

PESACH WEATHER

by Rabbi Berel Wein

Pesach falls in the month of Nisan - the month of aviv, springtime. In the southern hemisphere it falls in the beginning of the autumn, but since the Jewish world is centered on the Land of Israel and Jerusalem, Pesach is always thought of as being the holiday of the springtime. Spring is a time of warmth and renewal of beauty and fragrance. There is a special blessing that the rabbis composed for the month of Nisan, for the coming of the springtime that is to be recited when first seeing blossoms of fruit trees. The weather here in Israel on Pesach is usually glorious, warm but not yet summer hot, the threat of rain all but gone for this year and the smell of springtime and of renewed life fills our souls. The great descriptions that appear in King Solomon's Shir HaShirim - "the times of the rain are passed, the time of the songbird has arrived, the blossoms of the trees are seen throughout the land" - are real in front of our eyes and other senses. The springtime of the Land of Israel and its weather pattern is the beloved partner of the holiday of Pesach itself, the holiday of renewal and redemption, of optimism and hope. The country is still green from the winter rains and the rivers and the Kinneret are still full. Pesach weather carries with it special blessings and encouragement here in the Land of Israel.

In the Diaspora of Europe and North America, the springtime also arrives with Pesach. However, in much of the northern hemisphere, the springtime weather of Pesach is volatile and unpredictable. It alternates between cold and warm, fair and precipitation. I remember from my years in Chicago and Monsey that it sometimes even snowed on Pesach. This never happened in my experience as a rabbi in Miami Beach - the problem there was that it could turn brutally hot and humid on Pesach, especially on a "late" Pesach as this year is. Yet, even there in the uncertain Diaspora I felt the Pesach weather was more hopeful than depressing, more forward-looking and encouraging. The children and adults always wore springtime clothing, no matter what the weather was outside. We willed ourselves to treat the weather as warm and pleasant on Pesach, no matter what the harsh reality of its state truly was. In my yeshiva years, it may have been cold outside but none of us budding scholars would think of wearing our winter overcoats on Pesach. It would be almost sacrilegious to do so, a violation of the spirit and hope of Pesach. Pesach weather was a state of mind as much as being a fact of nature. It was yet another example of the Jew being able to live in a world far different from the practical and oftentimes depressing and frightening "real" world. For the Jew, Pesach was always sunny, warm and comforting no matter what the real weather.

The weather pattern here in the Land of Israel is an interesting one. We have practically no rain from

the middle of April till the middle of October. Everyone plans outside affairs during these months with no fear of rain spoiling the festivities. The prophet Shmuel when installing Shaul as king of Israel solidified the event by producing a miracle of rain falling during this dry season. Pesach is therefore the signal that the dry season is beginning. Israel has a very healthy climate, sunny, warm and with a very moderate winter season. The Torah itself remarks upon the climate of Israel, its dry season and its wintertime. Special prayers are added to our services to mark the rainy season and they are adjusted and changed when the dry season arrives. Living in the Land of Israel automatically puts one in touch with nature and the uniqueness of our climate and weather. A special people living in a special place somehow are entitled to have special weather patterns. It serves as a reminder that God is interested, so to speak, in us and in our little country. The advent of Pesach, the anniversary of our becoming a free and historic people, fittingly coincides with our changing weather pattern. Both events - Pesach and its weather - confirm to us the role that God plays in our personal lives and in the national life of the Jewish people.

May you and yours enjoy a happy, healthy and kasher Pesach. Text Copyright © 2005 by [Rabbi Berel Wein](#) and **Torah.org**