

on the couch soon after the search for the afikoman^v and the beginning of the after dinner prayers.

Years passed, Zadie was gone. I remember attending a few public seders held by various synagogues. I did not particularly enjoy sitting with so many strangers. I have only one strong memory from that time: my father complaining afterwards about how obnoxious some kid was whose family sat at the same table with us (I vaguely recall that he belched frequently during the entire evening). That was probably the last one of those seders we attended.

There were other Seders at the homes of various uncles, the first night on my father's side of the family, the second at my mother's side of the family. Passover in the Diaspora is celebrated for 8 days rather than the 7 mandated in the Torah. In Temple times, two Sanhedrin-approved witnesses testified to sighting the new moon from the Temple, assuring accuracy in establishing exactly when a festival began. Adding an extra day to holidays in the exile was to make sure the correct day was covered even if the precise information did not reach them in time I personally think it was done so that there could be two Seders (plus two Rosh Hashanah dinners, and two Shavuot^{vi} dinners), thus avoiding massive fights over whose side of the family's Seder one would attend. This became even more crucial in the light of rising divorce rates among Jewish families.

Thirty-five years ago, my parents divorced and my father remarried and moved 1500 miles away. I was now responsible for conducting the Seder in my mother's home. I was in my

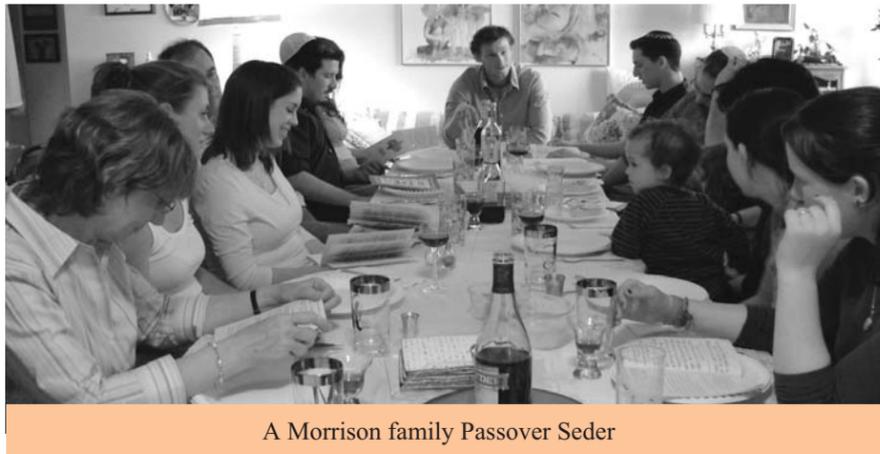
mid-twenties, married with a baby daughter, and a new believer in Yeshua. I was very excited to discover that the event that we had commemorated at Passover each year, the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, was masterminded by a God who was still around and still doing great stuff.

Fast forward twenty years, Katya and I are living in Israel with 5 children, ages 2 to 22. Time continues to flow, but the story is still fresh because the mercies of God are new every morning. (Lamentations 3:23) Children continue to grow. Leora married and grandchildren are now the welcome addition to our Passover table. Our special joy is inviting families that have no past memories of Passover. Now, because of the Lamb of God, they have a desire to participate and learn here in this land of God to which they've returned.

Our seders are becoming more creative while still retaining their traditional feel and structure; water in a pitcher on the table turns red as Moses (me) dips his staff in it (with a little help from a hidden container

of food coloring). A plague of frogs swarms over the table as gummy candy critters are tossed hither and thither. An eight-inch black locust leaps off the bookshelf and whirls around over the table. Celebrants duck and children squeal as this representative of the seventh plague circles above us by a cord attached to the ceiling-fan.

We recline at the table, as has been our tradition for thousands of years. The Passover we ate in Egypt was made in haste: loins girded, sandals on our feet, staff in hand. (Exodus 12:11) But now we are free men, women and children living in the Land of our fathers. We re-live the deliverance and the Exodus. Our history as a people and our personal history are highlighted by the fact that we have been rescued by the mighty hand and outstretched arm of the Lord of Hosts. We know that our Redeemer lives. So we lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord, Yeshua. (Psalm 116:13) Messiah our Passover has been sacrificed so we celebrate the feast in sincerity and truth. (1 Corinthians 5:7,8) ✨



A Morrison family Passover Seder

ⁱ **Search for the Leaven** - The day before the holiday the members of the house conduct a ceremonial final "search for leaven." It is traditionally done with the following elements: candle, wooden spoon, feather and linen napkin.

