TORAH TREATS

An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories Compiled by Yitzchok Henry



לעילוי נשמת



אבי מורי ר' גדליה דוד ב"ר איסר הענרי ע"ה

ר' איסר ב"ר זרח הענרי ע"ה

ואשתו מרת גאלדא ב"ר יצחק אהרן ע"ה

ר'יעקב שמואל ב"ר צבי הלוי גרינספעלד ע"ה

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ר'שרגא פייביש ב"ר מרדכי צבי ערליך ע"ה

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ת*נ*צ*ב*ה

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פסח

Hamaayan -The Torah Spring ~ Edited by Shlomo Katz



Hamaayan is prepared by laymen and published weekly for the edification and enjoyment of the reader who is lacking the time or ability to study the weekly parashah on his own. Hamaayan's goal is to acquaint the reader with a broad spectrum of traditional Torah commentary —as well as with aspects of Jewish history and thought.

Hashem told Avraham that Bnei Yisrael would be enslaved in a foreign land for 400 years, but the exile in Egypt lasted only 210 years. One explanation for how Hashem "justified" taking Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt after fewer than 400 years is that Bnei Yisrael were worked harder.

But harder than what? asks **the Kesav Sofer**. There is no record that Hashem ever specified how hard the Jews would work during their enslavement.

He answers: Hashem never told Avraham in what country the enslavement of his descendants would occur. The mere fact that the enslavement occurred in Egypt made it more difficult for Bnei Yisrael than it would have been had it had occurred elsewhere. After all that Yosef had done for Egypt, the Egyptians' turning against the Jews was more than Bnei Yisrael could bear.

אַרְבֶּה

During the plague of locust, Pharaoh hurried to call Moshe and Aharon, and to repent. Then Pharaoh changed his mind. What happened?

Rav Yehoshua Leib Diskin z"l explains that each of the previous plagues had lasted seven days. Therefore, Pharaoh thought that if he "repented" quickly, he could save his crops. However, after the locust departed, Pharaoh learned how much damage actually had been done, and he decided that there was nothing to gain from repentance.

Lessons from the Haggadah

R' Ben Zion Gossenbauer z"l (Komarno, Galicia; early 20th century) lists a number of lessons and benefits that one can take away from different parts of the Pesach Haggadah, including some parts that seem to be tangential:

(1) We learn from the Haggadah that even when a situation seems hopeless, it is not, for Hashem is capable of saving a person from any predicament. This is why we recite, "Ha lachma anya . . . ," for it alludes to the very difficult straits that Bnei Yisrael were in before the Exodus.

(2) Relating the story of the Exodus instills in a person faith in the Creator and the belief that no one can move a muscle absent His Will. We should not think that our ancestors could not save themselves from Pharaoh only because they were poor or not wise. No one could have saved himself without Hashem's intervention! Therefore, the Haggadah relates, even wise men like Rabbi Akiva and rich men like Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah must relate the story of the Exodus.

(3) The Haggadah teaches that when G-d decrees that a person should suffer, that suffering will not last a moment longer than was

decreed, but it could end earlier as a result of a person's prayer. This is why we tell the wise son the laws of afikoman, which alludes to the "chipazon" / the hurried exit of Bnei Yisrael from Egypt.

(4) The word "sippur" / "telling a story" alludes to the gem called "sapir" / "sapphire." This is because by telling the story of the Exodus, we cause great spiritual lights to shine from the Upper Worlds. (**Haggadah Shel Pesach Shulchan Ha'tahor p.54**)



R' Yekutiel Yehuda Halberstam z"l Klausenberger Rebbe) writes: There is a longstanding custom to make the Matzot for the Seder round, not square. The reason is that square Matzot can be placed next to each other so that they look like one; round Matzot cannot be joined in this way.

This reminds us that the cause of our long exile is our inability to get along. There is jealousy and hatred between us, and what one person considers to be a Mitzvah, another considers to be a sin.

Additional reminders of this sad situation are the custom to have a Matzah cover with three separate compartments so that the Matzot are kept separate, and the custom to name the Matzot, "Kohen, Levi and Yisrael," emphasizing their individuality.

Appropriately, the holiday of Pesach is known as "Chag Ha'matzot" – plural – not "Chag Ha'matzah"– singular. (**Haggadah Shel Pesach Halichot Chaim p.21**)

זֶה־הַיּוֹם עָשָׂה ה' נָגִילָה וְנִשְׂמְחָה בּוֹ - ***"This is the day Hashem has made, let us rejoice and be glad `bo'."*** (Tehilim 118:24 – included in Hallel)

The midrash states: I do not know whether "bo" means "with it" [i.e., the day] or with Him [i.e., Hashem]. Therefore King Shlomo writes (Shir Ha'shirim 1:4), "let us rejoice and be glad with You."

R' David Dov Meisels z"l (1814-1875; rabbi of Lask, Poland) explains: The midrash is teaching that, when a person experiences any type of salvation, his primary joy should not be over the salvation itself. Rather, it should be because the salvation means that G-d cares enough about the one who was saved to save him. (**Haggadah Shel Pesach: Rei'ach Dudaim p.94**)



It is customary to put out ten pieces of bread before Bedikat Chametz so that the person conducting the search will find them. These ten pieces of bread are then left to be burned the next morning.

The Klausenberger Rebbe suggest that these ten pieces of bread allude to the ten sons of Haman. As we prepare to celebrate our redemption on Pesach, we recall the trait that the ten sons of Haman shared with many of our enemies: their inability to see the handwriting on the wall, cut their losses, and save themselves.

Haman's wife predicted his downfall, but Haman's sons did not run away to save themselves. Even after Haman was hanged-which happened on Pesach, eleven months before the appointed day for the Jewish People and their enemies to do battle-Haman's sons didn't react.

The same trait, writes the Klausenberger Rebbe, a concentration camp survivor, was evident in the Germans. Long after it was clear that they would lose the war, concentration camp guards refused to run away and save themselves; they waited to be captured.

To recall this aspect of our salvation, which repeats itself throughout history, the ten pieces of bread are left to wait to meet their end (**Haggadah Shel Pesach: Rei'ach Dudaim** pg.11)

The Seder Night-The Matzot of Rav Meshulam Igra Zt'l



The Seder night refers to the first night when we sit around the table and conduct the Seder, as our Sages established. In Israel, this Seder is conducted only on the first night of Pesach; outside of Israel, this Seder is conducted on the second night of Pesach as well.

The Tur (Chapter 472) writes that all of the necessary items for the Seder should be prepared before the onset of Yom Tov, i.e. the Seder table should already be set from the afternoon of Erev Pesach. A nice tablecloth should be place on the table and all of the Seder items, including the Matzah, Karpas (celery), Maror (romaine lettuce), Charoset, salt water (or vinegar), and all other Seder necessities should be placed on the table.The reason for why one should be meticulous regarding this matter especially on the night of Pesach is so that the Seder can begin immediately when the men return home from the synagogue.

The great Rishon Le'Zion, **Hagaon Rabbeinu Yitzchak Yosef Shlit"a** writes that it is not necessary for all of the items to actually be

placed on the table, for sometimes there is not enough room on the table for everything or they wish to bring each item to the table as necessary for convenience. Thus, it is sufficient to prepare everything in advance and place the items wherever one wants in a manner that everything will be prepared and there will be no hindrance to the holiday meal.

Nevertheless, the Rishon Le'Zion writes that this should not become a point of contention in the home, for peace stands above all. This is especially true on this holy night which must be filled with joy and no anger should infiltrate one's heart on this night.

One of the greatest luminaries of the past generations, **Hagaon Harav Meshulam Igra *zt"l*** (1742–1801), would toil himself in the preparation of the Matzot for Pesach.

He would plant wheat in his yard, and he would then harvest the wheat himself, grind it, knead it into dough, and bake the Matzah all on his own from beginning to end. This was all done with utmost meticulousness in Halacha as well as sanctity and purity.

In those days, in was customary to keep the Matzah in a sack that hung from the ceiling in order to protect it from infestation of insects and rodents. These special Matzot were placed in such a sack as well. Next to this sack, his wife placed the other regular Matzot (ones Rav Meshulam did not bake himself) in a separate sack and they would eat these other Matzot on *Chol Ha'Mo'ed*.

A poor, young Jewish woman lived in Rav Meshulam's home and served as a housekeeper and she would assist the Rabbanit with all of her household chores.

On Erev Pesach, the Rabbanit was busy preparing Matzah balls out of Matzah meal to be placed in the soup. She asked the housekeeper to bring her three regular Matzot so she could grind them into Matzah meal for the soup. The housekeeper went and then inadvertently took three of the Rav's own precious Matzot and gave

them to the Rabbanit. The Rabbanit was not aware of her mistake and ground up these Matzot for Matzah balls.

That evening, after the Rav had already left to the synagogue, the Rabbanit went to get the Rav's Matzot so that she could place them on the table but when she entered the room, she realized what had happened and let out a cry! The housekeeper had also understood what had happened and she ran away from the home and hid close to the synagogue. The Rabbanit did not know what to do and she decided to place the regular Matzot on the table, hoping that the Rav would not notice the difference.

The Rav returned from the synagogue and soon began the Seder; however, he soon realized that the Matzot in front of him were not the ones he made. He asked his wife where his Matzot were and she told him exactly what had transpired and he furrowed his brow. He was not worried about the Matzot, however; another thought entered his mind. "Where is the housekeeper?"

The Rav immediately instructed his son to go find the housekeeper and bring her home. Indeed, he returned a few minutes later with the noticeably ashamed housekeeper following behind him. The Rav sat her down and told her, "My daughter, believe me, I do not care about the Matzot at all and do not worry about it at all. To show you that I am not upset at all and that I want you to be happy with us on the Seder night, I promise you that immediately after Yom Tov, the Rabbanit will buy you a new dress!"

This story is truly incredible. Rav Meshulam who worked so hard on preparing the Matzot himself did not become personally attached to them in the least as he had only done this to perform the Mitzvah in the most preferable manner possible. However, at that moment, the greatest Mitzvah he could perform was to gladden the heart of the poor, young woman. This was the true will of Hashem. May Hashem grant us the merit to follow the path of this righteous man.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman



I heard the following true story: At the beginning of **תשפ"ג**, a man leased a fifty-suite five-story hotel in Prague along the Vltava River. He didn't have enough money for the rent, so he borrowed money, which he planned to repay as he rented out rooms in the hotel.

He advertised in Jewish magazines to find renters, describing it as a unique opportunity to enjoy "The picturesque views, tranquil ambiance, and scenic beauty of the river while being close to Prague's attractions."

Several people reserved suites for Pesach… but then a major problem was discovered. The person who leased the hotel to him was a charlatan, a crook. He didn't own the hotel. He took off with the money, and there was no way to get the money back. The person who *thought* he had rented the hotel called up the people who rented suites and explained to them that he had been cheated and there was no hotel. Naturally, they demanded refunds.

He explained that he didn't have any money to pay them. He used the money they gave him to repay the loans he took for this project and was left without money. - "I will pay you back as soon as possible," he said.

The renters, thinking he had kept the money for himself, were furious, calling him a thief and a crook. They threatened to humiliate him publicly and ruin his name.

The humiliation was unbearable. A friend who wanted to help him arranged for him and his wife to go to South Africa for Pesach. No one knew him there, and he would be able to celebrate Pesach with peace and quiet. He was very pleased with this arrangement – he needed a break.

There was another Jewish family at this hotel in South Africa, and they both wondered about each other and why they had come to such a faraway place, but they didn't ask.

Later, on the third day of chol hamoed, they became friendly and began discussing the reasons they were there. One of them shared that he had been married for nine years and was struggling with infertility, r'l.

Every yom tov was a painful reminder of their situation, and they felt increasingly isolated and lonely. Pesach, in particular, was a time of heightened difficulty and humiliation for them. This year, they decided to spend the yom tov somewhere they could celebrate alone, hoping to find some peace and solace.

The other man revealed that he had come to the hotel to escape the shame and humiliation he faced from people who wrongly accused him of stealing their money. He said, "Due to my shame, I understand that I have the power to give brachos. I give you my heartfelt wishes and blessings that you merit a child in less than a year."

In response, the other man said, "I am wealthy. If your blessing comes to fruition, I will clear your debts."

They had their first son ten months later (just a few months ago). True to his word, he provided the necessary funds to clear the debts. They agreed that in the future, they would do business together. They would lease a hotel, and this time, they would be careful to deal only with trustworthy people.

This story shows the strength of a brachah, when given after suffering shame and humiliation. In addition, we see Hashem's

wondrous hashgachah pratis. - It was apparently time for this couple to have their first child, but they needed a brachah for it to occur. Hashem brought them both to South Africa so the couple could receive the brachah and salvation they needed and that the one who fell into debt should be able to clear his name and rebuild.



הגדה של פסח ליקוטי שְׂעֵה ברכה - The Hamaayan Haggadah by Shlomo D. Katz

This is the third book I have been privileged to publish, each of which has borne the title **שְׂעֵה ברכה**. However, I neglected to explain in either of the first two works what the origin of that name is.

R' Eliezer Rokeach z"l (12th century) said that an author should allude to his name in the title of his work. I have done this with the word **שעה**, which has the same gematria as my first name, **שלמה**. The phrase **שעה ברכה** is based on the entreaty in the bentching for a Sheva Berachot, **שְׂעֵה בִּרְכַּת (בְּנֵי יְשֻׁרוּן) בְּנֵי אַהֲרֹן** and alludes to my being a son of Aharon, i.e., a kohen. Finally, the word "berachah" is spelled the same as and, according to some commentaries is related in meaning to, the word "beraichah" / a pool of water.

As both my first work and this one consist of divrei Torah drawn from Hamaayan / The Torah Spring, they appropriately form a beraichah / pool of "water" - "**אין מים אלא תורה**". May it be Hashem's will that I will merit to continue to teach His Torah and publish other works like a **מעיין נובע** /" flowing spring" for many years to come.

Pesach At Home The following is a letter written by **R' Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler z"l** (1892-1953; Rosh Kollel in Gateshead, England, and Mashgiach Ruchani in the Ponovezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak) to an unidentified recipient. It is printed in Michtav M'Eliyahu: Kovetz Igrot, p.129.

"I received your precious letter with your invitation to come visit you and to participate in the Pesach Seder with you. Thank you very much for your invitation. However, I am unable to accept it. With G-d's help, I will celebrate the holy festival and arrange the Seder where I live.

It would seem that, just as it is impossible to invite a ben Torah [loosely translated: "one whose values are derived from the Torah"] to visit a friend for the Ne'ilah prayer on Yom Kippur, so, it seems to me, it is impossible to make a "visit" out of the holy Seder. [The Seder is an occasion to internalize, not a time to be outward-looking.] Fortunate is one who focuses and arranges the Seder within his heart.

The Exodus is the source of the Jewishness within us. The Seder must make a convert of our inner selves, which have left their original domain and become animal-like, grossly material. More than that, our inner selves have ceased being Jewish. Woe to our hearts that are lost within our inner selves.

A related thought: **R' Shalom Noach Berezovsky** z"l (1911-2000; Slonimer Rebbe in Yerushalayim) writes: As applied to some people, the title "Jew" is no more than an accident of birth. Such a person's Jewishness is not part of his essence; though he fulfills all of the Mitzvot, he is doing nothing more than "acting" Jewish.

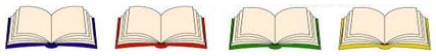
To really be a Jew means that one's Jewishness is embedded in the essence of his being, in his innards, his mind, his heart, and all his limbs. We read in Megilat Esther [about Mordechai], "There was a Jewish man . . ." [instead of, "There was a Jew"]. His whole

personality was Jewish--his beliefs and his outlooks were Jewish, his feelings and aspirations were Jewish; even his physical desires were Jewish, i.e., they were under his control.

We read (Vayikra 18:3), "Like the deed of the land of Egypt in which you dwelled--you shall not do, and like the deed of the land of Canaan to which I bring you--you shall not do, and do not follow their traditions." This means that those things which you are permitted to do, you should not do the way an Egyptian or Canaanite would do them.

A true expression of these feelings can be found in the journal entry that the **Piaseczna Rebbe Hy"d [R' Klonimus Kalman Shapira z"l; 1889-1943]** wrote upon turning 40: "What can I accept upon myself? To study more? I believe that I don't waste any time currently. To distance myself from physical desires? Thank G-d, I'm not subjugated to them, G-d forbid. What is lacking in me? Simply to be Jewish. I appear to myself to be a perfectly painted picture of a human being, which lacks only a soul."

[The Slonimer Rebbe continues:] Tzaddikim say that when one recites the blessing, "He did not make me a gentile," he must examine himself to see whether any part of himself is in fact gentile-like. (Netivot Shalom, Vol. I p.18)



Preparing for Pesach

R' Chaim Friedlander z"l (Mashgiach Ruchani of the Ponovezh Yeshiva; died 1984) writes: As Pesach approaches, we make many preparations--cleaning, shopping, etc. But the Mitzvah of Sippur Yetzi'at Mitzrayim / relating the story of the Exodus requires no less preparation, and this we do not do by-and-large.

In particular, we tend to make two mistakes which stem from not understanding either the "Geder" / definition or "Shiur" / required amount of this Mitzvah, R' Friedlander states. First, our Divrei

Torah at the Seder tend to focus on the text of the Haggadah rather than on the content, for example, expounding on whether we should say, "Ha lachma anya" or "K'ha lachma anya."

Second, many people recite so many Divrei Torah on the first part of the Haggadah, which is only the introduction (including "Mah nishtanah" and the Four Sons), that they have to rush through the later part, which actually tells the story of the slavery, persecution and, finally, redemption. Yet, according to **Rambam z"l**, the portion of the Haggadah about which it is said, "Whoever speaks more about the story of the Exodus is praiseworthy," is only the latter part of Maggid, from "Arami oveid" and onward.

R' Friedlander continues: When a person relates a moving experience that happened to him, it can be so real to him that he reacts as if he is reliving the fear or the joy that he experienced during the actual event. So, too, the Mitzvah of Sippur Yetzi'at Mitzrayim is fulfilled when we can picture ourselves in the story, not merely when we know the story. This requires even a learned person to actively retell the story so that he can first experience the bitterness of the slavery and oppression, then the gradual process of the Exodus, and finally the joy of being drawn close by Hashem.

This is not an easy task by any means. To help, we have tangible items on the Seder plate to aid us: Matzah, Maror, Charoset, etc. When we eat these items, or when we point to them during the course of reciting the Haggadah, it should not be a mechanical act but rather one that causes us to reflect.

For example, when we eat the Maror, we should reflect on the bitterness of the exile. When we eat the Matzah, we should think about the miraculous, sudden departure from Egypt after hundreds of years of exile.

R' David Avudraham z"l (14th century) writes that feeling as if one participated in the Exodus leads to "Hoda'ah," which means both acknowledgment and thanks, and to "Shevach" / praise.

R' Friedlander explains: Hoda'ah means "acknowledging" the truth that Hashem performed many miracles for us and "thanking" Him for them. This leads to Shevach, which involves speaking His "praises."

Ultimately, both of these--Hoda'ah and Shevach--are meant to lead to Kabbalat Ohl Malchut Shamayim / accepting the yoke of Heaven, which then leads to doing the Mitzvot willingly and with joy.

This is why, after we say, "In every single generation, a person is obligated to see himself as if he had participated in the Exodus from Egypt," we immediately say, "Therefore, we are obligated to give Hoda'ah and Shevach." (Siftei Chaim: Mo'adim II p.355)



R' Shimshon Dovid Pinkus z"l (died 2001) writes: There are two ways to pass Shabbat and Yom Tov – one can live the day, or one can be a bystander. By way of a parable: Two people go to the airport – one goes to watch the airplanes take off for distant and exotic lands, while the other buys a ticket and actually flies to one of those wonderful places. Obviously, airplanes were not built to give pleasure to those who watch them; they were built to carry those who board them and want to be lofted skyward.

So it is with the holy days. One can stand by and admire the beauty of the day – the sparkle of the house newly-cleaned for Pesach, the beautifully set table, the many songs that are sung as the night progresses. However, the holidays were not given to us so that we can watch them pass by as a tourist watches a parade go by. Rather, the holidays, like the airplane, were given to us to elevate us.

How do we accomplish this? How do we enable the spirit of the holiday to penetrate deep within us and affect our being?

It is only by attempting to understand the essence of the holiday. This, in turn, requires us to study books about the holiday – both its laws and its philosophical aspects.



Ma'ot Chittim

The leaders of the town of Radin complained to **The Chafetz Chaim** that donations to the town's Ma'ot Chittim / Pesach charity fund were inadequate to feed the town's poor.

The Chafetz Chaim acceded to the leaders' request that he address the townsfolk. "I am an old man," the Chafetz Chaim said. "Soon I will be called to give an accounting in the World-to-Come, and, since I am an influential person in this town, I will be asked whether the people of my town of Radin gave generously to charity. I will then be faced with a dilemma. If I say that they did, I will be telling a lie, something I have never done. On the other hand, if I say that the people of Radin did not give generously, I will be speaking lashon hara, which I also have never done. – "There is only one solution to my dilemma — for each of you to give generously to the Ma'ot Chittim campaign." (A Word of Wisdom, A Word of Wit)



שבת הגדול

R' Avraham z"l (12th or 13th century France) teaches: The people are accustomed to call the Shabbat before Pesach: "Shabbat Ha'gadol" / "The Great Shabbat." But, they don't know why. After all, it is no greater than any other Shabbat!

He explains: The reason for this name is that the Exodus from Egypt took place on a Thursday, as stated in Midrash Seder Olam. Therefore, the 10th of Nissan, when Bnei Yisrael set aside lambs for the Korban Pesach, was Shabbat.

When Bnei Yisrael were given this commandment, they asked, "If we slaughter the deity of Egypt in their sight, will they not stone us?" Hashem answered, "You will see the wonder that I will do!"

Sure enough, when the Egyptians saw Bnei Yisrael gathering sheep that they planned to slaughter on the 14th of Nissan, their insides boiled with anger, but they were helpless to harm the Jewish People.

Because of the miracle that happened on that Shabbat, we call it "Shabbat Ha'gadol." (Siddur Rashi, paragraph 352)



שבת הגדול

Many reasons have been offered for why the Shabbat before Pesach is called "Shabbat Ha'gadol" / the Great Shabbat.

R' Pinchas Menachem Alter z"l (1926-1996; long-time Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Sfas Emes in Yerushalayim, and later the Gerrer Rebbe) teaches: The Torah cites two reasons for observing Shabbat. First, Shabbat commemorates Creation (see Bereishit 2:3). In addition, it commemorates the Exodus (see Devarim 5:15). [See below.]

Before the Exodus, only the first of these reasons existed. However, as we prepare to commemorate the Exodus, we realize that Shabbat is now greater.

He adds: Notably, the Gematria of the phrase from Kiddush, " **וְשַׁבַּת קָדְשׁוֹ** " / "Shabbat, His holy [day]" (1118) is the same as the Gematria of "**זֵכֶר יְצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם** " / "a remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt" and of "Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokenu Hashem Echad," - the basic declaration of our faith. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Pnei Menachem p.9)



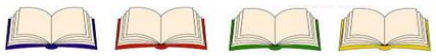
בדיקת חמץ

"If one cleans his room on the 13th of Nissan and has in mind to search for chametz and to destroy it, and he is careful not to take any chametz there afterwards, nevertheless, he must perform bedikat chametz on the night of the 14th. And, every person should clean his room before bedikat chametz." (Shulchan Aruch O.C. 433:11)

What is the purpose of this seemingly redundant effort?

The Chafetz Chaim explains that one who is cleaning does not take pains to search in every corner. Moreover, searching by candlelight

forces a person to focus more carefully on each spot. (Mishnah Berurah)



R' Moshe Yehuda Leib Friedman z"l (the Pishkaner Rebbe; died 1947) adds that there is a mussar reason for the above law: It is well known that chametz alludes to the yetzer hara. This is how one much introspect if he is to defeat his yetzer hara -- one act of introspection followed by another!

The story is told of a visit **by R' Yaakov Yosef Hakohen of Polnoye z"l** to **the Ba'al Shem Tov z"l**. As they were discussing various esoteric matters, a non-Jewish laborer knocked on the shutters and asked, "Are there any broken vessels here that need fixing?"

The Ba'al Shem Tov answered, "No! I have already repaired all of the broken vessels."

To this, the non-Jew retorted, "Look harder, maybe you'll find something."

When that worker had left, the Ba'al Shem Tov turned to his guest and said, "You understand, do you not, that this non-Jew was sent as a messenger from Above to ask us, 'Why are you busy with esoteric matters when you have not repaired all of your character flaws that need repairing?'

I replied that I had already perfected myself, to which Heaven answered, 'Look harder, and you will find additional flaws to repair'."

R' Yaakov Yosef answered, "I cannot accept that Heaven sends messengers in such a manner."

The Ba'al Shem Tov replied, "Don't say 'I can't.' Say, 'I am not willing'." And with this, they parted.

Along his journey, R' Yaakov Yosef encountered a wagon mired in the mud. "Help me," the wagon-driver pleaded, but R' Yaakov Yosef replied, 'I can't."

"Don't say 'I can't'," said the stranded wagon-driver. "Say, 'I am not willing'."

Recognizing that he had been sent a message, R' Yaakov Yosef helped the wagon-driver extract his vehicle from the mud. Then, reversing direction, he returned to the Ba'al Shem Tov and acknowledged that the latter had been correct.

This is the message of bedikat chametz as well, explains R' Friedman. When searching for character flaws, look harder, and you will find something to repair. (Quoted in Haggadah Shel Pesach Adir B'mluchah p. 16)



The preparations of **R' Yisrael Hager of Vizhnitz z"l** (known as the "**Ahavas Yisrael**") for bedikat chametz were lengthy, and he approached the mitzvah with great feeling. He said the berachah with great fervor. Then, while searching all of the cracks by candlelight, he beat his chest like one reciting Vidui, and called out "Oy, oy, oy!"

All who heard him trembled, and their hearts broke at the sound of his groans. When he had completed the search, he turned to his faithful Chassid, R' Mordechai Chaneh, and standing before him, tore open his shirt and said, "Now, search out the Chametz in my heart." [The Gemara refers to the "Yetzer Hara" as "Chametz."]

R' Mordechai did not lose his presence of mind, and replied, "Rebbe, the Halachah instructs us that we need not search a place where Chametz has not entered." (R' Natan Elya Roth: Kedosh Yisrael)



"Hashem's love is not based on your achievements or perfection, but on the essence of who you are. Embrace His love and let it empower you." ~ Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik.



The Gemara states that chametz which is found during the search must be set aside in a place where rodents cannot find it and spread it about.

On this law, **R' Chaim M. Hager z"l** (son of the "**Ahavas Yisrael**") commented: "Chametz" signifies pride. It rises and we must get rid of it. But, as with chametz (some of which is left over for the mitzvah of "Biur" / burning), we must leave something.

Pride is sometimes needed in our service of Hashem (see, e.g., Divrei Hayamim II 17:6) Yet man must take care that the small measure of pride which he leaves over be kept in a hidden place. He should take care lest a "rat" comes and spreads it about--lest the yetzer hara persuade him to make his pride public.



A man once came before **R' Yisrael Hager of Vizhnitz z"l** (1860-1936) and poured his heart out. He had arranged a match for his son some time before, but he had no money with which to meet the many wedding expenses.

The Rebbe asked him if he had already set a date for the wedding. "No," replied the man, "I cannot pay for anything. How could I set a date?"

"Look," said the Rebbe. "Our Torah demands of us that not a particle of Chametz be found in our homes on Pesach, and Pesach expenses are large. Now imagine that the Torah had not set a date for Pesach, and that we would only celebrate it when we had completed our preparations. We would never celebrate it! But since the Torah had established a specific date, a great wonder takes place. Everyone manages to clean his home, and all the needs of Pesach are filled.

"Learn a lesson from the Torah: Set the wedding date and you will see that you will acquire whatever you need by then." (R' Natan Elya Roth: Kedosh Yisrael)

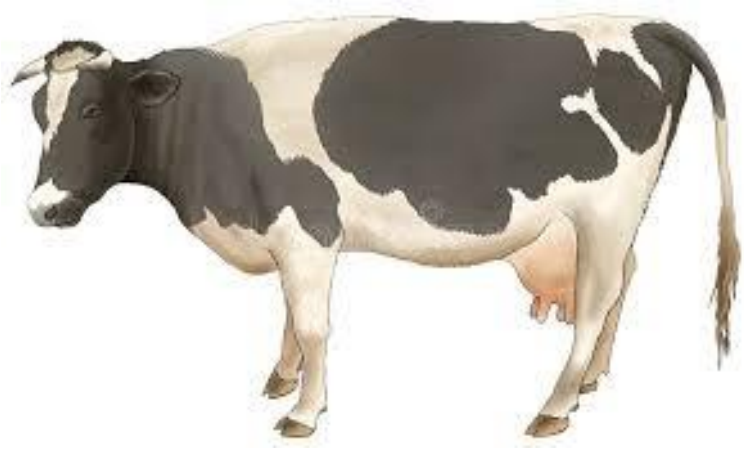


"Bedikat Chametz" — typically translated, "The search **for** chametz" — actually means, "The search **of** chametz." What does it mean to search **the** chametz?

R' Yissochor Ber Rokeach z"l (the Belzer Rebbe) answered this question with the following parable: A group of merchants was walking home from a successful day at the market, and they decided to rest under a tree. But where could they place their day's earnings for safekeeping?

After looking around for a safe place to deposit their moneybag, they decided to hang it among the branches of a tree. Satisfying themselves that the only witnesses were the cows grazing nearby, the merchants hid their treasure in the foliage.

Soon they had fallen into deep sleep. The merchants did not stop to think that where there are cows, there may be a cowherd.





From his place in the nearby brush, the cowherd had seen everything. Stealthily, he removed the gold coins from the sack in the tree and filled the bag with an equal volume of dung. He then hid the money in a hole he had dug and concealed himself in the brush until the merchants would leave and he could reclaim his ill-gotten wealth.

Upon awakening, the merchants took their bag from the tree. Feeling that the sack was much lighter than before, they looked inside and realized they had been robbed. But who had done it? There were no humans nearby! Obviously, the merchants concluded, the cows were

the culprits. But who had ever heard of cows that steal gold coins? Who had ever heard of cows that climb trees? How did the cows put the dung in a bag? No matter — there was no other explanation. With that, the merchants shrugged and went on their way.

These merchants were fools, said R' Yissochor Ber. Had they investigated further, they would have found the real thief and their money. Only a fool shrugs off such a loss.

Chazal teach that chametz is a metaphor for the yetzer hara / evil inclination, the cause of the great spiritual losses which we suffer on a regular basis. Our duty at this time of the year is to eradicate chametz, and what it represents. However, it is not enough to search for chametz; we must search the chametz itself. We must examine the nature of the chametz **within** ourselves and ask ourselves how it got there. - We may not shrug it off like those foolish merchants shrugged off their discovery of dung in their moneybag. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Sha'arei Armon)



R' Shimshon David Pinkus z"l (rabbi of Ofakim, Israel, and a prolific public speaker and author; died 12 Nissan 5761 / 2001) once told the following story about his own youth:

"When I was still single and studying in the Brisk Yeshiva [in Yerushalayim], I shared an apartment with several other boys. On the night of bedikat chametz, I was left all alone in the apartment. And so, at the appointed time, I took upon myself to fulfill the direction of our Sages: 'At dark on the 14th [of Nissan], we search for chametz.'

"Searching the entire apartment took one hour, then another, and then several more. It was hard work, and I became tired. Very tired! When I finished the mitzvah, I sat down – exhausted but content.

"Suddenly, I shuddered. 'The attic!' I jumped up as if bitten by a snake. 'There is no one here to check the attic. The neighbors won't

do it. Yet, the Shulchan Aruch says expressly that one must check the attic.' "Naturally, a battle was raging within me. 'Is it my responsibility to check the common attic that is shared by all the tenants in the building?' Of course, my exhaustion was a major consideration. All kinds of thoughts raced through my head, but in the end I decided, 'I will not give in. I will fulfill the mitzvah in its entirety.'

With that, I started to climb the steps. "I opened the door of the common attic and turned on the light, and I was taken aback. It looked as if the space had not been cleaned in years. The ceiling was covered with thick layers of dust. It would be impossible to check the attic in that condition, even putting aside the halachah that one must clean each room before bedikat chametz. But it had to be checked, for there was no doubt that people sometimes brought food up there.

"I stood in the doorway, and tiredness washed over me. I was almost too exhausted to know what my real obligation was. But I said, 'No matter; I will perform the mitzvah if it takes my last ounce of strength.'

"I went downstairs for a pail of water, and I came back up and started to work. Here I was, a yeshiva bachur cleaning years' worth of grime from a common attic at midnight on the night before Pesach.

From time to time, I paused and asked myself, 'Am I sure that this is a mitzvah?' And I reminded myself that, indeed, we are commanded by the Sages to check the whole house for chametz, including the attic. That knowledge gave me strength to go on.

I finally lit the candle and performed Bedikat Chametz in the attic. "Needless to say, I could barely stay awake that morning, but there was too much to do to have time for a nap. I said to myself, 'What kind of Seder will I have now that I am so tired?!'

"The Seder arrived, and I began to feel a great sweetness in the evening's mitzvot. I also felt as if a bright light was shining before me. As I read the words of the Haggadah, they had a 'flavour' that I had never experienced. When I ate the matzah, I felt such a connection that I was ready to sacrifice my life for that one mitzvah. I experienced a feeling of closeness to G-d that I had never known.

I felt so elevated, that I became another person. This feeling lasted through the entire Seder. "I couldn't sleep that night, and I stayed up performing the mitzvah of Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim / relating the story of the Exodus.

As mentioned, I felt a closeness to G-d that I had never known. At first, I assumed that this was a sensation that was possible only on the Seder night, but I was wrong. The next day, I felt the same way. "In the afternoon, I wondered, 'Can this feeling possibly continue through Chol Ha'moed?' [There is only one Seder night and one day of Yom Tov in Israel.] But the feeling did continue throughout the festival.

That year, the seventh [and in Israel, final] day of Pesach was followed by Shabbat. That week, I experienced for the first time in my life what Shabbat was meant to be.

"It was then, after that Pesach and Shabbat, that my real spiritual growth began. If I have any accomplishments to my name today, it is because of that one rabbinically-ordained mitzvah which I performed with true sacrifice." (Haggadah Shel Pesach Tiferet Shimshon p. 5)



"Bitachon is knowing that even in the darkest moments, hashem's light is shining upon you. Trust in His love and guidance, and you will find strength in every challenge. ~ Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra.



סימני סדר פסח

קדש, ורחץ, כרפס, יחץ, מגיד, רחצה, מוציא, מצה, מרור, כורך, שולחן עורך, צפון, ברך, הלל, נרצה.

Many commentators have found homiletical meaning in the above poem, aside from its obvious purpose of reminding us how to conduct the Seder.

For example, **R' Yehoshua Segal Deutsch z"l** (rabbi of the Katamon neighborhood of Yerushalayim) writes as follows: King David asks (Tehilim 24:3): "Who will climb Hashem's mountain, and who can stand in His holy place?" -This poem tells us how one can stand before Hashem and not worry about falling: "**קדש ורחץ**" / Sanctify yourself and be confident! ("Rechatz" in Aramaic means "be confident.") How does one accomplish this? "**כרפס יחץ**" / Man's material nature (which, like karpas, comes form the earth) cannot be reined in overnight. Rather, divide ("yachatz") and conquer.

According to one commentator, Bnei Yisrael's defence for the sin of the Golden Calf was that Matan Torah / the giving of the Torah had been too sudden for them, and left them confused and disoriented. Another tactic is "**מגיד רחצה**" / Tell others to cleanse themselves. This will inspire you to do the same.

However, one might ask, "Who am I to rebuke others?" The answer to this is "**מוציא מצה**" / Get rid of that humility, that view of oneself as being lowly as matzah.

As important as humility is, there is no place for it when one sees others violating the Torah. However, do not become arrogant or haughty, but rather "**מרור כורך**" - Wrap yourself in a cloak of authority (="marah") which you can use when rebuking others, but can shed at other times.

In order to be an effective teacher, "**שולחן עורך**" / Make sure your Torah knowledge is like a set table before you so that it will always be at your fingertips.

Also, make sure that your rebuke does not become a weapon of the Heavenly prosecutor. Make sure that "**צפון ברך**" / Hidden ("tzafun") within your heart should be blessings for your fellow Jews.

You should also "**הלל**" / Praise your brethren before Hashem. If you do this, your deeds will be "**נרצה**" / Accepted by Hashem. (**Haggadah Shel Pesach Kol Yeshuah**)



It was customary in Europe for the teachers of the very young to have their pupils memorize the key words of the order of the Seder (i.e. "Kadesh U'rechatz" etc.) along with their traditional interpretations. Once, on the evening of the Seder, the Chassidic Rebbe known as the "**Shpole Zeide**" asked his little son to recite the key aloud. The child began, "Kadesh--when the father comes from shul on the evening of the seder, he must immediately recite Kiddush."

The "Zeide" waited for his son to continue, but the child said that his teacher had not taught him anything further on this point. And so, his father taught him the conclusion: "so that the youngsters won't fall asleep, but rather will ask the Mah Nishtanah."

On the following day, the child's teacher was present at the Rebbe's table, and the Rebbe asked him, "Why didn't you teach the children the concluding remarks?"

"I didn't want to trouble them," said the teacher, "especially since the reason given is not very important. After all, even a person who has no children makes Kiddush immediately upon his arrival from shul!"

The Rebbe became angry. "Are you the one to judge which reason is important and which is not? Are you wiser than all of the other teachers? How did you dare change that which has been taught for generations?

Let me tell you what those who lived before us alluded to with this statement. - "When the father - that is our Father in Heaven - comes from shul on the evening of the Seder-- when He sees how His children, the people of Israel, have severed themselves from the darkness and troubles of the Exile and have come to the shul to praise Him for their Redemption; when He sees this, He must immediately recite kiddush, i.e., He must renew the 'Kiddushin' / the marriage bond between Himself and ourselves, and strengthen us in our Exile so that the youngsters won't fall asleep, i.e., so that we don't sink into a deep slumber in our Exile, but rather [we] will ask the Mah Nishtanah / why is this night, this Exile, longer than all the other exiles?"

With that, the Zeide burst into torrential weeping, and all present wept along with him. Finally, he came to himself and said, "Now we must give our Father some joy; we must show Him that His children can dance in the darkness, too." And together they began to sing and dance.



Why is the Seder -"**סדר**"called by that name?

R' David Moshe Hakohen z"l (son-in-law of the last **Radomsker Rebbe**; killed in the Holocaust) offers the following explanation: Regarding all foods prohibited by the Torah, there is a minimum amount that one must eat before he is considered to have transgressed. (Usually, that amount is a ke'zayit) Not so chametz, which is prohibited down to the smallest morsel.

Also, in no case where the Torah prohibited eating a particular food did the Torah prohibit owning the food. No other food-related prohibition requires us to search for the contraband and destroy it. Why does chametz have these unique requirements?

The Radvaz (16th century) answers this by referring to the midrash which alludes to a connection between chametz and the yetzer hara.

[Just as chametz rises, the yetzer hara causes a person to "rise," i.e., to become haughty.] Just as one is supposed to uproot every vestige of the yetzer hara from within himself, so one must uproot every vestige of chametz from his house.

There are four ways to interpret the Torah: peshat / the simplest explanation, remez / allusion (e.g., gematria), drush / homiletics, and sod / the esoteric meaning.

It seems, however, notes R' David Moshe, that there is no "simple" explanation for the severity of the prohibition of chametz. The peshat is missing, and all that is left is the "**סדר**" - "**SeDeR**" – sod, drush and remez. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Tiferet Shlomo p. 53)



קַדֵּשׁ

R' S.R. Hirsch z"l writes that although we already fulfilled the Torah obligation of Kiddush through our prayers in shul, we repeat Kiddush at home because the sanctity ("Kedushah") of the day must first and foremost find its expression in our homes.

Kiddush must be recited at the place where our meal will be eaten, as the festive meal is the most obvious manifestation of the joy we feel on the festival, and that joy must be preceded by sanctity. (The Hirsch Haggadah)



Many halachic authorities maintain that if one has no wine, he may fulfill his obligation to drink four cups at the seder by taking anything that qualifies as a "national drink." [Depending on the country, this may be juice, milk, coffee, etc.]

R' Moshe Isserless z"l ("Rema"; O.C. Section 483) writes that this is similar to the halachah which permits using a "national drink" for kiddush on Shabbat.

R' Yitzchak Ze'ev Soloveitchik z"l (Brisker Rav) notes that there is, in fact, a distinction between the Pesach cups and all other cups which we drink in fulfillment of a mitzvah (kiddush, havdalah, etc.). In the latter cases, all that is required is that the cup and drink qualify for the recitation of the berachah in question. However, the Pesach cups have an additional requirement: That they make us feel like free men. - Wine can do this, but can milk or coffee?

In truth, perhaps Rema agrees with this logic. However, he allows the use of a "national drink" for those who have no wine because it is better that they should fulfill at least one aspect of the mitzvah rather than none at all. (Quoted in Ma'adanei Mo'ed, p. 52)



וּרְחַץ

In Temple times, one would wash before consuming a damp fruit or vegetable in order to eat it in ritual purity. Although we cannot achieve such purity today, we observe this law of netilat yadayim / washing at the Seder in order or express our hope that we will soon be obligated to observe it, due to the arrival of mashiach and the rebuilding of the Bet Hamikdash. This is an expression of the freedom that we feel on Pesach. (The Artscroll Haggadah)



כַּרְפַּס

Why do we eat karpas? The best known reason is that the Hebrew spelling of karpas **כרפס** suggests "60 ferach" **ס' פרך** (i.e. 60 x 10,000 = 600,000) Jews worked hard as slaves."

Some say that karpas was the herb which Bnei Yisrael used to heal the sores they got while working and through beatings. Finally, the name karpas reminds us of the "ketonet pasim"--Yosef's coat which played a role in bringing about the enslavement of the Jews. (R' Yehuda Lebowitz: Notes to Ritva's Hilchot Seder Ha'Haggadah)



Of what does the salt-water in which we dip the karpas remind us? **R' Menachem Mendel Hager z"l** of Oyber-Visheve notes that, throughout the Talmud, salt is used as a metaphor for suffering.

Chazal teach that suffering is actually good for a person for it expiates his sins, but being only human, we quickly reach a point where we can stand no more.

Salt reminds us of this, for a little bit of salt improves the taste of food, but if that same food is too salty, it is not edible.

As we begin to recall the suffering of the slaves in Egypt, this thought should be on our mind. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Visheve-Vizhnitz Shearit Menachem)



יַחַץ

One year, at the seder of **R' Shimon Sofer z"l** (known as the "Michtav Sofer"), his grandson asked him the reason for stealing the afikoman. At first, the Michtav Sofer did not respond, but after the seder, he explained as follows: The Torah (Shmot 11:7) relates that as Hashem passed through Egypt killing the firstborn, not one dog belonging to a Jew barked.

It seems strange, said the Michtav Sofer, that Chazal did not establish any remembrance for this miracle which the Torah troubles itself to mention. [Ed. Note: In contrast, we allude in the Haggadah to literally hundreds of miracles which the Torah does not mention at all.]

In fact, said R' Sofer, stealing the afikoman is that remembrance. The Gemara (Pesachim 113a) states that one is not permitted to live in a city that has no dogs. Rashi explains that the barking of dogs is a protection against thieves. It follows, therefore, that on Pesach night, when the dogs did not bark, there was a greater risk of thieves.

We allude to this by stealing the afikoman.

Why didn't R' Sofer answer his grandson until after the seder?

It has been suggested that he sought to teach his grandson that a Jew must accept our Torah, mitzvot and customs even when he does not understand them. (Quoted in Vayaged Moshe)



מַגִּיד

R' Shimon Schwab z"l (1908-1995; rabbi of the K'hal Adath Jeshurun "Breuer's" community in New York) writes: From my earliest youth, I remember that the children would ask each other on the first morning of Pesach, "How long did your Seder last?"

This was true in my youth, and it is still the case today. If the children were to ask me this now, I would answer them, "I made sure to eat the afikoman before chatzot [halachic midnight]."

According to some poskim [halachic authorities], even the recitation of Hallel should be completed before chatzot. I must point out, R' Schwab says, that the present-day practice in which all the children read from their prepared sheets which they received in school is not exactly in accordance with the mitzvah of **וְהִגַּדְתָּ לִבְנֶךָ** /" and you shall tell to your children" (Shmot 13:8). The children have started a new "mitzvah" of **והגדת לאביך ולאמך**/" and you shall tell to your father and mother," which makes it extremely difficult to reach the mitzvah of achilat matzah / eating the matzah – and certainly the afikoman – before chatzot.

R' Schwab continues: Rather than discourage the children from actively participating, parents should encourage their children to keep their remarks brief so that the father or other leader of the Seder can read the text of the Haggadah and explain the miracles of Yetziat Mitzrayim / the Exodus. Children should be encouraged to say their divrei Torah during the meal if there is time or, otherwise, during the daytime meals of Yom Tov.

On the Seder night, concludes R' Schwab, it is a mitzvat asai d'Oraita - a commandment from the Torah to retell to one's children the events surrounding Yetziat Mitzrayim. If one has merited to have children or grandchildren, it is a mitzvah for the father or grandfather to hand down to them the details of the Exodus.

The saying of "vertlach" / short divrei Torah is very nice, but if these are not the details of the narrative of the Exodus – or its meaning or message – they are not a part of this mitzvah.

On the Seder night, the children are encouraged to ask any question relevant to Yetziat Mitzrayim, and the father has a special mitzvah d'Oraita to respond to these questions, and to tell his children about the miracles that G-d did for us. (Rav Schwab on Prayer p. 541)



הָא לַחְמָא עַנְיָא

We begin the Pesach seder by reciting, "Whoever is hungry, let him come and eat . . . This year here; next year in Eretz Yisrael." - How do these thoughts relate to each other? Also, how can we say, "Whoever is hungry, let him come and eat," when the doors of our houses are closed?

R' Yehuda Assad z"l explains as follows: Why are we happy on Pesach — after all, aren't we once again in exile?

The answer is that we rejoice in the knowledge that we can be redeemed at any time. Even from Egypt, where we were destined to remain for 400 years, G-d took us out early. Certainly, then, He can take us out of our present exile which has no fixed length.

How can we earn this redemption? Through charity!

The excerpt quoted above is not literally an invitation. It is a reminder that if throughout the year we practice feeding the hungry, then: This year here; next year in Eretz Yisrael.



Why do we begin the Haggadah with "הָא לַחְמָא עַנְיָא," a reference to the "poor bread" (matzah)?

This may be answered by a parable: A poor shepherd caught the eye of a king, who brought the shepherd to his court and appointed him as an official of the royal household. Gradually, this former shepherd rose in rank, until he became Minister of the Treasury.

Other royal ministers were jealous, and they told the king that his treasury minister was embezzling funds. The king did not believe them, but their constant attacks on his minister forced him to take action.

One morning, the king and his ministers set out to pay a surprise visit to the treasury minister's home. Arriving there, they were surprised to see how humble the home was. There was certainly no sign that the minister had come into newfound wealth. But one door of the house was locked, and there, the ministers were sure, the king would find hidden treasure.

The king demanded that the door be unlocked, and all of the treasury minister's entreaties were to no avail. Entering the room, the king was shocked to see nothing but a stick and a knapsack.

"What is the meaning of this?" he asked.

"With my sudden rise to prominence," the former shepherd responded, "I was afraid lest I become conceited. Therefore, I come into this room every morning, dress in my old shepherd's garb, and remember what it was like to be humble."

We, too, are faced with the shepherd's problem, the commentaries say. Once we were humble slaves in Egypt, but suddenly we became a proud nation with the Torah and a land of our own.

We begin the seder by looking at the matzah, and this reminds us of who we were and Who made us what we are. (Yalkut Lekach Tov)



הָא לַחְמָא עַנְיָא דִּי אֲכָלוּ אַבְהָתָנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרָיִם. כָּל דִּכְפִין יֵיתֵי וְיֵיכֹל, כָּל דְּצָרִיךְ יֵיתֵי וְיִפְסַח. הָשַׁתָּא הָכָא, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּאַרְעָא דְיִשְׂרָאֵל. הָשַׁתָּא עַבְדֵי, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּנֵי חוֹרִין

Commentaries ask many questions about this invitation, among them: (1) Why do we invite guests now, after kiddush? (2) What good is this invitation if we recite it sitting in our dining rooms behind a closed front door? (3) How can we say "Whoever is needy--let him come and share Pesach" when, according to Halachah, the korban Pesach may be shared only with those who made such arrangements before the lamb was slaughtered?

R' Eliezer Ashkenazi z"l (1513-1583) offers a novel explanation of "Ha lachma anya" which answers these and some of the other commonly asked questions. He writes that this paragraph is not an invitation at all, but rather a lamentation composed on the first Pesach night after the destruction of the Bet Hamikdash.

Sitting at their Seder tables, the Jewish People remembered the glory of the Seder when the table was graced by the korban Pesach and surrounded by family and friends who had joined together in advance as Halachah requires.

Remembering this, they said, "Our fare at this Seder is reminiscent of the lachma anya / poor man's bread which our ancestors ate in Egypt, not the sumptuous feasts that we had when the Temple stood. Now, anyone who is hungry can come and eat, and anyone who needs to can come and remember the korban Pesach, unlike last year when advance reservations were required by Halachah. This year, we are here, but next year, may we be back in Yerushalayim as we were before the Destruction." (Ma'asei Hashem)



"Hashem's love is like a flame that burns bright in the darkness. Trust in Him, and you will never be afraid." ~ Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berditchov.



הָשַׁתָּא הָכָא, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּאַרְעָא דְיִשְׂרָאֵל. הָשַׁתָּא עַבְדֵי, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּנֵי חוֹרִין

One might ask why do we continue to recall the Exodus every year? After all, we are still in exile!

R' Chaim Yaakov Goldvicht z"l (founder and rosh yeshiva of Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh) used to begin his Seder with a parallel that addressed this question:

There were two destitute brothers who sold used rags that they found in other people's garbage. So poor were they that the only place they could find to live was a large barrel, which they shared. One day, they earned an unusually large amount of money. It was the first time that they had ever possessed more money than they needed for one day, so they bought a lottery ticket. And they won! They were now wealthy.

The brothers had different ideas about how to spend their money. One took his half and bought a large house and fancy cars. Since he didn't have to work, he spent his time traveling, hunting, and engaging in other leisure activities. The other brother took his wealth and used it to obtain an education. Before long, he was expert in a number of sciences and other subjects.

Soon, the two brothers had little in common, but they still met every year on the anniversary of their day of good fortune in order to recall how their lives had changed.

But life is a never-ending cycle, and one day, the two brothers became poor again. When the next anniversary of their first change of fortune arrived, the brother who had chosen a life of leisure saw no reason to celebrate; he had nothing left of his good fortune. However, his brother continued to observe that anniversary, saying that although he had no money, he still had the education that he had obtained.

So, too, said R' Goldvicht, we may be exile, but we still have the education that we received as a result of the Exodus, namely, the Torah. Therefore, the Exodus is still something to celebrate and remember. (Asufot Ma'archot: Haggadah Shel Pesach p. 13)



Why does the recitation of "Mah nishtanah" follow immediately after the recitation of "Hah lachma ania"?

R' Yosef Chaim of Baghdad z"l (died 1909) explains: In Hah lachma ania we proclaim: "Whoever is hungry, let him come and eat! Who ever is in need let him come and share the Pesach sacrifice!"

This confuses our children, so they ask: "Why is this night different from all other nights? On all other nights, you slam the door in beggars' faces or leave them standing in the front hall. Why, tonight, are you are inviting them into the dining room?"



מַה נִּשְׁתַּנָּה הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַלֵּילוֹת

Why the emphasis on the question and answer format? Why doesn't the individual who is conducting the Seder simply lecture to his family and guests, explaining each step of the seder?

R' Moshe Meir Yashar z"l (a student of the **Chafetz Chaim**) explained with the following story: Towards the end of World War II, the Soviet army marched into Bucharest, Romania and liberated it from the Nazis. Among the Russian officers arriving in the Romanian capital was one, a Jew, who had somehow managed to remain observant despite the trials of military service under a Communist regime. When Pesach came, this officer went knocking on the doors of Bucharest, looking for a Seder which he could join.

Pretty soon, he found himself seated among his brethren, ready to start the Seder. "Please honor us by asking the Four Questions," the host asked his Russian guest.

"I'm sorry," said the soldier, "but where I come from, one is not permitted to ask questions."

When I read of this incident (R' Yashar wrote) I realized that being able to ask questions on Pesach, with no one to stop us or limit the number, is the truest sign of freedom. In fact, the name of this holiday, "Pesach," may be read as two words meaning, "A mouth which talks." Therefore, the son is encouraged to ask questions.



The Gemara says that the story of the Exodus should be told in a question and answer format. Even if a person is all alone, he is expected to follow this format. Why?

R' Aryeh Leib Zunz z"l explains: **The Zohar** says that when a person tells the story of the Exodus, Hashem Himself rejoices. He then gathers together the entire heavenly entourage and says to them, "Go and hear My praises which My children are saying."

Thus, says R' Zunz, a person who is conducting a seder is never really alone. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Birkat Shir)



Chazal designed the Pesach seder to revolve around questions and answers. Indeed, the halachah states that if a couple has no children, the wife should recite the Mah nishtanah. And, if a person is all alone, he should ask himself the questions. Why?

R' Avraham Danzig z"l (author of the halachic compendium Chayei Adam) explains: We do so many of our mitzvot by rote, without giving them much thought, if any. However, the lessons of Pesach are the centrepieces of our beliefs as Jews, and are much too important to be done by rote. Therefore Chazal required us to ask questions in order to slow us down and make us think.

Nor should the questions be limited to Mah nishtanah, R' Danzig writes. When the Gemara describes the seder, it says, "We pour the

second cup, and then the son asks." Presumably the question that the son will ask is, "Why are you pouring a second cup of wine before washing for hamotzi?" which is not one of the questions in Mah nishtanah.

Moreover, R' Danzig notes, a child could not ask the questions of Mah nishtanah [unless he had been prepared beforehand]! One of the questions is, "Why on all other nights do we eat chametz and matzah, and tonight only matzah?" How can a child know at the beginning of the meal that we will eat only matzah? Perhaps, just as on all other nights we eat chametz and matzah, right now there is only matzah on the table, but soon we will bring chametz!

Rather, Mah nishtanah is a set of more sophisticated questions, whose real meaning is, "Why will our actions tonight combine signs of slavery, such as eating matzah, and freedom, such as eating while reclining?"

As for the children, they should be allowed to ask whatever questions strike them. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Toldot Adam)



R' Shmuel Avigdor of Karlin z"l (19th century) observes that the question and answer format is not merely a creation of Chazal. It is a mitzvah de'oraita / Torah-ordained commandment, mentioned no fewer than four times in the Torah. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Im Peirush Maharsha)



עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפַרְעֹה בְּמִצְרָיִם

We begin our story with the statement "Avadim hayinu . . ." / "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt."

R' Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook z"l writes that this sentence describes three levels of degradation" (1) We were slaves, (2) to a foreign king, (3) in a foreign land. The Haggadah then goes on to

recount that G-d saved us from all three of these troubles: (1) We were taken out of slavery, (2) by Hashem, our own King, and (3) we were taken from Egypt and brought to Eretz Yisrael. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Olat Re'iyah)



We read in the Haggadah: "If Hashem had not taken our forefathers out of Egypt, we, our children and our grandchildren would be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt."

R' Chaim Elazar Shapira z"l (the Munkatcher Rebbe; died 1937) writes that the purpose of this statement is to answer the question: Why is our present exile so long and drawn out? Why doesn't Hashem redeem us in the same dramatic way that He redeemed our ancestors from Egypt?

R' Shapira explains with the following parable: A doctor was once rushed to the bedside of a sick man and, seeing the condition of the patient, he performed an emergency appendectomy that saved the patient's life. Within days, the patient was up and about, and he thanked the doctor accordingly.

Several years passed, and again this man took ill, this time with painful kidney disease. The same doctor was called, and he prescribed a regimen of diet and medication. "If you follow these instructions," he said, "you will be cured in several months."

"A few years ago, I was sicker than this — was I not?" the patient asked. "You were," the doctor answered.

"And then you operated and I was cured in a matter of days — was I not?"

"Yes," said the doctor.

"Then why are you giving me a gradual cure that will leave me suffering for months rather than operating and curing me immediately?" the patient inquired.

The doctor explained: "Surgery is a drastic measure that is performed as a last resort. Had I not operated then, you would have died shortly. Now, however, there is no immediate danger to your life. Although you may suffer for a time, this diet and these medications will cure your illness at its source, and you will remain healthy."

The Exodus, R' Shapira explains, was a "dramatic rescue" because the Jewish people were on the verge of total assimilation. Even we and our children would have been lost.

This is what the above excerpt from the Haggadah is teaching us. The present exile, though painful, can be "cured" more gradually and less dramatically. (Sha'ar Yissaschar: Ma'amar Aggadeta De'Pischa)



R' Yosef Chaver z"l (Lithuania; 19th century) notes that the Haggadah does not say, "We . . . would have remained enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt," but rather, "We . . . would have remained subjugated to Pharaoh in Egypt."

He explains: Egypt was a land where a belief in astrology and in the supposed powers of the heavenly bodies reigned supreme. The purpose of the Ten Plagues was to demonstrate that those powers are false, and that Hashem is in control of every detail of existence.

Not only the Egyptians needed this education; Bnei Yisrael needed it too! Thus the Haggadah teaches, "Had not the Holy One, Blessed is He, taken our fathers out from Egypt, then we, our children, and our children's children would have remained subjugated [to the false beliefs of] Pharaoh in Egypt. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Zeroa Netuyah)



"Hashem's love is like the ocean – it is vast and deep, and no one can fathom its depth." ~ Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra.



R' Zevulun Hamburger shlita (Yerushalayim) asks: Our Sages state that the world was created conditionally, and that the entire universe would have ceased to exist if Bnei Yisrael had not received the Torah. How then would we, our children, and our children's children have remained subjugated to Pharaoh in Egypt if there had been no Exodus? To the contrary, we would not even exist!

He explains: Surely we would have left Egypt and received the Torah at some point. However, the **Arizal** teaches that, had Bnei Yisrael remained in Egypt one more instant, they would have sunk to the fiftieth level of impurity from which there is no climbing out.

In that case, even after the eventual Exodus and even after receiving the Torah, Bnei Yisrael would have remained spiritually subjugated to Pharaoh. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Sha'arei Zevul p.41)



וַאֲפִילוּ כֻּלָּנוּ חֲכָמִים

We read in the Haggadah, "Even if we all are wise, we all are understanding . . . it would still be a mitzvah for us to relate the story of the Exodus."

Of course it would be! Why would we think otherwise? asks **R' Mordechai Gifter z"l**.

He explains: The mitzvah of relating the story of the Exodus has two parts. From the fact that we push our children to ask questions, it would appear that the mitzvah is mainly to inform those who do not know the story. - No, says the Haggadah, it also is a mitzvah for those who already know the story to remind themselves of it. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Pirkei Mo'ed)



"It's a great mitzvah to always be happy." ~ R' Nachman of Breslov zt"l



Why is even the wisest sage obligated to retell even the basics of the Exodus story every year?

R' Nosson Zvi Finkel z"l (the Alter of Slobodka; died 1926) explains: No matter how wise one has become, no matter how old one is or how many times one retells the story, one still retains the incorrect images of the Exodus that he formed as a child. - The story must be retold and retold until these images are uprooted. (Quoted in Haggadat Roshei Yeshivat Chevron p. 78)



R' Eran Moshe Margaliot shlita (Israel) writes, based on the writings of **R' Yehuda Aryeh Leib Alter z"l** (1847-1905; the Gerrer Rebbe; known as the "Sefat Emet"): Why, indeed, must a wise person who knows the story of Yetzi'at Mitzrayim retell it year-after-year?

He explains: We learn in Pirkei Avot (ch.3), "If one's Yir'ah / fear of sin precedes his wisdom, his wisdom will endure." Even if one is wise, he needs Yir'ah, because Yir'ah is the foundation that allows a person to stand before Hashem and accept the yoke of Heaven. That, in turn, is a prerequisite for attaining true wisdom.

Through retelling the story of the Exodus on the Seder night, a person can experience a revelation of G-d, which leads, in turn, to increasing one's Yir'ah and re-accepting the yoke of Heaven.

This comes from the realization that Hashem did not simply free us from serving Pharaoh; He did so in order that we would serve Him.

Also, a wise person must retell the story of the Exodus until he understands that all of his wisdom is not his own accomplishment, but from Hashem. This is why we conclude the Seder with the poem, "Echad mi yodea?" / "Who knows one?" We declare: "Mi yodea" / "The fact that anyone knows anything" is the result of the abilities he has been given by the "Echad Elokeinu" / "Our One Elokim who is in the heavens and the earth." (Petach Ha'haggadah p.26)



וְכָל הַמַּרְבֶּה לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם הֲרֵי זֶה מְשֻׁבָּח

The mitzvah of Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim requires more than just reading the story. One's recitation of the Haggadah must be from the heart and also must penetrate one's heart, so that the story of the Exodus will serve as the basis for strengthening one's emunah.

Indeed, **R' Simcha Zissel Ziv z"l (the "Alter of Kelm"; died 1898)** used to observe that the statement in the Haggadah, "The more that one relates about the Exodus, the more praiseworthy it is," also can be translated, "The more that one relates about the Exodus, the more improved he is."

R' Yaakov Levitt z"l (Bialystok) illustrated with a parable the difference between the right way to tell the story of the Exodus and the wrong way: A villager once took seriously ill. The doctor was called, and the doctor recognized that the villager's illness was fully curable if treated properly. He wrote out a prescription and he told the villager's wife, "Give your husband this prescription with water three times a day until it is finished, and he will be cured."

The family did as it was told. Every day, the simple village wife tore a small piece off the prescription, dissolved it in water and gave it to her husband to drink!

Needless to say, his condition did not improve. The doctor was called, but he was very perplexed. "I know that this prescription works," he said. "I have prescribed it for this illness before."

"Let me see the prescription," he requested finally. "Perhaps I made a mistake."

The villager's wife explained, however, that she could not show him the prescription because she had given it to her husband as instructed.

"Fools," he shouted. "Can a piece of paper cure your husband's illness? It's not the paper that makes the difference, but what's written on the paper that would have cured him."

So it is with the Haggadah. It is neither the book of the Haggadah, nor simply reading the Haggadah, which illuminates one's soul. Rather, one must absorb the contents of the story. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Sha'arei Armon p. 150)



Why is it necessary for the Haggadah to tell us that the more that one tells about the Exodus, the more praiseworthy he is? Would we have thought otherwise?

R' Avraham Shmuel Binyamin Sofer z"l (the "Ketav Sofer"; 19th century Hungary) explains as follows: The Gemara (Shabbat 118b) teaches: "One who recites Hallel every day is a blasphemer." Why?

R' Sofer explains that Hallel praises Hashem for the supernatural miracles of the Exodus. However, one who focuses too much on G-d's supernatural miracles doesn't notice His everyday wonders. Man is obligated to see Hashem as much in his daily life and in nature as in His supernatural acts, and therefore man is forbidden to recite Hallel every day.

R' Sofer adds: This is the meaning of the verse (Mishlei 3:6), "In all your ways know Him and He will smooth your paths." In all of your ways, in whatever you do on a day-to-day basis, know Him. Know that He is the source of your day-to-day success, and then He will indeed smooth the path before you.

In light of the above, one might think that he should downplay the story of the Exodus. No, the Haggadah tells us, on the Seder night one should elaborate as much as possible on the Exodus.



"The purpose of life is to serve Hashem. And the greatest pleasure a person can have is to fulfil their mission in life." ~ Rabbi Avigdor Miller.



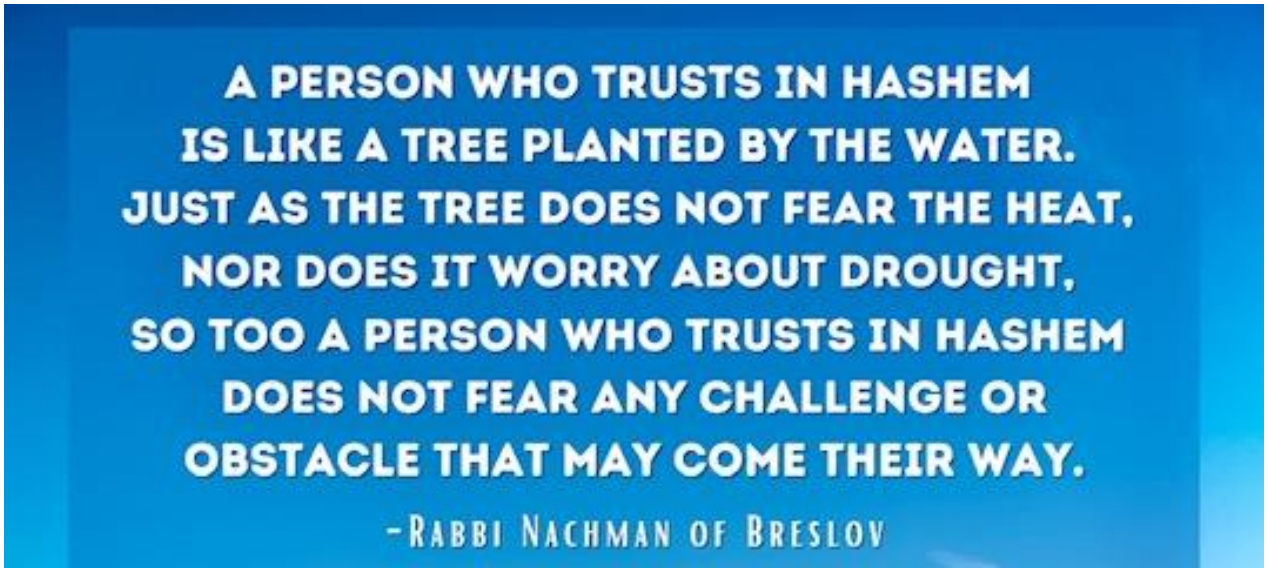
בָּרוּךְ הַמָּקוֹם, בָּרוּךְ הוּא, בָּרוּךְ שֶׁנָּתַן תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל, בָּרוּךְ הוּא. כְּנֶגֶד אַרְבָּעָה בָנִים דִּבְּרָה תוֹרָה: אֶחָד חָכָם, וְאֶחָד רָשָׁע, וְאֶחָד תָּם, וְאֶחָד שֶׁאֵינוֹ יוֹדֵעַ לִשְׁאוֹל

Why does the Haggadah introduce the passage about the "Four Sons" with a blessing over the gift of Torah?

R' Moshe Yisrael Feldman z"l (rabbi of Dragomiresti, Hungary; killed in the Holocaust) explains: The Mishnah (Eduyot Ch. 2) teaches that wisdom is hereditary. If so, how is it possible for one person to have four sons like the Four Sons of the Haggadah: a wise son, a wicked son, a simple son, and a son who does not know how to ask?

The answer may be found in the teaching of the Gemara (Nedarim 81a): "Why is it rare for Torah scholars to have sons who are Torah scholars? Because they do not recite the blessings over the Torah first thing [in the morning]." [The Torah scholars referred to are in such a hurry to return to their studies when they awaken that they neglect to recite the blessings, including the prayer, "May we and our descendants ... be students of Your Torah."]

Says R' Feldman: Now, as we are about to speak of the Four Sons, we remind ourselves to recite the blessings over the Torah, lest our sons grow up to be as different as these four.



רָשָׁע מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר... הַקְהֵה אֶת שִׁנָּיו



Why are we so hard on the wicked son? asks **R' Pinchas Halevi Horowitz z"l** (1730-1805; rabbi of Frankfurt, Germany).The Halachah is that a person who denies the validity of just one Mitzvah is not deemed an apostate. Why, then, do we treat the wicked son as an apostate?

He answers: The observances connected with Pesach are Mitzvot that encompass all of the other Mitzvot. They represent the foundation of the entire Torah, for they represent Bnei Yisrael's rejection of the idolatry of Egypt. This is alluded to in the name "Pesach" itself. If the three letters of the Hebrew word are spelled out – **פה סמך חת** - peh-heh samech-mem-chof chet-tav -- the resulting Gematria equals 613, the number of Mitzvot in the Torah. (Panim Yafot)

תָּם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מַה זֹּאת? וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים

"When your son shall ask you, 'What is this?' you shall say to him, 'With a strong hand G-d took us out of Egypt, from the house of slaves'." (Shmot 13:14)

R' Chaim "Brisker" Soloveitchik z"l asks: Since we nightly fulfill the mitzvah of remembering the Exodus [by reciting the last verse of the third chapter of Shma], why do we need the additional mitzvah of reading the Pesach Haggadah?

He explains that there are three differences between the daily performance of this mitzvah and its performance on Pesach.

(1) A person's daily obligation is to privately recall the Exodus, but on Pesach, a verbal question-answer format is required. Thus, even a

person who conducts the Seder alone is required to "ask himself" appropriate questions and to read the Haggadah aloud.

(2) Our daily obligation is simply to recall that the Exodus occurred, while on Pesach night we must "begin with shame and conclude with praise" [i.e. we must mention that our ancestors were idol worshippers and that G-d chose Avraham from among them, etc.]

(3) On Pesach we are required to discuss the mitzvot associated with the Exodus (the Pascal sacrifice, matzah, Maror), while the daily obligation does not include this detail. (Chiddushei HaGrach HaShalem, No.40 (p.25)



תָּם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מַה זֹּאת? וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים

R' Moshe Feinstein z"l (1895-1986) writes: The question of the "simple son" ("What is this") appears in the Torah before the question of the "wise son," because before a person can ask the reasons for the Mitzvot, he must know them thoroughly. - This will give provide him with a solid foundation for his faith. (Darash Moshe)



יָכוֹל מֵרֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ

Why is the Mitzvah to sanctify the new moon part of the story of the Exodus (see Shmot 12:1-2)?

R' Ben Zion Nesher shlita (one of the senior rabbis in Tel Aviv, Israel) explains: People in general are not aware of how strong an influence the calendar has over them. A nation's calendar commemorates that society's significant days, both happy occasions and the opposite.

The life of a Jew in the diaspora is very heavily influenced by the calendar of the culture in which he lives. Their days off are our days

off, their national holidays are our national holidays. - It introduces a bit of "idolatry" into our lives.

Our ancestors in Egypt were, no doubt, under the influence of their host nation's calendar. Therefore, the first step in the redemption was to get a new calendar, the Jewish People's very own calendar. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Shir Tziyon p.58)



Why was the Mitzvah of sanctifying the new moon given to Moshe and Aharon together, rather than to Moshe alone, as were most of the Mitzvot?

R' Kalman Winter z"l explained: The moon was the first creation to act jealously, i.e., when it challenged G-d's decision to create two luminaries in the heavens (see Chullin 60b; Rashi to Bereishit 1:16).

In contrast, though Aharon was older than Moshe and experienced prophecy before Moshe did, he greeted Moshe with truly heartfelt happiness upon learning that the latter had been chosen to lead Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt (see Shmot 4:14).

Because of this contrast, it was fitting that the commandment to sanctify the new moon be taught to Aharon along with Moshe.



מִתְּחִלָּה עוֹבְדֵי עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה

R' Avraham Aharon Friedman z"l Hy"d (Hungary; killed in the Holocaust) explains: One might ask, "Why make a big fuss over the Exodus? If G-d had not put us in Egypt, He would not have had to take us out!"

To answer this we say, "At first, our ancestors were idol worshipers, but now the Omnipresent has brought us near to His service." Through the experience in Egypt, especially the Ten Plagues, we learned to reject idolatry and to believe in Hashem.



וְגַם אֶת־הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲבֹדוּ דָּן אָנֹכִי

What is added by the word "**וְגַם**" / "also"?

R' Aharon Teitelbaum shlita (Satmar Rebbe) explains: Rashi z"l (to Shmot 11:2) writes that there were other nationalities in Egypt besides the Egyptians, who helped the latter oppress Bnei Yisrael.

Regarding them, Hashem promised Avraham Avinu, "Also the nation that they shall serve, I shall judge . . ." (Quoted in Haggadah Shel Pesach Otzrotaihem Shel Tzaddikim)



וְהִיא שֶׁעָמְדָה

"This is what stood by our fathers and us." What is "This"?

R' Yitzchak Yaakov Weiss z"l (1902-1989; "Dayan Weiss" of Manchester and Yerushalayim) explains that this statement refers to Hashem's words to Avraham quoted in the previous paragraph of the Haggadah: **יָדֹעַ תֵּדַע כִּי־גֵר יִהְיֶה זַרְעֲךָ בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לָהֶם** - "*Know that your offspring will be aliens in a land not their own . . .*"

It is the fact that we have always been aliens, keeping some distance from our host nations, that has maintained us in all of our exiles. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Minchat Yitzchak)



וְהִיא שֶׁעָמְדָה מכסים את המצות ומגביהים את הכוס

When we recite these words during the Seder, it is customary to cover the matzah and to lift the cup of wine. Why? Is not the matzah a mitzvah de'oraita / a Torah-ordained mitzvah, while the Four Cups are only a rabbinically-ordained mitzvah? Why do we seem to attribute more importance to the rabbinic mitzvah than to the Torah mitzvah?

R' Menachem Mendel Kalish z"l (1819-1868; Rebbe of Vorka, Poland) explained: What is it that has held the Jewish people together and

has stood us in good stead throughout the millennia of exile and persecution?

It is the Torah scholars of each generation who have ensured the continuity of halachah and mitzvah-observance, and it is our adherence to their words that has preserved us as a nation.

This is why we point out a rabbinic mitzvah and say, "It is this that has stood by our fathers and us."

When **R' Aharon Rokeach** of Bilgorai z"l (died 1948; father of the current Belzer Rebbe) repeated R' Kalish's explanation to his father, the Belzer Rebbe, R' Yissochor Dov Rokeach z"l (1854- 1926), the latter ordered that it be written down immediately. When he was reminded that it was chol ha'moed, when writing should be avoided if possible, R' Yissochor Dov responded that such a thought is too important to forget. It must be written down, even on chol ha'moed. (Quoted in Mi'saviv La'shulchan No. 140)



צֵא וּלְמַד מַה בִּקֵּשׁ לָבָן הָאֲרַמִּי לַעֲשׂוֹת לְיַעֲקֹב אָבִינוּ

"Go and learn what Lavan the Aramean attempted to do to our father Yaakov! For Pharaoh decreed only against the males, while Lavan attempted to uproot everything."

R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach z"l (1910-1995) comments: Although the Torah never mentions explicitly that Lavan wanted to kill Yaakov, our Sages testify that such was his intention. And, just as the details of Lavan's plot against Yaakov remain hidden, so it has been throughout history.

We read in Hallel: **הַלְלוּ אֶת־ה' כָּל־גּוֹיִם שַׁבְּחוּהוּ כָּל־הָאֻמִּים. כִּי גָבַר עָלֵינוּ חַסְדּוֹ** - "***Praise Hashem, all nations . . . For His kindness has overwhelmed us*** . . ."

Commentaries ask: Should the nations praise Hashem because His kindness has overwhelmed us?

The answer that is commonly given is that only the nations can truly appreciate Hashem's kindness to us, because only they know how many times they have plotted against us and failed. (Haggadah Shel Pesach R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach)



R' Shalom Schwadron z"l ("The Maggid") writes in the name of his mother: Hashem has promised that, regardless of our enemies' attempts to destroy us, Bnei Yisrael will exist forever. If so, Lavan's plan to "uproot" Yaakov's entire future could not possibly have succeeded. No miracle was necessary to save us from him.

In contrast, Pharaoh's decree affected only a portion of the nation; therefore, he might have succeeded. In this paragraph of the Haggadah, we praise Hashem that Pharaoh did not succeed. (Intro. to Da'at Torah, vol. 2)



צֵא וּלְמַד מַה בִּקֵּשׁ לָבָן הָאֲרַמִּי לַעֲשׂוֹת לְיַעֲקֹב אָבִינוּ: שֶׁפַּרְעֹה לֹא גָזַר אֶלָּא עַל הַזְּכָרִים, וְלָבָן בִּקֵּשׁ לַעֲקֹר אֶת־הַכֹּל

R' Levi Yitzchak Horowitz z"l (1921-2009; Bostoner Rebbe) asks: Why do we say, "Lavan sought to uproot Ha'kol," rather than, "Lavan sought to uproot the females as well"?

He writes: The answer came to me in a dream. The term "Ha'kol" alludes to women. For example, the Gemara (Yevamot 62a) teaches: A man who has no wife lives without joy, without blessing, without goodness, without Torah . . ." In short, such a person lacks Ha'kol / everything!

We read (Bereishit 24:1), "Hashem had blessed Avraham Ba'kol / with everything." The Gemara (Bava Batra 16b) states that Avraham had a daughter and her name was "Ba'kol."

In light of the above Gemara, we can understand why that name was appropriate.

The Bostoner Rebbe continues: One of the terms for a wife is "Akeret Bayit," for she is the "Ikkar" / essence of the house. [Notably, the verb used in the above quote from Haggadah, "La'akor," shares a root (עקר (with "Ikkar."]

Especially on Pesach night, concludes the Bostoner Rebbe, women are "Ha'kol." After all, our Sages teach that the Exodus occurred in the merit of the women. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Ezrat Avoteinu p.116)



וַיְהִי שָׁם לְגוֹי. מְלַמֵּד שֶׁהָיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מְצֻיָּנִים שָׁם. גָּדוֹל עָצוּם – כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל פָּרוּ וַיִּשְׁרְצוּ וַיִּרְבּוּ וַיַּעַצְמוּ בִּמְאֹד מְאֹד, וַתִּמָּלֵא הָאָרֶץ אֹתָם

R' Yosef ben Moshe Tirani z"l (Maharit; 1568-1639) writes: No one, not even Pharaoh, could deny that the growth rate of Bnei Yisrael was miraculous. Therefore, perhaps the verse (1:9), "He said to his people, 'Behold! the people, Bnei Yisrael, are more numerous and stronger *mimenu*'" [usually translated "more numerous and stronger than we"] should be translated, "more numerous and stronger from Him."

If this is the correct translation, Maharit continues, then the next verse, "Let us outsmart *lo*" [usually translated "it," referring to Bnei Yisrael] perhaps should be translated, "Let us outsmart Him," again referring to G-d.

Indeed, our Sages say that Pharaoh said, "Let us outsmart the Redeemer of Bnei Yisrael." That, of course, is none other than G-d. (Tzofnat Panei'ach)



"In every situation, live with Hashem. Nothing brings us closer to Hashem than turning to Him in difficult situations. There is no end to the greatness this brings." ~ Rabbi Shimshon Pincus.



וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל פָּרוּ וַיִּשְׁרְצוּ וַיִּרְבּוּ וַיַּעַצְמוּ בִּמְאֹד מְאֹד, וַתִּמָּלֵא הָאָרֶץ אֹתָם



The Midrash Rabbah states that the Jewish women in Egypt gave birth to sextuplets. Another opinion says they gave birth to sixty children at a time.

R' Yehuda Loewe z"l (the Maharal of Prague; died 1609) writes: The Midrash does not literally mean that women gave birth to 60 children at a one time. Indeed, he observes, if it were possible for one woman to carry that many children, each one would be so small as to not be viable. Rather, the Midrash means that women who gave birth, rather than suffering the weakness that normally follows birth, felt so strong that they could have delivered 60 babies if such a thing were possible.

As for the opinion that they gave birth to sextuplets, Maharal suggests that this was G-d's response to the fact that Bnei Yisrael were enslaved six days a week. (Gevurot Hashem ch.12)

וַיָּרֵעוּ אֹתָנוּ הַמִּצְרִים וַיְעַנּוּנוּ, וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה. וַיָּרֵעוּ אֹתָנוּ הַמִּצְרִים – כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: הָבָה נִתְחַכְּמָה לוֹ פֶּן יִרְבֶּה

נִתְחַכְּמָה - R' David Ha'naggid z"l (1224-1300; grandson of Rambam z"l) notes that the Mitzvot and customs of the Pesach Seder parallel Pharaoh's plot to "outsmart" Bnei Yisrael:

- **נ** -" nun" for "nisuch ha'yayin" / pouring wine;
- **ת** -" tav" for "tavshilin" / the two cooked items on the Seder plate;
- **ח** -" chet" for charoset;
- **כ** -" kaf" for karpas;

• מ -" mem" for Matzah; and

• ה -" heh" for Hallel.

(Midrash Rabbi David Ha'naggid Al Haggadah Shel Pesach p.37)



וַיְעַנּוּהוּ. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיָּשִׂימוּ עָלָיו שָׂרֵי מִסִּים לְמַעַן עַנֹּתוֹ בְּסִבְלֹתָם. וַיִּבֶן עָרֵי מִסְכְּנוֹת לְפַרְעֹה. אֶת־פִּתֹם וְאֶת־רַעַמְסֵס



What is added by the word "**לְמַעַן**" / in order? Moreover, why didn't the verse say more simply, "They appointed taskmasters over it <u>who</u> afflicted it with their burdens."

R' Tuvia Halevi z"l (Tzefat, Eretz Yisrael; 16th century) explains: A Midrash relates that Pitom and Ra'amses were built on quicksand or very soft soil so that, no sooner had they been built, they had to be built again.

The Egyptians received no benefit from Bnei Yisrael's work. Thus, the Torah emphasizes that the sole purpose of this work was "in order to afflict" Bnei Yisrael. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Haggadat Chachmei Tzefat)



וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיַּעֲבִדוּ מִצְרַיִם אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּפָרֶךְ

The Gemara (Sotah 11a-b) cites the opinion of Rabbi Elazar that **בְּפָרֶךְ** is a contraction of **בפה רך** / "soft-spoken."

Rashi z"l explains that the Egyptians enticed Bnei Yisrael with words and with rewards to begin their work; then they enslaved them.

R' Yehuda Loewe z"l (Maharal of Prague; died 1609) comments: Rabbi Elazar does not mean to negate the pshat / plain meaning of the verse, i.e., that the Egyptians enslaved Bnei Yisrael with crushing harshness. Rather, Rabbi Elazar is adding that the oppression felt so much harsher because Bnei Yisrael had, so-to-speak, been stabbed in the back after believing in Pharaoh's softspoken words. (Gevurot Hashem, ch.15)



וַנִּצְעַק אֶל־ה' אֱלקֵי אֲבֹתֵינוּ

R' Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson z"l (the Lubavitcher Rebbe; died 1950) once commented: People mistakenly think, "If only we had a Moshe Rabbeinu today, he would rescue us from our exile."

Those people are wrong. The redemption is not delayed because we don't have a Moshe Rabbeinu. Even in Egypt, Hashem sent the redeemer only after the people cried out to Him. - If we would cry out to Hashem similarly, He would send out redeemer.



וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הָרַבִּים הָהֵם וַיָּמָת מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם וַיֵּאָנְחוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן־הָעֲבֹדָה וַיִּזְעָקוּ וַתַּעַל שַׁוְעָתָם אֶל־הָאֱלקִים מִן־הָעֲבֹדָה - "***During those many days, it happened that the king of Egypt died, and Bnei Yisrael groaned because of the work and they cried out. Their outcry because of the work went up to Elokim.***" (Shmot 2:23)

R' Shmuel Shmelke Horowitz z"l (1726-1778; rabbi of Nikolsburg, Moravia) comments: This verse praises the Jewish people. Although they groaned because of the difficult work, their outcry "went up to G-d," i.e., what made them cry was not the backbreaking labour but the desecration of G-d's Name that was being caused by their condition. (Quoted in Haggadah Shel Pesach Ezrat Avoteinu p. 132)

R' Eliezer Nachman Poah z"l (Italian kabbalist; rabbi of Modena; died 1701) explains this verse differently. He writes: When one is in such pain that he cannot formulate his prayers properly, he should

simply cry out to G-d. Those prayers will go up to Elokim, a reference to G-d's Attribute of Justice. The Heavenly Tribunal will then evaluate these sincerely uttered prayers and the proper Divine Attributes (i.e., manifestation of G-d's powers) will come to the fore in response.



Why did they cry out now that Pharaoh died?

R' Meir ibn Gabbai z"l (Egypt; early 1500s) explains that it is common for a newly crowned king to grant a general amnesty to political prisoners. In this case, however, Pharaoh died, and the new king did not grant amnesty to Bnei Yisrael.

Why did this fact draw Bnei Yisrael closer to G-d such that they now cried out to Him?

Because the fact that they were not freed caused them to recognize that their slavery was not a natural phenomenon but rather a Divine decree. (Avodat Ha'kodesh Ch.34)



וְאֶת־עֲמָלֵנוּ. אֵלּוּ הַבָּנִים. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: כָּל־הַבֵּן הַיִלּוֹד הַיְאֹרָה תַּשְׁלִיכ�ֻהוּ וְכָל־הַבַּת תְּחַיּוּן



R' Yekutiel Yehuda Halberstam z"l (1905-1994; Klausenberger Rebbe) asks: Why does the Torah report the last part of Pharaoh's decree, **וְכָל־ הַבַּת תְּחַיּוּן** - "And every daughter you shall keep alive"? Is the Torah coming to praise his humanitarianism?

R' Halberstam answers: The Torah reports that Pharaoh planned to keep the girls alive because that was part of his evil plot. Pharaoh didn't know that a child born of a Jewish mother and a non-Jewish

father is halachically Jewish. He thought that keeping the girls alive to marry Egyptians would increase the Egyptian population.

In the Pesach Haggadah, we quote this verse and exclaim, **וְאֶת־עֲמָלֵנוּ** -"This is our burden." Understandably, the decree to kill Jewish boys was a burden, but why was the decree to keep alive the daughters a "burden"?

In light of the above, R' Halberstam notes, it is clear. The intent of the decree was to take away our daughters and marry them to Egyptians.

The Haggadah is teaching that the searing pain that Bnei Yisrael felt at the prospect of this intermarriage served as a merit that hastened their redemption. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Halichot Chaim p.221)



וְעָבַרְתִּי בְאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בַּלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה

We read: **וַיָּקָם פַּרְעֹה לַיְלָה** - "***And Pharaoh rose up in the night*** . . ." (12:30) - Rashi comments: **מִמִּטָּתוֹ** - "***From his bed***." What is Rashi teaching us?

It is said in the name of **Reb Mendel of Kotsk z"l**: Such is the nature of a Pharaoh. He is told in advance that all of the firstborn around him will die, and he goes to bed!



אֵלּוּ עֶשֶׂר מַכּוֹת שֶׁהֵבִיא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא עַל־הַמִּצְרִים בְּמִצְרַיִם

R' Betzalel Ashkenazi z"l (16th century Egypt; author of the Talmud commentary Shittah Mekubetzet) asks: Why were so many plagues necessary? Couldn't Hashem demonstrate that Pharaoh had lost the right to repent by striking Egypt fewer than 10 times?

The answer, says R' Ashkenzai, is that this was not the only purpose of the Plagues. Perhaps it was not even their primary purpose. We should not forget that the midrash illustrates how each of the

Plagues was a punishment midda-k'negged-middah / measure-for-measure for the ways in which the Egyptians had oppressed Bnei Yisrael. (Derashot R' Betzalel)



אֵלּוּ עֶשֶׂר מַכּוֹת שֶׁהֵבִיא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא עַל־הַמִּצְרִים בְּמִצְרַיִם, וְאֵלּוּ הֵן

R' Chaim Palagi z"l (1788-1868; rabbi of Izmir, Turkey) asks: What is the purpose of the seeming redundancy, **עַל־הַמִּצְרִים בְּמִצְרַיִם** - "*upon the Egyptians in Egypt*"?

He explains: The phrase "in Egypt" refers to Egyptians of prior generations who had oppressed Bnei Yisrael but had since died and been buried. They, too, experienced the plagues.

Conversely, the Bnei Yisrael of prior generations, including the twelve sons of Yaakov and their children, who had since died, shared in the Exodus, for their remains were taken out of Egypt. (Peninei Rabbeinu Chaim Palagi Al Haggadah Shel Pesach p.250)



לֵךְ אֶל־פַּרְעֹה בַּבֹּקֶר הִנֵּה יֹצֵא הַמָּיְמָה וְנִצַּבְתָּ לִקְרָאתוֹ עַל־שְׂפַת הַיְאֹר - "***Go to Pharaoh in the morning--behold! he goes out to the water--and you shall stand opposite him at the Nile's bank.***" (Shmot 7:15)



Rashi z"l explains: "[Pharaoh] went to relieve himself. Pharaoh claimed to be a deity and asserted that, because of his divine power, he did not need to relieve himself; therefore, he used to rise early and go to the Nile, where he relieved himself in secret."

R' Mordechai Krause asks: Earlier (6:13) we read, "Hashem spoke to Moshe and Aharon and commanded them . . . regarding Pharaoh,"

which Rashi explains as a commandment to show respect to Pharaoh. - Why then did Hashem now command Moshe and Aharon to humiliate Pharaoh by intruding on his most private activity?

R' Krause answers: Pharaoh refused to subjugate himself to Hashem's command that he let Bnei Yisrael go because Pharaoh suffered from ga'avah / haughtiness.

Deep down, the essence of haughtiness is the feeling: "I am unique; there is no one above me, and it is unimaginable that I would need to humble myself before anyone." - In this vein, Pharaoh claimed (Yechezkel 29:3), "My Nile is mine, and I made myself."

In order for Hashem to be revealed in the world, Pharaoh had to be humbled, to be shown that Hashem is far more powerful than he. A necessary first step was to humiliate Pharaoh by reminding him that he could not even control his own body. (Netiv B'mayim Azim p.416)



וְהַדָּגָה אֲשֶׁר־בַּיְאֹר תָּמוּת - "***The fish that is in the water shall die . . .***" (Shmot 7:18)



R' Eliezer David Gruenwald z"l (1867-1928) asks: Why was this included in Moshe's warning to Pharaoh? Obviously, if the Nile turns to blood, all the fish will die!

He explains: Pharaoh's magicians ostensibly mimicked the plague and turned water to blood. However, what they actually did was an illusion; the water did not turn to blood but just looked like blood.

Anticipating that, Moshe warned Pharaoh, "When I turn the Nile to blood, it will be the real thing and the fish will die." (Keren L'David)



דָּם צְפַרְדֵּעַ כִּנִּים עָרוֹב דֶּבֶר שְׁחִין בָּרָד אַרְבֶּה חֹשֶׁךְ מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת

We read: **וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו מֹשֶׁה כְּצֵאתִי אֶת־הָעִיר אֶפְרֹשׂ אֶת־כַּפַּי אֶל־ה׳** - "***Moshe said, 'When I leave the city, I shall spread out my hands to Hashem*** . . .'" (Shmot 9:29) - Rashi explains- **לְפִי שֶׁהָיְתָה מְלֵאָה גִּלּוּלִים** that Moshe did not want to pray inside the city because it was full of Egyptian gods.

R' Heschel of Cracow z"l (died 1663) asks: Why was this a problem for the first time after the seventh plague? Moshe never said before that he would pray only outside of the city!

One of Egypt's gods was the sheep. Just before the seventh plague, the Torah says (9:20), **הַיָּרֵא אֶת־דְּבַר ה׳ מֵעַבְדֵי פַּרְעֹה הֵנִיס אֶת־עֲבָדָיו וְאֶת־מִקְנֵהוּ אֶל־הַבָּתִּים** - "*Whoever among the servants of Pharaoh feared the word of Hashem hurried his servants and livestock to the houses.*" - Before this plague, the sheep were in the fields, so Moshe prayed in the city. Now, the sheep were in the city, so Moshe prayed in the fields. (Chanukat Ha'Torah)



וְלֹא־יָכְלוּ מִצְרַיִם לִשְׁתּוֹת מַיִם מִן־הַיְאֹר וַיְהִי הַדָּם בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם - "***Egypt could not drink water from the river, and the blood was throughout the land of Egypt***." (Shmot 7:21)

Midrash Rabbah relates that even if an Egyptian and one of Bnei Yisrael drank from the same cup, the Egyptian would find the liquid to be blood, while the Jew would have water.

R' Yaakov Aryeh Guterman z"l (1792-1874; Chassidic Rebbe in Radzymin, Poland) notes that this miracle involving water foreshadowed the splitting of the Yam Suf.

He writes: The Gematria of "**מַיִם**" / "water" equals 91 (40+10+40, plus 1 to represent the whole word). This is equal to the combined Gematria of the Divine Name "Y-K-V-K" (a Name that denotes Divine mercy) plus the Divine Name spelled "Aleph-Dalet-Nun-Yud" (a Name that denotes Divine justice).

Both in the case of the Plague of Blood and in the case of the Splitting of the Sea, the water was an instrument of mercy to Bnei Yisrael and an instrument of justice to the Egyptians. (Bikkurei Aviv)



וַיִּשְׁלַח פַּרְעֹה וַיִּקְרָא לְמֹשֶׁה וּלְאַהֲרֹן וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם חָטָאתִי - "***Pharaoh sent and summoned Moshe and Aharon and said to them, "This time I have sinned*** . . ." (Shmot 9:27)

Why, after the plague of hail, did Pharaoh admit that he had sinned?

R' Raphael Emanuel Chai Riki z"l (1688-1743; author of Mishnat Chassidim and other works) explains: The hail destroyed the crops, which ultimately would cause famine. This reminded Pharaoh of the kindness that Yosef had done for the Egyptians, and that caused him to acknowledge that it was wrong to oppress Yosef's family. (Chosheiv Machashavot)



During the plague of locust, Pharaoh hurried to call Moshe and Aharon, and to repent. Then Pharaoh changed his mind. What happened?

R' Yehoshua Leib Diskin z"l explains that each of the previous plagues had lasted seven days. Therefore, Pharaoh thought that if he "repented" quickly, he could save his crops. However, after the locust departed, Pharaoh learned how much damage actually had been done, and he decided that there was nothing to gain from repentance.



"Life is a gift from Hashem, and it is up to us to make the most of it. We should strive to live with purpose and meaning, and to use our time on earth to do good and make a difference in the world." ~ Rabbi Yitzchok Kaduri.



רַבִּי יוֹסֵי הַגְּלִילִי אוֹמֵר

We read: וַיֶּחֱזַק לֵב פַּרְעֹה וְלֹא שִׁלַּח אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל – ***'Pharaoh's heart became strong and he did not send out Bnei Yisrael.'*** (Shmot 9:35)

Why is Pharaoh's refusal to listen to Hashem referred to as having a strong heart? Does this imply that one who does listen to Hashem is weak?

R' Baruch Ezrachi zl (Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Ateret Yisrael in Yerushalayim) explains as follows: Many commentaries asked: Was it fair to bring the plagues on Pharaoh if his heart was hardened and he could do nothing to avoid the plagues?

Ramban answers that the hardening of Pharaoh's heart did not destroy his free will; to the contrary, it restored his ability to choose. Had Pharaoh released Bnei Yisrael as a result of one of the plagues, he would not have been doing so of his own free will. Rather, he would have done so because the plagues coerced him to act.

Based on Ramban's explanation, we can understand why the Torah speaks here and elsewhere of "strengthening Pharaoh's heart." Pharaoh's heart, his will, was weakened by the plagues, and it had to be strengthened so that it would be in equilibrium. Then, and only then, would Pharaoh have free will. (Birkat Mordechai p.257)



דַּיֵּנוּ

R' Ephraim of Luntschitz z"l (17th century; author of Kli Yakar) observes that the number 15 recurs in many aspects of Jewish history and practice. For example, Pesach comes on the 15th of the month, as did the Exodus; the song "Dayenu" has 15 stanzas; the greatest glory of the Jewish kingdom occurred in the 15th generation from Avraham (i.e., under King Shlomo); the destruction of the Temple took place 15 generations later; there were 15 steps up to the Bet Hamikdash and there are 15 psalms which begin, "Shir ha'maalot" / "A song of ascents."

He explains: The number 15 alludes to the completion of Hashem's throne. Thus, when Hashem swore that His throne would not be complete until Amalek is destroyed, He used the Name which is spelled "yud-heh," i.e., whose gematria is 15 (see Shmot 17:16). This is why the greatest glory of the Jewish kingdom occurred in the 15th generation from Avraham. (King David, who battled Amalek was the 14th generation. Note that the gematria of "David" equals 14.)

The number 15 also represents one half of a lunar month. The greatest glory of the Jewish people was in the 15th generation, just as the moon's glory is fullest on the 15th day of the month. The destruction of the Temple took place 15 generations later, just as the moon disappears 15 days after it is full. King Shlomo, the 15th generation, built the Temple with 15 steps. (The fifteenth "Shir ha'maalot" psalm refers to those who stand in the "House of Hashem," i.e., the Temple.) The 15th line of Dayenu also refers to the Temple.

The Torah (Shmot 13:18) states that Bnei Yisrael left Egypt "chamushim" / "with fives." We also read (14:7) that Pharaoh chased Bnei Yisrael "with threes."

R' Ephraim explains that these verses refer to three groups of five gifts each which Hashem gave to Bnei Yisrael. The first group consists of the five ways in which the Egyptians were punished. The second group consists of the five basic necessities which Hashem provided our ancestors in the desert. The third group consists of the five special gifts which Hashem has given us as His people. All 15 of these are listed in the 15 lines of Dayenu.



"The more we seek to connect with Hashem, and live according to His will, the more we unlock our true potential and find true fulfilment in life." ~ Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto.



אִלּוּ שִׁקַּע צָרֵנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ וְלֹא סִפֵּק צָרְכֵּנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה דַּיֵּנוּ "***If He had drowned our oppressors, but had not provided for our needs in the wilderness for 40 years, it would have sufficed for us.***"

Says **R' Abdallah Somech z"l** (1813-1889; Baghdad; the fact that Hashem did provide for our needs in the wilderness for 40 years demonstrates His intentions in redeeming us from Egypt.

He explains: Once a nobleman's son was kidnapped by a duke and held hostage in the dungeon of the latter's manor. The king sent the duke a warning to release the boy, but the duke refused. Moreover, the duke sent a belligerent message back to the king. The king was incensed, and he sent a battalion of troops to destroy the duke's home and free the nobleman's son. And so it was.

People wondered, however, "Did the king do this because he was concerned about his friend's son or because he was angry at the duke?" How could they tell?

If the king's troops destroyed the duke's house and left the former prisoner on his own, then it would be apparent that the king's primary concern was the duke's disrespect. On the other hand, if the king's soldiers carried the boy home triumphantly and also brought him to the king's palace, then all would know that the king was interested in the boy's welfare.

