present in the texts we studied suggest to us as we set our own priorities as contemporary Jewish leaders? How do these respond to the realities of the texts' contexts?
- 4) What realities in our local community that we have not confronted are game changers – something akin to living in times just after the Temple was destroyed – which would require a completely different response than before? As just one example, does the possibility that our kids will have a completely different relationship with Israel and Israelis than we do suggest that we have now passed in to a new context and need to think differently, create our own “new seder” about peoplehood, Zionism, Hebrew language instruction? What could/should our community do to face such new realities?
- 5) What other issues require acknowledging significant change? What ought we be doing?

OPTIONAL TEXTS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION
USE THESE AS YOU SEE FIT

Plato's Symposium (5th century BCE, Athens)

Apollodorus (on the way to a Symposium at Agathon's home)

This was the style of their conversation as they went along. Socrates dropped behind in a fit of abstraction, and desired Aristodemus, who was waiting, to go on before him. When he reached the house of Agathon he found the doors wide open, and a comical thing happened. A servant coming out met him, and led him at once into the banqueting-hall in which the guests were reclining, for the banquet was about to begin. Welcome, Aristodemus, said Agathon, as soon as he appeared-you are just in time to sup with us; if you come on any other matter put it off, and make one of us, as I was looking for you yesterday and meant to have asked you, if I could have found you. But what have you done with Socrates?

I turned round, but Socrates was nowhere to be seen; and I had to explain that he had been with me a moment before, and that I came by his invitation to the supper.

You were quite right in coming, said Agathon; but where is he himself?

He was behind me just now, as I entered, he said, and I cannot think what has become of him.

Go and look for him, boy, said Agathon, and bring him in; and do you, Aristodemus, meanwhile take the place by Eryximachus.

The servant then assisted him to wash, and he lay down, and presently another servant came in and reported that our friend Socrates had retired into the portico of the neighbouring house. "There he is fixed," said he, "and when I call to him he will not stir."

How strange, said Agathon; then you must call him again, and keep calling him.

Let him alone, said my informant; he has a way of stopping anywhere and losing himself without any reason. I believe that he will soon appear; do not therefore disturb him.

Well, if you think so, I will leave him, said Agathon. And then, turning to the servants, he added, "Let us have supper without waiting for him. Serve up whatever you please, for there is no one to give you orders; hitherto I have never left you to yourselves. But on this occasion imagine that you are our hosts, and that I and the company are your guests; treat us well, and then we shall commend you." After this, supper was served, but still no Socrates; and during the meal Agathon several times expressed a wish to send for him, but Aristodemus objected; and at last when the feast was about half over-for the fit, as usual, was not of long duration-Socrates entered; Agathon, who was reclining alone at the end of the table, begged that he would take the place next to him; that "I may touch you," he said, "and have the benefit of that wise thought which came into your mind in the portico, and is now in your possession; for I am certain that you would not have come away until you had found what you sought."

How I wish, said Socrates, taking his place as he was desired, that wisdom could be infused by touch, out of the fuller the emptier man, as water runs through wool out of a fuller cup into an emptier one; if that

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were so, how greatly should I value the privilege of reclining at your side! For you would have filled me full with a stream of wisdom plenteous and fair; whereas my own is of a very mean and questionable sort, no better than a dream. But yours is bright and full of promise, and was manifested forth in all the splendour of youth the day before yesterday, in the presence of more than thirty thousand Hellenes.

You are mocking, Socrates, said Agathon, and ere long you and I will have to determine who bears off the palm of wisdom-of this Dionysus shall be the judge; but at present you are better occupied with supper.

Socrates took his place on the couch, and supped with the rest; and then libations were offered, and after a hymn had been sung to the god, and there had been the usual ceremonies, they were about to commence drinking, when Pausanias said, And now, my friends, how can we drink with least injury to ourselves? I can assure you that I feel severely the effect of yesterday's potations, and must have time to recover; and I suspect that most of you are in the same predicament, for you were of the party yesterday. Consider then: How can the drinking be made easiest?

I entirely agree, said Aristophanes, that we should, by all means, avoid hard drinking, for I was myself one of those who were yesterday drowned in drink.

I think that you are right, said Eryximachus, the son of Acumenus; but I should still like to hear one other person speak: Is Agathon able to drink hard?

I am not equal to it, said Agathon.

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