

FROM THE PUBLISHER AND EDITOR



Once out of Egypt, the Children of Israel were on their way to receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai, where spirituality and physicality joined as one – a perfect state every Jew should in essence aim to reach – where every action is in accordance with the will of Hashem. For most of us this is easier said, written, or thought, than done. At Pesach we experience the 10 makkos and see the physical world turned upside down. In our own lives, indeed every day, we see events happening that are also upside down. Events all over the world – perhaps more now than at any other time, that defy rational explanation. The message is that it is all the will of Hashem and part of His plan.

On a different level, but in my mind a veritable miracle, *Jewish Life* first appeared nearly nine years ago and from the start has benefitted from the Hand of Hashem. The expertise that has been available to us in terms of writing, design, and marketing has been far in excess of what we originally anticipated. An example: while we initially forged relationships with publishers and content providers internationally for the rights to their articles, they now request the rights to re-publish material that we have written. Locally generated JL content is now available from Jerusalem to the USA (including most recently *The Reporter*, the Jewish newspaper in Pennsylvania) and through worldwide Jewish content sites we are read wherever a Jew is online. This is testimony to the strong mission the team has: to plan and create the best editorial content, with the right mix, tone, and perspective. Our readers will not make do with second rate content and nor should they. I thank all our readers who truly appreciate, like I do, the hard work that Robert and the whole team put into every page of every issue. I thank the growing number of advertisers who make *Jewish Life* their first, if not their only choice when wishing to talk to the Jewish community. I thank Hashem for enabling this and giving us the opportunity, inspiration, and the strength to do so much more than one thought possible.

We wish all our readers and advertisers a Chag Kasher v'Sameach.

MARTYN SAMUELS, PUBLISHER



Every yom tov requires us to think about others, particularly the poor, orphans, and widows, and the Torah obligates us, as part of the mitzvah¹ of simchas yom tov (rejoicing in the holiday), to make sure that they have what they need to enjoy the holiday: new clothes, nice food and wine, toys, etc. Since before the times of the Talmud², however, Jews have had an additional custom³ of collecting flour (nowadays, matzah) to distribute to the poor for the needs of the entirety of Pesach⁴ in accordance with each individual's needs (ie, not one-size-fits-all), known as *Ma'os Chitim* (lit: money for wheat) or *Kimcha D'pischa* (flour for Pesach).

And we're also accustomed to give for the other needs of Pesach: wine, meat, fish, etc., or alternatively (and nowadays, more commonly) to give the monetary value of these items so that people can acquire these things for themselves.⁵ This is a separate mitzvah from that of tzedakah and our Sages teach that it's rooted in the special feeling of freedom that we have on Pesach. In other words, even if a person has already fulfilled the mitzvah of tzedakah, he cannot possibly feel truly free deep down in his soul knowing that nearby there are fellow Jews who are hungry and don't have what to eat. Moreover, if we know that our brothers are going hungry in our city and we ignore their needs in advance of the holiday, how can we declare with any sincerity at our seder, "Whoever is hungry let him come and eat"? But, once we've provided for our poor brothers who we know about, we can then sincerely say when our table is set before us, "Perhaps there remain more hungry people who I don't know about" and issue that invitation wholeheartedly! And not only will our words be believed, but we'll be rewarded for making this declaration as if we have just now made it possible for those who are hungry to eat, bringing joy to them. May we always feel such sensitivity towards one another, truly sharing in each other's joys and pains.

On behalf of everyone here at JL, wishing everyone in our community – and Jews all over the world – a chag kasher v'sameach!

ROBERT SUSSMAN, EDITOR

¹See Devarim 16:14 and Sefer HaChinuch Mitzvah 498

²Mishna Berura 429:3

³Rema's comment on Shulchan Aruch O.C. 429:1

⁴Mishna Berura 429:4

⁵This point and what follows are based on Sefer HaToda'ah, Kimcha D'pischa

ON THE COVER: PIC BIGSTOCKPHOTO.COM. IT'S A MITZVAH FROM THE TORAH TO EAT MATZAH AT THE SEDER ON THE FIRST NIGHT OF PESACH. AT THE SEDER, WE START OUT WITH THREE WHOLE MATZOS AND LATER BREAK THE MIDDLE MATZAH IN HALF (AS PICTURED) AT THE FOURTH STEP, YACHATZ, SETTING ASIDE THE LARGER PORTION FOR LATER USE AS THE AFIKOMAN AND PLACING THE SMALLER PIECE BACK BETWEEN THE TWO REMAINING WHOLE MATZOS.



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