When Hashem first sent Moshe to Pharaoh, Pharaoh responded, - מִי ה' אֲשֶׁר אֶשְׁמַע בְּקֹלוֹ -"***Who is Hashem that I should heed His voice?***" (5:2). As Chazal understand it, Pharaoh was asking, "Why hasn't Hashem sent me gifts like other foreign kings do?"

Later, when Hashem brought about the ten plagues, one could legitimately wonder whether Hashem's true motivation was Pharaoh's disrespect or the welfare of the Jewish people. However, the fact that Hashem did provide for our needs in the wilderness for 40 years demonstrates that His real interest was Bnei Yisrael.

וְסִפֵּק צָרְכֵּנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה, וְהֶאֱכִילָנוּ אֶת־הַמָּן, וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת, וְקֵרְבָנוּ לִפְנֵי הַר סִינַי, וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה, וְהִכְנִיסָנוּ לְאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבָנָה לָנוּ אֶת־בֵּית הַבְּחִירָה לְכַפֵּר עַל־כָּל־עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ

The midrash relates a parable regarding a princess who was rummaging amongst the stalks in the field in search of food until, one day, a king saw her and took her to his palace. Thereafter, the other women said to her in wonder, "Yesterday you were rummaging amongst the stalks, and today you are sitting in a royal carriage?!" She replied, "Just as you are amazed, so I am amazed."

Similarly, the midrash says, the nations of the world said to the Bnei Yisrael, "Yesterday you were slaves in Egypt and today you are the chosen people?!" Bnei Yisrael replied, "Just as you are amazed, so we are amazed."

R' Yedayah Ha'penini z"l (died 1315) explains this midrash as follows: The amazement of the gentiles and of Bnei Yisrael was for different reasons.

To the idolatrous nations who did not know Hashem and who attributed events to the stars or to nature, the ascent of Bnei Yisrael was truly beyond their understanding. A nation's rise from slavery, such as Bnei Yisrael experienced, was unnatural and unprecedented.

To Bnei Yisrael, who were aware of Hashem's abilities and who had learned from their ancestors that Hashem watches over Bnei Yisrael, the source of their amazement was different.

Bnei Yisrael in Egypt were idolators, and they expected G-d to punish them for it. They were doubly amazed — not only did Hashem not punish them, He made them His chosen nation!

What is the answer to that which caused such wonder in Bnei Yisrael?

R' Yedayah writes that Bnei Yisrael failed to realize that the Exodus took place in the merit of the Patriarchs and because of Hashem's

promise to the Patriarchs. Bnei Yisrael themselves really did not deserve to be redeemed.

Also, while Bnei Yisrael did not merit the redemption at that moment, G-d had great plans for them. Hashem redeemed them from Egypt so they could be the means of revealing His Name in this world. (Peirush Tehilim, Ch.21)



רַבָּן גַּמְלִיאֵל הָיָה אוֹמֵר: כָּל שֶׁלֹּא אָמַר שְׁלשָׁה דְּבָרִים אֵלּוּ בַּפֶּסַח, לֹא יָצָא יְדֵי חוֹבָתוֹ, וְאֵלּוּ הֵן: פֶּסַח, מַצָּה, וּמָרוֹר

Rabban Gamliel said: If a person conducted a Seder but did not mention the Korban Pesach, the matza, and the Maror, he did not fulfill his obligation.

The Jews were instructed to bring a lamb as a Korban Pesach because the Egyptians of the time worshipped the lamb, and it was necessary for the Jews to show both the Egyptians and themselves that this "god" was powerless.

To bring the point home, the animal had to be roasted whole over an open fire. In addition, the fire represents the burning furnace from which Avraham was saved. The three matzot symbolize the loaves that Sarah prepared for the three angels. The Maror represents the bitter travails of Yaakov who remained faithful to Hashem despite all his hardships.

Through these foods, we hope to remind Hashem that we, too, stuck by Him despite many difficult times. (Me'am Lo'ez)



"Prayer is the ladder that connects Earth to Heaven, enabling us to ascend to the spiritual realms and to bring down Devine abundance. ~ Sefer Orchos Tzaddikim.



זֹאת חֻקַּת הַפֶּסַח - The Mitzvah of Korban Pesach

If Bnei Yisrael needed some merit with which to be redeemed from Egypt, why did Hashem give them this particular mitzvah and not a commandment that somehow encompasses all of the 613 commandments?



R' Meir Yechiel Halevi Halstock z"l the Ostrovtser Rebbe (1852-1928) answers that the mitzvah of Korban Pesach does allude to all of the 613 commandments. Specifically, the "full gematria" of the word "Pesach" / **פסח** is 613, the number of commandments. ("Full gematria" means the gematria of a word when each of the letters of the word is spelled out the way that letter is pronounced. Thus, the "full gematria" of **פסח** = **פה סמך חת** = 85+120+408.)

This may explain as well why Hashem gave Bnei Yisrael the mitzvah of matzah while they were still in Egypt. The "full" gematria of the word "matzot" / **מצות** is also 613. (= **מם צדי ואו תיו** = 80+104+13+416 = 613.)

R' Halstock observes further: Hashem had told Avraham that his descendants would be in a foreign land for 400 years, yet Bnei Yisrael were in Egypt for only 210 years. They were redeemed 190 years early in the merit of the mitzvah of matzah.

The "full" gematria of the word "matzah" / **מצה** equals 190 (**מם צדי הא** = 80+104+6 = 190.) (Meir Enei Chachamim Vol. III, p.54)

מַצָּה זוֹ שֶׁאָנוּ אוֹכְלִים

In what way is matzah connected with freedom?

Matzah reminds us that the dough of our forefathers did not have time to rise. Matzah teaches that spiritual freedom requires mastery over time, as R' Yehuda Halevi (author of Kuzari) wrote: "***A slave of time is a slave of a slave; a slave of Hashem is a free person***."

Matzah has the same ingredients as ordinary bread; the main difference is the attention to time which making matzah requires. [If the matzah is not completed in 18 minutes, it is presumed to have become Chametz.]

Chazal often use "Chametz" as a metaphor for the evil inclination. Idleness and inattention to time allow spiritual "Chametz" to form. Positive spiritual activity, on the other hand, together with the pressure to watch and preserve valuable time, prevents this "fermentation."

The Halachah requires that matzah be made out of grains which have the potential to become Chametz. The same elements within man which often produce evil emotions are those which must be controlled by positive spiritual activity. (**R' Aharon Soloveitchik z"l**)



R' Shlomo Luria (Maharshal) writes that one should wrap the matzah in a sack, throw it over his shoulder, and walk around the room in this manner saying, "*This is how our ancestors left Egypt, their belongings tied to their clothes, on their shoulders*."

R' Shlomo Kluger explains this custom as follows: Hashem told Moshe, "When Bnei Yisrael leave Egypt, they should not leave empty-handed. Rather, each woman should borrow items of value from her neighbor, etc." Isn't this verse redundant? If each woman is borrowing things from her neighbor, of course they will not leave Egypt empty-handed!

The Gemara says that after slaughtering the Korban Pesach in the Bet Hamikdash, each Jew would carry it home, thrown over his shoulder the way an Arab carries his load.

Why is it important for the Gemara to tell us that the Korban was carried like an Arab's load?



To remind us that the reason the Jews ended up in Egypt in the first place was that Yosef's brothers sold him to a caravan of Arabs.

Did the Jews deserve to be paid for the work that they did in Egypt? Only if they were subjugated unfairly. However, since we now know that this exile was a punishment for the sale of Yosef, apparently the Jews did not deserve to be paid. This is why the Jews could only borrow items from their Egyptians neighbors. [Ed. note: R' Kluger does explain why the Jews were nevertheless allowed to keep what they "borrowed," but that does not directly relate to our question.]

To remind Bnei Yisrael of this, Hashem told Moshe, "The Jews should not go empty-handed." They should carry these items in their own hands, and not place them on the animals or wagons. More explicitly, they should carry these items on their shoulders the way an Arab carries his load, so that they would be reminded of the reason that they went to Egypt in the first place.

This is what Maharshal tells us to do: We too should know why our ancestors were enslaved in Egypt. Carrying the matzah around the room on our shoulders reminds us of the reason. (Yeriot Shlomo)

כִּי גֹרְשׁוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם וְלֹא יָכְלוּ לְהִתְמַהְמֵהַּ



The Torah tells us that the Exodus occurred be'chipazon / hurriedly. **וַאֲכַלְתֶּם אֹתוֹ בְּחִפָּזוֹן** (Shemos 12:11)

But why, asks **R' Shlomo Kluger z"l** (1783-1869; rabbi of Brody, Galicia), do we place so much emphasis on this detail of the Exodus?

He explains with a parable: There were once two dear friends – call them Reuven and Shimon – who helped each other in every possible way. One day, Reuven was arrested and charged with a serious crime. As he was being led away, he cried bitterly, "Save me, my friend." His friend, Shimon, called after him, "Don't worry! I will do everything I can, and I will not rest until I have rescued you."

Reuven was taken to a dark jail cell and was locked away. One month passed, then another, but Reuven never gave up hope of being rescued. He knew Shimon would knock on every door until Reuven's innocence had been proven and he would be released.

A year passed, and then another, and doubt began to creep into Reuven's mind. Perhaps Shimon had forgotten him? "No! Shimon promised to save me, and he will."

As Reuven sat there musing thus, he thought he heard a distant sound of metal banging on rock. For several days, this sound continued, until one day several bricks popped out of the wall and Shimon's head appeared through the hole. "Hurry," Shimon whispered. "Let's get out of here."

Reuven was beside himself with joy, not only because he had been rescued, but also because the sudden manner in which Shimon had appeared showed Reuven that Shimon had never forgotten him. All of these years, Shimon had been planning and preparing Reuven's rescue.

Similarly, explains R' Kluger, Hashem's sudden appearance in Egypt and His hurried rescue of the Jewish people demonstrated that He had been planning their salvation for a long time and was merely waiting for all the pieces to fall into place.

The prophet tells us (Michah 7:15), "*As in the days when you left Egypt, I will show you wonders [at the time of the Final Redemption*]."

After two millennia in exile, we might think that Hashem has abandoned us. It's not true, writes R' Kluger. The Final Redemption will demonstrate also that Hashem never forgot us. This is why we take pains to remember the '*chipazon*' aspect of the Exodus.

[Haste or Chiapazon means "deliberate speed". It means - Do not procrastinate and waste time but proceed directly to the cause. We should make *haste* and not hurry.]



פֶּסַח, מַצָּה, וּמָרוֹר

Why do we always say "Pesach, matzah, and maror" (mentioning maror last) when the matzah and the Pesach sacrifice commemorate the redemption which came after the "bitterness" of the exile?

We know that the exile in Egypt had a purpose. According to **R' Chaim Yosef David Azulai z"l** (Chida), it helped prepare Bnei Yisrael to receive the Torah. However, during the dark days of slavery, the Jews could undoubtedly not appreciate this. Only later, after the redemption, did they understand why the bitterness was necessary.

To truly appreciate Maror we must discuss it after the Pesach and matzah. (Bnei Yissachar)



"If you want to know how far you can go, you must first find out how far you are willing to push yourself." ~ Lubavitcher Rebbe.



שְׂמֵחִים בְּבִנְיַן עִירֶךָ וְשָׂשִׂים בַּעֲבוֹדָתֶךָ. וְנֹאכַל שָׁם מִן הַזְּבָחִים וּמִן הַפְּסָחִים

In the berachah which concludes the "Maggid" portion of the Seder, we say, ***"[W]e shall rejoice in the rebuilding of Your city and shall be joyful in Your Temple service; and there we shall eat of the sacrifices and the Pesach offerings*** . . ." What are we saying? Is it in order to eat of the sacrifices that we pray for the rebuilding of the Bet Hamikdash?

R' Yaakov Kranz z"l (the "Dubno Maggid"; died 1804) answered this question with a parable: A merchant once hired a wagon and wagon-driver to take him home from the market with the goods he had purchased. On the way, they stopped at an inn to eat. When they came out, a shock awaited them, for the unattended wagon had been robbed of all of its contents.

The merchant turned white but said nothing. In contrast, the wagon-driver fell on the ground in bitter tears, screaming, "Woe is me! My raincoat is gone! My umbrella is gone! What will be with me?"

All the other visitors to the inn began to chastise the wagon-driver: "Your passenger, who has lost thousands of rubles in merchandise, is standing by silently, and you are crying hysterically for a raincoat and umbrella?!"

"Yes," answered the wagon-driver. "You see, my passenger's goods were insured. He has lost nothing. However, I depend on my raincoat and umbrella to help me earn my living. While my loss may be objectively small, to me it is a real loss."

So, too, said the Dubno Maggid, eating the sacrifices may seem like a small, even insignificant, part of the Temple service, but it is the only part that is really lost. Are we not taught that when one studies the laws of the sacrifices, it is as if he had brought those sacrifices to the Bet Hamikdash? If so, Hashem is receiving our offerings even though there is no Temple. We, however, are missing our share of the sacrifices — the part that we would be eating if real sacrifices

could be brought in the Temple — and it is for this that we pray. (Quoted in Sha'arei Armon p. 161)



רָחְצָה

Although the "Kadeish U'Rechatz" poem **קדש, ורחץ, כרפס, יחץ, מגיד, רחצה, מוציא, מצה, מרור, כורך, שולחן עורך, צפון, ברך, הלל, נרצה.** is, in its most simple meaning, the order of service that we follow at the Seder, numerous commentaries see it also as a complete plan for a Torah way of life.

One of its messages is: "First '**קדש ורחץ**' - 'Sanctify and wash (purify) yourself' - and only later, '**מגיד רחצה**' - 'Tell others to wash themselves'." (Haggadah Shel Pesach Zichron Niflaot and others)



מוֹצִיא מַצָה

R' Moshe Sternbuch shlita writes: Feeling joy when performing mitzvot is always considered one of the highest forms of service of G-d.

We should feel especially joyous when eating matzah, for Chazal teach that this mitzvah, properly fulfilled, can save one from judgment on Rosh Hashanah. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Moadim U'Zmanim)



R' David Hakochavi z"l (approx. 1260-1330; Avignon, France) writes: When one contemplates the mitzvah of eating matzah, one sees the Torah's perfection. How so?

G-d wished to prohibit us from eating chametz. Had the prohibition been for only one or two days, it would not have made the necessary impression. Therefore, the prohibition on eating chametz lasts for a week [eight days in the Diaspora].

In contrast, we are not commanded to eat matzah for seven days. One's obligation to eat matzah is only on the first night [the first two nights in the Diaspora], and only one kezayit [a very small volume].

Why is there this difference between the prohibition on eating chametz and the commandment to eat matzah?

Because the Torah takes into account the fact that too much matzah can make a person ill. (Migdal David: mitzvah 151)



שֻׁלְחָן עוֹרֵךְ

This expression literally means "He is setting the table" (in the present tense), and it alludes to G-d.

The story is told of a beggar who "worked" the homes of his neighborhood for only two hours a day, yet collected more than any of the beggars who struggled from door to door all afternoon long.

When he was asked the secret of his success, the beggar said, "I knock on doors only at mealtimes. Since the table is already set, no one minds feeding me as well. You, however, arrive at the houses when people are busy with other things, and they cannot be bothered to open the kitchen just for you."

Hashem, says **R' Yosef Chaim of Baghdad**, is not like a human. He (G-d) is always "setting the table" for us and thus we find sustenance at all times. (Sefer Orach Chaim: Peirush Al Haggadah Shel Pesach)



"Trusting in Hashem means living a life of hope. When we trust in Him, we know that no matter what happens, there is always a reason to believe that things will get better." ~ Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto.



בָּרֵךְ

The Gemara says that after a person eats, he has only one heart.- What does this mean?

Before a person eats, he has a yetzer tov / "good inclination" and yetzer hara / "evil inclination". After he eats, however, he has only one. If he has eaten "For the sake of Heaven," the yetzer tov subjugates the bad, but if he ate merely too fulfill his own desires, then it is the yetzer tov that is subjugated.

Reciting Birkat Ha'mazon enables the yetzer tov to prevail, for in it we acknowledge that all food is G-d's. (**Haggadat R' Tzadok Hakohen**)



הַלֵּל

The paragraphs of Hallel are divided at the Seder into two groups, one of which is recited before the meal and the other after. (To see this division, compare Hallel as found in the Haggadah with Hallel as found in the Siddur.)

Malbim explains that the section recited before the meal contains two paragraphs: one describes G-d's greatness in general terms, and the other deals specifically with the Exodus. These paragraphs are closely related to the story we tell tonight and are therefore recited immediately upon concluding the mitzvah of "Maggid" and just before eating the matzah.

In contrast to these, the paragraphs of Hallel which are recited after the meal are interpreted by Chazal as referring to the future, not the past, redemption. As such, they are more appropriately placed after our performance of the major Pesach mitzvot (matzah, Maror, etc.), for then we can look ahead to the future. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Im Be'ur Midrash Haggadah)



נִרְצָה

In the poems and songs of this section of the Haggadah we pray that all of the "Tefilot" which we have recited at the Seder be accepted by Hashem. If one has performed all of the Seder according to Halacha, he may feel confident that his service has indeed been accepted by G-d. We should pray that we may see the fulfillment of the verse: **כִּימֵי צֵאתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אַרְאֶנּוּ נִפְלָאוֹת** - "***As in the days of your Exodus from Egypt, I [G-d] will [again] show you great wonders***." (Micha 7:15) Then we can confidently proclaim: "Next year in Yerushalayim." (Haggadah Shel Pesach MiBeit HaLevi - Brisk)



חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא

R' Yitzchak Isaac Chaver z"l (1789-1852; rabbi of Suvalk, Lithuania, and a prolific author in all areas of Torah study) explains this poem as an allusion to all of Jewish history.

"One kid goat" refers to the Jewish People, as is written (Yechezekel 34:17), "You are My flock." The Jewish People is called "one," as in the verse (Divrei Ha'yamim I 17:21), "Who is like Your nation, Yisrael, one nation in the land." In particular, the Jewish People, a nation that is stubborn and brazen (in Hebrew, "**עז** "/" az"), is likened to a goat (in Hebrew, "aiz").

"That father bought for two zuzim" is an allusion to the sacrificial service, toward which every person contributed half a shekel, i.e., two zuzim, every year. The sacrificial service atones for the sins that result from our stubbornness and brazenness.

"Then a cat came and ate the kid goat" refers to the sale of Yosef by his brothers, after which the brothers slaughtered a kid goat.

"Then came a dog" refers to the exile in Egypt, which resulted from the sale of Yosef.

"Then came a stick" refers to Moshe's staff [which assisted in bringing about the Exodus].

"Then came a fire" refers to the sin of the Golden Calf, to which one can apply the verse (Iyov 31:12), "For it is a fire, it consumes until doom."

"Then came water" refers to Moshe's prayers, which are likened to water, as in the verse (Eichah 2:19), "Pour out your heart like water."

"Then came an ox" refers to the golden calves erected by King Yerovam [in the First Temple period; see Melachim I 12:28]. These new calves undid the atonement that Moshe's prayer had achieved and reawakened the "fire" of the Golden Calf.

"Then came the shochet" refers to the Anshei Ha'knesset Ha'gedolah/ Men of the Great Assembly [at the beginning of the Second Temple period] who prayed successfully that the Yetzer Ha'ra for idolatry be "slaughtered," i.e., eradicated from the Jewish People.

"Then came the angel of death" refers to sin'at chinam / unjustified hatred that led to the destruction of the Second Temple and our present long exile.

"Then came Ha'Kadosh Baruch Hu" alludes to the eventual fulfillment of the verse (Yeshayah 11:11), "On that day, Hashem will again show His Hand to acquire the remnant of His people." At that time, [in the words of Yeshayah (25:8)], "He will eliminate death forever."

Then, concludes R' Chaver, He will enlighten our eyes with a clear light - speedily in our days, Amen! (Haggadah Shel Pesach Yad Mitzrayim)



"When a person has reason to cry out, and wishes to cry out, but he cannot cry out – this is the greatest of cries." ~ The Kotzker Rebbe zt"l.



R' Yitzchak Ze'ev Soloveitchik z"l (the Brisker Rav; died 1959) used to say: One must take care to nap on Erev Pesach so that he can stay awake all night relating the story of the Exodus.

He said: "Why are so many people meticulous to stay awake on Shavuot night, which is merely a custom, while they neglect the halachah / law that one should try to stay awake all of Pesach night?"



A chassid visited his Rebbe before Pesach. The Rebbe noticed that the chassid was sad. "What's wrong?" the Rebbe asked. The chassid told the Rebbe that to bake matzos he had set aside wheat which had been watched from the time of the harvest, and it had completely disappeared. Now he would only be able to prepare matzos from wheat which had not been watched from the time of its harvest.

The Rebbe answered, "I understand that you want to fulfill the mitzva of matzah in the best way, but don't forget - the mitzvah of *simcha* during the *chag* is also a mitzva from the Torah!"



The Weekly Vort

● **כל המחלה אשר שמתי במצרים לא אשים עליך כי אני ה' רפאך** - ***...any illness that I put on Egypt, I will not bring upon you, for I am Hashem Who heals you*** (15:26).

There is a dispute in the Haggadah among the Tana'im as to how many punishments were included in each *makkah*. Why must we know the exact number of plagues inflicted upon Egypt? The Vilna Gaon answers using the above *pasuk*. Hashem told Klal Yisroel, "If you listen to Hashem… then any of the illnesses that I put on Egypt, I will not bring upon you."



● **הרם את מטך** – ***Lift your staff*** (14:16).

R' Bechaye says that "lift your staff" means: "Moshe, **remove** the stick from your hand. People have said that you can perform no wonders without your stick. Leave it and tell the sea to split."

Bnei Yisroel possess a special talent to turn impurity to purity. Thus, in the Haggadah we recount the inglorious beginnings of the nation ("Initially our fathers were idol worshippers…") as it was this very status that they transformed into a force for good. Likewise, their exposure to the decadence of Egyptian culture enabled them to achieve great levels of sanctity as they became disgusted with the spiritual impurity of the land. (**Maharal**) (The Haggadah Anthology)

Pesach Stories (From Otzrotaihem Shel Tzaddikim)

Once, when a student of **R' Yitzchak Ze'ev Soloveitchik z"l (the Brisker Rav; died 1959)** was returning to his home in Bnei Brak, the Brisker Rav said, "Please tell your father that I wish him a `Chag Sameach,' and that the holiday should pass with no shailos [i.e., that no questions should arise regarding whether chametz had found its way into the food or into the pots and pans]."

The Brisker Rav added: "Do not think that this is a small blessing. I remember that when I was a child, my father [**R' Chaim Brisker z"l**] once said to my mother after Pesach, `Thank G-d the holiday passed with no shailos.' He spoke then the way a person speaks after successfully undergoing difficult surgery."

"A shailah in those days was not like a shailah today. If a question arose in someone's kitchen, and all of his pots and dishes were declared chametz. Today, rabbis are so much more likely to accept a lenient opinion among the poskim / halachic authorities."

R' Yechiel Meir of Gostynin z"l, barely slept all Pesach. His family worried about his health and asked him why he wouldn't sleep. - "If I had won the lottery, would you ask me why I couldn't sleep? Believe me! Every minute of Pesach is like winning the lottery."

What did he mean by this? Why did he feel more fortunate on Pesach than on any other day?

The Amshinover Rebbe explained: Our Sages say that chametz represents the yetzer hara. Thus, Pesach is a time that is free of the yetzer hara. Every minute of such a time is priceless.

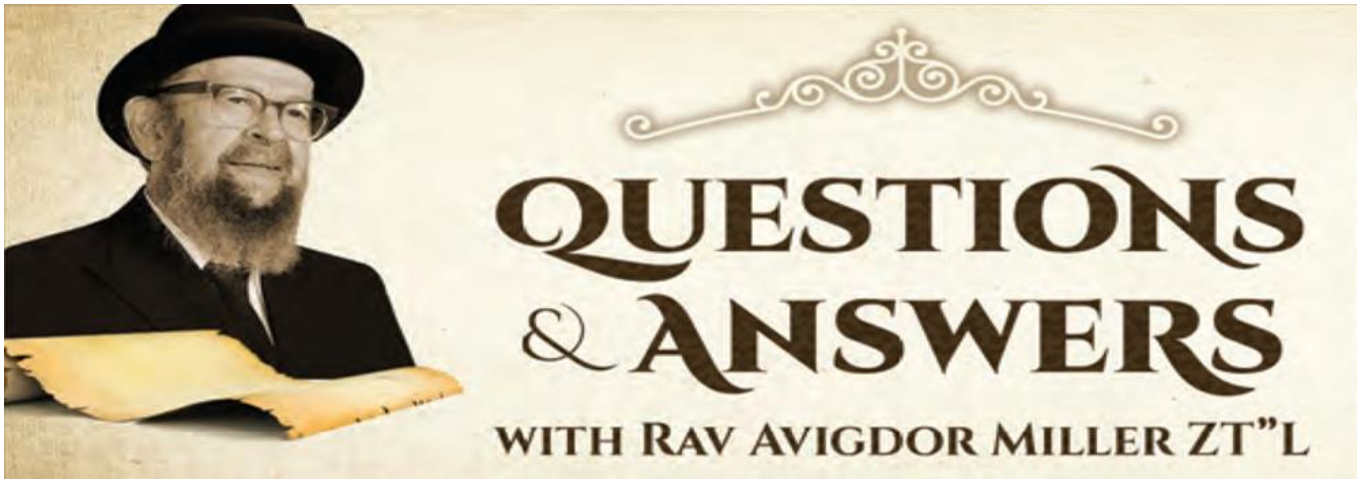
EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON MIDDOS TOVOS FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO דרגת יתירה

In order to truly experience the *Zman Cheiruseinu*, you are obligated to see yourself as if YOU left *Mitzrayim*!

There are those who actually act out the *Pesach* story as they read the *Haggadah* on the night of the *Seder*. They create a virtual *yetzias Mitzrayim* and imagine themselves leaving slavery and becoming free people. This can be taken literally or figuratively, but either way it must be taken to heart.

Getting out of your own personal Egypt, whatever it is you are enslaved to, entails getting the ten *makkos* out of our system. Although we did not experience the ten plagues in *Mitzrayim*, the ten plagues have seeped into us in this long and difficult *galus*. We can free ourselves of all that plagues us in our lives.

We all go through times of "*Mitzrayim*" in our lives! Both on a collective and on an individual level. But now we are entering the Time of Freedom. Now is the time to rid ourselves of the slavery, the hardships, the plagues and take *Mitzrayim* out of ourselves. We must liberate ourselves with *Emunah* in *Hashem* to be *zoche* to see all the great miracles that await us at this great time of redemption.





Do you approve of celebrating Pesach in a hotel?

And the answer is I do not. I definitely disapprove of hotels for Pesach.

Now, some hotels are definitely not kosher lePesach despite the fact that they say so; but I'm not talking about that. And some hotels are kosher lePesach but they provide other kinds of activities that are not in consummate with Pesach spirit; and I'm certainly not talking about that either. I'm talking about a hotel where there are no Broadway shows. There's not even a television there. There's nothing there except *seforim* in the *beis hamedrash* and everything is 100% kosher – even better than in your own home. And still I say Pesach is a home celebration. The *Seder* is *kodesh kodoshim* in your own sanctuary, your own Beis Hamikdash.

It's an opportunity given by Hakadosh Baruch Hu that is intended to raise the spirit of the home. **אִישׁ שֶׂה לְבֵית אָבֹת שֶׂה לַבָּיִת** . Pesach is for a family, that's what it is. And the father gets together with his children in the hallowed atmosphere of the *Seder,* and he hands over to his children the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim, the birth of our people. Not some official singer or a *chazan* or even an official rabbi.

The father! The father represents the whole background of Jewish tradition; and every child should be able to say, "My own father is

handing this over to me like his father handed it over to him; and the chain goes back, link by link, to Har Sinai, link by link to Yetzias Mitzrayim." That's what Pesach should be. The home becomes a holy place.

I definitely disapprove of going away for Pesach. There are no two ways about it.



On **שְׁבִיעִי שֶׁל פֶּסַח תשס"א**, **Horav Avigdor Miller זצ"ל** was not feeling well. However, he insisted on going downstairs to his shul to daven Shachris with a minyan.

To everyone's surprise, before Birchas Kohhanim, he even went down to the basement to wash his hands so that he could duchen!

This was the last tefillah that he davened with a minyan, and he was niftar on **כז ניסן**.

The Weekly Vort

An Opening for Eliyahu Ha'navi

One Shabbos Chol HaMoed Pesach, **R' Aryeh Levine** went to the prison in Yerushalayim for his usual Shabbos visit to the young men interned by the British for their underground activities to gain Israel's independence. R' Aryeh was curious to know how the prisoners had managed with their seder.

One prisoner answered him with a smile, "We had a wonderful time, in high spirits. We observed the seder quite properly, with all the details. There was only one difficulty: When we said "*Sh'foch chamascha*" we could not open the door for Eliyahu HaNavi."

"You know," said R' Aryeh, "you are making a mistake. Every man is put in a prison of his own self. He cannot leave it by going out of the door of his house, but only through the door of the heart. And to make an opening for himself in his own heart - that anyone can do, even a prisoner behind bars. And then he will be truly free - in spiritual freedom." (A Tzaddik in our Time)



An Incredible Afikomen Story

When the father-in-law of the great *tzaddik* Rav Shlomah Eiger *zt"l* passed away, he left a last will and testament which stated that whichever one of his children or grandchildren would name a baby boy after him first, would receive an inheritance worth 40,000 rubles. Such a large amount was practically unheard of at the time, and as *mazel* would have it, Rav Shlomah's wife was in the latter stages of pregnancy.

Within a few short months a baby boy was born and of course Rav Shlomah named his son after his father-in-law. Unfortunately, the baby was not well, and the doctors did not think the child would make it. In less than thirty days the sick baby succumbed to his illness.

A bit later, another son-in-law was blessed with a healthy baby boy. This son-in-law also called the baby after his father-in-law and this baby did survive. Now a question arose; Who should claim the 40,000 ruble inheritance?

Rav Shlomah insisted that under the terms of the will, the one who gave the name to his baby boy first would receive the inheritance, notwithstanding the fact that the child did not survive. His brother-in-law, however, argued vehemently that the purpose of naming the

child after their father-in-law was only so that the child should live and perpetuate his name. Thus, he believed that the inheritance should be given to him. The only recourse was to go to a Rov and settle the matter according to halachah.

The two respected claimants came to the Warsaw Beis Din, which was under the auspices of the renowned *Chemdas Shlomah*, Rav Shlomah Zalman Lifshitz *zt"l*. Each side presented his claim and Rav Shlomah listened attentively. After a few moments of deep concentration, he told them he would need thirty days to contemplate the matter and afterwards he would render a decision.

A month later, on the appointed day, Rav Shlomah Eiger and his brother-in-law found themselves back in Warsaw in front of the *Chemdas Shlomah*. With little fanfare he explained how he had reached his decision and ruled in favour of the other son-in-law.

Rav Shlomah Eiger was crestfallen. He had reviewed time and again all the angles of the case and had been sure that he would win. He had ample proof in the event that it would be necessary, and now Rav Shlomah Zalman would not listen. He had made up his mind and his ruling was final.

In exasperation, Rav Shlomah Eiger turned to the elderly Rov and said, "With all due respect this cannot be. If my father (the great Rav Akiva Eiger) would hear this case, I don't think he would rule as you did…"

Rav Shlomah Zalman didn't flinch. In fact, to the contrary, he broke out into a broad smile. "Let me tell you a story that happened many years ago with the holy rebbe, Rav Heschel of Krakow *zt"l*. When he was a young child, he was once sitting at the Pesach *Seder*, next to his father. He was a clever child and he managed to sneak the *afikoman* away from his father without his father realizing.

When the time for *tzofun* came his father looked about and saw that his *afikoman* was gone. Immediately, he turned to his son Heschel

and asked for it back. The young boy smiled and said he would return it but only on condition his father buy him a silk *kapote*." He continued, "the ancient custom of bargaining over the *afikoman* ensued but Heschel wouldn't budge. His father checked the time and realized that he had no choice but to give in. Heschel brought out the wrapped piece of *matzah* and ceremoniously handed it over to his father. His father began breaking off pieces and giving them to each member of the family. He gave one piece to every person present – except to Heschel.

'What about me father?' asked the boy.

"A sly grin crossed his father's face and he said, 'Okay, if you want a piece of the *afikoman* you must take back your demand for the silk *kapote*. Otherwise, I will not give you any *matzah* and you will not be able to fulfil the mitzvah.' His father grinned triumphantly. 'Fair is fair.'

"But young Heschel was not to be outdone. He reached under the table and pulled out a small piece of *matzah*. Grinning like a child who just won an unlimited supply of sweets he announced, 'Father, I had a feeling you would do this, so I came prepared. I broke off a piece of the *afikoman* before I gave it back to you!' The child prodigy Heschel munched happily, and his father sat back stunned and defeated."

The *Chemdas Shlomah* now looked at his eminent guest, Rav Shlomah Eiger. "When I took this case, I had a feeling that you might not be happy with my ruling and try to 'pull rank' on me by bringing your esteemed father into the fray. So, like Rav Heschel of Krakow, I, too, came prepared. I asked for thirty days so that I could present the case in writing to your father, Rav Akiva Eiger. He sent me back his response, which is in total agreement with my ruling!" Rav Shlomah Zalman then pulled out the letter and handed it to the stunned claimant. (Rav Dovid Hoffman)

The Priorities In Life Are Never Placed In The Checked Baggage

The Jewish people are about to leave Mitzrayim. Pharaoh is finally willing and indeed anxious to send out everyone – men, women, children, flocks, and cattle. Everyone and everything the Jews wanted to take out of Egypt could now leave with them. The *pasuk* tells us: "The people picked up their dough when it had not yet become leavened, their leftovers bound up in their garments upon their shoulders" (*Shemos* 12:34). Rashi says the term "leftovers" refers to the *matzah* and *marror* left over from the previous night's meal. It was this that they carried in their little knapsacks on their shoulders as they left Mitzrayim.

We are all familiar with what our dining room floor looks like after the *Seder*. It looks like a *matzah* factory with pieces of lettuce spread all over the place! What do we do? We sweep it up and throw it out.

The Jews at that "1st *Seder*" in Mitzrayim did not sweep the leftovers up and throw them out. They swept them up, wrapped them up, and put them in knapsacks, which they carried out of Mitzrayim on their shoulders! Rashi adds that even though they had many animals on which they could have placed these packages, they carried them themselves to show their love of the *mitzvos*.

A person does not throw the most precious item into the donkey's saddlebag. It can fall out. It can get lost. If something is very special, you take it with you in your "hand luggage". No one ever places valuables into their "checked baggage" on airplanes. People carry their most precious items on themselves.

Rav Simcha Zissel asks: The *pasuk* just stated that they borrowed gold and silver vessels. Where did they put them? Apparently, they put the gold and the silver on the donkeys but the leftover pieces of *matzah* and *marror* they carried on their own shoulders.

Klal Yisrael understood what is important and what is not important; what must be a priority in life and what is not a priority in life. The gold and silver was "replaceable". The *matzah* and *marror*, which represented the miraculous redemption from Mitzrayim, and which represented their relationship with the Almighty, was "irreplaceable." That was not something that could be entrusted to the donkeys. They carried it on their shoulders. (R' Frand)

Short Vorts

(The following short divrei Torah come from Rabbi Ephraim Nisenbaum's sefer called Power Points)

וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר - "*You shall speak to your child on that day* …" (*Shemos* 13:8)



The primary focus of the Pesach *Seder* is to transmit the fundamentals of Judaism from one generation to the next. It is the parent's responsibility to pass on to their children not only the information, but also the importance of these fundamentals.

A couple once asked **Rav Aharon Leib Steinman** for a blessing that they enjoy *nachas* from their children.

"Your *nachas* will be commensurate with the degree to which your child understands the *nachas* you would like to receive from him!" Rav Steinman replied.

אוֹר לְאַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר בּוֹדְקִין אֶת הֶחָמֵץ לְאוֹר הַנֵּר - "*We search for chametz by the light of a candle* … " (Pesachim 2a)



The Steipler Gaon used to say that the search for *chametz* is the most difficult of all *mitzvos* to perform. He himself would spend hours sprawled on the floor, cleaning and searching every nook and cranny for *chametz*.

He used to say, "It's worth searching one's house for *chametz* for seventy years, just to find a piece of *chametz* once! May Hashem protect us from transgressing with even a crumb of *chametz*."

The Kabbalists say that a person who is meticulous about not eating a crumb of *chametz* during Pesach, will receive special Divine assistance not to sin through the entire year.

וְלֹא־יֵרָאֶה לְךָ חָמֵץ - "*No chametz may be seen in your possession*…" (Shemos 13:7)

The Strikover Rav once remarked, "So many people ask me questions before Pesach. Some ask how to *kasher* silverware that was used with *chametz*, in order to use it for Pesach. Others ask how to *kasher chametz* pots for cooking Pesach food.

"I find it strange, though, that nobody ever asks me how to *kasher* a mouth that is filled with slander and improper speech, before using it to recite the *Haggadah* at the *Seder*."

תַּשְׁבִּיתוּ שְׂאֹר מִבָּתֵּיכֶם - *"You must destroy leavening from your houses …"* (Shemos 12:15)

The Apter Rav once had a distinguished guest in his home for Pesach. The guest had many stringencies regarding *chametz,* and the Rav duly complied with them. When the maid, however, mistakenly forgot once of the guest's stringencies, the guest became quite angry at her.

The Rav gently admonished him. "You agree that your stringency, although acceptable, is a bit far-fetched. After all, even if there had been a bit of *chametz* in the house, it would have become nullified before Pesach. Anger, on the other hand, even a trace of it, cannot be nullified at any time!".

[**Rabbi Avraham Yehoshua Heschel** (1755- 5 Nissan 1825) the Apter Rebbe, was a main disciple of the Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhinsk. He is also often referred to as *"the Ohev Yisrael,"* both after the title of the famous book of his teachings, and also because its meaning ("Lover of Jews") fits him so aptly.]

הָא לַחְמָא עַנְיָא דִּי אֲכָלוּ אַבְהָתָנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרָיִם - *"This is the bread of affliction that our forefathers ate in Egypt…"* (*Haggadah*)

Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev once heard that the owners of the *matzah* bakeries were working the young women who kneaded and rolled the dough from early morning until late at night. He approached the owners and cried, "Anti-Semites in various countries have often accused the Jews of using Christian blood for their matzos. That is, of course, a lie. Rather, it is the blood of the young Jewish women being overworked in the bakeries that is being misused!"

The meticulous care needed for the Pesach preparation is no excuse for hurting another person.

לְפִיכָךְ אֲנַחְנוּ חַיָּבִים לְהוֹדוֹת, לְהַלֵּל, לְשַׁבֵּחַ... לְמִי שֶׁעָשָׂה לַאֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ אֶת־כָּל־ הַנִּסִּים הָאֵלּוּ - *"Therefore, we must thank, laud, praise, glorify, exalt … to the One Who performed these miracles…" (Haggadah)*

The Vilna Gaon connects the ten expressions of praise listed to the ten plagues. Each plague from which the Jews were spared was cause for a new expression of praise.

Rav Yechezkel Abramsky admonished people to praise Hashem for everything they experience, and not only for great miracles. Pesach serves as a catalyst to remind us to thank Hashem for all year long.

A person once sponsored a *kiddush* on Shabbos. He Related that he had been involved in a car accident and walked away uninjured. The *kiddush* was an expression of his gratitude to Hashem.

The following week, his friend sponsored a *kiddush*. When asked if there was some special occasion he was marking, he replied, "After last week's *kiddush,* I realized that I have been driving more than twenty-five years, and I have never been involved in an accident. Why should I wait for an accident to occur before I express my gratitude?!

שְׁפֹךְ חֲמָתְךָ אֶל־הַגּוֹיִם -*"Pour out Your wrath upon the nations…"* (Haggadah)

At the Seder, before reciting *Shefoch Chamoscha,* **the Kotzker Rebbe** sent one of his disciples to open the door for Eliyahu HaNavi.

The student eagerly ran to the door, hoping to catch a glimpse of the great prophet. Unfortunately, there was no one at the door. When he returned, the Rebbe noticed the disappointed expression on his face.

"Let me tell you something," the Rebbe remarked. "Eliyahu doesn't come through the door; he comes through the heart!"

וְעֶצֶם לֹא תִשְׁבְּרוּ בּוֹ - "*You shall not break a bone in it [the Pesach offering]*" (*Shemos* 12:46)

Rav Chaim Mordechai Katz admonished his students not to drink directly from a bottle or can. He would say that a Jew, and especially a student of Torah, must always conduct himself in a more refined manner, and should drink from a cup.

Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer once sent a group of top students to the **Alter of Slabodka** to be tested. Later the two rabbis spoke about the students. The Alter predicted that one of the students would not become very great. Rav Isser Zalman was surprised, as he thought that this young man showed great promise.

The Alter explained that he had placed cups of tea in front of the students and some sugar had spilled on the tablecloth. This student has dipped his finger in the sugar and then licked his finger. The Alter felt that such poor manners showed a lack of self-respect and signified a serious character flaw. Indeed, the young man did become a rabbi, but he was later dismissed from his position. Eventually, he was arrested for being involved in financial improprieties.

Why We Give Kimcha De'Pischa for Pesach More than Other Yomim Tovim?

The *Rema* (*Orach Chaim* 529:1) writes: "There is a *minhag* to buy wheat and give it out to the poor for Pesach". The question is, why do we only find such a *takonah* by Pesach and not by the other Yom Tovim?

The *Sha'ar HaTziyon* (429:10) offers two answers:

The first answer he says is: "Pesach is a time of freedom, and everyone is at home reclining, full of joy, and it is dishonourable to Hashem that the poor of Yisroel should be hungry and thirsty at this

time. Therefore, we give them all the flour they require for the duration of Pesach, so that they will be able to recount the tale of the Redemption with joy."

The second answer he brings is that the Yom Tov of Pesach is special in that bread, the staple food of a person's diet during the year, is prohibited. Because *matzah* is hard to purchase, which can lead to the poor people's going hungry, or even to their transgression of the prohibition (*chas vesholam*), it was enacted that they should be specially provided for.

The *Kav HaYosher* (*Perek* 91) answers: On Pesach we are judged for *tevuah* [crop], and it is decided how much *berachah* each person should receive. The more *tzedokah* one gives, the more *berachah* he will receive. To ensure that we receive lots of *berachah, Chazal* enacted that people give *tzedokah*.

The Belzer Rebbe (R' Yissochar Dov) answers: It's well known that on Yom Tov, one is supposed to make poor people happy, and invite them for a meal. On Pesach, the *minhag* is that people eat in their own homes, and don't eat out, as each person has his own *chumros*. As a result, poor people receive less invites. To ensure the poor people still have what to eat, they enacted the giving of *ma'os chittin*.

The *Chochmas Shlomah* (*Orach Chaim* 429) offers a novel reason, he writes: "It appears to me, that the reason behind the custom is, that we say in *Ha Lachma Anya*, 'anyone who is needy come and eat', and truth be told if a poor person would turn up we would probably send him away. Therefore, in order to make it that we aren't telling lies on *Seder* night, the custom was enacted to give *ma'os chittim*. That way, if a poor person would come and we would turn him down, we can say to him, I only invited the needy, and you aren't needy as I already gave you *ma'os chittim* before Pesach. If you spent it in other things that's your fault. This appears to me to be a good reason for the custom."

R' Yonsan Eibshitz (*Ya'ares Devash* Vol. 1, *Derush* 15) answers that the month of Nissan represents *tzedokah*, like it says, "in the merit of *tzedokah* Yisroel will be redeemed", therefore, we give lots of *tzedokah*.

Some answer very simply, that the expenses of Pesach are more than any other Yom Tov.

Why Do Many People Use Round *Matzos*?



Rav Yehuda Assad (*Shu"t Yehuda Ya'aleh* 1:157) offers several reasons for this custom. He notes that the Torah says (*Shemos* 12:39) that as the Jewish people left Egypt, they baked their dough into: **עוגות מצות** - unleavened cakes. The term **עוגה** is often used to connote a round shape (e.g., *Ta'anis* 19a), so we also make our *matzos* round.

The *Rema* writes (*Orach Chaim* 476:2) that many people have the custom to eat an egg at the *Seder* as a symbol of mourning, as Tisha B'Av falls on the same night of the week as the first night of Pesach.

The *Pri Megodim* adds that eggs are also a sign of mourning for the death of Avrohom, who passed away on Erev Pesach. Rashi writes (*Bereishis* 25:30) that the connection between eggs and mourning is based on the round shape of an egg. For this reason, we also eat round *matzos* as an expression of mourning the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdosh* and the death of Avrohom.

The Egyptians ate square bread with several corners representing their multiple deities, while the Jewish slaves ate round bread. To remember this distinction, we also use round *matzos*.

The *sefer HaDerash V'HaIyun* cites the Ibn Ezra (*Vayikra* 2:4), who writes that the loaves of bread offered as Meal-Offerings in the *Beis HaMikdosh* were round, so we similarly make our *matzos* round.

Rav Aharon Levin points out that Hashem appears to value round objects, as the sun, the moon, the earth, and the stars are all round, while nothing was created in the form of a square (*Yerushalmi Ma'asros* 25b), so we strive to eat round *matzos* due to the significance and desirability of this shape in Hashem's eyes.

Riddle: At the *Seder*, I am Eaten. In *Tanach*, I am a Colourful Material. What am I, and What is the Connection?

The answer is *karpas*. At the *Seder*, *karpas* is eaten as the opening vegetable dish and is usually celery or potato.

In *Megillas* Esther, *karpas* is a colourful material (*Esther* 1:6). **חָוּר כַּרְפַּס וּתְכֵלֶת**. - *Rashi* (*Bereishis* 37:3) in describing the "*kesones pasim*" – "coat of many colours" refers the "*karpas*" of the *Megillah* and it was this coat that resulted in the jealousy between Yosef and his brothers that eventually led to the exile to Mitzrayim and ultimately the holiday of Pesach. (Torah IQ)

The Halachah is that One Shouldn't Eat After the *Afikomen* to Ensure the Taste of *Matzah* Stays in the Mouth, Anyway We Drink Two Cups of Wine and the Taste Goes Away, So Why Can't We Eat?

The *Maharil* answers: We don't want the taste to be taken away by non-mitzvah items, therefore, one shouldn't eat and drink non-mitzvah items that will remove the taste. However, we aren't worried if the taste is taken away by mitzvah items, therefore, it is ok to drink two cups of wine, as they are drunk for a mitzvah.

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Aisle in the Domicile





Taking a look at some sefarim, we see how the cleaning for Pesach impacted the learning of gedolim.

The Mordechai (c. 1250-1298) cites the words of Rabbeinu Meir: "…on Erev Pesach where we are so busy getting rid of the Chametz from all sides, I turned away from all that I was busy with to answer your question, in an abridged way…"

In a letter the **Chassam Sofer** (1762-1839) wrote to a Dayan he concludes, "Since I am outside my learning room because the righteous women are cleaning for Pesach, I am not able to be as lengthy as needed."

The Noda B'Yehuda (1713-1793) wrote, "In these days of Nissan, I am so busy with the *tzibur* teaching them Hilchos Pesach. Additionally, I don't have an empty place and I am walking from room to room and corner to corner since we are cleaning for Pesach. Therefore I will respond in short…"



Creating a Positive Atmosphere

Everyone is concerned about keeping the mitzvos correctly and avoiding chametz. These fears certainly have a positive side, but they must not get out of hand. Our concerns mustn't cause us to lose the joy of the yom tov and the joy of the mitzvos.

A yungerman told his rav, "I was thinking about how women clean for Pesach, and I concluded that they don't clean well enough. They clean the floors by pouring water over the floors, but what about all the crevices!? Chametz can get caught there and water won't take it out. I asked my wife to clean the floor with a toothpick and remove all the chametz from the cracks, but she refused. She said that only if the rav agrees it is important to clean the floors with a toothpick will she do so."

The rav replied, "I agree that it is very important to do so. In fact, it is so important that you should do it yourself. Don't rely on your wife or anyone else to clean the floors."

Husbands shouldn't make things hard on their wives. And if they desire something out of the ordinary, they can do it themselves…

The Ahavas Yisrael of Vizhnitz zt'l once told his family before Pesach, "Believe me, a drop of anger is worse than a drop of chametz."

"Hashem will bring salvation solely in the merit of one's faith, even if one is otherwise undeserving." ~ The Chofetz Chaim.

Every year, before the Seder, the married children of **Reb Zalman Brizel *zt'l*** would come with their families to wish him a *gut yom tov*.

One year, one of the grandchildren accidentally threw down all the matzos. Reb Zalman Brizel didn't become upset. He explained, "Hashem gave me grandchildren. Isn't that a reason to be happy?"

There is always a lot of good in our lives. And when we focus on the good, we can always be happy.

שפך חמתך

The Sar Shalom of Belz *zt'l* said to his grandson, **Rebbe Yissachar Dov of Belz *zt'l***, "Eliyahu HaNavi comes to everyone's Seder and there are great tzaddikim who see him. But an even greater level is when one doesn't see Eliyahu but *believes* that Eliyahu is there."

After saying **שפך חמתך**, the **Noda b'Yehudah** would escort Eliyahu HaNavi *z'l* out of his house, down the stairs, and into the street.

The Chidushei HaRim praised this deed immensely and said, "The Noda b'Yehuda didn't actually see Eliyahu Hanavi, but he believed he was there. And believing is a higher level than seeing." - This lesson is also an indication of the holiness of the seder. Eliyahu HaNavi is present.

Rebbe Yochanan of Rachmistrivka *zy'a* taught: **קדש ורחץ**, if a person wants to sanctify and purify himself, the path is **כרפס**, which is *roshei teivos* for **כ'לל ר'שאון פ'ה ס'גור**. - The first rule is to keep the mouth shut. By avoiding forbidden speech, one can attain holiness and purity.

יחץ מגיד means that when you do speak, say only half of what you planned to say!

The Beis Avraham *zt'l* ate very little. His Rebbetzin would say, "I made good food for you; why don't you eat it?"

He would answer, **דאס אדז'עט מיר**, "I am disgusted by food." - His sole desire was *ruchniyus*.

But at the Seder, the Beis Avraham would eat the matzah with relish. His Rebbetzin asked him, "Did you become a *baal taavah'nik*? Did you suddenly become so interested in food?"

He said, "The entire year, I am not interested in food, yet you encourage me to eat. Once a year, when I finally am interested in food, you say that I am a *baal taavah*."

The truth is, this is the pattern: When one holds back from *taavos* the entire year, he will eat the matzah with immense *taavah*.

The Nesivos Shalom *zy'a* once saw a *bachur* of his yeshiva eating falafel with great relish. The Nesivos Shalom gently rebuked him, saying, "The way you eat reminds me of how the Beis Avraham would eat the matzah on Pesach."

An egg is placed on the seder plate, and the Meiri teaches that *beitzah* is often pronounced **בעי**, which can mean "to request." - This is an indication that the Seder is an auspicious time for tefillah.

Rebbe Leibele Eiger said that we eat eggs at the Seder to indicate that just like an egg becomes a chicken when it is kept warm under a hen. Similarly, many great things can happen to us on this night, but we must bring forth warmth— our enthusiasm and joy — and then we will merit it.

There's a saying people use to describe a fool (or someone who does something foolish). They call him "The *chacham* from the *Mah Nishtanah*," the wise *chacham* of the Seder.

It's repeated in the name of the **Satmar Rebbe *zt'l***, "The *chacham* of the *Mah Nishtanah* asks wise questions! Why is a fool called "the

chacham from the *Mah Nishtanah*"?

The answer is that true, the *chacham* asks wise questions at the Seder, but where was he until now? Didn't he see everyone cleaning for Pesach, buying matzah, and so on? Why didn't he ask his questions then? Why did he only wake up now?

Let's not be that *chacham*; let's not wake up at the Seder to realize something special is happening. We should be awake beforehand and prepare for these holy days.



Beneath the Surface by R' Shmuel Winzelberg

The Kedushas Levi writes that when a person finishes learning from a Sefer on any day of the year, and he brushes it off from any crumbs, he is fulfilling the Pasuk of "L'Ma'an Tizkor es Yom Tzeis'cha Mei'Eretz Mitrayim Kol Yimei Chayecha" (Devarim 16:3), that one must remember the day of leaving Mitzrayim all the days of his life.

By constantly keeping Pesach in mind and always keeping one's Seforim clean from Chometz, he is constantly getting reward for doing this Mitzvah!

It is the custom that when we burn the Chometz we also burn the candle used in the search for Chometz as well.

Chometz hints to the sins and the Evil Inclination, and together with the sins we have to burn the accuser that helped to search and seek out the sins of Israel. (Mekor Baruch as brought in Shabbos Tish)

Rebbe Meir Shapiro of Lublin once said: "It is customary to place an egg on the Seder plate on the night of the Seder, and the hint here is to the Nation of Israel which is compared to an egg. - Just as this egg, the more one cooks it in boiling water or roasts it in the fire, the harder it gets. It is the same with the Nation of Israel. The longer and more difficult they find it in exile, the more they constantly hope for the redemption." (Shabbos Tish)

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

Rav Meilech Biderman, Shlit"a, cites from his Rebbei'im that the word 'MaZaL,' which means fate, is also an acronym of the words, 'Zeicher Le'yetzias Mitzraiyim'.

We can learn from this that by remembering our Geulah from Mitzrayim on the night of the Seder, it is a Segalah, and it has a special strength to change one's Mazal and his current situation for the better!

Pesach Gems

Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l, would personally supervise the baking of his own Matzos. He would always emphasize that he came to perform the Mitzvah, and not because he questioned the Kashrus of the bakery.

There were some people who wanted him to change and use a different Matzah bakery, as it would be much easier to use a larger, newer, and more efficient bakery, but Rav Moshe always refused. He explained that people might misunderstand why he made the change, and they might think that something was wrong with the Kashrus of the older bakery.

Those who accompanied Rav Moshe to the Matzah bakery observed his Zerizus in performing this Mitzvah, and his joy when the finished

Matzos were taken out of the oven. - There was someone who had made a number of appeals for funds on behalf of Rav Moshe's Yeshivah, Tiferes Yerushalayim, and one year, Rav Moshe asked a Talmid to bring some of these special Matzos to him.

Rav Moshe knew that this man was not looking for anything in return for his efforts on behalf of the Yeshivah, but Rav Moshe wanted that the very personal gift of his Matzos that he was sending would be accepted as a token of his appreciation!



The Seder - Reb Reuven Feinstein on the Haggadah by Rabbi Avrohom Meir Weiss



Karpas: The Rosh HaYeshiva, shlit"a, recalls that when he was a child, the Rosh HaYeshiva, ztvk"l, would use potatoes for Karpas, which was the minhag in Russia. [In the town of Kubrin, where Rebbetzin Shelia, a"h's parents were from, they used onions for Karpas.]

When his older brother, HaRav HaGaon Reb Dovid, ztvk"l, brought to light his opinion that the Karpas should be both a raw vegetable

and a green vegetable, the Rosh HaYeshiva, ztvk"l, had celery brought to the table also, in his honor. But certainly, cooked potatoes were the minhag in his town, and they can be used.

[The reason to use a raw vegetable is that one of the reasons we eat Karpas is in order to whet our appetites, and Tosafos (Eruvin 55b, d"h kol ir) maintains that only raw vegetables do this; cooked vegetables, on the other hand, while serving to prevent hunger, do not increase one's appetite. The reason to use a vegetable that is green is because the term used for the vegetable is yerek, which literally translates as a green.]

Practically, one may use celery, potato, parsley, or any other vegetable. [See further, Magen Avraham to §473, se'if katan 4, regarding the minhag to use potatoes.]



The Rosh HaYeshiva, shlit"a, notes that children definitely prefer the potatoes! Many wryly note that when it comes to a kezayis of matzah, the kezayis is somehow much larger than they expect, while when it comes to a kezayis of Karpas, the kezayis is much smaller!

On a serious note, the Rosh HaYeshiva, shlit"a, recalled that the Rosh HaYeshiva, ztvk"l, when he was brought a danish or the like in yeshiva, would eat only a very small piece, because he wanted to avoid the situation of a doubt as to whether he had eaten a kezayis or not.

• • • • • Which matzah we break is the subject of a machlokes Rishonim. Some hold that we use three matzos at the Seder, and we break the middle matzah. Other Rishonim hold that we use only two

matzos at the Seder, and they maintain that the top matzah is broken.

The minhag of the Rosh HaYeshiva, ztvk"l, was to use only two matzos, in accordance with the opinion of the Gra, and that is the minhag of the Rosh Yeshiva, shlit"a, as well. - The Rosh Yeshiva's brother, HaRav HaGaon Reb Dovid, ztvk"l, used three matzos.

The question of how many matzos to have at the Seder is one that goes back to the time of the Rishonim. One should follow his family's minhag in this regard.

The rationale to require three matzos is that after one matzah is broken at Yachatz, there are no longer two sheleimim (whole matzos) for lechem mishneh. Thus, a third matzah is added, so that even after one matzah is broken, two complete matzos will still remain. Others maintain that there is no need to add a third matzah. On Pesach, when we are required to partake of lechem oni, bread of affliction, the broken piece of one matzah counts as a complete matzah, and thus, only two matzos are required to have lechem mishneh. Moreover, this opinion maintains that if one were to add a third matzah, he would not be considered to be partaking of lechem oni; for two and a half loaves is certainly more than the two loaves ordinarily used! Thus, they maintain that it is best to have only two matzos.

The Rosh HaYeshiva, ztvk"l, followed the minhag of those Rishonim who used only two matzos, and this is therefore the minhag of the Rosh Yeshiva, shlit"a, as well. [Regarding Yachatz, the Rosh Yeshiva, shlit"a, would often relate the following story:

"When I was a young child, I was zocheh to sit at the corner of the table, right near my father, the Rosh HaYeshiva, ztvk"l. This was my seat, no matter who was joining us. I know that he used only two matzos — I saw this with my own eyes. My brother, HaRav HaGaon Reb Dovid, ztvk"l, used three matzos at his Seder. And yet, the Rosh HaYeshiva, ztvk"l, did not object to this.

I presume that the Rosh HaYeshiva, ztvk"l, chose not to correct Reb Dovid because he presumed that Reb Dovid had decided that it was correct to follow the opinion of those Rishonim who hold that we use three matzos. - Because the Rosh HaYeshiva, ztvk"l, did not do this, my minhag to this day is to use two matzos, as he himself did.

"From this, I observed an interesting practice of the Rosh HaYeshiva, ztvk"l, pertaining to the chinuch of his children. If there was a situation where he had a minhag based on one shitah in the Rishonim, and one of his children followed the view of the other Rishonim, if it was a situation where he did not have any personal psak on the matter, he would not say anything. Obviously, if he himself paskened on the matter, he would have felt that his children should follow him in this regard. I presume that this was because if he were to tell the child to adopt his minhag, he would essentially be telling him or her that the Rishon who held the opposite view was incorrect; and he did not want to do that. This is because we cannot prove the view of a Rishon as definitively incorrect.]



הוא היה אומר

R' Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev zt"l (Kedushas Levi) would say: "Pharaoh's heart was hardened and the shaarei teshuva were sealed before him - but I still envy him for the incredible Kiddush Hashem he brought about through his stubborness!"

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON MIDDOS TOVOS FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

דרגה יתירה

הַקְהֵה אֶת שִׁנָּיו

Pesach is called the holiday of EMUNAH, because it is ONLY with faith and trust in *Hashem* - that He is the Boss, He knows what He is doing, there are no mistakes and that everything He does is for the good - can we truly go free and leave the shackles of Egypt behind! - This is the greatest gift that we have! EMUNAH!

Without it we are totally and completely lost. THIS is what we are meant to PASS-OVER to our children during the holiday of *Pesach*.

Of course we can only "pass-over" to others what we ourselves possess! Therefore we need to fill ourselves up on this exquisite delicacy, this rapturous elixir known as EMUNAH!

Pesach is a holiday with an emphasis on the children. We spend these eight days literally passing down our rich and beautiful heritage to future generations. Our children take center stage at the *Seder*, not because of what they say, but because of what they see and hear! - All of *Hashem's* children are welcome and each one can be reached. This is a concept that is so important that the *Baal Haggadah* actually puts the words in our mouths, teaching us what to say to each type of child when he or she asks a question.

The child that is most perplexing is the "**רָשָׁע**". The rebellious son sits by the *Seder* and asks questions about the Exodus out of scorn. So what do we do? **הַקְהֵה אֶת שִׁנָּיו** - We knock out his teeth!

I don't know about you but if I was that child, I would never ask another question about Judaism again and I would probably would never attend another *Seder* - or *seudah* - again. So what kind of advice is this?

R' Yitzchok Guttman *shlita* (my son!) told me a beautiful explanation that goes to the crux of how to reach out and touch the heart of another Jew.

Chazal tells us that the word **הַקְהֵה** - which means to "knock out" - is a form of the word **מבהיק** - to emphasize or highlight something and cause it to stand out. Now, the word **רָשָׁע** is comprised of three letters. - The outer two letters spell out the word "**רע**" - "evil." The middle letter is "**ש**" - which represents the Name of *Hashem* **ש-ד-י**

The *Baal Haggadah* is teaching us how to handle a *rasha;* we must **הַקְהֵה אֶת שִׁנָּיו** - emphasize the "**ש**" in his title, his *G*-d-liness and his connection to *Hashem*. Indeed, no matter how low a person - even a *rasha* - has sunk, there is still a spark of *G*-dliness hidden inside of him, albeit surrounded and covered by his "**רע**" - the evil and negative actions, the inappropriate dress, the foul language and crude behavior. But deep down, his insides are pure and holy.

The two "**ש**"'s that are found on the boxes of *Tefillin*, are different. One contains three lines, and one contains four. This is to symbolize our roots. We, *Bnei Yisroel*, are all the children of the three fathers (**אבות**) and four mothers (**אמהות**) who gave us our genes which bring us close to *Hashem*.

הַקְהֵה אֶת שִׁנָּיו - Emphasize his "SHINS." Look at where he is coming from and not where he is right now. He has the potential for greatness if you can look past his outer shell.

Every person's potential for greatness lies in the ability to PASS-OVER another's faults and mistakes. We all mess up from time to time. We must pass-over our own mistakes and move forward!

Maybe this idea is the reason why we also "passed through" the Red Sea on the last day of *Pesach*. So that we can have "bookends" for both the first and last days.

May we be able to see the good in all of our children in all situations, so that we can truly be free to serve *Hashem* with love and joy. CHAG KOSHER V'SAMEACH!

Pesach Pearls, All About the Hagadah

● 'Whoever is Hungry Come and Eat'

It was Erev Pesach in the year 5686, and **R. Yosef Chayim Sonnenfeld**, following the Mitzvah of Bedikas Chametz, had just finished his supper, when four important visitors from Budapest paid him a visit. In spite of the lateness of the hour, R. Yosef Chayim received his guests graciously and bade them be seated.

It soon transpired that the purpose of their visit was to procure an invitation to the Rav's Seider, in which they were eager to participate. They insisted however, that he accept payment for the meal.

'Certainly, 'the Rav replied. 'It will be a pleasure to have you as my guests, and as for paying, that condition I accept too'.

The men, who had heard of R. Yosef Chayim's refusal ever to accept money for any favour, were startled at his amenability to do so on this occasion. And one of them promptly produced a handsome sum and placed it on the table.

The men did indeed participate in the Seider, and one of them later attested to the fact that one of the greatest experiences in his entire life was to see the holy and shining countenance of the Tzadik on that Seider-night.

On the first day of Chol-ha'Mo'ed, R. Yosef Chayim made his way to the Hotel Amdurski, where the men were staying, and asked to see the guests from Budapest. As they were from Chutz la'Aretz, they were still busy Davening Shachris for the second day of Yom-Tov.

The moment Davening was over however, they went to greet their esteemed guest in their room. The Rav asked them about their stay in Yerushalayim and how they were enjoying Yom-Tov. And as he spoke, he took out the money that he had received from them on Erev Yom-Tov, and placed it under the tablecloth. The four guests,

already surprised by their unexpected visitor, were quite taken aback by his latest move, but since it was Yom-Tov, there was nothing they could do about it.

One of the men however, did pluck up the courage to ask R. Yosef Chayim why, if he did not intend to keep the money, he accepted it in the first place?

This is what he replied. 'Pesach is a festival of freedom, is it not? Now what sort of freedom would it have been to feast free of charge at somebody else's table (which even Chazal describe as 'nahama de'chisufa' [bread of embarrassment])? So I accepted your offer of payment, so that you should feel like free men who are eating at their own table, without embarrassment), without any qualms about eating to your heart's content.

That was then. But now that this reasoning no longer applies', he concluded with a chuckle, 'I return to you what is yours'.

And with that, he wished them a good Yom-Tov and left.

● Would You Believe it?

All the Simanim of the Hagadah ('Kadeish, u'Rechatz ... '), hint directly or indirectly, at some aspect of the miracles of Yetzi'as Mitzrayim or other. In that case, asks **R. Yosef Chayim Sonnenfeld**, why did the Ba'al Hagadah fail to mention any hint concerning the greatest miracle of them all, the splitting of the Reed Sea?

Indeed, he does, he answers. The word **כרפס** is equivalent to the first letters of **כָּל סוּס רֶכֶב פַּרְעֹה** (all the horses of Paroh's chariots)". We dip the Karpas into the salt water, R. Yosef Chayim explains, to commemorate the drowning of the horses, together with the riders of Paroh's entire army in the salty waters of the Yam-Suf.

The Da'as Zakeinim mi'Ba'alei Tosfos presents a much simpler answer. According to him, the reason that we break the middle

Matzah in two is as a reminder of the splitting of the Yam-Suf and the River Yarden (and presumably, the miracles that they represent).

● Maidservants & Captives

The K'li Yakar asks why, in connection with Makas Bechoros, the Torah refers in one place (Bo 12:5) to the firstborn of the maidservants, and in another (ibid. 12:29), to the firstborn of the captives?

And he answers that in fact, the two were one and the same, because they would make the captives work in the mill by day, moving them to the dungeons by night. Consequently, the earlier Pasuk, which was said to Moshe during the day, refers to them as 'maidservants', whereas the latter Pasuk, which refers to the actual plague, which took place by night, refers to them as "captives".

● The Butler and the Seider

The Medrash states that the four cups that we drink at the Seider are based on the four times that "Kos" is mentioned in connection with the butler's dream (in Vayeishev).

We need to understand, asks the K'li Yakar, the connection between the one and the other?

To answer the question, he firstly reminds us that the Pasuk tends to equate salvation with a cup of wine, like the Pasuk writes in Tehilim 116:14 - "I will raise the cup of salvation".

Then, citing Rebbi Yochanan in Bava Basra (8b), he explains that captivity contains all the other 'tzaros' that precede it in Yirmiyahu (45:2) "the sword, pestilence and starvation", since a captor has the power to injure his captive with the sword, to kill him and to starve

him, which is why Chazal consider captivity worse than all the others tzaros.

It therefore emerges that someone who is released from jail, has in effect been spared from all four punishments. The word "Kos" is therefore mentioned four times in connection with the chief butler, to hint to him that he was about to be released from prison and be saved from the four punishments.

Indeed, it was from the four cups in the butler's dream that Yosef realized that he was about to go free. It is therefore befitting for someone that is released from jail to drink four cups of wine, which is why Chazal fixed four cups of wine (of salvation) at the Seider, since it is not only our fathers who were spared (as we say in the Hagadah) but ourselves.

● Why the Frogs Died

Rashi explains that the wild animals did not die like the frogs (they simply disappeared) so that the Egyptians should not derive benefit from their skins. But why, asks the K'li Yakar, did the frogs not disappear like the wild animals?

It cannot be so that the land would stink, he says, because then why did the locusts (which flew back into the Yam-Suf) not die too?

He therefore cites the Medrash which refers to the frogs that were Moser Nefesh (sacrificed their lives) for the sake of G-d's Holy Name, by jumping into the ovens, and from whom Chananyah, Misha'el and Eltzafan would later take their cue.

They did not die he explains (as the Pasuk [8:9] clearly indicates). And it is to highlight this that the other frogs did, to teach us that it is the one who is Moser Nefesh for G-d that stands a good chance of surviving, whilst the one who does not is bound to perish.

Pearls from the Seider (Adapted mainly from the Ta'amei ha'Minhagim)

● Changing the Language

The Avudraham gives two reasons as to why we say 'Ho Lachmo Anyo' in Aramaic: 1. because that was the spoken language of the time, and since we are inviting people to the Seider, it is important that our potential visitors understand the invitation; 2. So that the angels, who, as Chazal explain, do not understand Arama'ic, should not interfere with our grandiose statements pertaining to freedom, and counter that we are not worthy of freedom.

Interesting, because the Pardes ascribes the concluding words 'le'Shonoh ha'bo'oh … ' to the fact that we want the angels to understand, and to put in a good word on our behalf.

עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפַרְעֹה בְּמִצְרָיִם - ***'We were slaves to Paroh in Egypt'.***

Why Egypt?

The Likutei Maharil cites R. Shimon in the **Zohar**, who told his son R. Elazar that G-d chose Egypt because, due to their deep hatred towards the Jewish people (see Mikeitz 43:42), the two nations did not inter-mix. And this in turn, prevented Yisrael from sinking to the level of the Egyptians.

Indeed, the Pasuk says "and they became a great nation there", and as the Ba'al Hagadah will say later 'this teaches us that they retained their identity (they kept their Jewish names and language). The above Zohar explains how they managed to do this.

"The answer to all questions is – 'Hashem is in charge of everything that happens.'" ~ R' Moshe of Kobrin Zt'l.

If He had Just Given us Their Money …

The Pasuk in Tehilim (105:37) says **וַיּוֹצִיאֵם בְּכֶסֶף וְזָהָב וְאֵין בִּשְׁבָטָיו כּוֹשֵׁל** - ***"And He took them out with silver and gold, and there was not a pauper among them***".

The B'nei Yisaschar explains this Pasuk, by citing the Seifer Dan Yadin … that G-d took Yisrael out of Egypt with the two names Keseh ('Kuf Samech Hey') and be'Paz ('Beis Pey Zayin'), whose letters correspond to those of 'Kesef Zahav'.

Minhagim (Adapted from the Ta'amei ha'Minhagim)

● Hallel in Shul

The reason that we recite Hallel in Shul, with song and with a B'rachah both before and after it, at the Ma'ariv preceding the Seider, is because we do not recite a B'rachah at the Seider, which in turn, is due to the fact that we break in the middle with the meal.

The Orchos Chayim, citing the Birchei Yosef, actually says that even where the Minhag is not to recite Hallel, one should do everything within one's power to convince the community to adopt this Minhag.

This Minhag is particularly interesting as, aside from Seider night, Hallel may only be said in the day.

● The Four Cups

Based on the Medrash, which ascribes the four cups of wine at the Seider to the four expressions of redemption "ve'Hotzeisi … ", "ve'Hitzalti … ", "ve'Go'alti … " and "ve'Lokachti eschem li le'am", the Chesed le'Avraham fits them into the Seider like this:

The first Kos (the cup of Kidush) represents "ve'Lakachti" (asher bochar bonu mi'kol am), which comes first due to its importance;

The second Kos (the cup of Hagadah, which begins with the disgrace and ends with the praiseworthy) represents "ve'Hotzeisi eschem mi'tachas sivlos Mitzrayim";

The third Kos (the cup of Birchas ha'Mazon, which praises Hashem for the good that He does on our behalf and that He granted us Eretz Yisrael) represents "ve'Hitzalti eschem me'avodosom"; and

The fourth Kos (the cup of Hallel) represents "ve'Go'alti eschem be'yad chazakah u'vi'zero'a netuyah".

● Five Cups

According to the Yerushalmi (who ascribes the four cups to the four expressions of redemption) the fifth cup is based on the fifth Lashon "ve'Heveisi eschem el ho'oretz" - and the reason that it is not one of the official cups is because, unlike going out of Egypt, which is permanent, acquiring Eretz Yisrael is not, as we know only too well (Toldos Esther).

The Maharam Chagiz however, ascribes the four cups to the four exiles that followed our entry into Eretz Yisrael.

Consequently, the fifth cup is aptly referred to as 'the cup of Eliyahu'.

● Why Wine?

The B'nei Yisoschar asks why, to commemorate the four expressions of redemption, the Chachamim instituted four cups of wine? Why not four kinds of food or four things to say?

To answer this question, he cites Chazal, who say that it is possible to exempt Yisrael from punishment from the day the Beis-Hamikdash was destroyed, based on the Pasuk "intoxicated, but not from wine". What they mean, he says, is that they do not deserve

the full punishment for their sins, because they no longer have their full senses (like a drunkard when he is inebriated). In fact, they are compared to children, who are not subject to punishments because they do not have Da'as. And it was the very same argument that saved them at the Yam-Suf. The angels asked G-d why Yisrael deserved to be saved, whilst the Egyptians were being drowned, when the truth of the matter was that 'The ones were guilty of idolatry just as much as the others'?

And He answered that for over two hundred years the Jewish people had been so badly battered that they had lost their senses, and someone who has lost his senses is not taken to task to the same degree as a person who is totally sane.

● No B'rachah over the Four Cups

The reason that Chazal did not institute a B'rachah over the four Kosos (like we do over Ner Chanukah) says the Rokei'ach, is because we do not drink them in one go (only over a long period - indeed, if one drinks them in one go one is not Yotzei), as opposed to Megilah, which may take a long time, but which we read in one go (without a break).

And it is for the same reason that we do not recite a B'rachah over the three meals on Shabbos.

● Washing the Hands

The reason that we wash our hands before dipping the Karpas into salt-water (even those who do not usually wash before eating something that is dipped in one of the seven liquids) is to add to the list of changes that we do on this night, to encourage the children to ask 'Mah Nishtanah … '.

● Charoses

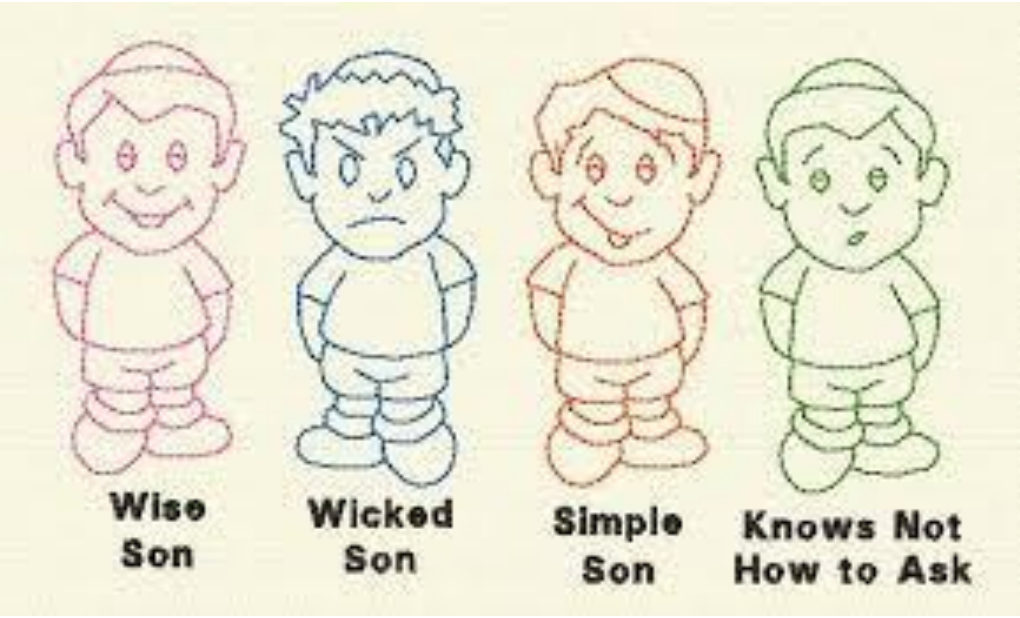
The reason that this dip is called 'Charoses' is because it reminds us of the bricks, which our ancestors had to manufacture from 'Charasin' (clay) - (Mordechai citing the Yerushalmi).

Pesach Pearls

● The Four Cups

The Medrash Raboh in Parshas Vo'eiro connects the four cups of wine with the four expressions of redemption, and the four expressions of redemption with the four evil decrees that Par'oh issued against Yisroel: the slavery, the killing of the Jewish babies when they were born, drowning them in the Nile, and withholding straw from them whilst demanding the same quota of bricks as they had built until then.

● The Four Sons



The four sons as vaguely described in the HaG-doh, are presumably the four types of Jews that appear in each generation.

They might be categorised according to age, but they might equally well apply to four prototypes irrespective of age. This explains why different HaG-dos illustrate the four sons according to the time and place in which the HaG-dos were produced.

Today, in what they call the twenty-first century, this is how we would probably depict the four sons:

The Chochom: The talmid-chochom, someone who 'Toroso umnuso', for whom Torah-study is his main occupation.

The Rosho: someone who deliberately shuns the Torah way of life, even though he has been exposed to it and knows it to be the right way, incorporating all those who are positively anti-religious.

The Tam: the balaboss who lives a Torah way of life, but who is not involved in serious Torah-study.

The She'eino Yodei'a Li'sh'ol: a person who does not live a Torah-life, because he has not been exposed to it. He is the proverbial 'tinok she'nishba' (a child who was captured and who grew up in captivity).

Alternatively - The Chochom strives to grow in his Yiddishkeit. The Rosho discards and destroys. The Tam retains his level of Yiddishkeit, without making the effort to grow, and The She'eino Yodei'a Li'shol displays no interest.

● The Four Expressions

According to the Gro, the four expressions of redemptions are: 1) "Ve'hotzeisi"; 2) "ve'hitzalti"; 3) "ve'go'alti eschem bi'z'ro'a netuyoh"; 4) "u'vi'sh'fotim gedolim", the last two referring to the slaying of the first-born and the drowning of the Egyptians at the Reed-Sea respectively.

Most commentaries do not agree with the Gro (according to them, the third and fourth expressions of redemption are "ve'go'alti" and "ve'lokachti", and they refer to the drowning of the Egyptians and Mattan Torah respectively).

According to the commentaries however, it is not clear why "ve'lokachti" is considered an expression of redemption and

"ve'heiveisi" which follows it, is not. (In other words, we ought to be obligated to drink five cups of wine at the Seider, not just four - notwithstanding the Yerushalmi who prescribes a fifth optional cup).

It is also not clear why Chazal forbade drinking between the third and fourth cups of wine (from which the Gro extrapolates that the third and fourth cups must correspond to 'bi'z'ro'a netuyoh u'vi'sh'fotim gedolim' - which unlike the other expressions, appear in one posuk).

A final proof for the Gro is from the wording of the HaG-doh, which does not elaborate on the giving of the Torah at Har Sinai. After all, the Seider, which is based on the four cups of wine, expounds on the Exodus from Egypt, not on Mattan Torah. For, when all's said and done, Mattan Torah may have been the main objective of Yetzi'as Mitzrayim, but it was not part of it. That is why it has a Yom-tov of its own - Shavu'os, and that is when we elaborate on it.

Karpas and the Blood Libel

Rebbi Elchonon Wasserman explained that the Karpas dipped in salt-water represents the tears that we shed for the suffering of Klal Yisroel as a result of the blood-libel, which in turn, was the result of Yosef's brothers dipping his shirt in blood and presenting it to their father.

In order to hide their guilt, the brothers stripped Yosef of his special shirt, killed a goat, and dipped it in blood, before asking their father whether it was not Yosef's shirt, leading him to believe that his beloved son had been devoured by a wild beast. The pain and anguish that he would suffer did nothing to deter them. That is why their descendants have had to suffer the pain and the anguish that resulted from the blood libel - measure for measure, the cruel, senseless and false accusations, for the cruel, senseless and false picture that they painted for their father.

Rabbi Yitzchok Bernstein z.l. of London pointed to a Rashi in Vayeishev (37:3), where he connects the kesones pasim of Yosef with a posuk in Megilas Esther: "pasim", he says, is equivalent to "karpas u's'cheiles" (Esther 1:6) - a powerful hint to Rebbi Elchonon's explanation.: The Sin Against their Father.

The commentaries write that the atonement for the sin of the sale of Yosef came to an end with the death of the ten martyrs (who were the reincarnations of the ten brothers who sold him). That was for the sale of Yosef. But the heartless act of cruelty that they perpetrated against their father Ya'akov is a different matter. For that, we continue to pay.

Pearls from the Hagadah (based on the Torah Temimah)

● This is the Bread of Affliction

הָא לַחְמָא עַנְיָא דִּי אֲכָלוּ אַבְהָתָנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרָיִם – 'This is the bread of oppression our fathers ate in the land of Egypt.'

The first letters of these words, says the Chida, add up to one hundred and seventeen, the number of years of slavery that our ancestors suffered in Egypt from the time that Levi died (when the Shibud began) until the Exodus.

● It's Time to Read the Sh'ma!

Why did the disciples find it necessary to disturb the learned discussions of these great Tzadikim, by informing them that it was time to recite the Sh'ma?

The fact that it was time to read the Sh'ma, explains Rabbi Abramski, indicated that the Mitzvah of Hagadah no longer applied. In that case, they were obligated to stop speaking about Yetzi'as Mitzrayim and to fulfill the Mitzvah of reciting the Sh'ma (since there is no Mitzvah to relate the miracles of Egypt in the daytime.

Had there been, they would have been exempt from reciting the Sh'ma, on account of the principle 'Someone who is performing a Mitzvah is exempt from performing another one which falls due').

TORAHANYTIMES NEWSLETTER



Rabbi Aryeh Kerzner - Family Time

There was an individual who approached **Rav Dovid Feinstein zt"l** with a very important halachic question. His wife was a recovering addict, having been addicted for many years to alcohol. At that time, she was strongly advised against spending any time in the presence of wine. As such, every week, the man would make Kiddush on grape juice instead of wine.

With the approach of Pesach, he posed the following to Rav Dovid. His family was planning on getting together, including the entire extended family, in Israel for Pesach. The problem was what he was supposed to do when it came to the Four Cups of Wine. There were expected to be over fifty family members present, and four cups of

wine would be distributed among them all, and yet his wife couldn't be around the wine. The other option would be for the entire family—more than fifty people—to use grape juice, and that would make it easier for his wife to be around. The man knew that actual wine was preferable for those who could drink it. But if he were to be there with his wife, he'd need to impose that everyone drink grape juice. Was that appropriate? Would it be better for him and his wife to join the family, and they all would drink grape juice, or better that they not go to Israel and rather conduct their own Seder away from their family so that they don't force everyone else to use grape juice?

The man knew that **Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l**, Rav Dovid's father, was very stringent to have wine with alcoholic content for the Four Cups. Considering this opinion of Rav Dovid's own father, perhaps there was strong reason to not join his family.

Rav Dovid replied as follows: "It's clear to me that you should go with everyone else, and every single person there should use grape juice for the Four Cups. More than fifty people will observe the mitzvah using grape juice because of the importance of spending time together as a family.

"Having everyone together is of prime value. The impact and energy that being together with family leaves is nothing small. The opportunity may not come around again, and you should be there with them. It can create a lifetime memory and impression on you, and you can't miss that."

"The story of Pesach teaches us that Hashem has the power to redeem us from any situation, no matter how dire. Trust in His plan and have faith that He will guide us through the difficult times." ~ Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986)

Rabbi YY Jacobson - Our Children, Our Elders



The Bluzhever Rebbe, R' Yisroel Spero, was born in 1889 and passed away in 1989. His wife and children were murdered in the Holocaust, and he had been interred in the labor camps until he was transported to Bergen Belsen in Germany.

As Pesach approached, the Jews in the camp began discussing how they'd obtain matzah for the Yom Tov. There was little hope, for how exactly would they bake matzah? Where would they find an oven, let alone the ingredients to make it under the nose of the SS?

A few Jews decided to approach the Bluzhever Rebbe and see what they could do. Perhaps together they could devise some strategy.

The Bluzhever Rebbe, like many holy rebbes, was hated by the Nazis. Yet there was one German commander who had his curiosities about the Bluzhever Rebbe, and from time to time would approach him and engage in conversation. He appreciated the Rebbe and would talk to him. Knowing this, the Bluzhever Rebbe decided to take a chance, knowing he might be hurt or worse, killed.

The next time the commandant struck up conversation, he broached the topic of Pesach. "We celebrate the exodus from Egypt, and we eat this type of leaven bread called matzah every year. Maybe Herr Commandant could do something to allow me to gain a small amount of water and flour and we could bake the matzah?"

When the commandant heard this request, he couldn't believe it. He stared at the Bluzhever Rebbe for a long time, and all the Rebbe

could think was how he crossed a line. Without further notice, the commandant began to walk away, leaving the Rebbe wondering what the consequence would be for asking such a bold question.

A few seconds later, though, the commandant turned to the Rebbe and said, "I'm going to see what I can do for you."

The Bluzhever Rebbe was shocked, yet remained hopeful, keeping the conversation to himself for the next few days until he'd see what the commandant had in mind.

It was just a few days before Pesach when the Bluzhever Rebbe was again summoned by the commandant. "Send two men to that gate over there. From there, they'll carry a package back to the bunker. I've arranged for you to have a small oven and flour and water available so you can make your bread."

The Bluzhever Rebbe realized this was nothing short of a miracle. And so, the preparations began. The Bluzhever Rebbe hand-picked a couple of trustworthy Jews and headed late at night to begin baking their matzos. Indeed, the oven was tiny, only having enough room to bake a few matzos at a time. The joy, however, at the mere opportunity to do such a thing in the heart of a concentration camp was out of this world. In the process, one of the other Jewish inmates noticed a Nazi guard approaching the bunker where the Bluzhever Rebbe was baking the matzos.

That spelled trouble. For the next few moments, the operations were halted. Until word was relayed back that the approaching guard was none other than the commandant, so the Bluzhever Rebbe could continue baking. As the commandant made his way closer to the bunker, however, the mistake came to light. This commandant looked like the other, friendly one, but it wasn't him. Anger burned in the commandant's eyes. "A letter was smuggled out of this camp, and it came from one of you Jews. I was reprimanded and went down in rank, and I'm determined to find out which one of you is responsible for this act!"

Moving in on the oven, he smashed it flat with his boot. And with that, he turned on his heels and marched out of the bunker.

The Jews, seeing this frightening sight, began to cry. The mitzvah had been so close, so obtainable, and now this cold-hearted Nazi took out his anger on a small, measly oven, baking nothing more than a few broken pieces of flour and water.

However, notwithstanding, one dozen matzos had been baked before the commandant broke the oven, so there was at least some small share of matzah. Of course, it wouldn't be enough to feed all the Jews in the camp, but it was something. Now, it was the day before Pesach, and the question which largely loomed in the mind of every Jew in the camp was who would be the recipient of these twelve cherished and precious matzos. All the Jews were starved; that was known. This was a different matter; a matter of a mitzvah.

Gathering together, they put forth the question to the Bluzhever Rebbe. After thinking for some time, he replied that those who are obligated in the mitzvah should be given a kezayis of matzah in order to fulfill the mitzvah.

As the conversation ensued, a voice was heard. "Bin'areinu u'bizkeineinu," it said. It was coming from a woman lying on the floor, nearly lifeless, the last ebb and flow of her life pulsing in her weakened body. Bin'areinu u'bizkeineinu, with our children and our elders. When Pharoah told Moshe Rabbeinu that only the elders would be freed to leave Egypt, Moshe countered that no, "Bin'areinu u'bizkeineinu neilech—We will go with our children and our elders."

The children would not be abandoned. "First Moshe Rabbeinu said 'our children,' and then he said, 'our elders,'" said the dying woman to the Bluzhever Rebbe with her last remaining breaths. "If this is what Moshe Rabbeinu said when it came to the Jews leaving Egypt, it should be the same way now. First our children should have the matzah, and then the elders."

The Bluzhever Rebbe approached the woman. "You're right," he said. That Pesach, the matzah was given to the children to eat at the Pesach Seder led by the Bluzhever Rebbe.

Miraculously, the woman survived. She survived all through the darkness of Bergen Belsen, until the war reached its end. The Bluzhever Rebbe, in fact, went on her marry her. Her name was Rebbetzin Brunya, and together they began a new life.

At that horrible moment, she was articulating a profound truth. Don't give up on the children. It's true that children under bar and bat mitzvah don't have an obligation to eat matzah, outside of the element of chinuch. But in terms of giving them the fire of emunah, don't ignore them. We need them. We need the future. It's precisely them who will continue our legacy and heritage.



Rabbi Moshe Weinberger - Ticking to the Redemption

Years ago, the tzaddik, **Rav Yissocher Ber from Radoshitz, a disciple of the Chozeh of Lublin**, was traveling and arrived at an inn. Upon requesting a room, the owner, a very old man himself, was awed. It was an honor to host such a great tzaddik in his very own hotel, and he made sure to clear out a beautiful suite for the Radoshitzer.

The Radoshitzer planned on retiring for the night, after a full day's travel, as the hotel owner waited around as the evening lingered on. But soon the owner began growing worried. He was situated directly underneath the Radoshitzer's room, and

he could hear not the quiet sound of sleep, but the back-and-forth pacing of footsteps. Was the Rebbe unable to sleep? Was something about the bed, the room, disturbing him from getting rest?

When morning arrived, the owner didn't need to ask; he knew. "Rebbe, you didn't sleep well," he simply commented, a tone of apology in his words. "The bed and room mustn't have been comfortable." But the Radoshitzer didn't feel quite that way. "No, the bed and room were very comfortable. But I must ask you something. Was there ever a tzaddik who has come to this inn before? Did you ever have the zechus of having someone like that as a guest?"

"In fact," replied the owner, "I did. About sixty years ago, I had R' Yosele come and stay here, the son of the Chozeh of Lublin. He stayed here for a week."

Hearing this, the Radoshitzer probed further. "Tell me something… Did he leave you a gift?"

"Actually," went on the innkeeper, "I refused to take any money, but he insisted on giving me a gift."

The Radoshitzer then pointed to an old clock hanging on the wall. "Is that clock the gift?"

The innkeeper's eyes gravitated to the familiar clock he had looked at hundreds of times before. "Yeah, it is. How did you know that? R' Yosele gave me the clock and said that the clock had once belonged to his father. But how did you know that? How did you know that this clock was given to me as a gift and originated with the Chozeh of Lublin?"

The Radoshitzer explained. "The truth is that I didn't know it had come from my rebbe, the Chozeh of Lublin. But I did know this. Every other clock in the world brings sadness, because every clock tells you how much time has passed since you've been born, and how much closer you are to your day of death. And therefore, every tick-tock

of every clock yields a feeling of despair and depression. But with the clock you have on that wall over there, I could hear it even from one floor to the next, and every tick-tock is filled with a joy for how much closer we are to the day of the Final Redemption. That day, when all the pain and suffering will end and Hashem will finally reveal Himself, awaits with every noise emanating from that clock."

We should all yearn to listen closely to the clock of the Chozeh of Lublin in our lives. Our children, our friends, they represent the clock of the Chozeh of Lublin. We are living through wondrous times, and it is all unfolding before our eyes.

The Klausenberger Rebbe, after having lost eleven children in the war, once remarked, "***I miss those days of the war in some way. Because then, it didn't make a difference if a Jew was religious or not, wore a streimel, wore a yarmulke or not, went bare-headed, or ate non-Kosher. What we had is each other, and I miss that.***"

Let's hold onto each other tightly during these days, and together listen in earnest to the tick-tock of a future world inching closer and closer. A world which contains the beauty and blessing that Hashem wishes to shower us with.

Rabbi Paysach Krohn - Grab and Eat

Rav Yaakov Galinsky zt"l told me the following story himself. - Rav Galinsky lived in Israel, was originally from the famed Novardok yeshiva, and was known as a very enthusiastic and energetic person. When he was a young boy, he told me, he was very wild. His parents didn't know what to do with him. What yeshiva would they send him to? They didn't think Slabodka would be a good fit, because Slabodka was focused on the theme and notion of gadlus ha'adam, the greatness and majesty and man, and Rav Yaakov would most likely not take to the teachings.

Rav Yaakov already thought a lot about himself, and his parents believed that if any, he needed to be toned down, not up. So they decided to send him to Novardok. Novardok was much stricter and more controlled. They figured that there, the rebbeim would be able to control him and help him build upward and feel his potential.

When he arrived at the yeshiva, he headed to the Mashgiach. As a short man, he needed to look up to make eye contact with him. And then he said, as if announcing, "I'm here."

"What do you mean 'I'm here?'" asked the Mashgiach.

"Well, my parents sent me here to Novardok," replied Rav Yaakov.

The Mashgiach quickly realized what he was dealing with.

"This is not how you come into a yeshiva," he said. "Why don't you walk down the block and learn some mussar. There's a shul there. Take a mussar sefer, learn a little bit of mussar, and then come back and we'll talk about being accepted to the yeshiva."

In recounting this to me, Rav Yaakov quipped, "I was sent out of the yeshiva before even being accepted." - It was already getting dark at the time. Rav Yaakov nevertheless headed into the shul and walked through the door into the main room. There, he noticed a young man, who he could see only from the back. In front of him were a few lit candles, and an open Gemara.

Rav Yaakov grew transfixed by the tune the boy was using to review the Gemara's phrase over and over and over. It was the Gemara in Eruvin 54a. Singing to himself, the boy was repeating, "Chatof v'achol… Chatof v'achol… chatof… chatof… chatof… chatof ishteh— Grab and eat… grab and eat… grab… grab… grab… grab… grab and drink… d'almah, d'almah… because this world… this world… d'az'linan mineih… that we are going from… k'hilulah dami… is like a wedding." When you come to a wedding, you can eat as much as you want. But eventually, the wedding will end. This world is the same. We don't live forever. And therefore, we ought to take as much as we can. We

must take advantage of every opportunity to learn Torah, perform mitzvos and fulfill Hashem's will.

Over and over, this boy repeated these words, the sight and tune mesmerizing the eyes and ears of Rav Yaakov. Rav Yaakov understood what these words meant—eat Torah, drink Torah, and make use of every moment— and was taken.

After hearing this, he felt humbled, and returned to the Mashgiach. "I heard what I needed to hear," he said. He was accepted, and he went on to become the great person that he was.

You know when the first time was that Rav Yaakov related this story?

At the levaya (funeral) of that boy who had repeated, with such heart and feeling, those riveting words to a riveting tune. The boy was the **Steipler zt"l**, father of **Rav Chaim Kanievsky zt"l**.

As a boy, the Steipler had these words pour out of his heart, and he became the great gaon and gadol that we knew. Chatof v'achol chatof v'ishteh d'almah d'az'linan mineih k'hilulah dami. Grab and eat, grab and drink, because this world that we are going from is like a wedding.

Rabbi Ephraim Shapiro - Your Only Child

My father zt"l relayed the following story many times. He heard it from the **Chazon Ish zt"l**.

On one occasion in Telz, a well-to-do man came to the yeshiva looking for a shidduch for his daughter. He asked the Rosh Yeshiva who he believed would be a suitable match, possessing the sterling qualities of a fine young man, toned by scholarship and middos tovos.

After a few minutes, Reb Leizer Telzer noticed one of the bachurim (students) who possessed extraordinary hasmadah (diligence in

learning). "Who's that bachur?" asked the father. "Ah…" replied Reb Leizer, "that's my ben yachid (only child)."

Could you imagine that shidduch, thought the father to himself. My daughter's husband, the very son of the Rosh Yeshiva himself! A few minutes later, the attention of the wealthy man was drawn to another bachur who seemed to have incredible middos. "Who is that?" he asked.

"Ahh…" once again replied Reb Leizer. "That's my ben yachid."

This scenario repeated itself a third time.

Finally, the man turned to the Rosh Yeshiva. "How is it possible to say about three separate boys that they are all your only child?"

Reb Leizer answered. "In this beis midrash, we have four hundred talmidim, and I have four hundred only child's."

Perhaps this is why, suggested my father zt"l, that when the Torah speaks about the two sons of Moshe Rabbeinu, the Pasuk says, "The name of one was Gershom... and the name of one was Eliezer" (Shemos 18:3-4). Why does the Torah state with regards to each of them, "The name of one"? It should have said, "The name of one was Gershom, and the name of the second son was Eliezer"?

My father explained that the Torah is highlighting how each child needs to be made to feel as if they are your only child. They need to be recognized and acknowledged.

This explains why in the Haggadah, we say, "Echad chacham, v'echad rasha, v'echad tam, v'echad she'einah yo'dei'ah lish'ol—And one is the wise son, and one is the wicked son, and one is the simple son, and one is the son who does not know how to ask."

The Haggadah underscores in relation to each of the sons that they are "one" because that is the truth. Each and every child is an only child.

FACEBUKER SHABBOS TABLE TALK

Continuing the Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Winiarz of blessed memory

R' Moshe Leib Sassover z"l once spent Shabbos, Parshas Bo, at the home of **R' Elimelech of Lizhensk z"l**. At the table, he expounded on the verse (Shemos 27:27) that HaShem skipped "on" the houses of the Children of Israel in Egypt.

The Torah should have written skipped over (passed over) or jumped from house to house. Why does it say he jumped "on" them?

R' Moshe Leib answered by saying, "The word "pasach" here, is not a language of jumping or skipping, but of dancing. When HaShem came to a Jewish home, He stopped and danced **upon** it, as it were, saying excitedly and with pride, "doh voint a Yid! - Here lives a Jew!"

And with that, R' Moshe Leib jumped up on the table before a smiling R' Elimelech and began dancing himself; ecstatically chanting, "doh voint a Yid, doh voint a Yid! – Here lives a Jew!

"There will come a time, very soon, when we will be shown miracles so great, they will make the Ten Plagues and the Splitting of the Sea appear as ordinary as nature itself.

So great, no mind can begin to fathom them; so powerful, they will transform the very fabric of our world, elevating it in a way that the wonders of the Exodus could not achieve.

For then, our eyes will be opened and granted the power to see the greatest of miracles.

And what are those miracles?

Those that occur to us now, beneath our very noses, every day." ~ Lubavitcher Rebbe, Reb Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994)

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman– Torah Wellsprings

Shivei Shel Pesach

Miracles Beyond Nature

The Sefer Chassidim writes that the word נס has two meanings. It means to "miracle" and it also means "flee". This alludes to the idea that when one runs away from sins, he will merit miracles. This is the reason the sea split when it saw the coffin of Yosef HaTzaddik. הים ראה וינס, the Midrash explains, "The Yam Suf saw Yosef's coffin and split (in his merit)." (Yosef ran away from the wife of Potifar who attempted to seduce him.) Similarly, Rebbe Michel of Zlotchev zy'a teaches, **when a person serves Hashem beyond his natural limits, Hashem will act with him beyond the rules of nature and will perform miracles for him.**

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman – Torah Wellsprings

Shevi'i Shel Pesach

Yeshuos on This Day

The Midrash (Shemos Rabba 21:6) asks why the words, ויבקע הים, weren't used to describe the splitting of the sea. Instead, it states, ויבקע המים, that the water split? The Midrash answers to teach us that all waters in the world split. All around the world, wherever there was a body of water, it split. What was the purpose of this miracle? The Yam Suf split so the nation could pass through, but why did all the waters in the world split? The Sar Shalom of Belz zt'l explains that water represents tzaros and yesurim, as it says in Tehillim (69:2), *Save me, Hashem, for the waters have reached the soul.* **Hashem split all water of the world to indicate that He put into the nature of the world that on Shevi'i shel Pesach Hashem saves us from our troubles, and this nature exists until today.**

"When I ponder the miracle of the survival and perseverance of the Jewish people, it is in my opinion greater than all the miracles and wonders that Hashem performed for our ancestors in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in the land of Israel. - The longer the exile persists, the more apparent the miracle becomes." ~

The Ya'avetz, Rabbi Yaakov Emden (1697-1776)

Divrei Torah, Ba`er Heitev באר היטב פרש"י בע' לשון. דברי תורה, שמחה וחיזוק.

