

lunch was eaten under the blue sky. Afterwards we continued to prepare for the festival. Some arranged the dining room and others took care of the burning of the leaven.

In the meantime, even Tel Aviv remembered us. During the late afternoon an airplane arrived, bringing us holiday greetings and more matzos and wine. It also flew in a number of Haggados. We put away the only Haggadah we had. We had printed it ourselves on our own press the night before and now we would keep it forever with us as a memento.

This was truly a Seder of "B'nai Chorin," of free men; of soldiers standing on constant guard to watch the homeland. And it seemed to us quite symbolic that on the Seder night there was an emergency military alert and everyone sat down to the Seder, weapons in hand, ready to repel an enemy attack at a moment's notice.

The dining hall was an exhilarating sight. From the ceiling hung a long streamer; on it was printed: "In the month of Nisan were we freed, and in the month of Nisan shall we be freed." In the bright glow of a huge searchlight a blue

and white flag proudly fluttered.

We looked about for the youngest to ask the Four Questions, but not a single soldier was brave enough to present himself for the honor. Because of that, the officer in charge of cultural activities was designated to ask the Questions. He hemmed and hawed; it had been so long since he had asked the Questions that he had practically forgotten them! But an order was an order; there was no getting away from that. All of us said "Avodim Hoyinu" — "we were slaves" — with great feeling.

Time passed swiftly. Had the cooks not entered and announced that the meal was ready, we might have gone on in this way until dawn. Better than the meal itself were the matzos that we had ourselves baked at the post. Everyone tried to identify the matzo that he had baked. For each matzo had a different form. After all, the soldiers were neither bakers nor the sons of bakers! When the Seder was over, a great song burst out. "Tavo Ha-Geula," (the redemption will come), we sang. And, forming a circle, we danced gaily. It was a dance of freedom, past and to come.

From "Al Ha-Mizpah"



The Questions

BY JESSIE E. SAMPTER

*I've practiced, practiced day by day
To learn the questions I must say
On Seder night;
Then father, like a king of kings,
Now low, now loud, the answer sings
When I have asked aright.*

*To you and me the story's told,
Because 'twas we in days of old
Whom God made free
To Pharaoh's slave He gave His rod
And made of us a prince of God
And dried for us the sea.*

*But I would ask one question more:
If we today should crowd the shore
Of every land
With listening mind and daring
heart,
Would not the oceans leap apart
Again at God's command?*

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The Night of Freedom

BY PHILIP M. RASKIN

*Sparks in the windows, stars in the
skies;
Wine in the glasses, light in the
eyes.
Lips that bless; hearts that sing;
Mother — a queen; father — a
king;
Toil and strife and worry — no
more;
Tables are set, open the door!
Little lips quiver, stammering
why?
Listen, my darlings, and I shall
reply:
A king there was in Egypt-land
Morose, and harsh and grave;
A foolish king, for he believed
A race could stay a slave.
A king there was in Egypt-land,
A foolish king was he;
He knew not that a People's will
Would twain the mighty sea.*

*A king there was in Egypt-land—
But why recall his name?
Full many a despot, ever since,
Believed the very same.
So fill your glasses once again,
And sing a merry song;
And fill your glasses once again,
To prove the tyrant wrong . . .
Sparks in the windows, stars in the
skies,
Wine in the glasses, light in the
eyes.
Dead are the Pharaohs, Egypts
are dead,
Perished the peoples in slavery
bred;
This is the Seder of Legend and
Light—
Freedom is feasting its triumph
tonight.*

Courtesy, BLOCH PUBLISHING CO.

fallen on its thin edge! And now it was rolling, across the floor, out the door, and into the street! In a flash it was wavering at the top of a long sloping hill. Now it was going down, balancing itself on a cobblestone, bouncing on a rock, hopping from slippery stone to mossy raingutter, white in the moonlight and rolling like a hoop. It seemed to beckon to David as if to say, "Come, David—if you really want me, come and get me!"

Tears started in David's eyes. He gripped the arms of his chair till his knuckles were white. "I can't," he cried. Then his eyes brightened with firm determination. "My matzo!" he said. "I won't lose my matzo! I WON'T!"

Startled passers-by stopped in the street when they saw a thin boy, his arms stretched out like balancing poles, take one step forward, then a second, and a third. He stumbled, fell, and rose. He tried again, and this time he took six steps before he fell. Now he was on his feet again, tottering, running crazily, flying down the hill, following the rolling matzo, crying at the top of his voice, "Matzo! Wait for me! I'm coming!"

At the foot of the hill, the matzo struck a sharp stone and came to a sudden stop. In a flash, David was upon it. He picked up the matzo tenderly. Followed by the gawking crowd, he walked bravely home.

The following evening, at the second Seder, many villagers of Yud squeezed into the Widow Dvora's home. The house was filled with gifts they had brought for David and his mother. There was talking and singing and laughter.

A hush fell. The crowd parted to let David through. He walked proudly to his place at the table and lifted the wine cup.

He began to chant the kiddush. He came to the words . . . *Chag ha-matzos ha-zeh, z'man cheru-saynu* . . . "This holiday of matzos, this festival of our freedom . . ."

He paused and glanced at the matzo Itzak had brought especially for him; it now lay on a plate of its own in the center of the table. In the rear of the crowd, Itzak the Baker noticed the pause. He felt a moistness in his eyes, and he reached for his handkerchief.

