

IMAGINE THAT!

by Rabbi Dovid Green

What makes Shabbos HaGadol so big? Why is it the Shabbos that remains great and not the 10th of Nissan that holds the historical potency? Is it only because at this time 3312 years ago our common ancestors had the clarity and courage to openly defy their oppressors? Maybe there's some other subtle factor that makes one Shabbos earn the title "Great".

We have a time honored custom to read the narrative of the Pesach Haggadah during the day of Shabbos HaGadol. There is the obvious need to prepare and gain familiarity of the texts before sitting around the Seder table on Pesach night, but what else compels us to do this?

Leaving Egypt like many other dramatic events don't just happen one fine day. There was and there still is a great deal of preparation that goes into setting the stage for Pesach, even now when we re-enact the original event. The reason we are reliving the event is because we are actually positioning ourselves for an actual recreation of the first exodus. There is one type of preparation that is so crucial that the busyness of the other details might push it away if there would be no special time and activity set aside.

Finding myself behind a car at a red light, I became a little disturbed by the contrast of two prominent bumper stickers on the car ahead. One sticker read, "I'm pro-choice and I vote!" while the other one read, "Visualize world peace!" The horrid vision of the activity of one, seen beyond the deceptively benign choice of words, would certainly disturb my vision of the second. I didn't get! I hope I don't!

Later, I saw another single bumper sticker I could agree with very much; "Think Global- Act Local!" That resonated more clearly. So many are so global these days to the extent that locally there is a great absence. Unavoidable and crucial relationships that require attention and devotion are ignored and maligned for the sake of some great global non-personal "love-in" or "log-in". To be global one must be real and really local.

Before shooting a free throw, the basketball player envisions the shot and later produces it in reality. Before a lecture the professor visualizes the flow of words and only relives later what he had experienced in his mind. Everything well orchestrated is created first in the mind of the conductor and then again on the strings of the violin.

One does not just pick up and leave a country where they had been, even uncomfortably, for 210

years. A completing of the historical record and mental date with destiny must be installed into the minds of the participants. Why are we leaving? Where are we going? What will we confront there? What will be our new challenges there? Why are we leaving now and not later? Why have we not left yet? What do we lose by staying?

In that original Shabbos prior to leaving Egypt 3312 years ago was the time all fears were slaughtered before the Pesach lamb took its turn. That's where the Jews left Egypt a thousand times in their minds before their feet carried them to their destiny.

Not only on a national scale but on the most local level each family and individual privately with his Maker needs to identify his or her role and to gather the necessary courage for a long journey. In that Shabbos HaGadol is all the potential that's waiting to be realized on seder night.

So much real vision has already been sincerely invested in this day historically that our constant hope, as we read the Haggadah on Pesach night together with all Jews world wide, that as we take local baby steps we create a global movement to "Next Year in Jerusalem". All that can flow from a Great Shabbos. Imagine that!

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