Rebbi Elozor Ben Azaryah was offered the position of Nosi but was only 18 years old. He went home that night and by the next morning his beard had turned white.

Rav Shimshon Pincus asks what is the significance of black or white hair. Why do young people have black hair and old people have white hair?

He explains that white and black are the only colors that are not colors in their own right. Within the color black is every other color. - If a child uses every color crayon to scribble the end result is black.

White is the opposite. It is pure and without any color whatsoever.

A young person who learns and does good deeds, it is entirely possible that he is doing it for a multitude of reasons. Maybe he wants Olam Haboh, or maybe honor in this world. Maybe he has aspirations to become a Rosh Yeshiva or maybe it will help him get a job. He is represented by the color black. His actions are a result of a mixture of ulterior motives. However, an old man who sits and learns has none of the above notions. On Olam Haboh he (has given up) [may have given up, Chas ViSholom (– editor)]. To impress the Mechutonim? They are already dead. A Rosh Yeshiva he won't be [might not be – editor]. He doesn't even need to earn a living anymore. - Why does he learn Torah? Because a Jew needs to learn Torah. His Torah is pure and white.

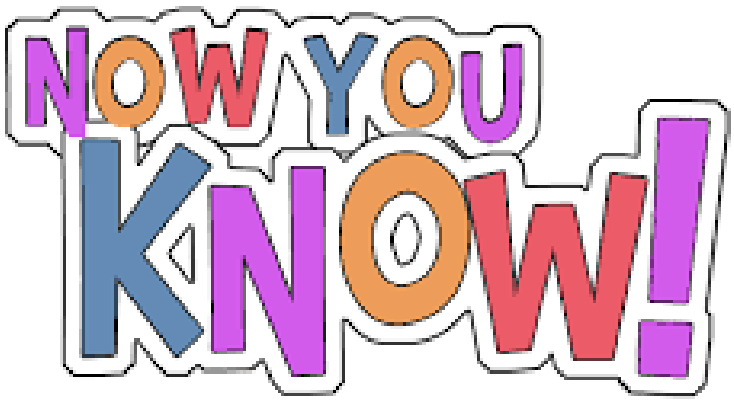
That is the meaning of the term "Alter". This title is given to describe the purity of the Godol's actions. Rebbi Eliezer ben Azaryah turned white at the "ripe" young age of 18. He may have been young, and he may have had the most glamorous position around, but he and his beard were both white.

מגדל אור

After the Bedikas Chametz, we burn the utensils when we burn the leaven. It makes sense to burn the feather and spoon since they may have touched chametz, but why burn the candle?

The Rebbe of Seret-Vizhnitz says light is meant to be used for seeing good. For example, the Torah says, "Ohr zarua latzaddik," light is sown for the righteous. Also, "Who is the man who desires life? One who loves days to see goodness."

We are supposed to seek out the good. On the night before Pesach, though, we use the candle to find the bad, the chametz which we want to dispose of. Such a candle, whose purpose is to look for the negative, has no use the rest of the year and should be destroyed.



When the Jews put the blood on their doorposts, the Angel of Death was not allowed in. Hashem had them mark their homes, so to speak, and in this way, though the destroyer had been unleashed to do damage, he was precluded from entering the Jewish homes. Hashem, Himself, skipped over the Jewish homes.

The Chasam Sofer offers a beautiful insight into the mitzva of korban Pesach. When the Hagadah says, "When your child will ask you, what is this service that you're doing," it refers to slaughtering the korban Pesach. - We are to tell him that the korban Pesach is offered because Hashem was compassionate and "skipped" over our

houses in Egypt and saved us on the night of the killing of the firstborn.

He explains that the son may be asking why all of the Jews are offering the Korban Pesach. If the Jewish firstborn were saved, they should have to bring the korban. Why everyone else?

It is because Hashem said "**בְּנִי בְכֹרִי יִשְׂרָאֵל**" the Jews are His firstborn. Thus, we were all in peril, even if we have older siblings in our families, because to Hashem **we** are the precious firstborn child. - It is a badge of honor for us to be considered Hashem's primary offspring, and this is why He had compassion on us and saved us.

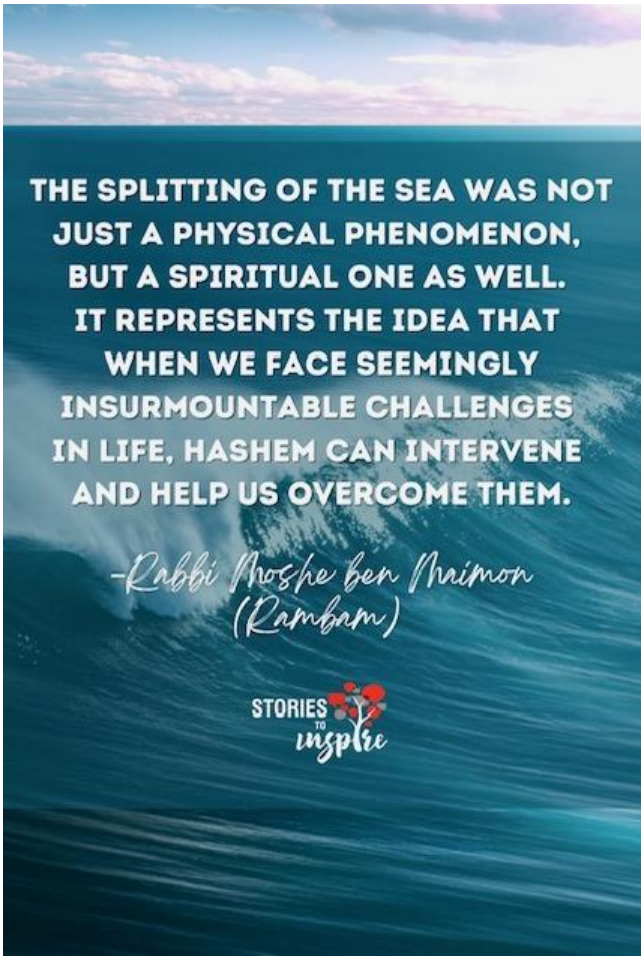
Therefore, when our child asks us why we do this, he is made to understand how precious he is to Hashem, and considered Hashem's bechor, and this lesson of the Korban Pesach should be a source of joy and pride for each of us.

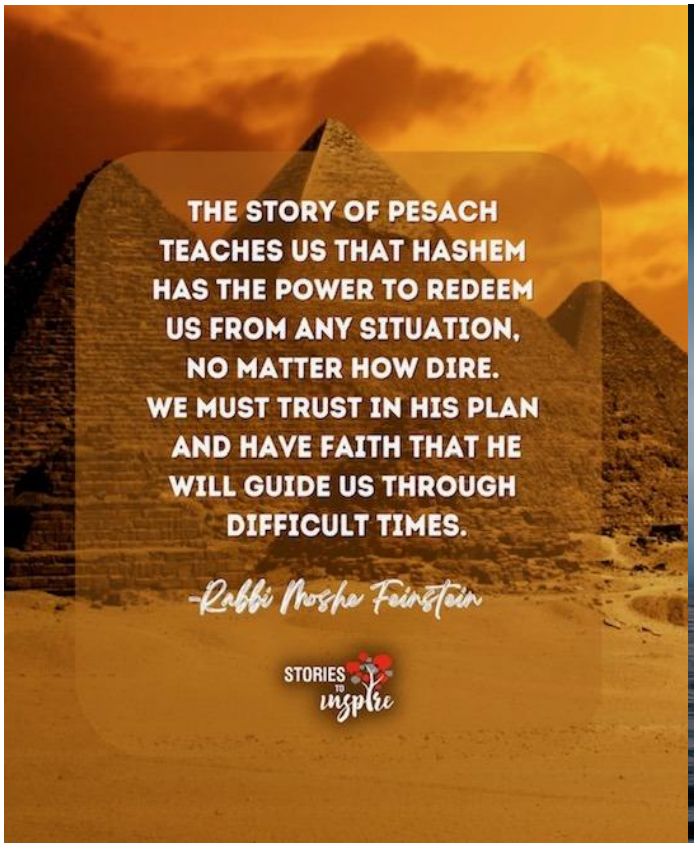
"When Hashem hears His children retelling the story of the Exodus, He proudly gathers all the heavenly bodies and tells them, "Go and listen to My children praising Me and delighting in the story of how I redeemed them!" ~ The Zohar.

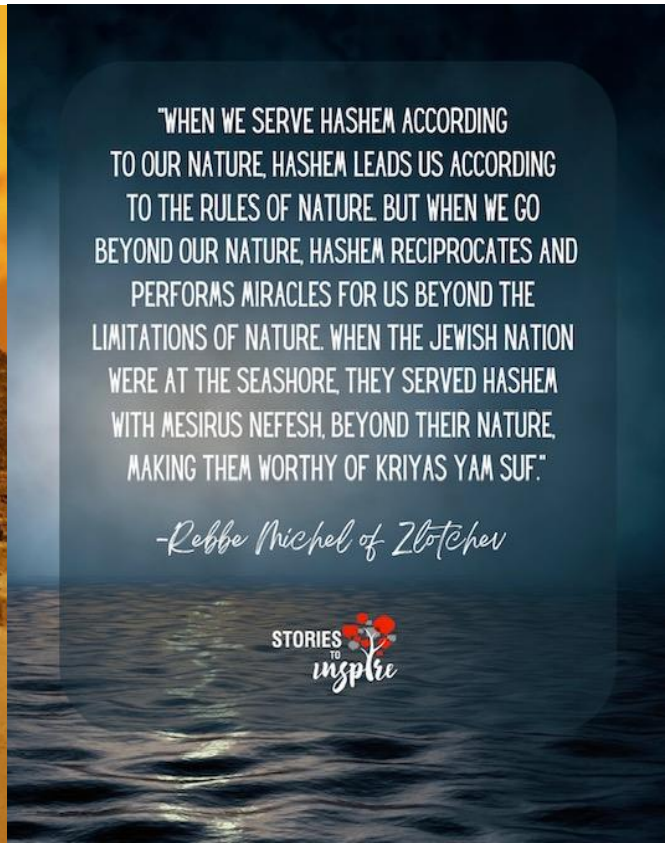
"On Pesach, we celebrate the power of faith and perseverance. Just as the Israelites trusted in Hashem's promise of redemption, let us trust that our own redemption is within reach." ~ Noam Elimelech, Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk (1717-1787).

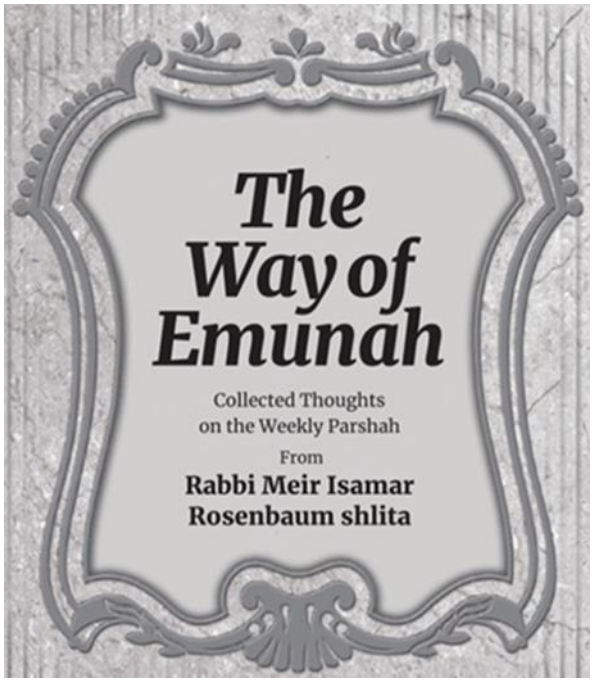
"Your search for every morsel of chametz should call your attention to the reality that every drop of your spiritual effort is truly cherished and embraced by Hashem." ~ Reb Noson of Breslov (1780-1844).


THE SPLITTING OF THE SEA DEMONSTRATES THAT WHEN WE ARE FACED WITH CHALLENGES, WE MUST TAKE ACTION AND MOVE FORWARD WITH FAITH, EVEN WHEN THE PATH SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE. IT TEACHES US THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING COURAGEOUS STEPS TOWARDS OUR GOALS.
-Chofetz Chaim
STORIES TO inspire


THE SPLITTING OF THE SEA WAS NOT JUST A PHYSICAL PHENOMENON, BUT A SPIRITUAL ONE AS WELL. IT REPRESENTS THE IDEA THAT WHEN WE FACE SEEMINGLY INSURMOUNTABLE CHALLENGES IN LIFE, HASHEM CAN INTERVENE AND HELP US OVERCOME THEM.
-Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (Rambam)
STORIES TO inspire


THE STORY OF PESACH TEACHES US THAT HASHEM HAS THE POWER TO REDEEM US FROM ANY SITUATION, NO MATTER HOW DIRE. WE MUST TRUST IN HIS PLAN AND HAVE FAITH THAT HE WILL GUIDE US THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES.
-Rabbi Moshe Feinstein
STORIES TO inspire


"WHEN WE SERVE HASHEM ACCORDING TO OUR NATURE, HASHEM LEADS US ACCORDING TO THE RULES OF NATURE. BUT WHEN WE GO BEYOND OUR NATURE, HASHEM RECIPROCATES AND PERFORMS MIRACLES FOR US BEYOND THE LIMITATIONS OF NATURE. WHEN THE JEWISH NATION WERE AT THE SEASHORE, THEY SERVED HASHEM WITH MESIRUS NEFESH, BEYOND THEIR NATURE, MAKING THEM WORTHY OF KRIYAS YAM SUF."
-Rebbe Michel of Zlotchev
STORIES TO inspire



Shabbos Hagadol

● Coming of Age

The Avudraham explains that when a boy reaches the age of 13, he becomes obligated to keep the mitzvos and is now called a "gadol". So too, on this Shabbos, Klal Yisroel was given their first mitzvah, which was to take a sheep for a Korban Pesach. (They were commanded to take it on the 10th of the month, which, in that year, fell on Shabbos.) Therefore, it is called "Shabbos Hagadol" because every Jew became a "gadol" and became obligated to perform mitzvos on that day.

● Hashem's Shabbos

Sefer Yashrish Yaakov explains that on this Shabbos, we are already prepared for Pesach. We have already given matzohs to the poor and we have joyfully learned the halachos and all of the dinim. This is a cause of great joy and pleasure to Hashem, to the extent that this Shabbos could be called "Hashem's Shabbos."

Thus, the "Gadol" of "Shabbos Hagadol" is Hashem. Since He is full of joy on this Shabbos, it is called "the Shabbos the Great One."

"The lesson of the splitting of the sea, is to teach us that when we have Mesiras Nefesh for Hashem, miracles will happen." ~ Reishis Chachmah [Shaar Ahavah 8:6].

● Atoning Like Yom Kippur

The Chidushei Harim zy"a equates the holiness of Shabbos Hagadol to the holiness of Yom Kippur. He notes that Yom Kippur is on the 10th of the month, and the sheep for the Korban Pesach in Mitzrayim was taken on the 10th of the month (Shemos 12:3).

Furthermore, just like the day of Yom Kippur itself atones for sins, so too Shabbos Hagadol purifies and sanctifies Jewish souls from their sins.

● Enough to Last Until After Pesach

Kimcha D'Pischa must be given generously. The poor must be given enough to cover all their needs and for them to have enough to last even after yomtov.

It is related that **Rav Yissochor Dov of Belz zy"a** asked one of his attendants before Pesach if a certain pauper was already given money for his Pesach needs. The attendant answered in the affirmative. The Rebbe then asked how much the man had been given, and the attendant answered that he was given enough to purchase matzohs, wine and apples.

The Rebbe said, "That isn't enough. If you want him to really be able to enjoy yomtov, you must give him enough money so that he will be able to buy food for his family after Pesach. If you don't give him that much, he will be worried throughout yomtov about how he will feed his family afterwards."

"A person who uses his mental ability solely for worldly pursuits instead of for understanding the true Heavenly light is like a villager who finds a magnificent sculpture and uses it as a scarecrow." ~The Alter of Novhardok.

● V'Ahavta L'Reacha Komocha

When one fulfills the mitzvah of Kimcha D'Pischa, he also fulfills the mitzvah of V'Ahavta L'Reacha Komocha. Sefer Divrei Chana (Chelek 2, page 125) relates that when the **Kaloshitzer Rebbe zy"a** lived in the city of Kashau, there was a resident of the city who was known as "Red Berish". This man was very poor, and he was a very coarse and vulgar person.

On Chol Hamoed Pesach, as the Rebbe was entering the bais medrash to daven and was emotionally declaring, "Behold, I accept upon myself the mitzvah to love every Jew like myself", Red Berish ran over to him and audaciously said, "You claim to love every Jew? The Rebbe has all that he needs for yomtov in his house but my house is empty. My family has no matzoh, meat, eggs or even apples!"

The Rebbe remained silent and did not reply. Instead, he immediately put on his tallis and davened quickly, which was very unusual for him. After davening, he ran home.

A few minutes later, he was seen running through the streets with two large bags full of food. He ran for a long time until he came to Red Berish's house on the outskirts of town, and he handed over the food with a smile. Berish then said that he sees that the Rebbe really does love every Jew like himself.

Pesach

● Rav Levi Yitzchok's Preparations for the Seder

Sefer Raza D'Uvda (Shaar Ha'Osiyos L'Pesach, Ois 1) relates that **Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchov zy"a and the Magid of Kozhnitz zy"a** shared a very close bond of friendship. One year, Rav Levi Yitzchok told the Magid that he wanted to spend the Seder night together with him. However, the Magid was a very weak man physically and he was afraid to be together with Rav Levi Yitzchok

because he knew that he was always full of fire and enthusiasm, and that he would often get excited, sing, dance, and jump around in an unnatural way. He knew that he didn't have the energy to keep up with this type of avodah, so he tried to refuse. However, Rav Levi Yitzchok insisted and eventually convinced the Magid to agree to be in the same house with him for the Seder, albeit in separate rooms.

On the Seder night, the Magid went into his room, closed the door and began to recite the Hagadah.

Rav Levi Yitzchok went into his room and began conducting the Seder with much enthusiasm and very loudly. When he got to the words: "Matzoh zu she'anu ochlim al shum mah", he got so excited that he got up from his seat, ran into the Magid's room, and jumped onto the table. The entire table fell over, breaking everything that was on it. He then ran over to the Magid, grabbed him by the shoulders, and began to shake him. He cried out, "Heiliger Kozhnitzer Magid! Matzoh zu she'anu ochlim al shum mah? Why do we eat this matzoh?"

He was so immersed in his avodah that he didn't even realize how hard he was shaking this weak man. He didn't realize that he had broken all of the cups and dishes and spilled the wine. – This was the extent of this great man's enthusiasm for ruchnius.

● The Angels Came to Hear the Hagadah

When **Rav Yitzchok of Radvil zy"a** was a young man, he lived in the city of Nadvorna. One year, when he was ready to start his Seder, he told his shamash to bring him water from the well for netilas yadayim. - A long time passed, but the attendant failed to come back with the water. The Rebbe sent his Rebitzen to see what was taking so long, but she also failed to return. Finally, he went himself to see what was going on. When he got outside, he saw a large crowd peering into the window of a home. They were looking at a Jewish man and listening to how he recited the Hagadah. He saw his shamash and

wife amongst the crowd, and he too walked over to see what was so interesting.

He saw that the man was reciting one page of the Hagadah and then one page from Megilas Eicha. He continued doing this, page by page, and the crowd was watching this and laughing at how funny it was.

The real story was that this man had given his Hagadah to a bookbinder, whom he asked to bind it for him. He also brought his copy of Kinos and Megilas Eicha to the bookbinder at the same time. The binder made a mistake and mixed up the pages, binding every other page from the Hagadah together with every other page from the Kinos. - This unlearned Jew didn't know what the words meant in any case, so he hadn't realized that anything was amiss.

The Rebbe later said that the entire 'Pamalia Shel Maaloh' had come down to hear this Jew recite the Hagadah with temimus. That is why everyone was so captured by it and were unable to stop watching. Their neshamos felt the kedusha and they were unable to walk away.

● Opening the Door

Rav Volf of Strikov zy"a asked why we open the door for Eliyahu Hanavi by Shfoch Chomascha, at the end of the Seder. Why don't we open it and invite him in at the beginning, when we invite everyone else in and say "anyone who is hungry, come and eat"?

He answers that this is meant as an important lesson in ruchnius. On the night of the Seder, the doors of Shomayim are open to all Jews, who can acquire great spiritual things. When we say that anyone who is hungry can come in, we aren't really inviting guests. What we really mean is that anyone who desires to become sanctified can get what he wants. However, one must open the door on his own to let the great spiritual influences in, as a sign that he is willing to do his part.

A similar idea is said in the name of the **Saraf of Kotzk zy"a** to explain the Gemara (Brachos 28A) that says that Rabban Gamliel

placed a guard at the door of the bais medrash to keep out anyone "whose inside is not the same as his outside".

We may ask how the guard knew what was inside a person. How could he know a person's inner thoughts?

The answer is that the guard didn't let anyone in at all. Those who gained entry were those who climbed in through the windows, which was a clear sign that they had a true inner desire to study Torah.

● We Have Enough Maror

Once, there was not enough maror at the Seder table of the **Ahavas Yisroel of Vizhnitz zy"a** for all the people. One of the chasidim called out to the gabbai to bring more maror but the Rebbe said, "The Jewish people do not need any more maror. We've had enough!"

When Yom Tov arrives, people are eager to fulfil the main mitzvos, and they spend money on expensive matzos, a beautiful esrog, or superior wine, but there's another mitzvah as well.

A person must gladden the hearts of those in his family. A husband must make his wife happy, ensure that his children are joyous. He has to have not just a nice esrog and quality matzos, but create genuine smiles.

It's nice to love mitzvos, but make sure you have your priorities straight. ~ R' Meir Mazuz

I can answer the question, what should not be done. But what should be done – this, each person must ask himself. ~ The Kotzker Rebbe.

● The Rasha Becomes a Tzadik

One year, the **Yismach Yisroel of Alexander zy"a** came home on the night of the Seder and told those in the house, "Anyone who does not believe that even the biggest rasha can change on this night and become a complete tzadik is the rasha the Hagadah is talking about!"



On another year, when the Yismach Yisroel began his Seder he loudly declared,

"'Kadeish'. Make yourself holy. Don't miss this opportunity to rise to lofty levels on this night.

'Urchatz.' Wash away your aveiros and get away from your lowliness.

'Karpas.' Look at the karpas. (He used potatoes for karpas.) It is a vegetable like all others, but it has one benefit. It's leaves grow above ground, while the vegetable itself is hidden below the ground. All year long, no one pays much attention to it, but on the Seder night, it gets an honored place on the table.

We can learn a lesson from it. Even if you are sunk under your aveiros all year, on this night you can uplift yourself to reach an honorable place.

"Without Hashem, it is impossible to cross a doorway – With hashem, we can split the sea! ~ The Lechovitzer Rebbe.

● Kedusha Like the Kohen Gadol

The holiness we can reach on Pesach is similar to the kedusha of the Kohen Gadol when he enters the Kodesh Kodashim.

The Maharal zt"l writes that the reason we wear a kittel at the Seder is to show that on this night, every Jew can reach the level of the Kohen Gadol and every house is like the Kodesh Kodashim.

● Telling the Story of Yetzias Mitzrayim Brings Back the Miracles



The Chozeh of Lublin zy"a would say that by relating the story of yetzias Mitzrayim, one can effect miracles and wonders. The Sefarim Hakedoshim say that speaking about miracles from past generations arouses their influence and causes miracles to happen today, and this applies most of all to the miracles of Pesach.

The Magid of Zlotchov zy"a said that saying the words of the Torah about yetzias Mitzrayim brings back the power of those miracles, as everything lies within the words of the Torah.

● Protection for the Entire Year

Sefer Tiferes Shlomo explains that this night has the power to provide protection for every night of the year. The word "shimurim" (literally "protections") is written in the plural to indicate that it refers to every night of the year.

The Sefas Emes (Pesach 5652) writes that the protection of the night of Pesach remains throughout the year and lasts until today.

He adds that the reason we put aside a piece of the Afikoman is to symbolize that a piece of that protection is set aside to last eternally.

● An Aliyah for the Entire Year

The pasuk states (Shemos 12:12): "And I passed through the land of Egypt on that night."

The Tiferes Shlomo says that we "passed through" in the sense that we went unnoticed. This indicates that Hashem ignores our faults on this night and looks solely at our good aspects. - This night is called "Pesach", which means to skip over, because Hashem skips over our iniquities on this night and only sees our goodness. - In this way, we can receive an aliyah on Pesach that lasts all year.

● Pesach's Imprint for the Entire Year

We recite in the Hagadah: "It is a mitzvah upon us to relate the story of the exodus from Egypt."

Rav Yechiel of Alexander zy"a explains that the main purpose of this mitzvah is for it to leave an imprint upon the one who performs it. Thus, the mitzvah is "upon us", as it is meant to improve us and bring us to a higher level. Its imprint is meant to be upon us all year.

The Origins of the (Non-) Jewish Custom of "Schlissel Challah" (Key Bread) by Shelomo Alfassa

Introduction

Every year Jewish women, young and old, partake in an Ashkenazi custom to place a key (such as a door key to a home), inside the dough of a loaf of bread that they bake. This custom is known as Schlissel challah—Schlissel from the German language shlüssel (key) and challah or hallah from the Hebrew for bread.

While a metal key is often baked within the bread, some form the bread itself into the shape of a key or even arrange sesame seeds on top in the form of a key.

Often times, these women gather in celebratory groups with the common belief that baking the Schlissel challah will bring blessing into their homes, and specifically, the blessing of increased fiscal livelihood. There is also a seemingly new 'custom' of baking Schlissel challah in the "merit" of a sick person, as a way of helping them recover from physical disease or trauma.

Connection to Passover

The modern Jewish custom of baking the symbolic Schlissel challah, annually takes place on the shabbat immediately following the holiday of Pessah, when tens (if not hundreds) of thousands of religiously observant Jewish women practice this observance.

In Christianity, baked goods associated with keys are commonly called 'Easter breads,' and in Europe they are also known as 'Paschals,' as the holiday of Easter in the East is known as 'Pascha' or 'Pascua.'

This is most likely the reason Christians often call Easter breads baked with keys Paschals. Before the Romans destroyed the Beit HaMikdash in Jerusalem, the focus of the Passover holiday for the Jewish people was the Korban Pessah.

Lack of Sources

While the custom is said to be mentioned in the writings of Avraham Yehoshua Heshel (the "Apter Rav" 1748-1825) and in the Ta'amei ha-Minhagim (1891), there is no one clear source for Schlissel challah. And while people will say there is a passuq attributed to it, there is not. And, even if there were, a passuq that can be linked to the practice is not the same as a source.

Micha Berger, founder of the AishDas Society, [orthodox] calls this type of logic 'reverse engineering,' it's like drawing a circle around an arrow in a tree, and subsequently declaring the arrow is a bullseye.

The idea of baking Schlissel challah is not from the Torah; it's not in the Tannaitic, Amoraitic, Savoraitic, Gaonic or Rishonic literature. Rabbi Shlomo Aviner of Israel's Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim said that while baking challah with a key in it is not forbidden, "there is no meaning in doing so."

Who Is Doing It?

As this is written in 2011, the concept and observance of Schlissel challah continues to grow and be exploited, especially in the USA and among newly religious Jews who are being taught it is acceptable to use a loaf of bread and a machine made die-cut piece of brass as an intermediary between them and the Almighty.

The baking is conducted today across the Jewish spectrum. It is widely popular (but certainly not universally practiced) in both the Hassidic and non-Hassidic haredi communities. It is also conducted by the Modern-Orthodox, among the 'Yeshivish' communities and by other American Orthodox Jews such as those with Lithuanian and German family ancestry.

Halakhic Acceptance

Several clever ideas have been devised which attempt to connect the (non-) Jewish idea of 'key bread' to the Torah, however these all fail to bring a Jewish wrapper to a wholly (non-) Jewish tradition. A

popular one attempts to inexplicably connect the idea of a spiritual "gate" to a physical "key," during the period when Jews count the 49 days during the Omer up to the 50th day which is the holiday of Shavuot. The idea of the 50th day represents the sha'ar hanun (50th gate), which according to kabbalah is known as the sha'ar binah (gate of understanding—and, since we are said to go {spiritually} from gate to gate, this is why the focus is on a key, as a key will 'unlock' a gate.

Further, modern commentators have exploited the name of Rambam (Maimonides), to indicate that he demonstrates an association between the idea of a key with challah. Such alleged connections are baseless and are only meager attempts to legitimize the idea of Schlissel challah. Nonetheless, it's well known that Rambam himself would have been utterly against the practice of baking a key into a bread which allegedly could influence the Almighty. It is one of Rambam's clear principles that any belief in an intermediary between man and G-d (including a physical object), is considered heretical to the Torah. He teaches that G-d is the only One we may serve and praise; that we may not act in this way toward anything beneath G-d, whether it be an angel, a star, or one of the elements; there are no intermediaries between us and G-d; that all our prayers should be directed towards G-d; and that nothing else should even be considered. This would certainly include baking a key inside a loaf of bread and/or shaping a bread in the form of a key, then expecting it to either change your fortune or influence your future.

Shabbos evening upon returning from Maariv, Rav Simcha Zissel Ziv zt"l would pause for a while in the entrance of his home to study all the Shabbos preparations. He would observe the beautifully set table and the many delicious foods in order to be properly grateful to his wife, who had gone to so much trouble for him. ~ Sparks of Mussar.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman



Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach Z'tl asks why do we drink 4 cups of wine at the seder? Because of the 4 expressions of Geulah **והוצאתי והצלתי וגאלתי ולקחתי**? Ok, but why does it specifically have to be 4 cups of wine? – use 4 matzos or 4 oranges for that matter.

He explained: When a person eats 4 matzos, does it change him? No, he might get fuller, but it does not change him. However, when he drinks 4 cups of wine (not grape juice), he gets lively! He becomes a bit different - **יַיִן יְשַׂמַּח לְבַב־אֱנוֹשׁ** / ***wine shall make the heart of man rejoice***.

After the 2nd cup, he gets even livelier.

After the 3rd cup, his excitement advances to another level.

By the 4th cup, we have to open the door for him! - He turns into an entirely different person.

This is the purpose of the Seder night. A person should change completely! His entire outlook should be completely transformed, until he calls out **אֶחָד מִי יוֹדֵעַ?** – declaring that Hashem is the only One, and everything is from Hashem.

"A single act of kindness is more beloved and precious to Hashem than all the sacrifices offered by Shlomo HaMelech." ~ Yalkut Shimoni, Rabbi Shimon Ashkenazi of Frankfurt (circa 1260).



Rebbe Nachman of Breslov (1772-1810) was the great-grandson of the holy Baal Shem Tov, founder of the Chassidic movement. He championed a unique path of divine service, urging his followers to serve Hashem with simplicity and joy. While it has been over 200 years since his passing, Rebbe Nachman's teachings continue to provide clarity, hope, and comfort to his followers. - In his magnum opus, Rebbe Nachman famously teaches, "A person must cross a very, very narrow bridge. The main rule is: Do not be frightened at all!" (Likutey Moharan II, 48:2) - We hope these words provide inspiration and encouragement as we navigate the narrow bridge of life.

True Value - Rabbi Avraham Twerski

The Tzaddik of Sanz used to drink the four cups of wine at the Seder from a glass rather than from a silver cup. Some chassidim thought that there must have been a kabbalistic reason for this, but my grandfather, **the Bobover Rebbe**, said that the reason was really simple: The Tzaddik had pawned his silver kos to give maos chittim to the needy, so that they could buy provisions for Pesach.

[Along the same lines, the Tzaddik had no sukkah decorations, "The finest sukkah decoration is to give the money for the ornaments to the poor."]

If you are not willing to learn, no one can help you. If you are determined to learn, no one can stop you. ~ Emuna Daily.

Happiness Takes Precedence - Reb Yitzchak of Neschiz

A chassid poured out his trouble before R' Yitzchak of Neschiz. The wheat he had guarded for matzos had become chametz and he would be forced to eat the simple "unguarded" matzos on Pesach.

"The eating of shmura matzah is only an adornment to the mitzvah" said the Rebbe, "but the commandment to rejoice on the festival is itself given in the Torah. It is preferable to eat the simple matzah in joy rather than the 'guarded' matzah in sadness."



Free Of Anger - Reb Pinchas of Radvanka

Becoming angry is more serious than violating the prohibition against chametz in one respect. Chametz, even a particle, is forbidden for one week of the year; anger, even a smidgen, is forbidden throughout the entire year.

A Truly Special Seder - Rabbi Avraham Twerski

The Chozeh of Lublin had a chassid, Reb Shmuel of Karov, who lived in abject poverty and had no means with which to buy provisions for Pesach. The Chozeh arranged for a wealthy chassid to send Reb Shmuel provisions for Yom Tov. Reb Shmuel was thrilled and conducted the first Seder with all the kabbalistic trimmings. He felt he was soaring in heaven in the company of the angels.

The next afternoon, Reb Shmuel took a nap and overslept; when he woke up it was already dark. He started the second Seder, but since he wanted to eat the afikoman before midnight, he rushed through the Haggadah, just saying the words without the profound kavanos. He was heartbroken that he did not have the time to think about the kavanos.

After Pesach he visited the Chozeh. "Reb Shmuel," the Chozeh told him, "soaring in Heaven in the company of angels is not a great avodah. But your second Seder? Ah, that was something special."

Save The Date - Vizhnitzer Rebbe

A man once came before the **Ahavas Yisrael of Vizhnitz** and poured his heart out. He had arranged a match for his son some time before, but he had no funds with which to meet the many wedding expenses.

The Rebbe asked if they had already set a date for the wedding. "No," replied the man, "I have no wherewithal to pay for anything. How could I set a date?"

"Look," said the Rebbe, "our Torah has demanded of us that not a particle of chametz be found in our home on Pesach, and Pesach expenses are large. Now, imagine that the Torah had not set a date for Pesach and that we would only celebrate it when we had completed our preparations; we would never celebrate it. But since the Torah has established a specific date, a great wonder takes place. All the women manage to clean their homes; all the needs of Pesach are filled.

Take a lesson from the Torah. Set the wedding date, and you will see that you will succeed in acquiring whatever you need by then."

Order To Everything - Maharal of Prague

This exalted evening is called "seder night," referring to the order of the meal, but - deeper - to the order of our lives. We affirm through this evening of faith that nothing happens randomly; Hashem has a divine order, a seder, to everything that transpires. the sequence of our lives is but the design of providence.

Desperate Times, Desperate Measures - Tiferes Shmuel

Kadesh, Urchatz …





On the first Pesach after he had become Rebbe, the Tiferes Shmuel of Alexander remarked: The order of the seder is Kadesh, Urchatz - first say the kiddush, the prayer of sanctification of the Festival, and then wash hands. Should not the order have been the reverse? First wash - a man should wash himself clean of sin and then rise and become holy... If, however, we think in terms of a parable, we can understand the order.

Not everyone is permitted to enter the palace of a king. Even those who have been invited to do so must make preparations, they must dress properly. And they can only go in at the appointed hour. If a man should enter without an invitation, without preparing himself - in sackcloth, or at an hour other than the one assigned - he would be severely punished. But if the man was fleeing from a band of murderous robbers and would rush into the palace to save his life, no one would hold him blameworthy or punish him.

On the evening of the first Seder in Egypt, Israel was sunk in the depths of impurity and corruption and was about to sink into the final depth and be completely assimilated. They were forced to leap up and out of the abyss into the palace of the King of kings to save themselves. They sanctified themselves (Kadesh) first, so to speak, and only afterwards went through stages of preparation; through the counting of the forty-nine days of the omer. That was the Urchatz, the washing away of the sins. (Eser Zechuyos)

Holy Exception - Reb Chaim of Sanz

Kadesh, Urchatz …

The order of the Seder is Kadesh, Urchatz - to make kiddush and then wash our hands. The Chassidic Rebbeim asked: Kadesh means to be holy, and it is necessary to cleanse oneself of sins in order to be holy, so why doesn't Urchatz precede Kadesh?

They answered said that although in Mitzrayim, Bnei Yisrael had fallen into the depths of impurity, nevertheless they merited to see the revelation of the Shechinah on Pesach night. This shows that Pesach night is so special that we can achieve kedushah even before we have cleansed ourselves of our sins.

Broken Without Hashem - Reb Menachem Mendel of Rimanov

Yachatz …

The division of the matzah at yachatz is a loving message we convey to Hashem: without You in our lives, we are not whole - but broken.

Don't Just Tell Them, Show Them - Avnei Nezer

Behold I am prepared and ready to fulfill the mitzvah of telling of the Exodus from Egypt …

The Rebbe of Sochachov, author of Avnei Nezer, noted that the Aramaic translation of Onkelos renders v'higaditah l'vinchah, you shall tell your son (Shemos 13:8) as: u's'chavei l'vinchah, which may be understood as: you should show your son. We are to show him the Exodus, have him see it, in a sense, not merely tell him about it. (Neos Deshe II p. 189)

The Ultimate Host - Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner

This is the bread of affliction that our fathers ate … Whoever is hungry - let him come and eat! …

Some people invite guests for yom tov. Others make it a yom tov when they invite guests!

Most Important Question - Rabbi Shlomo Heiman

Maggid … Why is this night different from all other nights?

The most important question in the world is always the one being asked of you right now.

Not The Norm - Baal Hafla'ah

Why is this night different from all other nights? …

R' Pinchas, the author of the Hafla'ah, was asked why we pose questions on Pesach and not on Succos, when many changes are also introduced and we leave our permanent homes for the temporary structure of the succah.

"On Pesach," he answered, "when the ever-troubled, ever-pursued Jew sits down to his table, as if free, and sees the beautiful dishes set before him, as if he is a lord and master, he asks, in amazement, 'Why is this night different?' - But on Succos, he enters a tottery succah. That is in keeping with, and normal to, the bitter life of Exile. There is no reason for amazement." (Chassidim Mesaprim 1:525)

"Where we are is up to Hashem, but who we are is up to us." ~ Rabbi Fischel Shachter.

Seeing The Light - Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein

It happened that Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah, Rabbi Akiva, and Rabbi Tarfon were gathered …



This episode occurred during the darkest period - following the destruction of the holy temple. The great rabbinic leaders gathered in Bnei Brak, seeking guidance and reassurance from Rabbi Akiva, the eternal optimist (see Makkos 24a-b).

By sunrise, the Rabbis got what they came for; they saw that there was a light at the end of the tunnel.

Daily Exodus - Rebbe Nachman

Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah said …

The exodus from Egypt occurs in every human being, in every era, every year, and every day; it is for this reason we recall it daily.

Available To All - Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik

Blessed is the Omnipresent …

We praise Hashem for giving us the Torah that addresses all four sons - each on his own level. This is one of the unique wonders of the Torah, that the very same text may be studied - and savored - by young and old, beginner and scholar alike.

Wise Answer - Reb Chaim of Sanz

Concerning four sons does the Torah speak – A wise one, a wicked one, a simple one …

One day, the Divrei Chaim of Sanz stood by the window looking out. A man passed by. The Rebbe tapped on the window and motioned him in. When he entered, the Rebbe asked, "Tell me! If you found a purse filled with gold coins, would you return it to its owner?"

"Certainly, Rebbe," said the man. "I would return it immediately."

"You're a fool," said the Rebbe, and dismissed him.

Once more, he stood at the window and motioned to another passing man to enter. He put the same question to him.

"I'm not such a fool as to return a purse full of gold coins that fell into my hand," said the man.

"You are wicked," said the Rebbe, and sent him off.

Once again, he returned to the window, and beckoned to a third man to come in. And once again, he asked his question.

"How can I give an answer to the Rebbe?" said the man. "Do I know what will happen at such a moment? Will I have it in myself to suppress my evil desire? I hope that Hashem would help me overcome and help me return the lost object to its owner."

"You are a wise man," said the Rebbe, "that is how one should answer." (Mekor Chaim 166)

A Taste of Shabbos

"Master of the World, You gave me fish for Shabbos; You gave me meat for Shabbos; Please give me Shabbos for Shabbos!" ~ R' Shlomo Karliner zt'l.

Protect The Others - Reb Tzvi Hirsch of Ziditchov

A wise one… a wicked one

R' Michel of Sambur said in the name of his uncle R' Tzvi Hirsch of Ziditchov:

Why did the compiler of the Haggadah place the wicked son next to the wise son and not at the end of the list of four sons?

Had the wicked son stood next to and after the simple son or the one who is unable to ask, he would influence them and ruin them, before the wise man could foil his plans. But he is placed next to the wise son who can keep an eye on him. (Eser Kedushos Tinyana 34)

Maintain A Connection - Reb Yisrael of Rizhin

The wicked son – what does he say …

One should never despair of any Jew. Every Yid retains holiness. Maintain a connection. After all, a bucket that tumbles into a well can still be pulled from the depths - as long as it is still attached to a cord.

Various Methods… Same Results - Rabbi Chaim Berlin

It is this that has stood by our fathers and us … but in every generation, they rise against us to annihilate us …

The reason it says "dor" (generation) twice is to underscore the two methods utilized by our enemies bent on annihilating us.

Some generations persecute and torture us; other generations use friendship and love in an attempt to assimilate us. Both are fatal to our national existence, and Hashem saves us from them.

Beware Of Whitewashing - Reb Aharon Menachem Mendel of Radzimin - *Go and learn what Laven Ha'Arami attempted to do to your father … Lavan attempted to uproot everything …*

When I was a little boy, my sainted grandfather R' Yaakov Aryeh put me on his lap and said to me: "Know that there is a simple, direct, evil nature who pushes men to sin. His name is Pharaoh. We can hope to escape him, because he attacks openly. And even if we fail in our encounter, heaven forbid, there is hope that we will repent.

But there is an evil nature whom we call Lavan the Aramean, because he fools us (m'reima) and dresses up in white (lavan) like a righteous man, a tzaddik. He persuades a man that a particular sin is not a sin, but a mitzvah. We are liable to overlook the trap and, not seeing it as a sin, fail to repent. Of him, my child, it is said that he wishes to uproot everything." (Chassidim Mesaprim III 451)

Just Passing Through - Meshech Chochmah

Then he [Yaakov] descended to Egypt … He sojourned there …

This means that Yaakov intended to teach future progeny - by example - how they must conduct themselves in any exile in which they are found: never view yourselves as full-fledged, permanent citizens of your host country - but as temporary guests.

Stop And Think - Ramchal

The Egyptians did evil to us - They imposed hard labor upon us

Pharaoh kept us so busy with our workload that we had no time to contemplate ways to rebel against him. This is the technique employed by the evil inclination, who attempts to distract us so that we have no time to think about how to free ourselves from his grasp.

Hashem To The Rescue - Sefas Emes

Hashem took us out of Egypt – not through an angel … but the Holy One, Blessed is He, in His glory, and by Himself …

Why could Hashem not send an angel to redeem us?

Because we had sunk to such a low spiritual state that no angel saw anything redeemable about us. Only Hashem, Who recognized that at our core we were good, came Himself to our rescue.

Seize The Moment - Rabbi Chaim Shmulevitz

"With great awe" – alludes to the revelation of the Shechinah …

Our sages convey that at the splitting of the sea, even the simple maidservant witnessed levels of divine revelation that the great prophet Yechezkel would not. But, alas, the maidservant remained a maidservant.

One must be prepared to build upon moments of inspiration - or they vanish...

Generating Sensitivity - Alter of Slabodka

These are the ten plagues which the Holy One, Blessed is He, brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt …

Why do we spill out drops of wine at the mention of each of the makkos?

Perhaps it is to develop our sensitivity toward the suffering of the Egyptians - even though they caused so much pain to the Jewish people.

Attitude Of Gratitude - Rabbi Chaim Shmulevitz

Blood …

Aharon - not Moshe - initiated the plague of turning the water to blood, since the waters in which baby Moshe had been placed had saved his life.

If such gratitude is owed to inanimate objects, how much more so must we show appreciation to people from whom we have benefited!

Danger Of Anger - Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky



Frogs …

One large frog came upon Egypt. Each time the Egyptians, in their fury, hit the frog, it multiplied into swarms of new frogs, until the entire land was covered.

Why, then, would they continue to strike it?

Because when one is angry, all rational thinking becomes suspended; he acts impulsively, even self-destructively.

Seeing Another's Pain - Chiddushei HaRim

Darkness …

The verse describing the plague of darkness states: "One man did not see another, and no one arose from his place" (Shemos 10:23).

Indeed, someone who is so blinded by his own interests that he fails to see the needs and problems of his friend will not get up from his place - he will never attain true spiritual transcendence.

Countless Miracles - Rabbi Avigdor Miller

Rabbi Akiva said … at the sea [Egypt was struck] by two-hundred and fifty [plagues] …

As many as 250 miracles were performed at the Yam Suf. Now, consider this: our sages taught (Pesachim 118a) that the miracle of supplying man with food is considered a greater wonder than that of splitting the sea! For food to grow from the earth, not just hundreds of miracles need to occur, but thousands upon thousands...

Well Equipped - Chiddushei HaRim

The Omnipresent has bestowed so many favors upon us! … Had He given us the Torah, but not brought us into the Land of Israel

The Holy One gave us the Torah. According to halachah, a giver should give in good measure, and whoever gives his fellow a field surrounded by other fields also grants him a path of entry to the field.

Therefore, if Hashem gave us the Torah, he most certainly granted each of us the path, the power and ability to reach the Torah. (Siach Sarfei Kodesh I 407)

Hashem Is Here, Hashem Is There…- The Netziv

How much more so should we be grateful to the Omnipresent for all the numerous favors He showered upon us …

Here the Haggadah uses the name HaMakom (the Omnipresent) - literally 'the place' - to describe Hashem. This title conveys that there is no place in the world that He does not occupy and control. Since this poem describes the series of wondrous events that divine providence orchestrated, such a designation is most befitting.

Rapid Redemption - Rabbi Avraham Pam

Matzah … They baked the dough … and could not delay , nor had they prepared any provisions for the way …

The matzah serves as a reminder that just as in Egypt our national salvation happened so suddenly, so will Hashem rapidly and unexpectedly bring an end to our current exile.

Accepting Bitterness - Yismach Yisrael of Alexander

Maror …the Egyptians embittered the lives of our fathers.

It is important to accept suffering with love for Hashem. Chazal have alluded to this in saying: "If one swallows matzah (without first chewing and tasting it), he has fulfilled the mitzvah; if he swallows maror, he has not" (Pesachim 115b). Maror was meant to be chewed well. (Chassidim Mesaprim)

Serving With Joy - Shelah HaKadosh

Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d … [Who] has commanded us concerning the eating of the matzah …

I witnessed elevated souls who would kiss the matzos and maror to demonstrate their adoration for these mitzvos. Fortunate is the one who serves Hashem with joy!

Elevating The Mundane - The Netziv

Shulchan Orech …

By interrupting the Hallel with a meal, we demonstrate that even our mundane activities such as eating may be raised to a high form of praise to Him.

Guaranteed Sustenance - Sefer HaChinuch

Barech …

Whoever is careful to recite Birchas HaMazon properly will merit abundant sustenance all of his life.

It's All From Above - Reb Zusha of Hanipoli

Barech … He gives nourishment to all flesh …

Each morning, after prayers, R' Zusha of Hanipoli would say, "Master of the world, Zusha is very hungry and wishes to eat. Please furnish him with his food." When his shammash (attendant) would hear this, he would enter and serve him refreshments, a portion of cake and drink.

One day, the shammash thought to himself, "Why doesn't the Rebbe ask me to bring him his food? Why does he turn to the Holy One with his request?" He decided that he would not serve the Rebbe unless he was asked to do so directly.

That morning, R' Zusha immersed himself in the mikveh before prayers as was his custom. It was a rainy day and the roads of Hanipoli were muddy. A path of narrow planks had been placed from one end of the street to the other to allow passageway.

R' Zusha was pacing along the planks on his way to the beis knesses when, there in front of him, he saw a stranger, a visitor in town, walking towards him. The stranger saw an elderly, slight Jew hurrying in his direction. The desire to play a prank seized him and he pushed R' Zusha off the plank and into the mud. R' Zusha fell, dirtying his clothes, picked himself up without a word, and continued on his way.

The stranger laughed heartily at the comical sight and could not stop laughing all the way to his lodgings. There, he told the innkeeper of the prank he had played. When, in answer to his host's question, he

had described the man whom he had pushed off the plank, the innkeeper smote his hands and said, "Oh my! What have you done? You shoved the Rebbe, R' Zusha, into the mud."

The visitor shook and trembled. R' Zusha was known as a holy man of G-d. "Woe is me!" he cried out in fear, "What shall I do?" "Listen to me," said his host. "R' Zusha spends a long time at his prayers and afterwards takes refreshments. Take some good-tasting pastry and quality liquor. Bring them to him as a present and ask his pardon. I'm positive that, righteous and modest as he is, he will forgive you whole-heartedly."

R' Zusha finished his prayers, took off his tefillin and said, "Master of the world, Zusha is very hungry and wishes to eat. Please furnish him with his food." The shammash heard him and didn't make a move. "If the Rebbe turns to Hashem, let Hashem bring him refreshments," he thought.

The door suddenly opened and in walked a stranger bearing a tray of pastry and liquor. He entered the Rebbe's room and placed the tray before him. It was now evident to the shammash that it was not he who provided the Rebbe with food, but the Holy One. (Sipurei Tzaddikim 74)

It's All Good - Reb Simchah Bunim of Pshischa

Barech … But those who seek Hashem will not lack any good …

"Those who seek Hashem will not lack" because "everything is good." They know that whatever Hashem does to them is only for the good.

"A Jew who is not tied to the past has no hope of being connected to the future." ~ R' Elazar Shach zt"l .

An Open Heart - Rabbi Aryeh Levin

Pour Your wrath…

People make a mistake believing that Eliyahu HaNavi enters through the door. In truth, he enters through our hearts and souls.

There Is Always Hope - Piaseczno Rebbe

How can I repay Hashem … I will raise the cup of salvations and invoke the Name of Hashem …

Even when we, the Jewish people, are in the enemy's fatal clutches - we must never lose hope in Hashem's imminent salvation.

Lasting Impression - Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner

Blessed be he who comes in the Name of Hashem … bind the festival offering [Isru Chag] …

On "Isru Chag" - when the yom tov concludes - never say that it has gone away. Those elevated moments of the festival remain forever embedded in our personalities, characters, and essence.

"Worldly pleasures are like sunbeams in a dark room. They may actually seem solid, but one who tries to grasp a sunbeam finds nothing in his hand. The same is true of all worldly desires." ~ R' Nachman of Breslov zt"l.

"We can learn three things from little children: They are always happy; they are always busy; and when they need something, they cry out." ~ The Maggid of Mezritch.

Concealed Miracles - Midrash

Gives thanks to Hashem … to Him Who alone does great wonders; His kindness endures forever! …

Hashem often makes wonders that He alone is aware of; the recipient of the miracle usually remains oblivious to the fact that divine providence is protecting him from harm.

Reason To Celebrate - Rabbi Shimshon Pincus



Gives thanks to Hashem … to He gives food to all living creatures; His kindness endures forever!

Our sages teach that Hashem's wondrous providing of daily sustenance to man is akin to the splitting of the sea (Pesachim 118a).

It follows, then, that just as the Jews burst forth in a spontaneous song of gratitude for the miracle by the sea, so should we each time we open our refrigerator door and find it stocked with food.

"Peace of mind is one of the greatest pleasures a person can have; lack of peace of mind can make one's life constant torture." ~ The Alter of Kelm, R' Simcha Zissel Ziv zt"l.

Happy Feet - Reb Chaim of Kosov

The soul of every living being shall bless Your Name, Hashem, our G-d … [were] our feet as swift as deer…



R' Chaim of Kosov would dance with great and saintly enthusiasm each Shabbos night, his face radiant like a torch. Once a heavy bench fell on his feet and he stopped dancing for some time. But after a few weeks had passed, he began to dance once more with his customary fervor.

When his chassidim tried to prevent him, because of his injured feet, he said, "You thought I had stopped dancing because my feet hurt me, but in truth my feet hurt because I had stopped dancing." (Sipurei Chassidim, Moadim 162)

Bowing Erect - Reb Mendel of Vorka

The soul of every living being shall bless Your Name, Hashem, our G-d … all who stand erect shall bow before You …

A genuine chassid must know how to bow even while standing erect, cry out even while silent, and dance without moving.

We Are Royalty - Reb Aharon of Karlin

O G-d, in the omnipotence of Your strength … O King enthroned upon a high and lofty throne …

The basic task of the evil desire is to make man forget that he is a King's son! (Darchei Aharon 24)

Willing And Capable - Rabbi Avi Weisenfeld

O G-d, in the omnipotence of Your strength … O King enthroned upon a high and lofty throne …

We refer to Hashem as "our Father, our King."

A father wants to do everything for his children, but he is limited. He can't do everything that he wants to do.

A king can do anything for his people, but he doesn't necessarily always want to.

Hashem is our father and our king. Not only can He do anything, but He also wants to do everything for us!

Our World, Our Essence - Rabbi Shimshon Pincus

In the assemblies of the myriads of Your people to thank, praise, laud, glorify, exalt, adore, bless, raise high, and sing praises …

You can tell the nature of a people by its thesaurus. Eskimos have many similar words describing snow, for that is their world, their existence. Jews have a full array of terms to express praise to Hashem, for that is our essence.

Immediate Redemption - Rabbi Yedidiah Tiah Weill

Nirtzah … He is most mighty. May He soon rebuild His House, speedily, yes speedily, in our days, soon …

The future Beis HaMikdash will not be built by man but will descend from on high, fashioned by Hashem (Rashi Succah 41a). As such, halachic restrictions of building on yom tov do not apply to it. Hence, this poem expresses our genuine hope that the third holy temple will be built immediately, without delay, on this very seder night!

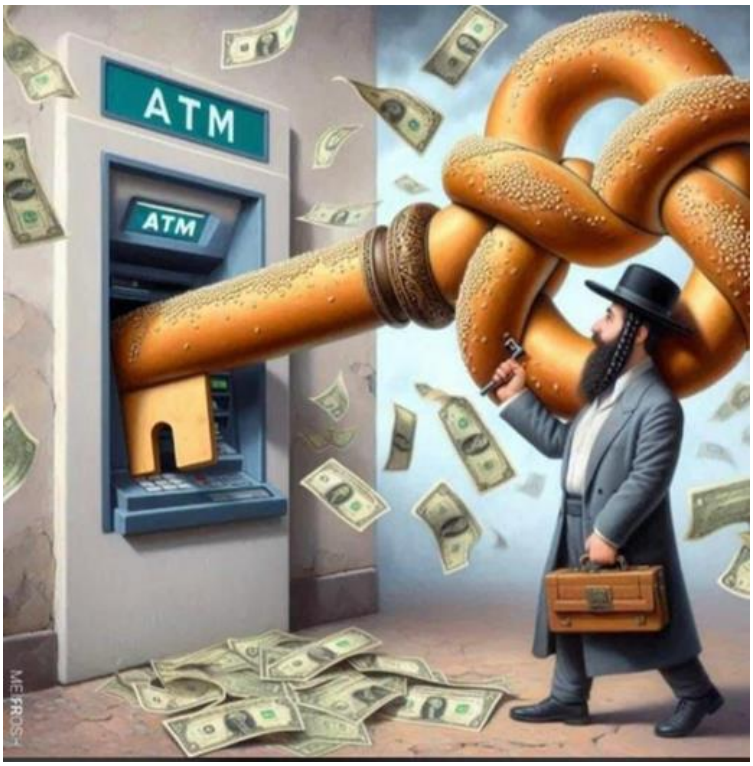
Love Song - Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe

Shir HaShirim …

Shir HaShirim is a song of the love that exists between Hashem and the Jewish people. Seder night, after having recounted the story of the Exodus, as we palpably sense Hashem's love for us and ours for Him, Shir HaShirim flows naturally.



Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages



There is a custom that some have on the first Shabbos after Pesach to bake a house key into one of the Shabbos Challos, or to have a Challah in the shape of a key, and this is known as a Shlissel Challah.

Sefer Ta'amei HaMinhagim offers a few reasons for this Minhag. The Medrash on the Pasuk in Shir HaShirim (5:2) explains that Hashem desires that we open up our hearts in Teshuvah towards Him, even as small as the eye of a needle, and Hashem says that He will open our hearts the rest of the way.

According to Kabbalah, on Pesach the Gates to Heaven were open, and following Pesach the lower gates are now closed. Therefore, it

is up to us to try and open them again, so on the first Shabbos after Pesach we put a key in the Challah to show that through the Mitzvah of Shabbos we are trying to open the locks.

Another reason given is that in the Midbar, the Jewish people ate the Mann until after Pesach when they entered Eretz Yisroel. At that point they ate from the produce of the land and became dependent on their livelihood for the first time, as the Mann had stopped falling down for them. The key in the Challah after Pesach is a request that Hashem should open the Sha'arei Parnasah, the Gates of Livelihood!

A Song of Unity – Rabbi Shlomo Landau

שביעי של פסח



The Jewish people, 3 million strong are at the cusp of the Red Sea. Behind them are the Egyptians closing in. On either side of them **נחשים ועקרבים** - snakes and scorpions. They are in an impossible situation – between a rock and a hard place. And then The Riboino Shel Olam makes the most phenomenal miracle occur – the sea splits. And it doesn't just split, but it splits into 12 distinct paths! One for each shevet.

Chazal teach us that there were glass walls dividing each pathway so that each shevet could see the others, to know that everyone was making their way out safely to the other side.

And then they arrive. But the Egyptians following them were thrown into the depths of the sea and were punished accordingly.

And then came that amazing moment when the Jewish people sang Shirah to The Ribono Shel Olam - **אָז יָשִׁיר מֹשֶׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל**. But what's so fascinating is the fact that when the B'nei Yisrael went through the Red Sea, Hashem thought it necessary to encase each shevet into 12 distinct compartments.

Because each shevet had his own way of carrying out the will of Hashem. And even more recently, we see that there are different nusachs eg Ashkenaz, sephard, Arizal, Sephardi – but we all have a common destination - **וְיֵעָשׂוּ כֻּלָּם אֲגֻדָּה אַחַת לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנְךָ בְּלֵבָב שָׁלֵם**. But as they were travelling on the way, each shevet was distinct each with its own unique path. But when they got to dry land on the other side, there were no distinct paths anymore. It was **כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד בְּלֵב אֶחָד – one entity**. They sang songs of gratitude and thanks as one people.

Because, when it comes to hakaros hatov, gratitude that we have to express to Hashem, there are no unique paths, everyone is like one person with one heart.

This is what we daven for on **שביעי של פסח** and **אחרון של פסח**. We have been through a lot, and each of us has been through our own unique path and set of circumstances, whichever country or part of the world we are in. But hopefully, Im Yirtze Hashem, when we arrive at our final destination – the redemption with Moshiach, we will once again sing **אָז יָשִׁיר** as one people with one heart!

"Everyone in the world from the most successful to the least, needs encouragement. - Make it your career to give others encouragement." ~ Rabbi Avigdor Miller.

Chosen – Rabbi Shlomo Landau

Here is something so powerful that most people are totally unaware of about the month of Nissan.

The Sefas Emes writes that in the same way that thousands of years ago, The Ribboino Shel Olam chose Klal Yisrael as His **עם הנבחר** – 'chosen people', every single year during the month of Nissan, Hakadosh Baruch Hu re-choses Klal Yisrael, us, as His chosen people. As **"בני בכורי ישראל"** – As Hashem's first-born son; The Jewish people.

And while Hashem choses us, there is an incredible auspicious opportunity to choose Hashem. We can re-commit ourselves to understanding just how special we are.



An Angelic Midwife by Rabbi Mendel Weinbach zt"l

A tough decision had to be made by the young Torah scholar as he prepared for the Pesach Seder. He had been approached by members of an organization involved in outreach to come to a Seder being held in Bnei Brak for Jews who were showing an interest in returning to their roots and to deliver one of his famed talks to them.

Although this meant sacrificing his own Seder he consented. His plan was to first come home to perform all the mitzvot and to then go deliver his inspiring talk. But when he came home he saw his pregnant wife suffering from labor pains. As expected, he accompanied her to the hospital where they found many women preparing for birth and only a single midwife on duty. He was reluctant to leave his wife

but she insisted that there was nothing he could do to help her. She insisted it would be wiser for him to go deliver his talk and rely on Heaven to take care of her and all the other expectant mothers.

When he returned from the talk, his wife had given birth to a healthy child. She told him that as soon as he left, a woman in white entered the room and took care of all her needs and then disappeared. When she took a look at her face she recognized her as a rebbitzen who had passed away a few years earlier.

[Source: Ohr Somayach Institutions]

How Much Matza? by Rabbi Mendel Weinbach zt"l

The rabbi of a European community of long ago dedicated his traditional Shabbat Hagadol sermon to a scholarly discussion of the correct amount of matzah which a Jew must eat on Pesach eve in order to fulfill that important mitzvah.

When he concluded, his congregation surrounded him with accolades in regard to the brilliance of his presentation. One of them, however, had a very different reaction. "How can I possibly fulfill my responsibility to eat that amount of matzah," he asked, "when I spent all the money I have on medical care for my wife and have nothing left with which to purchase any matzah?"

The rabbi quickly returned to his podium and made the following announcement: "What I said in my sermon about the amount of matzah needed to fulfill the requirement of the mitzvah is incorrect! No one's requirement is fulfilled until it is ascertained that every Jew in the community has matzah for Pesach."

"The journey of faith is not always easy, but it is always worth it." ~ Rabbi Eliyahu Yaakov Rosen.

The Root of Emunah

The Haggadah tells us that a person is praiseworthy if he talks a lot about **יציאת מצרים** during the seder.

Nesivos Shalom explains that relating the story of **יציאת מצרים** during the 1st night of Pesach is what charges a person with emunah for the entire year! - Therefore, the more a person gets involved in the mitzvah of **סיפור יציאת מצרים** the more emunah he will have this year.

Joy is Required

A chassid visited his Rebbe before Pesach. The Rebbe noticed that the chassid was sad.

"What's wrong?" the Rebbe asked.

The chassid told the Rebbe that to bake matzos he had set aside wheat which had been watched from the time of the harvest, and it had completely disappeared. Now he would only be able to prepare matzos from wheat which had not been watched from the time of its harvest.

The Rebbe answered, "I understand that you want to fulfill the mitzva of matzah in the best way, but don't forget - the mitzvah of simcha during the chag is also a mitzva from the Torah!"

וֶהֱוֵי דָן אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם לְכַף זְכוּת (Pirkei Avos 1:6)

"We are commanded to give others the benefit of the doubt. – So, why do we sometimes hesitate to give Hashem the same trust?" ~ Rav Aharon Karliner.

A Celebration of Love

Rabbi Shimon Pincus zt"l taught that one of the messages of Pesach is that Hashem loves us—His children—at all times, even if does not feel that way to us, and even if we are on the 49th level of tumah.

Pre-Pesach preparations will be filled with a lot of work—cleaning, kashering, etc. But since these days are leading up to the Chag in which we celebrate Hashem's love for us, excitement and joy should permeate all of our Pre-Pesach preparations.



◣ Drawing Waters - Reb Yechiel Meir of Ovstrovtza

Two times a year, Israel goes down to the river. On Rosh Hashanah they go to cast away their sins (tashlich). And before Pesach they go to draw water for the baking of matzos.

The actions and the times are significant. On Rosh Hashanah we repent because of fear, fear of the imminent judgment, and we throw our sins from us. But on Pesach we were chosen as an elect nation against a background of miracles. Then is the time for repentance (teshuvah) because of love. And when one does teshuvah from love, "the intentional sins" are changed into worthy acts in his favor (Yoma 86b). - Then we return to the river to gather up the sins which we had cast away and transform them into shining deeds of merit.

◣ Free Of Anger - Reb Pinchas of Radvanka

Becoming angry is more serious than violating the prohibition against chametz in one respect. Chametz, even a particle, is forbidden for one week of the year; anger, even a smidgen, is forbidden throughout the entire year.

◣ Save The Date - Vizhnitzer Rebbe

A man once came before the Ahavas Yisrael of Vizhnitz and poured his heart out. He had arranged a match for his son some time before, but he had no funds with which to meet the many wedding expenses.

The Rebbe asked if they had already set a date for the wedding. "No," replied the man, "I have no wherewithal to pay for anything. How could I set a date?"

The Rebbe said, "our Torah has demanded of us that not a particle of chametz be found in our home on Pesach, and expenses are large. Now, imagine that the Torah had not set a date for Pesach and that we would only celebrate it when we had completed our preparations; we would never celebrate it. But since the Torah has established a specific date, a great wonder takes place. All the women manage to clean their homes; all the needs of Pesach are filled. - Take a lesson from the Torah. Set the wedding date, and you will see that you will succeed in acquiring whatever you need by then."

◣ Order To Everything - Maharal Of Prague

This exalted evening is called "seder night," referring to the order of the meal, but - deeper - to the order of our lives. We affirm through this evening of faith that nothing happens randomly; Hashem has a divine order, a seder, to everything that transpires. the sequence of our lives is but the design of providence.

◣ Worthy Radish - Rabbi Elimelech Biderman



'Karpas … Blessed are You, Hashem … Who creates the fruits of the earth …'

In Yiddish, there is an expression, "vert a reitach," worth a radish, which indicates that something does not have very much value.

But the **Beis Yisrael** would say that Karpas teaches us the opposite lesson - tonight, at the Seder, this same radish is given a position of honor, an exalted spot on the Seder table. This, he said, symbolizes the Yidden seated around the table as well. Even if all year long you felt distant and forlorn "vert a reitach," tonight you are royalty.

The Yismach Yisrael saw a hint to this in the karpas itself. Many of the vegetables used for Karpas grow underground, almost entirely covered by dirt. Tonight, they sit on the table of kings, a cherished object of a mitzvah, invested with the ultimate glory. That is every Yid on this night, as the name of this Yom Tov denotes: Pesach, every single one of us can "skip," and reach a place so much higher than we have been until now.

◣ Proper Preparations - Reb Chaim of Sanz

'Behold I am prepared and ready to fulfil the mitzvah of telling of the Exodus from Egypt …'

Reb Chaim of Sanz was on his way to prayers. He reached the beis midrash, turned about, and retraced his steps. The Rav of Barniv followed him. R' Chaim returned home, remained there for a brief period and, once more, started on his way to the beis midrash. When he noticed the Rav of Barniv, he said, "Do you know why I returned home? A man must mentally prepare himself before fulfilling any mitzvah. Walking to the beis midrash is itself a mitzvah. And

because I was so concerned with preparing myself for prayer, I neglected to think that I was about to perform the mitzvah of walking to the beis midrash. That is why I returned home."

He raised his voice and added, "Now, behold, I am walking to the beis midrash to pray!" (Otzar HaSipurim VI, 11)

◣ The Ultimate Host - Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner

'*This is the bread of affliction that our fathers ate …*'

Whoever is hungry - let him come and eat! … Some people invite guests for yom tov. Others make it a yom tov when they invite guests!

◣ Seeing The Light - Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein

'*It happened that Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah, Rabbi Akiva, and Rabbi Tarfon were gathered …*'



This episode occurred during the darkest period - following the destruction of the holy temple. The great rabbinic leaders gathered in Bnei Brak, seeking guidance and reassurance from Rabbi Akiva, the eternal optimist (see Makkos 24a-b).

By sunrise, the Rabbis got what they came for; they saw that there was a light at the end of the tunnel!

"Emunah is not a destination, it is a journey." ~ The Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan (1838-1933)

◣ Smart And Simple - Reb Naftali Tzvi of Ropshitz

'*A wise one …*'

R' Naftali Tzvi of Ropshitz was very wise, perceptive, and keen witted. Once his master, the **Chozeh of Lublin**, said to him, "The Torah commands us: תָּמִים תִּהְיֶה עִם ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ - '***You shall be innocent with Hashem, your G-d***' (Devarim 18:13); it does not demand: 'You shall be wise!'"

"True, Rebbe," said R' Naftali, "but one needs exceptional wisdom to reach such innocence!"

◣ Protect The Others - Reb Tzvi Hirsch of Ziditchov

'*A wise one… a wicked one*'

R' Michel of Sambur said in the name of his uncle R' Tzvi Hirsch of Ziditchov: Why did the compiler of the Haggadah place the wicked son next to the wise son and not at the end of the list of four sons?

Had the wicked son stood next to and after the simple son or the one who is unable to ask, he would influence them and ruin them, before the wise man could foil his plans. But he is placed next to the wise son who can keep an eye on him.

◣ Savouring The Taste - Rabbi Mordechai Gifter

'*To the wise son – what does he say? … [Explain to him] that one may not eat dessert after the final taste of the Passover offering…*'

He response to the wise son - that nothing should be eaten after the korban Pesach so that its taste will linger in our mouth - is a basic message about Judaism for anyone who wishes to be wise: savour fully any spiritual matter you do. The joy, elevation, and excitement of a mitzvah should remain with you.

◣ Maintain A Connection - Reb Yisrael Of Rizhin

'*The wicked son – what does he say …*'

One should never despair of any Jew. Every Yid retains holiness. - Maintain a connection. After all, a bucket that tumbles into a well can still be pulled from the depths - as long as it is still attached to a cord.

◣ Hashem To The Rescue - Sefas Emes

'*Hashem took us out of Egypt – not through an angel … but the Holy One, Blessed is He, in His glory, and by Himself …*'

Why could Hashem not send an angel to redeem us?

Because we had sunk to such a low spiritual state that no angel saw anything redeemable about us. Only Hashem, Who recognized that at our core we were good, came Himself to our rescue.

◣ Generating Sensitivity - Alter of Slabodka

'*These are the ten plagues which the Holy One, Blessed is He, brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt …*'

Why do we spill out drops of wine at the mention of each of the makkos? - Perhaps it is to develop our sensitivity toward the suffering of the Egyptians - even though they caused so much pain to the Jewish people.

"Never doubt the importance of your prayers. Hashem considers them vital to the world's existence and maintenance; they are as important to Hashem as our daily bread is to us." ~ Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

◣ Countless Miracles - Rabbi Avigdor Miller

'Rabbi Akiva said … at the sea [Egypt was struck] by two hundred and fifty [plagues] …'

As many as 250 miracles were performed at the Yam Suf. Now, consider this: our sages taught (Pesachim 118a) that the miracle of supplying man with food is considered a greater wonder than that of splitting the sea!

For food to grow from the earth, not just hundreds of miracles need to occur, but thousands upon thousands...

◣ Answered With Light - Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner

'Therefore, it our duty to thank, praise, pay tribute … He brought us forth … from darkness to great light … '

At the Exodus we went "from darkness to light." - It is for this reason that the Haggadah was designed in question answer format. When one has a question, he is in darkness, and when he knows the answer, he has "seen the light."

◣ Serving With Joy - Shelah Hakadosh

'Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d … [Who] has commanded us concerning the eating of the matzah …'

I witnessed elevated souls who would kiss the matzos and maror to demonstrate their adoration for these mitzvos. Fortunate is the one who serves Hashem with joy!

"The city of happiness can be found in the state of mind." ~ Rabbi Avraham Yaakov Pam (1913-2001)

◣ Elevating The Mundane - The Netziv

'*Shulchan Orech …*' - By interrupting the Hallel with a meal, we demonstrate that even our mundane activities such as eating may be raised to a high form of praise to Him.

◣ Gauranteed Sustenance - Sefer Hachinuch

'Barech …' - Whoever is careful to recite Birchas HaMazon properly will merit abundant sustenance all of his life.

◣ An Open Heart - Rabbi Aryeh Levin

'Pour Your wrath…' - People make a mistake believing that Eliyahu HaNavi enters through the door. - In truth, he enters through our hearts and souls.

◣ Lasting Impression - Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner

'*Blessed be he who comes in the Name of Hashem … bind the festival offering [Isru Chag] …*' - On "Isru Chag" - when the yom tov concludes - never say that it has gone away. - Those elevated moments of the festival remain forever embedded in our personalities, characters, and essence.

"The survival of the Jewish people, and their commitment to the torah and Mitzvos, despite all manners of persecution and oppression, is in my opinion, greater than all the miracles and wonders performed for our ancestors in Egypt, the wilderness, and Har Sinai. This is a miracle of the highest order!" ~ The Ya'avetz, Rabbi Yaakov Emden (1697-1776)

◣ Reason To Celebrate - Rabbi Shimshon Pincus

'Gives thanks to Hashem … to He gives food to all living creatures; His kindness endures forever! …'



Our sages teach that Hashem's wondrous providing of daily sustenance to man is akin to the splitting of the sea (Pesachim 118a).

It follows, then, that just as the Jews burst forth in a spontaneous song of gratitude for the miracle by the sea, so should we each time we open our refrigerator door and find it stocked with food!

◣ Supporting The Fallen - Chiddushei Harim

'The soul of every living being shall bless Your Name, Hashem, our G-d … He supports the falling …'

Even when a person has slipped in sin, Hashem is still by his side to help lift him up. Hashem is there to support him even when he's fallen, providing him hope going forward.

◣ Happy Feet - Reb Chaim of Kosov

'The soul of every living being shall bless Your Name, Hashem, our G-d … [were] our feet as swift as deer…'

R' Chaim of Kosov would dance with great and saintly enthusiasm each Shabbos night, his face radiant like a torch. - Once a heavy bench fell on his feet and he stopped dancing for some time. But after a few weeks had passed, he began to dance once more with his customary fervour.

When his chassidim tried to prevent him, because of his injured feet, he said, "You thought I had stopped dancing because my feet hurt me, but in truth my feet hurt because I had stopped dancing!" (Sipurei Chassidim, Moadim 162)

◣ Willing And Capable - Rabbi Avi Weisenfeld

'O G-d, in the omnipotence of Your strength … O King enthroned upon a high and lofty throne …'

We refer to Hashem as "our Father, our King." - A father wants to do everything for his children, but he is limited. He can't do everything that he wants to do. A king can do anything for his people, but he doesn't necessarily always want to. - Hashem is our father and our king. Not only can He do anything, but He also wants to do everything for us!

◣ Our World, Our Essence - Rabbi Shimshon Pincus

'And in the assemblies of the myriads of Your people … to thank, praise, laud, glorify, exalt, adore, bless, raise high, and sing praises …'

You can tell the nature of a people by its thesaurus. Eskimos have many similar words describing snow, for that is their world, their existence.

Jews have a full array of terms to express praise to Hashem, for that is our essence.

"This is a lesson that one must always remember: treat people as you do your artwork and your pictures - always make sure to place them in the best light!" ~ Reb Yisrael M'kazakov.

◣ It Will All Make Sense - Imrei Emes

'*A kid … a cat … a dog … a stick … a fire …*'

This song is a metaphor for the Jewish people. A person may look at the saga of our nation's history and view it as nothing more than a series of random events: there was a kid, then came a cat, then a dog, a stick, a fire, etc. - However, in the end, Mashiach will come and reveal how the entire sequence was carefully arranged by Hashem.



Rabbi Shlomo Kluger zt"l



זֵכֶר לַמִּקְדָּשׁ כְּהִלֵּל. כֵּן עָשָׂה הִלֵּל בִּזְמַן שֶׁבֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הָיָה קַיָּם. הָיָה כּוֹרֵךְ מַצָּה וּמָרוֹר וְאוֹכֵל בְּיַחַד, לְקַיֵּם מַה שֶּׁנֶּאֱמַר: עַל מַצּוֹת וּמְרוֹרִים יֹאכְלֵהוּ - "***Thus did Hillel at the time when the Beis Hamikdash existed - he would sandwich together matzah and maror, and eat them together, to fulfil that which it says "you shall eat it together with matzos and bitter herbs***".

The reason why it was specifically Hillel who did this, we can explain according to the gemora in Berachos - once Hillel was coming from a journey, and he heard an outcry in the city, and he said: I am certain that this is not in my house. **The Maharsha** explained that Hillel used to teach his household, that if, G-d forbid, something bad happened, that they should not cry out - he taught them to say "This is also for the good, and everything is for the good".

Now, it is well known that the Pesach sacrifice alludes to good, to redemption, and matzah has two aspects - it could allude to good, to redemption and freedom, and there is also a side to say that it alludes to bad, to the bread of affliction, like it says in the Haggadah, "this is the bread of affliction". And maror certainly alludes to bad. Therefore, someone who does not say that the bad things that come from Hashem are actually good, distinguishes between good times and bad times. But somebody who believes that the bad things that come from Hashem are actually good, all times, good and bad, are the same. Therefore, Hillel would sandwich together the matzah and maror because to him their allusions were equal.

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

"What flight are you booked on?"

"Pardon!" I can hear you say

"I asked what flight will you be on? Oh, just wait, read this story, then I'll ask you again."

You might remember Reb Peretz (Peter) Koppenheim z'l. He always had a thought-provoking *Kasheh*, and nice *vort* or an interesting story. I once heard him relate of an experience he encountered whilst attending a *chasanoh* of one of his grandchildren in Lakewood, USA.

During the course of the evening, Rabbi Nosson Meir Wachtfogel zz'l (Mashgiach Ruchani of Beth Medrash Govoha, Lakewood, USA) came to participate in the simcha. He was led to the top table, and was seated next to Reb Peretz, who very soon struck up a conversation, with his stock of *kashes* and *vertlachs*.

After some time, Reb Peretz asked Reb Nosson whether he knew of any one going to Eretz Yisroel in the next few days, who could take

letters and photos to his children who didn't manage to come for this *Chasanoh*.

Reb Nosson thought for a moment, and said, "I am going, I can take them."

"Reb Nosson is going? When?" asked Reb Peretz.

"Tomorrow" replied Reb Nosson.

"Tomorrow? But Reb Nosson is scheduled to give his Vaad and other Shiurim, enquired Reb Peretz.

"That will all be changed", replied Reb Nosson

"Where will Reb Nosson be in Eretz Yisroel, so that my children can come and fetch the letters?" asked Reb Peretz.

Reb Nosson looked at Reb Peretz, and said, "You come and fetch them yourself."

"But I am not going to Eretz Yisroel. I have *Sheva Brochos* here" answered Reb Peretz.

"That's your problem", answered the Mashgiach. "You see, I am *Maamin* that *Moshiach* can come tomorrow, so I will be on the first flight. However, you seem not to be so Maamin so you will only be on the sixteenth flight."

בניסן נגאלו ובניסן עתידין ליגאל *(in the month of Nissan we were redeemed from Mitzrayim, and in the month of Nissan we will be redeemed from the current exile.- Rosh Hashono 11a).*

Now back to the original question. **"What flight will you be on?!"**

Good Shabbos



אין אהבתו של הקב"ה לבניו תלויה בדבר - ***"Hashem's love for his children is unconditional." ~ Tana Devei Eliyahu.***



Breaking Levi For Redemption



There is a perplexing custom practiced at the Pesach Seder. **ויקח מצה האמצעית ויבצענה לשתים ויתן חציה לאחד מהמסובין לשומרה לאפיקומן*- *'Take the middle matza, break it in two, and give half of it to one of those at the Seder to guard it for Afikoman.'** (Shulchan Aruch 473:6)

Since the Arizal compares the top matza to the Kohen, the middle to Levi, and the third to Yisroel (Pri Eitz Chaim Pesach 6:4), why do we specifically break apart the matza symbolizing Levi?

Rav Dov Waller beautifully explains in his Haggadah (Eishes Chayil p. 64) that since the tribe of Levi was not burdened with slavery in Mitzrayim (Shemos Rabba 5:16), we might think that they did not feel the pain of their brethren. However, Levi truly did everything they could on the nation's behalf and felt broken for the plight of Klal Yisroel.

Therefore, we specifically break the middle matza to remember we must always strive to offer spiritual, physical, and emotional support to others. Caring for others not only leads to our own personal salvations, it may even spark our ultimate national redemption.

"The story of Pesach teaches us that Hashem has the power to redeem us from any situation, no matter how dire. Trust in His plan and have faith that He will guide us through the difficult times." ~ Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986).

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner



Oat Matzos for those who can't tolerate regular Matzoh for various reasons, means that they can partake in the Pesach Seder and eat a shiur of matzoh. But Oat Matzos have only been on the market for the past 35 years. Here is the story of how it began.

Rabbi Kesternbaum z'l was a Pharmacist in North West London. He once encountered a young girl who was a celiac (someone whose intestines can't tolerate gluten), who used to frequent his chemist shop for medications etc. On one occasion she told him that she would soon be Bas-mitzvah, but she doesn't know how she will be able to be **מקים מצות אכילת מצה** because she can't eat wheat or gluten.

Rabbi Kesternbaum took pity on this girl and was determined to do whatever he could to help her. He did extensive research, and with close consultation with Dayan Osher Westheim zt'l, he pioneered the production of gluten free oat matzos. Besides ensuring that the oats were grown in an area where no wheat was also grown in the vicinity (for allergy reasons), he also had to overcome the problem of reducing the bitterness in the taste of raw oats. Normally this would be done by soaking the oats; another suitable method had to be found. The Mill and Bakery also had to be exclusive to oat production. Boruch Hashem he was successful and 'Kesternbaum Oat Matzos' were very mehudar and were sold around the world.

(In fact, the success of these Oat Matzos came to the attention of the Catholic Deity who distribute wafers as part of their religious services, and wished to order one million matzos for celiac members of their church. Rabbi Kesternbaum declined to supply this customer).

Another aspect of Rabbi Kesternbaums life, as he once related to me, was that he liked traveling around the world, not so much for sightseeing, but he used to visit Jewish prisoners in all parts of the world and hopefully give them chizuk.

In 1999, Iran arrested 13 Jews accusing them of spying. Whilst Yidden around the world davened for their welfare and salvation many politicians and others lobbied for their release, Rabbi Kesternbaum made the long and difficult journey to Iran to visit these Jewish prisoners in jail. Despite various difficulties in obtaining access, somehow Rabbi Kesternbaum gained a chance to converse with these inmates.

One particular inmate (Avrohom*) was distraught believing that the Iranians were going to put him to death. Rabbi Kesternbaum assured him that the Iranians had nothing to gain by killing him but would rather humiliate him by keeping him in jail. He gave him hope by telling him to focus on what he will do when he is released and where he would go. He also suggested that he should promise to undertake a mitzvah when he was released from prison.

Over the years, Rabbi Kesternbaum had met many prisoners in his travels, and he more or less gave similar words of encouragement. However, in all that time he only heard from one prisoner sometime after his release. This didn't deter him from carrying out these important missions.

Several years after Rabbi Kesternbaum had been to Iran, he received a phone call from Avrohom who related the following. "He had taken Rabbi Kesternbaums words, spoken in the prison cell, very seriously and had promised himself that when he comes out of

prison, he was going to eat Matzoh on Pesach, something he hadn't done since his youth. However, when Pesach came around and he tried eating the Matzoh, he found that it made him ill. Determined to keep his promise, he searched for an alternative and came across Kesternbaums Oat Matzohs.

At first the brand name Kesternbaum didn't connect in his mind to Rabbi Kesternbaum who had visited him in prison, but during the course of Yom Tov, seeing the name every time he took a matzoh from the box, it suddenly clicked in his mind. On the box was printed the name, address and phone number of the producer – Rabbi Kesternbaum. Avrohom didn't hesitate to contact Rabbi Kesternbaum to thank him for both the Matzoh and for giving him chizuk so many years before."

Good Shabbos and Chag Kosher V'Sameach - Aaron Leitner

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

Imprisoned and Free

We might have been celebrating Pesach, *Zeman Cheiruseinu,* but the spectre of imprisonment was hanging over Mr Moshe Kahan*. He was facing prison for a crime he did not commit. Who knew where he would be the following Pesach? Just making it through Yom Tov with false enthusiasm and a smile on his face took every last ounce of his energy, and then some. This is his story.

"My story had begun almost a year earlier. I was the senior accountant for a family-owned office supply company with branches all over the United States. I had been with the company for nearly 15 years, and my relationship with the two brothers who owned the business was excellent. Although they weren't Jewish, they were very respectful of my needs and taking off for Yom Tov and even Chol Hamoed was never a problem. They would also always tell me that my integrity was something that they especially appreciated.

They knew I was careful that everything I did compiled with the law. When they consulted me with regard to saving taxes, I always steered them towards tax loopholes that did not have a whiff of irregularity.

One morning, one of the brothers – whom I will call Mr White – came into my office with grim look on his face. "David, we need to talk. We have a problem. The IRS paid us a visit today and they were poking around. They are opening an investigation into possible tax fraud."

I could tell that he was very shaken up. This was a serious matter, but I assured Mr White that he had nothing to worry about. I had kept very proper books, and there was nothing there that would put him or the company in trouble.

"Okay," he said, "but no one much know about this – and I mean no one. It's in our best interest to keep this top secret."

"Of course not," I replied. "But everyone knows you're honest to a fault. It's probably a random audit. I wouldn't worry about it too much if I were you."

If I thought the drama would blow over, I was sorely mistaken. The IRS audit was only the tip of the iceberg. It let to an investigation, and the results were shocking. Apparently, the company had been keeping two sets of books, only one of which I was aware of. The other was used to fund the bosses' lavish vacations and sports cars without having to pay taxes.

I had no idea how they had been able to keep this a secret from me. I was furious, but also very hurt. How could they have done such a thing? Didn't they realise that any funny business could be blamed on their accountant? Then the bosses tried to pin the blame on me. I was incredulous that I was being framed. The IRS didn't believe my protestations of innocence. There was nothing left to do but to fight the charges.

I hired a top criminal defence attorney to plead my case. Since my bosses had betrayed me, I had no objection to making a deal with the prosecutors in exchange for my freedom, but, unfortunately, I had no information to offer them. I had truly been in the dark. The scheme had been very carefully constructed so that I couldn't detect the funds that were being siphoned off.

It was a terribly stressful time of emotional upheaval. I had endless meetings with *askonim* who tried to help me. My lawyers explained that my chances of being acquitted were up in the air, as you can never tell which way a jury decision will go. If I was convicted, I'd be facing a long time in jail. They urged me to cut my losses, make a deal and move on with life. I was between a rock and a hard place. With the blessing of my *Rav*, I decided to plead guilty. My lawyers struck a deal whereby I faced a sentence of three to six years in prison. I believe that the prosecutors ultimately believed that I was innocent, but their egos were in the way. While they refused to drop the charges, they wouldn't press for a draconian punishment.

My sentencing was scheduled for a few weeks after Pesach. My wife and I were determined to hide what was going on from our children until such a time when it was no longer possible. "We'll figure out how to break it to them after I'm sentenced," I said. "Right now, we need to have a normal Pesach."

Thus began one of the most surreal experiences of my life. I had always prided myself on being an upstanding citizen. Honesty in business had been ingrained in me since I was a child. My father had also been an accountant, and he had always cautioned me not to allow myself to be *schlepped* into any schemes my clients or bosses might concoct.

I had taken his advice, yet here I was facing prison time and the loss of my licence. It was also difficult for me to accept the people I had trusted implicitly, people to whom I had been so loyal, would betray me. They knew the truth but refused to come to my defence

even though exonerating me wouldn't have added to their legal troubles.

It was sitting at the Seder and talking about freedom when I knew that I could be behind bars in a matter of months. It was beyond ironic. Knowing that Pesach is a *leil shimurim* and a powerful time to *daven* for a *yeshuah*, I decided it was good time to share my personal "*Mitzrayim*" with my children. As I suspected, it didn't come to them as a total surprise, because they had heard rumors. I tried to convey a message of hope but asked them to *daven* for me.

Somehow, we all made it through Pesach. Paradoxically, after my children were in the loop and more people learned about what was happening, it became easier to smile. I actually needed to share my story, as my lawyer had recommended that I get as many letters (testimonies) as possible from friends, family and colleagues attesting to my character, because that would influence the judge to impose a lesser sentence.

Then the day came that we had been dreading yet wanted to happen already, the day the judge was to decide my fate. Living in limbo and not knowing what I was facing was agony. Whatever it was, I wanted to get it over with so I could move forward. My family came with me to the courthouse. We were all on tenterhooks as we sat, waiting anxiously. Would I need to sit in jail for a few weeks or months? Or maybe even years?

At first, when the judge began talking, I felt that he was going to give me a maximum sentence. I started to shake, and my attorney had to hold my shoulder to stop me from trembling. The judge went on and on, addressing the courtroom about greed and what a terrible crime had been committed. The only way to stop these crimes, he explained, is through accountability. Then just as I was expecting him to throw the book at me, "Mr Kahan, I read the letters and I am very impressed, especially the one from your former client who described how you had gone to great lengths to reimburse him for

money he didn't even know he was owed. Anyone who acts with such integrity must be an honest person to his core. I believe that you have had no gain from this crime. I am, therefore, sentencing you to six months' probation."

I didn't deserve even that because I was completely innocent, but it was a great relief not to have to go to prison. I accepted that this was Hashem's will, and we don't always understand why things happen.

My bosses ultimately received a lengthy prison sentence, while I was free to resume my life. However, as you might imagine, I am a changed person. I still sometimes wake up in a cold sweat from the nightmare in which I am being accused of something, falsely, and I don't take my freedom for granted anymore. I also remind my children that we should never automatically assume that anyone who is accused of a wrong doing is guilty. And most of all, that we should never give up hope.

Because even when the sword is at one's neck there is hope, and salvation can come in the blink of any eye."

Good Shabbos

Rabbi Jeremy Golker – Biur Chometz

The **שולחן ערוך** says that if a person doesn't find any chometz, you burn the spoon with which you were searching. **אורח חיים הלכות פסח סימן תמה סעיף ג**

There is a **פסקי תשובה** that says you burn the feather, the spoon, and the left-over candle together with the chometz. **ויש נוהגים לשרוף הנוצה והכף של עץ ושיורי הנר שבדקו בו החמץ**

I can understand why you need to burn the wooden spoon and feather used to collect the **חמץ**, because they have been in contact with the chometz, but why is it necessary to burn the candle?

Rav Aaron of Belz says, "We burn the candle because **חמץ** on **פסח** represents negativity, arrogance and the yetzer hora, The candle's purpose is to seek out and find that negativity. - Something whose entire purpose is to seek out negativity, does not deserve to exist! And therefore, we burn the candle.

Rabbi Jeremy Golker – Seder Night



There are two mitzvos on the night of Seder which are min HaTorah nowadays… **אכילת מצה** and **סיפור יציאת מצרים**.

This is based on the pasuk **וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר בַּעֲבוּר זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם (שמות פרק יג:ח)**

The Targum says **ותחוי לברך ביומא ההוא**- '***To show/demonstrate***'.

There is one thing telling somebody something, and there's another thing actually doing it.

On Seder night, there are lots of things that we do in an experiential way [a method of education that emphasizes hands-on activities and direct involvement. It's based on the idea that learning is best done by having experiences.] This enables our children to not just hear what went on but to be immersed in it in a practical way.

"The story of Pesach teaches us that Hashem has the power to redeem us from any situation, no matter how dire. Trust in His plan and have faith that He will guide us through the difficult times." ~ Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986).

בָּרוּךְ הַמָּקוֹם

בָּרוּךְ הַמָּקוֹם, בָּרוּךְ הוּא – This of course refers to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. But why do we use this name, there are so many other names of Hashem?

הַמָּקוֹם is used in instances where we cannot see Hashem's presence clearly. For example nebech when we go to a shiva house, we say **'המקום ינחם אתכם'**. Why **הַמָּקוֹם**?

Because we console the mourners that even in dark times, Hashem is still there.

On Seder night, we are acknowledging that after 2000 years of golus, we have been celebrating seder without a korban pesach and remind ourselves that HKBH has not abandoned us. Even though His presence is not so clear.

וְכָל הַמַּרְבֶּה לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם הֲרֵי זֶה מְשֻׁבָּח –"All who say ***much*** in their description of the redemption from Egypt are to be praised…."

The great Chasidic Master, **Rebbe Moshe Yechiel HaLevi Epstein of Ozarov, zy"a**, points out that the Torah almost always refers to the leader of Mitzrayim as Pharaoh and not as Melech Mitzrayim. Pharaoh means Peh Rah, a wicked mouth.

Clearly, on the night of the Seder we are meant to counteract the wicked speech of Pharoah.

"Each person is a one-time phenomenon, an occurrence that has never been before and will never be again. You have a unique blend of character traits and personality. You were born in a specific time of history and in a specific environment. This uniqueness gives you great importance. Only you can accomplish your unique life tasks." ~ Rashi, Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki

Reliving the Exodus

It is well known that the primary objective of the Pesach seder is to verbally recount the Jews' bitter, oppressive experience as slaves in Egypt, as well as their miraculous deliverance from that country.

It is a positive mitzvah from the Torah to speak about the miracles and wonders that were done to our ancestors in Mitzrayim on the night of the fifteenth of Nissan. (Rambam, Hilchot Chametz U'matzah 7:1)

We also have an obligation to relive the experience of the exodus. **בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיָּיב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ כְּאִילּוּ הוּא יָצָא מִמִּצְרַיִם** - "A person is obligated to see himself as if he were leaving Egypt." (Pesachim 116b)

Is this really possible? Even if we were to clearly define the exact obligation, is the expectation realistic? Can we really view ourselves, living as we do in a free country, with great liberty and freedom, far removed from the abject suffering of slavery, as if we are leaving Egypt? How then do we go about achieving a meaningful connection?

The simple approach to understanding this mitzvah is that we are expected to view ourselves as if we had actually left Egypt so as to better internalize our ancestors' struggles as well as their deliverance. In so doing, we come to truly appreciate G-d's miraculous intervention on behalf of His people, an intervention which we still benefit from today.

However, a problem remains. We can empathize with our ancestors and attempt to re-experience the entire process of the exodus. Yet, the exact nature of the obligation still seems somewhat elusive. How are we to truly imagine ourselves as experiencing the exodus in our comfortable lifestyles, millennia removed from the entire story?

Further complicating matters is the position of Maharal (Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague), who states (Gevuros Hashem, 61) that every man is obligated to view his generation as if it was the one that was

leaving Egypt, to the exclusion of all others. Is it really possible for us to in effect replace the actual generation of the exodus with our own?

The Maharal (Gevurot Hashem: 57) posits the idea that each of the Ten Plagues parallels one of the Asarah Maamaros (Ten Statements) with which Hashem created the world.

ayings of Creation in the Book of Bereishet	**The Ten Plagues in he Book of Shemo**	**Connection**
1:1 In the beginning…[4]	12:29 Death of firstborn	here is a parallel theme of beginning.[5
3 G-d said, 'Let ther be light'	10:22 Darkness	The opposite of light is darkness.
6 G-d said, 'Let ther be a firmament'	9:23 Hail	G-d made the firmament and now commanded unnatural hail (mix of fire and ice) to rain down from it.
1:9 G-d said, 'Let the vaters gather and le the earth appear'	8:13 Lice	-d revealed the earth and now the dus of earth transformed into lice, as it says: *G-d said to Moshe, 'Tell Aharon, retch out your staff and strike the dust the land and it shall become lice throughout the land of Egypt.'* (Shemot 8:12)
:11 G-d said, 'Let th earth bring forth vegetation'	10:13 Locusts	The locusts ate the vegetation. (Even hough the plague of hail also destroye vegetation, locusts *only* destroyed egetation, while hail also killed animals

1:14 G-d said, 'Let there be luminaries	9:6 Epidemic	The luminaries affect the state of the ai that we breathe which can cause an epidemic. (See Maharal)
:20 G-d said, 'Let th water sprout forth living creatures'	8:2 Frogs	G-d created creatures that came from water; now frogs came in excess out of water.
:24 G-d said, 'Let th arth bring forth livin creatures'	8:20 Wild animals	-d created living creatures on earth an now those animals came in excess and attacked in an unnatural manner.
:26 G-d said, 'Let us make man'	9:10 Boils	he plague of boils was the only one tha affected man's body so directly. Also, nan was made in the image of G-d, and the boils tainted that spiritual idea.
:29 G-d said, 'Behol I have given egetation… for food to eat'	:20 Change of wate to blood	ood of Egypt depended on the Nile an utrients of food are transported throug blood.

Based on the above, we can answer that the purpose of the ten plagues was to show that G-d is the One Who is behind every force of nature. For this reason, the plagues paralleled the ten sayings of creation that created the mask of nature. This is precisely why ten plagues were necessary. Additionally, this is why these specific plagues were chosen. Each plague was another glimpse behind the mask of nature, ultimately demonstrating Hashem's providence behind every part of creation.

This still exists today and is applicable in our everyday lives. – So, yes, we can identify with the Exodus in our current lives. Everything that happens to us is only down to Hashem.

Rabbi Eliyahu E. Dessler (Michtav M'Eliyahu, Vol. 2) points out that Jewish festivals are not merely anniversaries of important historical events, designed to remind us of these occurrences. Rather, they are annual spiritual opportunities. We do not simply commemorate events, we relive them. We do so by tapping into the unique spiritual energy that is unleashed during each respective time period.

Similarly, the freedom of Pesach is an ongoing, never-ending process. Our obligation is to try to achieve our own personal freedom by identifying the servitude of today and finding ways to overcome it. "In each and every generation, a man is obligated to feel as if he himself has left (his personal) Egypt."

We all have our own "Egypt". That may take many forms, such as a personal inclination towards sin or the influence of the general culture. Each year, at this time, we are granted special divine providence to confront and overcome these particular challenges.

Physical freedom is not sufficient for one to be considered free. By viewing ourselves as those who also need to escape from the alien thoughts and values that surround us, we will have the opportunity to make this Pesach a true z'man cheirusainu.

הא לחמא עניא - Yosef Shapiro

On Pesach why do we say, *"all who are hungry let them come and eat" and "all who need".*

What is the purpose in saying this and why is it so important to understand what you are saying?

The Beis Halevi explains that we need to say it and understand it because **צדקה** speeds up the **גאולה** . So, we show our concern for less fortunate people on the Seder night.

