



April 1, 2017

"For behold, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone.
The flowers have already appeared in the land;
The time has arrived for pruning the vines,
And the voice of the turtledove has been heard in our land...." (Song of Songs 2:11-12)

Dear friends of Hillcrest Jewish Center,

The above verses from Song of Songs, read during Pesach, usher the coming of Spring. While the climatic conditions in Israel are different than in America (we still have rain in the Spring and Summer), the beautiful poetry of rebirth can certainly apply to us as well.

How are seasons intrinsically different from one another?

In ancient times, in an agricultural society, the different seasons dictated a different set of activities. In Israel there is a time for sowing and a time for reaping, a time to repave the roads and a time to travel.

Our modern society doesn't necessarily respond to such divisions. Simply put: people can do whatever they want, whenever they want, with very little effort. We don't have seasonal fruit any longer (you can get fruits from all over the world in any supermarket), and people can escape the cold winter by flying two hours to a more benign climate.

And yet, if we can tune our ears to the voice of the turtledove, we will be able to listen to the message of Spring: "The winter is over. It is time to get out. It is time to tend your garden, your intellect, and your soul."

Spring can bring rebirth to all of us.

Our ancestors left Egypt, the land of oppression, during Spring, and we can try to leave our own Egypts, our oppressions, as well.

All we might need is to water our gardens, to nourish souls, to find opportunities to get out and make a difference in the outside world and in our own world.

May this change of season bring a rebirth to all of us, and may Hashem bless all of us and our loved ones with a sweet, joyous, meaningful, and kosher Pesach.

Rabbi Manes Kogan

