

Passover Transformations

The Jewish festival celebrations parallel the changes that occur in our souls as a result of the major seasons. After the brief rest of the mid-winter (Hannukah) celebrations, we return to work. Our souls are yearning to align with the truths we had seen in the fall, the goals we had prayed for, the light we had glimpsed on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

In the winter it's dark and cold and we follow our schedule with hopeful faith that our lives are moving, that we are indeed building a new world, a new life, stepping the next step to prepare for our Mashiakh place, inner Mashiakh and outer Mashiakh. In the wintry lack of external heat and less light (inspiration and perspective), we just follow our inner sense until something begins to change.

Even before Purim we may sense that our inner identity is undergoing change. We become overwhelmed. We may think that it's merely the great load of responsibility that we had taken on at the last High Holydays weighing in on us, crowding us. With hindsight we now see that it is a convergence of pressures, including inner pressures signalling the inner growth of a totally new perspective. The buds and blossoms of our winter labors insinuate themselves to expand the husks of the old seeds overthrowing our old points of reference. Spring comes to perfume the earth and to open our souls.

What is clear in our lives and what is obscure may suddenly undergo a radical shift. Things we had been avoiding, what we called shadowy, Hamanesque, are revealed to have centrally important teachings, inner Mordekhai essence; conversely, we may find that what we have been supporting and pouring our confidence into (our Mordekhai masks) has moved, revealing that it is no longer the growing edge for us: to stay with it further would be a misuse of our power. Mordekhai has ceased to be Mordekhai. The clear distinction between what is in our best interest and what is dangerous, who is Mordekhai and who is Haman, is lost. We may become very skeptical and very open at the same time. We become intoxicated on Purim wine whether we imbibe or not; it is an out of control, April-foolish middle-ground time.

Passover arrives finding our wonder eyes opened by the spring which parallels the transformation caused by our winter learnings. We feel like infants, looking at the old world with new eyes. We taste everything like it is new, bread is replaced by matzah, a new taste given to the old staple. We relive in our own lives the birth passage through the red sea. We now must find a way to release the bitter marmor of the difficult parts of the passage. In doing this, we go out of the Mitzrayim of our old minds and find ourselves in a baby consciousness. We emerge from out of the personal limitations of our old selves.

Here we taste the precious first fruits, the 'Omer' of our fall and winter work. We count the days as our learnings mature. We find ourselves now doing everything we can to exercise and pleasure this child consciousness, give it confidence, not ask too much from it yet. We find ourselves parenting our own minds, as it grows from day to day towards the promise of the new Torah of Shavuot and its blessing of a divine kiss to our work, a new divine grace to add to what we have done.

As the blossoming of consciousness grows in the summer to new places, we may receive the first backwinds of the High Holydays of the year to come; we can begin to taste the future probings of our own minds of the next Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur "Where is the new Teshuvah direction? What will be an appropriate practice for me now?" And then we fall back to relax and accept that what has not yet fully emerged is not yet a problem. Mitzrayim is still right behind us. Summer is not yet in its fullness.

...Rabbi David Blank