Thoughts for Pessah

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How are we meant to help bring about the ultimate *Geulah*, especially in light of this very precarious moment for the modern state of Israel.

Response of Rabbi Marc D. Angel, Director, Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals

At the Seder, we eat the "Hillel Sandwich," Korekh, which includes both matsa and maror. Rabbi Benzion Uziel, late Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel, pointed out that matsa—eaten as the Israelites left Egypt—symbolizes freedom. Maror—bitter herb—symbolizes the bitterness of slavery. We combine these two symbols to remind us that freedom and slavery are intertwined. Even when we are enslaved, we have our inner freedom. Even when we are free, we have to worry about falling back into slavery.

Until Mashiah arrives, we simply don't have full redemption. We are always experiencing a mixture of matsa and maror, freedom and suffering. Sometimes things are better and sometimes worse…but we are constantly engaged in personal and national struggle.

We are currently living in very challenging times for Israel and the Jewish People. We all feel the taste of maror, the bitterness of war,

death, anti-Semitism, ugly anti-Israel hatred. But we also have the taste of matsa…freedom. The State of Israel is strong, vibrant, and courageous. The Jewish People worldwide are standing up for our rights and for the honor of Israel. We are literally eating "korekh", matsa and maror together, simultaneously.

It has been noted that the redemption from Egypt is attributed entirely to the Almighty. The Israelites themselves were relatively passive in the process of gaining their freedom. But the ultimate redemption will require us to participate actively. While Hashem will be the guarantor of our geulah, we will need to assume personal responsibility.

Along with our prayers, we each must stand with Am Yisrael in every way possible. We need action—communal, political, financial etc.—in support of Medinat Yisrael. We need to stand up against anti-Semites and anti-Zionists with fortitude…and we must prevail.

Rav Nahman of Bratslav wisely taught: The whole world is a narrow bridge (precarious); but the essential thing is not to be afraid, not to be afraid at all.