Toras Avigdor Snippets

A sampling of previous Toras Avigdor booklets



● Egyptian Slavery

One of the many thoughts that we are expected to think about when we're eating matzah on Pesach – not only at the Seder night, but all eight days – is that at this time of the year, 3,000 years ago, we went **מֵעַבְדוּת לְחֵרוּת**, from servitude to freedom. That's the purpose of eating matzah – it's reminding us to think.

You ever tried that? It's lunchtime, Tuesday, Chol Hamoed Pesach. You're eating matzah and you're thinking, "Why matzah? Why not a roll? Why not bread?"

"Well, the Torah says so." - But *why* did the Torah say so?

The answer is the matzah reminds us to think about Yetzias Mitzrayim. "Wake up!" the matzah says, " **זָכוֹר אֶת הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר יְצָאתֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם** *Remember that day when Hakadosh Baruch Hu set you free from Mitzrayim – that's why you're eating matzah and not bread* (Shemos 13:3).

● Corrupted Freedom

Pesach is an especial opportunity – whenever you can steal for yourself a minute or even a half minute, think about that. That's why Pesach is called *Zman Cheiruseinu*, the Festival of our Freedom,

because it was then that we became *bnei chorin;* we became freemen.

Now, *Zman Cheiruseinu,* the Festival of our Freedom, that seems a quite clear and simple statement. 'Freedom', who doesn't know what that means? But we'll see now that it's not clear and simple at all because what Pesach means has been altogether corrupted today.

I have upstairs a bulletin that was mailed to me by a Brooklyn Jewish Community Council. It was right before Pesach and so these 'rabbis' – rabbis with gentile names and gentile brains – were *shepping nachas* without end that President Bush was going to eat matzah balls in the White House. "Because," they wrote there, "Passover is the festival of freedom not for Jews, but for men and women of all creeds and colors." Passover is *Zman Cheiruseinu* for everyone – 'the whole world should be free!'

● Freedom and Reparations

It means that the blacks should be free to get the best jobs in the universities even if they don't qualify. Women should be freed from the kitchen, from raising children. Freedom means to take away jobs from the men and give it to the women. Of course, it means freedom to kill babies too. Freedom to murder. Freedom for *toeivah!* Freedom to do whatever you want. 'Freedom for everyone!' That's the clarion call of Pesach in the world. Freedom to do whatever you want.

Forget about it! Rabbi Charles and Rabbi Steve in the synagogue bulletin and President Bush in the White House know about Pesach like I know about Chinese holidays. They could only say such a thing because they don't know what we mean by 'freedom', what the Torah means by *cheirus.*

● Escape To Slavery

The gentile idea of freedom has nothing to do with ours because actually we didn't go 'free' when we left Mitzrayim. The truth is that

to a certain extent when we left Mitzrayim, that's when we *lost* our freedom.

It's true, in Mitzrayim the Bnei Yisroel worked hard. But don't many people, even today, work hard for a living? So they also worked hard. But we know that they had their own homes, their own land, their own *tzon u'bakar,* and to a certain extent they had freedom. When Pharaoh was not looking or the servants were not watching you, you could do whatever you wanted.

It wasn't a pleasant experience – it was slavery after all – but they were only *meshubed* to Pharaoh. Once they went out of Mitzrayim and accepted Hakadosh Baruch Hu as their Master, then they became real slaves. It's a remarkable fact that we became less free after we left! We gave up our freedom entirely! In the *midbar* they couldn't budge. Every little thing that they did was under supervision.

● **Nosy Mashgichim**

First of all, there was someone watching your every move. Every ten Jews had one of them as a *mashgiach*, a *sar asarah,* over them. It means they were under the watchful eyes of *mashgichim* all the time. The Gemara (Sanhedrin 18a) says there were more than 78,000 *mashgichim* over them!

And if you didn't listen it went higher up. He hears in your tent how you are talking to your wife, how she is talking to you, and he reports it to the *sar chamishim;* there was another *mashgiach* in charge of every fifty. The *sar chamishim* says, "Oh no! That's not allowed here."

If that didn't work the *sar chamishim* runs to the *sar me'ah,* the *mashgiach* over every hundred, and then to the *sar alafim,* the *mashgiach* of a thousand. There was no escape. And Moshe Rabbeinu eventually heard about it and took action. It gets to Moshe Rabbeinu's ears and now the husband was summoned.

A man not honoring his wife?! You couldn't do things willy-nilly in the *midbar*. "You're not free here!" Moshe said. "There's action and reaction!" "What do you mean? You hate a fellow Jew?! That's worse than eating ham." To hate a fellow Jew is worse than eating ham, you're not free to hate.

And so they were very far from free in the *midbar*. When we left Mitzrayim and went out to freedom, we gave up our freedom entirely – whatever was left of it. Absolutely they were much more free in Mitzrayim than after they left.

● Shmiras Sedorim in the Wilderness

Also, besides being subjected to strict surveillance and criticism they were also expected to study Torah all the time. It was a *kollel!* But not like the *kollel* where the *kollel* man goes home for lunch and spends an hour and a half eating lunch. Or he reads the paper in the morning and comes late to the *seder*. Like a *rosh yeshiva* once said to me; "**אָנוּ אֵין מַשְׁכִּימִים** – We don't get up early; **הֵם מַשְׁכִּימִים** – the others get up early, but not we. We the yeshiva people don't get up early in the morning."

But in the *midbar*, they were *mamesh* **אָנוּ מַשְׁכִּימִים**. These *kollel* people got up early in the *midbar*. And **אָנוּ מַעֲרִיבִים** too; they stayed till late. It was **וְהָגִיתָ בּוֹ יוֹמָם וָלָיְלָה** – they labored hard in the kollel.

Moshe Rabbeinu was the *rosh kollel* and he meant business – he was a slave driver; he checked to see that you were making use of the freedom Hashem had given. Because that was the purpose of Yetzias Mitzrayim; to make something from yourself. Instead of slaving away making bricks, you'll slave away making yourself. Moshe Rabbeinu drove them hard. That's how it was; that was the *cheirus.*

And so if we had to describe in one word, in one idea, what the *midbar* was, it was an experience of *ol malchus Shomayim;* of being weighed down under the yoke of a King. Never was our nation

as loaded down with the yoke of *avodas Hashem*. And it wasn't an easy yoke; it was a real *shibud*.

● The Torah Sets You Free

So you might say, "So where is the liberty then? Is that called *cheiruseinu? Zman Cheiruseinu?!* It's the wrong name for the *yomtiv*."

The answer is that our freedom is not the world's 'freedom'.

אֵין לְךָ בֶּן חוֹרִין אֶלָּא מִי שֶׁעוֹסֵק בְּתוֹרָה – You're not free unless you're meshubad to the Torah, to Torah living (Avos 6:2).

It's only when you study the Torah which is the fountainhead of the true ideals, and you learn direction in life, then you become a free man, then you gain liberty. Liberty from slavery to wrong practices; liberty from slavery to wrong *middos*. Liberty from slavery to wrong influences and wrong attitudes and wrong habits.

When a person knows there is a Hakadosh Baruch Hu Who commands observance of the Torah, and he lives according to the Torah ideals and attitudes – he tries at least – that's the real *cheirus*. Because Torah gives you the freedom to live purposefully; the freedom to make something from yourself.

And so when we talk about *Zman Cheiruseinu* we're thinking not only about how we we went free from Pharaoh; it's what we did with that freedom that matters – we accepted the **עֹל מַלְכוּת שָׁמַיִם**!

Oh, that's *cheiruseinu!* If we'll go free into an environment that is forcing us to be decent, an environment that arranges our life so that we will live happily and successfully, so even though it's done by the fiats, by a command, by *shibud,* by the jurisdiction of somebody over you, that's the real liberty.

● The Best Generation

And so when they went out of Mitzrayim into a *midbar* for forty years, this was the most exceptional opportunity for liberty that

they ever had. All were together under the watchful eyes of Moshe Rabbeinu, under the watchful eyes of the Torah. And they gained such perfection that you have to know, they were called the *Dor Deiah*. We look back at them with admiration. Never again did we have people who had such *shleimus* as those people of those generations. You know why? Because they were free to obey Moshe Rabbeinu. They were free to be slaves to Moshe. And what did he tell them to do? Only things that were good for them.

And this great experience, the going out from one *shibud* to a different *shibud* was for a very important purpose. It was intended as a lesson; the forty years in the wilderness stand as an eternal model for what freedom is for, teaching us what it means *cheiruseinu,* what freedom means to a Jew.

We went out of Mitzrayim, not to go on trips to amusement parks. We didn't go out of Mitzrayim for democracy. **שַׁלַּח אֶת עַמִּי וְיַעַבְדֻנִי** – *Send out My people that they should serve Me* (Shemos 7:16).

We went out into slavery; we exchanged one form of *shibud* for another form of *shibud,* a *shibud* of freedom. Instead of being *avodim* to Pharaoh, *l'havdil* now they became *avodim* to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. **כִּי עֲבָדַי הֵם** – 'You are My slaves,' Hashem says, **אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם** – and that's why I took you out of Mitzrayim' (Vayikra 25:42). We became slaves to a new Master, a better Master. We became enslaved to *ol malchus Shomayim.*

"G-d appears distant, but there is in fact no one closer than Him.The space between heaven and earth is vast, and He is high above His universe, but a person can enter shul, stand near the pulpit, and pray in a whisper, and G-d hears his prayer, like a person whispering in his friend's ear… Could there be a G-d any closer than that?" Rabbi Simlai, Talmud Y.(Berachos 9:1)

Talelei Oras by Rav Yissachar Dov Rubin

● Wearing a Kittel at the Seder



For the avoda of the seder night, a white kittel is worn. This is the custom, writes the **Maharal**, because white is the most plain and simple colour of the spectrum. It is not a blend of any other colours and thus is "alone" and "only itself." - This reminds us that the redemption from Egypt which the seder commemorates was initiated and managed exclusively by Heaven, which is unique and "to itself" in Creation - the "simple" and separate realm, "above" the finite world in which we live.

White reminds us of Heaven - a "unity" that is completely unlike the physical world, for our "lower" realm is the realm of "combinations." Everything physical is made of a myriad of elements, which HaShem "puts together." Our redemption from Egypt came from "above" all this from simple "Oneness." This is why the Kohen Gadol wore white when he entered the Holy of Holies. For the avoda of the seder night we must have Heaven on our minds. We therefore wear white, like the Kohen Gadol wore white for his avoda.

● According to the Shulchan Aruch HaRav, a white kittel is worn at the seder because a kittel is the garment of the dead. Wearing a kittel is a precautionary measure, to keep the tone of the seder serious. This night is a happy time, but it also is a time for speaking about basic tenets of our faith, so the reminder of death is needed to stop levity from creeping into the proceedings.

● Writes the **Netziv of Volozhin**, "The reason for wearing a kittel on the seder night is not what the masses think - that it is to sober

us by reminding us of the day of death. This suggestion is preposterous.

"Rather, the Sages desired that on this night, we behave as they did when they ate of the Pesach offering. We can be sure that when eating the meat of offerings, which come from the 'table' of HaShem, Jews would not wear the clothing that they wore normally when eating. Rather, they would don a special garment made of white linen, as is written about Yosef when he was honored by Pharoah (Bereishis 41:42), 'And he (Pharoah) dressed him in linen garments.' - "This is why we wear a white kittel on the seder night."

● **The Malbim** (commentary on the Haggadah) writes that in the Mechilta we find allusion to the custom to wear white at the seder. The verse says about the Jewish People in Egypt (Devarim 26:5), "And they were a nation there." Says the Mechilta, "This teaches us that Israel was metsuyanim there" i.e. they were "distinguishable" from the Egyptians. What distinguished them?

The same phrase is used to describe the Sages in Bavel. The Gemara says (Shabbos 145b) that the Sages were "metsuyanim," i.e. they dressed in a distinctive way that set them apart. They wore white, for according to the Gemara (Nedarim 20b), "The Rabbonon are called melachim" i.e. ministering angels, for just as melachim wear distinctive garments, so do the Rabbanon. And what are the garments of the melachim? In many verses of the Prophets (e.g.. Yechezkel 9:2; Daniel 10:5), melachim are referred to as "lavush badim" - "clothed in linen" i.e. white. - As a reminder of the concept of "purity," white is worn at the seder.

● In Lev Halvri, **R. Akiva Yosef Shlesinger** suggests yet another explanation for the custom to wear a white linen kittel at the seder. Tradition says that the Resurrection of the Dead will take place on Pesach. This is why on Shabbos of Chol HaMoed Pesach, the Haftorah is prophetic verses from Yechezkel which tell of the Resurrection (Tur and Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim Siman 490). To

remind ourselves of this anticipated event, we dress in white linen, the garment of the dead, as if to say, "We are now ready for the Resurrection."



The Kedusha of the Seder Night

Writes the **Gaon Rabbi Akiva Eiger zt'l**, "On the night of Pesach, a Jew should conduct himself with kedusha and fear of Heaven. At the same time, he should feel joy that the Holy One has given us the opportunity to do many mitzvos on this night - the positive mitzvos of Kiddush, eating matzah and maror, telling about the exodus, drinking the four cups and saying Hallel. One must be careful, though, to eat a full kazayis of matzah without scrimping, and so, too, maror, for if he eats even slightly less than the required amount, he loses the mitzvah.

"In my opinion anyone with a brain in his head who believes in HaShem's Torah has to be extremely concerned to not lose even one of these great mitzvos, which he will be able to do again only after another year passes. Who can be sure that he will live until then?

"It is enough that because of our sins, we are not careful about everyday mitzvos such as tefillin and Birkas HaMazon. Why must we be the same about these mitzvos, too?

"True, the mitzvah of eating maror looks as if it involves a bit of difficulty. On the other hand, every day we accept upon ourselves to serve HaShem with all our souls, so why be upset over a small amount of hardship?

"In fact, I faithfully promise you, that when he eats maror - if a Jew does so happily and with enthusiasm, intending to fulfil his Creator's command, he will practically not taste any bitterness at all.

"Especially disturbing to me are those who are careless about the mitzvah of the Four Cups, and accustom themselves to drinking as

little as one quarter of the cup. Oy, what a disgrace! How can they wantonly ignore mitzvos without a legitimate excuse, and without worry of the consequences? To my mind, this is frivolousness indicating a very serious lack of yirah, Heaven save us. The punishment of such people will be too much for them to bear."

In the words of the **Chida**, "How good and how pleasant is the custom of those who fear HaShem! From kiddush until the end of Hallel they do not say a word of sichas chulin, for the entire night is yichud gamur v'shalame [to declare HaShem's "One-ness"] making it impossible to tolerate any interruption."

Yachatz

At the start of the seder," explains the **Chasam Sofer** in Pardes Moshe, "we split the matzah into two to indicate that the seder has two parts - one about the redemption from Egypt and one about the redemption to come - the Final and Ultimate Redemption.

The future redemption, the bigger and complete one, is hidden. We do not know when it will be. Therefore, the [larger] piece of matzah that alludes to this greater redemption is the Afikoman - called tzafun i.e. "hidden."

Maggid

According to the sefer Ma'ase Nissim, by **R. Yaakov of Lisa**, the essential mitzvah of telling about yetsias Mitsrayim is to go into the details of the story, explaining how each particular one was a different demonstration of HaShem's love for us. We must appreciate HaShem's kindness and mercy and realize how each detail of yetsias Mitsrayim was yet another way to benefit the Jewish People, then and forever. We must stress that the benefits that accrued to that generation were meant to be lasting. They were

not directed only to the Jews who lived back then. HaShem's Will was that Jews for all time would benefit from yetsias Mitsrayim - every aspect of it.

It must be made clear that had He not intervened with His countless miracles, then due to our sins and lack of worth, we would not have deserved even to remain in existence. He looked into the future when He worked His miracles, and He mercifully tailored each one so it would be a benefit to Israel in every generation, until the end of time.

This is the meaning of what we say in Hallel, "Ki l'olam chasdo" = His chessed (kindness) is forever." Not only back in Egypt were the benefits felt. Even today are the benefits felt.

The more one reflects about how a certain detail was good for the Jews in Egypt, and the more he speaks about this, the more he will be able to recognize the power of that good to sustain our People on a permanent basis, throughout the generations.

Maggid

In the sefer **Minhagei HaChasam Sofer**, we read: "All his elaboration would be directed to the little boys and little girls. He would translate every word of the Haggadah for them, and explain the main idea of each passage, according to its simple meaning, without adding any drash whatsoever."

Maggid

The Chafetz Chaim's son, R. Leib HaKohen, reported how his father would perform the mitzvah of maggid: "For the sake of the members of our household, he would translate every word of the Haggadah into Yiddish, for one has to understand what the Haggadah says, in order to be able to give apt praise and thanks to

HaShem for the many miracles that He did for our forefathers and for us.

"When he would reach the point of saying Shem Yichud before the mitzvah of eating matzah, for example, he would stand up, and would announce in his pleasant voice, filled with kedusha, 'We are about to fulfill the mitzvah of eating matzah lichvod HaShem, as is written in the Torah.'"

Maggid

According to the **Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh**, there is a segulah in saying the Haggadah properly. On the verse (Shemos 13:8), "And you shall tell your son..." he writes, "It is a hint that if a man says the Haggadah as he should, HaShem will reward him and give him a son to say it to."

And HaShem our G-d took us out of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm

One may wonder, why did HaShem smite Egypt with plagues and use force to take us out of Egypt? What would have been wrong with securing our release through peaceful means, without such coercion? Couldn't the Al-Mighty have brought it about that Pharaoh would have sent us away graciously and willingly?

Writes **R. Eliezer Ashkenazi, author of Ma'asei HaShem**, that if Egypt had freed us voluntarily, we always would have felt sense of gratitude towards them. In addition, it would have allowed them to feel proud, for they could say, "You see those people? They were once our slaves, but we graciously freed them!" - The Jewish People would have always remained "connected" and "bound" to Egypt.

So it is with any slave whose master decides to free him. The slave is eternally grateful to his former master, and the slave's children

and grandchildren naturally will share these feelings. To make us completely free of Egypt and prevent our feeling any attachment or gratitude towards them, HaShem used force and coercion, and Pharoah freed us only because he had to.



And even if we all were chachamim... it would still be a mitzvah for us to tell about yetsias Mitsrayim

From the Haggadah of **R. Yitzchak Isaac Chavare zt'l**: "Even if a man is wise and learned in Torah, even if knows all about yetsias Mitsrayim, he still is obligated to perform this mitzvah. His recounting must be with excitement and feeling, for the story of our redemption from Egypt is the foundation of the entire Torah, and is the basis of our nation's belief in Divine Providence. Even if our intellects fully grasped these concepts, as clearly as Avraham Avinu, who recognized Divine Providence intuitively, we still would have this mitzvah.

Why? - Because when a person enunciates ideas until he "feels" them, they make a much deeper impression and exert a greater influence on him than if his recognition is only intellectual.

During the last years of the **Chafetz Chaim**, his shamesh was R. Mordechai Pesach of Korvine, who committed to writing some of what this saintly personality said and did in those years.

He writes, "It was the night of the Holy Shabbos, around midnight. As I was passing by his house, I heard his holy voice, so I came up to the window and looked in. There was the Chafetz Chaim sitting up in his bed reading a Chumash, parashas Va'Yeirah. When he reached the plagues on Egypt he raised his voice in excitement, and each time he came to a verse about a new plague his would exclaim, 'Eee! Eee!'

"He came to the verses about the boils. When he read, 'And the sorcerers could not stand up before Moshe because of the boils,' he suddenly broke out into loud laughter, unlike any laugh I ever heard

from his mouth, with his whole being, as if he saw that plague and others right before his eyes!"

R. Mordechai Pesach concludes, "It was such an amazing thing to watch, I stood there by the window - transfixed - for more than half an hour."



'And all who tell more about yetsias Mitsrayim are to be praised'

We must ask, says the **Netziv of Volozhin**, why is it considered "praiseworthy" to elaborate on the exodus? Is it not an obligation to speak all night long about the exodus? Usually, praise is reserved for those who go beyond the letter of the law, not for those who simply fulfill the law.

The Tosefta and the Mechilta say explicitly, "A man is obligated to talk about yetsias Mitsrayim all night long until midnight." Therefore, if a man consciously decides not to do so, he deserves to be called a rosha.

This is so even if he willingly decides to not fulfill a Rabbinic mitzvah (Nida 12). All the more regarding a Torah mitzvah such as telling of the exodus!

One cannot tell about the exodus afterwards and thereby make up for not doing so on the seder night. Anyone who neglects the mitzvah loses it. Why does the Haggadah say that tonight it is "praiseworthy" to elaborate on the story of the exodus? This is the mitzvah according to the law!

We must say that although the Tosefta and Mechilta say, "A man is obligated to talk about yetsias Mitsrayim all night long," it cannot mean literally "all" night long, without interruption. After all, one has to eat and take care of other needs during the seder. Rather, the

meaning is that when a person is able to talk about the exodus then he should, and when he does, he fulfills a mitzvah of the Torah.

If so, the Hebrew "V'kol hamarbeh l'sapare" does not mean "And all who elaborate in telling." Rather, the Hebrew should be rendered, "All who make provision so they can elaborate." - The Haggadah is referring to those who tonight make special efforts to minimize the time that they spend on eating and other "interruptions." Although they are allowed these pauses, they go beyond the letter of the law and seek to minimize them, so they are able to elaborate on the story of our redemption as much as possible. Such behavior is deserving of praise.

And they spoke of yetsias Mitsrayim all through the night

On the seder night, one is supposed to stay awake and talk about the exodus until fatigue overcomes him and he falls asleep against his will.

The Brisker Rav used to express astonishment at how people make special efforts to stay awake the whole night of Shavuos. This is only a minhag, but on the seder night, when it is law to try to stay awake, people are lax and usually just get up from the table and go to bed!

One who is wise and one who is wicked

Seemingly, writes the Admor **R. Yoel of Satmar**, the pairing should have been, "One son who is righteous and one son who is wicked." Why is "wise" placed opposite "wicked?"

Perhaps we are to gather from this wording that if someone wicked is present, the trait of righteousness in someone else is not sufficient to combat him. Someone evil can be very intelligent and can bring this gift to bear to accomplish his wicked goals. He is

clever and deceitful and knows how to manipulate and scheme in order to get the better of the tzaddik. The heart of a tzaddik is straight and pure, and he is not familiar with cunning, so the evil one's tactics are liable to defeat him, because they catch him by surprise.

The Haggadah seems to be saying to us that a tzaddik must not be naive. He, too, needs to learn to be clever and cunning, but for the sake of good. In addition to acquiring "righteousness," one also needs some worldly "wisdom," so he can see through the scheming and unmask the evil ones. Thereby, he can emerge unscathed from their attacks and even go on the "offensive" and win the evil ones over to the side of good!

Therefore, the pairing is the "wise" son versus the "wicked" son.

An afikoman may not be served as a last course after the Pesach offering

According to **R. Mordechai Gifter zt'l**, writing in Pirkei Moed, this halacha teaches us that after someone performs a mitzvah, he cannot allow himself to lose "connection" with what he did. If he does, he will not understand or appreciate the mitzvah fully, because he failed to absorb its "taste."

On the seder night, in days of old, the last taste in one's mouth had to be the taste of the Pesach offering, so that each person who had done this mitzvah would "live" with the mitzvah awhile after having completed it.

This is what we answer the wise son. "Do not lose touch with a mitzvah after having done it! Continue to live it, for only then you will appreciate it for what it is. This is the way of a ben Torah.

And the one who does not know to ask

According to **R. Shlomo HaLevi Alkabetz**, quoted in sefer Geulas Olam of the Chida, the Haggadah here is not speaking of a fool. Rather, this son has fear of Heaven and wants to fulfill the mitzvos. He does not ask questions because, unlike his brothers, he simply cannot state a question clearly. Because he cannot express himself, he is afraid his questions will come out twisted, in a way that makes it appear that he is lacking fear of Heaven. - To prevent this from happening, he chooses to remain silent.

Regarding him, one has to speak first, while he remains silent, until he begins to "open up" and reveals what is inside him. About him the verse says, "Draw him into things until he shall tell you his lips are no longer sealed. He really does understand, and once he is talking, his fear of Heaven will shine out to everyone!

The Chida finds support for this explanation in how the Haggadah describes this son. It does not say he "does not know." Rather, he is a son "who does not know to ask." He would like to ask, but he is afraid because he does not know how! He does understand what is important in life, but the ability to ask questions is lacking.

And they will work them and oppress them for four hundred years

The Midrash says that as reward for having escorted Sarah four amos. Pharoah enslaved the Jews for 210 years. So, too, Nevuchadnezzar troubled himself to walk four amos to bring back a messenger who was carrying a letter that did not afford sufficient honor to HaShem (Sanhedrin 96a). Because of this, Nevuchadnezzer too, was able to subjugate the Jewish People when he became king of Bavel.

If Pharaoh troubled himself for four amos, and so did Nevuchadnezzar, why was Pharoah's reward 210 years of

subjugation while the Jews were subjugated under Nevuchadnezzar for only seventy years? - So asks R. **Betzalel of Ostra**, cited in the sefer, Kerem Shlomo.

An average man's step, says the Gemara, is one ama, and Tosafos explains that this is one-third of an average man's height, and average man is three amos tall. Our Sages tell us that Pharoah was a midget, however, and his height totalled only one ama. Therefore, his step was only one-third of an ama

According to this the answer is clear. The total number of steps that Pharaoh had to take to walk four amos was three times more than the number that Nevuchadnezzar had to take. Nevuchadnezzar took only four steps in order to traverse four amos, but Pharoah had to take twelve steps. Therefore, since Nevuchadnezzar merited subjugating the Jews for seventy years for four steps, Pharaoh had to merit subjugating them for 210 years, because he took twelve steps!

And afterwards they will go out with great wealth

According to the Meshech Chachma, this promise is the reason why the Torah tells us that Yosef, while prime minister of Egypt, said to the Egyptian people (Bereishis 47:23), "Today I have bought you and your land for Pharoah."

Just before the Jews left Egypt, HaShem told Moshe to ask the Jews to "borrow" from their Egyptian neighbors "vessels of silver and vessels of gold." The intent was not to return this property.

The Gemara tells us (Sanhedrin 91a) that long after yetsias Mitsrayim, the Egyptians came to Alexander the Great, demanding that he force the Jews to give back the silver and gold vessels that the Jews said they were only "borrowing."

Geviha ben Pesisa countered that before these items would be returned, the Egyptians would have to pay the wages for all the work

that the Jews had done for Egypt during the many scores of years they were there.

But how could Geviha ben Pesisa say such a thing? The Jews were Pharaoh's workers, as the verse says (Shemos 1:11), "And they built storage cities for Pharoah." The Jews took the silver and the gold not from Pharaoh but from the Egyptian people!

For this reason, the Torah tells us ahead of time that while Yosef was in power, Pharoah acquired all the people and property of Egypt. Therefore, it was Pharoah's property that the Jews "borrowed" that night, as partial payment for their many years of labour.



For in every generation they stand up against us to [try to] destroy us

The Hebrew reads, "For in every dor vador." The word "dor" means "generation." **R. Chaim Berlin** asks why is it not enough to say, "For in every dor"? Say the word dor just once! Why is the expression "doubled," as if to say, "In every generation and generation"?

He answers that here, the message is that in each different generation, there are different evil forces that seek to destroy us - each one employing the methods and approach that it feels will work.

In some generations, our enemies openly hate us and oppress us, issuing harsh decrees, abusing us, even murdering us, perpetrating all sorts of aggression to try to make us abandon our faith. The prime example of this type of enemy was Pharaoh.

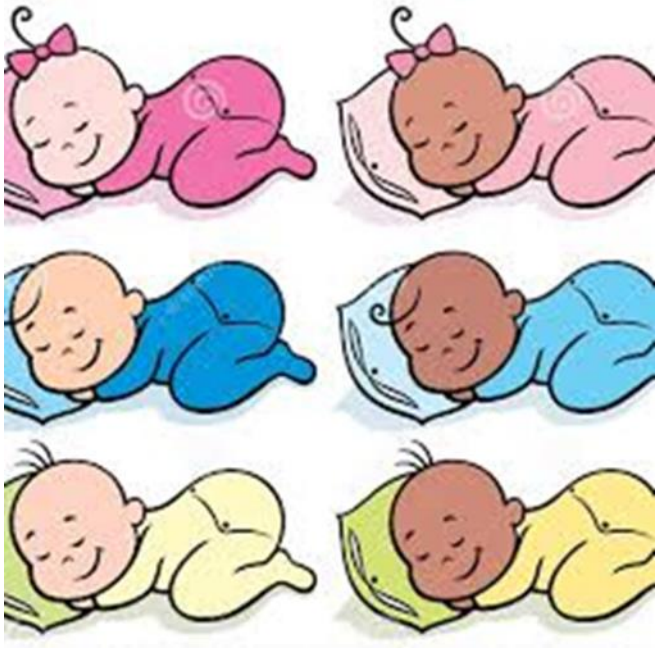
In other generations, those who hate us smile upon us, and act as if they like us and want to help us. They draw us close to them, pretending that they even have love for us. The prime example of this tactic was the perverse advice that Bilaam gave to Balak (See Rashi on BaMidbar 24:14).

The common goal of all of them is to destroy us, and the only difference is the tactics they use. But the Holy One saves us from all of them, as He promises (VaYikra 26:44), "And even when they will be in the lands of their enemies, I will not be disgusted with them or abhor them." - "The Holy One saves us from their hands!"

An Aramean sought to destroy my father

If the reference is to Lavan, asks **R. Yaakov Kamenetsky**, why doesn't the verse mention him by name and say explicitly, "Lavan sought..."?

He answers that, really, all those who lived in the vicinity of Lavan hated Yaakov. After all, when Lavan was planning to switch Leah for Rachel, and hold a big wedding celebration, the whole town knew about it, but no one revealed the deception to Yaakov. Therefore, the Haggadah sees no reason to refer to Lavan specifically. To tell us who sought to "Aramean" any destroy Yaakov, better to state a general term Aramean that you pick.



The Children of Israel reproduced, and bred, and multiplied, and as the Torah says (Shemos 1:7), "And the children became very, very populous"

Rashi quotes the Midrash (Shemos Rabbah 1:7), which that the Jewish women in Egypt gave birth to six children at a time.

The author of the sefer Oznaim LaTorah writes that his grandfather **R. Eliezer Gordon** - Rav and Rosh Yeshiva of Telshe, was once asked by an assimilated Jew, "Why

did the Sages exaggerate so much? How is possible that even one woman could give birth to six children at once? Look, I will concede that the Jewish people multiplied at a phenomenal rate while in Egypt. That much I'll grant you, because the statistics bear this out. But it's a big jump from that to say that the women gave birth to six children at a time!"

The man explained, "Let's look at the statistics. The Jewish nation numbered seventy souls when they arrived in Egypt. They stayed in Egypt for 210 years. According to normal rates of population growth, by the time they left they should have numbered somewhere between 1,200 and 1,500 souls. According to the Torah, though, at the time of the exodus the men alone between ages 20 and 60 numbered 600,000! If we factor in older men, as well as children and women, there must have been about two million Jews at the time! Granted, this is a fantastic rate of growth, but how can anyone suggest that it came about by women giving birth to six children at a time?"

The Rosh Yeshiva answered, "Oh, you place your trust in statistics? If so, I will show you from these very numbers that our Sages were not exaggerating!"

"In BaMidbar (3:43), we learn of a census that was taken after yetsias Mitsrayim - that the census discovered the number of all Jewish firstborn males then - 22,700. At the same time, the number of men between ages 20 and 60 numbered over 600,000. Now, we must realize that the firstborns were counted from the age of one month old, while the other count was only of those over twenty years old. Therefore, to determine the total number of males from infancy to old age (and by extension - their ratio to the firstborns), we have to take the number 600,000 and at least double it. Doing so, we come up with 1,200,000 males. Compared to the number of firstborns, this number is about 55 times larger. It is reasonable to assume that there was a similar number of females, both firstborn and others.

If so, every mother in addition to her firstborn had to have had another 55 children or so, whether the firstborn was a boy or a girl. This is a family of astronomical size, no?"

The Rosh Yeshiva then concluded. "Now follow this calculation closely. In the time of Moshe Rabbeinu, a person's life span averaged seventy years. Moshe said so explicitly in Tehillim (90:10), "The days of our years are seventy years." It also is safe to assume that over her seventy-year life span, the average woman gave birth about ten times, which is normal in our times, too (amongst the religious). If she gave birth ten times, and her number of children totalled approximately fifty-five, she must have given birth to close to six children each time, no?"

"I gave you to thrive like seeds of the fields" As is written (Yechezkel 16:6-7)

In his commentary on the Haggadah, **R. Yitzchak Isaac Chavare** explains why the Prophet compares bnei Yisroel to "seeds of the field." As long as the seed is whole and visible and fall apart. Only afterwards will a sprout emerge from it, and this nothing grows of it. It must first become buried in the ground, crumble, and eventually becomes a tree.

So it was with Bnei Yisroel in Egypt. The difficulty of the oppression almost brought them to the gates of death. Only then did promise begin to show forth, when Egypt had "swallowed" them and they had almost disappeared.

As the Torah says (Shemos 1:12), "And as much as they [the Egyptians] oppressed them, so did they [the Jews] multiply and grow." The "oppression" that almost brought their destruction was actually essential to their growth.

To thrive like seeds of the field

Usually, brush and undergrowth sprout from the "seeds" of the field. The more you cut back such growth, the healthier and stronger the plant will be, and the more it will reproduce and spread.

So, too, Bnai Yisroel in Egypt, writes the **Ya'avetz**. The more their taskmasters tortured them - weighing them down with burdens to reduce their size and "cut them back" - the more the Jews thrived and increased, spreading out in all directions.

And I saw you wallowing in your own blood

Someone who knew the **Admor of Bluzhov** told an astounding story that the Admor used to recount, because he witnessed it during the Holocaust. The Admor would tell this often, to show the devout faith of the martyred souls who were led to the gas chambers, may HaShem avenge their blood.

Near a place where the Germans would murder untold numbers of Jews daily, the Admor was forced to do hard labor, sawing down trees. One day, word got out that the accursed Nazis were planning to murder thousands of small Jewish childrenand babies. The rumor turned out to be true. The slaughter began, and the infants cried out from inside the furnaces, their voices rising to Heaven, mixed with the agonized wailing of their mothers. Nevertheless, the murderers continued with their grisly work with a cold, metallic apathy, cruelly scoffing at the Jewish grief.

Suddenly, a woman carrying a bundle appeared alongside the Admor, and she asked for a knife. The Admor discerned that the bundle was a tiny infant. He assumed that the woman could take no more and wanted to kill herself along with her child. Fearing that the Nazis would kill him if he stopped, the Admor continued sawing at the tree, but began speaking with her. "I understand that you want to do a terrible thing, but you must know that the world has a Creator, and

He sees everything that goes on. Even if a sword is poised at a man's throat, he is not allowed to give up hope. If, G-d forbid, Heaven has issued a decree on us, then we all must burn in the furnaces, and accept the decree with love. Taking our own lives, though, is forbidden."

A Gestapo man overheard the Admor's voice, and strode over to him, grabbed him by the throat and demanded to know what he had said. The Admor told him the truth - that the woman had asked for a knife, and that he had told there that it wasn't necessary, because anyway all the Jews were going to be thrown into the furnace.

The murderer did not believe the Admor, so he turned to the woman and demanded that she tell him what she had asked him. She answered that she had asked for a knife. With great delight, the Nazi gave her his bayonet, and waited with a big smile on his face to see how a Jewess would take her own life and the life of her baby.

The woman however gently laid the baby onto the ground, undid his diaper, and blessed in a loud voice, "Baruch atoh, HaShem ... Who sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us regarding the circumcision!" With that, she deftly removed her son's foreskin.

Wide-eyed, the Nazi demanded an explanation. The courageous woman answered him, "My son today is eight days old, and on this day, says the Torah, it is a mitzvah to give him circumcision. In a little while you will surely kill him, and I wanted to do the mitzvah while he was still alive."

A few hours later, they took this mother and her child, along with thousands of others, and led them to the furnaces.

The Admor used to tell this story often, especially when he was honored to be sandek at a bris milah. His eyes would stream with tears, while he spoke of what great mussar can be learned from the strength of the soul of a Jewish mother.

וַיָּרֵעוּ אֹתָנוּ הַמִּצְרִים וַיְעַנּוּנוּ - "And the Egyptians invented evil for us," as is written (Shemos 1:10), **הָבָה נִתְחַכְּמָה לוֹ** -"Come, let us be clever with them."

R' Moshe Feinstein seems to learn that the verse is saying that the Egyptians devised all sorts of evil that they perpetrated against us. He therefore asks, "To show that the Egyptians invented evil for us, why does the Haggadah cite a verse that says that they simply planned to be 'clever' with us? The verse cited does not describe any evil that they actually did to us."

He answers that a great difference exists between evil that is planned and evil that is done without planning. When there is a large investment of thought and prior planning, with a predetermined purpose and goal, the suffering of the victim is much, much greater.

That is why the Torah says **וַיָּרֵעוּ אֹתָנוּ** - "they invented evil for us." That is, they carefully planned it all, saying, "Let us be clever with them." Then the Torah says "**וַיְעַנּוּנוּ** " - "and they oppressed them." That is, only after planning and scheming.

"And G-d saw the children of Israel, and G-d knew" (Shemos 2:25)

Explains **Rabbeinu BaChaye** that the Egyptians were torturing the Jews not only in open ways – by means of the physical labor - but also in secret, conniving ways, with all sorts of plots and schemes to annoy and harry them.

About the pain and suffering that Jews suffered at the hands of the Egyptians in public, the verse says, "And G-d saw." About the quiet, secretive, oppression - the verse says, "And G-d knew."

"From every human being there rises a light." ~ Baal Shem Tov

I, and not an angel

Writes **Rabbeinu Bachaye**: "Had the tenth plague been by the agency of a high-ranking angel, it would have been done with the attribute of justice, and firstborn of Israel would have perished too, for many were not worthy to be redeemed. So that Israel, too, would not suffer from the tenth plague, the judgment was carried out the Holy One in His Glory - Himself. The Shechina passed through Egypt, and the Shechina is made of both the attribute of justice and the attribute of mercy."

The Arizal gives a different reason. Egypt was so steeped in abominations, the defilement was so severe, and the impurity was so strong, even a high-ranking angel could not have descended there without the risk of being spiritually defiled. Therefore, it was not possible to redeem the Jews by means of an angel. The Holy One was not willing to endanger the spiritual purity of any of His attendants, so He decided that He would descend into Egypt Himself - in all His Glory. He "personally" would carry out the judgment, for He certainly would not be harmed.

Blood and fire and pillars of smoke

They say in the name of the **Saba of Slobodka** that we take some wine out of our cup when mentioning the plagues to show that we empathize with those who suffered the plagues.

Even though the Egyptians were notoriously evil to our forefathers, and thus deserved the plagues, we should emulate HaShem, who drowned the Egyptians in the sea, but when His ministering angels rejoiced and started to sing shira, HaShem silenced them. He scolded them in astonishment, "The work of My Hands is drowning in the sea and you sing shira?"

Wild beasts

In Tehillim (105), we find a recap of the story of yetsias Mitsrayim. There we read (105:31), "He [HaShem] said and wild beasts and lice came throughout their borders."

Something is odd about this verse, for the plague of lice came before the plague of wild beasts! Lice was the third plague and wild beasts was the fourth. If so, why does the verse in Tehillim reverse the order?

The Maggid of Dubno answers with a parable: - In olden times, it was a custom that at Jewish weddings there would be a table where the poor would be able to sit and eat. Sometimes, however, the wealthy would make this meal the day before the wedding, so that at the happy celebration itself the poor would not be present.

One time, there was such a meal the day beforehand, but some of the poor who were there also came to the wedding feast itself the next day. The father of the bride asked them to explain this, and they told him, "Yesterday we came because we are poor. Today we are here because we are distant relatives."

The lice, too, came twice, and to explain themselves they said, "Yesterday we came on our own, but now we are coming again because, we, too are beasts of the wild."

Thus, the verse is not speaking of the third plague - when the lice came by themselves! The verse speaks only of the fourth plague - wild animals. "Wild beasts and lice came" during the fourth plague. After the third plague, when only the lice were present, they came afterwards, too, as "relatives" of the wild beasts.

"No matter what else we are doing to be Mechanech our children, it all must begin with Tefilah." ~ R Matisysahu Salomon.

רַבִּי יְהוּדָה הָיָה נוֹתֵן בָּהֶם סִמָּנִים: דְּצַ״ךְ עָדַ״שׁ בְּאַחַ״ב

A siman is supposed to be an aid for remembering something, so making a siman requires thought. Accordingly, the **Shibolei Lecket** asks, what sort of siman is it for the ten plagues to simply to string together the first letter of the name of each plague? Even a child can make such a siman, and how do the letters help us to remember the plagues?

Rabbi Yehuda's siman, though, is numerical. As the Haggadah quotes, there are different opinions as to how many plagues the Egyptians were hit with at the sea. R. Yosi HaGalili says fifty. R. Eliezer says two hundred. R. Akiva says two hundred and fifty. Add these three numbers together and the total is five hundred.

If you take the total of the numerical equivalents of the letters of Rabbi Yehuda's siman and you will see that this, too, totals five hundred - plus one for the siman itself!



The Plague of Lice

The Vilna Gaon points out (Avos 5:1) that only regarding the plague of lice does the Torah not bother to state that Israel was spared the plague. We can assume, though, that in truth, just like every plague, the lice alighted only on Egyptians. Why, then, does the Torah not mention this point?

According to **R. Chaim Kanievsky**, writing in Ta'ama D'Kra, only if it were possible for Egypt's sorcerers to duplicate a plague does the Torah bother to mention that Israel was spared. In such instances, one might err and think that the plague was sorcercy. Goshen's being spared showed that Hashem sent the plague, for although sorcery might be able to start a plague, it is not able to limit it.

The Torah tells us that the sorcerers were not able to bring forth lice. The plague on its own testified that it was the "finger of Hashem" so it goes without saying that Goshen was spared.

רַבִּי יוֹסֵי הַגְּלִילִי אוֹמֵר: מִנַּיִן אַתָּה אוֹמֵר שֶׁלָּקוּ הַמִּצְרִים בְּמִצְרַיִם עֶשֶׂר מַכּוֹת

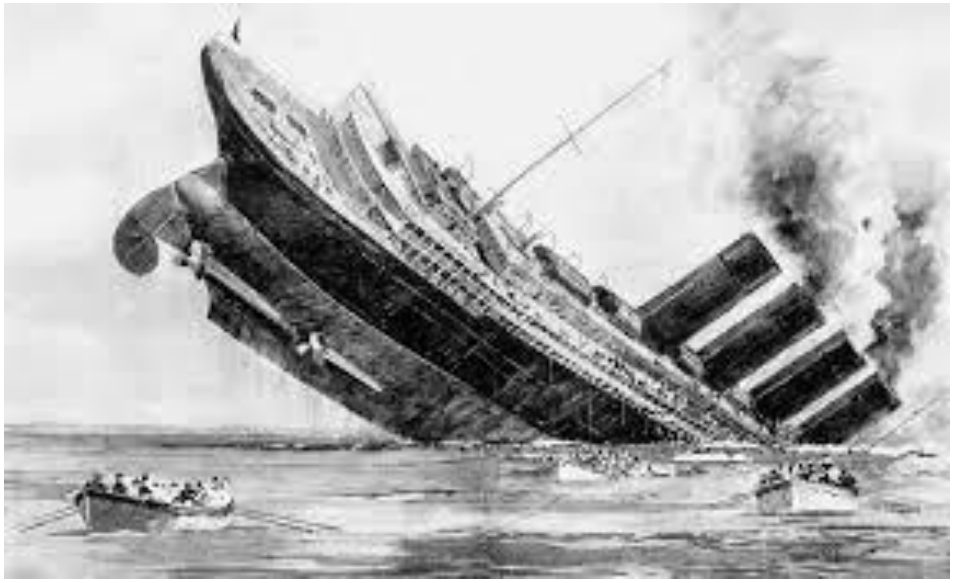
Yosi HaGalili, R. Eliezer and R. Akiva seem to be in a dispute about how many plagues HaShem brought on the Egyptians. In the sefer **Kol Eliyahu** it is said in the name of the **Vilna Gaon** that the argument is difficult to understand, for yetsias Mitsrayim happened long ago and served its purpose, so what does it matter how many plagues there were?

The Gaon is said to have explained this so-called "dispute" by recalling a promise that HaShem makes to the Jewish People if we keep faithful to Him. If we keep the Torah, says HaShem, then (Shemos 15:26), "All the diseases that I put on the Egyptians I will not put on you." In Devarim, Moshe Rabbeinu reiterates (7:15), "And all the evil diseases of Egypt - about which you know - He shall not put on you."

Compared to the other two sages, Rabbi Akiva says that HaShem brought more plagues on Egypt. However, all three sages sought to raise the number of plagues to a number higher than ten, because all three wanted to make HaShem's promise as "big" as possible. The more diseases and plagues we can say that HaShem put on the Egyptians, the better off we are, for it means that all those diseases and plagues He will not put on us!

'Trust in Hashem is greater than all the praises one can say to Hashem.' ~ Sefer Ha'ikrim.

אֵלּוּ שִׁקַּע צָרֵינוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ And caused our oppressors to sink in it



Writes **R. Reuven Melamed** in Tefilas Chana that **R. Yechezkel Levinstein**, Mashgiach of Ponevezh Yeshiva used to tell of when the great English ship, the "Luistania" was torpedoed and suddenly sank during World War One. Even though hundreds drowned, there were a few survivors. He used to remark that this prompted an interesting discussion in Yeshivas Kelm.

Despite what happened to this ship, and where it happened, so suddenly, some of the people who experienced this awesome episode lived to tell about it. By contrast, speaking of when HaShem drowned the Egyptians who had pursued the Jews into the sea, the Torah says (Shemos 14:28), "Not even one of them remained."

Think of it. The Egyptians who entered the sea after the Jews numbered in the millions - three hundred Egyptians to every Jew. Amongst these Egyptians there had to have been many who knew all about warfare at sea and even were trained to fight at sea. Nevertheless, not one Egyptian survived!

If the "nature" of things allowed that a few of those on the Titanic did not drown, but every Egyptian drowned, it must be that what happened to the Egyptians was not an act of nature.

Only by giving are you able to receive more than you already have.

Who sanctified us with His mitzvos, and commanded us to eat matzah

As soon as possible after Pesach, the **Vilna Gaon** would try to taste some chametz and would refrain from eating matzah that was usable for the mitzvah on the seder night. [Sefer Ma'ase Rav].

His efforts aimed to impress upon us that we do not eat matzah on Pesach for the sake of enjoyment of its taste. It is only because our Father and King commands us to eat it.

Shulchan Orech - the "Prepared Table"

שֻׁלְחָן עוֹרֵךְ Eating the Seder Meal



In the Gemara (Pesachim 116b), we find a dispute over where we interrupt Hallel on the seder night in order to eat the matzah and the rest of the meal. Beis Shammai says we say Hallel until "aim haBanim simaicha," but Beis Hillel says we go further and say another perek, and only stop at "chalamish I'miyno mayim."

All year long, notes the **Netziv of Volozhin**, whenever we say Hallel, once we start it, we have to finish it, and we are forbidden to interrupt anywhere in the middle! Tonight, though, we do stop in the middle and what do we do? We eat!

This shows us how very special the seder night is, and how different eating is on this night. When the Beis HaMikdosh stood and we ate the offering, it was before HaShem, so even our eating was a part of Hallel. Even today, lacking the avoda and the offering, we still have matzah and maror, and this eating, too, is before HaShem!

This halacha is itself reason to praise HaShem - for He has lifted us to such a high spiritual level that even our eating can be such a holy act, it is not an interruption of Hallel.

Yetsias Mitsrayim so changed us, so elevated us above other peoples, that at the seder, even today, even something as physical as eating becomes devoted service and homage to HaShem, bringing us eternal life in the Next World.



Shulchan Orech

Many have the custom to eat eggs during the seder. What is the reason? In the sefer Toras Emes, by **R. Leib Eiger of Lublin**, it is said in the name of the **Rebbe from Izbitza** that eggs allude to what, at essence, was yetsias Mitsrayim.

Throughout nature, when creatures are born, birth is concluded in one step. The mother's womb opens, and a new member of the species comes into the world. This birth is the concluding step that is necessary for the survival of the species. The birth of an egg, however, is not a concluding step. It is a necessary but preliminary step, and the real purpose is the hatching that comes later. Only then does the offspring emerge into the world.

Yetsias Mitsrayim was very much like the egg. It, too, was like a first step - an "emergence" and "birth," but it was not the ultimate purpose. That would come later, when our fathers stood at Sinai and HaShem gave them His Torah. Only later, by accepting the Torah were we "born" as a nation.

As is clear from the writings of the **Arizal**, HaShem took us out of Egypt in order to give us His Torah. This "made" us. First, though, He had to free us from Egypt and take us out into the clean air. Until the events at Sinai, the nation of Israel still was hidden, like a chick inside its egg.

Shulchan Orech



On Pesach there is a custom to eat "borsht" - a sweet or sour dish made primarily of beets. **R. Yissachar Dov, Admor of Belz**, relates that he always wondered about the reason for this custom, and inquired about it of many gedolim. For many years, he found no one who could answer him.

"Then I had the opportunity to spend time with some of the gedolim of Lithuania. They told me that the reason is the Karaites' view, for the verse says that on the seven days of Pesach (12:20), 'Any **מַחְמֶצֶת** (machmetzes) you shall not eat.' The Karaites [who believe only in the literal meaning of the Torah's verses, and do not accept how the tradition of our Sages explains the Torah] take this as a prohibition on eating anything that has a sour taste.

"In Hebrew, the word for 'borsht' is **חֲמִיצָה** (chamitza) [for it is often prepared to be sour, and the beets in borsht sometimes ferment more than is desired]. To show that the Karaites are wrong, and that **חֲמִיצָה** and other sour foods are fully permitted, faithful Jews went out of their way to make eating and drinking borsht a regular custom on Pesach!"

"To be kind is more important than to be right. Many times what people need is not a brilliant mind that speaks, but a special heart that listens." ~ Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994).

To the One Who cut the Sea of Reeds into slices



In Midrash Rabbah (Shemos 21) we read that HaShem said, "In the merit of Avraham I am bokei'ah (**בוקע**) = 'cutting' the sea, as is written (Bereishis 22:3), **וַיְבַקַּע עֲצֵי עֹלָה** -'and he [Avraham] chopped wood for the offering [of Yitzchak]."

Explains the Midrash that this is why the Torah says regarding the splitting of the sea (Shemos 14:21) "**וַיִּבָּקְעוּ הַמָּיִם**" i.e. and the waters "were cut" or "were split." It is the same word that the Torah uses to describe Avraham's woodcutting.

Usually, when HaShem rewards or punishes, it is "measure for measure - a fitting response to what the person did - good or bad. Regarding punishments, HaShem reacts this way so that the person can recognize what he did wrong and repent. The sinner sees his failing from his form of punishment. Regarding rewards, too, our Sages say that a person's good is rewarded "measure for measure."

If so, asks the **Maharil Diskin**, we should try to see how the splitting of the sea was a "measure for measure" reward to Avraham.

He writes that the splitting of the sea seems to have been reward for the way Avraham Avinu paid close attention to every detail of his mitzvos. He would always make sure that nothing would be delayed or be left undone, so the mitzvah would be performed in the optimum way, with no blemish in it.

The mitzvah involving wood for the offering was a perfect example. Why did Avraham cut the wood before he left on his journey to the place where he would make the offering? Having cut it ahead of time,

he had to carry it all the way to Har HaMoriah! Why not wait and cut the wood when he arrived at the designated spot, when the time came to build the altar and make the fire?

Avraham knew that upon arriving at his destination, he would not have any animal with him that would be fit to be the offering. At that point, Yitzchak would realize that he was the offering!

Avraham foresaw this, and he realized that if at that point, he would have to go start looking for wood, the delay would be agonizing for Yitzchak. It would be a sort of "stretching out" of carrying out a death penalty.

The Gemara says (Sanhedrin 35) that once a person knows he must die, the court must carry out the verdict as soon as possible, to minimize the person's mental anguish. Avraham paid close attention to all details, and recognized that the mitzvah at hand certainly required him to cut the wood beforehand.

In the merit of not letting this detail escape him – in order to prevent anguish to his "condemned" son - Avraham merited that HaShem have Moshe "thoroughly" split the sea for Israel, at one time, opening it from one shore all the way to the opposite shore.

It was a "clean" split – from one side of the sea to the other. This prevented the nation of Israel having to suffer any additional mental anguish. Had the sea opened for them only little by little - so that it was dry only where they walked- the water standing up high in front of them would have caused them mortal fear.

Because Avraham Avinu was careful to minimize his son's fear of death, HaShem rewarded him "measure for measure" by minimizing Israel's fear of death. Although the waters at our fathers' sides stood ominously high, the waters in front of them were cleared away. Avraham did such a considerate thing for his son, so HaShem did similarly for Avraham's distant descendants!

מִלְּפָנִים מִמִּצְרַיִם גְּאַלְתָּנוּ ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ- *'From Egypt, in days of old, HaShem our G-d redeemed us.'*

Why does the prayer Nishmas (Sefard) include the word (**מִלְּפָנִים**) i.e. "in days of old" here? Isn't it obvious that yetsias Mitsrayim happened long ago?

Perhaps, writes the **Chida**, we can understand the answer through the teaching of the **Zohar** that HaShem was behind the scenes causing the brothers to sell Yosef to Egyptian slave traders. It all was a preconceived plan so that later, the Jews would be able to leave Egypt legally. That is, HaShem was behind everything that brought Yosef to become leader of Egypt.

While in power, during the days of the famine, Yosef acquired all the Egyptians as his slaves. According to law, "Whatever a slave acquires belongs to his master," so afterwards, although the Egyptians ruled over us, they actually belonged to us! - Without this, says the Zohar, the Jews could not have legally left Egypt.

This could be why the prayer adds the word ' i.e. "in days of old." That is, very long before yetsias Mitsrayim, HaShem redeemed us, by laying the groundwork that led to Yosef's becoming king.

It started very long before yetsias Mitsrayim, when the brothers felt jealousy for Yosef and sold him down to Egypt.

Hadassah gathered the people to fast for three days-on Pesach

Esther commanded the Jews (Esther 4:16), "Fast on my behalf. Do not eat and do not drink for three days."

Notes **R. Chaim Kanievsky** in Ta'ama D'Kra that the words seem redundant. Once she commanded, "Fast on my behalf," the words "Do not eat and do not drink" do not seem to be needed. What is more, the halacha states (Shavuos 22b) that if a person says he will not "eat," this includes not drinking. If so, after having said, "Fast on my

behalf three days," even if she had needed to add, "and do not eat," the words "and do not drink" would seem to be superfluous.

All is understood, however, in light of the teaching of our Sages (Megillah 15a) that the third day of the fast was the first day of Pesach. No words are extra, for when Esther said, "Fast on my behalf," this command pertained only to the days when eating and drinking were not obligatory. Then she added, "and do not eat" i.e. any of the obligatory foods at the seder. Then she concluded, "and do not drink" i.e. the obligatory four cups of wine.



Hold Onto Your Roots - A Most Meaningful Seder by Rabbi Yechiel Spero

Maggid isn't just another part of the Seder. It's THE part. Listen carefully, because tonight, your father, or whoever is the head of the household, has a story to tell. And it's not just their story. It's your story: your family, your roots, and the foundation that keeps us all standing strong through the winds and storms of history.

Story: The Tree-Lined Boulevard

In the early 1920s, Winston Churchill, the future prime minister of England, visited Eretz Yisrael. As part of his trip, he came to see the young city of Tel Aviv, a small, dusty town just beginning to grow. The leaders of the city wished to make a strong impression. They wanted Mr. Churchill to see that their city was modern and beautiful.

The main street, Rothschild Boulevard, was supposed to be the pride of the city. But there was a big problem. It didn't have any trees. A boulevard without trees? The thought was embarrassing! How could

they call it a "boulevard" and welcome such an important guest without any greenery to provide shade or beauty?



Meir Dizengoff, the first mayor of Tel Aviv, came up with a bold plan. He ordered workers to bring in fully grown trees and "plant" them along the street overnight. The next morning, the once-empty boulevard looked grand, with tall, leafy trees lining the path Mr. Churchill would take.

When Mr. Churchill arrived, the city was buzzing with excitement. People waved flags, cheered, and gathered to see the famous British leader. Mayor Dizengoff proudly led Mr. Churchill down the tree-lined boulevard, beaming with pride. But then, disaster struck. Their grand plan to impress Mr. Churchill came crashing down.

A group of local kids was curious about the new trees and eager to catch a closer look at Mr. Churchill. So, they began climbing them. The trees, however, were still unrooted in the sandy ground. They couldn't hold the children's weight. One by one, the trees began to fall. First one tree toppled, then another, and then another.

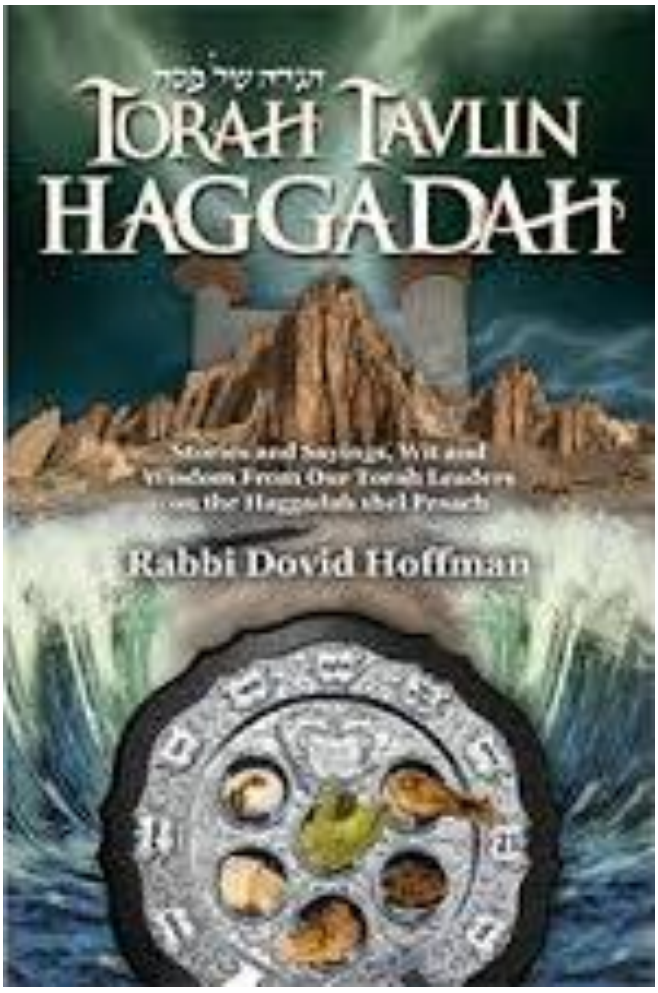
The city leaders were horrified. Their grand plan to impress Mr. Churchill had come crashing down — literally. However, instead of becoming upset, Mr. Churchill simply smiled. He patted Mayor Dizengoff on the back and said something simple yet memorable. "Roots. Without roots, the trees will never stand."

Mr. Churchill's statement wasn't just about trees. It holds a deep message for us, too. Without roots, nothing can survive. Not trees, not people, and, most importantly, not Yiddishkeit. As Yidden, our roots are our Torah, our mitzvos, and the mesorah passed down from

generation to generation. These roots give us strength to stand tall, no matter how fierce the winds or how tough the storms of life may be. Without them, we'd topple, like those unrooted trees. But with them, we flourish and grow.

Every year at the Seder, we connect to those roots. We remind ourselves of where we come from, of the sacrifices our ancestors made to pass the flame of Yiddishkeit from generation to generation. We remind ourselves that the strength of our future depends on the strength of our connection to the past.

Tonight, at the Seder… As you begin Maggid, think about your roots. Where do you come from, and how can you grow stronger? Without roots, we cannot stand. But with them, we can weather any storm and grow taller than we ever imagined.



In the annals of Jewish thought and liturgy, there are a number of timeless questions which have mystified many generations of commentators. These include the famous question of the Bais Yosef, why we celebrate eight days of Chanukah; the well-known query of the Tur as to why we go out to the sukkah in the autumn if we are doing it to commemorate a miracle that happened in the springtime; and, of course, the question of the Baalei Tosfos, who ask why the Shabbos before Pesach is known as Shabbos Hagadol. Here are a few wide-ranging answers to this question:

The Rishonim (Avudraham, Chizkuni) write that this Shabbos was the first Shabbos in Bnei Yisrael's journey to fulfilling the mitzvos of Hashem. A child who turns thirteen and begins to perform mitzvos is called a "gadol". Thus, the Shabbos on which Bnei Yisrael became a "gadol" is appropriately called "Shabbos Hagadol". (Tosfos)

Others ascribe the name to the fact that the halachos of Pesach are expounded in drashos given on this day. The drashos tend to go on and on, which may make the day seem quite long. (**Mahari"l, Rav Azaryah Figo zt'l - Binah L'itim**) And, unlike on other weeks of the year, when anyone who feels like it can get up and speak his mind, on this Shabbos, when technical issues of halachah are delineated, only a rav with genuine Torah knowledge and intellect-a true "gadol"-can be the one doing the talking! (**Rav Yissachar Eilenberg zt"l**)

The mitzvah of Korban Pesach was the first mitzvah that the Jewish Nation as a whole was commanded to perform. Although our Avos and their descendents were known to have performed all of the mitzvos, they were, as yet not commanded to do so. Thus, explains **Rav Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov zt'l (Bnei Yissaschar)**, this Shabbos was the first instance of Chazal's dictum: "Gadol hametzuveh v'oseh mi'mi she'eino metzuveh v'oseh - Greater is the one who is commanded to do something and then does it, than the one who is not commanded to do something and does it anyway." - This lesson is hinted at in the name "Shabbos Hagadol".

Gematria

בֶּעָשֹׂר לַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה וְיִקְחוּ לָהֶם אֵישׁ שֶׂה לְבֵית־אָבֹת שֶׂה לַבָּיִת (בא יב-ג)

On the tenth of Nissan, the Jews in Egypt were commanded to take a שֶׂה lamb, for the Korban Pesach. A hint for this is found in the first letters ("rashei teivos") of the words "Shabbos Hagadol". Similarly, this Shabbos was the official beginning of the end of the prescribed 430 years of galus Mitzrayim. A hint for this is found in

the last letters of "Shabbos Hagadol" - **ת'ל** - which equals 430. The middle letters of "Shabbos Hagadol" combined total fifteen, which correlates to the night when we eat the Korban Pesach - the fifteenth of Nissan. (Reb Zalman Bass z"l)

ותתן לנו ה' אלקנו באהבה מועדים לשמחה חגים וזמנים לששון את יום חג המצות הזה

Rabbeinu Don Yitzchak Abarbanel zt'l writes that the seven days of Pesach symbolize the seven decades of a person's life. On the first night there are many mitzvos, especially that of teaching one's children the miracles of Yetzias Mitzrayim. This alludes to the emphasis on education during the early and formative years of a person's life.

The first days are holy, symbolizing that the early years of a person's life must be dedicated to kedushah-holiness and Torah education.

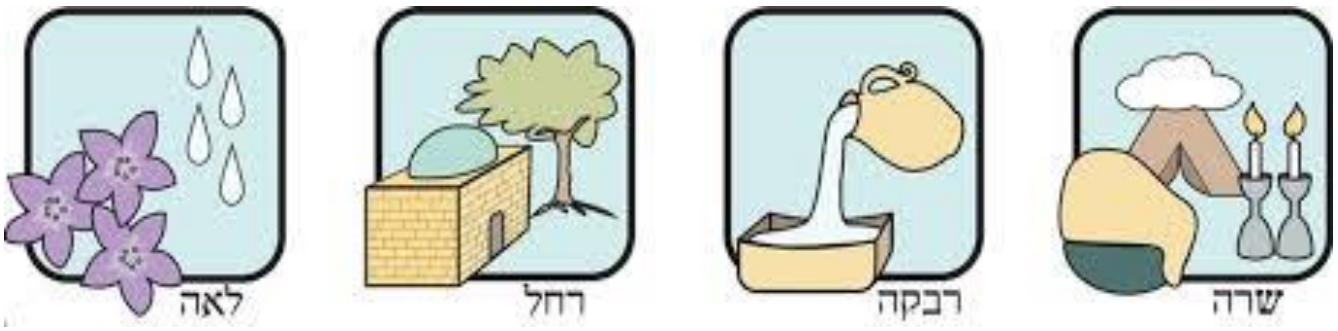
During the next four days, we observe Chol Hamoed, where work is permitted but chametz remains forbidden. Similarly, during the middle stages of one's life, one goes out to work and earns a living, while being careful to construct a lifestyle of mitzvos and stay away from forbidden actions.

After the first six days of Yom Tov, we celebrate Acharon Shel Pesach with complete holiness, just as at the end of one's life, when one is retired from work, he can once again dedicate himself solely to the holy pursuits of Torah study and mitzvah observance.

"On Pesach evening, hashem takes our hands and helps us walk into the brilliant light of freedom and redemption." ~ Reb Noson of Nemirov (1780-1844).

Remez

אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מכל עָם, וְרוֹמְמָנוּ מִכָּל-לָשׁוֹן, וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו



According to the **Shelah Hakadosh, Rav Yeshayah Halevi Horowitz zt'l**, the four cups of wine that we drink at the Seder, in order to symbolize our redemption from the four exiles, are in the merit of our four Matriarchs: Sarah, Rivkah, Rochel and Leah.

The first cup, used for Kiddush, when we thank Hashem for separating us from the nations of the world so we could serve Him, corresponds to Sarah, who influenced many heathen women to serve Hashem.

The second cup, with which we begin the Haggadah account of how we originally came from idol worshippers and recount the story of Yaakov Avinu and the difficulties he had with people like Lavan, corresponds to Rivkah, who came from Lavan's household, yet left idol-worship behind.

The third cup, with which we thank Hashem for our meal, corresponds to Rochel, whose firstborn son, Yosef, sustained us in a time of famine.

The fourth cup, with which we complete the Hallel, corresponds to Leah, who said at the birth of her son Yehudah, "Now I shall give thanks to Hashem." (Bereishis 12,29:35) In addition, the last part of the Hallel symbolizes our final redemption through Mashiach, who is descended from Yehudah.

Derech Eretz /Middos

ומועדי קדשך בשמחה ובששון הנחלתנו

Simchah-happiness is not just a nice middah that enhances one's life; it is the foundation of all spiritual success. Chazal tell us: "The Divine Presence does not rest except where there is happiness" (Shabbos 30b). Without simchah, one cannot become close to Hashem; one cannot truly live as a Jew.

The founder of the Bais Yaakov movement was an amazing and inspiring woman by the name of **Sarah Schenirer a'h** (about whom **Rav Aharon Kotler zt"l** was quoted as saying, "If not for Sarah Schenirer, where would our families, our wives, our children, our bnei Torah be?"). What is truly amazing is what is written on her tombstone.

She requested that it be written on her tombstone the five pesukim which encompassed everything she stood for and all that she wished to transmit to future generations. The very first pasuk, presumably the one she deemed the most important, states: "Ivdu es Hashem b'simchah-Serve Hashem with joy." This is listed even before the second pasuk, which is, "Shivisi Hashem l'negdi tamid-I place Hashem before me always."

What a crucial lesson this is for every Jew. Simchah is of paramount importance!

Derech Eretz /Middos

שהחיינו וקימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה

On the first two nights of Pesach, as on the eve of every Yom Tov, we conclude the Kiddush with the brachah of Shehechiyanu, thanking Hashem for allowing us to perform His special mitzvos at this time and on this auspicious occasion. However, we do not say Shehechiyanu during Kiddush of the last two evenings of Pesach.

Aside from the obvious reason that the last two nights of Pesach are not a new festival, there is another, deeper reason why Shehechiyanu is not recited then:

On the last two days, we commemorate our crossing of the Red Sea, when the Egyptians were drowned. The fact that Hashem's creations, although they were wicked, were suffering, should temper our rejoicing somewhat, as we are not to derive satisfaction from our enemies' troubles.

We find that when Moshe Rabbeinu sang "Az Yashir" at the Red Sea, he had to force the words out of his mouth. He was correct to sing a song of praise upon Bnei Yisrael's deliverance from the hands of their oppressors, but his heart was still heavy because of the drowning of the Egyptians.

Chazal teach us: "In the downfall of your enemies do not rejoice." (Mishlei 24:17) There is an unfortunate character trait in many of us to derive pleasure from someone else's downfall, and we should work to eliminate this negative middah. Let us try to share another's burden and rejoice in his/her triumphs.

Mussar Hashkafah

השתא הכא לשנה הבאה בארעא דישראל

During WWII, a group of Jews from the town of Chust sat huddled in a dark basement on the night of Pesach, to celebrate the Pesach Seder. Wanting to encourage his followers, the **Chuster Rav, Rav Yehoshua Greenwald zt"l**, addressed the group:

"We read in the Haggadah, 'Now we are here; next year in Eretz Yisrael.' What does the Baal Haggadah mean when he writes 'We are here? Of course we are here; where else would we be? Why does he need to make such a statement?"

The tortured and exhausted people awaited his response in silence.

Rav Yehoshua continued with emotion. "Perhaps the Baal Haggadah is telling us that if a Jew despairs because of the bitter lot which has befallen the Jewish people, he should realize that at least 'we are here'-we are still alive and able to celebrate the Pesach Seder in this world. Hashem, in His mercy, has preserved us this far; surely, He will bring us to freedom next year in Eretz Yisrael. So do not give up hope!"

This is the Baal Haggadah's message. If, despite everything, a Jew can still say, "I am here; my nation still exists even after 2,000 years of exile, after all the pogroms and persecutions we have gone through," then surely there must be a Divine Master Plan. Surely Hashem intends for us to be redeemed and brought back to our holy land. Thus, on this special night of Pesach, we can proudly proclaim, even while in the most desperate of situations, " **לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם**-Next year in Jerusalem!"

מוגזין כוס שני וכאן הבן שואל

In many Haggados, the words "**וכאן הבן שואל** - Here the son asks" is found right before the Mah Nishtanah. What is the reason for this juxtaposition?

The Bais Aharon of Stolin zt'l says that there is a profound message in these words: "Here"—on the night of the Seder- it is an auspicious time for every Jewish "son" to "ask" his Father in Heaven for all his needs and requests and for Hashem's blessings.

R' Elimelech of Lizhensk zt"l (Noam Elimelech) would say: "On Pesach, when we tell over the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim, the miracle comes to life once again. In this way, we hope to awaken the same Divine mercy in our time, as was prevalent at the time when we left Egypt."

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות .... עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים

On the first day of Pesach, young Shlomo Zalman was walking with his father through the narrow streets of Yerushlayim, returning from the Kosel where they had davened. They came face to face with the Chief Rabbi of Yerushalayim, **Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld zt'l**. After exchanging the customary "gut Yom Tou" wishes with Shlomo Zalman's father, Rav Yosef Chaim turned to young Shlomo Zalman and gently pinched his cheek. "Tell me, my son," he asked warmly, "did you ask the 'Four Questions' at the Seder?"

The boy nodded proudly.

"Did you ask the 'Four Questions' last year, too?" Rav Yosef Chaim asked.

"Yes, of course," Shlomo Zalman replied with conviction.

Rav Yosef Chaim continued, "What answer did you receive for these questions?"

The boy exclaimed, "Avadim Hayinu-We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt!"

"Well," said Rav Yosef Chaim, with a twinkle in his eye, "if you heard the answer last year, why did you ask the same questions again this year? Did you forget the answer?"

The boy just stood there, tongue-tied. He did not know what to say. Flustered and confused, he burst into tears. Imagine, Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld had asked him a simple question, and he could not answer it!

Many years later, young Shlomo Zalman, now the renowned posek and tzaddik, **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l**, once paid a visit on Chol Hamoed Pesach to a friend. Turning to the youngsters in the room, Rav Shlomo Zalman asked, "Tell me, children, why did you ask the 'Four Questions' this year? After all, you asked the same questions last year, and you already received the answer!"

The children came up with a variety of answers, each one trying a different approach. Rav Shlomo Zalman listened with obvious pleasure to the bright remarks.

"Baruch Hashem, you children have good heads. When I was your age, Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld once asked me this very same question," he said, smiling gleefully. "But I could not think of an answer. You know what I did? I broke down and cried!"

הלכה -Discussing the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim

It has been suggested that right after the Mah Nishtanah is asked by the children and the father answers with the words "Avadim Hayinu", he should clarify how the four questions are answered:

- We eat matzah on this night because Hashem took us out of Egypt swiftly and the dough had no time to bake.
- We eat marror because "avadim hayinu"- we experienced bitter times as slaves to Pharaoh.
- We dip vegetables twice just as rich, free men dip their foods. (According to others (7), one dipping takes place before the meal [karpas], because that's what the poor of those times did, and one dipping takes place in the meal [marror], because that's what the rich of those times did. And on this night, we were first poor slaves, and then we became rich free men.)
- We eat while reclining, because this is the way of free men who have no burdens upon them.

In this way, the father immediately fulfills the mitzvah of sipur Yetzias Mitzrayim and answers the children's questions.

"It is impossible to be free of worry without bitachon in Hashem." ~ The Chovos HaLevavos.

עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים ויוציאנו משם ביד חזקה - רמז

In the history of the world, there has never been a greater example of a weak and captive people being rescued and redeemed in miraculous fashion from the grip of a stronger and overly oppressive nation, than the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim.

Rashi tells us (Shemos 18:9) that the Egyptians "locked" their land to the point that even a single stray servant was unable to slip away undetected. The Egyptian sorcerers, the most powerful in the entire world, even cast a spell around the borders of Egypt, denying anyone the right to leave (**Ibn Ezra**), yet in the blink of an eye, well over a million men, women, and children just walked right out!

The Ben Ish Chai, Chacham Yosef Chaim zt"l, writes that this allusion is found in the word "**מצרים**", which begins with an open "**מ**" and ends with a closed "**ם**" to symbolize that when Bnei Yisrael came into the land, it was open to them. Later, however, when they wanted to leave, it was closed off.

Thus, the greatness of Yetzias Mitzrayim lies in the pasuk which states, "**וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶת־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִתּוֹכָם** -And I will take out Bnei Yisrael from their midst" (Shemos 7:5). The word "**מִתּוֹכָם** -from their midst" is a combination of "**מתוך ם**"-from within the confines of Egypt. - Hashem redeemed His Chosen Nation amid miracles and wonders even from the constricted borders of the land of Mitzrayim.

ברוך המקום ברוך הוא ברוך שנתן תורה לעמו ישראל ברוך הוא - מעשה

Once, in the city of Brisk, a Jew was required to take an oath in the gentile court. The Jew said he would only do so with a Torah scroll. A police officer was sent to the beis medrash to get a Torah scroll to bring to the Jew.

When the gabbai heard what the officer wanted, he immediately took out a sefer Torah, kissed it warmly, and handed it over to him, thinking he had no other choice but to consent to the request. The

Rav of Brisk, **Rav Yehoshua Leib Diskin zt"l**, watched the entire scene with dismay. Suddenly, he hurried over to the officer and grabbed the Torah from his hands. Tears streaming down his cheeks, he kissed the Torah and returned it to its place in the aron kodesh. He then turned back to the officer and said, "Please tell the judge that the rabbi prohibited carrying the Torah scroll out of the synagogue."

Not an hour passed before the officer returned. "The judge orders the rabbi to come before him," he said. Rav Yehoshua Leib followed him to the courthouse and stood before the judge.

"This police officer tells me that you seized from him the Torah scroll which he was instructed to bring to the courthouse!" the judge boomed. "You are certainly aware of the severity of tampering with the justice system. May I ask why you did such a thing?!"

"Perhaps I may answer the question by asking Your Honor a question of my own," said Rav Yehoshua Leib. "In the treasury of His Majesty the Czar, the crown of Peter the Great is kept, a crown made of pure gold. If Your Honor was in charge of the Czar's treasury, and a defendant agreed to swear only on this crown, would you grant the policeman permission to take the crown to the courthouse?"

"Certainly not!" replied the judge, infuriated by the question. "This crown is removed only for the most important ceremonies. It is the most precious artifact in the entire nation of Russia, situated in the heart of the capital. No one would dare take it for any defendant!"

Now it was Rav Yehoshua Leib's turn to get emotional. "If so, then certainly Your Honor could appreciate what the Torah scroll means to us, the Jewish Nation. It is our most precious artifact. Hundreds of thousands of people live according to its words, and countless Jews have given their lives for it throughout history. For the sake of this scroll, thousands have been tortured, burned, and murdered. How could we allow it to be desecrated, to have it taken back and forth for the sake of some defendant?"

A tense silence overtook the courthouse, until the judge spoke up, resignedly and feebly. "Yes, I can see your well-spoken point. Rabbi, you are right."

חכם מה הוא אומר - מעשה

One of the communities in Eastern Europe was actively searching for a qualified candidate to assume the position of rav in their community. Only the best would do for this town.

A number of applicants were scheduled to address the congregants in the main shul on successive Shabbosos, in the hope of impressing the congregants and earning the job. Each learned scholar delivered his drashah with as much oratorical skill as he could muster, yet one clear and outstanding choice was still not readily apparent.

That was, until a young boy of ten or eleven years of age, by the name of Heshel, boldly approached the elders of the community and requested that he be allowed to speak in front of the congregation and throw his proverbial hat into the ring of Rabbinate contenders.

Young Heshel, who was later to become the world-renowned rebbe, **Rav Heshel of Krakow zt"l**, was well-known in the town as a genius and prodigy of the highest degree, whose knowledge of Torah and incredible powers of chiddush-being able to come up with original insights, were overwhelming. As he was the pride of their community, the shamash and other members of the selection committee were amenable to humour the young genius and allow him to darshan on an available Shabbos when no other legitimate candidate would be there.

On the appointed Shabbos, the precocious child mounted the large pulpit and delivered a Torah discourse that kept the audience spellbound for hours. They had known of this genius' rare abilities, but they had never heard such scholarship and brilliance, and certainly nothing of the sort from any of the other candidates.

The young child became an instant sensation, and his words of Torah insight were debated over by scholars who employed every argument to try to disprove his lengthy discourse. Young Heshel, however, held his own. It was then that he suggested a bold proposal: based on his proven qualifications, he should be hired as the new rabbi of the town!

The elders of the community were taken aback. They tried to explain to him that although there was no denying his superior intellect, it was unthinkable to appoint a mere youth as rabbi of a community! But this child, who was really no child at all, was one step ahead of them.

He argued, "No human being is perfect, right? Everyone has shortcomings, some of which may not even be evident to you during an interview but could later cause you much distress."

The men nodded and Heshel went on. "You know me well because I grew up among you. Thus far, you have found only one defect in me, which is my young age. Well, then, I can promise you something that no other candidate can promise: Without reservation, I guarantee you that every day of my life, I will progressively improve on my one fault!"

מעשה - ואף אתה הקהה את שיניו

One of the more recent Israeli elections produced an event unprecedented in Israeli politics: Shimon Peres was elected as president of the State of Israel. Peres began his career as a top aide to Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, but never won an election for that coveted position outright.

His record of losing eight elections over his half-century in politics had tarnished his lustre as an elder statesman and had left him with the unflattering label of "perennial loser" until his election as president, a mostly ceremonial post.

During one of the races for prime minister, Peres ran on a platform promoting the idea that yeshivah students should not be exempt from serving in the army. He vowed that were he to be elected, he would ensure that this would come to fruition.

When this news was told to the holy **Steipler Gaon, Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky zt'l**, he exclaimed, "Er vet kein mul nit zein a rosh memshalah-He will never be (elected) as a prime minister!"

Indeed, throughout his long career, Peres remarked on a number of occasions that he felt as if a curse hung over his head when it came to his failures in Israeli politics.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky was asked about this, and he said, "Of course there was a curse-it was my father's curse!"

מתחילה עובדי עבודה זרה היו אבותינו ועכשיו קרבנו המקום לעבודתו

In Radin, there was a Jew who was a bookseller of various types of reading material. People came to the **Chafetz Chaim zt"l** with complaints that this person was selling books which contained heretical writings. The Chafetz Chaim instructed them to tell the bookseller that he wanted to examine all of the books that he sold in his store. The next day, a huge wagonload of books pulled up in front of the Chafetz Chaim's small house. Pile by pile, they were brought inside for the tzaddik's inspection.

When he saw that the books were indeed treif, the Chafetz Chaim tore them up and demanded that the man close down his store.

The bookseller was a decent man who wanted to do what was right. However, the thought of closing his store devastated him. He pleaded with the Chafetz Chaim, "How will I support my family?"

The Chafetz Chaim assured him, "I will look for a job for you."

Three days later, the Chafetz Chaim returned to the man, exclaiming, "Reb Shmuel! Reb Shmuel! I have a job for you! I found

out that the man whose job it was to summon the gentile peasants to their place of worship has died. I convinced their leader to let you have the job. All you have to do is stand outside and call all the goyim to their services every day."

The man was insulted. "Rebbi, how can I, a religious Jew, earn a living by calling goyim to alien beliefs?"

The Chafetz Chaim responded sharply, "It is better to call the goyim to alien beliefs than to call Yidden to alien beliefs. This job is better than your previous one. When you sold treif books, you were calling Yidden to alien beliefs!"



ועכשיו קרבנו המקום לעבודתו

One Friday afternoon, a family on their way home to Bnei Brak found themselves stranded. They had just missed the last bus and now were not sure how they would get home in time for Shabbos. A non-religious young man was driving past on his way to Tel Aviv, and he kindly offered to give the family a lift. When they arrived in Bnei Brak, it was already close to Shabbos, and the family realized that the young man would not make it to Tel Aviv before Shabbos began. The family begged him to stay with them for Shabbos, and the young man finally consented.

They had a wonderful Shabbos together, and the young man felt extremely uplifted and inspired by the time Shabbos ended. He could see how special keeping Shabbos and being religious could be, but he certainly was not prepared to change his lifestyle and become a baal teshuvah just like that. Then again, neither did he wish to forget this unbelievable experience. "You've been talking about mitzvos all day," he said to the father of the family. "How about teaching me a mitzvah that's small and hardly noticeable, something that I can do privately, so that I won't have to put up with any teasing from my friends?"

The father thought for a moment and then suggested a small mitzvah. "The Torah dictates how to do everything—even how we should put on our shoes. The correct way to put on shoes is to put on the right shoe first, and then the left shoe. Afterward, the left shoe is tied first, and then the right. Why not do this mitzvah? I'm sure that no one will ever notice."

The young man agreed and tried as hard as he could to keep this one mitzvah. Even when he would forget, which happened quite often, he would start all over and retie his shoes.

The young man was soon conscripted into the army. Even there, he struggled to remember and tie his long, laced army boots in the Torah way. It happened that one time, when his unit was on parade, he realized that he had not tied his boots properly that morning. He begged his Commanding Officer to allow him to return to his room for a moment, on the pretext that he needed to take some aspirin for a migraine headache. Once there, out of everyone's sight, he'd be able to remove his boots and put them on again in the right way.

The CO was none too happy about it. "There is a training helicopter due to pick up the entire unit in a few minutes. But if you're unfit-well, go and be quick about it."

The young man hurried, but by the time he returned to the parade grounds, the helicopter had already come and gone. That day, two Israeli army helicopters, including the one that had the young man's entire unit on board, collided in mid-air, killing all their passengers!

The young man, however, had never boarded that helicopter. He had been spared- all because of his determined efforts to keep a small mitzvah. When he learned what had happened and realized what it was that had saved his life, he made an about-face and became a full-fledged baal teshuvah. Today, he is learning in one of the prominent Israeli yeshivos.

שלא אחד בלבד עמד עלינו לכלותינו אלא שבכל דור ודור עומדים עלינו לכלותינו והקב״ה מצילנו מידם

The holy Chacham, **Rav Yitzchak Nunez zt"l**, was a frequent visitor as a close personal friend and advisor to the Sultan in Constantinople, to the palace. The Sultan welcomed these visits to discuss matters of importance with his Jewish friend.

Once, though, two whole weeks went by without Rav Yitzchak visiting the Sultan. The Sultan felt slighted and annoyed. However, rather than send a servant to go and fetch Rav Yitzchak and bring him to the palace, the Sultan decided to drop in unannounced at the Nunez home and confront his friend in this way.

Surrounded only by a small retinue of bodyguards, the Sultan knocked on the Nunez family's door. When Rav Yitzchak answered it, he was speechless: why had the Sultan decided to grace him with his presence at this time? Of course, he welcomed the Sultan into his house, and when the Sultan saw the beautiful Seder table laden with holiday finery, the costly silverware and goblets, and the entire family gathered around dressed in beautiful holiday clothing, he understood that his friend had been busy for the past two weeks preparing for the Passover celebration. His curiosity piqued, though, he asked to be told all about the Passover holiday and its meaning.

Rav Yitzchak did better. He prepared a seat of honor at the head of the Seder table and gave the Sultan a golden goblet of wine. Then, he proceeded to conduct the Seder, explaining everything in great detail for the benefit of his imperial guest. The Sultan enjoyed himself immensely, but when it came time to eat the matzah, he was most effusive with his praise.

"What is this? These crackers are the most delicious ones I've ever tasted!" Even when the savory Yom Tov meal was served, the Sultan continued to eat matzah after matzah, and when the Seder was over, he was delighted when Rav Yitzchak packed him up a box of matzos “for the road".

The Sultan decided to share his wealth a bit, and called in a few of his closest advisors. He told them about the incredible crackers that he'd had the night before and gave each one a piece to taste.

"Isn't it marvelous?" he asked eagerly, scanning their faces as they chewed. The advisors, though, did not share his exuberance. Although they said it was delicious, the Sultan could see on their faces that they were just saying it to please him. He did not understand. When he had tasted it, it had been deliciously sweet and pleasurable. His advisors, though, found the crackers to be dry and brittle. Why did they not taste what he had tasted?

"You ate these crackers at the Jewish Seder, right?" asked the Muslim High Priest (Mufti). "Well, then, it's obvious. The Jews are known to smear pig fat on their crackers on the night of Passover, and that's why it tasted so different last night!" The assembled group gasped in horror. Pig fat is forbidden by Muslim law.

Enraged, the Sultan immediately sent for Rav Yitzchak and demanded an explanation. How could he have served the Sultan pig fat? Rav Yitzchak vehemently denied that he had done anything of the sort. "Why, Your Majesty, we Jews are likewise forbidden to eat swine or pig fat. I would never do such a thing!"

But this only enraged the Sultan even more. "Are you saying that my holy Mufti is lying? A man like him does not utter frivolous or false statements! Woe is to you if I am forced to punish you for not only tricking me into sinning against Allah, but also for demeaning our religion, our scholars, and our holy priests!"

Rav Yitzchak insisted that he was innocent. "Your Eminence, give me some time and I can prove that what I am saying is true." The Sultan grudgingly gave him three days to come up with an explanation, but with a warning that if he did not, he would be killed.

That night, while Rav Yitzchak slept, Eliyahu Hanavi came to him in a dream. Eliyahu told him to return to the palace the next day, and

he revealed what Rav Yitzchak should say and do in order to prove his innocence.

When Rav Yitzchak appeared before the Sultan the next day, he asked one question: "With all due respect to the Grand Mufti, how does he know what pig fat is supposed to taste like? You and I both don't know."

The Sultan considered this for a moment. "Well, let us ask him, then," he finally responded. Together, they made their way to the Mufti's private quarters, where they were told by a guard that during certain periods of the day, no one was allowed in to disturb the Mufti because that was when he prayed and performed his sacred rituals.

The Sultan would have none of it. "I am the Sultan. Open the door now!" he uttered menacingly. The guard did as he was told, and the Sultan and Rav Yitzchak entered a large, empty chamber. In the corner, almost completely hidden from view, was a narrow staircase, which they quickly descended. What met their eyes was nothing short of astonishing: They were standing in a chapel that was filled with Christian religious artifacts, while genuflecting in front of a large wooden cross was none other than the Grand Mufti! Not only did he eat swine, but he was an honest-to-goodness, practicing Christian! Of course, he paid for his blasphemy by immediately being sent to the gallows.

וירעו אתנו המצרים כמה שנאמר הבה נתכמה לו

A late-night knock at his door, a day before Pesach was to begin, startled the revered rap of Prague, **Rav Yechezkel Landau zt'l**, author of the renowned responsa, Noda B'Yehudah. Anxious to see who was there and not without a little trepidation, he opened the door to find a rugged, sturdy-looking gentile of about forty years old. The gentile hesitated for a moment before accepting the

rabbi's gesture to enter. Once inside, he nervously told over a fantastic tale.

"Honored Rabbi," he began in a soft voice, "you probably don't remember me, but I am here to repay a debt from many years ago."

The rav looked at him uncomprehendingly.

"When I was a small child, I would help my father in his bake shop, selling bread and pastries. He was a violent man who was given to fits of anger and aggression at the slightest mishap, and I was often made into his scapegoat. Well, one afternoon, I was given the task of selling some loaves of bread in the marketplace, and I accomplished this task rather efficiently. However, as I was returning back to the shop to hand over my earnings to my father, I realized that the money was missing. It had somehow slipped out of my pocket and was gone! I was devastated and petrified, knowing that I was in for a real beating from my father. I slumped down on the street and began to cry anguished wails."

The gentile looked at Rav Yechezkel. "It was then that you, Rabbi Landau, came upon me, and after finding out about my plight, you kindly handed me the exact amount of money that was missing, thereby sparing me from a sound beating."

The man was quiet for a moment, then took a breath and continued. "I now run the bakery, and I'm here to inform you of a plot that was hatched by the gentile bakers of Prague. We all know that immediately following the conclusion of your holiday of Passover, all the Jews of the city flock to our bakeries to purchase bread. It was agreed to lace the freshly baked loaves with arsenic poison and sell these to the Jews. I couldn't argue with all of them to stop them, but I felt it was my duty, as a measure of my gratitude for what you did when I was younger, to inform you of the impending plot."

Rav Yechezkel was shocked, but after mulling over the issue for quite some time, he devised a plan. All Yom Tov, he did not divulge

the information, until the afternoon of Shvi'i Shel Pesach, when he sent out a message to all the shuls in Prague that they must remain closed for the next day's davening. Every Jewish citizen of Prague was to come to the main synagogue, as the rav had an important announcement to make.

"We have made a terrible mistake," intoned Rav Yechezkel solemnly the next morning to a packed shul. "We have miscalculated the exact days of Pesach, and as it turns out, today is really only the seventh day of Yom Tov, and not the eighth. Hence, tonight is not the end of Pesach, but rather the beginning of the eighth day!"

Loud murmurs erupted from the crowd and doubts were expressed. But the citizens of Prague, respecting the greatness of their rav, dutifully adhered to his unusual proclamation and kept an extra day of Yom Tov.

That night, not one Jew showed up to buy bread from the gentile bakeries. Instead, the police were tipped off to check the bread, and when they realized what it contained, they uncovered the ghastly plot and hauled away the bakers to prison.

Rav Yechezkel Landau's thoughtful gesture many years earlier saved the entire kehillah of Prague.



ויענונו כמה שנאמר וישימו עליו שרי מסים למען ענתו בסבלתם

Rav Yaakov Yosef of Polnoa zt"l (Toldos Yaakov Yosef) would say:

"Anxiety is what drives a person away from the service of Hashem. From morning to night, and from night to morning, people are occupied with their anxieties. - This is the meaning of the pasuk, 'to afflict them with their burdens'. The yetzer hara tries to afflict us with a burden of constant anxiety in an attempt to keep us from serving Hashem properly."



ותעל שועתם אל האלקים מן העבודה

A story is told about **Rav Chaim Soloveitchik (Brisker) zt'l**. He was once davening in shul, and he could not help but notice that one of the men praying there was shouting the words at the top of his voice while pacing around and waving his hands.

Now, sometimes a person's fervor and emotion while praying become so intense, that one becomes overwhelmed, and thus his words emerge with a loudness characteristic of someone who screams in pain or emits a shout of joy. In this instance, however, Rav Chaim detected that the man's performance was nothing more than a noisy act; it was nowhere near the appropriate level of kavanah.

Rav Chaim was initially inclined to let it go but soon felt it necessary to rescue the man from his own improper intentions. He gently approached the animated mispallel and said to him the following:

"Reb Yid, the Torah states that on the vestments of the kohen gadol, there were bells, so that when he entered the Mishkan, his movements would be heard by all those present. The question is: What need was there for these bells and this particular method to herald the presence of the kohen gadol? Would it not have been sufficient for the High Priest to daven in a loud voice, causing a commotion with his words and his frenzied movements, thereby alerting everyone of his presence?"

The man understood where the venerable rav was going with this and looked at Rav Chaim with a poor excuse for a hurt look. "But I could not contain myself, Rebbi," he blurted out defensively. "I was so deeply engrossed in my davening that I didn't even realize I was shouting and moving around in my prayers!"

Rav Chaim smiled as he softly took hold of the man's arm. "Look at the way our great forefathers davened to Hashem. Learn from the manner in which our father Yitzchak and our mother Rivkah davened. Each one stood in his or her own corner, where they davened

properly and with decorum, yet before the Holy One Blessed Be He, their prayers roared with a deafening appeal!"

Rav Chaim stopped and looked intently at the man, who by now had bowed his head. "What the Torah is telling us is that we must learn the proper way to daven!"

ואת עמלנו - אלו הבנים כמה שנאמר כל הבן הילוד היארה תשליכהו

The medrash tells us that when Pharaoh decreed that the Jewish babies were to be cast into the Nile, the mothers hid the little infant boys in cellars where the Egyptians could not find them. Attempting to flush out the infants, the Egyptians brought their own babies into the Jewish homes and made them cry, which prompted the hidden Jewish babies to cry as well. Then the Egyptians took away the Jewish infants, drowning them in the Nile River.

Rav Levi said that 600,000 children were thus cast into the river, for it says, "Moshe said, 'Six hundred thousand is the number of people in whose midst I am'" (Bamidbar 11:21), and for each of the 600,000 people, one child was thrown into the river.

Rav Shimshon of Ostropoli zt"l writes an amazing statement: These children did not die! In fact, each of the 600,000 infants lived on for another eighty years! Instead of drowning in the Nile River, they flourished miraculously in it, like fish.

The purpose of this wondrous miracle was revealed much later, when the Yam Suf parted, and the Jews crossed through it. At that moment, those children who had moved with the currents out to sea, came out of the water, alive. They recognized their parents and were reunited with them.

It is our firm belief that when Moshiach comes, the same thing will happen, and all those who have died will return.

במסת באתת ובמפתים ובמלחמה וביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה ובמוראים גדולים

There was once a wealthy man in the town of Brisk who would constantly refuse to contribute to any of the community charities. His reputation as a miser preceded him wherever he went and soon enough, a complaint about his penny-pinching ways reached the ears of the rap of Brisk, **Rav Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveitchik zt'l.**

The next time the Beis Halevi met this wealthy man, he steered the conversation to the subject of the sorcerers in Mitzrayim. These sorcerers were able to mimic some of Moshe Rabbeinu's miracles. The rich man revealed that he was cynical about all of this and doubted that anyone could perform either magic or miracles.

"Why do you say that?" Rav Yosef Dov asked casually. "It's not so difficult. Even I can perform miracles. I will gladly do so right now, but only if you are willing to donate one hundred rubles to the community charities." The sceptical man accepted the challenge.

"Very well," said the rav, "I will now show you that if you place four 25 ruble notes on each corner of this table, I will need to utter just one single word-and the money will find its way into the bowl at the center of the table!"

The man was veritably trembling with excitement and anticipation as he placed the four notes on the four corners of the table. Rav Yosef Dov looked around, then cupped his hands around his mouth. "Chaim!" he called out to his little son, who entered the room on cue, picked up the four 25 ruble banknotes-and deposited them into the bowl.

"Well, there you have it! The notes are in the middle of the table just as I said," the rav declared.

The wealthy miser howled in protest. "That's not fair! There was no miracle involved in this." He reached to take back his money.

"No miracle?" the Beis Halevi asked good-naturedly, but with a touch of pointed rebuke. "You think that getting one-hundred rubles for charity out of you is not a miracle?"

Everyone had a hearty laugh, and the wealthy man, duly chastened, left without any ill feelings.

מנין אתה אומר שלקו המצרים במצרים עשר מכות ועל הים לקו חמישים מכות

When Pharaoh chased after Bnei Yisrael in an attempt to quell their flight to freedom, he understood that he would need extraordinary powers of impurity to counteract their holiness.

The Chiddushei Harim, Rav Yitzchak Meir Alter zt"l, says that this is alluded to in the pasuk: **וַיִּקַּח שֵׁשׁ־מְאֹות רֶכֶב בָּחוּר... וְשָׁלִשִׁם עַל־כֻּלּוֹ** - *And he took six hundred elite chariots... and commanders over all of them*" (Shemos 14:7).

Pharaoh took with him 600 chariots, plus the 7 Noachide Laws that he turned into impurity, plus "shalishim-commanders". The word "shalishim" is also plural for "shlish", which means "3". Since the minimum plural is 2, we can multiply 3 times 2, which is how we get 6.

The sum total for all of the above equals 613. Pharaoh tried using 613 powers of impurity in order to fight against the 613 mitzvos that Klal Yisrael have.

פסח על שום שפסח הקב"ה על בתי אבותינו במצרים

The word "Pesach", for which both the Yom Tov and the korban that was offered on the eve of Bnei Yisrael's departure from Egypt are named, alludes to the fact that during the Plague of the Firstborn, Hashem "passed over" the homes of the Jewish people, and not even one of them was harmed.

The question is: Why does the Torah use the expression **אֲשֶׁר פָּסַח עַל־בָּתֵּי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל** - "passed on the houses of Bnei Yisrael" (Shemos 12:27)? Did Hashem actually pass directly over the rooftops of the Jewish houses while punishing the Egyptian firstborns?

Rav Moshe Leib of Sassov zt'l says that, in fact, this was exactly what happened! When Hashem came to an Egyptian house, He immediately sensed the impurity and total lack of spirituality which permeated throughout the home. When He came to the home of a Jewish family, however, Hashem perceived the holiness that was radiating from it.

The beauty of a Jewish home filled with mitzvos, and the level of purity that He found there, so gladdened Hashem that he danced, as it were, and sang with happiness, "Here lives a Jew! Here lives a Jew!" - Thus, Hashem literally passed on the tops of the Jewish homes!

ואכלת ושבעת וברכת את ה' אלקיך על הארץ הטובה אשר נתן לך

One who eats and does not make a blessing to thank Hashem for the sustenance He has provided, is comparable to an animal. An animal eats when and what it wants and does not think about where the food came from, nor does it consider offering thanks to whoever it was that provided the food for him.