And the village of Yud in the province of Kaf rejoiced until the whole valley rang with happiness, and the purple mountains roundabout reflected a beauty unsurpassed in all the wide, wide world.



Our New Pesach

BEN SHEMEN, ISRAEL

BY ELIEZER SMOLI

The Festival of Freedom has always inspired our people and filled our hearts with hope. Perhaps never did it mean so much as during the dark days when the hardy pioneers in the Jewish State were fighting their War of Independence. The report printed here is a stirring account of how one Jewish outpost observed Pesach in Israel.



A HOLIDAY spirit reigned at the post. Long before Pesach everyone had grown concerned about where the Passover supplies would come from. We had put our hope in the convoy and when that failed to come through, our executive committee held a meeting to discuss the needs for Pesach. The talk revolved chiefly about the two main items: matzos and wine. It was decided that if by a certain date the convoy still had not arrived, we would begin baking matzos at the post.

The hustle and hubbub began soon afterwards. By the middle of the week, the bakery was in a fever of excitement. Not one among us was to forget this memorable experience. At last the time arrived to knead the dough; now the first

matzo was put into the village oven. It was the first time that it had ever been used for baking Pesach matzos.

Songs and chants provided a merry accompaniment to the baking of the matzos. The little room was flooded with happiness and light, and the very walls seemed to rejoice with us as we fulfilled the commandments of the Torah.

Everyone was busy. One of us kneaded and another rolled the dough; a third gently slid the matzos into the oven. Everyone moved swiftly in order that the dough might not become sour before it was baked. No one shirked; officers and men worked shoulder to shoulder. By morning, a traditional Jewish atmosphere pervaded the room. The tables were taken outdoors and

A Matzo for David

BY MORRIS EPSTEIN



THE LITTLE village of Yud in the province of Kaf nestled in a peaceful valley. The low houses, the marketplace, the cobbled lanes, and the gabled synagogue were older than anyone could remember.

One evening while the whole village was fast asleep, all was dark except for lamplights in two houses. One belonged to the shop of Itzak the Baker. The other was in the modest home of the Widow Dvora, at the outskirts of the village.

Itzak the Baker was busy at this time of year. During the day there was cleaning and scrubbing to be done. And at night, with Passover so close at hand, Itzak performed his duties as the only matzo-baker in the village of Yud.

In his fragrant bakery, there was a large oven built into the wall. On a long table stretched before it were smooth rolling-pins used to flatten out the dough for matzos. The dough had to be prepared swiftly so it would not "rise." When it lay on the table in a thin sheet, Itzak took his perforating wheel, which had a handle and sharp teeth. Swiftly he ran the wheel across the dough, first one way, then across. Next he used a compass with a cutting wheel at the end of one leg. Around and

around it went, and soon the table was covered with circles of perforated dough.

One by one, Itzak gently placed the unbaked matzos on the flat end of a long paddle and slid them into the yawning orange mouth of the heated oven. A few minutes later he scooped them out, crisp and curling at the edges.

Itzak yawned. Enough matzos for one night, he thought. He put away his apron and his tools. He was struggling into his greatcoat when he heard a noise. One matzo had fallen off the edge of the table. Itzak stooped, examined it. It was unbroken. He put it back on the table. He pulled on his heavy fur cap. *Plop.* The matzo was on the floor again. Cautiously, Itzak picked up the matzo and put it in the center of the table. He drew on his mittens, put out the lamp, locked the door of the bake-shop, and trudged down the cobblestone street.

A ribbon of light caught his eye. Itzak looked up. He stood before the Widow Dvora's home. Through the window, he saw her sewing a patch on a boy's shirt. Nearby sat little David reading a book, his crutches beside him.

"How brave were the Israelites, Mama," David said. "They followed

Moses right into the Red Sea."

"Yes, David. Passover reminds us of wonderful days, when God performed miracles for us," replied Dvora, a catch in her voice.

"I wish I were like Moses, Mama. I'd fight for you. I'd earn a good living, so that you could have a fine house and never have to worry."

"Ah, David," sighed his mother, "those are fine wishes, but I would trade them all for one wish of my own. If only you could walk again, David. But what use is it to wish for Passover miracles when I have not even been able to buy matzos for the holiday."

Itzak drew back into the shadows. Everyone knew about David. The boy had been struck by a runaway horse years ago. The doctors said the wound had healed well enough. The boy *should* be able to walk. If only something could *force* him to walk, just once . . .

Itzak the Baker knew what he

had to do. He returned to his bake-shop, entered, and made a neat package of the last batch of matzos he had baked. Separately he wrapped the matzo that lay in the middle of the table. "It's a jumpy one," he thought. "That's what the boy needs—a little motion."

Returning to the Widow Dvora's house and entering, Itzak said gruffly, "Somebody canceled his order for matzos, so I have too many. Take them. And here—this special package—it's a matzo for David. Use it for the afikomen."

Dvora worked to the last minute preparing for Passover, and David was tired and sleepy by the time his mother was ready to begin the Seder. Dvora placed him in a chair next to the table. He was about to put *his* matzo in its place on the Seder plate, but as he reached out, it slipped from his hand and fell to the floor.

"Mama!" he cried. The matzo had

