

The Daily Portion **- Sivan Rahav Meir**

Don't miss **Shabbat HaGadol!**

Translated by Janine Muller Sherr

This coming Shabbat, the Shabbat of Parashat Tzav, is also called Shabbat HaGadol. What customs do we observe on this day and why is it called GADOL – great?

1) Shabbat HaGadol is the name of the Shabbat immediately preceding Pesach. One of the explanations for this name is that on this day the rabbi – the outstanding (“great”) Torah scholar – gives a long sermon in order to prepare the community for Pesach. In almost every synagogue, men, women, and children will gather to listen to this sermon. This year, even if we are unable to go to synagogue due to the current situation, we can still study at home and prepare on our own for the upcoming holiday.

2) On this Shabbat, there are those who have the custom to review sections of the Haggada – but not all of it – in order to save most of it for the Seder itself. This is our opportunity to refresh our memories so that we will come prepared for this important night.

3) And there is another reason why this Shabbat is known as “Shabbat

HaGadol”. On this Shabbat, we read the haftara from the prophet Malachi who prophesies not only about the Exodus from Egypt but also about the future redemption: “Lo, I will send you Eliya(hu) the prophet before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord, that he may reconcile parents with children and children with parents...” Notice what is supposed to take place on that “great and awesome” day: Eliyahu HaNavi will unite the hearts of parents with those of their children so that they work together to achieve the same goal. The harbinger of our redemption will succeed in bringing the generations together. If only this shall come to pass.

4) Many commentators attribute the name of this Shabbat to an important event that occurred on that day. On the Shabbat before the Exodus the Israelites dared to prepare for the sacrifice on a lamb – which was considered a deity for the Egyptians – and to partake of this sacrifice. Thus, even before the Exodus, the people of Israel had the courage to reject the idol worship that surrounded them. This ability to liberate themselves from the accepted norms of their day and to chart a new course for themselves was the first step in their journey toward freedom. Even before their physical redemption from Egypt, their spirit was already free. May we all merit to release

ourselves from the forces that
enslave our souls. Shabbat Shalom!

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