

Excerpt from Rosa Sonneschein's editorial in *The American Jewess*, April 1897.

There is a great similarity between the Fourth of July and the Fourteenth of Nissan, and in celebrating the first some think we could dispense with the latter. Some enthusiastic American Jews would like to eradicate everything not strictly of American origin. They argue: "Would it not be ridiculous if the owner of a silken gown, should look with pride at the mulberry tree on whose leaves the silkworm feeds? Well, it is just as foolish, if free-born Jews of our day look back loftily upon the liberation from Egyptian bondage. Between then and now thousands of years have elapsed during which countless generations of Jews have lived and died slaves and outcasts among the nations, till at least we, in America are blessed with perfect liberty." Pesach is a religious festival, and as such it must be celebrated. But one would think a race which so slowly gained liberty would have had ample time to purify its inner life, and should, in our time, be totally free from soul slavery. Is this so? Is this inner life of Judaism free from mediaeval slavery? We fear it is not. Some Jews hold the same relation to religious liberty as some citizens do to national freedom; they disrespect all constitutional edicts; to them liberty means that one may do as he pleased; in short they regard self-governing laws as remnants of slavery. Religious Nihilists came to the conclusion that the adherence to divine laws are the remnants of superstition. They are not ready to admit that religious, like national liberty does not consist of abusing laws, but that the highest duty of man is to respect and obey those laws by which the masses must be governed, so that liberty may become a blessing, and not a curse.