The saintly **Chacham Rabbeinu Yaakov Abuchatzera zt'l (Abir Yaakov)** writes that if a person eats like an animal, he will have a very hard time making a brachah like a Jew. Indeed, one must remember Hashem even when he eats, ensuring that words of Torah are spoken at the table, and in general always remaining conscious of the fact that he is eating at the sacred table of Hashem Himself. Only in this manner can he recite a brachah with the proper concentration and a sense of proximity to the One Who created the food and him, as well.

This is the meaning of the words: **וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ** - You will eat, be satiated, and bless Hashem your G-d." (Devarim 8:10)

The Divine name "Elokecha-your G-d" and the word "achilah-eating" have the same letters and gematria of sixty-six. Therefore, when

reading this pasuk, it affords the opportunity to be read in another light: "You will eat, be satiated, and bless Hashem (while you are) eating", indicating that if Hashem is before you even as you eat, then you may recite a brachah. However, if one eats like an animal or involves himself in other forms of waste and degradation of food, he is not placing Hashem before him at all, and as a result, he cannot make a true blessing.



יום שצדיקים יושבים ועטרותיהם בראשיהם ונהנים מזיו השכינה

מעשה

Many stories are told of the great masters who were able to uplift themselves to such an exalted spiritual state, that their entire being would seem to enter the Heavenly spheres and interact with the celestial angels.

The famous tzaddik of Sanz, **Rav Chaim Halberstam zt"l**, was one of these great rebbes who would often go into states of profound meditation, during which he appeared to lose all contact with the physical world. It would seem that he actually lost control of his physical body in pursuit of reaching higher and higher levels of holiness.

For example, Rav Chaim had a congenital weakness in one of his legs, which required much care and delicate maneuvering, yet during these moments of profound meditation and inspired prayer, he would sometimes get carried away with so much fervor, that he would stamp his feet repeatedly and heavily, until the weak leg would actually begin to bleed. Rav Chaim himself would not be in control of his actions and would be oblivious to the bleeding and the pain, and attendants would have to rush over to stem the bleeding and sit the Rebbe down.

The rebbetzin would plead with his private shamash (attendant) to take measures to protect the Rebbe's weak leg, but the shamash

always replied, "Believe me, it is pointless. I assure you that our master has no idea which leg he is stomping on, and there is little we can do about it."

One time, at a public gathering, the tzaddik was in a state of spiritual ecstasy, when he was suddenly seized by a severe coughing spasm. Only after several minutes, and with great difficulty, his son aroused Rav Chaim from his trance, and urged him to drink some hot tea in order to relieve the coughing spell.

"Why did you interrupt me?" the Rebbe asked his son, just the slightest bit annoyed. "I was in the highest of celestial spheres, and in those conditions of spirit, one has no need for hot tea."

"True, Father," the son countered respectfully, yet with wit and wisdom beyond his years, "but in those exalted states of trance, one does not cough either!"

Rav Chaim looked at him and smiled. "You win," he admitted, accepting the hot cup of tea readily now. "You win." And he gladly drank of the steaming cup.

הרחמן הוא יזכנו לימות המשיח ולחיי העולם הבא

משל

The Chasam Sofer zt"l once met an errant Jew who boasted that he was so busy, that he had no time to study Torah or to perform mitzvos. The rav asked him, "How will you ensure yourself a place in the World to Come?"

The fellow replied confidently, "I have no fear. The one thing I do religiously is the recitation of Ashrei, and our rabbis have taught that whoever recites Ashrei three times daily is assured of a place in the World to Come!"

Meanwhile, a young yeshivah student entered the Chasam Sofer's home and complained of a terrible cold. He was asked if he was

taking medicine, to which the student answered, "Yes, but it doesn't seem to be helping."

The Chasam Sofer then asked the boy where he slept. The boy answered, "In a cold, damp cellar."

Upon hearing this, the Chasam Sofer exclaimed, "If so, then all the pills in the world will not help you, you are in a place which breeds sickness each and every day!"

The Chasam Sofer then turned to his visitor. "Ashrei is like medicine. If you do all the mitzvos but err slightly and catch a touch of spiritual illness, then Ashrei can save you. But if you don't study Torah, and neglect all the mitzvos, then you are terminally ill and you are in an environment which perpetually breeds sickness. - You can say Ashrei all day, but you won't merit a portion in Olam Haba!"



עושה שלום במרומיו הוא יעשה שלום עלינו ועל כל ישראל

דרך ארץ/ מידות

A terrible machlokes once broke out in a small town between two peasants. The rav wanted to get involved and break up the fight, but his family told him that it was inappropriate for the rav to be involved with such people.

The rav disagreed and told them, "Do you know why we take three steps back when we say 'Oseh Shalom' in Shemone Esrei? Because in order to make peace, one must step back. One must back down and look away from his own personal kavod; this is what generates real peace!"

Rav Yisrael Reisman shlit"a says in the name of **Rav Avraham Pam zt"l**: There is a three- step formula for creating true shalom: FARGIN, FARGESS, FARKOOK!

Step 1. FARGIN means not just to give in, but to truly rejoice in another's success, even at one's own expense. This is the ideal,

albeit most difficult, attribute. A person always wants to be right. When one realizes that he gains more by being content than by being right, he displays humility in action! However, if one finds this too difficult, let him proceed to:

Step 2. FARKOOK means to overlook. Do not notice everything! A person who picks on every little detail will not have happy relationships with others. When one judges others favorably and thinks positively, he will find it not too difficult to "farkook". If these two steps are too hard, there is only one thing left for the person to do:

Step 3. FARGESS means-to forget! When two people fight, says Rav Pam, the only way to resolve the tension is by forgetting about the fight. Otherwise, the argument will linger, and the hurt will remain. Sometimes a bad memory is not such a bad thing. If Hashem blessed one with a poor memory, then let him use it!

Let us follow these steps to create everlasting peace in Klal Yisrael. Without peace, we have nothing!

כי חלצת נפשי ממות את עיני מן דמעה - מעשה



When the famed baal mussar and menahel, **Rav Eliyahu Lopian zt'l**, reached the age of eighty, his eyesight worsened. Doctors informed him that the only solution to save his eyesight was a new operation that was considered dangerous in those days. Rav Elya, as he was known, put his faith in the Almighty and decided to proceed with the operation.

Midway through the operation, Rav Elya's blood pressure began to spike to unusually high levels. Doctors and extra attendants were called in, but their attempts were to no avail. His situation became critical, and the doctors just about gave up hope. Announcements were broadcast all over Eretz Yisrael that everyone should daven for the great tzaddik and especially in the yeshivos, hundreds of talmidim poured out their hearts in prayer on behalf of Rav Elya. Baruch Hashem, he pulled through, but his recovery was long and arduous, and for a man of his age, it was quite an ordeal.

At this point, people began to point fingers at the doctors with the assumption that they were responsible - or at least partially to blame - for the events that had transpired during the operation. The head doctor, a well-respected and highly regarded surgeon, denied that he had anything to do with the problems that occurred. "I have no idea what happened or what brought about this unusual spike in blood pressure," he declared to anyone who would listen. "But I can assure you, we took every precaution in our preparations and all throughout the procedure to ensure that the rabbi would have a successful recovery. We have reviewed every single action that took place, and we have yet to figure out just why this occurred."

A number of years later, it became necessary for Rav Elya to undergo another operation. His family and close friends were nervous and understandably anxious, recalling what had happened the last time he went under the knife. Extra precautions were taken, and his blood pressure was constantly monitored. This time, though, all went well and the operation proceeded without incident.

When some relatives came to be mevaker choleh - visit the sick, the discussion turned to the previous operation and the events that transpired then. Rav Elya, weak but alert, said, "You want to know the difference between this operation and the last time when I was so critically ill? Well, right before the doctors put me under for my eye operation, I thought to myself, 'I must do teshuvah. Surely, the

outcome of this procedure will have to do with how I am judged in Heaven.' I immediately began to think back to all my deeds and actions from the time I was twelve years old. I recalled everything - down to the last minor detail - and I was alarmed. I had so many regrets. I began to tremble and as a result, my blood pressure began to rise. I couldn't stop my thoughts and there was nobody other than myself to blame for placing me in that life-or-death situation."

Rav Elya smiled weakly at his guests. "This time, I made sure of one thing and baruch Hashem it all worked out fine. - For the sake of pikuach nefesh, I just didn't think about anything at all!"



למוליך עמו במדבר כי לעולם חסדו

Every Shabbos, a group of mispallelim from one shul would finish davening Shacharis and then walk outside for a "recess" during Krias HaTorah. Only actual davening was important, they felt, and leining was not for them.

The rav was greatly distressed by his "recess crew" and spoke to each one in private to give up his terrible habit. But to no avail. Kiddush and a good "shmooze" were obviously much more important than following the reading of the parshah.

Finally, the rabbi had had enough. The disrespect to the Torah had gone too far and he was prepared to take extreme measures. One Shabbos, before Krias HaTorah, he stood up and announced from the pulpit, "I must publicly apologize to those people whom I had criticized for leaving during the Torah reading. You see, when we take the Torah out of the aron kodesh, we recite the words, 'Arise Hashem, and let Your foes scatter. Let Your enemies flee before You, ' and these people are simply doing precisely what they are told. May we all learn from their sense of obedience!"

The Aron in which the Torah is contained is the symbol of Divine Protection for Klal Yisrael. When the Jews traveled in the desert,

their enemies would scatter in fright from the sight of the Aron. Should we be so foolish to act like our enemies by running away from the Torah, thereby disrespecting it and the holy words within it?



תשעה מי יודע? תשעה אני יודע. תשעה ירחי לידה

One might wonder how the concept of "nine months of pregnancy" correlates to the rest of the numbers. All of our other assets that we proudly enumerate connect in some way to holiness and spirituality. Where is the spirituality in the natural cycle of a nine-month pregnancy?

Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv Zt'l explains: The entire miracle of Yetzias Mitzrayim came about through Moshe Rabbeinu. Moshe himself was saved miraculously from the hands of the Egyptian oppressors who murdered every newborn Jewish boy. However, if not for the fact that Moshe was born prematurely-in the seventh month-his mother could not have outwitted the Egyptian hunters and saved him, for they only began searching for him after the full nine-month term. Thus, the natural order of a nine-month pregnancy was precisely what allowed Moshe to remain hidden, ultimately saving his life!

The Ridvaz, Rav Yaakov Dovid Wilevsky zt'l, was once traveling on a train, when a man rushed into his car and cried frantically, "Rebbe, please help. My wife was not due to give birth for a few more weeks, but she suddenly went into labor here on the train! What can I do? Please, you must help her!"

Rav Yaakov Dovid shrugged helplessly. "What can I do?" he asked. But the man was in a state of panic and would not leave until the Ridvaz finally told him, "Go back and say the kapitel "Yosheiv b'seiser elyon" seven times... backwards!"

The man ran out of the train car, and all was still for a few minutes. After a while, the man calmed down and came back into the Ridvaz's

car to inform him that the labor had stopped, and his wife was doing okay.

Another rav who was traveling with Rav Yaakov Dovid could hardly contain his curiosity. "Where did you come up with that? I have never heard of such a segulah before in my life! How did you know about this?"

Once again, the Ridvaz shrugged. "I'll tell you the truth, Chazal tell us that if a woman is experiencing a difficult labor, one should say this kapitel seven times as a segulah to open up her womb. I felt that if you say it seven times backwards... that would seal it shut!!"



חַד גַּדְיָא - ואתא שונרא ואכלה לגדיא

Once a battered and bloodied man staggered into the beis din of **Rav Shmuel Salant zt"l**, in Jerusalem. With blood streaming down his face, he cried out, "Rebbe, look what Yankel did to me. He is a wicked person! He must be punished!"

Rav Shmuel quickly turned to his shamash and told him to go at once to see if Yankel was still alive. The shamash did as he was instructed, and he returned relating to everyone in attendance that he had indeed found Yankel lying half- dead in the street outside and had rushed him to the hospital in order to save his life.

"How did you know," they asked Rav Shmuel, "that Yankel's life was in danger? Are you a navi?"

Answered the Rav, "If he himself did not come to complain about the other man, then I figured that it could only be because he was either dead or dying."

The Baal Haggadah describes in "chad gadya" how the seemingly defenceless cat was bitten by the dog. Yet the truth of the matter is, that the cat was really the instigator of all the trouble, not a victim at all. The dog witnessed the cat biting the innocent kid; thus

even though the dog appeared to be the aggressor, he was actually the righteous one.

He who cries loudest is not always the innocent party. It takes a discerning eye to sort the truth from illusion and right from wrong.



Pesach reminds us that hope must never be abandoned. The Jewish people suffered under the weight of brutal slavery for generations, yet redemption came - not slowly, but in an instant. The Exodus wasn't just a historical moment - it's a timeless promise: that Hashem never forgets us, and that salvation can come in the blink of an eye.

The Torah says (Shemos 3:7), "I have surely seen the affliction of My people." Hashem wasn't distant or indifferent - He saw every tear, every burden, every silent cry. Pesach teaches us that we are never truly alone in our pain. Hashem is there, watching, caring, and preparing our personal redemption. Even when we can't see it, Hashem is working behind the scenes on our behalf.

When Bnei Yisrael finally stood together, united in faith and purpose, they were able to leave Egypt behind - not as scattered slaves, but as a unified people. The night of the Exodus was one of collective strength - families gathered together, carrying the same hopes, believing in the same future. It was that unity that transformed them from slaves into a nation.

Our redemption was not just about being freed from Egypt; it was about becoming one people. Pesach reminds us that when we stand together - in faith, in action, and in spirit - we become stronger than any challenge, we become unstoppable. It reminds us that true freedom is found not only in breaking physical chains, but in standing together as one.



A Segulah for Miracles

The Chozeh of Lublin zy"a would say that by relating the story of yetzias Mitzrayim, one can effect miracles and wonders. The Sefarim Hakedoshim say that speaking about miracles from past generations arouses their influence and causes miracles to happen today, and this applies most of all to the miracles of Pesach.

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

Rav Biderman taught that when we eat Matzah at the Seder, we recline. Then, when we eat the Marror, we don't recline. Soon after, when we eat Matzah and Marror together in Koreich, we recline.

Why do we recline by this? It is true that there is Matzah there, but there is Marror there as well!

The answer is that Matzah is the food of Emunah, and when it is wrapped together with the Marror, one realizes that even the bitter times one experiences are for his good. Once one knows this, he can now recline for the Marror as well!

Pesach Treasures

Rav Mordechai Schwab, zt"l, described how his Rebbe, **Rav Chaskel Levenstein, zt"l**, would find ways to make his Emunah more tangible.

On the night of the seventh day of Pesach, the day when the Yam Suf split, Rav Chaskel would pour a glass of water on the floor and jump over it, reenacting Klal Yisroel's march across the Yam Suf.

Rav Mordechai would say that Emunah can enable one to overcome the most challenging obstacles. He lived with tangible Emunah, clearly seeing Hashem's guidance in every aspect of his life!

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

It is taught in the name of **Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk, zt"l** that the most ideal time for one to attain Emunah Sheleimah, complete Emunah, is the night of the seventh day of Pesach. Additionally, the **Karliner Rebbe, zt"l, the Beis Aharon**, said, "The six days of Pesach are a preparation for the seventh day, which is the main day of Pesach. It is the most perfect day, the day the Bnei Yisroel sang Shirah to Hashem!"

The Weekly Vort

■ **Shulchan Aruch**

Orchos Chaim writes: "It is proper that one discard all worries and distress and eat the Seder meal joyously." - The Seder HaYom notes that one should eat at a leisurely pace in the fashion of free men and royalty. -**The Shelah HaKadosh** teaches, however, that the joyous atmosphere must be blended with the solemnity of the moment.

■ **לאכל בו מצה ומרור – *That we may eat on it matzah and marror.*** We thank Hashem for having freed us and for giving us the opportunity to commemorate His kindness by fulfilling His *mitzvos* and eating matzah and *marror*. It is not the pleasure of living *per se* for which we are grateful, but the opportunity life affords us to serve Hashem by performing His commandments. (Malbim)

"If you only knew how much Hashem believes in you, you would never doubt yourself again." ~ Based on the teachings of Rebbe Nachman (1772-1810)

The Tzaddik of Yerushalayim

Pesach Gems

R' Aryeh Levin, the Tzaddik of Yerushalayim, was a living legend of extraordinary chessed, kindness, compassion, tzidkus and Torah knowledge. His yahrzeit is on 9 Nissan (1969). May his merit protect us.

◣ *A talmid chochom* known as R' Yerachmiel the Maggid was *niftar* the very night before Pesach in Yerushalayim, while a steady rain fell. As the rule is not let a deceased person remain overnight in Yerushalayim, the *levaya* was arranged in great haste that night.

The next day his son sat *shiva* only until noon, as *halacha* requires before a yom tov. But that entire morning no one came to comfort him. Since his father passed away so suddenly and received burial at once, hardly anyone knew of it. And those who knew were busy preparing for Pesach.

A few hours before Pesach began, R' Aryeh Levin came knocking on the door. In that stormy beating rain, he had trudged on foot all the way to the Katamon section, from his neighborhood of Mishk'noth, to visit the son in his time of sorrow. He was the only man who came to bring consolation that day.

The man later recounted, "I can never forget this act of sheer kindness; nor will I ever forget the words of solace he spoke then to comfort and hearten me, just a few hours before Pesach began for us all, while I was utterly alone in my grief."

◣ During Chol HaMoed R' Aryeh had a custom of visiting the widows of worthy rabbonim. Why? He explained: "The whole year everyone is busy and burdened with his work, and a widow does not feel her loneliness. On these days of Chol HaMoed, however, it is different. Now people are at leisure and such a woman surely thinks back to the good old days when her prominent, respected husband was alive, and all the eminent, worthy citizens of Yerushalayim came to visit

him. She must remember how her house filled with visitors, and the atmosphere was happy and cheerful. And now, what a contrast: she sits alone, forsaken; and the days of the Yom Tov turn into a time of pain. How much she must suffer.

For this reason, I make it a point, no matter what, to visit these widows specifically in the days of Chol HaMoed – to cheer them and bring a little happiness into their mournful hearts."

◣ Whenever Pesach approached, it was the custom of R' Aryeh Levin to distribute money among the poor. One year, however, the times were very hard, and he simply had no money for this *tzedakah*. Pesach was drawing near and he was in despair. How could he face these people who looked to him for help?

When it was at last the very day before Pesach, he set out for the *Kosel* with his son. They went to take the bus to the Old City, where a long line of people were waiting in the intense heat. Suddenly a bare-headed Jew in shirtsleeves came over to him, thrust some money into R' Aryeh's hand, and asked him to distribute it among the poor.

R' Aryeh seized him by the hand. "Who are you?" he demanded. "Why are you doing this? And what reason did you see to choose me particularly to be the emissary for this mitzvah?"

The man grew a bit angry with R' Aryeh and said, "If you are given money, just take it and act!"

R' Aryeh hurried off to his widows and orphans and gave them all that they were waiting for, and more. Who that man was or where he came from, R' Aryeh never quite found out.

◣ One Shabbos Chol HaMoed Pesach, R' Aryeh went to the prison in Yerushalayim for his usual Shabbos visit to the young men interned by the British for their underground activities to gain Israel's independence. R' Aryeh was curious to know how the prisoners had managed with their Seder. One prisoner answered him with a smile,

"We had a wonderful time, in high spirits. We observed the Seder quite properly, with all the details. There was only one difficulty: When we said "*Sh'foch chamascha*" we could not open the door for Eliyahu HaNavi."

"You know," said R' Aryeh, "you are making a mistake. Every man is put in a prison of his own self. He cannot leave it by going out of the door of his house, but only through the door of the heart. And to make an opening for himself in his own heart – that anyone can do, even a prisoner behind bars. And then he will be truly free – in spiritual freedom."

◣ Speaking to his "children" in the prison in Yerushalayim in the days of the British mandate, R' Aryeh once explained that the name of Moshiach was among the things created even before the world came in existence.

Why was that necessary? Because for our numerous sins we have to live without the Moshiach; but how could we live for even one instant without the "name" of the Moshiach?

The name is an endless source of comfort and hope, since it shows that he exists potentially, and is certain to appear one day. (A Tzaddik In Our Time) **בניסן עתידין להגאל**

Psak For Pesach

It was Erev Pesach in Slonim when R' Nochum, a prominent community member, approached the Rav, R' Yosef Charif, with an urgent matter. R' Nota, a wealthy man, had lost his fortune and was in danger of starving with his family, having nothing for Pesach. - When R' Yosef asked why he hadn't come sooner, R' Nochum explained that R' Nota and his wife were determined to keep their hardship private, not wanting their enemies to rejoice or their friends to pity them.

R' Yosef thought for a moment, then said, "Go to R' Nota's house right away. Tell him to come to me after Maariv when everyone in shul wishes me a 'Gut Yom Tov.' He should whisper his greeting in my ear instead of saying it aloud. If he does this, I assure you that all his needs will be taken care of."

R' Nochum was perplexed. "What miracle is supposed to come from R' Nota's whispered greeting?" he asked.

R' Yosef replied, "There's no time for questions. Go quickly, and don't delay."

Though doubtful, R' Nochum followed through. When R' Nota expressed confusion over the strange request, R' Nochum reassured him, "The Rav does something special every Yom Tov. This time, you've been chosen."

That evening, as R' Nota approached the Rav, R' Yosef said, "Wait. I see that R' Nota has something private to tell me." The crowd stepped back, and R' Nota whispered his greeting.

Suddenly, R' Yosef exclaimed, "*Chametz*! Everything is *chametz*! There's no way out!" - He quickly added, "But you don't live in a wilderness, R' Nota. I'm sure the good people of Slonim will ensure you have everything you need for Pesach—matzos, fish, meat, wine, and more."

The people, understanding the situation, immediately stepped forward to offer their help. Within moments, R' Nota had everything he needed for Pesach. His pride and dignity remained intact, for no one in Slonim knew of his dire circumstances. (A Story A Day)

"On Pesach evening, Hashem takes our hands and helps us walk into the brilliant light of freedom and redemption." ~ Reb Noson Of Nemirov (1780-1844).



Why were מתקן – חז"ל that we say over the הגדה on wine?

One answer is that wine symbolizes the greatest differentiation between us and the other nations. For Example: This was **the** example that Haman used to show **אחשורוש** that **כלל ישראל** are different. - He said, "If a fly would fall into their wine, they would just take out the fly, but if the king would touch it, they wouldn't drink it…"

One of the main points of **ליל הסדר** is to internalize this message "that we are the Am Hanivchar – the chosen nation and we **are** different – and even though **בכל דור ודור עומדים עלינו** … we are proud because we are different. - And that by the way, is the reason why we would sing when saying these words – even though one might think that such words are "not the type" to be sung - if one thinks about what they mean.

חד גדיא...המשל והנמשל

It looks as though the cat (**שונרא**) ate the goat however this is not the case. If you look closely, after every paragraph we are always left with **חד גדיא**.

All that we are left with at the end of "**חד גדיא**", is **הקב"ה** and one goat. The goat refers to **כלל ישראל** who throughout all the years were being "eaten" and persecuted by all the nations. However at the end all the nations in the world will seize to exist. All that will be left will be **הקב"ה** … **and his one goat**.

Derech Cheirus

We all know that we are meant to act in an aristocratic way on the seder night. As a matter of fact, the **Chofetz Chaim** writes in the sefer Mishna Berura that even though all year round as a zecher l'churban a person is not supposed to place all his beautiful utensils and goblets on the table, on Pesach to be makayem the inyin of acting in a way of derech Cheirus we tell you to put on the table all of the most beautiful goblets and utensils.



The *mazal* (constellation) of Nissan is a lamb, which was an idol in Mitzrayim. Therefore, Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim in the middle of this month when the *mazal* is at the peak of its strength, in order to show that the lamb is worthless as a god and is absolutely unable to prevent the departure of Bnei Yisrael.

Makas Bechoros was in the middle of the night, in the middle of the month when the moon is full, in order to show that the moon is not a god. They left in the middle of the day, to show that the sun is also not a god.

"Show empathy towards everyone. We may be on different paths, but we are all climbing the same mountain." ~ Based on the teachings of Rabbi Pinchas Shapiro of Koretz (1726-1791).

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

It is well-known that Soviet Jews, through no fault of their own, were denied the most basic Jewish education. With the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, Jewish schools were shut down. Jewish seforim and books were destroyed and ritual objects destroyed, too. Whilst Germany tried to wipe out the Jews, the Soviets tried to wipe out Judaism.

There was one man who gave body and soul to sustain the Torah under the noses of the extremist, anti-Semitic Bolsheviks. His name was **R' Yehoshua Horodner zt"l** and he defied the Soviets throughout the 1920's, even into the 1930's. The legendary **Chofetz Chaim zt"l** called him an 'Eved Hashem' – a true 'servant of Hashem'.

R' Yaakov Kaminetzky zt"l (who, himself, lived through that period in the USSR) once related the following story: In the city of Minsk, under Soviet rule, Rav Horodner maintained a yeshivah. He taught Torah and learned with students under tremendous duress. How did he manage to do what no other Rabbi or teacher, no matter how wealthy, clever, connected or committed, managed to do in the former Soviet Union?

Well, he had a trick of sorts, similar to the Jews in the times of the Chashmonaim. Rav Horodner would stand outside his yeshivah in Minsk and pretend to be washing the windows or sweeping up. All the while, he was singing a tune. If anyone he suspected of being a Soviet agent approached or appeared suspicious, he quickly changed his tune – a signal to the students to flee via the back windows and disperse.

One day, in 1933 he was summoned to Moscow by the NKVD, the infamous precursor to the KGB. He was not told in advance what this 'meeting' was about but it was fair to say that when someone got 'called in' by the NKVD, it was not for a pleasant social visit, for sure. R' Yehoshua did not appear nervous – he knew better than anyone, that it was all up to Hashem.

When he arrived, he was made to wait in a cold anteroom for several hours, to work up his terror. Many suspects would lose his will to defy the Soviets in that dreary anteroom. After many long hours, he was summoned to another room. There, the chief officer called him into another even more private room and said to him, "Rabbi, I have known about your activities for a long time, and we have a file on you this big," He spread his hands far apart and took out a bulging file to prove it. R' Yehoshua glanced at the file – it was truly huge and intimidating.

Without warning, the officer suddenly changed his cold and official tone, and now spoke softly "Rabbi Horodner, do you remember Chaikeh the widow from the Brisk railroad-station area?" Rabbi Horodner said he did not. He had lived in so many places and knew people from all over, and it was difficult for him to keep track of them all.

"Well, I am her son. Yes, I am a Jew like you. You would bring us clothing, shoes, and food from time to time. I recall that one evening, the night of Passover, we did not have enough food and mother came to your house after you had already distributed everything you had collected for the poor. You took a goblet of pure silver out of your closet and gave it to her to sell for buying holiday provisions. We most likely would have starved if not for you, and certainly would not have had anything to celebrate Passover with," said the officer.

Now, he looked at R' Yehoshua with a sense of Jewish mercy. "Out of respect and gratitude, I will destroy this file, but you must cease your activities of propagating religion because in half-a-year I will be promoted and will not be in a position to protect you from my successor. The best advice is for you to leave the country before I leave my post."

Six months later, Rabbi Horodner successfully left the USSR and arrived in the Holy Land, having received his exit papers through

another Soviet officer whose needy family he had also helped before the revolution. However, upon his move, it signalled the end of the yeshivah in Minsk. The voice of Torah in that great city where it had not lapsed for generations, was silenced. It took an unbending integrity, a love of Hashem, which drove His servant, R' Yeshohua Horodner, to put his body and welfare at risk in order to sustain this holy community longer than any other person, and any other Jewish community, under Soviet rule.

Helping out a fellow Jew before Pesach so many years, previously, was the vehicle for his salvation.

ושמרתם את כל המצוה אשר אנכי מצוך היום למען תחזקו ובאתם וירשתם את הארץ.

Good Shabbos and a Kosherein and Freilichen Pesach.

Aaron Leitner

Don't Just Do It - Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz by Yisroel Besser

The Kopyzcynitzer Rebbe, Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel, lived on the Lower East Side, but as more and more young families were choosing to settle in Boro Park, the Rebbe's son, Rav Moshe Mordechai, had opened a shtiebel there as well, on 55th Street between 14th Avenue and 15th Avenue. At his son Rav Moishe'le's urging, the Rebbe would come to Boro Park for Shabbos and lead the shtiebel.

The Rebbe had only one condition as to who could daven in the shtiebel: he wouldn't accept any member who was already a steady mispallel in another shul. That rule resulted in the shul attracting a young crowd, newcomers to the neighborhood — Reb Meir Zlotowitz among them.

Kopyzcynitz took some getting used to for Reb Meir. He had grown up in his father's shul, which reflected the glory of Lita and its yeshivos; a chassidishe shtiebel was a new experience for him — but

at the same time, he felt an instant bond with the Rebbe. The Rebbe — whom **Rav Aharon Kotler** would refer to as a "gaon in chessed" — imbued these young "chassidim" with a sense of their own abilities and responsibilities. He taught, by example, that life is meant to be viewed as a means to help others.



The Rebbe was a master of how to give. One of the young couples in the shul received the traditional "drosha geshank," a wedding present from the Rebbe, the customary becher. Inside the silver Kiddush cup, the new husband found a thick, rolled up wad of bills. He hurried to the Rebbe's home to thank him for the gift — and return the money he assumed the Rebbe had mistakenly left there.

"No," the Rebbe smiled, "it's part of the gift. A newly married couple always needs some extra money while they get settled. Use it well."

There were many memorable moments in the presence of the Kopyzcynitzer Rebbe, but one remark made by the Rebbe would illuminate Reb Meir's own path and life's work. The Rebbe introduced this group of young American yeshivah graduates to the joy in the performance of mitzvos, the experience of shaking daled minim or blowing the shofar. They would join him each year as he went to bake matzos, each of them assuming a specific task as part of the Rebbe's chaburah and observing his sublime delight in the mitzvah.

One year, after they finished baking matzos, the Rebbe circulated among the workers at the matzah bakery, thanking each one for their devoted work. The Rebbe noticed a chassidic young man who

worked as a kneader; the Rebbe handed him several bills, a tip in honor of the approaching Yom Tov. The worker gratefully accepted the money.

A few days later, the Rebbe announced that he was going back to the matzah bakery to bake "Erev Pesach matzos," in accordance with his custom, and they joined him once again. After they finished baking, the Rebbe again sought out the young kneader and approached him with a wad of bills. "Here, l'kavod Yom Tov," the Rebbe said.

This time, the gentleman protested. "Der Rebbe huht shoin yotzeh gevehn, the Rebbe has already fulfilled his obligation," he said.

The Kopyzcynitzer Rebbe looked at him. "Ich bin nisht gekummen oif di velt, I didn't come down to this world," the Rebbe said, "yotzeh tzu zein, just to fulfill my obligations."

Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel, the Kopyzcynitzer Rebbe, was niftar in 1967, just a few short years after establishing the little shul, but his words and message would reverberate throughout the years, the families he inspired going forward, each in their own way, to live lives of genuine accomplishment — never just "yotzeh tzu zein."

Someone once asked the **Kotzker Rebbe**: "If we're so worried about chametz on Pesach, why eat matzah at all? One mistake in the bakery and you're doomed. Why don't we just stick to foods that cannot possibly become chametz?"

The Kotzker Rebbe smiled and said, "Chametz represents the Yetzer Hara. You can't totally avoid him; you must know how to deal with him and vanquish him. Therefore, we eat Matzah made from a grain that can become chametz, and we work to ensure it does not!"



A Different Kind of Bedikas Chametz

It's the night of bedikas chametz. It's the only time that Rav Chaim looks in every corner of his house. It takes Rav Chaim hours to do bedikas chametz.



He looks under the table and under the chairs, and takes the mattresses off the beds so he can look at the boards. He looks in every corner and every place.

When bedikas chametz is over, he asks a grandchild to help him because everything has to be put back in its place.

"Bedikas chametz is a mitzvah mi'deRabbanan, but upsetting Bubby is an issur d'Oraisa," he says.

"The greatest of people always see the greatest in people." ~ Based on the teachings of Reb Noson of Breslov (1780-1844).

Why Me?? 'The Generation to Generation Haggadah' by Rabbi Nosson Muller

הַיְלָלָה הַזֶּה שְׁתֵּי פְעָמִים - *On this night twice*



A number of years ago, one of the hidden *tzaddikim* in the Boro Park section of Brooklyn, Reb Mendel Weiss, passed away. Although he dressed in layers of old rags and musty coats, those who merited to know him testified that Reb Mendel was a lofty, holy Jew who disguised himself as a simple, hapless Jew.

Someone who once gave Reb Mendel a ride was rewarded with this gem of a *vort* from this gem of a man.

"Why is it only on Pesach night that we ask why we dip twice, but on Rosh Hashanah we don't ask? On Rosh Hashanah as well we dip twice, first the challah in honey and then the apple?"

With a twinkle in his eye, Reb Mendel answered, "Because we tend to ask questions only when we dip into bitter things. When something is dipped into honey, we don't have any questions!"

How true were your words. How many times throughout our lives, when things aren't going well, are we quick to question the *Ribbono Shel Olam*, "Why me?" or "Is this really fair?" Yet, when things are going well and we are blessed with an abundance of sweetness, we somehow don't rush to ask, "Why me?"

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Pesach Eve In Our Little Shtetl - Piesk, Belarus



Cover of the original Yizkor book

The period between Purim and Passover was a time of frenetic activity for the Jews of Piesk in Belarus, a town of small wooden houses and roofs of straw. Wheat that was pure for the holiday had to be bought, matzohs had to be made, and the houses had to be "koshered" which meant ridding them of anything unfit for Passover use.

Furniture was carried outside so the house could be cleaned thoroughly and the kitchenware and dinnerware purified by putting them in boiling water. Seamstresses worked day and night, as every girl and woman wanted to be renewed with a dress for Pesach.

When Seder night arrived, every house appeared transformed. The father sat upon his regal leisure chair like a king. His wife was the queen, and around them were their children. The youngest child asked the 'Four Questions' and the father had to answer. The door was opened for Elijah the Prophet to enter. The mother could hardly sit through the first Seder, so tired was she from the preparations.

The little town of Piesk (its Yiddish name) was part of Poland until 1795, when it was annexed by Russia. In 1920, it returned to Polish rule, only to be annexed again by Russia in 1939 and ultimately became part of independent Belarus after the breakup of the Soviet Union. It is in the west of Belarus near the Polish border. When the Germans took the town in 1940, they established a ghetto which was

later liquidated, sending the Jews to labor and death concentration camps.

Pesach preparations would begin immediately after Purim when we were finished with the tasty hamantashen. You then went to the megillah reading in shul and with hammers and grogers slew (by drowning out his name) wicked Haman. Then, began the [Passover] preparation ritual.

Everyone, who was able, immediately bought wheat meal. Avrum Shebach, the miller, already was concerned that the meal ground in his mill should not become "chometzdick". Everybody bought according to their ability and the size of their family.

It was expensive to have the baking done at a private bakery; [therefore] the poorer Jews got together and, communally, baked at the place of whoever had a large oven. The work was divided according to each person's skill. There was a meal pourer and a water pourer. The water had to be kosher. The (gentile) water carrier, Muchashke, could not fetch the water; only a Jew could bring it. A female kneader performed the kneading and handed off to the women rollers and they to the perforators. From the perforators, it went to the oven placer.

When the matzoh was done, a female partner in the undertaking would lay it in a clean pillowcase and suspend it from the ceiling of her home so the matzoh would not come in contact with "chometzdick" things. In this way, they would bake matzoh for everyone.

When the matzoh ritual concluded, koshering of the home began. There were houses where from Pesach to Pesach there was extraordinary cleansing. Then began the working season of Frieda the whitewasher. From whitewashing the houses, her earnings were sufficient to live the entire year with her husband the kulak [Note: a landed peasant]. Women carried out all the furniture into the street and koshered the home. When the home was cleansed of

chometz, they koshered the oven and the entire kitchenware and dinnerware.

Water was heated in a kettle; and stones were added. When the water boiled, they would put in the kitchenware and dinnerware. Erev Pesach, the chometz would be sold to Muchashken the water carrier; and he, the Christian, earned nicely from this trade.

I also remember the job of beet [preparation]. After the beets were left standing [in water] for three weeks, the water became scummy. The scum was removed; and a good borscht remained for Pesach to have with matzoh. [Note: The writer is describing the preparation of russel, a variety of borscht obtained through fermentation.]

Wine was made from raisins and water. Honey was cooked with water; hops were added. This was allowed to sit. As dear Pesach arrived, there were resources to treat one's guest.

The seamstresses worked day and night, as every girl and woman wanted to be renewed with a dress for holy Pesach. When Seder night arrived, the home was not recognizable. Every house appeared so pure and holy. The father of the family donned his kittel [a white linen robe worn on solemn occasions and used as a shroud after death] sat upon his regal leisure chair like a real king. His wife was the queen, and around them were their children. Wine was poured for everyone at the Seder without forgetting a cup for Elyohu-Hanovi. The youngest child asked the Four Questions; and the father had to answer. The door was opened for Elyohu-Hanovi to enter.

The mother could hardly sit through the first Seder, so tired was she from the preparations.

On Chalemoyed (the intermediate weekdays of the holiday), girls and young men traveled as guests to other shtetls to get together with family and, in the meantime, to take advantage of the time to see about a match. Thus, the Jews lived for centuries, worried about livelihoods and were happy with their spiritual life without [the

bounties of] wider civilization, without radio and television, without electrical devices – until the coming of Hitler, may his name be blotted out, killed everyone.

The Jews who emigrated to other lands and continents have acclimated themselves to their environments. But, from time to time, they remember and yearn for those times.

וְהִיא שֶׁעָמְדָה לַאֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ, שֶׁלֹּא אֶחָד בִּלְבָד עָמַד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵינוּ, אֶלָּא שֶׁבְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר, עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ, וְהַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא מַצִּילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם

When Paris fell to the Nazis in 1940, Jacob and Paula Levinson, and their baby Hessy, traveled to the south of France where they desperately tried to get visas to enter another country. The Levinsons wanted to go to Israel, but in the midst of the war, it was impossible to enter British Mandate Palestine. Instead, in 1942, they entered the Cuban consulate in the French town of Nice and fortuitously obtained Cuban visas. From there, they made their way to Marseilles, bought train tickets to Portugal, then purchased passage on a boat sailing from Lisbon to Havana, Cuba.

But there was a problem; Gerta, their Jewish live-in nurse, was still in Paris with no visa and no way of leaving Nazi-occupied Europe. While Paula waited with Hessy in Marseilles, Jacob took the train back to Nice, a perilous journey for a Jew, to visit Cuba's consulate once more.

Terrified of being asked for his papers by the Nazi guards who frequently boarded trains, Jacob stayed in the dining car, eating and drinking nonstop until he felt sick. His plan worked, guards boarded the train, asking for all travelers' travel documents, except those in the dining car.

Once in Nice, Jacob sold his silver cigarette case and entered the Cuban consulate with the cash. He was willing pay even more money for another visa for Gerta. The consul, however, refused.

"I already gave you three visas, and I am in enough trouble," he growled.

Jacob would not give up so easily. He told the man that he would not leave until he was given another visa, so he sat down and waited.

At the end of the day, the consul turned to him angrily. "I am going to close, are you leaving or must I call the police?"

"I'll leave as soon as you give me a visa," Jacob retorted.

Seeing Jacob's determination and desperation, the consul suddenly - perhaps more accurately, miraculously, softened.

"You know, there is an old law on the books in Cuba that says a man can immigrate with all his possessions, including his slaves. Would you say this woman is your slave?"

Jacob looked in disbelief. It was that simple.

"Of course! Absolutely! This woman is my slave!"

The consul issued one more visa for the "Jewish slave" Gerta.

This story was said over on *Pesach* night at the seder, to demonstrate how *Hashem* mercifully took the "slave" out of Nazi-occupied Europe!

While recounting the miraculous Exodus and rebirth of our nation on the holiday of *Pesach*, we remember how in each generation there are always those who stand up to us but ultimately fail. Even in the darkest times, *Hashem* is always there to be our salvation - sometimes openly, and sometimes more subtly.

"One of the greatest miracles of Pesach is not just that we were taken out, but that we still remember, we still tell, and we still believe with certainty that it will happen again." ~ Rabbi Asher Weiss.

קַדֵּשׁ - Kadesh / Kiddush



A number of years before his passing, **R' Moshe Feinstein *zt"l*** developed a medical condition that caused him to become extremely drowsy, and at times his mind was not completely lucid and clear. This caused the great *Gaon* a large amount of consternation. Because of this ailment, he needed to be on intravenous fluids at all times.

Shortly before *Pesach*, the family decided to hire a nurse to take care of R' Moshe in his apartment on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, so he wouldn't have to spend *Yom Tov* in the hospital. His son, **R' Reuven Feinstein *shlita***, would arrive and spend the *Yom Tov* in the house with his father and he would handle the preparations and run the *Seder*.

R' Reuven, of course, did not do anything half-measure; he poured his heart and soul into the *avodah* and by the first night of *Yom Tov*, he was tired but spiritually elated as the entire family sat down around the *Seder* table.

Not wanting to waste any more time, R' Reuven lifted the *becher* and made *kiddush*. As per the Feinstein family *minhag*, only the leader of the *Seder* would make *kiddush* for all those in attendance, so R' Reuven then poured wine from his *becher* into small cups for all those seated at the table.

Assuming that R' Moshe would want to take a sip of the *Kiddush* wine, the newly hired nurse picked up one of the small cups from the table and held it out for the rabbi to take a drink. However, to his dismay, R' Moshe closed his mouth and refused to drink.

Confused, the nurse held it out again and motioned for R' Moshe to take the cup and drink, but he just closed his mouth and shook his head.

Turning to R' Reuven, she exclaimed, "I don't understand what's going on here! The rabbi is always such a cooperative patient, and he always does whatever I tell him to! Why won't he take a sip of the wine?"

Puzzled, one of the grandchildren jumped up and grabbed another cup of wine from the table and brought it to R' Moshe who smiled at him. He then took the cup and drank the wine without hesitation.

It didn't take R' Reuven more than a quick moment to piece it all together. The nurse was obviously not Jewish, and when R' Moshe saw her holding the cup of wine, he did not want to drink from it because of the prohibition of *Stam Yeinam* (*Chazal* enacted a decree which forbids the use of any wine which has been poured by a non-Jew, whether or not it was intended as a form of idol worship.). However, as soon as one of his grandchildren brought him a cup of wine, he was more than delighted to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *Arba Kosos* - drinking the four cups of wine.

The family was astounded. R' Moshe had not been doing particularly well at the time and his mind was not fully clear. Nevertheless, he refused to transgress a *halacha* and refrained from doing something that looked improper to him!

R' Reuven would later smile and say that in truth there was no problem. The wine was in fact *mevushal* but R' Moshe obviously did not know this. "It was not his intellect that stopped him from the *issur*" said R' Reuven. "It was his entire *guf*, his very body, that simply abhorred anything that was against the *Torah* to the utmost degree. - When he saw wine in the hands of a non-Jew, his automatic reaction was not to drink it!"

"You can talk to Hashem anywhere, anytime, about anything." ~ Based on the teachings of Rebbe Nachman (1772-1810).

Parsha Potpourri, by Rav Ozer Alport

אז ישיר משה ובני ישראל את השירה הזאת (שמות 15:1)

After witnessing the drowning of their Egyptian pursuers in the Yam Suf, the Jewish people were moved to praise Hashem and express their gratitude through song. In introducing the words of the song, the Torah says, "Then Moshe and Bnei Yisroel will sing this song to Hashem," which seems grammatically inaccurate. When discussing a song that was already sung, why is the verb written in the future tense?

The Gemora explains (Sanhedrin 91b) that this grammatical anomaly hints to the concept of techiyas hameisim (resurrection of the dead) and the future song of praise that will be sung at that time. While this is a fascinating idea, it still begs the question: Why did Hashem specifically hint to the future resurrection here as opposed to any other place in the Torah?

At the end of World War II, the Belzer Rebbe, **Rav Aharon Rokeach**, worked tirelessly to gather his chassidim to inspire them and give them strength to rebuild. On their first Shabbos together, he quickly realized that as Holocaust survivors who had endured indescribable suffering and had lost virtually everything they had, they were in no mood to sing Shabbos zemiros. The Rebbe addressed the broken chassidim and asked why the Torah specifically alludes to techiyas hameisim in conjunction with the song that celebrated the splitting of the Yam Suf.

He explained that as lofty and climactic as Shiras HaYam may have appeared to the naked eye, for those who lived through it, it was bittersweet. While they were certainly appreciative for their miraculous salvation from their sadistic Egyptian oppressors, most of their brethren were not there to experience it, as Rashi writes (Shemos 13:18) that four-fifths of the nation died during the plague of darkness and did not experience redemption.

If 80% of the Jews died in such a short period, it is safe to assume that virtually everyone who was saved had relatives who were not as fortunate. Thus, as great as their personal feelings of joy and relief may have been, they were tempered by the recognition that they were unable to share them with their loved ones who had recently passed away.

The Belzer Rebbe posited that when Moshe came to the Jewish people and suggested that they sing a song of praise to Hashem, they responded in disbelief, "How can you expect us to sing when four-fifths of our family is missing?" - When Moshe heard that, he told them that the Torah's narrative of the song they would sing hints to the future resurrection, at which time they will be reunited with all their deceased relatives and friends. This awareness consoled the Jews and enabled them to sing with joyous hearts, a thought that also comforted the grieving chassidim and enabled them to sing Shabbos zemiros with their Rebbe.

More recently, a widow's only son died fighting for the Israeli army in Lebanon. After the loss, she was devastated. She refused to go to any celebrations, explaining that she could never again experience joy. A while later, she went to a funeral in the Sanhedria cemetery in Jerusalem. After the burial, she stopped at the grave of **Rav Aryeh Levin**, who was also buried there, to daven.

The aggrieved mother noticed the following written on his tombstone: "Every person who comes to pray at my grave should verbally declare, 'I believe with complete faith that the dead will be resurrected when it is Hashem's will for this to occur.'" As the woman contemplated these words, the message sank in and allowed her to emotionally accept that there would come a time when she would get her beloved son back. - Rav Aryeh's posthumous message enabled her to return to normal life, buoyed by her hope and confidence in techiyas hameisim.

א-ת – Rabbi Shlomo Landau



One of the most tragic periods in Jewish History was

Who Were the Cantonists? - The Tsar's Jewish Child-Soldiers.

The Cantonists were Jewish boys in the Russian Empire who were forcibly taken to camps ("cantons") where they were trained to become soldiers in the Tsar's army between 1827 and the end of the 1850s. Often snatched as young as six years old, they became soldiers when they turned 18 and were then made to serve as long as 25 additional years. Cut off from their families and communities, the boys were under tremendous pressure to abandon their Judaism, and many displayed heroic devotion to the faith of their ancestors.

"Cantonist," - a Jewish boy who was forcibly taken to a military school ("canton"), where he was not given kosher food or otherwise allowed to live as a Jew. After the boys turned 18, they were drafted into the military.

Originally a 25-year term, the military service was subsequently diminished to 18 and then 14 years. Meaning that boys could have been robbed of more than 30 years of life.

The era of the Jewish cantonists began in 1827 when Jewish children, as well as Jewish adults, were forcibly taken to cantons, military schools, which had previously served primarily the children of Russian soldiers. While some were stationed close to the existing Jewish communities in White Russia, where our family lived, others were stationed in far-off Siberia, virtually cut off from home and hearth. Yet even there, many of the boys clung to the faith of their

childhood, determined to observe Judaism to the best of their meager knowledge and abilities.



The boys were selected by Jewish community (*kahal*) officials, who were required to furnish a specific quota of conscripts. Since the well-connected could often do whatever it took to protect their children, it was typically the sons of poor families, widows, and others on the margins who were taken.

This placed tremendous pressure on the leaders, who were often faced with the terrible choice of determining whom to send.

In many places, roving kidnappers (*khappers* in Yiddish) would take children off the streets and furnish them to the recruiting authorities at the behest of *kahals* desperate to fill their quotas while protecting their own children. As could be expected, these men were reviled by their fellow Jews.

The trip from home to the canton was often fraught with danger, with boys suffering from hunger, exposure, illness, and exhaustion even before they arrived at their battalions.

Life in the cantons was brutal, and the children were habitually starved. Treatment for illness included beatings, and the mortality rate was high.

Under these conditions, the boys were subjected to extreme pressure to abandon Judaism, from military brass and clergy who

offered financial incentives (25 rubles by order of Tsar Nicolas I himself), promotions, and breaks from incessant beatings in exchange for converting. The campaign to convert as many of the boys to Russian Orthodoxy as possible was the work of the Tsar, who micromanaged the project, demanding frequent reports on how many boys had been converted, rewarding priests responsible for large numbers of converts and berating those who fell behind.

Yet despite the immense pressure and suffering that was their lot, the majority of the cantonists maintained their Jewish identity, even though they often lacked basic knowledge of Judaism since they had been taken from home before they had a chance to learn to read Hebrew, celebrate the holidays, etc.

The sad era of the cantonists came to a gradual close following the 1855 death of Nicolas and the ascent of Alexander II, who cancelled the draft of minors, although it continued through the end of the 1850s.

Scandalizing reports of forced conversions were surfacing, and converted cantonists (some of whom still wore *tzitzit* and prayed with hidden prayer books) were clamoring to openly return to the faith of their ancestors.

Following discharge, many cantonists did not want to return home sensing that they would be shunned by communities who did not understand their experience and for whom their very existence was a mark of shame.

Sadly, the Jewish community didn't always embrace them. In fact, they called them הַיְוָנִים – 'The Greeks', alluding to the period of Jewish history where the people jumped ship to a different culture, and they would call them יָוָן. This name was very painful to these people….

Our story unfolds in a shtetl near Vilna where the rav was giving a shiur on Gemarah **יבמות**. The rav kept using the word '**יבם**' (referring to a man who marries his deceased brother's wife).

There happened to be one cantonist who was sitting at the back of the shul who kept hearing the rav and the participants of the shiur keep saying the word '**יבם**', and he thought that they kept repeating the word '**יָוָן**-Greek', talking negatively and disparaging about him. All the pent-up pain began to bubble over, and he got very angry.

He got up and he began to shout at them, "Do you have no respect? Do you think that it was my fault that I was kidnapped as a little boy? How can you keep humiliating me in front of everyone?"

The rav said to him, "Sir, please forgive us, but no one said the word '**יָוָן**-Greek', but the word '**יבם**'". But the fellow is not having any of it and gets even more angry.

At the end of the shiur, one kind gentleman comes over to the cantonist and said to him, "How can I placate you and make you feel and believe that we weren't talking about you? I know that the words **יָוָן** and **יבם** are similar and could sound the same, but really they have nothing to do with one another. Come I'll show you."

The cantonist says, "Ha, this is just a plan to make me feel good – I don't even know the difference between a **ן** and a **ם**.

"So, what can I do to help you truly understand?"

The cantonist said, "You know what? - Teach me Aleph Beis, and then maybe I'll see the difference."

The fellow says, "Ok, come and sit down." And one the spot he began to teach him the Aleph Beis.

The Chofetz Chaim Zt'l used to say, that this particular cantonist became an ilui – a genius in learning and became a massive talmid chacham! And it all began with one fellow sitting down with him and teaching him the Aleph Beis – from **א-ת**.

On seder night, we meet somebody called the **שֶׁאֵינוֹ יוֹדֵעַ לִשְׁאוֹל** -'*The one who doesn't know how to ask*'. He doesn't know how to formulate what he's feeling about Yiddishkeit. The Haggadah tells us **אַתְּ פְּתַח לוֹ**-you must open [the story] for him and make him feel comfortable.

The word should really be **אתה** - but Chazal teach us that **אַתְּ** stands for **א-ת**.— You have to start him off. As we mentioned, the she'ino yodeya li'shal doesn't even understand enough to ask. The Haggadah tells us, "At psach lo — You have to start him off," and you teach him the basic building blocks of who we are. You help him understand.

This means that you should teach this child from the letter 'א all the way to 'ת, from the very beginning to the very end. Teach him everything he needs to know.

But maybe there's another lesson hidden here. The Haggadah is teaching us that when this child learns, even if he can manage only the simplest things, just the aleph-beis, it's as if he's learned the entire Torah, from **א** to **ת**. His efforts are no less valuable than the efforts of a great talmid chacham who finishes all of Torah. Because all Hashem wants of us is to do the best we can. - For the talmid chacham, it's the entire Torah. And for the **שֶׁאֵינוֹ יוֹדֵעַ לִשְׁאוֹל** it's whatever he can learn.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

The Maharal says an astonishing vort, and the only reason why I'm able to repeat such incredible words is because the Maharal wrote them.

We all know the reason why the Yomtov of Pesach is called so - because Hashem 'passed over' - **פסח** the Yiddisher homes during the plague of Makkos Bechoros. So that we should remember that during the plague of Makkos Bechoros, only the Egyptian houses were hit, but our houses were spared.

The Maharal asks, "Were the other Makkos any less significant?" – The same thing happened by the plague of blood. The Yid drank water while the Mitzri drank blood! – Is that less of a miracle? Why is it specifically by Makkos Bechoros that it is so significant? – Makkos Choshech, it was light for the Yid, and dark for the Egyptian! Is that not amazing? Why was Makkos Bechoros so special?



The Maharal gives a mind-boggling answer… By all other makkos, the fact that the Yidden were spared was simple. Why? Because the first nine makkos were carried out by a Malach. Hashem lifted the Yidden higher than the Malachim so that the makkos could not affect them! Their water stayed water, and they had light etc.

However, by makkos bechoros, it says **וְעָבַרְתִּי בְאֶרֶץ־מִצְרַיִם בַּלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה** - Hashem himself carried out the Makkoh! Not a malach – It was Hashem Himself! - **לֹא עַל־יְדֵי מַלְאָךְ, וְלֹא עַל־יְדֵי שָׂרָף, וְלֹא עַל־יְדֵי שָׁלִיחַ, אֶלָּא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא בִּכְבוֹדוֹ וּבְעַצְמוֹ.**

If so, how did it not affect the Yidden? By the other makkos, Hashem lifted us higher than the Malachim, but by Makkos Bechoros, Hashem took the Yidden and lifted them up to Himself – together with Him! The Yidden became G-dly! – That is why the makkoh did not affect them!

This is what happens to **you** on Pesach night says the Maharal. That is why we call the YomTov 'Pesach'. – Know that you become one with Hashem on this holy night! Hashem raises us to a Divine level.

Project Mesorah – Rabbi Paysach Krohn

Many years ago, the **Vishnitzer Rebbe – Rav Yisrael Hager** was preparing for bedikas Chometz. He lit his candle and was about to start his search, when he paused. One of his gabboim said, "Rebbe, what are you waiting for?"

The Rebbe said, "You know, that tonight you're not only meant to check for the physical chometz, but also **חמץ שבלב** - the chometz in your heart."

So, they asked him, "What's the **חמץ שבלב**?"

He said, "Just like when dough rises, it becomes chometz, similarly when a person's heart rises, he will show off and become a baal gaavah. So tonight, you have to search for the **חמץ שבלב** as well."

So, one of the gabboim said to him, "Rebbe, the gemarah says (Pesachim 2a) **כָּל מָקוֹם שֶׁאֵין מַכְנִיסִין בּוֹ חָמֵץ, אֵין צָרִיךְ בְּדִיקָה** - *Any place into which one does not typically take leavened bread does not require a search, as it is unlikely that there is any leavened bread there.* – Rebbe, you have no gaaveh at all during the year, so you don't have to check for **חמץ שבלב**." - The Rebbe smiled in agreement and proceeded with the bedikas chometz.

This is a great lesson for all of us. When it comes to Pesach, we shouldn't show off to other people as to how long our seder took, or how fancy our seder plate is. Whatever you have (money, family, house, belongings etc), keep it a low profile. – Let's not have **חמץ שבלב**. If we do that, we will bring achdus to Klal Yisrael.

The Main Goal of Pesach is a Good Sleep! – Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff



-The Mechaber in **שולחן ערוך אורח חיים תפא-ב** says **חייב אדם לעסוק בהלכות הפסח וביציאת מצרים ולספר בניסים ובנפלאות שעשה הקדוש ברוך הוא לאבותינו עד שתחטפנו שינה** - *'A person is obligated to engage in the laws of Pesach and the story of the Exodus from Egypt, and to recount the miracles and wonders that the Holy One, Blessed be He, performed for our ancestors until sleep overtakes him.'*

The expression **עד שתחטפנו שינה** is very difficult to understand. What kind of measure is that? - *Until sleep overtakes him?* If you are supposed to do it all night, let it say so. And if you fall asleep, so you're **פָּטוּר**. Maybe it should say do it all night, unless you fall asleep.

The inyan in learning about **סיפור יציאת מצרים** is that a person should become so imbued with the message of Emunah in living with The Ribboino Shel Olam, that he realises that everything is **ביד ה'**. Hashem can help a person in all and any circumstance.

There are many people who approach the YomTov of Pesach with a lot of real worries and challenges in their life for which they need **יְשׁוּעוֹת**. As a result of which they can't sleep at night because of the issues that trouble them.

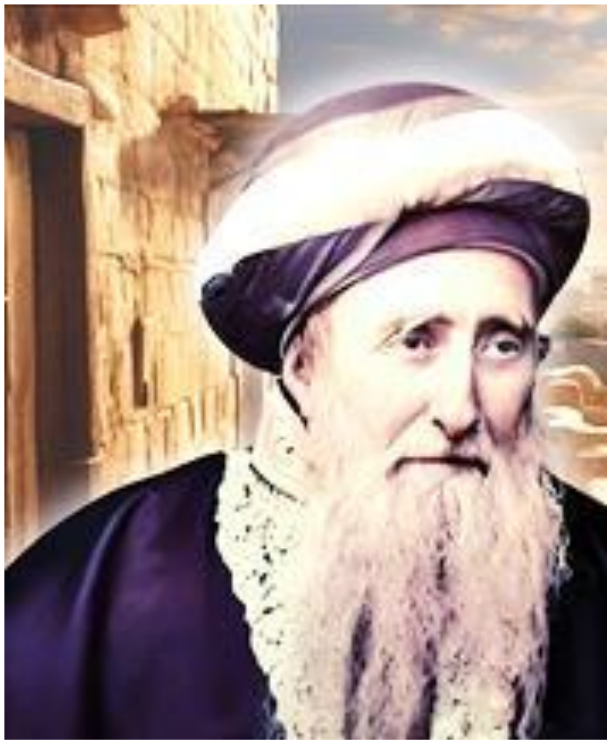
Says the Mechaber – the **חִיוּב** of Pesach is to internalise the message of **סיפור יציאת מצרים** to the extent that a person becomes calm, believing in the knowledge that Hashem will take care of everything. When a person believes this, he is happy and content - **עד שתחטפנו שינה**. Sleep will overtake him, and the sleepless nights will end.

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Libel Label

The question is asked in Pirkei Drebbi Eliezer why does it say twice in the pasuk, **בדמיך חיי**, in your blood you shall live. The answer given is that Hashem says in the merit of the *dam mila* (blood of *bris mila*) and *dam pesach* (the blood of the Karbon Pesach) I redeemed you from Mitzrayim and in its merit you will be redeemed in the future.

One **בדמיך חיי** refers to being redeemed from Mitzrayim and the other **בדמיך חיי** refers to the redemption in the future.



R' Chaim Falagi is bothered by this as what does it mean by a Korbon Pesach before the redemption before Moshiach comes? We have no Parah Aduma ashes or Beis Hamikdash so there will not be a Korbon Pesach prior to Moshiach.

He explains that it refers to the karbonos of the Jewish people who were killed Pesach time as a result of blood libels. - In this sense, their tragic deaths are counted in Heaven as offerings before Hashem.

"The story of Pesach teaches us that Hashem has the power to redeem us from any situation, no matter how dire. Trust in His plan and have faith that He will guide us through the difficult times." ~ Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986).

Rabbi Yissocher Frand



Rather than speaking about the *parsha*, I want to share with you a beautiful insight on the Haggada from the *sefer* Yerech Lamoadim by **Rav Yerucham Olshin Shlita**, one of the Lakewood Roshei Yeshiva.

Most people's *sedarim* start with the obvious question about *ha lachma anya* being written in Aramaic, and then discuss the *ma nishtana*, and then the *arba bonim* – the *chochom*, the *rasha*, etc. Then it kind of peters out. Here is a very beautiful *ha'ara* on *charoses*.

According to the Mishna in Mesechta Psachim, Rav Eliezer bar Rebbi Tzadok says that *charoses* is a *mitzva*. The Chachomin argue and say that *charoses* is just to counteract the *kappa* in the *marar*. But Rav Eliezer bar Rebbi Tzadok says that it is a*mitzva*. You need to use*charoses*. The Gemara asks, what is the *mitzva*? Rav Levi says that *charoses* is *zecher l'tapuach* (in remembrance of the apple). Rav Yochanan says that *charoses* is *zecher l'tit* (in remembrance of the mortar).

Abaye says that in order to fulfill both opinions, *charoses* must contain apple to give it a certain tang, commemorating the apple trees, and it must be thick like cement, commemorating the *tit*. The *charoses* is a double symbol – of the *tapuach* (apple) and of the *tit* (mortar).

The *zecher* of the *tit* is a remembrance for the terrible *shibud* (slavery) that they experienced in Mitzrayim. As the Maharal writes, there is nothing more difficult than working

with *tit* – making the mortar and even needing to find the straw. The *charoses* is a *zecher* for the *shibud* Mitzrayim.

What is the *tapuach*? Chazal describe the wondrous births of Jewish children in Mitzrayim: "In reward for the *nashim tzidkonios* (righteous women) in that generation, the Jews were redeemed from Mitzrayim" (Sotah 11b). What did these *nashim tzidkonios* do? They carried hot water for washing as well as fresh cooked fish to their husbands who were working in the fields, to revive them from their heavy work, and through this they brought more children into the world, despite the *shibud* and harsh decrees.

The women subsequently gave birth painlessly under the apple trees, far from the Mitzrim. That is what Chazal mean by *zecher l'tapuach*.

Rav Yerucham Olshin's question is, how can something be a symbol of two opposite things? On the one hand, *charoses* needs to be thick, *zecher l'tit* like mortar, which is a symbol of the *shibud*. On the other hand, *zecher l'tapuach* commemorates the open miracle that they gave birth to the babies without labor pain and with *malachay hashorays* from *shomayim* caring for the babies. How can something simultaneously be *zecher l'tit* and *zecher l'tapuach*?

Rav Yerucham Olshin answers using a *vort* that we have said in the past. By *mechiras* (the sale of) Yosef, the *pasuk* says that Yosef was taken down to Mitzrayim by Yishmaelim. The Torah publicizes that these Yishmaelim were transporting spices to sell in Mitzrayim. Why were these Arabs that bought Yosef carrying spices? It was in order to teach us the reward of the righteous. Rashi quotes Chazal that the typical practice of Arabs is to sell foul smelling oil. Some things never change. So why were they selling spices? They should have been selling oil.

Rashi explains that that the Ribbono Shel Olam is precise in His execution of punishment. Yosef needed to be sold and transported to Mitzrayim. However, Hashem did not want Yosef to suffer from

foul smelling oil during the trip down to Mitzrayim. Therefore, Hashem arranged through *hashgacha pratis* (Divine providence) that this caravan would be loaded with the pleasant aroma of spices instead of oil.

Rav Mordechai Pogromansky (whom Rav Gifter always used to quote as being the *illuy* (prodigy) from Telshe) asks, do you really think Yosef was thinking that even though he was being taken to Mitzrayim as a slave, at least the caravan smelled of good spices? Did he really care? Imagine if a person is put in prison but is given a great pillow. Wonderful! He is behind bars and he has lost his freedom but at least he has a nice pillow. When a person is being taken to jail, what difference does it make to him if he is being transported in the back of a Lincoln Town Car or the back of a paddy wagon? It is unlikely that Yosef, who had to psychologically deal with his separation from his parents, his family, his homeland, to say nothing of his freedom, would be very consoled by the fact that he had the "luck" of being in a pleasant-smelling caravan! What is this Rashi teaching us?

Rav Mordechai Pogromansky explains that herein lies a very fundamental lesson. The smell was not the point. Rather, Yosef must have felt abandoned. However, the ability to see the *yad* Hashem within '*tzoros*' mitigates the sense of abandonment. People throw up their hands in despair when there seems to be no hope. If a person can see the silver lining in the cloud — but more importantly — if a person can see the *yad* Hashem in the cloud, then he will have the attitude: "I am going to get out of this! I have not been forsaken by the Ribono Shel Olam."

True, the situation remained very bad but when Yosef saw the strange phenomenon of an Arab caravan transporting spices, he realized that the Ribono Shel Olam was still with him and watching over him, regardless of the gravity of the situation. The nature of such a sign may be insignificant but the presence of the sign

that Hashem still cares is of tremendous importance. Yosef had hope because he saw that the Hashem was watching over him.

Rav Yerucham Olshin is saying that it was the same thing in Mitzrayim. The *shibud* Mitzrayim was terrible. Their children were killed, etc., etc. It may have seemed as if Hashem abandoned them. It went on for generation after generation for over two hundred years. They must have felt, "*Keili, Keili, lama azavtani*" (My G-d, my G-d, why have you forsaken me)?

Therefore, Hashem did things during the *shibud* Mitzrayim that demonstrated that He still cared about them. The Ribono Shel Olam performed *nissim* (miracles) for them. The women had babies without *tzar leida* (labor pain). *Malachay hashorays* came to act as midwives and care for the babies. These were *nissim geluyim* (open miracles) occurring in Mitzrayim during the *shibud*, while experiencing a truly horrible existence.

So, is there a contradiction between *zecher l'tit* and *zecher l'tapuach*? Rav Yerucham explains that there is not a contradiction because in fact *charoses* is a *zecher* for both. During the *tit* experience, they also experienced the *tapuach*, when Hashem demonstrated that He has not forgotten them.

That is something that we have also seen in our time, during the last sixteen months. As we all know, October 7 was a horrible, horrible day. And it has not ended. There are still 59 hostages in Gaza. The number of people killed and wounded and the soldiers that have been killed then and since then is horrible.

At the same time, we all should remember that Hashem has performed *nissim geluyim* for us during this terrible period. So many missiles were shot at Eretz Yisroel that caused almost no damage. The exploding pagers. How many *karbanos* (sacrifices) would there have been from the attempted simultaneous bus bombings that blew up prematurely in empty parking lots (and then even more were discovered) instead of blowing up during rush hour? The entire

strategic situation in the Middle East has changed. Hamas is half dead. Hezbollah is a shadow of its former self, seemingly unable to continue to fight. Syria collapsed. Iran is on its heels.

So, during this terrible *tzara*, while we are very much experiencing the *tit*, we are also experiencing *tachas hatapuach orrarticha*. We need to keep this in mind. Hashem made *nissim*. We need to be *makir* (recognize) that.

On a personal level also, even if a person experiences a difficult situation, every once in a while, he may see the yad Hashem demonstrating that Hashem is still taking care of him. That is why Rav Eliezer bar Rebbi Tzadok holds that *charoses* is a *mitzva, zecher l'tit* and *zecher l'tapuach* – a *zecher* for the terrible *shibud* but also a *zecher* for the *yad* Hashem that the Ribono Shel Olam showed us even during the *shibud* Mitzrayim.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman



It states (Shemos 10:2) **וּלְמַעַן תְּסַפֵּר בְּאָזְנֵי בִנְךָ וּבֶן בִּנְךָ אֵת אֲשֶׁר הִתְעַלַּלְתִּי בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאֶת אֹתֹתַי אֲשֶׁר שַׂמְתִּי בָם וִידַעְתֶּם כִּי אֲנִי ה'** - "*In order that you tell into the ears of your son and your son's son how I made a mockery of the Egyptians, and [that you tell of] My miracles that I placed in them, and you will know that I am Hashem.*"

Why was it necessary to speak specifically **בְּאָזְנֵי בִנְךָ וּבֶן בִּנְךָ** - into the *ears* of the children and grandchildren?

Reb Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman zt'l, the Ponovizher Rav zt'l, explains that when there is a lot of noise around, and you want

someone to hear what you are saying, you have to raise your voice and speak *directly into the ear of the listener.*

In Mitzrayim, there was a lot of *kefirah*. Pharaoh said (Shemos 5:2) **מִי ה׳ אֲשֶׁר אֶשְׁמַע בְּקֹלוֹ** - "*Who is Hashem that I should heed His voice.*" - It wasn't only Pharaoh who spoke that way in Mitzrayim, but all of Mitzrayim shouted that they didn't know of Hashem.

When there is so much noise in the world, and you want to teach emunah, the only solution is to shout it into the ear of the listener; otherwise, he won't hear what you are saying.

The Ohev Yisrael, the Apte Rav zt'l, explains the reason we have a mitzvah of **וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא (13:8)** - to tell the story of yetzias Mitzrayim to one's children at the Seder.

He writes, "The truth is that even if a child asks his father about *yetzias Mitzrayim* any other time of the year, the father must answer him. Nevertheless, the holy Torah teaches us that throughout the year, even if you tell your son the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, the words won't settle in the child's heart. [He won't fully accept the concepts of emunah that you tell him]…



The Haggadah says, **ומרור לא אמרתי אלא מונחים לפניך בשעה שיש מצה** - 'the time to speak about *yetzias Mitzrayim* is when matzah and maror are in front of you.' This is because at the Seder the mind is open for comprehending... and emunah and bitachon hover over all Jewish people.

At this time, when you tell your son the entire story, your words will certainly enter his ears, and he will truly believe in yetzias Mitzrayim. The rest of the year, when there's darkness in the world, the son isn't able to receive the father's words properly to believe."

This lesson is like what we wrote above. It is hard to teach emunah when there is "noise" in the world screaming the opposite. Therefore, the Ponovizher Rav explained, the Torah says to speak emunah into the ears of the children. In other words, make sure they hear the message, because it is so easy to miss it.

This is why we must take advantage of this holy night of the Seder to speak about yetzias Mitzrayim. - It is a night our words are mesugal to be heard.



I saw the following thought in **Rav Avraham Bukspan's** *sefer*. This is a beautiful insight and something to remember for the Pesach Seder.

In describing the instructions given to Bnei Yisrael to be carried out during their last night in Mitzrayim, the *pasuk* says: "You shall take a bundle of hyssop and dip it into the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with some of the blood that is in the basin, and as for you, you shall not leave the entrance of the house until morning." (*Shemos* 12:22). No one was allowed to leave their house the entire night, not until the next morning.

Our Seder is basically a reenactment of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. We try to do everything like they did the night before they left Mitzrayim. However, there is one anomaly. We do one thing at our Seder that was **not** done at that first Seder! When we say the paragraph "*Sh'foch chamoscha…*" (Pour out your wrath upon the nations who did not know you), we **open** the door.

Why do we open the door if we are trying to re-enact the first Pesach Seder? We should say "Don't open the door! Keep that door closed. Nobody leaves here until morning!"

Rav Bukspan says that we know from many different sources that Klal Yisrael were not worthy of leaving *Mitzrayim* based on their own *zechusim* [merits]. "These people worship *avodah zarah* and these people worship *avodah zarah*!" The reason the Ribbono Shel Olam brought about *Yetzias Mitzrayim* was in the *zechus* of the *Avos* and in the *zechus* of Moshe and Aharon – but not in the *zechus* of the Jewish masses.

The *Zohar* writes that when Lot and his family were saved from the city of S'dom, they were warned: "Don't look back!" The reason they were not permitted to look back is because when the *midas hadin* [attribute of judgement] is rampant, only people who are righteous and are therefore "*zoche ba'din*" [merit salvation based on judgment] are saved. However, even though Lot was the best of the people of S'dom, Chazal say that he was guilty of many of the same moral shortcomings as the other inhabitants of S'dom. The *malachim* warned him not to look back because if he looked back, he would be caught up in the decree of judgment along with everyone else.

In fact, the *Zohar* lists three times in *Chumash* when people were not supposed to look because they were not *zoche ba'din*: (1) Noach in the *teivah* was told to not look out; (2) Lot could not look back at the destruction of S'dom, and (3) the Jews in Mitzrayim could not go out during the night of *Makas Bechoros* [the Plague of the First-Born Sons]. Klal Yisrael were not permitted to go out that night because they too lacked the personal *zechus* to escape that decree. The *midas hadin* ruled in Mitzrayim that night and undeserving Jewish firstborns could have been killed as well had they "looked."

A person who is not worthy of a miracle or salvation should not look. The reason why we **open** the door during our Seder is in the hope that, G-d Willing, we will be *zoche* to salvation *ba'din* during the future *geulah* [redemption]! Therefore, when we conduct our Seder, we anticipate being *zoche* to personally witness the Divine wrath poured out upon the *goyim*. The *Sefas Emes* in fact says that in the

pasuk "And you shall not go out from the doorway of your homes ***ad boker***" (until morning), the term ***ad boker*** is an allusion to the **future redemption**, when we will hopefully be fully *zoche* to witness that salvation. (**R' Frand**)

YESHIVA TORAS CHAIM TORAS EMES

The Ten Plagues: Discover What Really Happened - Rabbi Yaakov Moskowitz [Sources adapted from Otzer Hamidrashim, Haggadda V'Aga data, Let My Nation Go, The Katz Passover Haggadah.]

דָּם BLOOD



1) In addition to the Nile river, all water in Egypt turned to blood, even if it was in a jug (Yalkut Shimoni)

2) The saliva of the Egyptians turned to blood (Yalkut Shimoni)

3) Fruit juice turned to blood. (Midrash Hagadol)

4) The water component of the trees turned to blood, and dripped from the trees. Blood would drip out of the wood used to cook and extinguish their ovens. (MIdrash Hagadol)

5) Cement from Pharaohs palace began to bleed. (Midrash Hagadol)

6) An Egyptian and a Jew filled a cup from the same barrel of water. For the Egyptian it was blood, and for the Jew it was water. the egyptian said "give me some of that water". when the Jew gave it over, it turned to blood. the egyptian said "let's drink from the barrel at the exact same time", yet again the Egyptian had blood, and the Jew had water. Then the Egyptian paid the Jew for the water, and it remained water. (Shmos Rabbah)

צְפַרְדֵּעַ FROGS



1) In addition to frogs, crocodiles also attacked the Egyptians. (Hemek Davar)

2) The frogs came from the sea and gathered together in the street in an orderly fashion, and then marched all together to Pharaohs palace, to attack him in his bed. After, they went to his servants, and then to the entire nation. (Matnas Chaim)

3) When the Egyptians lifted a stick or stone to kill a frog, the frog exploded and burst into 6 frogs, until it became impossible to get Near them. (Targum Zohar)

4) The frogs jumped into the Egyptians stomachs and croaked from within. (Sifsei Kohen)

5) The frogs threw themselves into the Egyptian ovens without fear of injury. (Midrash Tehillim)

6) Many frogs died when they were baked in the Egyptian bread. However, when the Egyptians ate the bread, the frogs came back to life in their bellies. (Midrash Seichel Tov/ Sifsei Kohen)

7) Egyptian drops of sweat turned to frogs. (Meam Loez)

8) Droplets of water turned into frogs. (Shmos Rabbah 10:3)

9) The croaking in their stomachs was so intense, that they couldn't hear each other, even if they were right next to one another. (Meam Loez)

כִּנִּים LICE



1) All The dust in Egypt turned to lice. (Midrash Rabbah)

2) A cloud of lice arose from the earth and spread across all of Egypt. Rashbam/ Even Ezra)

3) There were 24 different forms of lice that struck Egypt ranging in size from a hen's egg to a goose egg. (Yalkut Shimoni)

4) Every person had 10 Kavin (volume of 240 eggs) of lice on them. (Rabbeinu Efraim)

5) The lice crawled into their clothing, their hair, And the skin on their faces.

6) They even went inside their nostrils and ears, and spread all over their bodies. (Baal Haturim/Rokeach/Rabbeinu Efrayim)

7) The lice feasted on their flesh and blood, causing them excruciating pain. (Midrash Hagadol)

8) The lice created a carpet on the ground that was 2 Amos (approx. 4 feet) deep. (Midrash Seichel Tov)

9) The lice would enter their ovens, their dishes, and their food. (Midrash Bchidush)

10) Egyptians would run to the sea to get away from the lice, yet the lice would chase after them. (Baal Haturim)

עָרוֹב Wild Animals



1) the Egyptians didn't see the animals coming from outside, they just miraculously showed up in their houses. (Midrash Hagadol)

2) The ground of each of the wild animal's natural habitat, came with them, so they should feel most comfortable, and therefore have full strength in their attack. (Meam Loez)

3) Some animals came from a hot climate, and some came from a cold climate. Hashem miraculously had each animal come with the specific climate conditions suited for it. (be'er yosef 8:17)

4) Since Jews were not being attacked, the Egyptians asked them to accompany them to their homes, and to take their kids inside. However, the animals recognized who was Egyptian and who was not. (Meam Loez)

5) Octopuses reached into the houses and unlocked the doors, allowing the other animals to enter. (Sefer Hayashar)

דֶּבֶר Death of Animals



1) An animal that rightfully belonged to a Jew, but was in the possession of an Egyptian didn't die. Through this Hashem made it clear who the real owner is. (Shmos Rabbah)

2) If a Jew and Egyptian made a deal the day before, giving the Jew rights to the animal, the animal was not harmed. (Midrash Seichel Tov)

3) Not one Jewish owned animal died, even the ones were destined to die now due to age or illness. (Maharil Diskin)

4) Do not think that some Egyptian animals died, and some did not. Rather ALL the Egyptian animals died immediately.

שְׁחִין BOILS



1) Egyptians were covered in boils from head to toe (MeaM Loez 9:11)

2) The boils developed into infectious blisters that destroyed the skin of the Egyptians and spread across their bodies like a flame. (Sefer Hayashar)

3) The infected flesh began to peel away, causing limbs to be exposed, and ultimately decay. (Sefer Hayashar)

4) There were 24 different forms of boils that were brought to Egypt. (Midrash Hagadol)

5) Even the animals (that they purchased after Dever) were afflicted with boils. (Abarbanel)

6) All the different boils had opposite remedies, so the medicine used to heal one, caused others to become even more inflamed. (Midrash Hagadol 9:10)

One year, before starting the Seder, the Yismach Yisrael of Alexander zt'l announced, "If one doesn't believe that he has the potential tonight to change from being a rasha to being a tzaddik, then he is the rasha of the Haggadah."

בָּרָד HAIL



1) This plague consisted of a combination of: Noise, Rain, Fire, Hail, Stones, Sulfur, and Snow. (Tur)

2) The hail destroyed all grass, trees, people, and animals that were in the field. (RabbeiNu Bachaye)

3) Hashem changed the regular order of the world and mixed fire within the hail, so they know there is a Master of the world. (Midrash Hagadol)

4) This plague was extremely wondrous, since it was not normal to rain or hail in Egypt. (Mincha Belula)

5) Initially there was thunder and lightning, and the ground began to shake. Then the Hailstones came down and exploded, releasing flame all over. Additionally, the flames burst open, and shot out a destructive ball of ice. (Midrash Hagadol)

6) When a hailstone fell on a person or animal, they were killed immediately on impact. (Malbim)

7) The hailstones were the size of bricks. (Sefer Hayashar)

8) Egyptians killed their animals to eat. While running and carrying them back to their homes, birds came down and took the meat from them. (Midrash Hagadol 9:25)

אַרְבֶּה LOCUSTS





1) The locusts would rest on the faces of the Egyptians and poke out their eyes. (Lekach Tov)

2) The locusts went into their mouths, noses, and eyes. (Riy Mevina)

3) The locusts consumed not only the trees and vegetation, but also Egyptian clothing, jewelry, and other precious items. (Midrash Hagadol)

4) If a Jew purchased wood from an Egyptian, and it was on the ground of the Egyptian, the locusts consumed the ground and all that belonged to the Egyptian, and did not touch the wood. (Meam Loez)

5) The locusts closed up the springs in Egypt. (Midrash Hagadol)

6) There were so many locusts, that they blocked the sun, moon, and stars, making Egypt extremely dark. One could not recognize if it was day or night. (Midrash Hagadol)

7) The locusts did not touch the Jewish fields in Goshen, even though they were right next to the Egyptian fields.

An egg can change and become a chicken, or it can remain the same and be cooked and eaten as an egg. - Rebbe Leibele Eigar zy"a said that we place an egg on the seder plate to indicate that it is a night when one can change completely, or he can remain the same after the night passes.- It's up to us.

חֹשֶׁךְ DARKNESS



1) The darkness that came to Egypt was as thick as a coin or a wall. (Shmos Rabbah 14:1)

2) Even if you brought all the candles and torches in the world and lit them, there would not have been light. (Midrash Hagadol)

3) While the Egyptians did not have light even during daytime, the Jews had light even at nighttime. (Kli Yakar)

4) The thick darkness extinguished any light that was lit by the Egyptians. (Midrash Seichel Tov)

5) For the first three days, Whoever was sitting and wanted to get up, was able to get up and vice versa. For the next three days whoever was sitting could not get up, and whoever was standing could not sit. They got stuck in whatever position they were in. (Midrash Bchidush)

6) The darkness gave off toxic fumes, and they would have to close their mouths and noses, even though they were stuck in difficult positions. (Malbim)

7) When a Jew approached an Egyptian the light came with the Jew, yet the Egyptian still could not see. (Midrash Hagadol)

The Chasam Sofer notes that redemption started even though the Jewish people were not spiritually perfect. Hashem responded to small acts of faith and courage. - Pesach teaches that growth begins with small steps, not perfection.

מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת KILLING OF THE FIRSTBORN



1) The plague began at exactly midnight, yet all of Egypt was lit up as if it were midday. (Ohr Hachaim)

2) All firstborns in Egypt were killed that night, whether firstborn from the father, or mother, whether male or female. (Yalkut Shimoni)

3) Some died through inhaling a poisonous gas. Some through the deafening sounds of the thunder. Some simply through the word of Hashem. (Abarbanel, Rokeach, Targum Yonasan)

4) Firstborns that were already dead rose from their graves, and died a second time. (Meam Loez)

5) Sculptures and statues of individuals that were firstborns, fell to the ground and broke. (Sefer Hayashar)

6) During this plague Hashem destroyed all Egyptian gods. Metal idols melted, wooden idols rotted, and some crumbled. (Midrash Hagadol)

7) No less than 600,000 firstborn died during this plague. (Midrash Hagadol)

8) Some Egyptians tried saving their firstborn children by putting them to sleep in Jewish homes. Yet Hashem killed them, and didn't kill even one Jew. (Shmos Rabbah)

'True freedom is attachment to the Divine source. Torah is not limitation — it is liberation from inner slavery.' ~ Maharal.

TWO TRUTHS & A LIE



TRUTH: During the plague of dam (blood), the saliva of the Egyptians turned to blood.

TRUTH: During the plague of blood, all Egyptian fruit juice turned to blood.

LIE: During the Plague of blood, the Egyptians had no ability to drink water. (Truth is: if they paid money to a Jew for water, it remained water.)

TRUTH: During the plague of tzfardea (frogs), the frogs were croaking from inside the Egyptians stomachs.

TRUTH: During tzfardea, the frogs all walked together to pharaohs palace to attack him first.

LIE: During the Plague of tzfardea ,frogs were the only animals to attack the Egyptians. (Truth is: crocodiles attacked as well)

TRUTH: During the plague of kinim (lice), the lice went inside the Egyptians nostrils and ears.

TRUTH: The Lice created a carpet on the ground 2 Amos (327pprox.. 4 ft) thick.

LIE: The Egyptians were able to remove the lice by running into the river. (Truth is: lice stuck to them, even when they ran to the river.)

TRUTH: During arov each of the wild animals came to Egypt surrounded by the habitat they were accustomed to.

TRUTH: During arov octopuses reached inside the houses and unlocked the doors to allow the other animals inside.

LIE: During the plague of arov (wild animals), Jews that were watching Egyptian children were harmed as well. (Truth is: the animals caused harm to the Egyptian children but did nothing to the Jews)

TRUTH: During the plague of dever (dying animals), all Egyptian animals died immediately.

TRUTH: If a Jew and Egyptian made a deal the day before, giving the Jew rights to the animal, the animal was not harmed during dever.

LIE: The Jewish owned animals that were destined to die at this time due to old age or sickness died during dever. (Truth is: Hashem kept them alive so nobody would say "look Jewish owned animals are dying too")

TRUTH: There were 24 different forms of boils during this plague.

TRUTH: The medicine used to heal one boil, caused other boils to become more inflamed.

LIE: During the plague of shechin (boils), Egyptian animals (purchased after dever) did not suffer from the boils. (Truth is: animals were afflicted with boils as well)

TRUTH: During the plague of barad (hail), The hailstones consisted of fire and ice, mixed together.

TRUTH: The hailstones were the size of bricks.

LIE: The hail killed all Egyptian animals, including those that were taken inside their homes. (Truth is: the hail only killed animals that were left out in the field. Those that were brought inside were spared.

TRUTH: During the plague of arbeh (locusts), Egypt became extremely dark, since the locusts covered up the sun, moon, stars.

TRUTH: The locusts would poke out the eyes of the Egyptians.

LIE: Each locust was able to consume an entire tree in one shot. (Truth is: the locusts destroyed everything that grew, but not one locust per tree.)

TRUTH: During choshech, the Egyptians got stuck in whatever position they were in.

TRUTH: When a Jew approached an Egyptian, the light came with the Jew, yet the Egyptian still could not see.

LIE: During the plague of choshech, (Darkness) the Egyptians were able to light a small fire to be able to see around them. (Truth is: The darkness was so thick, it extinguished any light that was lit by the Egyptians.)

TRUTH: During the plague of makas b'choros, Egyptian firstborn that had already died, came back to life and died again.

TRUTH: 600,000 firstborn Egyptians died on that night.

LIE: Makas b'choros only affected those that were firstborn from their father. (Truth is: all firstborn died, Whether firstborn from the mother or father.)

🔥 *Kedushas Levi — Seen With Love*

The Kedushas Levi emphasizes that Hashem redeemed the Jewish people by seeing their inner goodness. Pesach reveals a Divine perspective that looks beyond flaws and believes in potential.

Gra'amen Composed by My Father - R' Gedaliah Dovid Henry ע"ה over 60 years ago (To the old-fashioned tune of La la la la – la la la la – Tra la la la la la la.)



The Roasted Bone

On the Seder plate is a roasted bone…

Of the קָרְבַּן פֶּסַח it is a reminder alone…

But on the Seder night, it we do not eat…

For the law forbids any roasted meat…

The Three Matzos

Three matzos we have at the Seder table…

So taking two for לֶחֶם מִשְׁנֶה we are able…

The middle one has to be divided…

So half for כּוֹרֵךְ and half for אֲפִיקוֹמָן is provided…

The Roasted Egg

The roasted egg is for another offering…

קָרְבַּן חֲגִיגָה is its name…

Round it is for the sign of mourning…

For without the בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ - פֶּסַח is it the same…

כַּרְפַּס

כַּרְפַּס reminds us of all the tears…

Which the Jews shed for those many years…

At סֵדֶר night when sitting with the rest…

This is eaten not to lose the children's interest…

חֲרוֹסֶת

This delicacy is made of nuts and wine…

With apple and Cinnamon, it's made very fine…

Brown is its colour & sweet is its taste…

To remind us of the Jewish people's paste…

מָרוֹר

To remember the affliction מָרוֹר we eat…

And this we can tell you, it's far from sweet…

They worked by day and rested by night…

But the Egyptians still whipped them with all their might…

Into the walls the baby boys were put…

But I can tell you I'm not pulling your foot…

Some of the baby boys were drowned…

But later on in the caves were found…

The Four Cups of Wine

Four cups of wine we do drink…

Of the four terms of salvation, we must think…

וְהוֹצֵאתִי, וְהִצַּלְתִּי, וְגָאַלְתִּי, וְלָקַחְתִּי at the end…

When out of Egypt the Jews Hashem did send…

The הַגָּדָה

The הַגָּדָה is read on the Seder night…

About the יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם we recite…

But no bracha is made for it…

Because to talk about it, there is no limit…

כּוֹס שֶׁל אֵלִיָּהוּ הַנָּבִיא

And I will bring וְהוֹצֵאתִי …

This is an extra cup you see…

To remind us of אֵלִיָּהוּ הַנָּבִיא …

Who we wait for constantly…

Why We Hide the Afikoman

For two reasons on Seder night matzoh is eaten…

One for slavery and one for freedom of the Yidden…

So, the Afikoman we must hide…

Because the two reasons should not coincide…

לֵיל שִׁמּוּרִים

Opening the door for אֵלִיָּהוּ הַנָּבִיא gives us no fear…

Because לֵיל שִׁמּוּרִים is now here…

When Hashem passed over us on this night…

And saved the Jews from their sorry plight…

Rav Moshe Feinstein

"The haste of the Exodus teaches that when a moment of spiritual opportunity arrives, one must seize it immediately. A Jew must never delay growth."



Igniting Zechus Avos - The Need for Zechus Avos

וַיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת קֹלֵנוּ — Hashem heard our cry.

The Baal Haggadah quotes the *pesukim* **וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹקִים אֶת נַאֲקָתָם וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹקִים אֶת בְּרִיתוֹ אֶת אַבְרָהָם, אֶת יִצְחָק, וְאֶת יַעֲקֹב** — *Hashem heard their groaning, and Hashem recalled His covenant with Avraham, with Yitzchak, and with Yaakov. (Shemos 2:24)*

Our *tefillos* aroused the *zechus Avos*, the merit of our Patriarchs. This *pasuk* from *Shemos* is also the second *pasuk* in the *Zichronos* section of the Mussaf prayers of Rosh Hashanah, a time when we seek to arouse the merit of our *Avos*.

The question is: Why do we need to invoke *zechus Avos*? Why can't we just daven on our own?

The answer is: Because we cannot succeed with our *tefillah* alone. We need *zechus Avos* as well. For this reason, every single *Shemoneh Esrei* that we daven, three times a day, opens with **אֱלֹקֵינוּ וֵאלֹקֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ** — *Our G-d and the G-d of our Forefathers*, referring to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov.

Rambam (*Moreh Nevuchim* 3:43) explains why we merited to inherit Eretz Yisrael: Because of the kindness of Hashem and His promise to our Forefathers; because our *Avos* were perfect in their mindsets, in their cognition, in their *middos*. All the goodness Hashem did for us in the past, all the goodness He will do for us in the future, is due to the *zechus* of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov.

The Need for Tefillah

Well, if that's the case, why bother davening at all? Why not simply rely on the *zechus* of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov?

Because in order to merit *zechus Avos*, we have to be recognized as the children of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. We must resemble our parents if we want *protektzia.*

If we want to be treated like the children of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, we have to *look* like them; we have to *act* like them. We have to glean from their *middos* and try to emulate them.

That's why we need *tefillah*. Because when we daven, we *look* like Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. They cried out to Hashem, and we're crying out to Hashem.

Adopting the Craft

In *Parashas Beshalach* (*Shemos* 14:10), the *pasuk* tells us that the Bnei Yisrael cried out to Hashem: **וַיִּצְעֲקוּ.** - Rashi elucidates: **תָּפְשׂוּ אֻמָּנוּת אֲבוֹתָם** — *They adopted the craft of their Forefathers.*

R' Wolbe elaborates. An **אֻמָּנוּת** is a *craft.* Often, certain crafts remain in families for generations, each son learning from his father and then teaching his own son the family trade. We find this regarding shoemakers, carpenters, gardeners, farmers, jewelers, and many other crafts. The skill is naturally in the child's nature and so it's a given that he will inherit the business.

Tefillah is the *craft* of the Jewish people. Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov plied their trade and passed it on to us.

When we start to daven, that's the one-two punch; we're doing two things when we daven. First, we're davening. Second, we are emulating our *Avos*, which activates their *zechuyos.*

"The purpose of the Exodus was not freedom for its own sake, but to become a nation of kindness. A free people must use its freedom to elevate the world." ~ Netziv (Ha'amek Davar).



The Guardians - bringing Jewish history to life!

📖 A Small Mystery Hidden in a Haggadah

About 200 years ago, a finely printed Haggadah shel Pesach was published in Vienna, one of the many elegant Central European editions produced for the Jewish communities of the region. But at the very end, a curious detail appears.



On the final page, a full shtar mechiras chametz is printed in German. The text is precise, carefully structured, and written with clear legal awareness, yet no author is mentioned. Scholars who studied this edition noted the presence of the document, but could not attribute it to any particular figure. It remained anonymous, almost a technical appendix at the back of the Haggadah.

Yet talmidei chachamim who read the wording closely noticed something unusual.This was not a simple translation from Hebrew into German. The phrasing was deliberate and exact — the kind of formulation that suggests the hand of a major Torah authority.

Later research revealed that the text was indeed written by one of the great rabbinic figures of that era.

The author of the document is none other than the **Chasam Sofer of Pressburg**.



Contract
zum Chamez verkaufen.



Beyond leading the great yeshivah of Pressburg and standing among the foremost rabbinic authorities of his time, the Chasam Sofer also served as the city's rabbi. Each year, in his Shabbos HaGadol drashah, he would guide the community through the practical preparations for Pesach, including the proper wording of the shtar mechiras chametz.

His foremost disciple, the **Maharam Schick**, later testified how important this text was to his teacher, describing it as a carefully crafted legal document that the Chasam Sofer valued greatly and eventually allowed to be printed.

The Haggadah itself was brought to print in Vienna by Ber Frenk of Pressburg, a close associate of the Chasam Sofer, who received the wording of the document directly from him. And the clearest proof appears in the Chasam Sofer's own responsa, where he writes that he himself composed the contract in German and had it printed in the Haggadah in Vienna.

What seems at first like a small appendix at the end of a Haggadah turns out to be something far more significant — a halachic text written by one of the greatest poskim of his era.

The Vilna Gaon's explanation of the letters of "מַצָּה" and the danger of delay that turns it into chametz

The Gra (Vilna Gaon) explains that the difference between מַצָּה and חָמֵץ is one tiny moment of delay — symbolized in the letters themselves.

The Gra focuses especially on the ח → ה shift: The ה in מַצָּה is open, airy, humble. It represents breath, life, and alacrity — the ability to move, to act, to respond.

The ח in חָמֵץ is the same shape as a ה but closed on the left. - That tiny closure symbolizes delay, blockage, ego and spiritual heaviness.

The difference between matzah and chametz is the difference between an open ה and a closed ח — a single stroke. One moment of delay transforms purity into corruption.

Just as a tiny delay turns dough into chametz, a tiny delay in spiritual life can turn inspiration into stagnation.

The difference between success and failure is often one stroke, one breath, one moment.

Zerizus is not speed — it is not missing the moment!

Ramban (end of Parashas Bo)

"The miracles of Egypt teach us that everything in the world is guided by Hashem. Pesach is the foundation of emunah — that Hashem knows, supervises, and intervenes."

Pesach Preparations

Rav Shlomo Wolbe explores the meaning of Pesach preparations (*Alei Shur*, vol. II, page 388).

Rav Wolbe elaborates how each part of the work before Pesach, in cleaning, baking *matzos*, *bedikas chometz* and so on, are all carefully designed to provide for one attuned to spirituality ample opportunities to be stimulated into self-growth, so that he can arrive at the spiritual heights of Pesach ready to absorb and utilize the sacred days and not squander them.



The Address To Which To Turn

One of the most respected men in Brisk was named R' Yisroel Nisenstrok, a man who was not just a great talmid chacham, but also a wealthy and generous community leader.

In time, however, his fortunes turned and he lost his money. He tried valiantly to re-establish himself, but whatever he tried, failed. He was certain that if he had the funding, he could rebuild the business he had lost, and with no recourse, he decided to travel to faraway England and seek a loan from Baron Rothschild.

He gathered together any objects of value he still had and sold them all, using half the money for his trip and leaving the rest of the money to sustain his wife and children in his absence.

The trip took several months, and when he reached London, R' Yisroel started to make inquiries about how he could meet the great philanthropist.

He learned that there was one day each week that the doors were open for those seeking donations, and on the appointed day, he arrived on time, brimming with hope. - That hope turned to dismay when he realized that rather than have a chance to make his of the

baron, he would get a prepared envelope from a clerk, who request sat there receiving all petitioners.

He had spent months dreaming of this moment, planning his every word, but now it became clear that he would not even get to meet the baron in person. As he realized that he wasted a huge sum of money and months of his life, he began to weep, tears coursing down his cheeks.

The clerk noticed that the respectable-looking man was crying, and he politely asked what was wrong.

R' Yisroel told the clerk his story and explained that his entire plan revolved around being able to solicit a loan from the baron, which would allow him to find success once again.

The clerk perceived that he was speaking with a sincere, serious person, and he offered R' Yisroel advice.

Every Friday at noon, the baron came to the office in which they were standing to receive an update on the past week. "If you stand here when he comes, I will try to make sure you get a chance to speak with him," the clerk assured R' Yisroel.

That Friday, the clerk kept his word, and he introduced the visitor from Brisk to the financier. Baron Rothschild was very taken by the distinguished-looking guest, and he invited R' Yisroel to join him for Shabbos.

Over that Shabbos, the baron had the opportunity to appreciate just how scholarly, insightful, and perceptive his guest was, and when Shabbos ended, they sat down for a meeting. The baron asked R' Yisroel how much money he'd had before his downfall. R' Yisroel thought for several minutes, and then said a number. - The baron rose and went into a side room, returned with that amount of money, and handed it to his guest.

"Here, now you are back where you started," the baron said, "and this is not a loan, but a gift."

R' Yisroel was overwhelmed and he struggled to find words to convey his appreciation.

The baron took out a pen and wrote his name and address on a paper, giving that to his visitor as well. R' Yisroel wasn't sure what the baron's intention was: Did he expect a letter of thanks?

As he accepted the paper, the baron explained. "You are a seasoned, experienced businessman and clearly, you are very wise," the baron said, "and yet, you still lost your fortune.

This is because of the bad mazel that hovered over you, and I hope that you have gotten rid of it for good. Still, I worry that perhaps, despite your hopes, this attempt to start again might fail because of that same mazel. Perhaps it is not yet gone, and in that case, you will need help yet again.

"I give you my address," the baron concluded, "so that if you need my help, you should not have to travel all the way here, but rather, you can just write to me and tell me of your situation."

That was the story that R' Yisroel told the townspeople of Brisk, testimony to the generosity and benevolence of Baron Rothschild, who did not just give his money, but also his address in case his help would be needed in the future.

That is precisely what Hakadosh Baruch Hu did and does, not just rescuing us from Mitzrayim and protecting us, but also ensuring that we remember the story - so that we have the address to which to turn if we ever need help again. [**Reb Meilech on the Haggadah**]

Baal Shem Tov

"Every day a person must leave his own Mitzrayim — the fears, the habits, the narrowness that constricts the heart. The Exodus is not a story of the past but a map for the soul."