ⁱⁱ **Seder** - ceremonial meal served on the eve of Passover to commemorate the Exodus from Egypt

ⁱⁱⁱ **Bubbie** - affectionate Yiddish name for grandmother

^{iv} **Zadie** - affectionate Yiddish name for grandfather

^v **Afikoman** - piece of Matzah hidden at beginning of the ceremony, which must be found by the children after the meal

^{vi} **Shavuot** - Pentecost, Feast of Weeks

Editor: Eitan Shishkoff
Graphic Design: David Coddington
P.O.Box 1018 Kiryat Yam 29109, Israel
Tel: +972 (4) 877-7921
Fax: +972 (4) 875-7792
E-mail: ohalei@netvision.net.il
Stateside: c/o Tikun Ministries
P.O.Box 2997 Gaithersburg, MD 20886-2997

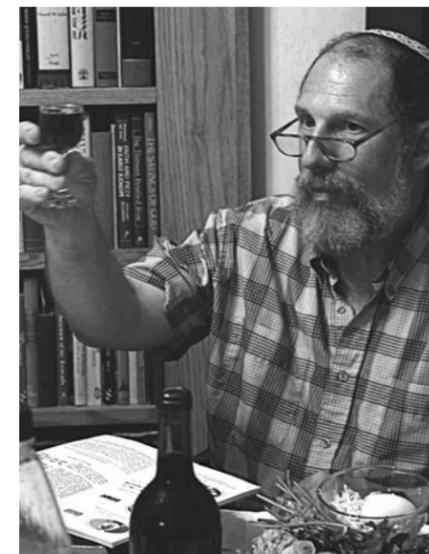


Our Vision:

Tents of Mercy - to participate in today's historic exodus by assisting Israel's returning exiles.

No spectators in the kingdom - to be a worshiping, sharing community based in homes, equipping each one for service.

Come back Yeshua - to welcome Yeshua home to Israel, by restoring the Jewish roots of New Covenant faith.



Moshe raising his cup of sweet Passover wine

Searching through various rooms in my brain with a candle, I look for some small hidden crusts of memory of Passovers past that I might sweep up with a feather onto a wooden spoonⁱ and then wrap up into an interesting, educational and edifying article for Oasis. Perhaps munching on a piece of Matzah and sipping from a small cup of Carmel Passover wine would

help. I don't want to offend any dear abstaining friends, but what would Passover be without thick and sweet kosher wine? For me, grape juice just doesn't cut it. Probably the closest thing to kosher wine is cough syrup. I expect the French Jews have slightly more refined tastes, serving a dry red wine, perhaps a merlot or cabernet at their Sedersⁱⁱ.

What about a spoonful of horseradish? Something to bring tears to my eyes, make my nose run and send me gasping for a glass of water. Ah, that's the right stuff. Tastes and smells and sensations forever engraved on my consciousness, memories of seders from early childhood until today. My Bubbie and Zadie, my parents, my sister, a host of uncles, aunts and cousins, friends, assorted strangers, my wife and children, my grandchildren. Now I'm Zadieⁱⁱⁱ and my wife is Bubbie^{iv}, except we don't use those terms. She is Safta (Hebrew for grandmother) and I'm Papa Moshe. Many outside my immediate family also call me Papa Moshe, not just my grandchildren.

What was, is, and continues, generation after generation. Critics

said that believing in Yeshua would end the line, destroy our traditions and alienate us from our people. But contrary to the conventional wisdom, believing in Yeshua has only served to strengthen our tradition.

Passover, like all of our sacred seasons and festivals has been given new life and significance. Twenty-eight years ago I wrote in a testimony, that after finding Yeshua (more accurately, He found me since I was the one who was lost), I would have been willing to give up my heritage for Him if He so required. Instead, He drew me deeper into a greater connection and appreciation of my heritage. It is even more so today than it was nearly three decades ago.

Images flicker on the screen: My father and I taking grapes to my Zadie, so he could stomp barefoot on them in the old ball and claw-foot bathtub to make his own Passover wine. It was unique and potent. I never finished the obligatory four cups during the Seder; mostly because I never finished a Seder. The two cups that came during the ceremonial parts before the meal, plus the heaviness and quantity of food always put this young lad unconscious



Eli testifying of God's grace



A TALE OF TWO POOLS

By Martin Shoub



Ygal calling on the name of God

It is early Friday morning; twenty or so men are huddled outside of Tents of Mercy waiting for our bus to arrive. We are the typical congregational mixed bag; Russians and Americans, Ethiopians and Sabras, young men still in army service and pensioners. Only the God of Israel could have put such a crew together. An hour into our journey the bus rumbles off the highway onto a narrow dirt road. We are high up the Golan plateau, cows graze among the Tabor oaks stretching out on both sides of the dirt track. To the south, the Kinneret (Sea of Galilee) is far below us, a blue platter among the wavy hills of the Galilee. We lumber off the bus, stretching and joking the way boys of all ages and nationalities do. Eventually we muster ourselves together and amble down a steep valley slope to our destination – The Meshushim (Hexagonal) Pool.

