

***Welcome to Beyond Twelve Gates -- special Passover edition.*** When we were children most of us had the experience of sinking our hands into the earth to plant seeds. Over the following weeks we watched with wonder as those seeds grew into green plants, edible vegetables and beautiful flowers. As adults, we can plant 'seeds' in our children that will lead to responsible and enlightened adulthood.

Passover is a time of 'planting Jewish seeds' within our children. What type of seeds will we plant?

***Shabbos Chol HaMoed Passover Exodus 33:12 - 34:26***

On the Shabbos that falls during the intermediate days (*Chol HaMoed*) of Passover the regular cycle of Torah readings is interrupted with a reading that reflects the theme of the holiday. Our reading this Shabbos is a section of the book of Exodus. Specifically, it is the text from divisions (*aliyos*) three through six of Parsha Ki Sisa, but newly divided into seven *aliyos* for a complete Shabbos reading.

Ki Sisa, you will remember, is when Moses comes down from Mount Sinai with the first set of tablets to find that the Jewish people had made a golden calf. Moses breaks the tablets and G-d punishes the guilty. This Shabbos' reading begins right after that. Toward the end of this Torah reading, G-d gives the commandments to observe the three festivals of Passover, Shavuot, and Succot and to appear in Jerusalem on those three occasions. Then various additional commandments are given, including not to eat chametz on Passover.

The seventh day of Passover begins on Sunday evening, March 31. On Monday, April 1, the Torah reading is from Exodus 13:17-15:26. This reading contains the description of the splitting of the Red Sea, and the Song of the Sea. On Tuesday, April 2, the eighth day of Passover, the Torah reading is from Deuteronomy 15:19-16:17. In chapter 16, the pilgrimage festivals (including Passover) are discussed.

A way of summarizing these three major festivals is: Passover is the holiday where you can't eat **WHATEVER** you want, but you can eat **WHEREVER** you want. Succot is the holiday where you can eat **WHATEVER** you want, but you can't eat **WHEREVER** you want. And Shavuot is the holiday where you can eat **WHATEVER** you want, **WHEREVER** you want, but you can't eat too much because it's only two days long!

***Rabbinic Ruminations***

After floating on the lonely seas, adrift for nearly a century, the world's oldest message in a bottle was pulled from the ocean 98 years after it was written, and officials say it is the world's oldest of its kind. Andrew Leaper, a Scottish skipper aboard the fishing boat *Copious*, discovered the bottle last April, trapped in his fishing net as he sailed east of Shetland, an island group northeast of the U.K. mainland. In August, Guinness World Records confirmed it as the oldest message in a bottle ever found, beating the previous record holder by five years.

"As we hauled in the nets I spotted the bottle neck sticking out and I quickly grabbed it before it fell back in the sea," Leaper, 43, said. "It was very exciting to find the bottle and I couldn't wait to open it." The bottle was originally launched back in June 1914 as part of a scientific study to map sea currents around Scotland. More than 1,800 bottles were released, but only 315 of them have been found. The bottle contained a cream-colored postcard asking the finder to record the location where it was found and mail it back to the Glasgow School of Navigation for a minor reward.

Imagine receiving a message from intelligent life in outer space. The thrill would be breathtaking. Now, imagine receiving a message sent from the Creator: a message that contained a description of the beginning of the Universe, the origin of the Jewish people, and a message on behalf of all of humanity. We once received such a message. It was called the *Torah* -- a find more thrilling, exciting and significant than any old message ever found in a lost bottle. Andrew Leaper's recovered bottle contained a message promising the reward of a sixpence, a coin that is no longer issued. One who finds the

Torah, however, will be rewarded in this world and the next: "For they (the words of Torah) are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh." (Proverbs 4:22)

### *Quote of the Week*

The lowest ebb is the turn of the tide -- *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

### **Joke of the Week**

Three men at the office were discussing what most people wanted in a new car.

"Dependability," said one fellow.

"Styling," declared another.

"Economy," said the third.

Just then a fourth man, who recently had bought a new car, entered the room. They decided to pose the question to him.

"What is the thing you'd like most to get out of your new car?" they asked.

"My teen-age son," he replied.