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE
A PROJECT OF THE Mesorah Heritage Foundation
WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

"Pieces" Of Halachah Kovetz Halachos – Rulings of Rav Shmuel Kamenetzky Compiled By R' Daniel Osher Kleinman



Hiding Ten Pieces of Bread Many have the custom to hide ten pieces of bread around the house to be "found" during bedikas chametz. If one generally follows this custom, but realizes, as he is about to begin the search, that the pieces were not yet put out, he should put them out at that point only if he can do so quickly, with minimal delay. If preparing and hiding the pieces will take a considerable amount of time, he should not do so, as performing the search at the proper time takes precedence.

The one performing the search may put out the ten pieces of chametz himself. Certainly, then, if someone else puts them out, there is no need to ensure that the one searching for chametz does not see where they are placed.

● The Rema (432:2) writes that the purpose of the custom of putting out ten pieces of chametz is to ensure that chametz will actually be found during the search, so that the searching will have been justified and the berachah over it will not have been recited in vain. He adds, however, that ultimately, the berachah is valid even if one did not put out these pieces, since it is recited over the act of searching, to ensure that no chametz remains and eliminating

whatever chametz is found. [See Taz (§4), who offers a somewhat different explanation.]

● Although there are various arguments to be made (see Pri Chadash and Beur HaGra), the Mishnah Berurah ultimately concludes that the consensus of the Acharonim is that placing the pieces is not halachically required. - The Rosh Yeshivah stated that he personally does not put out ten pieces of chametz. He further noted that although the Shaar HaTziyun (§12) writes that there is greater reason to do so in contemporary homes, which are thoroughly cleaned before the night of Erev Pesach and may be entirely free of chametz, this does not mean that putting out ten pieces of chametz before the search is crucial.

● The Brisker Rav did not put out ten pieces of chametz (Haggadah shel Pesach MiBeis HaLevi, p. 28), nor did R' Yaakov Kamenetsky or R' Moshe Feinstein (Arzei HaLevanon).

● Considering that this is not a halachic requirement, one who generally does put out ten pieces of chametz and forgot to do so should not delay bedikas chametz past its proper time in order to put them out. A simple solution is for the head of the household to recite the berachah and begin searching; while he proceeds, another person may place the ten pieces in areas he has not yet reached.

● The Steipler is said to have put out the ten pieces himself (Orchos Rabbeinu, Pesach 5). Of note, however, in addition to the concern of reciting a berachah in vain (see fn 10 above), the Chok Yaakov writes that one reason for putting out the ten pieces is that knowing there is actual chametz to be found will inevitably spur the one searching to perform a more thorough and diligent search. - It is doubtful whether this reason can be fulfilled when the one conducting the search puts out the pieces himself. See Gevuros Eliyahu (O.C. 126:4).

A Wise Man would say: "Our prime purpose in life is to help others. And if you can't help them, at least don't hurt them."

הגדה של פסח

The Tzaddik **Rav Elya Dushnitzer** said a Shabbos HaGadol derashah each year, as is the minhag. One year, he repeated a derashah that he had given a few years earlier and after Shabbos, he wrote it down and asked that it be spread throughout the kehillos of Klal Yisrael.

If this tzaddik and gaon thought it was a good idea for us to learn it, then we should do our best to internalize it.

The pasuk in Megillas Esther (4:17) tells us **וַיַּעֲבֹר מָרְדֳּכָי** which literally means "Mordechai passed by." One opinion in the Gemara (Megillah 15a) explains this to mean that he transgressed an aveirah, so to speak, by choosing to fast on Pesach.

The first question is why he would specifically choose to fast on a day when there is a mitzvah of achilah, to forego the unique mitzvos of achilas matzah and maror and of drinking the daled kosos?

Secondly, the gezeirah against Klal Yisrael was not a sudden decree, but a saga of several years: Why had he not established the fast day at the time in the year during which we traditionally beg for rachamim, during the days of Elul and Tishrei?

R' Eliyahu Gutmacher explains **וּמָרְדֳּכַי יָדַע אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשָׂה** - that Mordechai knew all that had transpired (Esther 4:1), precisely what was going on in the halls of power. - Not just on earth, but in heaven.

He understood that this frightening decree did not come from Haman or Achashveirosh, but from a much Higher Source. He understood that **נִכְתָּב וְנַחְתָּם בְּטַבַּעַת** – 'Signed and sealed with the ring of the King' (3:12), was a decree that came from the Ribbono shel Olam, and a decree with that sort of strength cannot just be overturned.

He understood that even the wellspring of rachamim that opens during the month of Tishrei would not be sufficient - there is only one night in the year that carries the potential to avert and overturn this gezeirah.

It had to be on Leil Pesach, the leil shimurim throughout the generations, the night upon which Hashem chose to make us one with Him.

On that night, בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא נָדְדָה שְׁנַת הַמֶּלֶךְ: The pasuk states the sleep of the king was interrupted (Esther 6:1). The Midrash reveals that this means that the Master of the universe did not rest. He was "busy," occupied with performing nissim for His children. This is not a phrase we often see in Chazal, but on that night, He was creating wonders for us.

Because that is the nature of this night, the potential it carries, and the power every Yid has to ask.

This is the vort that R' Elya Gutmacher shared, but then he added a piece of advice. People should know, he continued, that those facing difficulties in having children or with the children they have, those struggling for parnassah and even those who seem to have no mazel this is the night of nissim! Now is when it can change!

He compared it to someone digging for water in the middle of the desert. They can exert themselves, digging without cease, but if there is no water underground, then all their effort is for naught. But if, in fact, there is water concealed beneath the earth, then their hard work will pay off.

On Leil Pesach, the wellspring of wonders is there for those willing to work and toil to access it.

That was this tzaddik's message for us, so when we prepare for this exalted night, we are preparing not just to remember the wonders of the night, but also to tap into their enduring power. [**Reb Meilech on the Haggadah**]

"The greatest freedom is the freedom to do Hashem's will." ~ The Chofetz Chaim.

Preparing for The Seder

❖ Anger

The first most important preparation for the seder is to prepare oneself not to get angry even once at the seder. Not at one's children and not at one's spouse.

❖ Leaning

In the places that one must lean they are obligated to lean on the left side.

The Halacha is that only a lefty would be **יוצא בדיעבד** if he were to lean on his right. Whereas a righty who leaned on his right is not **יוצא** even **בדיעבד**.

❖ If one did not lean by Matzah

If one did not lean by matzah, he should eat another kizaiyis while leaning without a brachah (even though it is ideal to eat 2 kizaisim while leaning). However, he should not eat another Afikomen if he forgot to lean.

❖ On The קערה there should be the following Six items:

1 – Maror, 2 – Charoses, 3 – Karpas, 4-5 – 2 Tavshilin – one **זכר חגיגה** one **זכר לפסח**. We are **נוהג** to place a **ביצה** and a **זרוע**. (Some place a roasted wing of a chicken) 6 – Chazeres.

❖ The 4 cups of wine

If one normally doesn't drink wine because he can't stand it or gets headaches from it, he must push himself to drink in order to fulfill the mitzvah of the four cups (This does not include if he becomes bedridden because of it).

It is preferred to use red wine, and ideally not mevushel unless the mevushel is better.

Woman are also obligated to drink the four cups in addition to the rest of the mitzvos we do on these nights.

❖ The First Cup

Before one makes Kiddush on the first cup of wine, he should have in mind that he wants to fulfill the Mitzvah of Kiddush and also the Mitzvah of the four cups, because kiddush is included as one of the four cups.

Some have the custom to say **הֲרֵינִי מוּכָן וּמְזוּמָן לְקַדֵּשׁ וּלְקַיֵּם מִצְוַת אַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת.** ("I am prepared to make Kiddush and to fulfil the mitzvah of the four cups").

One may drink more wine after the first cup. However, it is better not to unless there is a real need, due to the possibility of intoxication and then not fulfilling the Seder properly. If one thinks he will drink more, then he should have in mind during the brachah on the first cup to exempt that which he will want to drink afterwards (as mentioned above).

Also, one may only drink after the first cup as long as he didn't ready himself to say the Hagadah, and it is surely prohibited once he has and already filled his cup and started the Hagadah.

❖ Yachatz

The middle matzah should be taken and broken in half in order to fulfill that which the Torah calls it, Lechem Oni (Poor man's bread). The brachah of 'Al achilas Matzah' which will be said soon is primarily referring to this matzah. And the brachah of 'Hamotzi' which is said in the beginning, is going on the top matzah that is placed before him.

It is befitting to save/guard/hide the larger half for the Afikomen. Then, while holding the broken matza raised, in a loud voice one should say 'Ha Lachmah Anya' (in an understood language) etc. until 'Ma nishtanah'.

❖ Magid

Before one starts the Hagadah, he should have in mind or say, that he wishes to fulfill the Mitzvah of telling over what happened by Yitzyias Mitzrayim.

One should not lean while reading the Hagadah, he should read it in a state of seriousness and awe.

When one gets up to 'Dom, Va'Aish, V'Simros Ashan' and the Makos, he should use specifically his pointer finger and not his pinky (As the Mitzriiyim said "It is the finger of Hashem"). If one is finicky, he may spill from the cup.

❖ **Rachtza**

One should wash his hands even though he already did for Karpass, being that the Hagadah was an interruption, and maybe he touched something dirty. However, if one is sure he watched his hands properly, then he should touch his shoe (for example) in order that he should be able to make a Brachah.

❖ **Motzi Matza**

Preferably, once the Brachah for matzah has been made, one should only talk regarding the needs of the meal until he eats Koraich, in order that the brachah of Achilas Matzah and Maror could be applied to Koraich too. However, if one spoke about other things, he doesn't need to make another brachah.

It is only an obligation to eat Matzah the first 2 nights. It is written in the name of the Gr"a, that it is a Mitzvah the whole Peasach, but not an obligation.

❖ **Shulchan Oraich**

Preferably, the meal should be eaten while leaning. One should try not to eat too much in order that he shouldn't come to the Afikoman completely full. If one is so full that he can't stand eating anymore, even if he pushes himself to eat he does not fulfill his obligation, for this type of eating isn't called eating.

❖ **Afikoman**

The Afikoman should be eaten while leaning, and if one forgot, he doesn't need to start over. Afterwards, one should not eat anything, and only drink water.

❖ **Hallel**

It is a Mitzvah to have 3 men by Hallel, in order that one should say Hodu and the others answer the pasuk after. The same by Ana Hashem. This is preferable, but not needed.

Even a katan may lead by Ana Hashem (but not Hodu) in order to train him in Mitzvos, and so he shouldn't sleep.

One may include a neighbor for this, and he may even finish the Hallel there and drink the fourth cup (for Hallel doesn't need to be said amidst a meal, and it's not a problem that the four cup weren't in one place).

❖ **After the Seder**

One is obligated to toil in Hilchos Pesach and Yitzias Mitzrayim to speak of the miracles and wonders that Hashem has performed for our fathers, even the entire night until sleep takes him over.

❖ **Before sleep**

Only Shema (the first parshah or all three, whichever one does normally) and Birkas Hamapil is said before going to sleep, but not the rest of what we normally say at night for protection, because this night is a night of protection (Leil Shmurim).



The Power of the Many

The prayer of the individual is not comparable to the prayer of the many. ~ The Machatzis HaShekel.



בס"ד

למודי משה

Using "Fennel" for Karpas



Rabbeinu Mano'ach MiNavorna on the Rambam (*Hilchos Chometz U'Matzah* 8:2) writes that some have the *minhag* to use a vegetable called *shumar* (שומר) for *karpas* to hint to the fact that Seder night is *Leil Shimurim*.

The *Orchos Chaim* (*Hilchos Leil Pesach, ois* 27) brings in the name of the Ramban, that in some places they have the *minhag* to eat on Seder night a food called *shumar*, known as "*finulyi*" (פינוליי) to hint to the fact that Seder night is *Leil Shimurim*.

R' Zev Zikerman in his *Haggadah, Otzar Pelois HaTorah* (pg. 813) writes that *shumar* is a type of vegetable/herb that grows near the Mediterranean and in English is known as "fennel".

If Seder Night is *Leil Shimurim*, How Come We Have Seen So Many Tragedies Over the Years That Happened on Seder Night?

Throughout history, many troubles have occurred on Seder night. Many times, there were blood libels that happened on Seder night and the non-Jew's would riot against the Jews, and slander that the Jews put the blood of Christian children into their *matzos*. The question that begs to be asked is, surely Seder night is *Leil*

Shimurim, a night where we are protected from bad things, so how can we explain this?

The *Chida* relates that in the times of his teacher R' Chaim Vital *zt"l* on the first night of Pesach someone became lame, and the *talmidim* of R' Chaim Vital asked their Rebbe, "surely the Torah gives us a *havtocha* [guarantee] that Seder night is *'Leil Shimurim'*, so how could this happen?"

R' Chaim Vital answered them and revealed a big secret, and he said that this person had committed a sin that night, and therefore this trouble came to him, as the special power of "*Leil Shimurim*" is only for people who don't sin, however, if one acts on this night the way he acts every other night, and also carries out sins, then for him it is not "*Leil Shimurim*".

R' Yaakov Yisrael Posen (in his *Haggadah Betzilo Chomadati* pg. 7) brings that they asked R' Aharon Leib Steinman *zt"l*, that if Seder night is *Leil Shimurim*, how come so many tragedies happened to Klal Yisrael on this night, such as the terrorist attack that happened in the year 5762 in a hotel in Netanya, where thirty people were murdered in the middle of carrying out their Seder (for those who know these things, thirty is an incredible large amount of people to be murdered in such an attack)?

R' Steinman answered: *Leil Shimurim* means that the night is guarded from *mazikim* such as demons and spirits, like we see in the Gemara that there is no concern of *zugos*, however, it is not a night protected from murderers and vicious people. Along these lines R' Steinman is quoted elsewhere as saying -"*Leil Shimurim* is a night guarded from *mazikim* but not from thieves, for thieves it is like every other night."

R' Steinman adds, that before we ask these types of questions, we should make sure to check that we have done all that is incumbent upon us, before we come with complaints. On the contrary, we should

dance with joy that the Creator of the world protects us, and the situation is not worse.

R' Chaim Kanievsky *zt"l* said that in light of the above we can understand the *Rokeach* who says that the reason Boaz slept in his granary on the night of Pesach was to protect it from thieves. Many ask, that surely the night of Pesach is *Leil Shimurim*, so why did Boaz need to protect his granary? However, according to R' Steinman that it is only *Leil Shimurim* from *mazikim* and not thieves, we can understand.

R' Chaim Kanievsky in his *sefer Tama Dekra* (Rus 3, *ois* 7) asks the same question and gives a different answer. He writes that according to the *Magen Avraham* that if **שכיח הזיקא** – damage is likely, then one must be careful and not rely on miracles, we can say that in the times of Boaz there were lots of thieves around, therefore, he needed to take the necessary precautions and not rely on miracles (this is not like the answer above).

Not Locking the Door

The Maharil says that since the night of Pesach is guarded against *mazikim*, "The doors of the houses are not locked with a strong bolt like they normally are. The main thing is that we have *emunah* and *bitachon* that Hashem watches and guards over us, *emunah* is a great thing, and everything should be done for the sake of Heaven."

However, if damage is likely then we don't rely on miracles, and we lock the door like normal. Seemingly, if one is scared then he may lock his door like normal. If one is guarding someone else's money in his house, he must lock the door like normal. Unless the owner explicitly allows otherwise.

כל דכפין ייתי וייכול : The *Moshav Zekeinim* explains that the reason we start the *Haggadah* in Aramaic is because we don't want to invite the *mazikim*.

שפוך חמתך : The *minhag Yisrael* is to open the door by *shefoch chamoscha*, to show that we are not scared of anything and that we trust in Hashem. We hope that this will help speedily bring the arrival of Moshiach.

Pearls of Wisdom… *A Word for the Ages*

The Sfas Emes taught (Likutei Pesach) that each year on Pesach, every person has the ability to leap and grasp Hashem Yisbarach in single bound, without any opposition from the Satan at all.

Rav Gamliel Rabbinovitch explains that on Pesach, on the night of the Seder, every single one of us can reach levels of Emunah that we could not reach during the course of the year. It is as Shlomo Ha'melech wrote in Shir HaShirim (1:4), '***The King (Hashem) brought me into His chamber***.' - Although one could usually not obtain or reach this heightened level so easily during the rest of the year, however, the night of Pesach is unique, and one is capable of soaring to great heights without the standard progression. The only condition for this is that we prepare ourselves properly by having a sincere desire to come close to Hashem! (Tiv HaEmunah)

Rav Hutner (Pachad Yitzchak, Pesach)

"The Exodus was not merely the removal of chains — it was the birth of a new kind of human being. On Pesach, we do not celebrate freedom from Pharaoh; we celebrate the creation of a soul capable of serving Hashem without fear."

Torah Tavlin - A Series In Halachah The Seder Night - Mitzvos helped by the Seder



As the Yom Tov of Pesach approaches, we begin to focus on one major aspect of the coming Yom Tov; the Seder night. Every year, the Seder serves as a vivid reminder of the miracles that took place when Bnei Yisroel went out of Mitzrayim. All throughout the year, we have many mitzvos that mention and remember these miracles. Every day and night we are obligated to mention them when we recite the final words of Krias Shema.

According to many Poskim, even ladies are required in this obligation. However, this is a very quick, daily mention and for it to be able to properly penetrate into one's consciousness, one needs to have a fresh detailed memory of what had occurred then. Thus, by going through the topic with the detailed description of the Hagadah, one is able to flash back quickly during the year as he finishes Krias Shema.

Also, the two precious mitzvos of Tefillin act as a reminder of **יציאת מצרים**. Therefore, this night helps to perform Tefillin properly the whole year.

❖ Being rested

Both men and ladies should ideally sit down to the Seder well rested. Many people spend countless hours on Pesach cleaning, scrubbing utensils and scraping mixers, etc., when they could just as easily do a basic year-round cleaning and then put these "chometz" items away to be sold with the chometz. This is true even for those who maintain the stricter custom not to sell but rather to destroy "real" chometz . If one finds any part of Pesach cleaning overwhelming, he or she should consult a Rov.

❖ Keeping children happy and receptive

In order to correctly give over the Pesach message of **חירות** - freedom to the next generation, the children must be in a positive and receptive mood. Sometimes though, a sharp word or an angry reprimand from a parent can upset children and "close them up" for the night. For example, they might spill dark grape juice on a "just cleaned for Pesach" carpet or one sibling will grab the afikomen before another. These issues and problems should be anticipated and worked out earlier, e.g. each child will receive a gift for not grabbing the afikomen.

❖ Clear mind

Having a clear mind is a must for this inspiring night. If drinking four full cups of wine will take its toll on one's lucidness and mental ability, he should dilute the cups with grape juice. If one gets stomach-aches or other pain from ingesting large amounts of matzah he should find out from his Rov the exact amount he is required to eat and not add any unnecessary or counter-productive amounts. In many homes, after the 2 Sedorim, the Yom Tov kind of peters out. Ideally, one should discuss the topics of the Hagadah a whole Pesach, especially by all the meals.

Bircas Hailanos - Blessing on the Trees



The month of Nisan is usually the time of year when one begins to see the trees blossoming. When one sees a tree in this early stage of blossom, he recites the beracha: **בָּרוּךְ שֶׁלֹּא חִיסַּר בְּעוֹלָמוֹ כְּלוּם וּבָרָא בּוֹ בְּרִיּוֹת טוֹבוֹת וְאִילָנוֹת טוֹבוֹת לְהִתְנָאוֹת בָּהֶן בְּנֵי אָדָם** This beracha is said only on fruit-bearing trees, preferably the first time one sees them. If he didn't say it at that time, though, one can still say it when he sees a tree at a later time, even after the month of Nisan . One is permitted to recite this beracha alone and on a single tree, however, there is a preference to say it together with others (group of 3 or 10) on two or more trees. This is not considered a "time-bound" mitzvah, but rather a "circumstance/season-bound" mitzvah and ladies should also try to perform this mitzvah. The correct way to recite this beracha is for one to come close enough to the tree to see the beauty of the blossom, and then immediately start to say the beracha from a siddur, even if he is not actually looking at the tree when he recites it.

The Telzer Rosh Yeshivah, R' Mordechai Gifter ZT"L, explains that the purpose of reciting this beracha is in order to train a person to be conscious of all of nature's beauty the entire year, and from it, derive the greatness and kindness of Hashem (sight, beauty, colours, fragrance, sunlight, rain, etc.)



Daughters of the Chasam Sofer zt'l said to their new sister-in-law (wife of the **Ksav Sofer zt'l**), "When our father the Chasam Sofer makes a Seder, his face shines so brightly, it's impossible to look at him." She didn't believe them. She thought to herself, "Ingerishe maasos, Hungarian delusions. I am a Poilisher, and I am wiser than that. " But after she was at a Seder with her father-in-law, the Chasam Sofer, she saw it was true. Years later, she repeated this story to her grandson, **HaGaon Reb Akiva Sofer** (the Pressburger Rav zt'l), and told him that it was impossible to look at the Chasam Sofer's face when he sat at the Seder. "It was like looking at the midday sun."

Similarly, the **Avnei Nezer zt'l** (who was the son-in-law of the **Rebbe of Kotzk zt'l**) said that it was impossible to look at the Kotzker Rebbe's face at the Seder. It glowed with a holy fire on this night. We aren't on this level, but we should learn from the Chasam Sofer and from the Kotzker Rebbe to do the mitzvos of this night with enthusiasm and joy; each person according to his level and abilities.

The Yesod Yosef (85) writes: One who does the mitzvos of the Seder, "with joy, and without any anger, he is the person upon whom the wings of the Shechinah rest constantly, to save him in all places and at all times, and he will merit miracles." We derive from his words that throughout the year, miracles will occur because of the mitzvos performed at the Seder. The condition is to do the mitzvos with joy and without anger.

Rabbi Malcolm Herman - Launching Our Emunah

ואתא שונרא *And the cat came…* (Haggadah Shel Pesach)



For one Rav living in Eastern Europe, his daily routine consisted of him serving as a judge for the local Jewish court, returning home for supper for an hour and then heading off to shul to be available for answering questions. On one occasion, though, as his wife prepared fish for supper, she wished to cool it off before he returned home. Stepping outside, she placed a plate of fish just next to the back door.

As it turned out, the rabbi was not the only hungry one that day. Helping himself to the delicious smelling fish was the neighbourhood cat. When the Rebbetzin returned only a few minutes later and noticed what had happened, she began to panic. "What is my husband going to eat? He needs his supper!" Hearing the cries of the Rebbetzin from the front of the house was Yankel. Concerned that something had happened, Yankel knocked on the door and stood waiting. When the Rebbetzin opened the door, Yankel reassured her that she had nothing to worry about. He would go to the shul and gently relay the news to the Rebbe. In this way, he would not enter the house unprepared for a surprise.

Entering the shul, as soon as Yankel caught sight of the Rebbe, he walked over to him. Noticing that he was being approached during the time he usually headed home for supper, the Rebbe asked Yankel if he could return later. "Rebbe, I have a very important question." "Is it life-threatening?" "It is much more important than that," said Yankel. "I am having doubts in emunah. I can't be left for even an

hour with such doubts!" Hearing that Yankel was bothered by something of such great import, the Rebbe listened carefully.

"I have been learning the Haggadah," Yankel began, "and I came across the passage of Chad Gadya. But I don't understand; something doesn't make sense. As it appears from the story, the goat did nothing wrong. But if so, following the sequence of the passage, the cat who ate the goat was therefore wrong, the dog was right, the stick was wrong, the fire was right, the water was wrong, the ox was right, the slaughterer was wrong and the angel of death was right. But if that is true, it must be that Hashem was wrong. How can that be?"

Listening to Yankel's concern, the Rebbe explained, "Yankel, you have to start the other way. Hashem was right, the angel of death was wrong, the slaughterer was right, the ox was wrong, the water was right, the fire was wrong, the stick was right, the dog was wrong, the cat was right…"

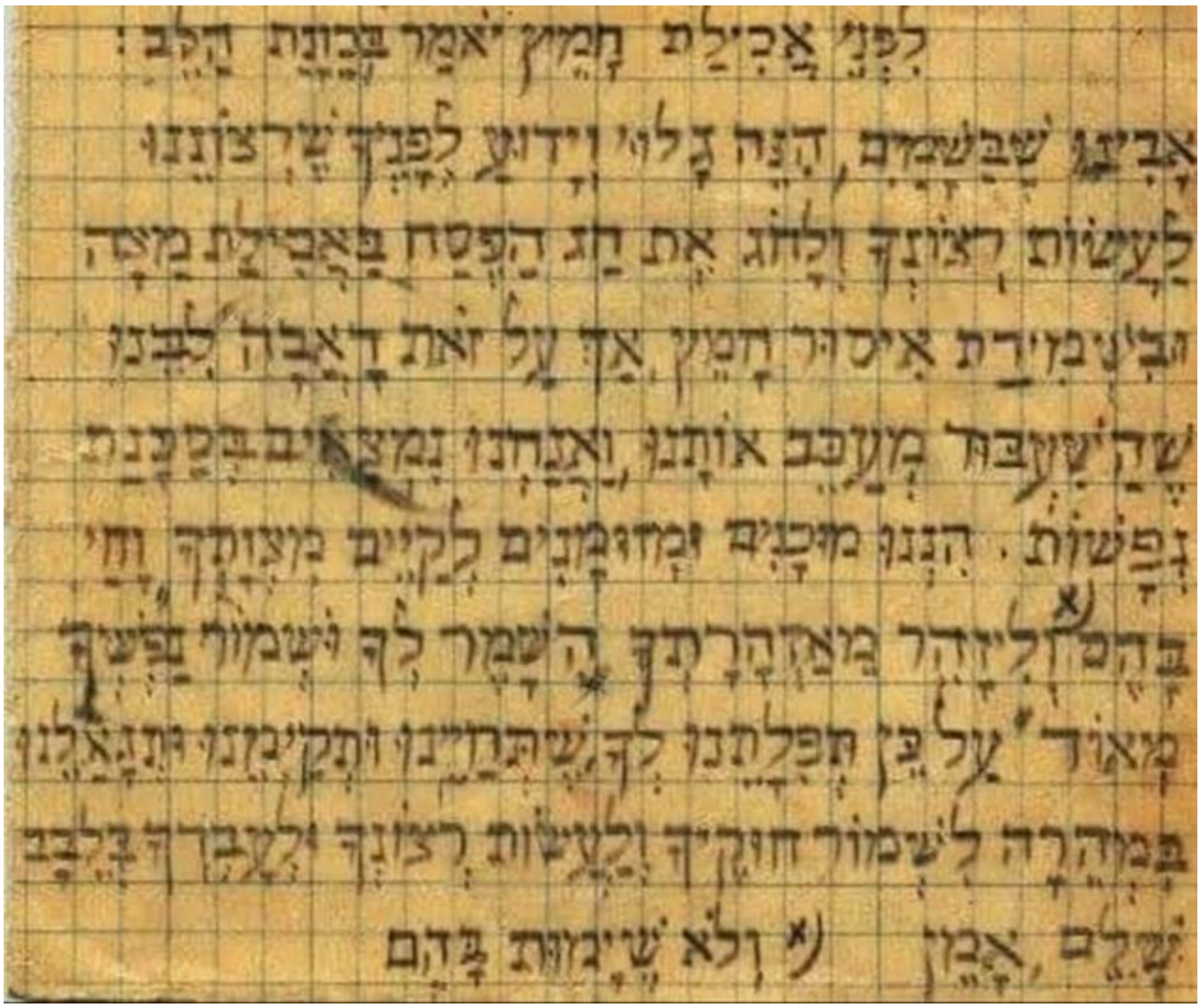
"Rebbe!" immediately interrupted Yankel, "if the cat was right, you have no supper."

The Slonimer Rebbe (Sefer Nesivos Shalom) *writes that the month of Nissan is the month which launches our emunah for the whole year. It is the crucible in which we solidify and anchor our faith. Even though we may sometimes drift off course and struggle throughout the coming months, Pesach night is the time when we calibrate and get into sync.*

Questions and doubts only begin when our emunah is not firmly grounded and starts off on the wrong foot. When that is the case, its entire trajectory will be skewed. But if our emunah starts off from the right position and is firmly grounded, it will carry us throughout the entire year and keep us heading exactly where we need to be.

Bergen Belsen Pesach 1944

This crisply handwritten "Chametz on Passover Prayer" was written or at least dictated by Rabbi Aharon Bernard Davids, leader of the Dutch community of Rotterdam in Holland, and perhaps also by Rabbi Simon Dasberg of Gronigen Holland, for their communities who had been interned first in the Westerbork Holland transit camp and then sent to Bergen Belsen concentration camp.



Before eating Chametz say the following with intent & devotion:

Our Father in Heaven! It is known to You that we desire to fulfil Your will and observe the Passover holiday by eating Matzah and safeguarding against Chametz. But our hearts are pained at the captivity which prevents us, and we find ourselves in danger of our lives. We are hereby ready to fulfill Your commandments

"And you shall live by them (the commandments)" and not die by them, and to observe the caution of "guard yourself and watch your soul/life very much." Therefore, our prayer to You is that You keep us alive, and sustain us, and redeem us speedily, so that we may observe Your laws and fulfil Your will and serve You with a full heart. Amen!

And then these Jews gathered around Rabbi Davids in Bergen-Belsen and ate their meagre ration of bread on the night of Passover.

Rabbi Yissacher Davids was a very Chosheve Rav, a big Talmud chacham and the chief rabbi of Rotterdam. He was in Bergen-Belsen. He knew that the Yidden were going to have to eat Chometz over Pesach to survive. He created this Tefilah that people should say before they eat chometz. I always tell people, keep it on the Seder table. Let the children see and understand how grateful that we have to be, that we don't have to be forced to eat Chometz on Pesach just to survive. ***(Rabbi Paysach Krohn)***

Halacha L'maaseh: Horav Boruch Hirschfeld Ohio

The Month of Nisan

The poskim bring a custom to refrain from eating matzah from Rosh Chodesh Nisan until the night of Pesach. This is in conjunction with the halachah that on the night of the seder, the matzah must be eaten with an appetite, thus prohibiting one from eating matzah on Erev Pesach. Some even refrain from as far back as Purim. During the month of Nisan, it is proper to give money to help poor people celebrate the Yom Tov of Pesach. This is not just charity but also a part of the mitzvah of **ושמחת בחגך** since true Simchas Yom Tov includes making other people happy.

Clean For Pesach and Enjoy The Seder! by Rabbi Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg Zt'l



Preface

In former times, wealthy people who had large houses also had many servants who did their bidding, while poor people, who could not afford servants, lived in small homes with one or two rooms. Understandably, the pre-Passover chores of the rich were performed by the servants, while the poor, who had only their one or two rooms to clean, a few pieces of furniture, a minimum of utensils, and some clothing, took care of their needs themselves.

In those days, cleaning was hard. Tables were made of raw wood, requiring them to be scrubbed or even to be shaven to ensure that no pieces of food were hidden in the cracks. Earthen or wooden floors also needed to be thoroughly cleaned and scrubbed.

Today, we seem to be caught in a trap. The average modern home is larger than formerly. Furniture, utensils and clothing are much more

plentiful. The average home today can compare with the more affluent homes of previous generations. However, we do not have the servants that they had, so that today, all the chores fall on the woman of the home. At the same time, she still feels obligated to clean and scrub as they did formerly, even though she has laminated furniture and tiled floors, making this type of cleaning unnecessary.

As a result of this, the pressure of pre-Pesach cleaning has reached unnecessary and overwhelming levels. The housewife often becomes overly nervous, unable to enjoy the holiday joy of Passover and unable to perform the mitzvos and obligations of the Seder night.

Introduction

Passover, like every other yom tov, must be enjoyed by every member of the family, including women. This is an obligation clearly defined in the Torah as explained by our Sages. We can understand a person dreading Tisha B'Av but Pesach is to be looked forward to and anticipated with joy. Every woman should be well rested, relaxed and alert at the Seder table so that she can fulfil all the Torah and Rabbinic obligations and follow the Haggadah with the rest of the family. Clearly, the performance of her pre- Passover duties must be balanced against her Passover obligations.

Pre-Passover cleaning is required to avoid the danger of transgressing any Torah or Rabbinic prohibition of having chometz in the house on Pesach. ***It is evident from the responsa of the Rosh Hayeshiva that this need not be excessive.***

It is not the intention here to abolish traditions which have been passed down by Klal Yisroel from generation to generation. Nevertheless, some practices adopted by women in the Passover cleaning today are not an actual continuation of the old traditions. For example, if a person does not sell his chometz, of course it is necessary to check his utensils and to wash off any chometz left on them, or to render the chometz inedible. But if the chometz is sold,

then washing the pots, pans and dishes which are going to be locked away is not necessary.

One might be tempted to insist on doing the extra work anyway — to be machmir (stringent). However, in these stringencies lies the grave danger of causing many laxities and brushing aside many mitzvohs completely, including Torah and Rabbinic obligations which women are required to do on Passover and particularly during the Seder.

Many women like to do more "cleaning" than the bare minimum, to such an extent, that some even incorporate their general "spring cleaning" into their required pre-Passover chores. These extra exertions should not prevent them from fulfilling their obligations on Passover, and particularly on the Seder night.

General Notes

All property and possessions must be cleaned and checked to make sure that they are free of all chometz, except in the following cases:

❖ If, during the year, chometz is not brought into a place, that place does not have to be cleaned out or checked for chometz.

❖ Any article which is not used on Pesach does not need to be checked for chometz, provided it is put away properly and the chometz in it is sold.

❖ Crumbs which have been rendered completely inedible [by coating with small amount of household cleaner] to the extent that they are not fit to be eaten by a dog are not considered chometz.

❖ The general obligation to check for and destroy crumbs does not apply if the crumbs are less than the size of an olive and are dirty or spoiled enough to prevent a person from eating them.

❖ The household cleaner (mentioned below) used must spoil the crumbs slightly to the extent that people would refrain from eating them.

❖ It is customary that any item to be kashered should not be used for 24 hours prior to kashering, in order that it should not be a ben-yomo.

Practical Applications

1) CLOTHING CLOSETS: If there is some significant possibility that chometz went into them, they should be checked for fully edible crumbs of chometz, besides large pieces of chometz. If the probability that chometz entered these places is remote, a rav can be consulted to clarify the conditions under which they do not have to be checked. This includes chests, dressers, basements, and all other similar places (see General Note E).

2) FLOORS: We don't have earthen floors with deep cracks in them. It is sufficient for tiled or covered floors to be swept and washed with a household floor cleaner. Cracks and spaces between tiles do not have to be checked if the cleaning solution reaches into them.

3) FOOD CABINETS: If the cabinet is not going to be used on Passover, then you just have to lock it or seal it in a manner that will remind you not to use it on Passover and sell it with the chometz (see General Notes C & E). If the cabinet is going to be used on Pesach, take out all the food and wash it with a rag soaked in a household cleaner. Be sure the cleansing agent reaches into all the cracks and soaks into any crumbs that might be left there. The usual practice is to line the cabinets.

4) REFRIGERATOR: Take the food out, and wash it with a rag soaked in a household cleaner. The racks are usually covered. (It is advisable to leave holes for air circulation.)

5) KASHERING SINKS: Clean the sinks (see General Note G), and pour a kettle of boiling water into them and on their sides. Some people pour hot water mixed with bleach down the drain. The usual practice today is to use an insert, or line the sinks (e.g. aluminum

foil, contact paper). If not difficult, this practice should be followed.

6) FAUCETS (TAPS): Cleaning, without any other kashering procedure, is sufficient.

7) MARBLE AND STAINLESS STEEL COUNTERS: If they were used for hot chometz they should first be cleaned well. They should either be completely covered so that nothing Pesach'dik touches them or (if it will not ruin the countertop) pour boiling hot water on them. Many people do both.

8 TABLETOPS: Wash them with a household cleaner. The usual practice is to cover the tables.

9) KASHERING RANGE/OVEN/STOVE-TOP: Wash the top and side surface areas with a rag soaked in a strong household cleaner. Clean the knobs well. Grates can be kashered by first cleaning them well (see General Note G), then put them back on the stove, and then lighting all the burners, raising them to their maximum heat, putting on a blech while the burners are on. This spreads the heat over the whole top and intensifies the heat on the grates. Let it burn for 5 – 10 minutes. [Be careful that the knobs don't melt.] After kashering, the usual practice today is to cover the stove-top with aluminum foil (being extremely careful not to block the air inlets around the burners and on the back of the stove, as this could create poisonous fumes in the room).

*** OVEN:** If you want to use the oven: (a) First clean the oven well with an oven cleaner (e.g. Easy-Off). Make sure that it reaches into all the cracks and around the screws. (After using the oven cleaner, there is no need for further cleaning). (see General Note G). Then heat the inside of the oven by turning the oven on to its highest temperature for about one hour. (b) If your oven has a turbo option (a fan which circulates the heat), consult a rav about your particular type. (c) After kashering, if the oven door has a glass window, preferably cover the entire inside of the door with aluminium foil.

(d) If a closed oven insert is available, this would be preferable. In this case, only washing and cleaning are necessary. (e) Do not use the chometz-dik oven racks for Pesach. If this is difficult, then one can kasher the racks with the same procedure as for the oven, placing them as close as possible to the heating element.

If the oven is not going to be used: None of the above is necessary. Just make certain that there is no edible chometz inside, tape it closed well and see below #10.

10) POTS, PANS, DISHES, & SILVERWARE (CUTLERY): Whatever is not going to be used for Pesach should either be locked up, or put away and sealed in a manner which will remind you not to use them on Pesach. If there is a possibility of actual chometz in them, the chometz should be sold (see General Note C.). If you do not sell chometz, then they should be either washed or soaked in a household cleaner; it is not necessary to scrub them. (Concerning kashering utensils for Pesach consult a rav.)

11) FOOD PROCESSOR/MIXER: A rav should be consulted.

12) DISH TOWELS: If one does not have a Pesach'dik set of dish towels, then one's regular dish towels may be used if they are washed with a detergent and no food remains attached to them. (It is customary to have a set of Pesach'dik dish towels.)

13) PESACH TABLECLOTHS: These can be ironed with the same iron as is used during the rest of the year.

14) CLOTHES, BLANKETS, POCKETS, ETC.: If they have been washed in detergent or dry cleaned, then there is no need for them to be checked (see General Note E). Otherwise they need to be cleaned and checked thoroughly by brushing or shaking them out well. However, if there is a possibility of crumbs between the stitches or in a hidden crevice which cannot be shaken out, then they must be wiped with a rag which has been soaked in a detergent. Clothes which will not be worn on Pesach do not have to be checked,

but they should be put away and the chometz in them sold (see General Notes C. and Sec. 10 on Pots and Pans).

15) SIDDURIM, BENCHERS, SEFORIM, BOOKS: If there is a chance that they contain chometz, then they should either be put away and sold with other chometz utensils (see General Notes C.), or cleaned and checked well.

16) TOYS: If there is edible chometz, then it should be either removed, or rendered inedible (see General Notes E). There is no need to scrub them.

17) TECHINA & OTHER KITNIYOS (legumes): May be used after the house has been cleaned for Pesach. They should not be cooked in utensils that will be used on Pesach, and certainly not on Pesach itself (according to the Ashkenaz minhag).

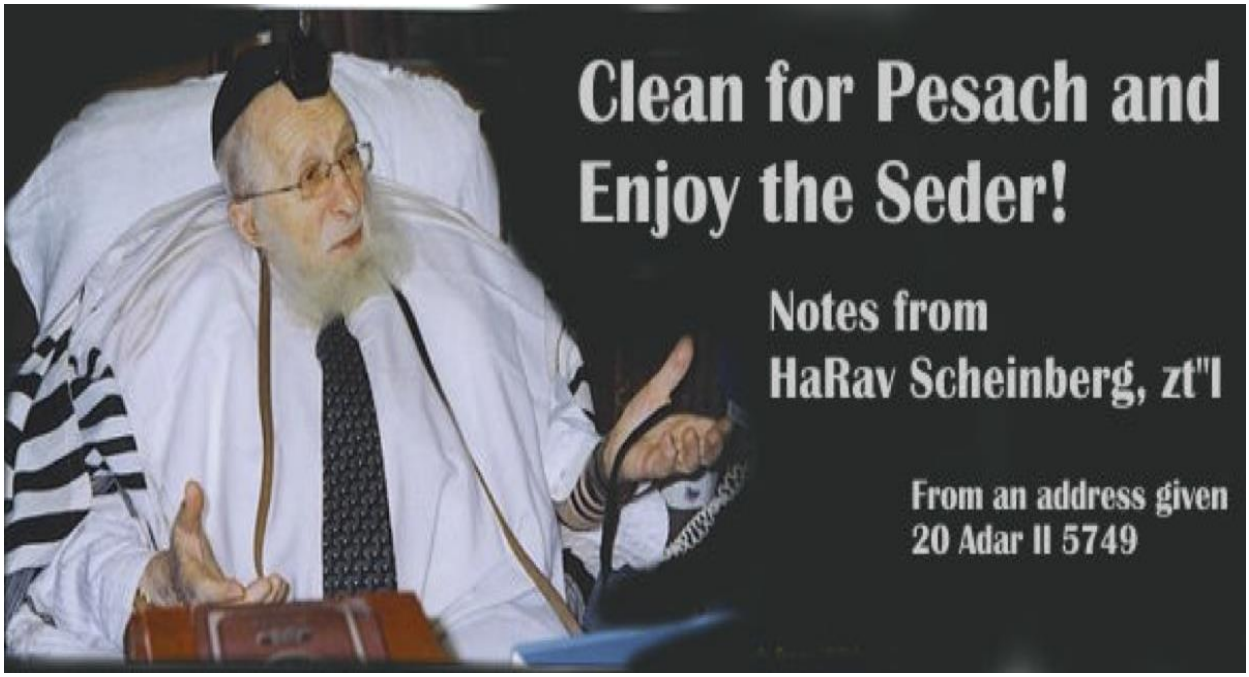
20) LAST MINUTE PREPARATIONS: For example, setting the table, etc., should be completed early enough in the day, so that you will be able to rest a little bit. Be ready to start the seder immediately after ma'ariv, to ensure that the children won't fall asleep at the Seder.

21) ENJOY PESACH! - ***Try to make the Pesach chores easy for yourself. Don't do unnecessary hard work. Don't do unnecessary cleaning. You can be like a Queen and you must enjoy your Pesach!***



The Seder night is called "Seder."

There are four ways to derive lessons from the Torah, **פַּשט סוד דְרוש רְמז**. But on Pesach, there is no **פשט**, simple meanings. Everything is deep and esoteric. Every part of the Seder contains great secrets. At the Seder we eliminate the **פ** from **פרד"ס** we are left with the final three letters, which spell **סדר**.



Seder Advice from Rabbi Scheinberg to Women

Some women have a habit of taking a bite of matzoh, then running back and forth to the kitchen, taking a few more bites in between. In this way, it takes them too long to eat the matzoh, and they do not fulfil the mitzvah properly. The same is true about the wine, maror, korech and afikomen.

Therefore, do not leave the table until you have finished eating the required amount. Sit like a Queen! Relax and be calm while eating and drinking the matzoh and wine within the time limit. The cooking can be checked after completing the mitzvahs. Remember... these are mitzvohs that can be done only once a year, so enjoy them and enjoy the whole Seder. "

Pesach Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

Rav Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik, *zt"l*, the *Brisker Rav*, always wondered why people are so particular to stay awake and learn the entire night of Shavuos, which is a *minhag*, while on Pesach night where there is a clear *Halachah* to talk about *Yetziyas Mitzrayim* the entire night until one falls asleep, people are not as diligent?

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings



Baron Rothchild once invited **Reb Shlomo Bobover** (the first Bobover Rebbe zt'l) to visit his beautiful mansion. Reb Shlomo came, and Baron Rothchild showed him around his home. "And here is the Pesach suite," Baron Rothchild bragged. "Chametz never comes in here. It's Pesachdig all year round." Reb Shlomo Bobover wasn't impressed. "Isn't it important to be careful from chametz?" Baron Rothchild asked. "Of course," the rebbe replied. "So why aren't you impressed with my Pesach suite?" Reb Shlomo Bobover replied, "It's true that you are wealthier than my grandfather (**the Divrei Chaim of Tzanz**) but when it comes to mitzvos, my grandfather was wealthier than you. He would give all the money of the world to do a mitzvah. My grandfather didn't have a Pesach suite, so apparently it isn't a hidur; it isn't necessary."

Reb Shlomo Bobover explained that the point of the Torah isn't to escape challenges. The Torah desires the challenge, the struggle. Hashem wants us to scrub the house and get rid of the chametz. If one makes avodas Hashem too easy, like by moving into a chametz-free environment for Pesach, he misses the point of the Torah.

Reb Shlomo Bobover added, Matzah is made from flour and water, ingredients that could potentially turn chametz if one isn't careful. But good Yidden bake the matzos quickly, before it rises, and then they use it for the mitzvah of matzah. If one would make matzah from rice flour or from corn flour, ingredients that can never become chametz, he wouldn't have matzah. This demonstrates that Hashem desires the struggles, and that we should serve Hashem in those situations.

Minhogim



Seder night is possibly the occasion in the Jewish calendar when the importance of minhogim is at its most prominent. This is reflected not only in the more universal customs, such as removing a small amount of wine from the becher/glass at the mention of each of the plagues, but also in the hereditary family customs that permeate the evening, such as which ho'adomoh item to use for Karpas.

The story is told of a chossid who came early on Erev Pesach to visit his Rebbe and to present him with a magnificent bunch of carrots to be used for Karpas. When the chossid departed, the Rebbe ordered the carrots to be burned with the chometz. Though surprised at this reaction, the chassidim nonetheless complied.

After Pesach had concluded, the owner of the carrots returned, now thoroughly distraught, and insisted on seeing the Rebbe. When he was admitted to the Rebbe's presence, he explained that he was wracked with guilt as his maid had explained that the carrots had turned out to be far superior than the usual crop, because she had watered them with beer, making them chometz. The Rebbe reassured the chossid that he need not worry, as the carrots had been burnt with the chometz on Erev Pesach.

The chassidim who were present now understood why they had been told to burn the carrots but wondered out loud how the Rebbe knew that they were chometz. The Rebbe explained that he had not known at all, but it had never been his custom to use carrots for Karpas, and one should not deviate from one's family custom. Such is the importance of a minhag.

The Haggadah on Many Levels -Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss



The annual holy narrative of the Pesach Seder is a multi-faceted experience with which we should familiarize ourselves so that we can get the most out of this rarified opportunity. The Haggadah makes a sweeping statement, "V'afilu kulonu chachamim, kulonu nevonim, kulonu zekeinim, kulonu yodim es haTorah, mitzvas alenu l'saper b'yetzias Mitrayim – Even if we were all wise, all people of understanding, all elderly, veterans of this experience, and all knowledgeable of the Torah, it is still a commandment to tell the story of the Exodus."

This obviously begs the question: If we all know why the paragraph of *Ha Lachma Anya* is in Aramaic, and what is the answer to the *Four Questions*, and what does *V'Hi She'amda* stand for, and there are only oldsters at the seder so there are no youngsters to introduce its ideas to, why do we have to re-hash it again? The answers to this question shed light on the different angles of the seder experience.

The Rambam and the Ritva explain that the Haggadah is really a Shir of Hodaah, a Song of Thanks to Hashem. After all, Pesach is the anniversary of the Jewish people and as we express, if we weren't taken out then we would still be a lowly Semitic people until this day.

On this level, the Haggadah is not an experience of intellectual prowess nor an educational opportunity, but rather an eloquent chance to say thank you together with our loved ones to Hashem for the fact that He chose us for His nation and gave us His wonderful mitzvos.

This explains why Ashkenazim wear the kittel, a garment usually reserved for prayer, during the seder. It also explains why the Hagaddah is said over the second cup of wine, for song is said over a goblet of wine as it says, "Kos yeshuas esa uv'Sheim Hashem ekra – The cup of salvation I raise and in the name of Hashem I call out." Likewise, certain Chasidic groups even wear a tallis during the seder.

A completely different element of the seder narrative is that it is an integral component of the mitzvah of matzah. For, the matzah is called *lechem oni*, which literally means poor man's bread. It is for this reason that at the announcement of "Yachatz!" we break the matzah, for a poor man usually has only a piece and saves some of that for later.

But the Gemora also informs us that *lechem oni* has another meaning: Lechem she'onin alov devorim harbeh – Bread upon which we answer many questions." Thus, in order for the matzah to be complete, we have to have a question and answer session about the Exodus.

Yet, another facet of the telling of the Exodus is to aid in the fulfillment of the unique mitzvah of the seder night, *Chiyov odom liros es atzmo k'ilu hu yotza m'Mitzrayim*, that one is required on the night of the seder to use one's imagination to mentally visualize as if they were now actually leaving Egypt. Indeed, this is one of the reasons why we drink the four cups of wine (except of course for those who cannot do so because of health issues) for the slight intoxicating effect of the alcohol helps us to achieve this artificial sense of newfound freedom. And, in order to help us experience this imaginative rescue, we must say the narrative of the Exodus, although we are familiar with it, to help us to relive the experience once again.

Another important element of the Haggadah experience is to further accomplish the goal of taking what we know intellectually

and making it a part of our very instinctive behavior and our very being. This is the aim of what we say in Aleinu, "V'yodata hayom v'hasheivosa el levovecha – You should know today and bring it to your heart."

Such lessons, like Yaakov insisting on always remaining a visitor in Egypt which we know intellectually is the correct behavior, we review from year to year in order to remind ourselves that we too are only visitors in America. And, although we know this intellectually, to make it a part of our very persona, we need to repeat it from year to year.

As the Baalei Mussar have taught us the way to make something a natural part of you is to review the idea over and over again, for constant repetition helps to get a theme into our very bones.

Finally, there is another important pursuit at the seder. **Rev Chaim Pulagi, Zt"l, Zy"a**, writes that the Haggadah was written by Rabbi Akiva. As such, it is part of the Oral Law and there applies to it the rule of, "Ein cheiker lisvunoso – There is no end to its understanding."

As such, even if we were all wise and knowledgeable of the Torah, every year we can find many new lessons in the Haggadah. As the great Rav Yecheskal Saran says in the Hagadas Chevron, "Every time we open the Haggadah we can discover new lessons."

May it be the will of Hashem that this year's sedar opportunity should be indeed a multi-faceted and wonderful experience for ourselves and our families, and in this merit may Hashem bless us with a *chag kosher v'sameicha*, and with long life, good health, and everything wonderful.

"The only way to truly conquer desire is through Torah study." ~ Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt - Exact accounting



Since Yosef was sold as a slave, we became slaves in Mitzrayim- measure for measure. So, the punishment for **מכירת יוסף**; the sale of Yosef was the enslavement in Mitzrayim. The following is said in the name of **the Ostrover**: the Midrash informs us there was no enslavement while Levi, who lived the longest of all the Shevatim, was alive. From the time Levi died until we left Mitzrayim, it was 117 years. Only nine of the brothers were involved in the sale of Yosef (not Reuvain and Binyomin). How many years was Yosef a slave for? 13 years, as he was sold at 17 and it ended at age 30. What do we get when multiplying 13 by 9? 117!

Karpas – R' Menachem Dresdner (Age 6)

What types of vegetables can we use for Karpas? There is a Remez as follows:- **כַּרְפַּס**

כ - Carrots

ר - Raddish

פ - Potato

ס - Celery

Getting To The 613



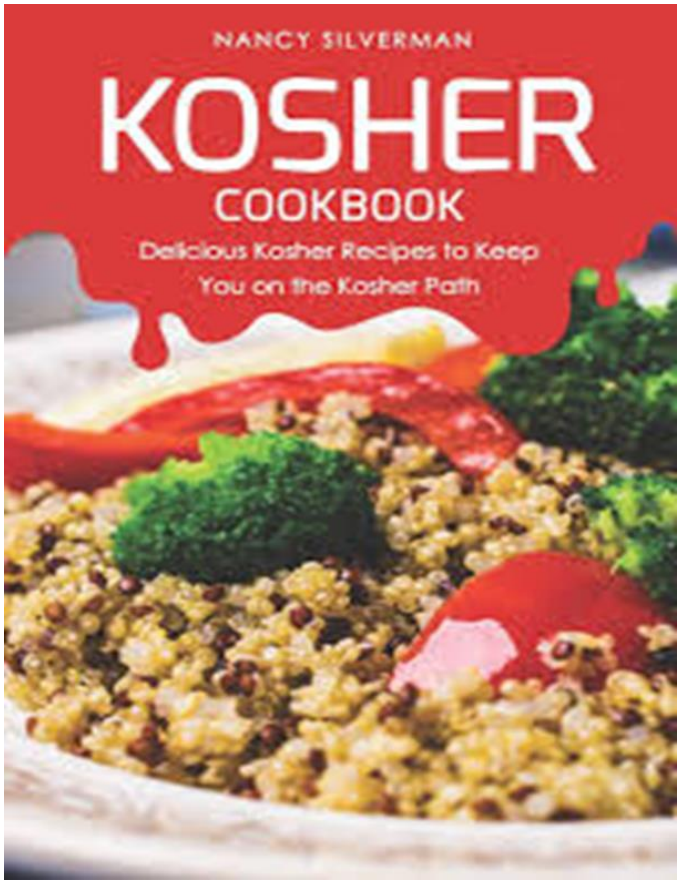
The Pasuk states **מתחת סבלת מצרים**...; I will take you out from under the burdens of Mitzrayim. Taking this literally, let us go under (**מתחת**) the letters of **סבלת** . The letter under... **ס** is **ע** -(70) **ב** is **ג** (3) **ל** is **מ** (40). Below **ת** (400), would be the number 500 since it is the last letter. Adding these together- 70, 3, 40, 500- we get a total of 613! This alludes to that we were taken out of Mitzrayim in order to receive the 613 Mitzvos of the Torah.

It is because we left Mitzrayim that we have the Torah and the Mitzvos. This is why we say **זכר ליציאת מצרים** concerning many Mitzvos since if we didn't leave Mitzrayim, we wouldn't have the Mitzvos. It comes as no surprise that **ועשיתם את כל מצותי** ; perform all my Mitzvos, is juxtaposed to Yetzias Mitzrayim- **אשר הוצאתי אתכם מארץ מצרים** ; Hashem removed us from Mitzrayim to be our G-d.

What is the Yom Tov of Yetzias Mitzrayim called? **חג המצות** ; the festival of Matzos. This can also be read as **חג המצות**; the festival of Mitzvos.

Let us see what we discover when we spell out the word **פסח** fully- **פה, סמך, חת - 85 -120 - 408** If we add this up, we get 613!

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo



Boruch Hashem, we are living in a "book generation." There are thousands of sefarim printed annually on just about any topic imaginable. When one enters a sefarim store it is overwhelming. Interestingly, there are usually an equal amount of kosher cookbooks as there are Haggadahs and books on halacha and hashkafa! Each cookbook boasts the most succulent recipes (gourmet gefilte fish?) with actual real-life pictures that one finds himself licking his fingers when he finishes the book! Rabbosai, we are living in an **FEG** - Food Emphasis Generation! As we embark on Sefer Vayikrah and likewise prepare for Chag HaPesach, we are meant to put the whole concept of eating into its proper perspective.

The gemara tells us that one needs to loosen his belt when he eats a large seudah - except for the korban Pesach, when one is supposed to tighten his belt, because the korban Pesach is the tikkun for all eating. It is the first korban that teaches man what eating is all about. The purpose of eating is to come close to Hashem. It is meant to be a catalyst of appreciation for all the bounty in our lives. Food is supposed to whet one's appetite to create a real relationship with our "Provider" - and not an exercise in gluttony.

Pesach is a time to bond with our families and our Father in Heaven. Leil HaSeder is a night of tremendous inspiration and for this reason, Maggid comes before Shulchan Aruch to put life in the proper perspective. Tzafun , however, comes immediately after the

meal because how a person eats defines who he is really is and thus, the true inner (hidden) Jew only comes out after he eats the meal. So let us become a real **FEG** - Food Elevation Generation and achieve great heights in kirvas Hashem.

Cleaning for Pesach

Rebbe Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev zy'a saw people cleaning and scrubbing their homes for Pesach, and he prayed that all the angels that are being created through that, should rise to heaven, and arouse Hashem's compassion, and bring goodness to the Jewish nation. the Berdichiver Rav said, "May the malachim that come forth from different kinds of cleaning go before Hashem and bring mercy on the Jewish nation." The holy Jewish nation is extremely careful from chametz, they clean their homes and scrub the walls, and all of this is extremely precious in heaven.



The Kav HaYashar (90) writes, "I have a kabalah that when one toils in honour of Pesach, and is tired and exhausted from the work, it kills all the mazikim, demons, which harm people." Before a surgery, people usually have to fast to cleanse their systems. **Rebbe Ahron Leib of Parmishlan zy'a** compared Pesach to a surgery, because on Pesach, Hashem purifies us and elevates us. But an operation needs a cleansing period beforehand. He said that cleaning for Pesach is the cleansing process. Cleaning for Pesach destroys all the mazikim and prepares us for the holiness of Pesach.

חֲסַל סִדּוּר פֶּסַח כְּהִלְכָתוֹ, כְּכָל מִשְׁפָּטוֹ וְחֻקָּתוֹ. כַּאֲשֶׁר זָכִינוּ לְסַדֵּר אוֹתוֹ

Rabbi Pinni Dunner, the senior rabbi at Young Israel of North Beverly Hills, in California, tells over the following: One of the issues that has been coming up again and again in the past week during phone calls I have been having with my community, and with others from further afield, is the fact that people will be on their own for the Pesach Seder this year. It is either that or their Seder will be drastically reduced in numbers, with children or parents elsewhere, all isolated in the midst of the current social-distancing self-quarantine situation, which is so important to prevent the spread of the disease. Some people will literally be by themselves, solitary, with no one to do the Seder with at all. "How can we do a Seder by ourselves?" they ask me. "Doesn't the Pesach Seder need to be done with family and guests?"

Well, let me tell you a story that I heard from **Rabbi YY Jacobson**, the well-known Rabbi and inspirational speaker. Rabbi Jacobson often tells stories about the **Lubavitcher Rebbe zt"L** when he speaks to audiences, so I asked him if he ever focuses on the simple mannerisms of the Rebbe. "For example," I asked Rabbi Jacobson, "do you ever tell audiences that in their sixty years of marriage, the Rebbe and his wife ate every Shabbos meal together on their own? No guests, no attendants, no public spectacle, just a married couple eating together – bringing the food in, eating, clearing the table, doing the washing up. A man who had tens of thousands of people literally at his beck-and-call! What a powerful lesson!"

Rabbi Jacobson paused for a moment, and then he smiled. "I've got one better for you," he said. He told me about a query he received from a divorced woman who was scheduled to have her children for Pesach and she prepared an entire festive Yom Tov, including the 2 Sedorim. At the last minute, plans changed and she was left all alone for Pesach. "Rabbi Jacobson," she said, "I almost fainted from shock and heartache. I was also so ashamed. I guess I could have called my parents and gone to them for the Seder. But how could I actually do

that? I had told everyone my kids were coming! The truth is, I did not have the energy to even be with anyone. I felt completely and totally numb - dry and lifeless. So I did the Seder by myself. On my own. It was the worst and most bitter Seder I have ever had. I just sat there crying the whole way through. Weeping. It wasn't Pesach. It was Tisha B'Av. I did not have to eat Maror. My entire life was Maror. Yes, I went through the Haggadah and ate the Matza; but the entire Seder took me 25 minutes." In her misery, she concluded, "Rabbi Jacobson, did I do the right thing? Did I fulfil my Seder obligation? Was it even called a Seder? Because it did not feel like a proper Pesach."

Rabbi Jacobson responded with a burst of inspiration. "In 1988 the Lubavitcher Rebbe's wife died, and he was left on his own, as they sadly had no children. She passed away in February, and two months later was Pesach. Every year, the Rebbe and his Rebbetzen had a Seder together, but this year he was on his own, totally by himself. Who would the Rebbe conduct the Pesach Seder with?

I recall that a young boy, Ari Halberstam – who was later tragically gunned down on Brooklyn Bridge, in 1994 – approached the Rebbe after Maariv on the first night of Pesach and, on behalf of his mother, invited the Rebbe to his home for Seder. Ari's family lived at 706 Eastern Parkway, just one block away from '770'. The Rebbe smiled at Ari and shook his head. He thanked him profusely but told Ari he would be having the Seder in his private office in '770'." "And so, the great Lubavitcher Rebbe - the man who inspired countless people around the world for their Seders, who personally undertook to provide a meaningful Pesach Seder for Israeli Army personnel who were on duty on the first night of Pesach via his shluchim in Eretz Yisrael – had the Seder on his own. Not one other person was present. As the Talmud says: if you are on your own, you ask yourself the 'Ma Nishtana' questions, and then you answer them to yourself." "A few of us yeshivah boys did not go home that night; we waited outside in the street - and after a couple of hours, the Rebbe opened

the door to welcome Eliyahu Hanavi and recite 'Shefoch Chamascha.' He walked outside, holding a candle and his Haggadah, said the prayer, gave us a wave, and then went back inside to finish the Seder by himself."

"My dear lady," said Rabbi Jacobson, "if it was good enough for the Lubavitcher Rebbe to have the Seder on his own, trust me, your Seder was perfect! The Rebbe could have had his Seder with 100 people, 1000 people, or 10,000 people. He was responsible for hundreds of thousands of people celebrating Pesach on Seder night, from Kathmandu to Alaska, from San Francisco to New Zealand. But at the end of the day, he went and did the Seder on his own. He didn't need anyone else to be close to G-d. He didn't need adulation. He didn't need validation. He sat alone and relived the Exodus from Egypt."

"I was only 15 at the time," concluded Rabbi Jacobson, "but despite my youth, I felt sad that the Rebbe had nobody to be with for the Seder. Why did he not invite even one person to be with him? But today, after hearing your story, I may have discovered the answer - and it is just a personal feeling. As a true Jewish leader, the Rebbe wished to empower all those souls who would ever need to do their Seder alone. He wanted them to know that their solitary Pesach Seder was powerful, meaningful, and real. Jewish history and the Divine presence would dwell at their Seder just as it does at a Seder with many people there."



This year, so many people will be having the Seder on their own or without their families. All of our

Seders will be diminished, and anxiety will be hovering in the air. And all of us will be thinking to ourselves – 'is this really a proper Seder?' I think Rabbi Jacobson's story about the Lubavitcher Rebbe in 1988 answers that question, and it eases any doubts we may have about our impending 'depleted' experience. After all, "if it was good enough for the Lubavitcher Rebbe to have the Seder on his own, trust me, your Seder is going to be just perfect!"

Haggadah By Menachem Leibtag

וְאִלּוּ לֹא הוֹצִיא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, הֲרֵי אָנוּ וּבָנֵינוּ וּבְנֵי בָנֵינוּ מְשֻׁעְבָּדִים הָיִינוּ לְפַרְעֹה בְּמִצְרָיִם.

Had not the holy one, blessed is he, taken our fathers out from Egypt, then we, our children and our children's children would have remained subservient to pharaoh.

This statement seems rather unlikely. The Pharaohs have not ruled Egypt for centuries. Surely over the millennia the Jewish people would have shaken off the yoke of slavery under natural historical circumstances, even if not for the Exodus. There aren't even any slaves anywhere in the civilized world anymore!

The answer to this question, said **Rav Shach** in the name of the great rabbis of the Mussar movement, is that if G-d had not taken us out of Egypt, but we would have gained our freedom through some political or natural process, taking advantage of Pharaoh's magnanimity, we might not have remained enslaved to Pharaoh, but we would have been subservient to him - that is, we would have been beholden to him with a debt of gratitude, which would remain an encumbrance upon us for all time. There is no greater responsibility than the indebtedness owed to a benefactor for his kindness!

Rav Shach himself exemplified this trait in his personal life, as the following anecdote illustrates.

For many years Rav Shach would visit an elderly woman in Ramat Gan and inquire after her welfare, offering to help her in whatever way he could. The Rosh Yeshiva explained the background to his relationship with this woman:

"When I was a child we lived in a little village called Vabolnik. My mother had the practice of spending the entire Yom Kippur in shul praying, straight from Kol Nidrei until Ne'ilah. One year, when I was about 5 years old, I was playing outside, when a band of Gypsies came along and snatched me, pulling me into their wagon as they continued to ride along.



It so happened that several girls saw what had happened, and began to run after the wagon, crying, 'Stop! Thief!' The Gypsies became frightened and threw their 'catch' out of the wagon. Thus, I was saved from being kidnapped and from who knows what other forms of calamity. This woman living in Ramat Gan is one of those girls from Vabolnik!"

Many decades had passed since that incident. Rav Shach had gone on to study in Ponevezh, in Slabodka, Slutsk, Kletzk, Luninetz, Novohardok and Vilna. He had moved to Eretz Yisrael and lived in Yerushalayim and then in Bnei Brak. But he never forgot his debt of gratitude to that woman!

The Beis Yisrael zt'l would use a radish for karpas. He said, "All year round, you're a retach, a radish - tonight you're a mitzvah!"

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings - Emunah



Chad Gadya is sung at the end of the Seder. The final phase of an event is often the climax (as Neilah is the climax of Yom Kipppur). What's special about Chad Gadya; what message is it giving us? **The tzaddikim of Gur zt'l** explain, the goal of the Seder is to teach emunah, and a primary aspect of emunah is belief that everything happens for a reason. Chad Gadya reinforces that lesson. Along came a fire and consumed a stick. One may think that it was by chance, but it was because the stick had hit the dog. But why was the dog hit? It was because the dog bit the cat. The cat was bitten because it ate the goat. Nothing just happened. Everything was for a reason. This teaches us that in life, too, everything that occurs is pre-planned for a reason.

Torah Tavlin

R' Yerachmiel Yisroel Danziger zt"l of Aleksander (Yismach Yisroel) would say: "Matza is referred to in the Zohar as **מיכלא דאסוותא** - a food that heals. Indeed, not only does matza have the ability to heal one who is weak in his belief, but it can literally help a person who has a real sickness.

Even doctors have said that matza can heal a person who has a **חולי ראש**. Through matza one becomes strong in emunah and it heals as well."

The Egg On The Seder Plate



Rebbe Leibele Eiger zt'l explained that when an egg is incubated, it will become a chick. But it will remain an egg when it's kept cold. We place an egg on the Seder plate to remind us that if we do the mitzvos of the night with warmth — i.e. excitement and joy — it will result with many yeshuous. But if we're cold at the Seder — detached and disinterested — it will not have that effect.

Arab Bakery that Observes Pesach? By Baruch Gordon

Non-observant Jews from Tel Aviv would once line up at the Abulafia bakery on Passover to buy bread products. And then...

This is a true story that occurred 47 years ago, and this writer corroborated with the granddaughter of the chief character, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman, in order to write it.

The venue is Yefet Street in Yafo (Jaffa) where Jews and Arabs once owned businesses, one next to another. Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Shtouber owned a shoe factory on the colourful Yafo street, next to the famous Arab-owned Abulafia bakery.

In Israel, almost every supermarket and corner grocery ceases selling bread or any leavened products during the weeklong Passover holiday, in accordance with Jewish law which prohibits bread. Non-observant Jews from Tel Aviv would line up at the bakery on Passover to buy bread products; the Abulafia family worked overtime to supply the increased demand.

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman's tender Jewish soul ached at the site of seeing fellow Jews straying from Passover tradition and indulging en masse in Abulafia's baked goods. He approached the bakery's late owner Sayeed Abulafia with an attractive offer.

"How much profit do you make on the week of Passover," the Rabbi asked. "Passover is our most profitable week of the year," Sayeed answered, disclosing the staggering amount which was equivalent to the cost of an apartment in Yafo.

Imbued with rock-solid faith that he would succeed, the Rabbi told Sayeed that he would organize the exact amount for him, if he would close his bakery for the entirety of Passover. And so it was. Sayeed, closed the bakery, took advantage of the time to do a few renovations, enjoyed the vacation, and didn't lose a penny of profit.

For the next five years, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Shtauber would arrive one week before Pesach with the payoff, and Sayeed agreed each year to close on Passover.

In the 6th year, Sayeed came early to the rabbi's shoe factory to change the agreement: "Our family has had so much profit and blessing from Allah in the merit of our closing on Passover, that there is no longer any need to pay us. We will stay closed without the money."

Both Sayeed and Rabbi Shlomo Zalman since passed away, but Sayeed's grandson who carries the same name, now runs the bakery and honors the same family tradition: "This Arab bakery closes on Passover," says the young Sayeed.



Recently, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman's grandson Chaim Shtauber brought Sayeed a copy of the original agreement between their grandparents. The picture of the two grandchildren standing together in front of the bakery holding the original agreement.

The Beis Aharon zt'l (p.93:) writes, "The six days [of Pesach] are a preparation for the seventh day, for the primary day is the seventh day of Pesach, since that is perfection, the day they said shirah."

Rebbe Mendel of Riminov zt'l said, "I heard from a gadol, a student of Rebbe Elimelech of Lizensk zy'a, who repeated in the name of his Rebbe that the time most mesugal for attaining emunah is the night of Shevi'i shel Pesach.

Partners in Torah – Rabbi Elazar Meisels

Measure for Measure



The Ten Plagues were not merely the imposition of difficult situations upon the Egyptians. Instead, they were carefully calculated to help them realize their evil ways and contemplate repentance. Unfortunately, they chose to ignore the clear messages inherent in the plagues and continued the oppression with mounting cruelty. Here is a brief description based on Medrash of how each plague mirrored the oppression to which the Jews were subjected.

1. Water turned to Blood — They kept the Jews thirsty in the hot sun, now they knew the pain of thirst.

2. Frogs [or crocodiles] — The Egyptians forced the Jews to work at night and deprived them of sleep. The frogs raised such a ruckus that no Egyptian could sleep.

3. Lice — They forbade the Jews to bathe which caused them to suffer from lice. The Egyptians now enjoyed the very same lice experience.

4. Wild Beasts — The Egyptians forced the Jews to hunt wild beasts for them as sport. Now they had an up close and personal encounter with those beasts.

5. Pestilence among the livestock — The Egyptians forced the Jews to become cattle-herders under harsh conditions.

6. Boils all over the body — The beatings administered by the Egyptians caused the Jews to break out in sores constantly.

7. Fiery Hail — The Egyptians took the liberty of stoning Jews. Hailstone rained on their heads in return.

8. Locusts destroying crops — They forced the Jews to tend their vineyards and fields.

9. Darkness — When the Egyptians held their parties, Jewish slaves had to stand at attention, with torches on their heads, to light up the scene.

10. Slaying of Firstborn — The Egyptians, and in particular the firstborn, practiced murderous designs against the Jews. In return, their firstborn were slain.

Minhagim

When it comes to Pesach, almost every home has their customs. Some are careful with gebroks, some don't eat out of their homes, some don't eat certain foods, etc. Sometimes, we don't understand the reason behind the customs; nevertheless, it is important to keep them. If this is the minhag of your family, you should adhere to it. As it states, *"Don't abandon your mother's teachings."* The customs of your home, should be upheld.

The Slonimer tzaddikim explained, "One mustn't veer from the customs of his family, not even a hairsbreadth because if one does, it could lead to falling further and further away from yiddishkeit. The minhagim protect us and keep us in check. When one begins to depart from them, he is liable of falling until he may even transgress grave sins.



One of the people who davened in the beis medresh of **Rebbe Yehoshua of Belz zy"a** didn't want to wear a shtreimel after his chasunah. The rebbe spoke to him about this, and the man replied, "Clothes don't do anything to me. A shtreimel… a hat… they are both the same for me. What is inside the person is what's important." The rebbe told him, "The Gemara (Gittin 60) states that Hashem made a bris, covenant, with the Jewish people because of the oral Torah. Today (in a way) it isn't an oral Torah anymore because the Mishnah and the Gemara were written down. The oral Torah of our times is the customs, because these aren't written down.

Minhagim, therefore, are extremely important. It is for them, that Hakadosh Baruch Hu makes a bris with the Jewish people. You should therefore keep all the customs, even when you don't see a purpose in them."

Reb Shimon Sofer, the Rav of Krakow, zy"a, would encourage his children and grandchildren to steal the afikoman (as this is the custom) because he wanted them to be awake and involved in the Seder. Once, his grandson (who later became the gaon and tzaddik, Reb Shmuel Dov Kornitzer zt"l) was at his grandfather's Seder, and

he asked, "What is the purpose for this custom? It doesn't seem correct, to encourage people to steal the afikoman." Reb Shimon Sofer didn't answer him, he just continued on with the Seder. During the meal, he told his grandson, "You asked a good question: Why is there a custom to steal the afikoman, and why do parents and grandparents encourage it?

The Gemara mentions this custom, as it states: *we grab the matzos,* (Pesachim 109) so the children will not fall asleep, however, we can still ask, why should it be done in a manner of stealing? Aren't there other ways to keep the children awake? I never heard an explanation before, but immediately after you asked me, I thought of an answer. I didn't answer you immediately, because I wanted to teach you a primary principle of Yiddishkeit: We keep the mitzvos and the minhagim, even if we don't know the reason. And now I will tell you the answer that I thought of: In Mitzrayim on this night, when the first born of the Egyptians were smitten, it states, "*For the entire Jewish nation, no dog barked*" (Shmos 11:7) describing the tranquil evening that prevailed for the Jewish people, in comparison to the havoc and confusion that was happening among their gentile neighbours. The Gemara (Pesachim 113) tells us that a person should live in a city where there are dogs, because dogs bark when someone trespasses their owner's property, and thus protect the city's residents from theft.

On the night of yetzias mitzrayim, the dogs didn't bark. This means that on that night theft was possible. (No one stole, but theft was technically possible.) We want to commemorate this miracle (that no dogs barked on this night in honour of Bnei Yisrael) and therefore we steal the afikoman, to indicate that on this night, the dogs didn't bark, and theft was possible.

Although we are discussing the importance of upholding the customs of one's family, it is important to also remember that these remain minhagim and not halachos. It is important to differentiate, and to

know what is halachah, what is a chumrah, and what is a minhag. This awareness is essential, as the following story will demonstrate:

A student of the **Noda b'Yehudah** left the path of Torah and became a priest. After making some inquiries, the Noda b'Yehudah heard that the priest has a set time each day when he relaxes on his porch, and watches people pass by. The Noda b'Yehudah decided that he would pass by at that hour and greet him. If the priest returns his greeting, it would mean that there is hope to bring him back to Judaism. If he will ignore him, there is nothing he can do to help him. He wouldn't tell him anything else because Chazal say: "Just as there is a mitzvah to say something that will be heard, there is a mitzvah to refrain from speaking that which will not heard."

When the Noda b'Yehudah passed by, the priest greeted him first, and they shared a few friendly words together. The Noda b'Yehudah continued on his way, returned home, and then he asked one of his students to invite the priest. The priest arrived soon afterwards. The Noda b'Yehudah came straight to the point. He asked his former student, "Why did you leave the path of Torah?" "Once, on Pesach, I was eating ***teig*** [the custom of that time was that the yeshiva students would eat at the homes of the townspeople] and a kernel of wheat was found inside one of the pots. The head of the household sent me to ask you whether we may eat it. You said that the food is permitted according to halachah, but because of the chumros of Pesach, it would be proper not to eat it. I returned to my hosts and told them what you said. They were G-d fearing people and immediately accepted your psak. They were ready to throw everything out. However, I wanted to eat it so I asked them to leave a portion for me. They did so, and I greatly enjoyed it.

Sometime later, I regretted eating the food. I felt like a rasha for eating questionable food on Pesach. I couldn't stop thinking about my lowliness; how I lost my yiras shamayim for a bowl of food. My depression increased, I fell away from Yiddishkeit, and within time,

as you can see, I became a priest." The Noda b'Yehudah exclaimed, "But I told you that it was permitted. It wasn't more than a chumrah. There was no sin at all! Therefore, from now on regret your sins and return to Hashem." The student did so, and he became a baal teshuvah.

This story shows us just how important it is to know what is halachah, what is a chumrah, and what is a minhag. If this man would have known how to differentiate between them, he would never have felt so devastated to begin with.

A chassan, only a couple of weeks after his chasunah, was at his father-in-law's home for the Seder. They were up to Shulchan Aruch, and the mother-in-law was serving soup to the family. The chassan looked at his bowl of soup, and saw a kernel of wheat inside! He couldn't believe it. "How did that happen, I wonder?" the father-in-law was saying. "I will go to the rav who lives nearby and ask him what to do." The son-in-law, however, felt that he shouldn't eat in this home, even if a rav ruled that the foods are kosher. "I can't eat in a home that wasn't properly cleaned for Pesach," he shouted indigently, and left the home, his shamed wife following after him. With his rude reaction, he embarrassed the entire family, and also his wife.

He took his wife to **Rav Shmuel Salant zt"l**, the Rav of Yerushalayim, to tell him what happened. He was certain that the Rav would praise him for his yiras shamayim, and his readiness to leave the home immediately, in order to be cautious from chametz. The Rav took the chassan's shtreimel, and shook it forcefully. A few kernels of wheat dropped out. The chassan understood what had happened. A couple of weeks before, he was a chassan, and people threw kernels of wheat on him, as per the custom then, and he forgot to clean his shtreimel. He discovered that he was the source of the problem, and not his in-laws. He also learned that although it is important to uphold customs and chumros of one's home, however,

this shouldn't be at the cost of other people's honor. Embarrassing others and inciting a machlokes are sins d'oraysa, from the Torah, and are more severe than minhagim and chumros.

Once, a guest in **Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil's** home was eating gebroks. Someone from the family wanted to stop him, but the rebbe didn't let him. Another member of the family wanted to say something to the guest, but the rebbe signalled to him to remain silent. The rebbe explained, "In heaven, you will not be asked whether you ate gebroks or not. You will be asked whether you watched your eyes, and whether you guarded your tongue from harming another Yid."

מכות צפרדע : Naftali Silverberg



Tzfardeya (frogs) - Even a cup of water which an Egyptian was holding filled up with frogs. The frogs managed to break through walls to get into people's houses. They even went inside some people's bodies and made them impotent as a punishment for banning the children of Israel from having children. According to Rabbi Akiva, there was one giant frog which split in two and each subsequent frog would split in two when struck, until the land was full of them. Why did the Egyptians continue hitting them?

The Steipler Gaon answers that anger completely circumvents logic. The word tzfardeya comes from the Aramaic words tzafra and da (meaning 'morning' and 'know'). The frogs had croaking shifts, and it was clear to all when morning had arrived because the night-shift frogs stopped croaking and handed over the baton to their morning-croaking colleagues. The plague of frogs punished the Egyptians for

preventing Jewish women from giving birth. Jewish women had to give birth in secret and could not scream to alleviate their labour pains. Therefore, the Egyptians themselves were disturbed by the incessant croaking of the frogs. This was also a punishment for the cries of children of Israel after seeing their babies mercilessly thrown into the river.

Four Cups Of Wine



Why do we have a mitzvah to drink four cups of wine at the Seder? It is well known that the four cups of wine were established by the Rabbis to correspond to the four expressions of redemption in the Torah – vehotzaisi, vehitzalti, vego'alti and velokachti. [The fifth expression – vehaivaisi – relates to the time of Moshiach and is represented by the Kos shel Eliyohu.] There are, however, many additional opinions offered for the requirement of four cups. **The Vilna Gaon**, for example, points out that there are four categories of people who must bensch gomel – say a special tefiloh to praise Hashem for keeping them safe.

The Gaon explains that the events of the exodus triggered all the four categories for each of Bnei Yisroel. These are someone who travels across the sea, someone who negotiates their way through the desert, someone who is released from captivity and someone who recovers from a serious illness.

On this last category, the Gaon points out that at the time of Matan Torah at Har Sinai, anyone with an illness was healed. The four cups are thus symbolic of our fourfold obligation to praise Hashem. The

question remains, however. Why did the Rabbis insist on our using wine? Why did they not choose four apples or four food items that might be easier on the stomach than wine, which some people find very difficult to drink in the quantities required for the mitzvah?

An obvious answer is that wine has a chashivus – a highly regarded status – and is often associated with the performance of mitzvos, for example Kiddush, Havdoloh, at a Chuppah etc. Since each of the four cups is a separate mitzvah in its own right, as well as being associated with four mitzvos at the Seder (Kiddush, Haggodoh, Bensching and Hallel), it is not surprising that the Rabbis should have chosen wine for this purpose as well.

There is, of course, a deeper meaning in the choice of wine. Each of the four expressions of redemption is intended to depict an incremental stage in the exodus from Egypt, rather than simply four different ways of expressing the same idea. Similarly, the effect on the individual of drinking each subsequent cup of wine is increased due to the consumption of the earlier cups, leading to a growing feeling of satisfaction that is more representative of the concept of cheirus (freedom).

There is another, even more profound reason for the choice of four cups, and thus the need for a liquid rather than non-liquid food item. The Gemoro in Maseches Yumo [77a] informs us that mido tovo merubo mimidas puroniyus arbah pe'omim (the quality of goodness is four times the quality of punishment).

The Meforshim explain that a cup was involved at the very beginning of our forefather Yaakov's descent to Egypt – golus mitzrayim (the Egyptian exile) – when Yosef placed his silver goblet in the sack belonging to his brother, Binyomin. Since one cup was involved at the beginning of the golus, it is only right that, consonant with the Gemoro's principle, four cups should be involved at the point of redemption, when Hashem's mido tovo came to the fore.

Yachatz



Why do we break the middle matzo? There are many explanations. One is that as it is lechem oni – poor man's bread – we act as a poor man would do. Not knowing from where he will get his next meal, he breaks off a portion of the available matzo and squirrels away the larger part for another time. Also, given the need to eat matzo for the Afikoman, representative of the korban Pesach, it is fitting to reserve some of the choicest matzo selected for the main Seder service for this purpose.

A further insight is brought by the **Bostoner Rebbe ztvk"l**, who points out that the number four predominates throughout the Seder – the four cups, the four sons etc. – corresponding to the four expressions of redemption. So too when the middle matzo is broken, there are then four pieces to connect with the redemption.

Fascinating Insights by Rabbi Yehoshua Alt

R' Binyamin Rabinowitz (*a member of the Beis Din of the Eidah HaChareidis in Yerushalayim.)* was careful to eat the Afikomon before Chatzos. One year, they began the meal (Shulchan Aruch) only 20 minutes prior to Chatzos. As his children rushed the meal so they could eat the Afikomon before Chatzos, R' Binyamin told them to take it slow. He explained that the Rebbetzin worked hard to prepare the meal so she may be upset if it is rushed without being enjoyed. Then R' Binyamin commented, "All the stringencies of the Seder aren't worthwhile if it causes another Jew to groan."

Maran Harav Shach Zt"L On Mah Nishtanah - Why Is This Night Different?



One of Rav Shach's students came to visit him on the first day of Pesach, a few years after he was married. "So where were you for the Seder last night?" asked the Rosh Yeshiva. "We went to my parents' house," he replied. "And did you ask the Mah Nishtanah?" he asked. "No," he answered. "My little daughter did that!" "That's not good," the Rosh Yeshiva told him. "Each generation should ask the one before it. 'Ask your father and he will tell you' (Devarim 32:7). Your daughter should ask you, and you should ask your father."

The procedure for fulfilling the mitzvah of recounting the Exodus at the Seder is done through a question-and-answer format. Rather than just rattling off the facts, the leader of the Seder is presented with specific questions by a child, which are then addressed in the Haggadah.

Even when there is no child present, the Gemara teaches that one's wife should ask the questions to her husband. Even if the Seder is being held by a single individual, he is supposed to "ask" himself the questions.

The reason that this particular method is employed is that it is specifically through this sort of dialogue that information is best absorbed and internalized. This principle is not only part of human

nature but is embedded into the natural world as a whole, said the Rosh Yeshiva.

As the Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 9) teaches, Hashem created several worlds and destroyed them before deciding to keep the present world that we live in. How can this be understood? Clearly G-d did not need to go through a trial-and-error process until obtaining the desired result, like some kind of research scientist. Rather, explained Rav Shach, the world was created for the sake of the Torah (see Rashi on Bereishis 1:1), and in accordance with the dictates of the Torah.

The wisdom of the Torah is transmitted through discussion and dialogue, through questions and answers, through establishing working assumptions and then confirming or eliminating them. It was for this reason that the very creation of the world had to have these processes embedded into it.

The Haskalah Movement

When the Haskalah movement brought its vicious and destructive tactics to bear against G-d-fearing Jews and the institutions of religious Jewry throughout Eastern Europe, they did more than just poison the minds of impressionable Jews against observance of Torah and Mitzvos.

These heretics attacked Judaism itself to the point where people began to lose pride in their heritage altogether, believing many of the lies told throughout the gentile world that the Jews were actually a vile people. Jew turned against Jew and the battle of the minds of our people was in full force.

Things had gone so far, that some even expressed concern that the youth of the coming generation would start believing in the timeless accusation that Christian blood is used for the baking of Matzos before Pesach.



Some of the most renowned secular writers actually defended the "blood libel" with absurd reconciliations to the effect that this could be considered a *quasi-consolation*, for the Jewish people, in that we, despite being a minority amongst the nations of the world, can prevail over the majority and refute them, proving that not everything the nations of the world - the majority - says about the Jewish people is accurate and true. The logic behind this reasoning is flawed beyond belief but those people spoke, wrote and discussed these ideas until they became mainstream. Unfortunately, the damage caused by these secularist positions have had a long-lasting effect for many generations of Jews.

A story is told that one year before Pesach, a simple Jew came to the **Rav of Telz, R' Eliezer Gordon zt"l**, with a simple request. The man and his wife had performed all the prescribed preparations for the upcoming holiday and all its myriad commandments, with punctilious precision. They had scrubbed and cleaned and beautified their home with many added adornments and hiddurim. They were just missing one thing which they hoped the Rav could help them out with: they were interested in knowing about the special esoteric embellishment that was practiced before Yom Tov. R' Laizer (as he was called) looked at the man and did not understand.

"What 'embellishment' are you referring to," he asked, eyebrows raised in curiosity. The simple peasant was hesitant. "Rabbi, you know that special 'hiddur' that Jews do before baking the matzos on Pesach." He lowered his eyes to avoid making contact with the Rav.

"No. I don't know of any special 'hiddur' that is done at this time," replied R' Laizer puzzled. Finally, the man came right out with it. "You know, the Christian blood which the ultra-pious Jews use on Pesach." He shifted nervously from foot to foot.

R' Laizer was appalled! How could a Jew even begin to think that such a hideous practice could be employed by his own people? Without a moment's hesitation, R' Laizer stood up and took the man by the hand. Silently, he led the man to the nearest shul and walked inside. To the amazement of the peasant, the Rav quickly raced up to the Aron Kodesh, and pulled aside the curtain. The man smiled to himself, believing that the Rabbi was about to reveal to him where the classic flask of blood was hidden.

Instead, he was shocked to see R' Laizer remove one of the Torah scrolls and hold it high in his arms. With a voice that was both powerful and defiant, he called out, "I swear by this Torah and by everything that is sacred, that never in all the years of our history, have Jews ever used human blood for any ritual!" His words had the desired effect.

The Holiness of the Matzohs

The Zohar Hakadosh (Chelek 2, 183B) refers to matzoh as a food that heals and helps cure all illnesses.

The well-known chasid, Rav Noach Gad Weintraub (in his Sefer Kaf Chen) quotes Rav Yaakov of Kinov zt"l as saying in the name of Rav Yechiel of Alexander zy"a: "The power of the kedushah of matzoh is that it provides an 'abundance and wealth in one's house' (Tehillim 112:3). It instills great wealth into one's heart without him even realizing it.

A Jew living in darkness doesn't even know it but a great light is shining through the darkness within him."

Haggodoh Insights compiled by Chazan M Simon



Mitzvos Of The Seder

As is well known, there are five primary mitzvos that we fulfil on Seder night:

Mid'oreiso (Biblical)

Telling the story of the Exodus (Sippur) - Eating Matzo

Mid'rabonon (Rabbinical)

Four cups of wine - Eating Maror (in post-Temple times) - Reciting Hallel

However, the Meforshim explain that Seder night is unrivalled by any other point in the Jewish calendar, since a person who is fully involved in the Seder has the opportunity to fulfil a total of 64 mitzvos.

Pesach Thoughts - Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

In Chad Gadya, everything goes in a natural progression except for one step, the stick hitting the dog. How can a stick go and hit a dog? A stick doesn't have free will or innate power!

Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein explained that we learn from here that there is a hidden hand at play here, and this must be referring to the hand of Hashem, which was holding the stick. The author of Chad Gadya was giving us a message, that just as the stick cannot hit the dog without Hashem's direction, so too none of the other steps in the song— nor any situations in our own lives, can happen without Hashem's willing it!

Maxwell House Haggadah



In 1932 C.E. the classic Maxwell House Haggadah was published for the first time by the Joseph Jacobs Advertising Agency of New York City, the latter at that time owned by the founder, Joseph Jacobs. The story begins with Jewish people of Ashkenazi descent (Jews whose ancestors came from Central, Northwestern, and/or Eastern Europe) following a traditional custom not to drink coffee during the Passover festival on the mistaken belief that the coffee bean was an actual bean that therefore fell into the category of legumes, and any food which fell into this category was religiously forbidden to be consumed during Passover.

In 1923 C.E., Joseph Jacobs, an advertising genius of New York City, consulted an Orthodox rabbi, Rabbi Hersch Kohn, to determine if the Maxwell House coffee bean was, in a technical sense, more similar to a berry - a fruit - than a bean and therefore, kosher for Passover, meaning it would be permitted by the Orthodox rabbi to be consumed during Passover. After the Orthodox rabbi issued his approval and certification that the Maxwell House coffee bean was in fact, kosher for Passover, General Foods, with the help of the Joseph Jacobs Advertising Agency, started to market Maxwell

House coffee for Passover to Jews in New York City in 1923 C.E. Sales of Maxwell House coffee during Passover among the Jewish population rose dramatically.

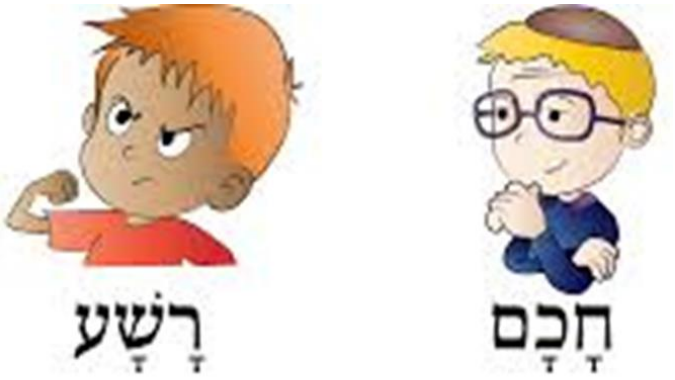
The success of this strategy led Joseph Jacobs to reinforce the kosher-for-Passover message by developing a Haggadah for Maxwell House in 1932 C.E. which, while marketing Maxwell House coffee as kosher-for-Passover to the Jewish population of New York City, was to be printed and then distributed for free to supermarkets across the United States, with free copies of the Maxwell House Haggadah being offered with the purchase of any Maxwell House coffee product, in a clever and successful effort to become a household name among American Jewry.

Orthodox rabbis were again consulted to ensure the accuracy of the Haggadah. Since the Maxwell House Haggadah, noted for its simplicity, was given away at no cost, it became one of the most popular Haggados not only among American Jewry, but also among Canadian-Jewry. In fact, the Joseph Jacobs Advertising Agency still produces the Maxwell House Haggadah and as such, it is now the longest running sales promotion in advertising history, with over 50 million Maxwell House Haggadahs having been printed, making it the most widely used Haggadah in the world, and the most widely circulated Judaica item in the world.

The result of this advertising campaign was that Maxwell House coffee became the preferred coffee in Jewish households. In the mid-1960's, the Haggadah used a more modern English-language translation, and in 1997, the colour scheme, traditionally a blue colour, was changed to a multicolour scheme.

You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt – Leaving the Mitzrayim within us





1) **The Satmar Rebbe** asks why is it called **יציאת מצרים**; Mitzrayim left. They didn't leave, we left! It should thus be called **יציאת ממצרים?**

2) In the Haggada it says **אחד** by each of the four sons- **אחד חכם אחד רשע וגו**. Why doesn't it say it just once?

There is an explanation that the four sons in the Haggada are actually one son. Sometimes one acts wise while at other times wicked and so on. Hence, in the Haggada it says **אחד חכם אחד רשע וגו** meaning it is all one son. Multiplying the word **אחד** (13) by four (the four sons) we get to a sum of 52. This is the numerical value of **בן** alluding to that it is all one son.

Pesach gives us the ability to free ourselves from this contradiction within us and be synchronized with Hashem. Accordingly, it is referred to as **זמן חרותנו**. The word **מצרים** derives from **מצר** - boundary; constraint as we say **מן המצר** ; from the straits. We each have that what limits us- anger, laziness, desires, self-limiting thoughts, fears and the like. On Pesach we can leave our personal Mitzrayim and as we say **קרבה אל נפשי גאלה**; draw near to my soul, redeem it.

R' Nachum Chernobyl comments on **בניסן נגאל ובניסן עתידין ליגאל**; in Nissan we were and will be redeemed, that **בניסן נגאל** is when we left Mitzrayim and **ובניסן עתידין ליגאל** is referring to our personal Mitzrayim.

At the Seder we have three Matzos, which are also referred to as **לחם עני**; bread of affliction. Multiplying **לחם עני** by three we arrive at a total of 624. This is the same equivalent as **חירות**. We also have the four cups of wine. Multiplying **כוס יין** by four we come to a sum of 624, **חירות**. - Is it any wonder that the first letters of the 4 sons as it is spelled in the Haggada- **חַכם רַשע תַם וַשאנו יודע לשאול** - is **חרות**.

We say in the Haggada one is obligated to look at himself as if he exited Mitzrayim. Another meaning is if we look and know our self then it is as if we left our boundaries.

וְהִיא שֶׁעָמְדָה לַאֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ. שֶׁלֹּא אֶחָד בִּלְבָד

One of the highlights of Maggid is the singing of the words **וְהִיא שֶׁעָמְדָה** Loosely translated, it means, "THIS" is what stood by our nation through the trials and tribulations that have befallen us throughout the millennia. Many explanations have been offered for the word **וְהִיא**. Some say it refers to our Emunah. Others say it refers to the Torah.



R' Chaim Yosef Kofman zt"l adds another pshat to this word based on the Gemara (Sota 11) which states: - *We were redeemed in the merit of the women of that generation.* The Gemara elaborates that the women would go out to the workplace and be mechazek their husbands, encouraging them not to despair, but rather to build Klal Yisrael, thus ensuring the continuity of the Jewish people. This strength and ability of the women is a trait that we've seen throughout the generations.

In more recent times, **Sara Schenirer a"h**, Mother of Bais Yaakov, spearheaded a breakthrough that altered the face of our nation.

The Bais Yaakov movement enabled all Yirei Hashem and Bnei Torah to marry and build Jewish homes. But in truth, it is in every home that the wife/mother enables her husband both to daven and set aside time for learning. It is the mother who moulds and raises the children. She is the backbone of the house, albeit behind the scenes. And it is she who deserves the credit. As Rabbi Akiva so aptly put it: **שלי ושלכם שלה היא** - "What is mine and yours all belongs to her."

Thus, perhaps we may suggest another meaning of the famous words of the Baal Haggadah: **וְהִיא שֶׁעָמְדָה** - it is SHE - the women, our nashim tzikaniyos, who have helped our nation survive throughout all the generations. And as husband and wife, may Hashem give us the strength and enormous siyata d'shmaya to build future **דורות** of children and grandchildren, who will bring Him - and us - much nachas.

Vehi She'omdo



"וְהִיא שֶׁעָמְדָה לַאֲבוֹתֵינוּ And it is this, which has stood up for our forefathers and for us".

To what is the vehi referring? The Abarbanel explains, through gematria, that the letters of the word vehi stand for the mishnah (vov = six, which is the number of the sedorim of the mishnah), the chumash (hey = five, which is the number of books of the Torah), the aseres hadibros (the Ten Commandments/Utterances at Har Sinai, represented by the yud, which equals ten) and the aleph, which equals one, is a reference to Hashem. All these things have come together under the control of Hashem to protect us and preserve us throughout the millennia.

שֶׁבְּכָל הַלֵּילוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שְׁאָר יְרָקוֹת – הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה (כֻּלּוֹ) מָרוֹר



The great tzaddik, **R' Yehoshua Leib Diskin zt"l** (Maharil Diskin) began his rabbinic career at a very young age. He inherited his father's rabbinate in the Polish city of Lomza at the age of 25. He later served as a Rabbi in Mezeritch, Kovno, Shklov, Brisk - where he attained the original title of "Brisker Rav" - and finally the holy city of Jerusalem after moving there in 5636 (1876). R' Yehoshua Leib remained in Jerusalem for 21 years. He established the Ohel Moshe Yeshivah and gave shiurim there. He assisted many of those who were building the first settlements in Eretz Yisroel. He was a great Tzaddik, one whose every gesture was dictated by halacha and he took on numerous pious customs which he did not place on others.

One of the many stringencies that he took upon himself due to this pious character was that the Maharil only ate matza on the first night of Pesach; the rest of Yom Tov he would not eat matza for fear that it might contain or become Chometz.

Obviously, this was a huge stringency, and he would not require anyone else to keep this custom. However, personally, for the entirety of Pesach, the Maharil ate almost nothing but potatoes. One year, it was a Shemita year, and it was nearly impossible to obtain potatoes - or any vegetables for that matter - except from gentiles. Although some people were able to purchase fruits and vegetables from the local Arab populace, the holy Maharil refused to be lenient for Pesach and pay money for fruits of Shemita of a gentile. He was very limited in his options, and he wondered where he would get potatoes for Pesach that year.



The Maharil heard that in the surrounding Arab villages, they had potatoes and he hoped to obtain some. He sent his close and beloved talmid **R' Eliezer Don Ralbag zt"l** outside Jerusalem to search the Arab villages for someone, anyone, who will give him a few potatoes for free. He went from village to village until he finally found an old kindly Arab who agreed to give him a bag of potatoes for no money.

Successful in his mission, R' Eliezer wished to hurry back and give his Rebbe the good news, but in his haste, he lost his way. He walked down the road which he thought led into Jerusalem but somehow, he took the wrong path. Looking around, he realized that this way was unfamiliar, and he became nervous. Danger was a constant presence on these small pathways and not wishing to keep walking and getting further lost, R' Eliezer stopped and sat down on a log.