The pool is named after the hexagon shaped basalt pillars that



The Meshushim Pool

line the cliff sides along the north end of the pool. The view is prestigious but we have not come here only to admire the beauty of God's creation. There is still a bite in the February air but assistant congregational leader Avishalom Teklehaimanot, young adults leader, Dima Kravtsov and a young soldier, Eli A. dutifully strip down to shorts and wade in up to their waists. Today, Eli is making a public declaration of his faith in Yeshua HaMashiach through the ancient ritual of immersion.

Eli is 19, a soldier and a dedicated follower of Yeshua. Before the ceremony Avishalom encourages us all to live a life of adventure and risk – a life typified by identifying with the death and resurrection of Yeshua. As we are huddled together listening to his words, a group of young secular Israelis arrive at the pool. They join our huddle to get a better look at the goings on. Eli confesses his faith in the Messiah of Israel and Avishalom and Dima dunk him under the water. Here is something hikers in Israel don't see everyday. What sort of *strange and foreign ritual* is this?

ELI'S STORY

Eli, Avi and Dima towel up and change into dry clothes. Eli gathers us together to tell his story. Life in Israel for Eli and his family has been tough and fraught with difficulties. When Eli was a young boy his father was jailed for drug use and

criminality. His mother raised him with a strong sense of Jewish identity but could not provide the answers to his seeking heart. As a teenager Eli saw the vain pursuits of his peers and concluded life was not worth living. He meticulously began to plot his own death. Before going through with suicide Eli reached out to the God of Israel one last time. He knelt in the street and called on Adonai to reveal Himself.

Unbeknownst to Eli, one of his good friends was a messianic believer. Unsure of how Eli might react he hadn't told him of his faith. One night, shortly after Eli's desperate prayer, Yeshua visited this same young believer in a dream. Yeshua told him to go "and speak all the words of this life" to Eli. When Eli heard the gospel and how Yeshua had visited his friend he realized God had answered his prayer.

Eli's mother was distraught over his faith in Yeshua. She enlisted the anti-Messianic group Yad L'Achim to try and convince Eli of the error of his ways. Undaunted by their arguments and accusations Eli stayed true to the Messiah who loved him. Eli's mother would not relent, she forbade her son to attend Tents of Mercy. Eli obediently waited two years - until he came of age before he joined us for Shabbat services. Eli's mother has softened over the years as she has observed the godly character of her son.

BBQs and BAPTISMS

Men's meetings and BBQ are synonymous terms at Tents of Mercy, so it is back on the bus to another nearby location where we can pull out the braziers and get the shishlik grilling. Here we are at another pool. Not carved out of the rock by a forceful stream but laid out square by the Syrian army as an outdoor pool for their officers. The pool is somewhat disheveled since its Syrian recreation center days. Weeds now cover over the broken patio stones and fish swim about in the water but it is a flat, wide spot with just enough room for twenty hungry men and their BBQs.

While the grillers are tending the fires we are joined by guests. Two orthodox men have come to the pool to make a mikvah (a ceremonial washing). Without much fanfare they stripped off their clothes, jumped in the pool, said a quick prayer and then immersed themselves repeatedly. Out they hopped, clothes back on, a brief cigarette break and they were on their way. What a picture; all I could think about was how I wish I had witnessed this in my Bible college days – that would have put a speedy end to the superfluous sprinkle versus immersion debate!

Baptism is a very sensitive subject among our people. Many Jews believe immersion in the name of Yeshua is the embarkation line between Judaism and Christianity. Two hours earlier a

brother was immersed with the help of his friends to declare he had been made clean by the death of Yeshua and raised up to a new life in God through Him. Now, two of our kinsmen were immersing themselves in keeping with the Torah and in line with a centuries old tradition as an act of faith in God's cleansing power. This is not some *strange and foreign ritual*, the thread of hope and redemption remains unbroken through the years. But how much greater meaning and power was evident witnessing Eli's immersion; this young man who had stood faithful through so much adversity, joyfully declaring to his brothers (and some Israeli tourists) that he belonged to Yeshua and would serve Him forever.

YGAL'S STORY

After our BBQ another surprise: Ygal, a soldier in his early twenties, encouraged us with his testimony and observations about immersion in water, the Spirit and with fire. Ygal told of God's faithful dealings in his life, how Adonai had met him in these three immersions, each time revealing more of Himself. Coming to faith as a young man Ygal first connected with Tents of Mercy through his mother. Sadly, she eventually left our faith community but Ygal kept coming. As a 14 year old he got himself up every Shabbat morning to make the trek to services without the typical parental prodding, pushing and pleading!



Dima and Avishalom