As he offered a heartfelt prayer to Hashem to help him complete his mission, he suddenly heard the sound of someone coming down the road. Completely out of the blue, a Turkish officer, resplendent in his crisply starched uniform, riding a big beautiful horse appeared and stopped to ask him what he was doing so far from civilization. R' Eliezer told him that he had gotten lost and could not get back to Jerusalem. The Turkish officer accompanied R' Eliezer and brought him back to the main road.

With much appreciation, R' Eliezer turned to thank the officer but the man on his beautiful steed had disappeared. Strange as it was, at least he was out of the woods and able find his way back to Jerusalem.

After returning home, he told his Rebbe, the Maharil, about the unusual event. In a holy gaze, the Maharil looked at his talmid and

said that he merited Giluy Eliyahu - a revelation of Eliyahu Hanavi, something only the most righteous people can merit.

The next year, a few days before Pesach, the Maharil wished to buy potatoes from the same Arab. He sent R' Eliezer again just as he did the previous year. When he arrived in the Arab village, he found the same old Arab's home but this time, it looked different. It was freshly painted and fixed up. When R' Eliezer offered to pay him for a bag of potatoes, the Arab refused to take any payment from him.

"You don't understand what's been happening with my crops since last year," the Arab told him. "I have never seen such a blessing in my crop! It is surely because I gave your rabbi the potatoes last year for free!" He was so sure that this blessing came to him due to his generous deed the previous year. It cost him a mere couple of potatoes and now he was the wealthiest Arab in the village!



וְהִיא שֶׁעָמְדָה לַאֲבוֹתֵינוּ

The custom is to recite these words while lifting up the cup of wine. What does lifting the cup of wine have to do with praising Hashem for saving us from the evil doers who mean us harm?

The answer is that when our Sages instituted the prohibition of **יין נסך**, which requires us to stay away from the wine of gentiles, it was meant to keep us away from them so we do not get hurt by them. Thus, we lift up the cup of wine and say, **וְהִיא שֶׁעָמְדָה לַאֲבוֹתֵינוּ**- it was this takana to stay away from the wine of the gentiles that has kept us safe and alive throughout the generations." ~ **R' Meir Simcha of Dvinsk zt"l.**

Torah Tavlin - Concepts in Avodas Halev From The Family of R' Chaim Yosef Kofman Zt"L

מַה נִּשְׁתַּנָּה הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַלֵּילוֹת

Every Yom Tov is a time of joy but sadly, this Yom Tov, many will be mekayem a halacha that is not so common. The din is that a child asks the Mah Nishtana - the four questions, at the Seder table. If there is no child present, the wife may ask her husband. If that is not an option, he asks them himself. This year, unfortunately, many will have to "settle" with having their wives or even themselves to ask the questions. How can we gain some inspiration in this current situation?



Well, first, we must ask why is the Mah Nishtana exclusive for a child to begin with? Many explanations are given; the most common understanding is that everything associated with the night of Pesach is part of **והגדת לבנך** - telling over the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim to our children. Since children understand things clearer in a question and answer format, we tend to utilize that in many ways, especially the four questions of Mah Nishtana.

Perhaps, in our plight, we may suggest a new machshava. Pesach as we know is the chag of Emunah. Emunah, besides faith, can also mean loyalty. A father doesn't lie to a child - the faith, love and loyalty is ever present. Thus, a child turns to his/her father and asks the innocent questions, and the father responds thereby instilling in the child rock-solid faith. We are all "Banim LaMakom" - children of Hashem.

The meforshim say that right before the Mah Nishtana, we say the words: **כאן הבן שואל**- *here is where the child asks*. We, as children, can also ask Hashem for anything, but first He must realize that if we are children, that means He is our Father. And a father never forsakes his children, and everything He does is for our benefit. So. whether we have an intimate "Shana Rishona" seder or it's just you and Hashem - you and your Father - let's all ask for an end to these trying times and to this endless galus.

R' Moshe Alshich zt"l (Toras Moshe) would say: וירעו אותנו המצריים - This is not a correct way to say *'they (Egyptians) were evil.'* Literally, it means *'they made us become evil.'* Indeed, this was the plan of the Egyptians who took their evil to an even further level.



They accused the Jewish people of not being grateful for their 'hospitality,' making us look like the evil ones. We learn from this to always be generous when it comes to giving hospitality, so we do not look like we are accused of any evil."

R' Shmuel Winzelberg- Torah U'Tefilah

It is the custom that when we burn the Chometz we also burn the candle used in the search for Chometz as well. Chometz hints to the sins and the Evil Inclination, and together with the sins we have to burn the accuser that helped to search and seek out the sins of Israel. (Mekor Baruch as brought in Shabbos Tish)

אכילת מצה

The meaning of each mitzvah a Jew does is illustrated powerfully in a story related by **R' Yaakov Galinsky zt"l**. He heard it from one of the renowned poskim, **R' Yitzchok Shlomo Unger zt"l** of Bnei Brak. R' Unger related that about thirty years after the end of World War II, a Hungarian Jew came to him with a question in halacha. The man was shaking, as they sat down to discuss the issue. The man began to share his story. He was a Holocaust survivor. He was sent to Auschwitz in the last year of the war. While there, he slept on a plank of wood in the barracks with another Jew who was a child of tzaddikim. They became very close.



One day, his bunkmate, who somehow kept track of the Jewish calendar in the camp, told him, "In two more days, it will be Pesach. We have no shortage of maror, bitterness here in the camp, but where are we going to find matzah?"

Upon hearing this, the Hungarian Jew was so moved, that he set his mind to somehow find a way to bake two matzos, one for his bunkmate and one for himself. It took much intuition and resourcefulness. He worked quickly, risking his life each step of the way. In the end, he was indeed able to bake two matzos of the proper measure, one for each of them.

On the way back to the barracks, he was hiding the matzah in his clothes, when a Nazi officer saw that he was walking strangely. The Nazi ordered him to stop and put up his hands. He did so, and the matzos fell to the ground, breaking into many pieces. Seeing this, the animal became furious and beat him to the point of death. After he moved on to another victim, the poor, beaten, and broken Jew picked up all of the remaining pieces of the matzah that he could

salvage and hobbled back to the barracks, collapsing upon arrival. His friend helped him take care of his wounds and tried to ease his pain.

The Hungarian Jew told his friend what had happened and showed him the matzah he was able to salvage. His friend begged him to give him the matzah, as he had never missed the mitzvah of matzah in his life. But the Hungarian man refused. He had risked his life and had now been beaten to a pulp in order to fulfil this mitzvah. There was only a drop left of it and he was not going to lose it. He originally made enough for both of them but now that there was only one measure of matzah, he was going to eat it himself at his "Seder."

His bunkmate continued to beg for the privilege to do the mitzvah, arguing that his entire family had been killed already and doing this mitzvah would be a slight comfort. The Hungarian Jew responded that his entire family had also been killed. The bunkmate told him that he had memorized all of the Haggadah and Shir HaShirim and promised that if he would give him the matzah, he would recite it with him. The Hungarian Jew refused, saying that he would forego the recital of the Haggadah and would rather perform the mitzvah of matzah instead.

Broken, crying, and begging, the bunkmate finally said, "I promise you that if you give me the matzah, I will give you my reward of the mitzvah! I will also recite the entire Haggadah and Shir HaShirim with you as well!" Seeing the utter desperation and sincerity, the Hungarian Jew paused to think and then agreed to this arrangement. Things ended better for the Hungarian Jew than for his bunkmate. The next morning, as they were trying to recite Hallel from memory, the bunkmate, overjoyed at being able to eat matzah on Pesach in Auschwitz, was so overcome with emotion that he yelled the beracha of Hallel out loud. A Nazi heard and became enraged. He was shot on the spot.

The Hungarian Jew survived the war, moved to Eretz Yisroel, built a family, and lived in Bnei Brak. This Jew then told R' Unger why he

asked to speak with him. The night before, his old bunkmate appeared to him in a dream, dressed in white with his face shining. He asked the Hungarian Jew whether he remembered him and the matzah he gave him that fateful Pesach. The Hungarian Jew told his old friend that he surely remembered him and everything that happened. The bunkmate then said, "I have received reward for every mitzvah that I did in my life except for that one mitzvah of matzah due to our agreement. Please do me a favour. Please return the reward for that mitzvah to me."

The Jew responded that he could not believe his old friend's audacity. After he had risked his life and was beaten to the point of death, at the very least, he should be entitled to the reward he bargained for in giving up the matzah.

After several arguments back and forth, the dream ended, and the Jew was haunted with thoughts of what he should do. He explained that he came to visit R' Unger to ask if he was obligated to give the reward for that mitzvah back to his friend.

R' Unger responded that this was a question for a Rebbe, not a Rav. So he sent him to ask the question to the famed **Machnovka Rebbe, R' Avraham Yehoshua Heshel Twersky zt"l**, who also resided at the time in Bnei Brak. The man went to the Rebbe, told him the whole story, and asked him what he should do. After thinking for a while, the Rebbe told him that it is proper for him to give up the reward for the mitzvah to his friend. His old friend could no longer do mitzvos, but the Hungarian Jew had lived on and was able to continue doing mitzvos for many more years hopefully until one hundred and twenty. Just for that reason alone, he should do this kindness for his dearly departed friend.

Begrudgingly, the man told the Rebbe that if that was what he is being to do, he would do it. However, the Rebbe could see that the man wasn't comfortable with it. The Machnovka Rebbe told him he had to do it with joy. He should immediately go to a beis medrash,

put his head inside the Aron Kodesh, and "remind" Hashem of every detail of the story. Then, he should willingly give the reward back to his friend. The Jew mustered up the strength and did so. Exhausted, emotionally and physically, the Hungarian Jew returned home that evening and immediately fell asleep, utterly drained from all the gut-wrenching events of the day. In the middle of the night, his friend appeared to him again in a dream to thank him for giving up the reward for the mitzvah of matzah from that night, over thirty years earlier.

The next day, the man came back to R' Unger and told him what the Machnovka Rebbe told him to do and about the subsequent dream. R' Unger responded that he was not surprised. "Imagine," he told the man, "This Jew, who was the child of tzaddikim, surely grew up doing mitzvos his entire life and was enjoying an abode in the highest place in the World to Come. Not only that, but Chazal teach (Bava Basra 10) regarding one who is killed sanctifying Hashem's Name that, "No being has a stature greater than they do in the world above." Yet, with all of that, it was worth it for him to leave that place of ultimate pleasure and delight in Hashem's Presence and descend all the way back down into This World to try to pick up the reward for that one small measure of matzah!" *(Aish Kodesh)*

Rebbe Meir Shapiro of Lublin once said:

"It is customary to place an egg on the Seder plate on the night of the Seder, and the hint here is to the Nation of Israel which is compared to an egg. Just as this egg, the more one cooks it in boiling water or roasts it in the fire the harder it gets, so too the Nation of Israel, the longer and more difficult they find it in exile, the more they constantly hope for the redemption." (Shabbos Tish)

The year 5608 (1848) saw many wild outbreaks of violence in Eastern Europe. Not surprisingly, the Jews were the first victims. Word spread in Szerdahely, Hungary, that a mob of rabble-rousers was preparing to overrun the town on the first night of Pesach, while all the Jews were sitting at their Seder tables.



When the news was brought to the chief rabbi, **R' Yehuda Assad zt"l**, he decreed that all the Jews in town should join together to conduct a large communal Seder. Immediately after davening Maariv on the first night of Yom Tov, all the Jewish families of Szerdahely arranged themselves around large tables in the synagogue's central hall. R' Yehuda Assad sat the head of the main table and spoke words of encouragement to the frightened citizens.

Suddenly, a scout came running in with news that the mob was approaching with murder in their eyes. R' Yehuda sat calmly and told the people to do the same. Then, he stood up and walked outside alone to meet them. Clad in his long white kittel, he walked confidently toward the violent men. As soon as they were in sight, the Rav lifted a shofar to his mouth and began to blow. Confusion overwhelmed the mob, and they began running wildly in all directions. A number of them were trampled to death by their companions' fleeing horses. It was truly a miracle, and the Jewish community was saved.

A statue was later erected on the spot, to commemorate the miraculous events of that night. However, the story does not end there. The town's gentiles were driven to fury by the rabbi's

conniving feat. They decided to take revenge against him. They would attack him and maim or kill him.

A number of criminals waited in ambush in the town square knowing that the rabbi would be coming their way soon. When the rabbi approached, the bakery owner - a violent man - ran out brandishing a huge cutting knife with a sharp blade. R' Yehuda Assad continued to walk toward him, unafraid. Furious, the baker raised his knife with all his might, intending to bring it forcefully down on the rabbi. But a miracle occurred, and instead of piercing the rabbi's body, the knife missed the rabbi and somehow the baker cut off his own hand!

After that, the gentiles' respect for R' Yehuda rose sharply, and because of him they were careful to treat the entire Jewish community respectfully as well. As for the crippled baker, he wandered through the town for years, no longer able to work, warning his fellow gentiles and reminding them of what awaited those who dared harm a Jew.

Parsha Pshetel – Rabbi Yankie Shechter

אדיר הוא יבנה ביתו בקרוב – מהר"א מבעלזא



The site upon which the Bais Hamikdash was built, was given different names by the Avos Hakdoshim. Avrohom Avinu called it, **הר**-mountain, Yitzchok Avinu called it, **שדה** - field, and Yaakov Avinu called it, **בית** -house (Pesachim 88a). This is based upon the Medrash that says that Hakodosh Boruch Hu created this world using His Name, "**מחנה**" – "encampment."

Hakodosh Boruch Hu infused the first wall of the Bais Hamikdash with spiritual powers by endowing it with the power of His Name,

מחנה which is the Gematria of 103. Avrohom Avinu added another wall to the Bais Hamikdash, giving it another 103 – which with the two walls now had a Gematria of, **206– הר** (103x2) with the Kolel. Yitzchok added a third wall, giving the Bais Hamikdash another 103, with the three walls the Gematria of **309– שדה** (103x3). Yaakov added the fourth and final wall, giving the Bais Hamikdash another 103, with the four walls the Gematria of, **412– בית** (103x4). Moshe Rabbeinu added the roof of the Bais Hami dash, adding another 103, through his 515 (103x5) Tefilos in which he was Mispalel to be allowed to enter Eretz Yisroel, the Gematria of **ואתחנן** !

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo



R' Noach Weinberg zt"l was asked to give a beracha to a group of children. He looked at them and smiled. "Who loves you the most?" he asked them. They all answered unanimously, "Mommy." R' Noach smiled again. "No. Who loves you more than Mommy?" The children replied, "Tatty?" "No," he replied to the confused children. "Who loves you more than your Tatty and your Mommy?" The children were speechless. R' Noach said with a hearty laugh, "You know who? HASHEM! That's Who! Hashem loves you more than Mommy and more than Tatty and more than anyone in the whole world! This is the biggest beracha I, or anyone can give you ... that you should always remember how much Hashem loves you!" This is the most important thing that a Yid must know. Hashem loves us all! This is the message of Pesach! May we all enjoy a freilichen and kosheren Yom Tov.

חד גדיא – בן איש חי



The cat ate the kid improperly; he did not have a right to eat it. If that is correct, then when the dog ate the cat, he was justified because the cat should have been punished for his improper actions. That would mean that the stick that hit the dog acted improperly, the fire acted properly, the water acted improperly, the ox acted properly, the Shochet acted improperly, the Malach Hamaves acted properly. If the Malach Hamaves acted properly, then why did Hakodosh Boruch Hu punish him?

While it is true that the cat acted improperly for eating the kid, who gave the dog the right to get involved in that which is not his business? The dog was incorrect for punishing the cat. Hakodosh Boruch Hu had decreed that Klal Yisroel would have to go through Golus. Why were the Mitzriyim inflicted with harsh punishments, when they were just following what Hakodosh Boruch Hu had decreed? Hakodosh Boruch Hu did not say that it would be the Mitzriyim who would subjugate Klal Yisroel. The Mitzriyim had the choice not to be the ones that inflicted pain on Klal Yisroel. Being that they chose to do it, they were properly punished for it.

The Power of one Amen

If a person would realize the power of one "Amen," he would say it with great joy. ~ R' Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg zt"l

חד גדיא – ברכת השיר



The kid refers to Klal Yisroel, and the two Zuzim refer to the two words which Klal Yisroel said when they were offered the Torah, **נעשה ונשמע**.

Perhaps now we can understand the great significance in the Piyut with which we end the Hagadah, and why we keep mentioning the kid. Although the Piyut begins with the kid apparently being devoured, it was not really devoured. The kid represents Klal Yisroel. At times it may seem that the kid was devoured, but as we see at the end, the kid is the only one left standing, together with Hakodosh Boruch Hu. As we end the Hagadah, we must take note of what the night of Pesach is all about.

Hakodosh Boruch Hu gathers all of the Malachim to hear our Shira that we sing to Him. A key point that we can possibly learn from this last Piyut is that everything that happens is actually for our good. We start the Hagadah with that which seems to be bad for Klal Yisroel. This Piyut demonstrates that there is a sequence of events that are required to unite us exclusively with Hakodosh Boruch Hu. What may seem to be bad is also good, for it is what is necessary to bring us to be with Hakodosh Boruch Hu eternally. May we be Zoche to see the ultimate Geulah and be united with Hakodosh Boruch Hu forever.

"With faith, there are no questions; without faith there are no answers." - Chafetz Chaim

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings



At the end of the Seder, when the **Beis Yisrael of Gur zy"a** was taking off his kittel, he said, "Earlier tonight we put on the kittel and now we are taking it off. But there will come a time when we wear a kittel and never take it off."

As a child, the **Imrei Emes zy"a** asked his father, **the Sfas Emes**, why we wear a kittel by the Seder. The Sfas Emes answered, "Yom Tov we wear nice clothing, and we don't want them to become dirty, so we wear a kittel to protect the clothing." When the Imrei Emes was older, he thought about what his father said to him, and tried to understand the meaning. (He was certain that his father wasn't just making a joke.)

The Imrei Emes perceived the following: Pesach, by the Seder, we rise levels and become like a new person. We must be careful to retain this cleanliness, and not tarnish our souls again. We wear a kittel to protect our clean clothing, and this is primarily to remind us that we must also protect the cleanliness of our souls as well.

שפוך חמתך : Yosef Shapiro

Why do we go outside at this one point of the Seder?

The Sefas Emes explains that during makas bechoros, the Yidden were not allowed to go outside as it says in the pasuk "no man shall go out the door of his house till morning "(Shemos 12 ;22). This was because the Yidden did not deserve Yetzias Mitrayim, so we were kept inside so as not to see their downfall.

The Best Seder

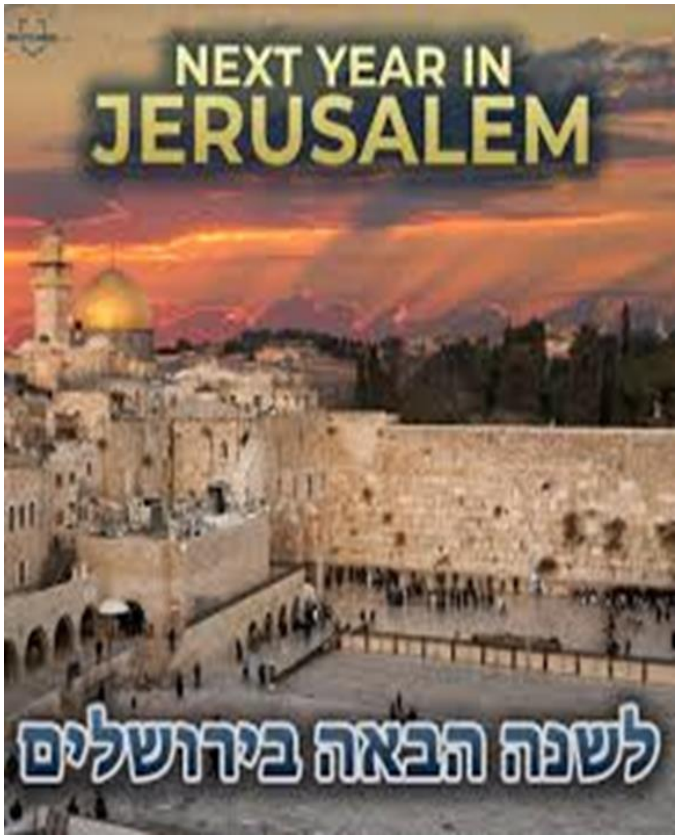


Reb Bertze zt'l (one of the great chassidim of Rebbe Asher of Karlin zy'a) had a custom to prepare the table for the Seder himself. One year, after preparing the table with great love, he left for beis medresh, to daven minchah and maariv of Yom Tov. His wife passed by the table, her apron caught onto the tablecloth, and everything on the table – including the matzos and the wine – toppled over. When Reb Bertze came home, he saw the matzah scattered and crumbled on the ground, the broken wine bottles on the floor, and his wife in bed, moping. She blamed him for what happened. She said, "Why weren't you more careful with the matzos and with the wine? Why did you put them in a place where they can topple over so easily? It is all your fault!" she hollered.

Reb Bertze realized that if he would throw back the blame on her, the dispute would continue throughout the night. Instead, he calmly said, "It is nobody's fault, because everything is from Hashem," and Reb Bertze turned away his focus from his disappointment, and he performed the seder that night with joy and with emunah in Hashem.

The next morning, Rebbe Asher of Karlin was discussing the Sedarim of tzaddikim that were performed that year (which he perceived with his ruach hakodesh, divine vision). And then he said, "But the seder of Reb Bertze was greater than all of them. No one reached the heights that he attained."

Parsha Points to Ponder Compiled by Ozer Alport



At the end of the Seder, we sing **לשנה הבאה בירושלים**– next year in Jerusalem. This is one of two times that we express this sentiment, the other being at the end of Yom Kippur. What is unique about these two occasions that specifically motivates us to pray that next year we should be celebrating in Jerusalem, more than on any of the other Yomim Tovim?

Pesach and Yom Kippur are unique in that they are the two festivals on which we are presently unable to perform the primary mitzvah associated with them due to the absence of the Beis HaMikdash. On Pesach, the central component is the Korban Pesach (Passover-Offering), and on Yom Kippur, the focus is supposed to be the service of the Kohen Gadol to obtain forgiveness on behalf of the Jewish people. We certainly yearn for the Beis HaMikdash every day of the year, and even more so on every Yom Tov, but our present inability to serve Hashem in the proper manner is most pronounced on Pesach and Yom Kippur, so we specifically conclude each of them with a prayer that the following year we should merit observing them properly in the rebuilt Yerushalayim.

"People think that there's much bigger and better things waiting for them out there… They're often mistaken; the real gold is to be found in improving your situation where you are…" – Rabbi Avraham Chaim Tanzer Zt'l

Hashem instructed Moshe (Shemos 12:13) to command the Jewish people to place the blood from their Passover sacrifices on their doorposts to serve as a sign so that He would pass over their houses without harming them. Since Hashem clearly knew who was in each house, why was the blood necessary? (Rabbeinu Bechaye)

Rabbeinu Bechaye posits that the blood that the Jewish people placed on their doorposts was not some magical sign that intrinsically protected their homes from the plague. Rather, the blood symbolically demonstrated the Jews' faith that Hashem would redeem them. They trusted Hashem to the point that they were willing to sacrifice one of the deities of their Egyptian masters and publicly display it without any fear of retribution. It was this demonstration of faith that provided the merit for their protection.

Hashgacha Pratis - Casriel Silver

Pesach is built on Hashgacha Pratis. All the way back when Yosef was sold to slavery (and since the beginning of creation) we have seen how Hashem has been there with us every step of the way holding our hand through the ups and downs. This has built into us an understanding that nothing happens by "chance" and the only one we can truly rely on is Hashem and His divine providence. Consider using this time with your family and friends to talk about Hashgacha Pratis stories that we have each experienced, it's a great way to focus on Hashems constant and unwavering love for us.

I Am With You

Mrs. Gayle Sassoon [*mother of seven siblings who died in house fire in Brooklyn after the tragic fire, sparked when a hot plate used for Sabbath overheated and flames swallowed her Brooklyn home in 2015.*] related a story that recently happened to her. A few weeks before the Yahrtzeit of her children, which was this Rosh Chodesh Nisan, she attended a class given by Rav Avraham Schorr. The Rabbi

discussed the Machasit Hashekel, Half Shekel coin, that was given annually for use in the Bet Hamikdash. The Rabbi said, "The Jews gave with all their hearts, and it was so precious to Hashem. We also have the opportunity to give. Anything a Jew gives up with difficulty for the sake of Hashem is considered a contribution to building the third Bet Hamikdash." When Gayle Sassoon came home that night, she began to think what she could give up for Hashem. The next day, a friend from Israel visited her. Gayle wanted to show her a text message she had just received from someone in Israel. As she handed her friend the phone, the guest said, "I am sorry. I can't look at it. I promised myself I would never use a smartphone. They are taking over people's lives and consuming all their time."

When Gayle heard this, she said, "Wow. I am so inspired. I also want to give up my smartphone. That will be my Machasit Hashekel."



There was only one problem. She was part of a large WhatsApp group, consisting of over 250 women who gave each other Chizuk. Gayle benefited a lot from them, and they benefited from her. Nevertheless, with a lot of strength, she sent a message that she was giving up her phone and would be signing off. Everyone sent her messages back, trying to convince her to stay. The last message she received was, "Gayle, you can't leave. We need you." She replied, "You need me, and I need my children." With that, she gave up her phone.

The very next morning, she received an email on her computer with a link to an article on the Israeli news site, Arutz Sheva. The article reported how, after nine years of digging, archaeologists uncovered a rare seal from the time of the first Bet Hamikdash. The seal bore the name "Eliana Bat Gael," the exact same name as her eldest

daughter A"H. The article stated that, in general, finding such seals is a very rare occurrence. However, finding a seal that belonged to a woman is even more unusual. Moreover, the name Eliana is an unprecedented name; it does not even appear in the Bible. This was Hashem sending His beloved daughter, Gayle, a message from Heaven. "I accept your Machasit Hashekel. The Bet Hamikdash is on its way."

The odds of this combination of names-Eliana and Gael, are astronomical. That seal had been sitting there for over 2000 years untouched. If it would have been discovered a few months earlier, it would have been considered a nice sign. However, being found on the same day that Gayle gave her Machasit Hashekel and having the message waiting in her inbox is nothing short of a miracle. It was Hashem giving her a receipt engraved with her daughter's name for her Machasit Hashekel. He was telling her, "I know how hard it is for you, but I am with you." Gayle was comforted. Hashem is here with us all the time. We don't see Him, but we feel Him. The more we make Him part of our lives, the easier life becomes.

Never underestimate the power of a small deed done with a pure heart. Holiness is not hidden only in monumental moments or dramatic acts; it can be found everywhere – in the quiet, seemingly insignificant, choices we make throughout the day. A moment of patience, a word of kindness, a simple act of generosity.

Intention elevates the moment, and when it comes from a place of sincerity, even the smallest action becomes something sacred. The tiniest spark still carries the same fire as the sun. In the end, it's intention over intensity that shapes a life of meaning and purpose. ~ Inspired by the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov, Rabbi Yisrael ben Eliezer (1698-1760)



Although Hashem commanded Moshe (14:16) to lift up his staff and stretch out his arm over the Red Sea in order to split it for the Jewish people, the Torah relates (14:21) only that he stretched out his hand over the sea in order to do so. Did Moshe also raise his staff as he was commanded, and if so, why is no mention made of it in the Torah, and if not, why did he deviate from Hashem's instructions?

The **Targum Yonason** writes that Moshe did use the staff to split the water. This also seems to be the opinion of **Rashi**. The **Rosh**, **Tur**, and **Rabbeinu Bechaye** explain that the word **הרם,** traditionally understood to mean "lift up" can also be interpreted to mean "set aside," which is supported by the **Medrash**. There were Jews and Egyptians who claimed that Moshe's strength was solely from his staff, which he had used to perform the plagues, so Hashem insisted that he split the water with his hand without the assistance of the staff.

The **Kli Yakar** suggests that Hashem made this point specifically at this time because He wanted Moshe to perform each miracle in the manner it was decreed in Heaven. Because the ten plagues are described as emanating from Hashem's finger (8:15), Moshe performed them using his staff, which resembles a finger. The splitting of the Red Sea is connected to Hashem's hand (14:31), so He wanted Moshe to split it with his hand without the staff.



Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

We should pay attention to what we read in the Haggadah, to acquire these lessons. Someone who reads the Haggadah, and doesn't think about what he is saying can be compared to a person who goes to a doctor, and asks for medicine for a sore throat. The doctor gives him prescription sucking candies. But the patient just swallows the pills and doesn't suck them. Obviously, they don't help him at all.

The same is with the Haggadah Shel Pesach. One should study its words for it to have an effect on him. As Chazal say, **כל המאריך בסיפור יציאת מצרים הרי זו משובח** *,whoever speaks a lot about Yetzias Mitzrayim, it is praiseworthy."*

Sugary Saying With Rabbi Menachem Lomner

"When you understand what you are doing, you enjoy it more."

When we say "*this Matzah*" we lift the Matzah, and the same with the Marror (Gemara Pesachim 116b). **The Rashbam** explains that we lift the Matzah for those present to see, an act meant to make the Mitzvah cherished in their eyes. Seemingly, this means that showing the Matzah while we say the reason for this Mitzvah gives a special flavor to those who "see the light".

We can apply this idea for all Mitzvos. Let's spend a moment or two thinking about the lesson for us from each Mitzvah we perform.

Hashem Echad



There were tzaddikim who used to walk outdoors on the night of Pesach, to listen in on the seder of the simple townsfolk. **The Bnei Yissaschar** was also taking such a walk, and he heard someone say **כְּנֶגֶד אַרְבָּעָה בָנִים דִּבְּרָה תוֹרָה: אֶחָד חָכָם, וְאֶחָד רָשָׁע, וְאֶחָד תָּם, וְאֶחָד שֶׁאֵינוֹ יוֹדֵעַ לִשְׁאוֹל** and when he said **אֶחָד** he said it long and forcefully, in the manner people say **אֶחָד** when they are saying kriyas Shma.

The Bnei Yissaschar went inside to ask the man why he does this. The man replied, "My father told me that one should stretch the word **אֶחָד** . So what's the difference between the **אֶחָד** of the Shma or the echad of the Haggadah?"

The Bnei Yissacher said to the people who were with him, "This yid has turned the four children into the same concept as Shma." This is actually alluded to in the words of the Haggadah, where it says that the students came and said, **רַבּוֹתֵינוּ הִגִּיעַ זְמַן קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע שֶׁל שַׁחֲרִית**. 'it is time for kriyas Shma of the morning. **שַׁחֲרִית** is roshei teivos, חָכָם, רָשָׁע, תָּם, שֶׁאֵינוֹ יוֹדֵעַ לִשְׁאוֹל. This story was repeated to **Rebbe Yehoshua of Belz zy"a**, and he was evidently very excited by the story, though he didn't explain why. His son, **Rebbe Yissacher Dov of Belz zy"a** explained that Chazal tell us that everyone has their mazal. Some are born with a mazal to be poor. Others have a mazal to be a fool and unwise, etc. But by saying echad of Shma, one is able to fix everything that he is lacking, and to even change the mazal that he was born with.

אֶחָד of the Shma is written in the Torah with a large **ד**. There is also a large **ר** in the passuk, **לֹא תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְאֵל אַחֵר** (Shmos 34:14). Often, for children, one will make a large dalet or reish, so the child doesn't

confuse them. The Torah is telling us that we too shouldn't be confused, and we should know that **ה' אחד**, Hashem is One, and He does everything.

Vehigadita Lavincha



Rebbe Meir of Dzikiv zy"a in Imrei No'am explains that in general, it is good for a person to conceal his good deeds and not to publicize them. However, it is proper to show your good deeds to your children so they can learn from him.

This is the meaning of the passuk, **מה רב טובך**, most of your good deeds, **אשר צפנת ליראיך**, you should conceal. **פעלת לחוסים בך** when should you reveal them? **נגד בני אדם** in front of your children. (Tehillim 31:20)

This idea is alluded to by yachatz. We hide the larger half of the matzah, implying that we should conceal the majority of our good deeds. But the children customarily grab away this large half of the afikomon. Because on the night of the seder, when we instil emunah in the children, it is proper to reveal even the half which is generally concealed, so the children can learn from it and follow in their parents ways.

On the words **והגדת לבנך**, Unkelos writes **ותחוי לבנך**, show your children. It is a night when we show the generally concealed matters.

Vehigadita Lavincha



Rebbe Yissacher Dov of Belz zy"a says that since we are Hashem's children, Hashem will also perform with us the mitzvah of vehigadita levinacha. He will tell us the story of yetzias Mitzrayim, and open our heart to emunah. When Hashem teaches us about yetzias Mitzrayim, we are able to perceive matters that we couldn't understand before. The Mishnah says, "The father should teach his son, according to his son's capabilities."But when our Father in heaven teaches us about yetzias Mitzrayim, He is able to give over even those matters that we weren't capable of understanding beforehand.

Rebbe Yissacher Dov of Belz zy"a said that this is alluded to in the Haggadah, **וְשֶׁאֵינוֹ יוֹדֵעַ לִשְׁאוֹל – אַתְּ פְּתַח לוֹ**. Even those who have limited knowledge, and they don't even know how to ask questions, Hashem can open their mind, and enable them to grasp ideas of emunah, that are generally beyond their limits.

"The story of Pesach teaches us that Hashem has the power to redeem us from any situation, no matter how dire. We must trust in His plan and have faith that He will guide us through difficult times. – Rabbi Moshe Feinstein.

Burning the Chametz



On erev Pesach, we should experience a mixture of fear and joy. Joy, because it is the day we brought a korban pesach, and fear of Hashem, as we cleanse ourselves from chametz. Cleansing ourselves from chametz in the literal sense, and also figuratively, to cleanse ourselves from the yetzer hara. When we burn the chametz, the bad of the world also becomes destroyed, and the world becomes purer. Therefore, it is an ideal time for tefillah.

When **Rebbe Aharon Chernobler** was about to burn his chametz, he said, "Some people think we annul gezeiros with money, but this is a mistake. Now, when we burn the chametz, we can annul all types of cruel decrees."

אז רוב ניסים הפלאת בלילה The Targum Yonoson writes, "Yitzchak called his older son, Eisav, on the fourteenth of Nissan and said, 'Tonight [the first night of Pesach] all angels praise the Creator… and the treasure rooms of heaven are opened. (Bereishis 27:1) Similarly, in (Pirkei d'Reb Eliezer it says that on the Seder Night, the gates of shefa (abundance) are opened. In all generations, the Jewish nation received miracles and salvations on this night. This began with Avraham Avinu, who fought against four kings on this night, and emerged victorious. **הקב"ה** came in a dream to Yaakov Avinu (and told him to leave Lavan's house), the army of Sancheriv was destroyed, and many other miracles happened on the first night of Pesach. As the Midrash states, "Their G-d is accustomed to perform miracles for them, on this night." Because on the night of the seder, Hashem leads the world beyond the rules of nature, and therefore everyone can change his mazal for the better.

This is alluded by yachatz. The round matzah represents the round world, where everything seems to run according to nature. We break it, because on this night we can change the routine of nature and create a new reality. All customs and all halachos of the seder have great sources, and they arouse many salvations. It is beyond our ability to grasp, all that we accomplish on this night. Even in heaven, great things occur because of the seder that we perform here below. **The Tiferes Shlomo** writes, "It is impossible to imagine the great spirituality that is brought into heaven, because of the seder that yidden perform, by eating the matzah and marror, and by telling the story of yetzias Mitzrayim from the Hagadah."

The gemara tells us that Mordechai declared a day of fasting on this night, as it says **ויעבור מרדכי** he transgressed the Yom Tov and told people to fast. (Megilah 15). But why did he do so? It was still a year before Haman's evil plan was to take affect (on the 13th of Adar). Wouldn't it be better to fast after Pesach?

The Tiferes Shlomo answers, "Mordechai was wise to prevent the yidden from making the seder. Because when they didn't make the seder it created a tumult in heaven and in all the worlds…" and it provoked the angels in heaven to realize just how much they need Klal Yisrael. The existence of the world is dependent on the seder.

To describe the potential of the seder night, **Reb Elyah Gutmacher zt"l** told the following mashal: Someone was surrounded by four high walls, with no way to get away. If there would be a tiny breach in one of the walls, he could hammer at this aperture until it widens and he can escape. The Seder night provides us with this small opening. Everyone has walls surrounding them. For some it is the lack parnassah, for others it is health issues, family strife, etc. rachmana litzlan. They feel imprisoned. But by the seder, there is a breach in the walls. If we pound on this opening (by taking advantage of this holy time) it can open wide, and things can change.



A Pesach Parable By Rebbe Nachman of Breslov

Once a Jew and a German gentile were travelling together as hobos. The Jew told the German to make believe that he was a Jew (since his language was similar [to Yiddish]), and the Jews would have pity on him. Since Pesach was approaching, the Jew taught him how to act (when he is invited to a Seder). He told him that at every Seder, Kiddush is made and the hands are washed. However, he forgot to tell him about the bitter herb. The German was invited to a house on the first night of Pesach and, being very hungry from all day, looked forward to the fine foods that had been described by the Jew. First, they gave him a piece of celery dipped in salt water, and other things served at the Seder. Then they began to recite the Haggadah, and he sat there longing for the meal. When the matzah was served, he was very happy. Then they gave him a piece of horseradish for the bitter herb. It was bitter to taste, and he thought that this was the entire meal. He ran from the house, bitter and hungry, saying to himself, "Cursed Jews! After all that ceremony, that's all they serve to eat!"

He went to the synagogue where he had made up to meet his partner and fell asleep. After a while the Jew arrived, happy and full from a good meal. "How was your Seder?" he asked. The other told him what had happened.

"Stupid German!" replied the Jew. "If you had waited just a little longer, you would have had a fine meal, as I had." The same is true when one wants to come close to G-d. After all the effort to begin, one is given a little bitterness. This bitterness is needed to purify the body. But a person may think that this bitterness is all there is

to serving G-d, so he runs away from it. But if he waited a short while and allowed his body to be purified, then he would feel every joy and delight in the world in his closeness to G-d. *(Rabbi Nachman's Stories, Parable #23)*

Matzah



Tzaddikim of all generations looked forward to the seder, when they would perform the mitzvah of achilas matzah with holiness. They made many hachanos (preparations) to do this mitzvah in the best way possible. However, this mitzvah wasn't given only to tzaddikim. HaKadosh Baruch Hu accepts and loves when this mitzvah is performed by simple, regular people as well. The main thing is that everyone should get ready and perform the mitzvah in the best way they can, according to their level.

One type of preparation is to make the mouth a good place for the matzah to be. It says **מַצּוֹת תֵּאָכֵל בְּמָקוֹם קָדֹשׁ,** *"eat matzah in a holy place"* (Vayikra 6:9). **The Tiferes Shlomo** said that the place for matzah is one's mouth. One should make his mouth a **מקום קדוש**, a holy place. This is done by avoiding lashon hara, forbidden words, and by being careful from eating non-kosher foods. Those who have already sullied their mouths can always purify it with a kabbalah to improve.

Rebbe Berish of Biyala zy"a said, "People ask rabbanim questions on how they can kasher their utensils, but no one asks how they can kasher their mouth, so it will be a fitting utensil with which to eat the matzos of Pesach."

Rebbe Yochanan Rachmistrifka zy"a said: **קדש ורחץ**, if a person wants to sanctify and purify himself, he should do **כרפס**. **כרפס** is roshei teivos for **כַּ**ילל **רַ**שאון **פַּ**ה **סְ**גור, the first rule is to keep the mouth shut. After that comes **יחץ מגיד**. This means that when one must speak, he should only say half.

The Chasam Sofer teaches that eating matzah on the night of Pesach is the only mitzvah of eating that has remained with us since the churban Beis HaMikdash. We don't have korbanos anymore, we don't have a korban pesach, etc. We only have this annual mitzvah to eat matzah on Pesach. Will Hashem be pleased if we will not keep even this one mitzvah properly? it thinks. Similarly, we don't know what we are doing, but we believe that each step accomplishes so much.

Reb Akiva Eigar writes (in a letter): "On the [first] night of Pesach, have kedushah and yirah (holiness and fear) and be happy with the mitzvos that Hashem gave us: Kiddush, matzah, marror, the four cups, and saying the Hallel." **The Shlah** writes that chassidim and anshei maase would kiss the matzos when they lifted them by the seder.

Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Riminov zy"a said that if he wouldn't be embarrassed from people, he would take the matzah to beis medresh and make na'anu'im (shake it) like a lulav. The Tiferes Shlomo writes that the uniqueness of matzah is that it enters the body. Therefore it is like a spiritual remedy. It removes all the bad that is inside him and enables him to be davuk to Hashem.

One year by the seder, the **Kedushas Levi zy"a** shouted with his trademark fervour, "Ribono shel Olam, either you come into me, or I will come into you." **The Rokeiach** writes that whoever eats matzah during the seven days of Pesach, becomes a partner with Hashem in Creation.

Segulos of Matzah



There are many segulos in the matzah. The Zohar calls matzah - healing food and - food of faith, because it infuses emunah into our heart. **The Yismach Yisrael** writes, "Doctors agree that matzah is a refuah for the head. This is like a prophecy, only they don't know what they are saying. Because with matzah you fix emunah, and thereby purify the brain." But the literal meaning of the Zohar is also true, matzah brings refuah. **Rebbe Menechem Mendel of Riminov** said that matzah rids the person from all his bad taavos (temptations).

Before the Second World War, **Reb Tzvi Kintzlicher zt"l** was rav in Seban, Romania. (Later he moved to Yerushalayim.) Once in the month Nissan, he had severe stomach pains, so he travelled to the medical centre in Klausenberg. The doctors diagnosed him with a serious disease, lo aleinu, which needed immediate surgery. Reb Kintzlicher realized that if they would operate on him then, he wouldn't be home in time for Pesach. So he told them that he wants to go home, and will return right after Pesach. The doctors tried to persuade him from going, but when they saw that he was firm in his resolve, they told him to be careful and only eat light foods such as eggs, milk, and fruits.

Reb Kintzlicher followed these directions, but at the Seder he decided to eat matzah soaked in milk. While eating the matzah he felt something positive happen to his innards. When he finished eating the matzah on the second night of Pesach, he didn't have any pain at all.

On Shabbos after Pesach, he went up to the bimah in his beis medresh and with a broken heart, told his congregation that he was leaving for a serious operation. "Pray for me, because who knows if I will survive…" When he returned to Klausenberg, the doctors examined him and saw that he was better.

"Which doctor did you go to?" they asked, in shock. He told them, "I ate matzah, the meichla deasvasa healing food and I was healed." One of the doctors said, "A great miracle happened to you. But I admit, everything that doctors know is like nothing, when Hashem desires differently."

Matzah is also a food of emunah. The Yismach Yisrael says that eating matzah brings us ahavas Hashem. When this occurs, we will only want Hashem, Torah and Mitzvos. Our love for Hashem will defeat all other loves for this world.

The halachah prohibits us from eating matzah on erev Pesach. The Yerushalmi tells us, "Someone who eats matzah on erev Pesach, is similar to someone who takes his fiancé before the chasunah." We derive from this that eating matzah on Pesach is like a chasunah. Some people always keep in their possession some of the leftover matzah, because of the many segulos that matzah incurs.



מוציא מצה

R' Moshe Sternbuch *shlita* writes: Feeling joy when performing *mitzvos* is always considered one of the highest forms of *avodas* Hashem [service of Hashem]. We should feel especially joyous when eating *matzah*, for *Chazal* teach that this mitzvah, properly fulfilled, can save one from judgment on Rosh Hashanah. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Moadim U'Zmanim*)



Mesirus Nefesh

The Tzemech Tzedek said, Shvi'i shel Pesach is the Rosh Hashanah for mesirus nefesh. On this day, Nachshon ben Aminadov jump into the Yam Suf. As the water reached his nose he shouted "*Save me because the water is covering my soul,*" and then the sea split.



The Midrash reveals another aspect of mesirus nefesh that occurred on this day: It is written, **הים ראה וינס** "The Sea saw and fled." The Midrash asks, "What did the Yam Suf see? It saw the aron of Yosef." When the sea saw Yosef's bones, the one who had mesirus nefesh and ran away from tests, the sea split for them.

נס has two meanings: It means to flee and it also means miracle. The Sefer Chasidim explains that when one runs away from sin, he merits miracles. As the gemara says, "Why did miracles happen to the previous generation, and not now? It is because they were moser nefesh for Hashem's honour. We aren't moser nefesh…" (Brachos 20). Therefore, the Reishis Chachmah teaches, the lesson of kriyas Yam Suf is mesirus nefesh (self-sacrifice). When one does a good deed with mesirus nefesh, miracles will happen, as the sea split for Nachshon ben Aminadov.

Rebbe Michel of Zlotchev zy"a said, if one wants a salvation beyond the rules of nature – for example, if he wants to have children, and naturally it is impossible – he should do a mitzvah by stretching beyond his nature, and then Hashem will act with him in kind. **The Bnei Yissaschar** explains that when one goes beyond his nature to serve Hashem, Hashem will respond by doing kindnesses with him,

beyond the laws of nature. And it was because of these deeds of self-sacrifice that the sea split for Bnei Yisrael.

The Midrash tells that as the Jewish nation were crossing the Yam Suf, angels in heaven were saying, "Why should we save the Yidden and destroy the Mitzrim. They are both idol worshipers?" It seems that there was a possibility that the Yidden wouldn't survive, and that they would perish in the sea. How can this be? Did Hashem take them out of Mitzrayim with ten makos and wondrous miracles so they would die afterwards in the sea? It isn't logical.

The Sfas Emes answers that the Yidden would certainly be saved. There was no question about that. The only issue was whether they Torah will be saved because they deserve it or because of Hashem's chesed. Hashem wanted that the nation to deserve their salvation. Based on what we've said, the nation deserved their salvation. They had mesirus nefesh and walked into the sea, even before it split. The aron of Yosef also aroused Yosef's merit, who was moser nefesh to do Hashem's will. Therefore, the Yam Suf split for them and let them pass through. Because where there is self-sacrifice, Hashem acts with them beyond the standard rules of nature. When the yidden were standing by the shore of the Yam Suf, their lives were in danger (because the Egyptians were pursuing them). When the sea split, their lives were in danger again, because the angels in heaven said, "Both camps are idol worshipers. Why should we save the Yidden and kill the Egyptians."

The Avnei Nezer asks, why didn't Hashem give them a mitzvah to perform to save them? When the Yidden were in Mitzrayim, they didn't have merits to be saved. Hashem commanded them to do milah and korban Pesach, and in these merits, they were saved. So why didn't Hashem do the same by the Yam Suf? He could have given them mitzvos to perform, and with those merits save them.

The Avnei Nezer answers that by the Yam Suf, no extra merits were needed. They entered the Yam Suf with mesirus nefesh, and

whenever there is mesirus nefesh, they deserve to be saved. Hashem didn't have to give them another mitzvah, to merit salvations and miracles. Their mesirus nefesh was sufficient.

Many of our good deeds are performed with mesirus nefesh. We have a body, a yetzer hara, and many other matters that prevent us from serving Hashem. To do a good deed, requires a measure of mesirus nefesh.

The Chareidim writes that the angels see the reward and the levels that a yid reaches when he does a good deed, and they are astounded. They ask, "How did this person reach the kisei hakavod so easily? How did he leap to such high heights?"

The answer is, Hashem knows just how difficult it was for the person to perform his good deeds. It seems simple, but really it required mesirus nefesh, and that's why his deeds are so precious to Hashem. The malachim serve Hashem with immense fear and love, but they don't have a human body and a yetzer hara to prevent them from doing what they have to do. Therefore, their avodas Hashem isn't as outstanding. But nature pulls the human being towards materialism, and yet, he overcomes his yetzer hara, and he allows himself to be thirsty for Hashem. That's how he creates a nachas ruach for Hakadosh Baruch Hu and he is even greater than the angels. And since he rose above nature to do Hashem's will, Hashem responds in kind, and does miracles for him beyond the rules of nature.

Rebbe Shlomo Karliner zy'a says, when a person overcomes his yetzer hara and serves Hashem with self-sacrifice he leaps up to Hashem and reaches the kisei hakavod.

"We don't need a miracle to happen in order to see Hashem. We can see Hashem in every part of the day." - Chovos Halevavos.

Me'oros Ha'tzaddikim



Pesach is the name we give to the festival we celebrate in the month of Nissan, but nowhere in the Torah is it mentioned by that name. Rather, it is always called Chag HaMatzos, the Festival of the Matzos. Why then do we call it Pesach?

Shlomo HaMelech writes (Shir HaShirim 6:3): Ani ledodi vedodi li – *"I am for my Beloved, and my Beloved is for me"*. This means that it is for us to sing the praises of Hashem and for Him to sing our praises. For instance, in the tefillin we wear, the scrolls speak the praises of Hashem, and in the tefillin that He wears, according to the Gemora (Berochos 6a), the selections praise the Jewish people. The Torah calls the festival Chag HaMatzos in praise of the Jewish people who did not hesitate to leave Egypt instantly, even before their bread had a chance to rise (see Rashi, Shemos 12:39). But we call it Pesach to recall that Hashem skipped over the Jewish homes when he unleashed the final plague on the land of Egypt.

"You don't achieve happiness by looking for it elsewhere. It's inside of you. You have within you an endless fountain of joy, and when you discover the secret, then you need nothing else. There's no experience in life that can even remotely compare with the happiness within your own mind." – Rabbi Avigdor Miller.

Take It and Act

Whenever Pesach approached, it was the custom of **R' Aryeh Levin**, the Tzaddik of Yerushalayim, to distribute money among the poor. One year, however, times were very hard and he simply had no money for this tzedakah. Pesach was drawing near and he was in despair. How could he face these people who looked to him for help?

When it was at last the very day before Pesach, he set out for the Kosel with his son. They went to take the bus to the Old City, where a long line of people were waiting in the intense heat. Suddenly a bare-headed Jew in shirtsleeves came over to him, thrust some money into R' Aryeh's hand, and asked him to distribute it among the poor.

R' Aryeh seized him by the hand. "Who are you?" he demanded. "Why are you doing this? And what reason did you see to choose me particularly to be the emissary for this mitzvah?" The man grew a bit angry with R' Aryeh and said, "If you are given money, just take it and act!" R' Aryeh hurried off to his widows and orphans and gave them all that they were waiting for, and more. Who that man was or where he came from, R' Aryeh never found out. *(A Tzaddik In Our Time)*

R' Yaakov of Mishklov zt"l once asked his holy rebbi, the Gaon of Vilna zt"l, why Moshe Rabbeinu is not mentioned at all in the Haggadah. After all, he is the most central figure in the episode of Bnei Yisroel leaving Mitzrayim. The Vilna Gaon replied that Moshe Rabbeinu's name is in fact mentioned in the Haggadah - once. He quoted the posuk: **ויאמינו בה' ובמשה עבדו** *"And they believed in Hashem and in Moshe His servant."*

"I still don't understand," R' Yaakov persisted. "Since Moshe played such a pivotal role in Bnei Yisroel going out of Mitzrayim, his name should be sprinkled all throughout the Haggadah. It is mentioned one

time, quoting the posuk by Krias Yam Suf, but otherwise it is totally omitted. It almost seems as if the omission is deliberate." The Gaon answered, "Your point is exactly correct. It is a deliberate omission.

The Haggadah is teaching us that while Moshe Rabbeinu's role in leading Bnei Yisroel out of Mitzrayim was a very important one, nevertheless, Moshe himself was incidental to the Exodus. In other words, Bnei Yisroel did not leave Mitzrayim because Moshe Rabbeinu took them out. Hashem took Bnei Yisroel out of Mitzrayim and Hashem utilized Moshe Rabbeinu to accomplish it. (This is one of the reasons why Moshe had a speech impediment; so that people should not claim that Moshe used his persuasive and articulate tongue to convince Pharaoh to release Bnei Yisroel, or to convince the Jews to submit themselves to him.) If, for whatever reason, Moshe had not led the Jewish people out of Egypt, someone else would have done it."



"Moshe Rabbeinu's role is downplayed," continued the Gaon, "in order for us to properly understand that, in actuality, no single individual played a role in our exodus other than Hashem Himself. The posukim in the Torah that discuss Yetzias Mitzrayim and the miracles that were done (in Parshas Vaera) teach us to clearly comprehend that it was only Hashem Himself Who released us forever from the bondage and slavery of Egypt, that it was only Hashem Himself Who punished the Egyptians and that it was only Hashem Himself Who took us out of Egypt." "Therefore," concluded R' Eliyahu to his disciple, "Moshe Rabbeinu's name is not prominently mentioned in the Haggadah. However, it is mentioned just this one time '*And they believed in Hashem and in Moshe His servant.*' The

one and only time Moshe Rabbeinu's name is mentioned in the entire Haggadah is to tell us that he is a true servant of Hashem, and not one who has any power of his own." *(Portraits of Prayer)*

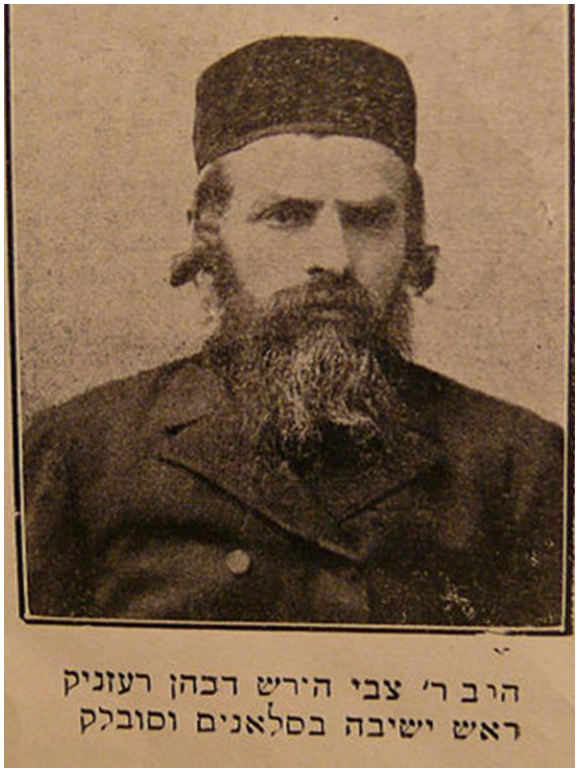
Etz Chaim - Stories of Gedolim



After undergoing heart surgery, followed by the implanting of a pacemaker, **Rabbi Avigdor Miller** was being wheeled back to his room. At that moment, he told his grandson of "at least" two things that he had just learned. "Please look out the window," he requested. "Do you see that bridge? (George Washington Bridge). Do you have any idea how it was made? No? You should know that just as you cannot fathom how that bridge was made, so too can you not possibly understand the world of my youth. When I was young, I prayed that I should be blessed with at least one frum child. When I passed by my three daughters just now and saw them crying and saying Tehillim, I realized how much kindness Hashem has done for me throughout my life. Yes, my Tefillos were accepted, and Hashem has blessed me with children and grandchildren who are all Bnei Torah. I was therefore worried that I had used up all of my zechusim. Now that Hashem has sent me some measure of suffering, perhaps I'll merit some Olam Habba!"

From stories connected to Pesach: "A Jew who trusts in Hashem can overturn decrees as harsh as Pharaoh's." ~ Noda B'Yehudah.

Nothing Was Missing



It was Erev Pesach in Slonim. One of the prominent community members, R' Nochum, approached the Rav, **R' Yosef Charif**, about a very urgent matter which could not be postponed. It seems that R' Nota, a very wealthy man, had lost his fortune and had become impoverished. He had nothing at all for Pesach, and he and his family were in real danger of starving. When R' Yosef asked why he had not come earlier, R' Nochum apologized, saying that R' Nota and his wife had refused to let their situation be known as they did not want their enemies to rejoice at their downfall, nor did they want the pity of their friends and relatives.

R' Yosef began to think of a solution that could help R' Nota at this late hour. "Listen, R' Nochum," exclaimed R' Yosef. "Go at once to R' Nota's house. Tell him to come to me tonight after maariv, when the entire congregation wishes me a 'Gut Yom Tov.' Let him whisper his greeting into my ear instead of saying it aloud. If he does this, I assure you that all of his needs will be taken care of to everyone's satisfaction." R' Nochum was astonished and perplexed. "But Rebbe, what miracle is supposed to spring up from R' Nota's whispered greeting?" R' Yosef told him, "This is no time for questions and answers. There is still much to prepare for Yom Tov. Quickly, go to R' Nota and tell him what I just said."

Bewildered and doubtful, R' Nochum carried out his mission. When R' Nota questioned the strange instructions, R' Nochum reassured him, saying, "Not in vain is our rabbi called 'charif – the sharp one.' On every festival he does something special to enliven the

atmosphere. This time you have been chosen. He must think highly of you."

That evening, when R' Nota approached the Rav, R' Yosef Charif announced to the people, "Wait. I see that R' Nota has something private to tell me." The people drew back and R' Nota whispered his "Gut Yom Tov" into the Rav's ear. Suddenly, R' Yosef exclaimed, "Chametz! Everything is chametz! There is no way out!" Before R' Nota could react, R' Yosef continued. "But you don't live in a wilderness, R' Nota. I am certain that the good Jews of Slonim will see to it that you have everything you lack – matzos, fish, meat, wine and everything else."

The people understood the situation and immediately came forward with their offers for help. Thus, within a few minutes, R' Nota was assured of all the food he would need for Pesach. And he had no choice but to accept it. After all, it was the Rav's psak. Nothing was missing from his table that year. Above all, R' Nota's pride and self-esteem remained intact for no one in Slonim was aware of his sorry plight. *(A Story A Day – Nissan/Iyar)*

When we eat matzah, we recline. Then we eat the maror, and we don't recline. And then we eat matzah and maror sandwiched together, and we recline. Why do we recline? Although there's matzah, there's maror there too.

The answer is, when the maror is wrapped with matzah, which is "food of emunah," he realizes that even the bitter times are for his good. He can now recline for the maror as well. ~ R' Elimelech Biderman Shlita

"Pesach teaches that even in the darkest exile, Hashem prepares redemption long before we can see it." ~ Rav Shmuel Salant.

Torah Tavlin



Aleksander Rebbe, R' Shmuel Tzvi Danziger zt"l (Tiferes Shmuel) would say: "Why is 'Kadesh' before 'Urchatz'? Shouldn't one wash and cleanse himself before he is worthy of Kedusha?

The answer is that under normal circumstances, a person cannot enter a king's palace unless he is invited. At that time, he prepares himself accordingly and enters in clean clothes and looks the part of a royal guest. Unless he is being chased by bandits who wish to kill him, at which time, he rushes into the palace, as a safe haven, to protect him and save his life, no matter how he looks or is dressed.

On the night of Pesach, the Jewish people were rushing to leave Egypt in great haste, fearful of falling into the 49th level of impurity. They had no choice but to jump into kedusha into the service of Hashem even before they were cleansed. We, too, rush into 'Kadesh' even before we are ready for 'Urchatz.'"

When we reach the section of the Haggadah that states "'ונצעק אל ה", it's a very special moment for tefillah. If one needs parnassah, refuah…and he shouts at this point for a salvation, Hashem will save him." ~ R' Chaim Meir Yechiel of Magulintza zt"l.

Chacham Ovadia Yosef zt"l would say:

"Of course, not only do we speak of the wondrous miracles during the Exodus at the Seder, but even the rest of the Chag, we should continue to mention them and discuss them with our families. However, on the second day of Pesach, the 16th of Nisan, there is an added component. It is the day on which the wicked Haman was killed during the Purim story. This, too, was a great and wondrous miracle and it is therefore proper to make some commemoration of this event during one's meal on this day, a practice often referred to as ***'Seudas Esther.'*** At this meal one should speak words of Torah relevant to Queen Esther and how Hashem rescued the Jewish people during the time of the Purim story, to commemorate the miraculous salvation that took place on the 16th of Nisan."



Not Immersing Oneself in Eating

Sefer Siach Zekeinim quotes **Rav Yosef Shteichel zt"l**, one of the elder chasidim of Belz, as saying that he heard that in Belz that the **Sar Shalom zy"a** once was sitting at the Seder and saw that the following words were printed in Yiddish in the Hagaddah before Mah Nishtana:

"Mir rikt avek dem shissel un mir fregt Mah Nishtana." (The ke'arah is removed and Mah Nishtana is recited.)

The Rebbe declared, "Of course! Of course! If one is able to remove himself from his bowl of food (if one can put aside his eating), he will know how this night is different."

אִלּוּ נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת, וְלֹא קֵרְבָנוּ לִפְנֵי הַר סִינַי, דַּיֵּנוּ

The piyut (song) of Dayeinu is a progression of miracles and wondrous acts that Hakadosh Boruch Hu performed for Klal Yisroel during Yetzias Mitzrayim, and we thank Hashem for each and every one by saying, "It would have been enough had Hashem just done this."



R' Avraham Yehoshua Soloveitchik shlit'a asks: One of the stanzas in the song seem to be out of place. "If He (Hashem) had bestowed the Mann upon us, but not given us the day of Shabbos, it would have been enough." First of all, why is Shabbos singled out from all the other mitzvos? Second, the mitzvah of Shabbos was given earlier than the Mann. Shabbos was commanded to the Jewish people in Mara, and they even rested on Shabbos in Egypt. If so, the stanza seems to be out of order: why does the Baal Haggadah state that if Hashem had given us the Mann first but not given us Shabbos afterwards, it would have been enough? Shabbos came before the Mann!

The Brisker Rav, **R' Yitzchok Zev Halevi Soloveitchik zt"l** elucidates in a uniquely Brisker fashion. There are two dinim here, says the Brisker Rav. Shabbos is not only a mitzvah - Shabbos is also a gift, a Matana, that was gifted to the Jewish people, as it says in the Gemara *"Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu, 'I have a wonderful gift in my treasured archives and it is called Shabbos. I wish to give it to the Children of Israel. Go and inform them about it.'"* Although the commandment of Shabbos took place in Mara, as the nation was leaving Egypt, even before they reached the Yam Suf, the Matana

of Shabbos was only given in the desert, soon after the Mann began to fall.

In our Shabbos davening we say, - *"Hashem, our G-d, did not give (Shabbos) to the nations of the land .... for only to Klal Yisroel did He give it with love."* This refers to the Matana that Hashem "gifted" to Israel, and since Shabbos is the only mitzvah that has this added reality, therefore Shabbos is not just a mitzvah - it is a present that belongs to the Jewish people alone.

מִתְּחִלָּה עוֹבְדֵי עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה הָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וְעַכְשָׁיו קֵרְבָנוּ הַמָּקוֹם לַעֲבֹדָתוֹ



The Chasam Sofer zt"l writes: "Just as a person is required to view himself as if he went out of Egypt (on the night of Pesach), so too, a person is required to view himself as if he was serving Avodah Zara (idol worship) in the beginning **מִתְּחִלָּה עוֹבְדֵי עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה** and now is drawing closer to Hashem **קֵרְבָנוּ הַמָּקוֹם לַעֲבֹדָתוֹ** . The lesson to be learned is from the Karpas, a simple vegetable, which spent most of its existence buried in the ground, and now, on the night of Pesach, we take it out and elevate it to the status of a **חפצא של מצוה** - a glorious object imbued with holiness, with which we perform an important mitzvah with. Similarly, every Jew has the potential to elevate him or herself from the lowest point of tumah and physicality, to the highest level of kedusha and supreme spirituality.

מָרוֹר זֶה שֶׁאָנוּ אוֹכְלִים, עַל שׁוּם מַה? עַל שׁוּם שֶׁמֵּרְרוּ הַמִּצְרִים אֶת־חַיֵּי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם

There was once a Dinover chasid who suffered from a mortal lung disease and travelled to the capital city of Vienna, Austria, for medical advice. After many tests and evaluations, the doctors told him that his disease could not be cured, because the lung was not in its normal position. It was pushed to the side and filled with phlegm which could not be drained and would cause decay. Any sharp or spicy food he would eat could be fatal. They suggested that he hurry home, lest he die among strangers. The man started on his journey homeward with a broken heart. His way passed through the village of Sanz and he thought to himself, **"The Divrei Chaim (R' Chaim Halberstam zt"l, Sanzer Rav)** is renowned as a great Torah scholar and authority on Jewish Law. I shall ask him what to do about eating maror, the bitter vegetable, in the forthcoming Seder on Pesach night. I am unable to eat the required amount (a kzayis - the volume of an olive), but am I still required to eat a lesser portion and should I pronounce a blessing over it?"



He went to the Rebbe who listened patiently to his query. "It is written in the Zohar," replied the Sanzer Rav, "that maror is considered a 'healing food.' You should be able to eat the full prescribed amount and be healed." This chasid was an accomplished Torah scholar in his own right. After he left the Rebbe's presence, he searched for the Zohar but found that it does not say that maror is a healing food, but rather, matza is the food that heals.

The Divrei Chaim had obviously made an error in his ruling, thought the chasid, and with that, he dismissed the incident from his mind. On the night of the Seder when the moment for eating maror

arrived, the sick man took the tiniest portion of bitter herbs. He never received an answer to his query, so he ruled on his own that it was better to be stringent in this mitzvah. The instant he swallowed the maror, though, he immediately began to cough strenuously, weakening him greatly.

In a fit of righteous zeal, he cried out to his family, "If this is my end, let me at least fulfil the mitzvah of maror in its entirety!" He reached out and grabbed a full portion of the strong horseradish root and forced it into his mouth. As soon as he swallowed the whole mouthful, his eyes bulged, and his face turned an awful shade of crimson. His coughing fit grew considerably worse and his whole body shook dreadfully.

His family jumped out of their seats and tried to help him. There wasn't anything they could do. Anyone who has ever swallowed a large portion of the bitter herb on the night of Pesach and began coughing, can attest that the feeling is anything but pleasant. For this chasid, it was absolutely painstaking. His wife and children were terrified as the man seemed to be out of control.

Quickly, someone ran to fetch a local doctor. But the doctor was himself conducting a Seder and did not hasten to come. Meanwhile, the chasid and his coughing became progressively worse. When the doctor finally did arrive, he found the patient unconscious. He was told that the man had become so exhausted from his coughing and twitching that he fainted. They had put him into his bed where he seemed to be sleeping, his breathing rising and falling laboriously. The doctor said that the rest was good for him and that he should not be awakened under any circumstances.

The chasid slept until a late hour the following day and when the doctor came again to examine him, he was amazed. The patient was breathing fine, he was calm and did not even feel any pain from his damaged lungs. It seemed that the force of the coughing and the shuddering of his body had jarred the lung and it had returned back

to its normal position. Additionally, the fluid that had built up inside of him seemed to have drained out.

Now, the man understood the teshuva (responsa) of the Divrei Chaim. Of course, the matza is the "food of healing" but in his specific situation, the Rebbe had seen that the maror - not the matza - would be the charm needed for his cure.

Gebrochts



Once, during the customary dancing by the Neilas HaChag in Bobov, the Rebbe, **R' Benzion Halberstam zt"l**, joined in the long human chain and danced with the bochurim. The hour was late and the Beis Medrash was thrown into total darkness, but the joyous singing and dancing continued for hours. At one point, when it was well after nightfall, someone kindled a kerosene lamp and light illuminated the big room. Suddenly, everyone saw the **Kedushas Zion** with his arms outstretched on a bochur in front of him.

Nobody, not even the bochur, had realized that the Rebbe was dancing behind him and everyone was shocked. What was even more shocking was that this particular boy was not from the brightest students in the Yeshivah, and while everyone was singing, **בבקעך ים סוף** ("When You split the Red Sea"), he misunderstood the words and was singing **בראק אריין אין ים סוף** ("Dip into the Red Sea").

In his small mind, he sincerely believed it was reference to the leniency of eating Gebruks (dipped matza) on the eighth and final day of Pesach. The shocking part was that the Rebbe - not wishing to embarrass the boy - was singing the same words with him!

וַיְהִי חֹשֶׁךְ עַל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם וְיָמֵשׁ חֹשֶׁךְ Shemos 10:21

The Torah says that during the first three days of **חושך**, the darkness was so black, and permeating, that no person could see anything at all, while the last three days brought a thick murkiness that prevented people from even moving their bodies.

The great commentator, Rabbeinu Avraham Ibn Ezra ZT"L, writes that he knows exactly how the Egyptians felt during that time, as he personally experienced such a thick darkness while travelling on the Atlantic Ocean. He recalls how a heavy black fog descended on his ship, with the vapour so thick and sticky that not only was he unable to see an inch in front of his face, but the moisture also literally clung to his body making it difficult for him to move his arms.



This fog could last for up to five days at a time and it was impossible to distinguish between night and day - just like the Egyptians who had no idea how many days had passed in that state of complete and utter darkness. Even more astonishing is what is found in the Haggadah of **R' Tzvi Hirsch Farber ZT"L (Kerem Tzvi)**: "When I was in Manchester, England, in the autumn of 5672 (1912), I saw a fogginess so deep and thick like the fog the Ibn Ezra wrote about. In fact, community elders showed me a certain street that was called "Ibn Ezra Place" and they have a tradition that the great commentator once resided on this street for a period of time, and his description of the terrible fogginess actually came from what he saw there.

I, too, witnessed a thick, heavy blackness in London that lasted for three days straight, like the biblical darkness in Egypt - and it prevented people from moving about. Even the wagons and railroad cars were forced to shut down due to the deep fog, and most business dealings were cancelled. Over five thousand people lost their lives over the course of this event, as people could not function properly, and life could not go on because of the pitch darkness."

מָרוֹר זֶה שָׂאָנוּ אוֹכְלִים, עַל שׁוּם מַה? עַל שׁוּם שֶׁמֵּרְרוּ הַמִּצְרִים אֶת־חַיֵּי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיְמָרְרוּ אֶת חַיֵּיהֶם בַּעֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה

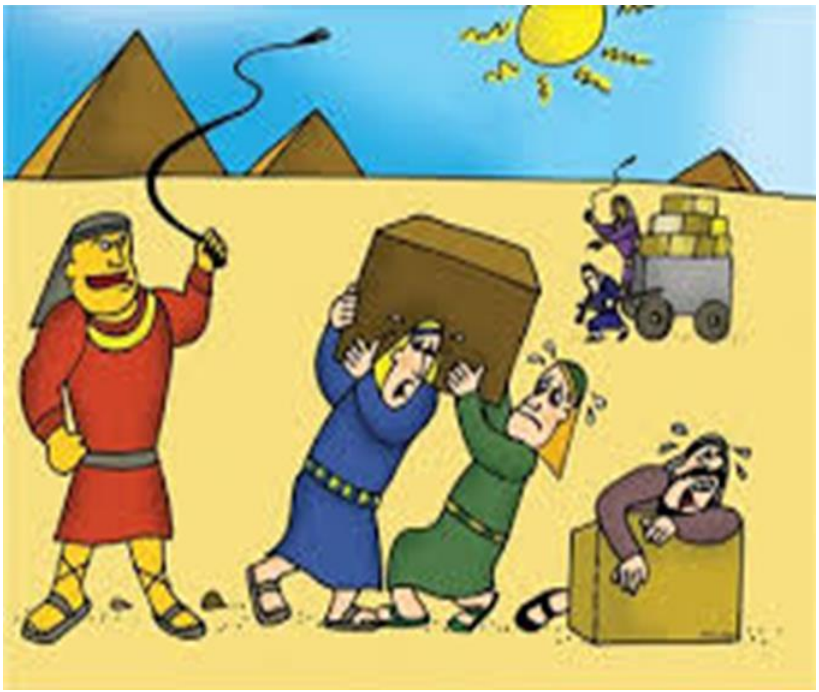
As a scion of two renowned and prestigious rabbinic families, both on his father and mother's side, **R' Avraham Yehoshua Heschel ZT"L**, later to become famous as the Ohev Yisroel (both for the title of his sefer and due to his deep love for every fellow Jew), showed great promise even at an early age. Acquiring fame as a talmudic scholar, he studied under two great Tzaddikim, **R' Elimelech of Lizhensk ZT"L and R' Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov ZT"L**.

Early on his rabbinical career, R' Avraham Yehoshua was offered a position in the Polish town of Kolbuszowa where he arrived as a candidate a few weeks before Pesach for a "Proba" (audition), hoping to impress the townspeople and secure the position. As was the custom, on Shabbos morning, R' Avraham Yehoshua walked up to the podium and delivered an address on Torah topics for the benefit of the entire congregation. His masterful discourse was appreciated by scholar and layman alike for its clear and prescient content, the easy manner in which it was delivered, and the powerful lasting effect it had on its listeners.

As the young rabbi was speaking, many in the audience were smiling and nodding to one another, agreeing that this candidate was surely a perfect match for the job. R' Avraham Yehoshua saw their expressions and understood that he was on solid footing, and this gave him confidence. Of course, all it takes is the comment of one

incendiary individual, or ignoramus for that matter, to bring the young man's tower of confidence crashing down in disaster.

The Rosh Hakahal, the acting president of the kehilla, was a rich man who believed that his large bank account and prestigious appointment entitled him to speak at will. He even fancied himself a Torah scholar on par with the leading scholars and rabbis in the Beis Medrash. Thus, it came as no surprise to many in the audience when the president loudly cleared his throat midway through R' Avraham Yehoshua's lecture and asked a question. "Rabbi, if you don't mind, I have a question on a posuk from a previous parsha.



When describing the plight of the Jewish people in Egypt and the terrible hardship of their slavery, the Torah uses the words **וימררו את חייהם** ('and they embittered their lives').

What I find unusual is that when I was reviewing the posukim twice and the Targum/translation once, I realized that the musical spikelation notes on these two words are 'Kadma V'azla' which is an uplifting and even happy tune. Since these words reflect the Jews' pain and suffering, shouldn't a sad or downward tune be used? Why does the Torah employ such a happy tune to describe such a sad occurrence?"

A slight smile of victory curled up on the sides of the president's mouth, while the people in the audience scratched their heads in bewilderment at the random equivocation of the question. But worst of all, the young man at the podium, who had previously been riding

a wave of confidence and optimism, now felt the pinch of uncertainty threaten to overtake his entire performance. If he could not come up with a satisfactory reply to the Rosh Hakahal, how can he expect to get the job?

He looked around at the audience but they all knew better than to take a side opposite their rich and powerful president. R' Avraham Yehoshua became tongue-tied and there was a long stretch of uneasy silence in the shul. Suddenly, the young man's face brightened and he straightened his posture. Hashem had come to his rescue and gave him a brilliant response.

"That is a fine question indeed," he began, his voice rising with his renewed confidence. "Perhaps we may understand it based on a concern that our sages have previously voiced. When Hashem spoke to Avraham Avinu, he forewarned him that his descendants will be 'a wandering nation in a land not their own; they will be enslaved and made to suffer for four hundred years.' However, as we all know, Bnei Yisroel only slaved in bondage for 210 years. What happened to the other 190 years? Well, Chazal tell us that the harshness of the servitude was such that the pain and suffering of 400 years was rolled into 210 years. The embitterment of those years and watching their babies being thrown into the Nile was so terrible that Hashem counted it as if they had actually served the full 400 years."

The Rosh Hakahal was taken aback at the young man's miraculous rebound and he sat there spellbound as the spoken words were directed at him.

R' Avraham Yehoshua's countenance was shining with a G-dly aura. "Now we can understand the 'Kadma V'azla' that you so astutely pointed out," he said with a smile. "It was through **וימררו את חייהם** - the deep sense of pain and bitterness, that Hashem hurried up and preempted the redemption by 190 years.

Thus, we say 'Kadma V'azla' which means to hurry up and go forth, since the word 'Kadma' has the gematria of 145 (**קדמא**), and **ואזלא**

'V'azla' is 45. Together, they equal the numerical content of 190, which is exactly how many years Hashem hurried up the geulah! Is this not cause for a happy, celebratory sound?" Needless to say - he got the job!

Halacha L'Maaseh – Rabbi Baruch Hershfeld

Hallel. If one maintains the custom to say Hallel in shul on Pesach night, he should have in mind that the beracha on this Hallel should also apply to the Hallel he will say at the Seder.

Making the Shehechiyanu. When one says the beracha of Shehechiyanu during Kiddush on the first two nights of Pesach he should have in mind that not only is it meant for the Yom Tov itself, but it should also be applied to the following mitzvos :

Bedikas Chametz on the night before Pesach.

Biur (burning) Chametz during the morning of Erev Pesach.

The other mitzvos of the night. These include; eating matzah, reciting the Haggadah, drinking four cups of wine, eating Maror, making the Korech sandwich, and singing Hallel.

One can also have this in mind for the mitzvos that we do at the Seder to arouse the curiosity of the children like the dippings (Maror in Charoses, Karpas in salt water, etc.), and leaning to show freedom.

The Haggadah all Yom Tov. Most people, after they finish the second Seder, only use their Haggados for bentching at the seudos of Yom Tov. This is a mistake. It can be shown that the mitzvah is to talk about Haggadah topics the whole Yom Tov.

The first two nights are considered a "crash course" - in other words, a summary of the entire topic of Yetzias Mitzrayim and Chag HaPesach, whereas the rest of Yom Tov is the time to study and probe this topic further. Therefore, on the remaining days of

Pesach, the Haggadah and the Pesach-night mitzvos should be revisited to keep learning more about them, as well as from them.



The Nazi occupation of Salonika, Greece began in 1941, and with it, the persecution of Jews, as it had in other parts of Europe. In 1943 the Jews of Thessaloniki were forced into a ghetto near the rail lines, and soon after, the Nazis began deporting them to concentration and labour camps, resulting in the near-extermination of Greek Jewry.

Yakob Masito was among the tens of thousands of Greek deportees to Auschwitz. Together with his entire family, he found himself herded into a cattle car and shipped away to a distant location in the spring of 1943. Fortunately, he was part of the small percentage of Greek Jews who were spared immediate death. The prisoners who greeted them upon their arrival in Auschwitz seemed dispirited and despondent. As far as they were concerned, all hope was lost. They had seen too much death and destruction in the camps to believe that there was any hope for the future.

The new arrivals from Greece, however, had an unusual advantage over the others, which kept them in good stead; due to their unfamiliarity with Yiddish, Jews from Greece kept to themselves. As a result, the pervasive feeling of death and despondency that overtook the prisoners from Europe who had already experienced the worst humankind had to offer, was not in place. For the newly arriving Jews of Greece, the taste of freedom was still tantalizingly fresh.

For Yakob Masito and his friends who were sent to the right - to life in the concentration camp - their sense of hopefulness was prevalent, and the new arrivals refused to give in to despair. Upon arrival, every inmate received two utensils - a bowl and a spoon. These two utensils were vital for survival. No utensils, no food. As it was, it was nearly impossible to complete the inhuman tasks their

captors demanded of them on their meagre daily ration. If a prisoner had no utensils to eat with, he was finished. So, Yakob Masito accepted the bowl and spoon he was given and guarded it well. But in truth, Yakob was less worried about what he would eat that very day or the next - or the next after that. What he was most worried about was the upcoming holiday, and specifically, how and where would he and his friends obtain matzos for Pesach?

Although the other Greek Jews may not have been as concerned, Yakob was obsessed with this problem. He schemed and pondered, but a solution eluded him. Until an incident occurred and the problem was solved. Yakob and several of his friends were assigned to work on the railroad line. It was arduous, back-breaking labour. Occasionally, though, Yakob and his friends were able to make contact with the local populace.

It was during one of these rare times that he got lucky. After describing to a Polish farmer what he needed, the Pole understood and agreed to procure two matzos for him - but for a price. "Where are are we going to get the money?" Yakob's friends questioned. Yakob was silent for a long time as the group of men returned to their work. His mind continued to mull over the possibilities. They were so close to having matzos; surely there was a way.

And then, as if touched by a Divine light of inspiration, he had a brainstorm. "I have it!" he shouted. As the group watched, curious to see what plan he would come up with, Yakob extracted his spoon from his pouch and held it up for everyone to see. "A spoon?" the others laughed, "The Pole is not going to trade matzah for a little spoon!" "No, no," said Yakob, smiling, "just watch."

The men stared as Yakob placed his precious spoon, his life's support, on the railroad tracks next to him. Then, he waited. It wasn't long before a train roared by, flattening the spoon into a long pointy tool. "And now," Yakob announced with a wide grin, "we use this to pry out our gold teeth!" Yakob held the elongated utensil as

it glinted in the sun. Slowly, painfully, Yakob pried and prodded until he had extracted all of his gold teeth. His friends quickly followed suit. When they put together a considerable amount of gold, they offered this unusual currency to the Pole, and he happily accepted their payment for the two round matzos. That year, on the night of Pesach, Yakob and his friends made kiddush and fulfilled the mitzvah that they came to with such resolute determination.



Many years later, at Yakob Masito's eighty-first birthday party, he told over this story. All the guests sat in open mouthed wonder at the devotion and sacrifice of Yakob and his friends. "We didn't have enough matzah for everyone to have the correct amount," Yakob said, harking back to that dark period of time, "but at least we all had a little taste of freedom."

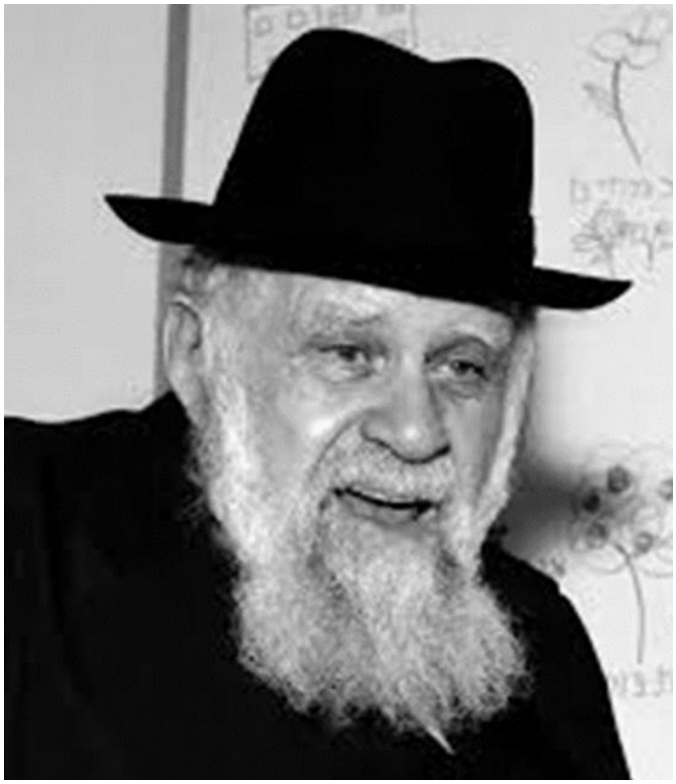
There are those who "break their teeth" on a minimal amount of matzah each year, complaining about the difficulty in eating the bread of freedom. Yet Yakob Masito literally "broke his teeth" just to eat a small piece of matzah on Pesach.

הבן שואל - And Here, The Child Asks (from the Hagadah)

Said **Rabbi Aaron of Karlin**, in the name of his father, **Rabbi Asher of Stolin**: "Here," on the night of the seder, every Jewish child may request of his Father in Heaven anything he wishes, and he will receive extra strength and vitality for all of his needs. (**Beit Aharon**)

בְּכָל־דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיָּב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת־עַצְמוֹ כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יָצָא מִמִּצְרַיִם

It makes sense for children to celebrate the anniversary of their parents' wedding. After all, if their parents had not wed, they would not have come into this world. It is, thus, an important event not just for the parents but for the children as well. But is it also important for the children to review the menu that was served at the wedding? Is it necessary for them to know whether fish or poultry was served? Of course not. The important thing is that their parents are married. Likewise, with regard to the events that took place during the exodus from Egypt. We are grateful that we left that horrible place of slavery. But why are we commanded so strongly to tell over - at such great length - every last detail?



We learn from this, writes **R' Simcha Wasserman ZT"L**, that this is not only a series of events that happened in that generation, but that they also have an effect on our lives today. **The Ramban** in Parshas Bo says that Yetzias Mitzrayim demonstrated at that time the fundamentals of emunah and belief in Hashem. First of all, the existence of Hashem and His power were visibly and powerfully demonstrated. It was also clear that the world does not function like a machine that was created to run by itself. Hashgacha - that He has a concern with what is going on - was demonstrated, as was prophecy.

When Moshe Rabbeinu said something, it happened exactly the way he said it would. The Ramban says that these fundamentals are essential and they demonstrated so dramatically at the time of our

formation as a nation so that we should always remember them. We should learn the lessons of emunah from the miracles and wonders that accompanied our leaving Egypt. Thus, we say: "In every generation, a person is obligated to see himself as if he went out of Egypt" - as if he had personally experienced the entire process of the exodus in its entirety. We should be grateful for it. It is not enough to know that there was a wedding. We must also learn lessons from it. In order to learn a lesson, we must know what actually happened at the wedding.



A story is told about R' Yisroel Salanter ZT"L, who stayed at an inn for Shabbos and was horrified to see the innkeeper smoking on Shabbos. R' Yisroel questioned him about it and the innkeeper replied, "If there was really a G-d, He would kill me on the spot! The fact that I am still here proves that there is no G-d, and I can do whatever I want!"

R' Yisroel looked around and asked the innkeeper, "Tell me, what are all these certificates on the wall?" The innkeeper proudly replied, "My daughter is an outstanding dancer. These certificates are all hers." R' Yisroel seemed interested and asked if he could speak with the girl. When she arrived, R' Yisroel asked her, "How do I know that you are really a dancer? All these certificates could be fake. Prove it to me - show me how you can dance?"

The girl looked at this Rabbi incredulously and sneered, "I should dance for you? I don't have to prove myself to you! My certificates are my testimony. If you don't believe them, well, that is YOUR

problem!" R' Yisroel then turned to the innkeeper and smiled. "Hashem doesn't have to bring a thunderbolt to strike down every nudnik who says he doesn't believe. You want to see Hashem's 'certificate'? That is Yetzias Mitzrayim!" The exodus from Egypt was indeed an earth-shattering event in a geographical location. It was an urgent, fast-paced turn of events that brought the Jewish people from being slaves in Egypt to being free men with a higher purpose and goal.

The Sefer Likutei Yehuda on Parshas Bo explains that Yetzias Mitzrayim was a koach that was placed into every one of us to be able to pull ourselves out of darkness and despair, decadence and difficulty. It is the power in every Jew to turn his life around in a split second and jump right into the loving outstretched arms of the Ribbono shel Olam Himself, who is always waiting and expecting His Beloved Son, Yisroel, to emerge from his personal "Mitzrayim" and live a life of dveikus with Hashem.

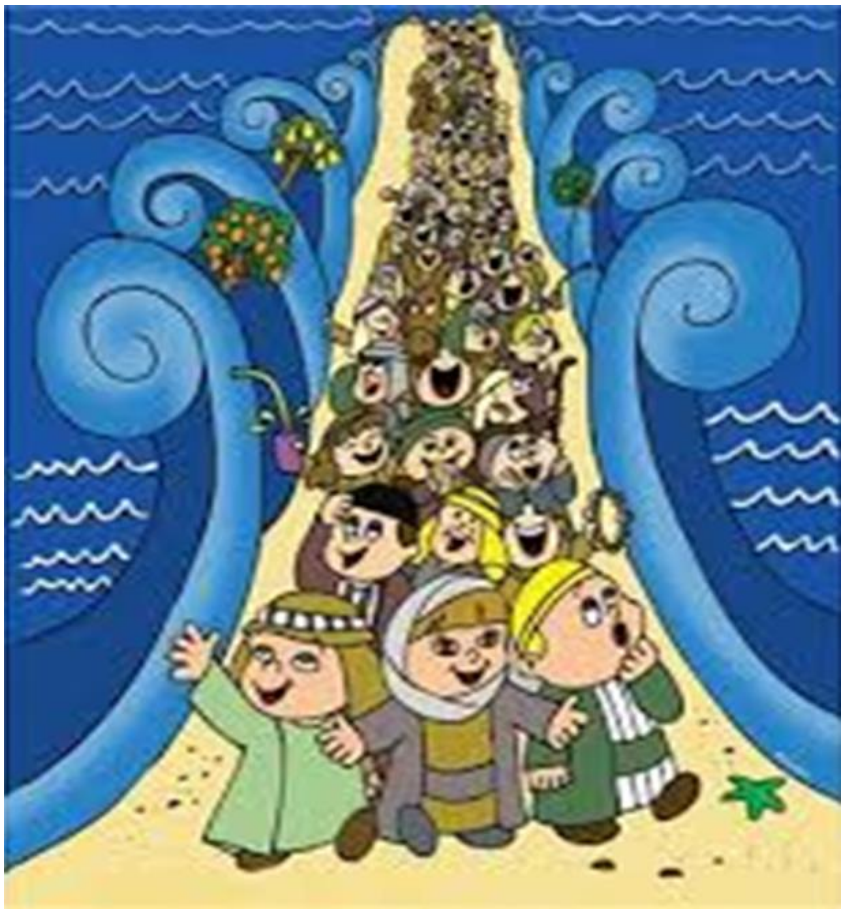
R' Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov ZT"L (Bnei Yissaschar) says:



"Why do we stop asking for 'Geshem' (rain) which signifies wealth and sustenance, on the first day of Pesach? Shouldn't we continue asking for this all year round?

The answer is that the matza we eat on the night of Pesach is **לחם עני** which the seforim hakedoshim tell us is a segulah for parnassa. By fulfilling the mitzvah on the night of Pesach properly, we sustain ourselves for the rest of the year. Indeed **מצה לחם עני** is the gematria of **גשם** (343).

R' Yisroel Halevi Belsky Shlit'a (Haggadah shel Pesach B'Tzeis Yisroel) would say:



"How can we understand the words of our sages that matchmaking and creating livelihoods for people are as difficult for Hakadosh Boruch Hu as the splitting of the sea?

'Difficult' for Hashem? There is no such concept! However, we can explain that just as by the Red Sea, it did not split until Nachshon jumped in, thus requiring human participation and involvement, so too, with earning a parnassa and making shidduchim, it requires people to get involved and make the effort on their own. The 'difficult' part for Hashem is waiting for people to do their part!"

The Seventh Day of Pesach

Many seforim say that the day of Krias Yum Suf is a very opportune day, a day when Tefillah and good davening can shower a person with parnassa. It was on this day, that Bnei Yisroel became exceedingly wealthy from the spoils of the sea, which they collected at the Yum Suf after the Egyptians drowned, which was even more than they took out with them from Mitzrayim.



וְאָתָא מַלְאָךְ הַמָּוֶת וְשָׁחַט לְשׁוֹחֵט

One cold wintry day, **R' Yaakov Loiberboim ZT"L** of Lissa (Nesivos Hamishpat) stopped at an inn. As he sat near the warm oven, he noticed the local shochet who had come to slaughter a calf for the innkeeper. The rav watched as the shochet drained four shot glasses of brandy in an effort to warm up. Immediately thereafter he rose to slaughter the animal.

"With all due respect," R' Yaakov protested, "perhaps you should lie down and rest for a short while before you slaughter the animal. You have drunk quite a bit of brandy, and you really should not be practicing shechita in your state."

The shochet, who apparently did not know who was addressing him, looked at the rabbi scornfully. "Mind your own business," he muttered, and began to walk away. But R' Yaakov, in an attempt to stall him so he might forget to slaughter the animals until later, called him back and engaged him in conversation.

"My dear man, I do wish to thank you. You have provided me with an answer to a question on the Haggadah that we recite on Pesach, that I have been pondering for a long time." The shochet, a bit tipsy and intrigued by the rabbi's words, came back to listen.

R' Yaakov continued. "At the end of the Haggadah, in 'Chad Gadya,' the Angel of Death kills the shochet, after he had slaughtered the ox, who had drank the water, that had put out the fire, etc.... I am sure you are familiar with the story?" The shochet brightened and nodded affirmatively.

"Well, here's my question. Why does the shochet deserve to die? The cat, the dog, the stick and the other characters in Chad Gadya

all behaved incorrectly, or even improperly, and therefore were deserving of punishment. But what did the shochet do wrong? Is it not a mitzvah to recite a beracha and perform shechita?" The shochet nodded heartily - obviously he was in full agreement.

R' Yaakov, however stopped smiling at this point. "But after watching you, the answer has suddenly become crystal clear. The shochet in Chad Gadya slaughters the ox after the four cups of wine have already been drunk! As such, he indeed deserves punishment for slaughtering an animal after having partaken of so much alcohol!" The drunken shochet hung his head - and then went to sleep.

Bedikas Chametz



The procedure for Bedikas Chametz is filled with tradition. We are used to using a candle, because candlelight can penetrate into deep recesses. The feather and wooden spoon for gathering the crumbs seem to be present for practical purposes, rather than for any esoteric reason.

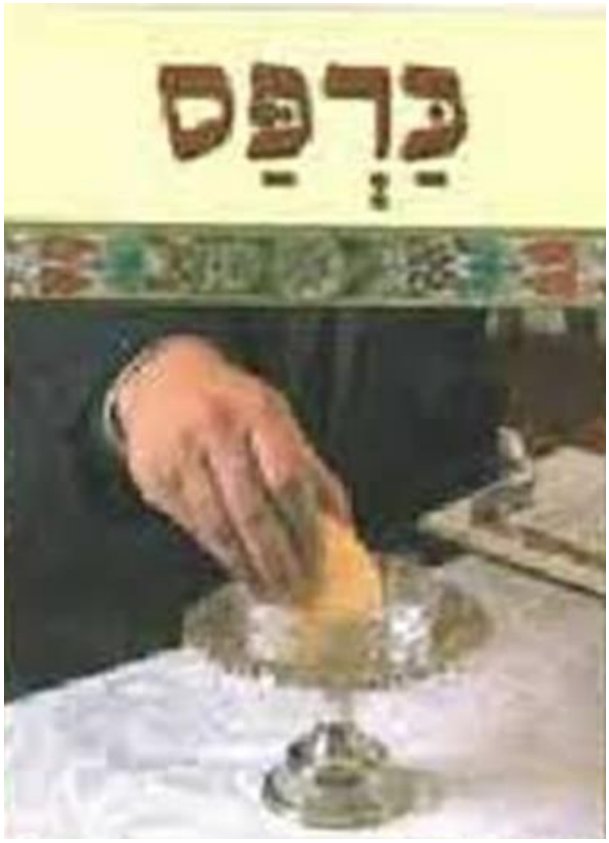
They are all burned together with the chametz. Some have the custom to include their esrog and lulav in the fire. The procedure for Bedikas Chametz is as follows: Ten pieces of chametz, leaven, are placed in key places in the house. Why ten pieces?

Minhagei Yeshurun explains that, in the Purim story, the Persian scribes copied the decree to destroy the Jews on the thirteenth of Nissan.

According to tradition, these ten scribes were none other than Haman's ten sons. Thus, we burn ten pieces of bread on the fourteenth of Nissan to show that we overcame the calamity these men had plotted against us.

Taamei HaMinhagim explains that the true purpose of Bedikas Chametz is to remove the spiritual chametz/dross, the yetzer hora, evil inclination, from our hearts. The Kabbalists teach that Hashem created ten types of angels in ascending levels of merit, and, also, in contrast, ten levels of impurity to which man can plummet.

Through the ritual of searching for the ten pieces of bread, we demonstrate our desire to search ourselves and destroy these spiritual flaws. Last, we see that, regardless of how much we have cleaned our house, chametz is still to be found. Likewise, no matter how much a person attempts to lead a good life, perfection eludes him.



R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld ZT"L would say:

"Karpas and Yachatz allude to Krias Yam Suf. How so? The letters of the word **כרפס** spell out **כַּל סוּס רֶכֶב פַּרעה** and when we dip the karpas into salt water, we commemorate how Pharaoh and all his chariots were submerged in the salty waters of the Red Sea.

Similarly, splitting the matza by Yachatz, represents the splitting of the Sea."



When R' Shimshon Dovid Pincus ZT"L was a bochur studying in the Brisker Yeshiva in Yerushalayim, he shared an apartment with several other boys. One year, on the night of Bedikas Chametz, he found himself all alone in the apartment, as the other boys had gone away for the duration of the Yom Tov. And so, at the appointed time, he took upon himself to fulfil the mitzvah of Bedikas Chametz on behalf of the entire apartment.

As soon as it became dark, on the eve of the 14th of Nissan, he began the search. Searching the entire apartment took one hour, then another, and then several more. It was hard work, and Shimshon became very tired. When he finished the mitzvah, he sat down - exhausted but content. Suddenly, he shuddered. "The attic!" he screamed and jumped up as if bitten by a snake. "There is no one here to check the attic," he thought to himself. "The neighbours won't do it. Yet, the halachah expressly requires that a person must check the attic before Pesach."

A battle began raging within him. "Is it my responsibility to check the common attic that is shared by all the tenants in the building?" he asked out loud. Of course, his exhaustion was a major consideration. All kinds of thoughts raced through his head, but in the end, he knew that he really had no choice. "I will not give in. I will fulfil the mitzvah in its entirety."

With that, Shimshon started to climb the steps to the attic. When he opened the door of the common attic and turned on the light, he was quite taken aback. It looked as if the space had not been cleaned in years. The ceiling was covered with thick layers of dust. It would

be impossible to check the attic in that condition, even putting aside the halachah that one must clean each room before Bedikas Chametz. On the other hand, it had to be checked, for there was no doubt that people had brought food up there from time to time.

Shimshon stood in the doorway, and tiredness washed over him. He was almost too exhausted to know what his real obligation was. But he told himself, "No matter. I will perform the mitzvah if it takes my last ounce of strength." He went downstairs for a pail of water and came back up and started to work.

Here he was, a yeshiva bochur cleaning years' worth of grime from a common attic at midnight on the night before Pesach. It was close to dawn, before he finally lit the candle and performed Bedikas Chametz in the attic. - Needless to say, Shimshon could barely stay awake that morning, but there was too much to do to have time for a nap. He kept telling himself, "What kind of Seder will I have now that I am so tired?"

The day flew by in a flurry of activity and Shimshon didn't even time for a short nap. However, after davening Maariv and arriving at his Seder, he suddenly began to feel a great sweetness in the evening's mitzvos. Shimshon felt as if a bright light was shining upon him. When he ate the matza, he tasted a "flavour" that he had never experienced before. As he read the words of the Haggadah, he felt such a connection and experienced such a closeness to Hashem that he had never known.

Shimshon felt so elevated, that he became another person. This feeling lasted throughout the entire Seder. In fact, he couldn't even go to sleep that night due to this unusual and amazing feeling, and he stayed up performing the mitzvah of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim all night. He continued to feel such an exceptional sensation of dveikus to Hashem.

At first, he assumed that this was a sensation that was possible only on the Seder night, but he was wrong. The next day, Shimshon felt

the same way. In the afternoon, he wondered, "Can this feeling possibly continue through Chol Hamoed?" (There is only one Seder night and one day of Yom Tov in Israel.) But the feeling did continue - all throughout the seven days of the festival.

That year, the seventh day of Pesach was followed by Shabbos. That week, Shimshon experienced for the first time in his young life what Shabbos was meant to be. R' Shimshon would conclude this story by saying, "It was then, after that Pesach and Shabbos, that my real spiritual growth began. If I have any accomplishments to my name today, it is because of that one rabbinically-ordained mitzvah that I performed with true sacrifice." *(From Haggadah Shel Pesach Tiferes Shimshon)*

מגיד-רחצה-מוציא מצה...



What is the difference between **ורחץ** and **רחצה**? Both are expressions of washing that are spelled differently.

The Tunisian Chacham, **Rabbeinu Yosef Gez ZT"L** writes that our Sages tell us that it was in the merit of *the righteous women* that Bnei Yisroel were redeemed from Egypt. It was their strength of character in the face of great hardship that encouraged and strengthened their husbands to withstand the torturous labour, the beatings and backbreaking work. They cared for their wounds, washed away the blood and bruises, and infused the men with courage and faith in the Almighty that their salvation was near.

As a result of their actions and their emunah, Hashem sliced the original decree of slavery almost in half: from 400 years to 210

years, as the gemara states: "*A good wife is a fine gift to her husband for it doubles the days of his life.*" By assisting their husbands and caring for them, they caused the actual number of years in slavery to be recognized as double. Thus, in their merit, the exodus took place in half the time it normally would. The word **רחצה** is a feminine term, and it is the part of the Seder that immediately precedes **מוציא מצה** - *eating of the matza*.

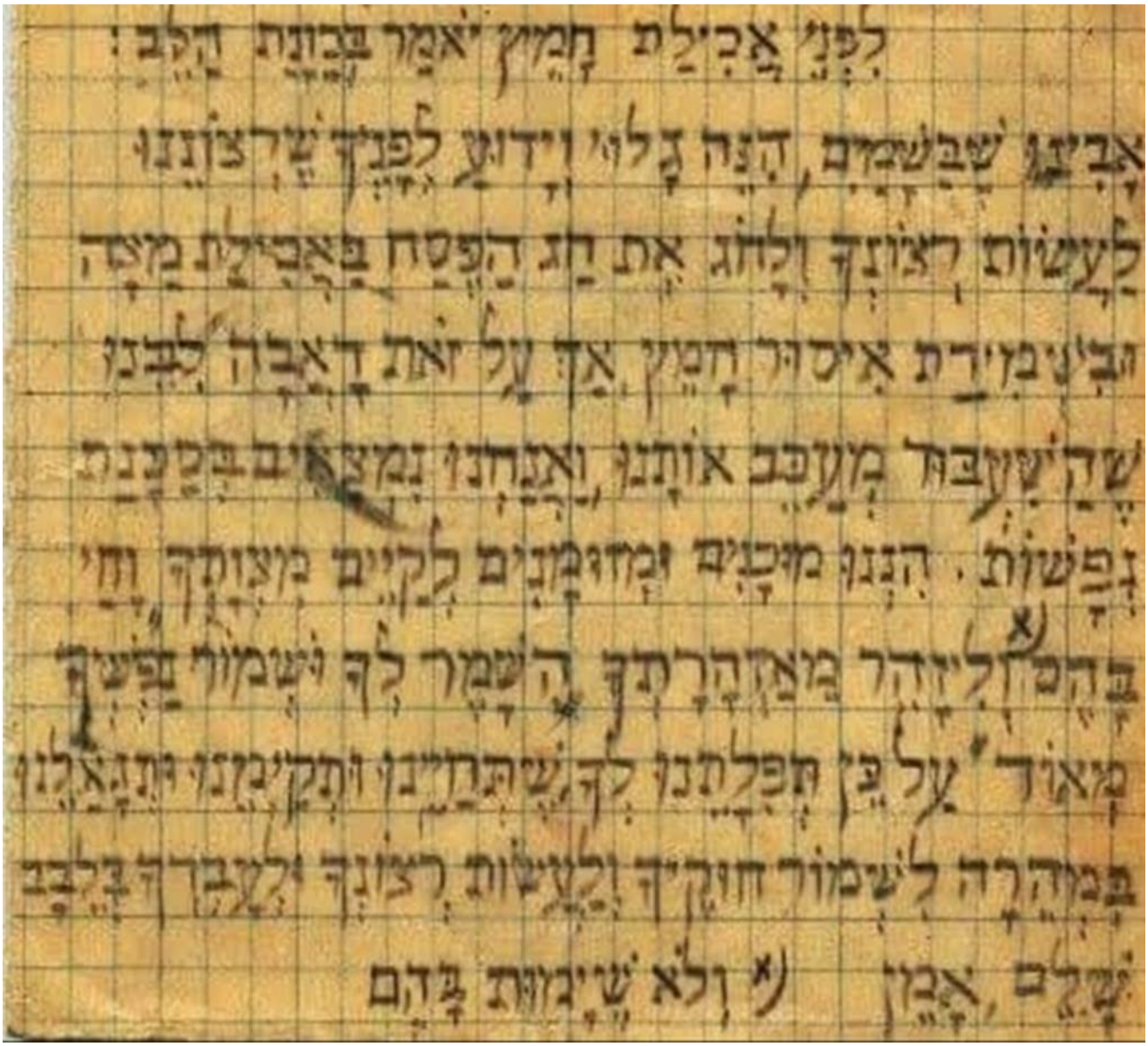
The symbolism is quite clear and not coincidental. It was the righteous women amongst the Jewish people, the ones who washed away- **רחצה**- their husbands' pain and anguish, who brought about the redemption and exodus in half the time!

It was Erev Pesach, 1944.

The entire Jewish community of Rotterdam, Netherlands - men, women, and children - had just been transferred from Vesterbork, a deportation camp in Holland, to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany. Conditions in Vesterbork had been harsh, but continued religious observance had somewhat preserved the Jews' dignity and their will to live. Under the guidance of their spiritual leader, the revered Torah scholar **R' Aharon Davids ZT"L**, some semblance of communal cohesiveness and optimism had been sustained. Upon arrival at Bergen-Belsen, however, daily existence took a sudden, overwhelmingly drastic turn for the worse, as most of the things that make a human being feel human were taken away. Families were divided, people starved, the absurdly hard labour broke body and soul, and disease was spreading fast.

As for the upcoming Pesach holiday - Matzah was, of course, unavailable. R' Davids, whose wife and three children had been separated from him upon arrival in the camp, yearned to keep the spirit of his flock alive, even as their physical strength ebbed. Yet under such circumstances, refraining from eating chametz would surely bring on illness and death for an unknown number of Jews.

What should be done during the week of Pesach with their small daily rations of bread?



He conferred with other rabbinical authorities in the camp, and after anguished and lengthy discussion about this complex and most serious dilemma, a course of action was finally agreed upon. On the eve of the 15th of Nisan, the Seder night, R' Davids took his place at the head of the long table in the male barracks, conducting the ceremony not from a Haggadah - there was none of course - but from memory.

When he reached the blessing, "Who has sanctified us by His commandments and commanded us to eat matzah ..." he lifted up his voice and clearly recited the following prayer -

Avinu Shebashamayim, Heavenly Father, it is manifest and known to You that we desire to carry out your will in regard to the commandment of eating matzah and strictly refraining from chametz on the Festival of Pesach. But we are sick at heart at being prevented in this by reason of the oppression and mortal danger in which we find ourselves. We stand ready to perform Your commandments of which it is said, "You shall do them and live by them," - that is to say, you shall live by them and not die by them. And accordingly, we heed Your warning, as it is written, "Take heed to thyself and keep thy soul alive." Therefore, we beseech You that You will keep us in life and establish us and redeem us speedily from our servitude so that we may in time come to perform Your statutes and carry out Your will with a perfect heart. Amen.

He then reached for a piece of bread and took a bite, thereby urging his brethren to do likewise. R' Davids, along with his son Eliyahu, died shortly before the liberation of Bergen-Belsen by the allied forces. His wife and their daughters, along with approximately 2,800 others, were evacuated by train from the camp. During the two-week journey to nowhere, 570 died and were buried in a mass grave somewhere along the way. Those who survived the trip were abandoned by the Nazis near the East German village of Troebits.

In 1947, his wife and daughters emigrated to the land of Israel, taking with them a copy of the prayer that their husband and father had composed. She died in a Hertzliya nursing home in 1997. Each year, the family and its descendants read the prayer aloud on the Seder night, to hear again how R' Davids asked for Divine assistance, beseeching a shattered people to do the unthinkable and "live, not die, by them." *(Aish.com)*

R' Klonymous Kalman Halevi Epstein ZT"L

"The first letters of **אפיקומן** are the **ר'ת** of **פותח את ידך** - for this **מצוה** is a segula for parnassa."

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

יִשָּׁקֵנִי מִנְּשִׁיקוֹת פִּיהוּ כִּי־טוֹבִים דֹּדֶיךָ מִיָּיִן (Shir Hashirim1:2)



The great Tanna, Rabi Akiva, teaches that all the writings of the Torah are holy, but the book known as Shir Hashirim is deemed the "Holy of Holies." For this reason we read, at the outset, the words, **יִשָּׁקֵנִי מִנְּשִׁיקוֹת פִּיהוּ**- "Kiss me with the kisses of your mouth."

The question is: What exactly are we asking Hashem for with this heartfelt request? The answer is that this is truly the underlying theme of the entire sefer Shir Hashirim. It is our passionate yearning above all else to be connected deeply to our Beloved Master of the world. A **נשיקה** (kiss) is the natural way for people to show love to one another.

When Hashem grants life to a person, He attaches His essence to that person by breathing into him a soul, literally a piece of Himself. Similarly, a "kiss of death" is when Hashem attaches Himself to the soul of a person and "pulls out" the neshama, as He did with Moshe Rabbeinu.

We experienced a similar "kiss of Hashem" at Har Sinai when we heard the voice of Hashem, were kissed by His words through angels, and our souls were removed from our mortal encasing in order to become one with the Almighty. Only later, were we revived. A kiss is sharing a "ruach" between the two parties. It is an attachment, a spiritual closeness that we yearn to have with Hashem.

May all of Klal Yisroel merit to live their lives with closeness to Hashem as their primary goal, so that they will never miss a single kiss of the truest and purest love - Hashem's love to His Nation. May

we sing the song of all songs and receive the kiss of all kisses in our times, as we greet Moshiach Tzidkainu, speedily and in our days, amen!

The Kav HaYashar (90) writes:

"I received a kabbalah that every activity one does in honour of Pesach, and becomes tired from the toil, this kills many *mazikim*, which are called **נגעי בני אדם** . Many *machzorim* write the abbreviation, **קשר"ק** to represent , תקיעה **ת**רועה ,**ש**ברים, תקיעה . And the *machzor* states the following prayer: "May the *malachim* that come out from the **קשר"ק** go up before Hashem to be *meilitz*, and to say good about the Jewish nation."



The Berdichever Rav once saw women cleaning for Pesach, and he said, "May the malachim that come forth from the קראצין שאייערין רייבין קערין (rubbing, scraping and cleaning for Pesach), *roshei teivos* **קשר"ק** , go up to heaven and say good about the Jewish nation." Because cleaning for Pesach creates holy *malachim*, similar to the *malachim* created by the blowing of the shofar.

Once, in the beis medresh of the Beis Aharon, there were chassidim who wanted to buy new tables in honour of Pesach. The Beis Aharon replied, "What would the Bardichover Rav say?" The Bardichover Rav would say that cleaning the tables create *malachim* that go up to heaven and are *meilitz yosher* - speak good things, about Bnei Yisrael, and this annuls all *kitrugim* Above.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

Pesach Cleaning

Every aspect of Yiddishkeit should be performed with joy, Pesach cleaning, too. **Reb Nota Zehnworth *zt'l*** once said in beis medresh, "When there's an **עת צרה**, klal Yisrael responds by making a **יום תפילה** - a day of fasting and davening. I think we should do the same, now."



No one knew what he meant. They asked, "What *tzarah* are you referring to? Is there a problem?" With a smile, he explained that Pesach is approaching, and we have to clean… and people become anxious and worried. They feel as if it is an **עת צרה** . So, we should make a **יום תפילה**, a day of fasting and *teshuvah*."

We shouldn't be upset about the work involved in cleaning our homes for Pesach. We should consider it a privilege.

"The splitting of the sea was not just a physical phenomenon, but a spiritual one as well. It represents the idea that when we face seemingly insurmountable challenges in life, Hashem can intervene and help us overcome them." – Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (Rambam).

Pesach Cleaning



There was a *yungerman* who told his rav, "I was thinking about how women clean for Pesach, and I concluded that they don't clean well enough. They clean the floors by pouring water over the floors, and then they mop it up. But what about all the crevices!? Chametz can get caught there and pouring water won't take it out. I told my wife to clean the floor with a toothpick, to get out all the chametz in the crevices, but she isn't interested in taking on this *chumrah*. She said that if the rav agrees that it is important to clean the floors with a toothpick, then she will do so."

The rav replied, "You are correct. It is a very important *chumrah*. In fact, it is so important, I think you should do it yourself. You shouldn't rely on your wife or anyone else to clean the floors. You should clean the floors yourself."

The lesson: Husbands shouldn't make things difficult for their wives. And if they feel something should be done, and their spouse doesn't want to, they can do it themselves…

"A Yid is like the dough from which matzah is baked. As long as one takes the time to work with it and knead it, it is fine. But if it's left unattended, it quickly goes bad and turns to chametz." – R. Yechezkel of Kuzmir.

Ten Pieces of Chametz



In Warsaw, there was a watchmaker who was a *tzaddik nistar*, one of the concealed tzaddikim of the generation. **The Cheibiner Rav *zt'l*** broke his watch on purpose, just to have an excuse to go to the tzaddik's store and receive a *brachah* from him. The hidden tzaddik grasped the Chebiner Rav's intention and said, "What do you want from me? I'm a simple person." The Chebiner Rav said, "At least tell me a *dvar Torah*," and this is what the *tzaddik nistar*, the watchmaker, said:

The *tzaddik nistar* asked about the custom to look for the ten pieces of chametz, even when we know where they are. He asked, "If he put out the bread pieces himself, he knows where the chametz lies. Is this called *searching* for chametz? How can this be called *bedikas chametz*?"

But there is a proof that even when one knows where the chametz lies, looking for it is still considered searching. The proof is when Yosef's soldiers were searching for Yosef's *gaviyah* (goblet). The soldiers knew where the *gaviyah* was, as Rashi (*Bereishis* 44:12) writes, "They began the search from the oldest son as it states **ויחפש בגדול** - so it wouldn't be noticeable that they knew where the *gaviyah* is." They checked all the bags, from the eldest son to the youngest, and they found it in the bag of the youngest brother, Binyamin, although they knew all along that Yosef's *gaviyah* was there.

Nevertheless, the Torah calls this **ויחפש** , which proves that you can search for something even when you know where it is.

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld-*Rosh Hayeshiva Yeshivas Beis Dovid*

Seder Night, Giving over the Fire of Yiddishkeit

As someone was filling up petrol in his car, he was watching his surroundings and noticed a most peculiar sight. There were two men, working on the side of the road, each of them holding a spade. The first man was digging a large size hole, then moving down the road, digging another hole. The man behind him, came right after he finished digging the hole and filled the hole back with the earth that the first man had just dug.



Thinking they must be doing something interesting, after paying for his petrol, he drove over to them and asked them what exactly they were doing. They responded: We work for the local council and are improving the environment by beautifying the local surroundings.

The man responded, but you are not doing anything except for digging and refilling holes, surely, you're just wasting the money of the council. Being offended by this attack, the man responded:

Sir, there are normally three of us that work here on this site. Our friend mike isn't here today, he is sick. My job is to dig the hole, mike – who isn't here today – normally places a small tree into the hole that I dug, and Jonny over there, he fills up the hole with dirt. We figured that just because mike isn't here today to do his job that we shouldn't stop doing our job, so we are continuing to work.

Sounds funny, but we often do the same in our own lives. We just keep doing what we do, without ever stopping to think of what we are doing and if we are actually accomplishing anything.

We live fast moving and busy lives, we just don't have that much time to stop. It's like a person that is driving many miles that is told, you will have to stop for petrol at one point. Stop, he responds, I don't' have time to stop, I'm busy driving!

Pesach is the time we get to stop and think, refuel our engines. Instil in ourselves the Emunah in H-shem and expound upon His capabilities. - But it's not only ourselves that we have to inspire, it's also our children. The night of Pesach is our opportunity to instil in our children the necessary trust on H-Shem that is necessary to be able to cope with life's challenges.

The Torah instructs us regarding chinuch of our children four times. Each time it is presented as **אמונה ודעת את ה'**. *Chazal* (Yerushalmi, Pesachim 5:4) explain that thee four times represent the four sons that we speak about of Pesach night at the seder: The wise one, the evil one, the simple one and the one that doesn't know how to ask.

Explains **Rav Yitzchok Eisek Sher *zt"l*** that the Torah is teaching us an important lesson. One has to know how to approach each child. Each child has their own unique manner that they have to be taught in. Every child has his right to know and understand, and it's up to us to give it over to him in the manner that he needs to hear it. - The night of Pesach is a night that we have this opportunity.

Avraham Avinu is praised until today for the act of wanting to sacrifice his son that he loved so dearly. In fact, until this day, we remind H-Shem of that act of sacrifice to enable ourselves to catch a little bit of that reward. The question is what was so great about what Avraham did. Wouldn't have we all done the same? If H-Shem came to us in a clear manner and told us we needed to do it. So why is Avraham praised so much for this act?

The Vilna Goan explain's that Avraham wasn't praised for *what* he did, since we all would have done the same thing, but Avraham was praised for *how* he did it. Such enthusiasm, such excitement. That, is something we have to learn and give over to future

generations. Many of us do the things we do because that's how we grew up or that's what we were taught. We have to learn to develop an excitement for doing them. This is the strongest message we can give our children.

The Nesivos Sholom of Slonim (Parshas Tzav) writes the following *moshol* in which a person wishes to build a huge palace for himself on a huge property which he owns. There was one problem. The land was covered in a huge forest. He grabs an axe and begins to chop away. After falling a tree or two, he realizes that even if he were to have a whole crew of lumberjacks, this effort would take many years. It dawns on him that what he needs is a fire, - a powerful, controlled conflagration that can destroy the forest in a matter of minutes. The Nesivas Sholom explains that it takes a fiery, passionate and soulful *yiddishkeit* to overcome the vast forests of filth and confusion that dominate our environment.

"How was your seder?" is likely one of the most commonly asked questions during the first days of Pesach. People of curious as to what time your seder finished, what was offered for the *afikoman* prize and what was served for the meal. However, one of the most vital areas of the seder, which is in fact a Mitzvah Min HaTorah which is often neglected or overlooked was the obligation of *Sipur Yetzias Mitzrayim* – the recounting of the Exodus from Egypt. This obligation is stated clearly in the Torah: "*V'higadeto L'bincho Bayom Ha'hu*" (Shemos 13:8)

Rav Chaim Freedlander *zt"l* terns the seder night as "A night of Chinuch" in which we transmit to our children the fundamentals of *Emunah*, which we received by a continuas tradition for over 3,000 years from our forefathers.

What is this mitzvah?

Strictly speaking, the mitzvah can be fulfilled by any verbal expression conveying the essential information of the Exodus. Hence, even a minimal remark that contains the fact that H-Shem released the Jews from the bondage of Mitzrayim is sufficient to fulfil ones obligation. However, the more details and enlightening the discussion, is especially commendable, as stated in the haggadah:" *Kol Hamarbeh Lesaper Beytzias Mitzraim, Harei Zeh Meshubach*" – "The More one expounds upon the exodus the more praiseworthy."

But they are just kids; they don't sit still during a regular Shabbos meal?

Achieving a harmonious seder table with a bunch of young children is not a simple task. At a table with small children, the normal restlessness and disorder that are quite normal for large families seem to make the role of the parents more like policeman rather than seder leaders who are trying to transmit the feeling of *yetzias mitzrayim* to their children.

Although I do not claim to have any simple or magic solutions for parents to attain a peaceful seder, there are, however, a few pieces of advice I can offer that may help:

a) Preparation: Since the responsibility of conducting the seder and fulfilling this mitzvah is upon the parents, it is important for both parents to prepare themselves both physically and emotionally. I remember my Rosh Yeshiva **Rav Sheinberg *zt"l*** saying every year that the parents are completely exhausted after the lead-up to pesach that by the time the seder arrives, they sit down for what seems to be the very first time in weeks and sigh a breath of relief that we made it this far and have no more strength for the rest of the night.

b) Just as many people put their children to rest in the afternoon of Erev Peasch so the kids should be well rested for the seder, it is

just as important for the parents to grab even a few minutes rest at some point during the day. Trust me, I have done it. It works wonders. If many of the seder food items and table settings are taken care of the day before or in the morning, there is no reason one cannot rest for a few moments.

c) Divrei Torah: prepare what you are going to say before the seder, rather than looking up ad trying to find things during the seder. You can do this by either putting bookmarks in the places you noticed a good story or divrei Torah, or just jot down notes and keep it in your haggadah.

d) Technique: The seforim write that a father has a unique power on the night of Pesach to inspire his children with lasting *Emunah* in H-Shem. Therefore, even if one's children already know the stories of *yetyzias mitzrayim*, the father should make every effort to retell them enthusiastically.

The Torah states that H-Shem performed the ten plagues in Egypt "*L'maan te'saper b'oznei vincha u'ven bincha*…! So that we will relate to our sons and our son's son's hoe H-Shem smote the Egyptians.

Why are our grandchildren mentioned? The answer is that when we tell our sons about the miracles in Mitzrayin, the story must penetrate with such an impact that our sons will be able to pass what we tell them to their sons. One suggestion would be to look up the *medroshim* on the 10 *maccos* in order to excitedly explain what the Jews witnessed and were saved from, and dramatize the seder by perhaps demonstrating the heavy loads that the Jews had to shlep. I always like to have a supply of treats as 'prizes' to give out to the children as soon as they ask any question or make any addition to the seder; this encourages them to stay at the table and keep listening!

I am sure everyone can use their own imagination but think about it before you get there. No-one comes to a business meeting and only then starts to think about what needs to be discussed and improved, it's on the agenda before the meeting begins. Well, on seder night,

every parent has the chance of a lifetime to instil in his children's mind Who runs the world. *Emunah* in our generation is so vitally important because life does not always go according to our plans. We all go through twists and turns along the journey of life, and many obstacles get in our way. The only way to deal with life's challenges is *Emunah*. The belief that H-Shem is pulling the strings. This is the recipe for a successful and happy, calm life. As parents, the biggest success is to raise children in a manner that they no longer need us as parents to hold their hand and they are fully independent. What better night than seder night to take advantage of this most precious opportunity, and make this year's seder night one our children will remember for generations.

Tonight, we have the opportunity to instil in our children – Klal Yisroels future – that *yiddishkeit* is exciting, it's relevant. The opportunity to perform mitzvos and serve H-Shem is something to be happy about, something to look forward to.

Let's use this unique opportunity and with H-Shems help, will ensure that *yiddishkeit* remains as exciting as it always was and we merit a full *Geulah* with the rebuilding of the third Beis Hamikdash, Amen.

R' Meir Hurvitz of Dzikov ZT"L (Imrei Noam) says:

"The last day of Pesach – **אחרון של פסח** - is one of the most special and joyous holidays of the calendar year. It is unlike the last day of Sukkos or the last day of Shavuos, for it is the final day of the new cycle of holidays. This is the allusion that is attributed to none other than Avrohom Avinu in the words of the song **אשת חיל** that he composed: **ותשחק ליום אחרון** - 'Her (joyous) laughter on the final day.' The final day **אחרון של פסח** - is a day when joy and laughter reign supreme and it is the day that starts off the joy and happiness for the entire year."

Milk for Pesach by David Olivestone



An English farmer milking a cow during the Second World War

Kosher for Passover food is now so abundant, thanks largely to OU Kosher, that we take it for granted. Of course, it wasn't always so. In England, where I grew up, the years of the Second World War (1939-1945) were a time of hardship and deprivation. Food, clothing and many other items were often in short supply and were rationed due to the war effort. Orthodox Jewish housewives would trade the bacon, ham and other *treif* foodstuff coupons in their ration books with their non-Jewish neighbours for coupons for butter, eggs and other items they could use.

In 1940 most young children were evacuated out of the larger cities when the German Blitz began. They were billeted with families in the safety of the countryside while bombs fell night after night on London and elsewhere, injuring and killing tens of thousands and destroying large swaths of homes and businesses.

Many Jewish children, often to their dismay, found themselves placed in non-Jewish homes. The foster parents, however well-meaning, had probably never met a Jew before, but at the very least usually realized that serving the children bacon for breakfast would not make them feel at home.

To its credit, the organized Jewish community realized that it was faced with an unprecedented, multi-faceted problem and struggled

to meet the challenge, although understandably not always with great success. Besides trying to make kosher food supplies available wherever Jews were then to be found, great efforts were made to continue the children's Jewish education, which was obviously vital given the circumstances in which many of them now lived.

Since they had three small sons aged eight, four and one (I was born later, toward the end of the war), my parents were evacuated with their family and were able to find a tiny house in Bovingdon, a small Hertfordshire village about thirty miles outside London.

They were probably the first—and last—Jews ever to live there. During the week, my father worked in London in a factory making parachutes for the Royal Air Force, often also serving as a nighttime fire warden, directing the fire brigade to where fires had broken out due to the bombings. He would come to Bovingdon for Shabbat, bringing whatever kosher food he could obtain.

Two *frum* teenage German refugee sisters were also living with my parents. They had come to England in the Kindertransport program and were placed in a Jewish group home. Since the home had no facilities for Pesach, the girls were sent to stay with a Jewish family for the week. But on arrival at their hosts, they very quickly realized that the home was not really *kasher l'Pesach,* and they telephoned the director of the group home asking to be placed elsewhere.

His initial reaction was that it would be impossible to find another host family so close to *yom tov*, whereupon the girls told him that he had better send two hearses right after Pesach as they would perish from starvation by that time. Somehow, my parents were contacted, and the girls ended up living with them for over two years.

My father was able to get *matzot* and some *Pesachdik* ingredients for my mother to cook with but was faced with the challenge of how to obtain fresh milk. So, he took a very tall glass vase and *kashered* it for Pesach. (This is not done much these days, but in Europe it was common for glassware to be *kashered* by soaking it

in cold water for three days, changing the water every twenty-four hours.) He put the vase into my brother's baby carriage and wheeled it off to a local farm.

So that he could be certain the milk would be *kasher l'Pesach*, he asked the farmer to milk directly from one of his cows into the vase. Whatever he might have thought of this request, the farmer was quite willing, but he had a problem. How would he know how much milk my father was taking and therefore how much to charge him? He proposed using his one-pint milk dipper to fill the vase with water, counting the number of pints it contained.

For my father, this raised a red flag. Even though he was quite aware that there was only a remote possibility that this procedure would make the vase—and the milk—*chametzdik*, he was taking no chances and had to come up with another plan. He suggested to the farmer that they first fill the vase with water, and then pour it from the vase into the dipper as many times as it would take. The problem was solved, and the milking commenced. When the vase was full my father paid the farmer and trundled it back home with its precious cargo, and the family had milk for *yom tov*.

But when Chol Hamo'ed came they needed more milk. Off went my father to the same farmer with the big vase in the carriage. Once again, he asked him to follow exactly the same procedure and to milk straight from the cow into the vase.

"Righto," said the farmer in his agreeable manner, "but does it have to be the same cow?"

"In recalling the Exodus, a Jew should remind himself never to despair from spiritual striving, no matter how dismal his situation." – R. Tzadok Hakohen of Lublin.

The Rav's Eight-Year- Old Grandson



Moreinu HaRav [Gamliel Rabinowitz) shlita relates: In our house we are careful to follow the halachos to the letter. For example, we are told to check for chometz in holes and cracks, so we check everywhere, even the places that have already been cleaned are thoroughly checked. We do a true and basic bedikas chometz.

Although we are older and at our age it is hard to bend down, my solution is – grandchildren. Even now in the time of corona, my son and grandchildren have been living with me the whole time and these young grandchildren help me search in the places that are hard for me.

So I assigned an eight-year-old grandson for the bedikah and I explained to him that I am going to search places where he saw his grandmother and mother had already cleaned and mopped several times.

He asked why we had to search when it was so clean? I told him because Chazal told us to and we follow halacha without changing anything and if we do not find anything, we have still fulfilled the mitzvah.

The grandson understood and accepted it and we searched. When we reached our bedroom, I asked him to bend down and look under beds and see if there is chometz.

Suddenly, the grandson jumped up in joy and shouted: "I found, I found chometz!!!" He found a half-eaten wafer literally the size of a kezayis of chometz!!!

The grandson was excited and so was I and the rest of the family. He had asked and he was answered that even this room which is basically cleaned and even under the beds had been swept and still chometz was found under the bed which showed a young grandson how chometz can reach a room without intention. (*Tiv Hakehila.)*

An Amazing Story of Chessed



We keep seeing how much beautiful *chessed* and *tzedaka* is being done during this difficult time of Covid. There was a [Ashkenazi] woman in Lakewood who unfortunately lost her husband back in September. Pesach was approaching, and she was looking forward to hosting her children and grandchildren for the *Sedarim* and meals. When Coronavirus struck, she was devastated. This *almanah* would be alone for the entire holiday.

The woman has a next door neighbour whose window is directly across from hers. The neighbour [who was Sephardi] called her up and said, "I don't want you to be alone during the holiday. I'm going to push my dining room table up against the window, and you will also sit by yours, and we'll do the *Seders* together." She gladly accepted.

After Pesach ended, the woman's son called her and asked how her holiday was. She said, "It was really great actually!"

The son was surprised and asked why.

She answered, "My neighbours sat by their window so I could participate in their *Seder*. You wouldn't believe it. They read all the parts of the *Haggadah* and all of the songs in your father's tunes. The same way Dad always used to conduct our Seder was the way the neighbors also did! It made me feel so good and not like a lonely widow. It was the best possible *Seder* under the circumstances!"

Little did she know, before Pesach, the [Sefardi] neighbour had called the son. He said, "I want to make your mother feel special. I want to have her do the *Seders* with us by the window and for her to be as comfortable as possible. Can you please teach me the exact [Ashkenazi] tunes for how your father used to read the *Haggadah*?"

After he learned, he sat down with his wife and children, and they practiced over and over. They wanted to sing exactly how this *almanah* was accustomed in order to make her feel comfortable and less alone!

Something so simple yet so thoughtful could go a really long way. These ordinary people did an extraordinary thing to make an *almanah* feel so special. *Chessed* like this is what will bring *Mashiah* swiftly in our days!! Amen!

May we all appreciate the blessings we get from the *kohanim*. May we also learn the importance of not speaking *lashon harah* even when it's seemingly innocent. May we all learn from the amazing story that [Sephardi] family did for the [Ashkenazi] Almamah for her Pesach Seder that she was forced to spend without her family. Lastly, may we remember to use the tools gifted to us as a means to always serve Hashem.

Dealing with the Unexpected On the Pesach Seder Night By Rabbi David Ashear



If something is important to a person and he is passionate about it, when things don't go smoothly in that area he could become easily angered. He needs extra chizuk to remind himself that whatever happens is from Hashem. No matter how careful he is to do things right, Hashem is still in charge.

The Seder night is a very special time. Hours upon hours of preparation go into a Seder, and we're all passionate about it; so we want things to run smoothly. If something unexpected comes up and we're not prepared to handle it properly, it could ruin the night.

The Chida writes, because this night is so special, the yetzer hara works harder, to get us to become angry or upset, and ruin it. We must remember, as important as it is to have a proper Seder, it's just as important for us to be calm and composed when issues come up.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman told a few stories about how tzaddikim responded when faced with various, unexpected circumstances

which arose on the night of their Sedarim. He quoted from the **Bet Aharon of Karlin** who said that his father had a righteous student, Rabbi Barsy. This Rabbi Barsy was very strict in all areas of Pesach, especially when it came to baking matzot and preparing the wine for the four cups. He personally supervised the entire production of both the matzah and the wine which he used for the Seder.

One time, he came home on Erev Pesach, after putting in days of toil, with just enough wine and matzah for his family. While he was in shul that night, his wife was walking by the table and the tablecloth got caught in her belt. As she continued walking, everything came tumbling down. The dishes broke, the matzot broke and the wine was all over the floor. She was so angry. Here she had spent hours preparing a beautiful table, and now it was all ruined.

When her husband came home, she started yelling at him, blaming him for leaving the matzah and the wine at the edge of the table, blaming him for the tablecloth sticking out. Rabbi Barsy calmly said to himself, "This is from Hashem." He didn't get upset that his hard work was ruined; he didn't get upset that his wife yelled at him. He said to himself, it's a test.

He picked up the broken matzot; he salvaged whatever wine he could; he set the table back to the best of his abilities, and then he sat down at the Seder table with joy and went on as if nothing happened. The next day, the Rav HaKadosh of Karlin, entered the shul and started telling his students about what each one of them accomplished in the spiritual worlds with their Sedarim. And then he said, "Rabbi Barsy's Seder was greater than all. His behaviour and his attitude accomplished more in Shamayim than anybody else's Seder. While we might think that getting angry over spiritual matters is warranted. Actually, we could accomplish more by not getting angry.

One of the grandchildren of **Rabbi Zalman Brizel** told that one Seder night, a different grandchild accidentally broke all of the

Rabbi's matzah shemurah that he worked so hard to prepare. The moment Rabbi Brizel saw what happened, he looked up to Shamayim and said, "Hashem, thank You so much for giving me these sweet little grandchildren. Even though sometimes they are careless, they are the greatest gift."

At the Seder of the **Admor Rabbi Yochanan Twersky** from Tolna, a child once walked in holding real chametz that he found in the street. The people around the table were mortified. The Rebbe, on the other hand, calmly got up, went over to the child and told him to put the chametz down on a plate. He then took the plate and covered it with a white cloth lichvod Chag. He then turned to the child and said, "Thank you for letting me fulfil the words of our Chazal who tell us to cover any chametz we find on Chag." And then he went back to the Seder and continued.

The common denominator in all these stories is that even though Pesach was so important to these Rabbis, they knew that it is just as important not to get angry. They accepted whatever Hashem sent their way, and they kept a happy atmosphere. B'ezrat Hashem, we'll all be able to elevate ourselves in our middot to be happy and calm throughout the Seder and do this mitzvah the best way possible.

The Jewish Weekly

Itche, the Hero of Ger By Rabbi Yechiel Spero

Throughout his life, the **Imrei Emet, Rav Avraham Mordechai Alter of Ger**, was particular that no one should touch his clothing. He was so concerned that his clothes were not affected by impurity, that he even chose his tailor very carefully. There was one person, however, who was allowed to touch his clothing. He was neither a Rebbe nor a learned individual, nor did he come from a prestigious background. Itche Greinemous was a rather simple fellow. However,

because of one amazing day in his life, he had the privilege of helping the Rebbe don his Kittel on Pesach night.

At the time of the story, **the Sfat Emet, Rav Yehudah Aryeh Leib**, stood at the helm of Ger Chassidut. One day, word began to spread that a plague had broken out in the city. Immediately, everyone ran to their homes and tried to protect themselves against the deadly plague. But it was too late; the plague spread quickly and mercilessly, claiming the lives of many, especially children. By the time daybreak had arrived, the streets were littered with the bodies of lifeless children.

The authorities, desperate to get the situation under control, decreed that these bodies should be cremated to prevent the plague from spreading any further. The heartbroken families, who wanted so badly to give their children a proper final farewell, watched helplessly from inside their homes, since they knew that they were risking their lives by going outside.

The Sfat Emet was beside himself. There was really nothing anyone could do, as no one was prepared to risk his own life. After much thought, the Sfat Emet issued a declaration: Anyone who was prepared to bury one of the dead children would be guaranteed a portion in the World to Come. Families heard about the Rebbe's promise, but the streets remained eerily empty, until suddenly, one towering figure emerged. It was Itche Greinemous. With a shovel in his hand, he bent down next to a small child in the middle of the street and wrapped him in a tallit. Then he went to the cemetery and buried the boy.

At the end of the day, he showed up at the doorstep of the Sfat Emet. The Rebbe had heard about his act of selfless dedication and promised him that he would receive a special portion in the World to Come, for his Mesirat Nefesh. But Itche just stood there at the doorstep, exhausted and filthy. "Rebbe, what you promised was

based on someone burying one child. I just came from the cemetery. Rebbe, I buried 16 children!"



The Sfat Emet looked incredulously at the broad-shouldered fellow. He could hardly believe what he had just heard. "Sixteen children?" The Rebbe contemplated the immeasurable comfort that Itche had provided to those 16 families. Instead of their children being reduced to ash, they now had a final resting place of dignity, where the parents could come visit them and pray. "So what can I possibly give you as a reward?" the Rebbe asked. Itche did not hesitate for a moment. He knew exactly what he wanted. It was neither riches nor monetary rewards he was seeking. Nor was he interested in honour or glory. Instead, he asked the Rebbe if he could have the privilege of helping him put on his Kittel every year at the Seder. Immediately, the Rebbe agreed, and so it was.

Every year, after they came back from davening, the Sfat Emet allowed Itche to help him with his Kittel, a privilege that was allowed to no one else. The obvious connection was never spoken about. While Itche had risked his life to prepare the 16 children he had buried and to dress them in their **תכריכים**, the Rebbe had given him the privilege of dressing him in his Kittel, a special garment reserved for the Seder, and used later for burial.

In the last year of the Sfat Emet's life, as Itche helped him with his Kittel, he let out a krechtz , "Oy! There are thousands of Jewish soldiers who have written to me asking that I daven on their behalf. All they want is that they should be Zocheh to receive a **קבר ישראל**.

How can I begin my Seder with this enormous burden on my shoulders? Who can carry such a burden? I can't do it anymore. I just can't do it."

Anyone who was in the room at that time was greatly moved by the Rebbe's cry, but perhaps no one was more moved than Itche, who had risked his life to bring so many children to Jewish burial. After the Rebbe's passing that year, Itche continued to perform his yearly practice with the Imrei Emet, the son of the Sfat Emet.

Althought the Imrei Emet was particular about who touched his clothing, Itche was more angel than man. Years later, on the first day of Succot, as he stood in the Gerrer Beit Midrash holding his Lulav and Etrog, Itche breathed his last breath. With thousands of people in the surrounding area, Itche was taken out of the Beit Midrash. The following day, he was brought to his final resting place, in one of the largest funeral processions the city of Ger had ever seen. Of course, the Imrei Emet was in attendance, as well. Itche was buried right near the children he had buried years before.

Divrei Torah, Ba`er Heitev. באר היטב פרש"י בע' לשון. דברי תורה, שמחה וחיזוק.

Asks the Medrash (Shemos Rabboh 10), how did the Tzfardeyah (frog) enter the great houses, which were built of marble?

Answers the Medrash, that the frog would say to the marble walls, "Make me an opening I should be able to go and do the will of my Creator", and the marble would split open!

So too, must every Yid say to his heart which is clogged as a stone, "Split open, as to enable me to do the will of my Creator". As even for the frog the marble split open, when it was going to do the will of The Borei, Hashem Yisborach Shemo. • **Sefer Divrei Shmuel – Slonim**

How We Baked Matzah In a Nazi Labour Camp By Asharon Baltazar



Three men, all prisoners, could think of nothing but the imminent festival of Passover. As thousands of Jews - including their own relatives - were being sent to their deaths on a daily basis, Yaakov Friedman, Moshe Goldstein, and **Rabbi Yekusiel Halberstam** (the Klausenburger Rebbe) had the bravery and presence of mind to secure matzah for Passover 1945.

Here is Moshe Goldstein's account of the amazing turn of events that afforded them the ability to observe the Festival of Freedom amidst abysmal suffering and death.

In the days preceding Passover, the war was nearing its end. The relentless droning of American aircraft filled the German skies, followed by the whistling hail of bombs that pounded the Mühldorf railway complex into rubble. Spared of destruction were the nearby forced labour camps where we toiled under the harshest conditions. We prisoners celebrated this mighty display of Allied destruction, but the anxiety of our German overseers ran high.

The railway was vital to the war efforts, and orders were issued to immediately repair the damage. The Germans decided to send a

group of 12 Jewish slaves to begin the clean-up. I volunteered to go. I knew the work would be excruciating but I hoped that perhaps I would find some food amidst the rubble.

We arrived at a scene of utter devastation. Freight cars lay on their sides, smoke rising from gaping holes. Stretches of railing were ripped off the ground and tossed aside in twisted heaps. Nearly every building suffered extensive damage. It was clear some of the cars were unrepairable. I managed to disappear between the rows of trains that were still upright. It took a while, but I eventually found a boxcar from Hungary loaded with wheat in burlap sacks. Wheat! And so close to Pesach! G-d had granted us a good start, but how could I possibly smuggle the wheat into the camp?

A faint groan from amid the wheat sacks caught my attention. There, in a dark corner of the boxcar, lay a man, crushed by the enormous weight of the grain. The man mumbled something more, which I recognized as Hungarian, my native tongue. I saw he wore the grey uniform of an SS officer. "What happened?" I asked. The SS officer moaned weakly about being pinned under the sacks. "I understand. Let me help you."

As I approached, I noticed the officer's boots, deep black in colour and luxurious in appearance. On my own feet were bits of tattered leather, barely held together. "I'm going to take off your shoes," I said. "That way, you'll feel less restrained, and then we'll see what we can do."

Once I had undone the laces, I slipped the heavy boots off. Then, wielding whatever strength and hate I could muster, I swung at the man's head. I took the boots and continued my search. I knew I did not have much time and I needed to think of a way to bring in as much wheat as possible without the guards knowing. Lugging the sacks through the main gates didn't even occur to me; the wheat would be confiscated, and I would be shot without a second thought.

I rummaged around some more and discovered two pairs of pants. I put them on and cinched the bottoms around my ankles with some rope. I was then able to pour a quantity of wheat into the space between the two pairs of pants. Once my legs were filled with as much wheat as I dared carry, I began the long walk back to the camp.

The bombings left the Germans rattled and fearful, and for the initial days following the air raid, the inspection of prisoners at camp gates was enforced almost half-heartedly. I was thus able to smuggle in a fairly large amount of wheat. We had wheat, but now what?

Reb Sender Direnfeld, a fellow inmate and a Belzer Chassid, offered to hide the wheat, and amazingly, he managed to keep it away from prying German eyes. Later, an old mill was procured from somewhere. We ground the wheat in the dead of night, and using a clean piece of cloth, sifted the flour from grit. Next we needed fuel for a fire. During one stint in the field, I asked everyone to find a stick and carry it back to the camp. The branches were conspicuous and caught the attention of a German guard. He motioned me over. "Why is everyone with a stick?" "What difference does it make? People want to walk around with a stick," I answered. We had flour and we had fuel. We were ready to bake matzah.

One night just before Passover, we set about baking matzah. Near the barrack door stood a prisoner, standing guard with fearful eyes. We lit a fire under a metal can which functioned as our oven, and the Matzah baking - under Nazi noses - began. The Rebbe, Reb Yaakov, and I mixed the flour and kneaded the dough. We worked quickly, not only because of the strict 18-minute limit, but also because of the ever-present danger of being caught. We ended up with 20 small matzahs.

On Pesach eve, after returning from work, our small group sat down for the Seder. On wooden slats around us lay sleeping bodies, exhausted from the relentless work. For those celebrating, the

hardships of the Holocaust and daily camp life melted away, as we experienced the Biblical redemption from Egypt. Unable to sit for long, we each ate an olive-sized piece of matzah, the taste of tears mingling with the matzah crumbs in our mouths. We could not sit leisurely and recite the Haggadah, but in those moments we each prayed - more fervently than ever before or ever since - the words that still ring in my ears: "Next year in Jerusalem." (*Reprinted from email of Chabad.org.)*

Torah Tavlin וַיַּאֲמִינוּ בַּה׳ וּבְמֹשֶׁה עַבְדּוֹ



A woman in dire straits once came to **R' Chaim Sanzer ZT"L** for a blessing. The Rebbe listened patiently as she poured out her heart and then said, "If you strengthen your emunah in Hashem, He will surely save you!" The woman stopped and, in all innocence, responded, "But Rebbe, I am but a simple woman and when I daven each morning, in my siddur the words **ויושע ה׳** ("And Hashem saved") come before the words **ויאמינו בה׳** ("And they believed in Hashem"). Why must I do the opposite?"

The Sanzer Rov heard these words and immediately jumped up from his seat. He paced the room furiously, stroking his beard and whispering to himself. Then, he stopped and turned to the woman. "You are right! You are absolutely right! First, Hashem must send His salvation for 'the salvation of Hashem (can come) in the blink of an eye!'"

Mayim Shelanu



In the olden days, Jews would go to the river and draw water in order to use it to bake the matzos. This was called mayim shelanu. What is the reason for this custom and why was it necessary?

The great Rebbe, **R' Avrohom Yaakov of Sadigura ZT"L** gives us a fascinating explanation. As we know, the **ימים נוראים** - Days of Awe, from Rosh Hashanah until after Yom Kippur, are days of judgement and anxiousness. These days are called Gevurah - Strength. A person does teshuva at this time from fear, because fear comes from the middah of gevurah. Therefore, a person's repentance is not good enough to wipe out his sins completely. They are **נעשית כשגגות** - *turned into unwilling sins*. Therefore, when we go to the water to do tashlich, we cast away our sins. This shows that the unwilling sins still need atonement and we rid ourselves of these sins by casting them into the water.

However, when the month of Nisan comes, this is considered a time of chesed and love for Hashem and one should involve himself in teshuva during this time. Because before Pesach one is at the level and capability to do **תשובה מאהבה** - *Repentance out of Love*, in order to turn his sins into merits . For this reason, we go to the river to draw water for the matzos. We are thus taking back the sins that we threw into the water during Tishrei so that we can now make them into merits through our love.

מַעֲשֶׂה בְּרַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר וְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְרַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן־עֲזַרְיָה וְרַבִּי עֲקִיבָא וְרַבִּי טַרְפוֹן שֶׁהָיוּ מְסֻבִּין בִּבְנֵי־בְרַק

A number of questions are raised regarding the story of the five Tanaim who conducted their seder in Bnei Brak. Firstly, what is the significance of the setting that it needs to be stressed that they "were reclining in Bnei Brak"? Secondly, is the uniqueness of this story, that it had to be included in the Haggadah, the fact that these Tanaim almost forgot to say Shema? Why is this noteworthy?



Rabbeinu Yitzchok Abarbanel ZT"L interprets this story in a unique manner and reaches the following startling conclusion: "Bnei Brak" does not refer to a city or even people from the city of Brak. Rather, it refers to beautiful vessels which are used on Pesach to show freedom and glory.

ברק is an expression of shining, flashing, lightning, and **בני** is simply an expression meaning "capable of" or "relative to." Hence, here it means that these great men were reclining with their expensive, glittering Pesach silverware as befitting the glory of the Seder

night, which is the one night in the year when one may display his wealth in a lavish manner, provided the intention is to demonstrate freedom and the liberation from the bondage of Egyptian civilization, both physical and spiritual.

These Torah giants were fulfilling their seder-night obligation by reclining – **בבני ברק** - with their sparkling vessels which served to combine the wealth of their Torah dialogue with spiritual brilliance and physical splendour.



Never Forgets

Many people are very broken now and feeling very lost. We do not understand why great gedolim, incredible baalei tzedakah and so many members of Klal Yisrael are passing away. Allow me to share with you the life of Yosef HaTzaddik, someone who went through incredibly trying and tough times.

The Chidah writes that Yosef was given the appellation "Tzaddik" because he is the foundation of Klal Yisroel. As we are told in the Torah, Yosef's own brothers threw him into a pit and sold him into slavery in Egypt. Yet, in being transported to Egypt, Yosef was taken in a caravan, which was filled with nice-smelling spices, reminding him that G-d was with him even amidst his deepest and darkest moments. He knew that Hashem was there with him. Even amidst all that is going on now and all the wailing of the sirens, we must do our utmost to focus and understand, like Yosef did, that Hashem never forgets his children.

After the unbelievably challenging test which Yosef overcame facing the temptations of the wife of Potiphar, we would have assumed that he would have been handsomely rewarded. He passed such an incredibly tempting and trying test; he certainly deserved to be miraculously brought back home and returned to his father from whom he had been separated.



After Avraham Avinu passed his test at the Akeidas Yitzchak, Hashem "blessed him with everything," says the Torah. Yet what was Yosef's reward? After feeling so good for overcoming his yetzer hara, what happened? He was placed in prison. Yosef could have thought to himself, "Hashem, what happened! I just passed this very difficult test; Why is this happening that I'm thrown into a dungeon? That is how I am rewarded?" There Yosef was in prison, and no one would ever find him.

The last words in Parshas Vayeishev, which mirror a similar feeling which many people feel today, is, "And the cupbearer did not remember Yosef, and he forgot him" (Bereishis 40:23). Yosef HaTzaddik was forgotten. Many individuals right now are looking at their Pesach seder and looking all around at the world, and feeling… forgotten… But Hashem never forgets His creation or His children.

If you just turn the page in the Chumash, the next words are, "Vayehi Mikeitz – And it was the end of…" Just turn the page. In one moment, you feel forgotten, and Hashem turns the page and everything changes. It was Rosh Hashanah when Yosef was remembered and pulled out from prison (Rosh Hashanah 11a) … and he became second in command to Pharaoh, to the most powerful king. Yet throughout it all, Yosef never forgot that Hashem was looking after him. In looking through the Pesukim, the constant word which escapes Yosef lips is the name of Hashem. "Without Hashem," says Yosef to Pharaoh, "I cannot interpret your dream." "That which Hashem tells me I will say to Pharoah…"

A human being can forget someone else, but Hashem never forgets us. Hashem is neither angry at us right now. He is preparing us for

Moshiach, and we simply need to take our game up another level from being an amateur to becoming a professional. Hashem is putting us in our houses, and telling us He loves us, and He is bringing the beginning of a new world. Yet to be a part of the beginning of that team, we cannot play in the Minor Leagues. We are entering into the Major Leagues, and we need to straighten out our swing and learn how to run faster. Hashem is not angry at us. Hashem would not bring Moshiach because He is angry at us. He needs us to be ready, and therefore, all He needs is for us to step up and better ourselves.



Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein From Wall to Window

אֵלּוּ עֶשֶׂר מַכּוֹת שֶׁהֵבִיא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא עַל־הַמִּצְרִים בְּמִצְרַיִם, וְאֵלּוּ הֵן... חֹשֶׁךְ

These are the ten plagues … Darkness

As Mr. Lefkowitz began to get on in his years, he decided that it would be best if he moved into a nursing home. There he could receive all the assistance he needed and be supervised by doctors and nurses around the clock. Aside from age, however, Mr. Lefkowitz faced another complication – his inability to walk around freely. Having lost his legs earlier in life due to a disease, Mr. Lefkowitz would move from place to place using a wheelchair. Yet that did not take away from his optimistic attitude. Moreover, as a wealthy man in his own right, he was the only gentleman in the nursing facility who had a room to himself. Yet that was soon to change.

One day, the head of the nursing home approached Mr. Lefkowitz with a request. "We have a man who would like to move into our home, yet there are no available rooms at the moment. Would it be possible that he move in with you for one month?"

Lefkowitz, a sweet and considerate man, happily complied. And so, the next day, there was Mr. Friedman situated in the room, across from Mr. Lefkowitz. Wishing to welcome his new roommate, later that day, Lefkowitz got into his wheelchair and rolled over to

Friedman's bed. "Hi!" Lefkowitz said with a big smile. "Friedman, you're my new roommate for a month! It's going to be great. I can just imagine that we will become best friends."

While Lefkowitz was full of joy and excitement, Friedman was just the opposite. A miserable, grizzly, old man, he had no interest in talking to Lefkowitz. "Can you please get away from my bed!" shouted Friedman. Getting the message loud and clear, Lefkowitz slowly made his way back to his side of the room. "He just needs a little time," figured Lefkowitz. "I'm sure he will warm up soon."

Later that night, Lefkowitz heard the sound of sobbing. Looking over across the room and seeing Friedman crying, Lefkowitz immediately got into his wheelchair and rolled over to Friedman. "Friedman, what happened? Why are you crying?"

"Please get away from me!" said Friedman. "Can't you tell what my problem is?"

Unsure what Friedman was referring to, Lefkowitz just sat there in silence.

"I'm blind!" said Friedman, "and I don't want to hear your stories. Please don't come over to me and act like you're the happiest man alive. Five years ago, I lost my eyesight, and since then I haven't been able to see my children and grandchildren. Just do me a favour. Let me live as I am in my dark world."

Lefkowitz, listening to Friedman's story, was left in a total state of shock. Rolling back towards his bed, all Lefkowitz could think about was what he could do for Friedman.

Within a few minutes, there was Lefkowitz back at the bedside of Friedman. "Friedman!" called out Lefkowitz, "I have an idea. You are blind and I have no legs. In a couple weeks from now, when we will be good friends, you know what we can do? You can place me on your shoulders, and we will go all around the nursing home cheering people

up. I will be your eyes and you will be my feet. We will be the funniest pair in this entire facility."

Not receiving any response from Friedman, Lefkowitz continued. "But if you are not in the mood for that right now, I'll tell you something else. I have been an artist my whole life and have a keen perception for detail. So let me do you a favour. I will go over to the window every day and be your eyes. Whatever I see outside, I will describe what it looks like. We'll try it out for two days. If afterwards, you no longer want me to describe the outside view to you, I will immediately stop. Just give it a little bit of time."

To Lefkowitz's delight, Friedman agreed to the plan. The next morning, at 5:30 am, Lefkowitz woke up and called out to Friedman. "Sunrise, sunrise…! It's pretty dark out there, but I see a little pink… Just off to the north, there is a large cloud… and there is a man walking a dog…" Describing in vivid detail everything he saw, Lefkowitz covered the entire panoramic view from the woman holding the umbrella, to the fire hydrant, to the trees, benches and children playing in the park. This continued for some time that day, as well as the following day. And then for a third day, and then a week and then a month. Friedman was absolutely mesmerized by Lefkowitz's descriptions and began to slowly but surely take a liking to him.

Sure enough, within a short while, Friedman and Lefkowitz were best friends. And there they were. Running up and down the halls of the nursing home cheering up everyone they came across, besides for having a great time themselves, everyone else was too.

This went on for a year, with Lefkowitz talking about the snowflakes, the changing colour of the leaves and everything else in between. Friedman could not get enough of Lefkowitz's optimism and beautiful depiction of the world he saw.

One morning, Friedman called over Lefkowitz. "Lefki," he said, "for my whole life until five years ago, I was able to see like everyone

else. But I have to tell you something. I never saw a sunrise in my whole life, I never looked so closely at a snowflake, and I never appreciated the beauty of a tree blooming in the spring. Being blind in this room with you, I have seen more than I did when I had my eyesight. I would just like to thank you." Listening to the kind words of Friedman, Lefkowitz let out a smile.

As could be imagined, Friedman's mood by now had entirely changed and the friendship he enjoyed with Lefkowitz was cherished above all else. Yet, one morning, Friedman awoke slightly later than usual. Having a feeling that he had overslept and wondering why Lefkowitz had not woken him up earlier, he called out across the room, "Lefki, where are you? It's late. Did you oversleep?" But there was no response. Panicking, Friedman called over the nurse. "Nurse, where's Lefkowitz?"

"I am very sorry to tell you Mr. Friedman, but Mr. Lefkowitz passed away last night. He had a heart attack in the middle of the night while you were sleeping, and we did not want to wake you. We rushed him to the hospital, where he passed away." Friedman could not believe his ears. "The funeral is today," continued the nurse, "at 11 o'clock." "What time is it now?" panicked Friedman. "I must go to his funeral!" "It is 9:30," said the nurse. "If you would like, we will make arrangements for you to attend."

While Friedman remained resting in bed shocked, before the nurse left the room, he had one request to make. "Nurse, could you please do me a favour? In memory of my friend, Lefki, could you go over to the window and describe what you see outside. Is it raining? Are there clouds? Lefki used to do this for me every morning. If you could please do me this favour and just let me know what is going on."

Standing there a bit confused, the nurse said, "I'm sorry, but what exactly would you like me to do?" "You know," repeated Friedman, "go over to the window and describe what you see."

The nurse looked back at Mr. Friedman with a blank stare. "Mr. Friedman, I am very sorry, but there is no window in this room."

Friedman remained silent. "What do you mean? Don't play around with me. There's no way that can be! Every morning, Lefkowitz would tell me in such great detail everything that was going on!"

Asking the nurse to help him out of bed, Friedman proceeded to inch his way towards Lefkowitz's bed and begin touching the wall all around in search of a window." But he could not find one anywhere. And then Friedman realized. "I cannot believe it. For an entire year, Lefkowitz stood by a wall and pretended it was a window? He was describing such spectacular sights when all he was doing was looking at a wall!"



Friedman could not believe that this was true, but in fact, it was. Now at the funeral of Mr. Lefkowitz, Friedman asked if he could say a few words. "If the Jewish nation knew who Mr. Lefkowitz was, this would be a funeral similar to the funeral for the greatest of leaders. And that is because my dear friend, Mr. Lefkowitz, did something for me that no one could imagine.

Every single day for the past year, he would sit in front of a wall and turn it into a window. He would share a beautiful world with me that even when I could see, I didn't see. I will forever be grateful and indebted to him. He not only turned the physical wall in front of me into a window; he turned my life, which was a wall, into a window."

Every single Jew holds the capability of taking somebody else's wall and making it a window. We can take the wall of one who is undergoing a challenging time and create a window full of breath-taking colour and opportunity. We can become the artists who add colour to the dark life of a fellow Jew who is distant from Hashem, depressed or grumpy and enlighten their world to the true beauty of life and its endless potential. And even if we ourselves do not have our own window, but struggle with our own problems and have our own wall to deal with, we can take that wall which we, along with so many others stare into, and turn it into a window of beauty, of opportunity and of life meaning.

A Villager Once Took Seriously Ill.

The local doctor was called, and after a full examination, he wrote out a prescription. He told the villager's wife, "Give your husband this prescription with water three times a day until it is finished, and he will be cured."



The family did as they were told. Every day, the simple village wife tore a small piece off the prescription, dissolved it in water and gave it to her husband to drink. Needless to say, his condition did not improve. The doctor was called again, but he was very perplexed. "I know that this prescription works," he said. "I have prescribed it for this illness before." Finally he requested to see the prescription. "Perhaps I made a mistake," he thought. The villager's wife explained, however, that she could not show him the prescription because she had given it to her husband, exactly as he

had instructed. "Fool," he shouted at her. "Can a piece of paper cure your husband's illness? It's not the paper that makes the difference, but what's written on the paper that would have cured him."

So it is with the Haggadah. It is not the book, nor the simple act of reading the Haggadah which illuminates a person's soul. Rather, one must absorb the contents of the story, incorporating into himself the miraculous events. The mitzvah of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim requires more than just reading the words. One's recitation of the Haggadah must also penetrate the person's heart, so that it may serve as the basis for strengthening his faith in Hashem.



כַּרְפַּס - Rabbi Paysach Krohn - Paving Redemption with Kindness

The Rambam (Hilchos Chametz U'Matzah 8:2) writes that we begin the Pesach seder by reciting the blessing over the Karpas vegetable and then dipping it. In explaining the words of the Rambam, the Rabbeinu Manoach states that we are accustomed to dipping the Karpas because the brothers of Yosef dipped his coat, the Ketones Pasim, into goat's blood. Our dipping the Karpas vegetable into saltwater mirrors the brothers act of dipping his coat into blood. On the surface, the explanation of Rabbeinu Manoach is quite difficult. In what way does our dipping on the seder night have any relationship to the brothers dipping Yosef's coat?

Rav Isaac Bernstein explains the observation of the Rabbeinu Manoach by citing a comment of Rashi in Parshas Vayeshev (Bereishis 37:3), "And Yisrael loved Yosef more than all his sons…

and he made him a Kesones Pasim (i.e. coat)." The word Kesones is commonly translated as coat, but what does Pasim, a more obscure word, mean?

Rashi explains that it is a combination of two words – Kar (pillow) and Pas (silk). Yosef's Kesones Pasim was essentially a fluffy silk coat. It is not coincidental, explains Rav Bernstein, that Yosef's coat was composed of these materials, which in Hebrew forms the word Karpas. This is what the Rabbeinu Manoch means to reference.

Throughout the seder, we focus on how we underwent the harsh slavery in Egypt and after many years were taken out by Hashem. But Karpas, the vegetable which we eat before beginning to talk about the exile and exodus, reminds us how we got there in the first place.

We must remember that it was because the brothers and Yosef could not get along. Their discord and dissonance are what caused the brothers to scheme to kill Yosef and eventually pretend that he died by dipping his coat in blood.

It was this brotherly hatred which laid down the bricks of slavery. When Jews do not get along, that is the beginning of exile. Before we therefore begin the seder, we highlight the underpinnings and background of it all. The dipping of our vegetable into saltwater thus forces us to take a moment and think of ways we can increase our friendships and harmony with our brothers and sisters.

When there is dissension between members of the Jewish people, we pave our way into exile; but when there is כַּרְפַּס Karpas - love and kindness, we pave our way into freedom. That is the remedy. When we act with compassion and thoughtfulness, we open the doors of exodus.

When I was twenty-one years old learning in the yeshiva of Torah V'Daas in 1966, my father unfortunately passed away, leaving me as the oldest child of the family. Yet, before my father's time came,

he called me over one day and said, "You should know that when I am no longer around, you will need to support the family. I have been teaching you how to perform bris milahs now for some time, but I feel that we need to intensify your learning process because I do not know how much longer I myself can be a mohel." And in fact, by June of that year, my father could no longer perform brisim, and months later, on Shemini Atzeres, he passed away.

There I was, a young twenty-one-year-old with relatively few people who wanted to hire me as a mohel. Understandably so, I had less experience than other seasoned mohelim, and it was difficult to support my mother and younger brothers and sisters. One day, as I stood in shul, a man named Chaim Israel approached me. "Here," he said, handing me an envelope, "this is for you." I proceeded to open it up and count the money folded inside. It came out to $1500. In 1967, such money was considered a fortune.

"Mr. Israel," I said, "my family is not poor, and we are not begging. Thank you very much, but we don't need the money." "No, no," he reiterated, "this is a loan for you and your mother." "What do you mean by a loan?" I curiously asked. "I will never ask you to pay me back," he said. "Whenever you would like to do so, that is perfectly fine. I know, however, that you and your mother most probably could use this."

I was very touched to be the beneficiary of such largess, but I hesitated to take the envelope. "Mr. Israel, it is very kind of you to offer this to my family, but I cannot accept it without asking my mother." I then continued on home, relating to my mother what had occurred. "We are not poor," my mother exclaimed, "we are managing." "Ma," I said, "that is what I told Mr. Israel, but he said it is a loan. He clearly told me that he will never ask us for the money, and we can repay him whenever we want."

After hearing the entire story and facts, my mother acquiesced. "Under those conditions, we will accept it." Two years later, after I

had gained more experience and built a small reputation, I was able to put together $1500. And so, one day, I called Mr. Israel in his office. "Mr. Israel," I said, "I would like to come and speak to you." When I later arrived, I took out an envelope with the $1500 and laid it down on his desk. - "I'm not taking this," Mr. Israel said. I stood there confused. "What do you mean? You said it was a loan? We would not have taken this as charity." But Mr. Israel would not budge.

"Please sit down," he said, "I want to tell you a story. "Do you remember how a couple of years ago I was very wealthy and I suddenly lost a tremendous amount of money?" "Yes, I do," I said. "Well, there was another man in the neighbourhood named Mr. Lewenstein who one day came over to me and handed me an envelope full of money. 'Mr. Lewenstein,' I said, 'I am not poor.' 'This is not a donation,' he said, 'it is a loan. You can repay me whenever you want.'

"Two years later, I returned to Mr. Lewenstein with the money. 'I'm not taking it,' he said. 'What do you mean? You told me it was a loan!' 'It in fact was a loan,' replied Mr. Lewenstein, 'but I don't want you to give it to me. Give it to another family. Someday you will find a family who is struggling financially, and you will help them by giving them this money. That is how you will pay me back. And when that family returns to repay you the loan, you tell them the same thing. 'I will not accept the money but give it to another family who needs it.'

That is how this act of chesed will continue.' This great kindness which Mr. Israel learned from Mr. Lewenstein and in turn showed to me is something I carry with me to this very day. And in fact, two years later, my mother and I found a family who needed the money, and we gave it to them on the condition that it was a loan. When they later returned to repay us, we declined as Mr. Israel and Mr. Lewenstein had done, telling them the same thing we had been told. Find another family in need and pass the money on to them.

This is what true chesed is all about. It is done altruistically and without expectation of receiving something in return. It is about perpetuating more and more kindness in the world and doing whatever possible to ensure that the entire Jewish people are taken care of. And when this becomes our attitude and perspective on chesed, there is no limit to the quality and quantity of love and care we can provide.

This is the remedy to ending our current exile and leading us into redemption. With every act of compassion and thoughtfulness, we are pulling open the doors of Mashiach more and more, until he finally enters.

הָשַׁתָּא הָכָא, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּאַרְעָא דְיִשְׂרָאֵל



During WWII, a group of Jews from the town of Chust sat huddled in a dark basement on the night of Pesach, to celebrate the Pesach Seder. Wanting to encourage his followers, the **Chuster Rov, R' Yehoshua Greenwald ZT"L**, addressed the group: "We read in the Haggadah, 'Now we are here; next year in Eretz Yisroel.' What does the Baal Haggadah mean when he writes 'We are here'? Of course we are here; where else would we be? Why does he need to make such a statement?"

The tortured and exhausted people awaited his response in silence. R' Yehoshua continued with emotion. "Perhaps the Baal Haggadah is telling us that if a Jew despairs because of the bitter lot which has

befallen the Jewish people, he should realize that at least 'we are here' - we are still alive and able to celebrate the Pesach Seder in this world. The Divine Mercy, which has preserved us this far, will surely bring us to freedom next year in Eretz Yisroel. So do not give up hope!"

This is the Baal Haggadah's message. If, despite everything, a Jew can say, "I am here!" - my nation still exists after two thousand years of exile, after all the pogroms and persecutions we have gone through - then surely there must be a Divine master plan. Hashem surely intends for us to be redeemed and brought back to our holy land. Thus, on this special night of Pesach, we can proudly proclaim, even in the most desperate of situations: **לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלָיִם**



אָמַר אוֹיֵב אֶרְדֹּף אַשִּׂיג אֲחַלֵּק שָׁלָל תִּמְלָאֵמוֹ נַפְשִׁי אָרִיק חַרְבִּי תּוֹרִישֵׁמוֹ יָדִי... צָלְלוּ כַּעוֹפֶרֶת בְּמַיִם אַדִּירִים

A man travelled to a distant city to learn a trade and raise money to pay off his many debts back home. After two years working for a baker and earning a sizable amount of money, he headed home. One day as he walked through a dark forest he was held up at gunpoint. The bandit demanded, "Your money or your life!" All his pleas for mercy, the fact that this money was all he had in life fell on deaf ears. Sobbing, he handed over his lifesavings; but before the thief ran off, he asked for one favour. "My wife won't believe me. She'll think I wasted two years and have nothing to show for it." He took off his jacket and said, "Please shoot some holes in this so I can show her that I was shot and robbed." The thief obliged and poured a few

bullets into the jacket. Then he stopped. "Why did you stop?" asked the man. "I'm out of bullets," replied the thief. "Oh, really?" said the man, and attacked the thief with his bare hands until he got his money back!

When Pharaoh finally let Bnei Yisroel leave Egypt, this was a zechus in his favour and had he left it at that, his nation would have survived. But he chose to chase after them and hunt them down. Thus, he used up any merit he may have had - he was all out of bullets! At that point, it all turned on them and the Egyptians were doomed to die at Yam Suf. (בן איש חי)



Not a Stone - Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein

Many years ago, I went through the very painful process of having kidney stones, which no one should know from. I remember at the time hearing how people debate if the pain of kidney stones is equal to the pain of childbirth. While I personally had no idea, there was one thing I did know. When experiencing the discomfort of kidney stones, you know that what is going to pass is nothing but a stone. All that pain is only going to yield you a stone. Yet when you are expecting a child, even with all that pain which you are experiencing, in the back of your mind you know that what will result is a child. It is that thought of having something so precious come from everything you go through which makes the pain that much more bearable.

This Pesach, we must realize that we are experiencing the Chevlei Moshiach, the birth pangs of Moshiach, and at the end of all the

death, sickness and strife which surrounds us, a child will be born. And that child will be Moshiach. We are not getting a stone; we are getting a child. We are getting Hashem and the Beis Hamikdash.



Halacha L'maaseh: Horav Boruch Hirschfeld Shlit'a - The Pesach Seder - Mitzvah Of Korech

During the Seder, many rituals are performed with little or no understanding. One of these is the mitzvah of eating the Korech sandwich. The Mishnaic Sage Hillel was of the opinion that the Korbon Pesach was eaten in a sandwich form, with meat (of the korbon), maror and matzah all together. Later, though, when Chazal instituted the mitzvah of eating maror to commemorate the maror of the Korbon Pesach, it was decided to first eat the maror separately and then to follow the opinion of Hillel.

This is a reminder to "sandwich" the geulah, symbolized by the matzah, with the bitter golus symbolized by the maror, to signify that in fact, the suffering was what brought about the redemption. We learn from this that in all life situations, hardship and pain are for the eventual good.

"When I think about the miracle of the continued existence of our nation, it is as astounding to me as the exodus from Mitzrayim." ~ R' Yaakov Emden zt"l.

R' Yisroel Salanter ZT"L (Ohr Yisroel) Would Say:



"In Shir Hashirim, Shlomo Hamelech talks about the beauty of Klal Yisroel: הִנָּךְ יָפָה רַעְיָתִי הִנָּךְ יָפָה עֵינַיִךְ יוֹנִים - ***'Behold your beauty, my beloved, behold your beauty, your eyes are (like) doves.'*** (1:15)

What is so beautiful about the eyes of a dove? For when a dove flies far from its nest, it turns its head from time to time to look back at what it has left behind. A Jew is the same: although he may wander far from his source, he never forgets it entirely. His heart is undoubtedly drawn back toward its source."

Rabbi Aryeh Sokoloff - Thank you, Thank you

אוֹדְךָ כִּי עֲנִיתָנִי וַתְּהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה I thank You Hashem for You answered me and became my salvation

When considering which school would best suit my son with Down syndrome, my wife and I toured one particular school which we thought might be suitable. Almost immediately upon entering one of the classrooms, an energetic sixteen-year-old boy came running over to me. "I have a dvar Torah for you!" he exclaimed.

"I'm all ears," I replied, "go ahead." "There is a Pasuk in Tehillim which we say as part of Hallel, 'I thank You Hashem for You answered me and became my salvation.' We repeat this phrase twice. But do you know why we say it twice?"

After hearing the question and thinking about it for a moment, I realized that I had never even considered it. "That's an excellent

question!" I said. "Well," the boy continued, "let me tell you the answer!"

"If someone came over to you and offered you an orange, what would you say?" Although unsure where the boy was going with this question, I went along. "Thank you," I answered. "But what if someone came over to you and offered you an iPod; what would you say then?" Before I could get out a word, the boy continued, "I'll tell you what I would say! Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you. I would never stop saying thank you.



"Don't you understand? That's why we repeat this Pasuk twice. When Hashem took us out of Egypt and made us a free nation, it was the greatest thing possible! It was like getting an iPod! So what do we say to Hashem in return? Thank you, thank you. We can't stop saying thank you!"

We Ask About The Laws Of Pesach

A poor Jew went to **Rebbi David of Tolna** on the eve of Pesach and said, "On the eve of Pesach everyone is come to the Rebbi to ask him about the laws of Pesach. I also have a question to ask. What will me and my family eat?"

The Rebbi looked at the thin hungry face of this man and said, "I will answer your question" and he took out a coin and gave it to the man. The next day, the man came back to the Rebbi and said, "Rebbi, from the answer I received yesterday nothing is left and the question is again asked..."

The Gaon, R' Eliyohu Of Vilna ZT"L (Vilna Gaon) Would Say:



"In the Haggadah, there is a discussion at great length as to how many blows - **מכות** occurred in Egypt and how many at the Red Sea. Why is there a need to prove that these plagues were so numerous? Since the Torah promises: '*All the plagues that I brought upon Egypt, I will not bring upon you*' - thus, they did their best to prove as many plagues as possible, to ensure that none of them ever come upon the Jewish People!"

The Riyatz of Lubavitch zy"a said: "The Besht says that a heartfelt chapter of Tehillim, going out of one's way to do a favor for a fellow Jew in ruchnius or in gashmius, and ahavas Yisroel are the keys that open all the doors of the chambers of mercy, refuah, yeshua, and parnassah."

Rabbi Lazer Brody - Emuna from a Tattoo

וַיַּאֲמִינוּ בה׳ *And they believed in Hashem*

As a rabbi once delivered a lecture at the Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, he asked if anyone was familiar with the word emuna. One boy raised his hand and said, "Emuna means complete belief in G-d." The rabbi thought that perhaps the boy was religious, and so he continued to ask, "Did you go to yeshiva?" "No," he replied. "Are your parents religious?" "No," he said again. "Well, how then did you ever hear of emuna?" Getting up in front of the class, the boy went on to explain. "A couple of weeks ago, my friends and I took a road trip from Cleveland to New Orleans. On our way, we stopped off in Alabama and entered a restaurant. As we sat down, a waitress noticed my Magen David. 'You are wearing a Magen David,' she said, 'you must be Jewish.' 'Yes I am,' I responded. 'Want to see something?' the woman continued to ask. 'Look at this!'



Extending her arm, she pointed to a tattoo spelling emuna. "As I looked at the word on her arm, I wondered what in fact it could mean. 'Is that your name?' I asked. The waitress stared back at me. 'You mean you don't know what emuna is? It means complete faith in G-d,' she explained. "And so," the boy concluded telling the class, "that was my first introduction to the word emuna and how I learned what it means."

Now you may be wondering why a woman in Alabama would have a tattoo spelling emuna on her arm. So allow me to reveal the secret. Two months before this boy from Case Western Reserve University met this waitress, I received an email from her: Dear Rabbi Brody, Allow me to share the following with you. For some time now, I have

lived in Alabama and gone out with a rich boy who worked in a big law firm and drove a fancy car. After a while, we decided we would get married. I was thrilled. He promised that he would buy me a big, white mansion up on a hill in Birmingham. I was going to live luxuriously with everything I have ever wanted. But then, all of a sudden, he left me. My heart was broken, and I was depressed. Life was over for me. But then, the owner of the restaurant where I work said to me, "You look depressed; here, read a book. It's called 'The Garden of Emuna.'" I took the book and read it from cover to cover. But, Rabbi, I have a question. How can G-d have done something like this to me? How could He allow the man of my dreams to leave me like that? I am devastated and my dreams are shattered. Thank you, Ms. _____

After reading this email, I wrote back to her: "Sometimes in life, we do not understand the whole picture. But we must remain living with emuna. And perhaps, in fact, some day you will find out why this occurred." Lazer Brody.

Two weeks later, I received another email from the waitress with a link leading to an online newspaper article from the Birmingham Gazette. Along with the link, she wrote the following: Rabbi Brody, I must tell you. Just the other day, my friend called me and said, "Did you read about that boy who left you in the Birmingham Gazette? They just caught him involved in illegal business dealings. He is no lawyer; he needs a lawyer." I couldn't believe it. Here I thought G-d had abandoned me, when in fact, He was looking after me the entire time. I now understand that everything G-d does is for the best. It was the biggest blessing that this boy left me. And in fact, I was so inspired that I looked up to heaven and said, "G-d, that book this rabbi wrote is true. You're looking after us all the time. I have emuna." And so, I picked myself up and went to the tattoo shop and told them, "Put a tattoo on my arm and write e-m-u-n-a." So now, Rabbi, I have a tattoo on my arm which says emuna. Sincerely, Ms. _____

And now you know the rest of the story. Even when a situation may look depressing and unfortunate, Hashem is always there. Sometimes we just have to wait and see. Emuna can be learned from the strangest of places. Yes, even from a tattoo.

R' Tzvi Elimelch Of Dinov ZT"L (Bnei Yissoschar) Would Say:



"Until Pharaoh came to power, chariots were pulled by two horses. Pharaoh added a third horse to make the chariots run faster. As a result, his army covered the distance Bnei Yisroel needed three days for in one day. This teaches us that it is praiseworthy to enhance a mitzva by spending one third more for it."

Rabbi Fischel Schachter - A Familiar Face

It was during those difficult and dark years in Auschwitz that the Nazis ym"s gathered together a group of girls and women and transported them in cattle cars to the hills to construct a dam. Stopping at the bottom of the hill, the women disembarked and began making the long trek all the way to the top. It was an exhausting walk of many kilometers, and yet it was only the beginning of their day's work. Exerting themselves for hours on end, at the end of the day, they had to retrace their steps back down the hill.

On one occasion, one sixteen-year-old girl could no longer take it. Emaciated and weak, she told her friend that she would not be returning with her down the hill. Although she was well aware that

such a decision would be endangering her life, she remained undeterred. "I cannot do it," she said; "let them take my life if they so desire." But her friend would not hear of such a thing. "I am not leaving you here. You need to live and you are going to live!" "I can't!" the girl persisted. "Okay, I will help you," said her friend.



Without delay, the sixteen-year-old girl was flung over her friend's shoulders, herself tired and frail, and carried 10 kilometres back to the cattle cars. Fast forward forty years later… Mazel Tov! Mazel Tov! My daughter had become a kallah. Amid the feelings of joy pervading our home, in walked my mother, the bubby of the kallah. With a smile on her face, she stood still, holding her walker and looking on at the many people who had gathered together for her grand-daughter's vort. From the other side of the room, the grandmother of the chassan entered. She too was elated to participate in the joyous occasion of her grandson's vort. And then their eyes met. The grandmother of the chassan looked at my mother, the grandmother of the kallah. It was a familiar face. Quite familiar… from forty years before.

"Mrs. Schachter," called out the grandmother of the chassan, "throw away your walker. I will carry you." The grandmother of the chassan was none other than the friend who had carried my mother in Auschwitz and saved her life. The woman who had reinvigorated my mother and reminded her never to give up on life, no matter how difficult and dark it may seem, was later privileged to see the fruits of her encouraging words and tireless efforts. Reuniting together

where they could share mutual nachas, they both realized that from the bitterest of moments, the happiest of moments had grown forth.

Never give up on life, even when it is your last breath, for you never know where that last breath may take you.

Dayeinu – Mount Sinai but no Torah?! - D Fine

In Dayeinu we say 'if You [HaShem] would have brought us to Mount Sinai but would not have given us the Torah that would have been enough.' But is that really true – what would we have gained from standing at Mt Sinai but not getting the Torah? The answer is that before one can accept Torah fully, one must have yiras HaShem – fear of HaShem. And this is what we got on Mt Sinai even before the Torah was given. We saw the lightning, etc and gained real yiras HaShem. So too do we see that the psukim after shacharis that detail the remembering of Mattan Torah do not say anything about receiving the Torah – they just talk about the spectacle of standing at Mt Sinai. Why?



For the same reason – because the way to remember everything that went on and really live by the Torah is by utilising and

developing the yiras HaShem that we achieived at Mt Sinai. And it is this receiving of yiras HaShem that would have been enough of a gift even without receiving of the Torah.

Chassidishe Vort Written by Benjamin A Rose



On Pesach at the Seder, we drink 4 cups of wine plus we have one cup for Eliyahu HaNavi. The word cup in Hebrew is "Kos." The gematria of the word Kos is 86, which is the same gematria as "Elokim." 5 X 86 (5 cups) is 430 which is the gematria of the word "Nefesh".

There are five parts of a man's body over which he does not really have control. They are his 2 ears, 2 eyes, and the "Os Bris Kodesh." These five Ayvarim are very hard for a man to control. Avraham Avinu was only able to control these five after Hashem added the Hey to his name. The five cups of wine which we use Pesach night are keneged – likened to – these five Ayvarim. We can find a remez to this at the end of Parshas Bo. The Pasuk tells us that the years that Bnei Yisrael were in Metzrayim were 430. 430 is Nefesh, which is 5 cups of wine x Elokim.

It is only with the help of Elokim that man can control these five Ayvarim and save his Nefesh for Galus.

"ובכן ויהי בחצי הלילה" ***"It came to pass at midnight."***

The words *"bachatzi halayelah"* (**בחצי הלילה**) — "at midnight" — have the numerical value of 190. The refrain of the poem emphasizes Hashem's redeeming us from Egypt one hundred and ninety years earlier than it was originally destined to happen. (**הגש"פ מוצל מאש - בית אהרן - בפי' פאר אהרן**)

Kos Shlishi - Why is it a sign of freedom?- Benjamin A Rose



The four kosos represent the four lashonos of geula that are unique to Pesach night. The third kos is the kos that we drink for Birchas HaMazon. But Birchas HaMazon always has a kos. Why is this considered one of the four kosos of freedom on Pesach?

A person can have freedom from many things and feel really independent. However he says there is one freedom that is harder to achieve than others. That is freedom from believing that your efforts bring you Parnasa. When it comes to health, children, and many other areas, with a little hard work and experience we manage to teach ourselves that it all comes from Hashem. However when it comes to our livelihood we more often than not hide behind the guise of "Hishtadlus" because we are just not sure that Hashem really grasps the business world.

When a person can say with a full mouth and whole heart the words, "Hazan Es HaOlam Kulo Bituvo B'Chen B'Chesed…Hu Nosen Lechem"; all our wealth and earnings come only from Hashem with kindness and mercy, through absolutely no help of our own, only then is a person truly free. At that point he can raise his kos and celebrate the freedom of Mitzrayim, the freedom to serve Hashem with his whole heart.

Pesach is the Rosh HaShana of Emuna, Faith in Hashem. ~ Rav Gamliel Rabbinovitz, Shlit"a

The Ten Plagues Written by D Fine



The main part of the mitzvah to relate the story of the Exodus is the ten plagues. And the Chayei Adam says that it was the minhag to call in the non-Jewish helper to hear the ten plagues! So here are some things you might not have known about some plagues…

1) Frogs – Egypt at that time was at war with Kush over their borders. The frogs solved the problem by stopping on the precise border. And even when the Egyptian magicians created their own frogs, they did not go over the border. [Yalkut] According to R' Akiva there was one giant frog and every time the Egyptians hit it, it split into two, etc, until the land was full of them. [So why didn't they stop hitting the frogs? Because anger throws logic out thewindow; Steipler]

2) Wild animals – There was one animal called a 'Yedoni,' who had a tube connecting it to the ground and if the tube was disconnected from the ground it would die. HaShem even brought the Yedoni to Egypt for the plague of wild animals – and it came with a clump of earth under it to ensure its survival. [Chanukas HaTorah]

3) Hail – Moshe warned the Egyptians of the coming plague of hail and told them to bring their belongings indoors. Pharoah sent messengers telling people to leave everything outside, but people still took things inside; they feared the word of HaShem more than Pharoah [Meshech Chochmah]. And HaShem made it so the hail only fell on things outdoors – it did not even fall on anything indoors [Brisker Rav]

4) Darkness – Normal darkness does not have an existence in and of itself; it is just an absence of light. And so, one candle knocks away much darkenss. But this plague of darkness brought a new creation; an existence and reality of darkness which could not be reomved by lighting candles [Sforno]. And the plague was worse because nobody helped their friends out [Chidushei HaRim]

5) Makkas Bechoros – Why is this the only plague that is called 'makkas x; why not 'makkas dam,' etc too? The midrash says (brought in tosfos shabbes 87b) that when the firstborns heard Moshe's warning about the plague of the firstborns, they rebelled against Pharoah to make him let the Jews go free, and many were killed in this rebellion. It is this rebellion that we refer to in the word 'makkas.' [Birkas Chaim]

Rabbi Daniel Glatstein The Amazing Discovery

אֵלּוּ עֶשֶׂר מַכּוֹת שֶׁהֵבִיא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא עַל הַמִּצְרִים בְּמִצְרַיִם – *These are the ten plagues which the Holy One, Blessed be He, brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt.*

What was Hashem trying to demonstrate by performing countless miracles and striking all of Egypt with plagues? As illustrated by Pharaoh's response to Yosef after Yosef interpreted his prophetic dreams, "Could we find another man like him in whom there is the spirit of G-d?" (Bereishis 41:38), it appears that Pharaoh was not a complete heretic. While he certainly doubted Hashem, there was

something about G-d which he recognized. Yet what was it exactly? What did Pharaoh believe in and what did he not?



The Arizal (Shaar HaKavanos) and **Shelah HaKadosh** (Parshas Va'eira) write that Hashem is referred to by two names – Elokim and Yud-KayVav-Kay. Elokim refers to G-d's ability to set nature into motion and create natural processes. The numerical value of "HaTeva," nature, is in fact 86, the same as "Elokim". The natural workings of the physical world were something Pharaoh believed in and accepted. Hashem's four-letter ineffable name of Y-K-V-K, on the other hand, refers to His ability to override the system of nature. That was something Pharaoh did not acknowledge.

In this vein, we can greater appreciate a marvellous insight as noted by **Rav Pinchas Zalman Ish Horowitz** in his sefer Ahavas Torah. Looking to determine how many times Hashem's four-letter name appeared in the Torah, he came up with the number 1,820.

Rav Horowitz did not stop there. He went on to count the number of words in the Haggadah from Ha Lachma Anya through the concluding blessing in the Maggid section, and amazingly arrived at 1,820 words. There are the same number of words in the Haggadah as there are

mentions of Hashem's four-letter name of Y-K-V-K in the Torah. What is the significance of this?

As mentioned above, Pharaoh believed G-d to be the source of natural occurrences, but not capable of overriding nature. He believed in Elokim, but rejected Y-K-V-K. However, as Pharaoh witnessed outright, he was terribly mistaken. Hashem is the all-powerful G-d Who can break the forces of nature. This is the hidden message of the Haggadah. Corresponding to every word of the Haggadah is the four-letter name of Hashem overriding nature and teaching the world that G-d exists. While Pharaoh says, "Who is Hashem?" the Haggadah says, "I am Hashem."

Pesach: Is G-D Bad?



I believe this is from the Gr"a. The progression of events in Chad Gadyah is representative of the progression of Jewish history. And it is a story of the ups and downs of our past. If you interpret the 2 zuz to mean the 2 tablets, then the sale at the beginning, is matan Torah. The following verses therefore go bad, good, etc. Sale is good, cat is bad, dog is good, stick is bad, fire is good, water is bad, ox is good, shochet is bad, angel of death is good, and therefore G-d is bad!! How can this be?!

Rather, you can say, that the sale is the sale of Yosef, which started the whole exodus off! That means the sale is bad, cat is good, dog is bad, stick is good, fire is bad, water is good, ox is bad, shochet is good, angel of death is bad, and therefore G-d is good! Yay! But it

gets better…! How much was Yosef sold for? He was sold for 20 pieces of silver. Divide the 20 pieces of silver between the 10 brothers who played a part in his sale… 2 each!

Matzos = Mitzvos Written by Moshe Kormornick



It is no coincidence that the word Matzos is exactly the same word as mitzvos. For matza to be 'non chametz' it must be baked within 18 minutes – ie. With haste. So too we can learn that the best Mitzva is done with haste and in the moment. This was the greatness of Pinchas' act when he restored G-d's name amongst the Jewish people after they had succumbed to the desires of the yetzer horoh. All the more so, we learn from this from the posuk " Mitzvos lyadcha, al tachmitza " 'If a mitzva comes your way, don't lose the opportunity ("let it go sour").

Here we can clearly see also that as well as mitzvos and matza being interchangeable, so too we see the root of the word "tachmitza" = chametz! So we learn the lesson that just as we should act with haste to make the matzos before they become chametz, so too should we act with haste and enthusiasm to do mitzvos before the opportunity and the inspiration passes us by!

"We don't celebrate Pesach because the Jews were taken out of Egypt; rather the Jews were taken out of Egypt because it was Pesach." - The Beis HaLevi



Rebbetzin Chaya Sora Gertzulin

יַחַץ- Broken with Hope

During Yachatz, we break the middle matzah and put aside the larger half to later be eaten as the Afikoman. What is the significance of this? During the Seder, we are required to drink four cups of wine and make use of three matzahs. The four cups of wine represent the four Imahos (Matriarchs), namely Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel and Leah; while the three matzahs, on the other hand, symbolize the three Avos (Patriarchs), that of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov.

It is not coincidental that we break apart specifically the middle matzah, which corresponds to Yitzchak, the second of the Patriarchs. It was Yitzchak who was asked to sacrifice his life during the Akeidas Yitzchak and wholeheartedly readied himself to do so. Despite the difficulty involved, Yitzchak beckoned to the command of Hashem and displayed his total dedication. This is what is represented by the breaking of the middle matzah and storing away the larger piece to be used as the Afikoman.

Even if we face challenges in life and feel broken, we can take comfort in the fact that we know it is for our best. There will come a time when the bigger piece will emerge, and we will understand how every difficulty was meant to be. Even amidst our challenges, we can never become despondent and give up hope, because the Afikoman dessert will eventually arrive. Everything will turn out alright when we place our commitment and faith in Hashem.

Allusion to Moshe in the Haggadah does exist: **משה נרצה = 365 =** ***Moshe is the first redeemer and the final redeemer.***

מַגִּיד - Rabbi Benzion Klatzko - Returning Home

כָּל דִּכְפִין יֵיתֵי וְיֵיכֹל ***Anyone who is hungry let him come and eat…***

Having founded an organization called Shabbat.com which provides a person with a place to spend Shabbat and enjoy the warm ambiance of another family anywhere in the world, countless lives have been changed. Being that I myself have many guests in my home each week, I decided that it would be a smart idea to host the Shabbat davening in my home as well. I therefore began to look for a Sefer Torah I could purchase. Researching the matter, I found an ad which said that a Sefer Torah was being sold for $35,000. Without further delay, I proceeded to head for the home it was located in.



As I entered inside, I was greeted by an old, secular Jew married to a gentile. He sat me down and we began to talk. After some time, I asked him, "How do you have this Sefer Torah?" "Well," he said, "my grandfather inherited it from his father who was a religious Jew and had a little Shul in the Catskills. After the Shul closed down I inherited it from him. Here I am now stuck with a Sefer Torah which I haven't opened in years and know nothing about. I do not learn Torah and have no connection to it."

Hearing of this man's predicament, I began to give him an inspirational talk I normally would give to irreligious Jews. I lectured him about Torah and the power of it bringing people back to their heritage. I as well explained how I wanted to have a Sefer Torah in my house so I could use it for the Shabbat davening and return Jews

back to their roots. By the time I was done talking, he was in tears. He said to me, "I wish I had a rabbi like you sixty years ago. Now I am already an old man. But you know what? I want you to have this Torah for free. I want this little Torah to be put in your house and bring back as many Jews as it can."

Unbelievably, I walked out of this man's home with a $35,000 Sefer Torah for free. Now, all I needed to do was find an Aron Kodesh to store the Sefer Torah. And so, I went online to see if I could find one. After some time, I saw the title, "Religious Christian Aron Kodesh for sale." I didn't know what to make of it and if it would be worth my while to try, but I decided I would head over to the place where this Aron was being kept.

As I arrived, I was met by a Christian fellow. "Do you have the Aron?" I asked. "Oh, yeah, I have it. I received this Ark from a rabbi in Europe. It was an Ark which was taken over by the Church, and as you can see they put a little cross on top. Do you want it?" I wasn't sure what to respond. Looking closely at the Aron, however, my eye caught sight of some inscription on the bottom. Bending down, I was able to make some words out: "Hinei lo yanum v'lo yishan shomer Yisrael" –"He [G-d] does not sleep nor slumber, the Guardian of Israel." It was a Pasuk from Tehillim (Ch. 121). I was amazed. I immediately told him that I would take it. And with that I headed back home.

When I returned home, I removed the cross and placed it down in my basement. Putting my newly received free Torah in this Aron which had gone through Christian hands, I said to myself, "Isn't this incredible? Here we are returning this Torah and Aron Kodesh to where they belong. We are uniting them and bringing them home despite all the trials and tribulations they have gone through. What a home this is going to be."

Sukkot time arrived and I was approached by someone with a question. "I have this girl who is a mess. She is a misfit, on drugs,

rebellious against her family and has run away from home. Could you take her in for Sukkot?" "No problem," I happily said, "she can have a room in my basement." As I took her into my home, I was in for a surprise. She sat at my table with her head down. She did not speak one word to anyone and was socially inept. I myself approached her and spoke to her a little bit, but otherwise she remained to herself.

By the end of Sukkot, however, she was a different person. She was talking, having a good time, eating with everyone, enjoying Yom Tov and doing all the requisite mitzvot. I didn't know what to make of it. And so I went to ask her. "If you don't mind me asking, what happened to you? When you came here you were ignoring everybody and you looked miserable. Now you seem to be the happiest person." "Let me tell you," she began.

"You put me in a room in your basement downstairs. As I was there and noticed the Aron and Sefer Torah, I began reminding myself about the story you told me about them. I was thinking of how they had gone on a long journey and finally returned home. And so, every night at midnight when everyone else was asleep, I would go over to the Aron and Sefer Torah and cry and talk to G-d. I said, 'G-d, if You can find a home for this Aron Kodesh and Sefer Torah after being far away from their rightful home, You can do the same to me. You can bring me home too.' With tears in my eyes, I told this to G-d every night. Now I feel like a new person. I have decided that I am going to be like that Aron Kodesh and Sefer Torah and return home."

As we invite "everyone who is hungry to come and eat" we ought to remember that it is not merely a call for one to enjoy the Paschal Sacrifice and Yom Tov meal. It is a call for every Jew to nourish their hungry soul for Torah and reconnect to their Father in Heaven. We can never know what will bring a person back home to Yiddishkeit. Even one completely distant from any relationship with Hashem has hope of returning. No Aron Kodesh, Sefer Torah or

Jewish neshama is ever to be given up on. Our loving Father always welcomes us home and tells us, "No matter where you are, you can return to Me and I will embrace you."

רָחְצָה - Rabbi Yitzchok Fingerer A Lesson for Happiness



Have you ever wondered what the relationship between happiness and matzah is? As part of Hebrew grammar, certain letters are understood to be interchangeable. One pair is that of **ש** and **צ**. In line with this, the word for being in a state of happiness – **שמח** – can alternatively be read as **צמח**, the word for "growth." What though is the connection?

Happiness in life is achieved when there is growth. When one develops as a person in his relationship with Hashem, with others and with himself, one feels a deep sense of fulfilment. On the other hand, when one remains stagnant and does not experience growth in any significant way, unhappiness often sets in. What does this have to do with chametz and matzah? Not coincidentally, the nature in which chametz is formed is the mirror opposite of genuine growth. And indeed, this is reflected by their respective Hebrew words. **צמח** is spelled in the exact reverse order as **חמץ**. Chametz is formed by doing nothing to prevent and impede the leavening of flour and water. It is through lack of action that chametz comes about.

The same dynamic is true of growth in life. Merely allowing life to occur and not expending due effort and energy – as occurs when allowing chametz to form – will leave one stilted and stunted. Matzah, in contrast, is the result of constant activity. One must

consistently work hard – as one does to matzah – to achieve growth and fulfilment. It is only through remaining vigilant and on guard that the flour and water do not leaven and one is left with matzah.

And now we can appreciate the correlation between matzah and happiness. Matzah, in contrast to chametz, represents growth and meaningful work, which in turn leads to a genuine sense of happiness. It is through dedicatedly applying oneself that joy and satisfaction result and a life full of upwards growth and purpose is experienced each and every day.

Pesach: That Elijah Breeze



Why do we open the door for Eliyahu? It's freezing outside.

Three suggestions:

1) Eliyahu needs a drink.

2) It's "leil shemurim" – a guarded night – so we are not afraid to open the doors.

3) Rav Nebenzahl picks up on the Gemorah in Pesachim 86a, which tells us that back in the day it was traditional to bentsch and to finish the seder up on the roof. Well, how else are you going to get up there if you don't open the door?

Anger dwells only in the bosom of fools.

Dr. David Pelcovitz - Saving a Life

Years ago, after briefly speaking about the life and times of the **Piacesner Rebbe H'YD** *(the Jews in Trawniki work camp, including Rabbi Shapira, were shot to death)* a man came over to me with tears in his eyes.

"The reason I am alive today is because of the Rebbe," he said. "One night during the war, my father who was then thirteen years old fell asleep next to a window, allowing a cold draft to make its way in. "In the middle of the night, my father opened his eyes only to see the Piacesner Rebbe gently approach his cot and move him away from the chill to the middle of the room.



The Rebbe then tucked my father in again and tiptoed away." But that is not the end of the story. "Two years later, on the fateful day the Piacesner Rebbe and his students were taken to meet their end, my father stood in the selection line. And he knew what that meant. He was puny and malnourished and would almost certainly be sent to his demise. "But just as they were about to direct him to the gas chambers, an SS guard ran out and began loudly announcing, 'Carpenters, carpenters, I need carpenters! Could anyone volunteer?'

My father thought to himself, 'I am a klutzy young boy who can barely hammer a nail into a piece of wood. Forget it.' So he decided he would not say anything. "But then, almost involuntarily, an image flashed through his mind of two years earlier.

He remembered the Rebbe so gently and lovingly moving him away from the cold and tucking him in. And then he thought to himself, 'I

am somebody! I am worth something! I am not just here one day and gone the next. The Rebbe cared enough about me to tuck me in…' And so, my father raised his hand. "The SS guard selected my father to be a carpenter and his fellow Jews protected him. They taught him the trade and he survived. "Many times during those horrible years," the man concluded, "my father was on the verge of despair. But, just as he was about to give up, the image of the loving tuck of the Piacesner Rebbe came forward to save him."

Even the smallest of loving gestures can go far beyond our greatest expectations. We can never know, but just sometimes, it may in fact save a life. As we now prepare to eat the matzah, it would behoves us to take a moment and reflect upon its meaning. It is the bread of affliction, yet also the bread of faith and freedom. Because even amid the darkest of conditions, Hashem deeply loves us and cares for us and will surely one day save us.

Violent Cats



How can a cat take on a goat? Goat's are bigger. And we're not talking about a lion. It would make an interesting fight.

Rav Michoel Fodor quotes a Gemorah in Chullin which says, that if a cat claws the back of a goat, it is considered a treifa (an animal which will die within a year, from disease or infection, etc.) There's always an easy answer. You just have to learn the more obscure masechtot!

Rebbetzin Esther Baila Schwartz - All from Hashem

כֵּן עָשָׂה הִלֵּל...הָיָה כּוֹרֵךְ פֶּסַח מַצָּה וּמָרוֹר וְאוֹכֵל בְּיַחַד So did Hillel: he would combine Pesach, matzah and maror in a sandwich and eat them together



What is the underlying message of Hillel's sandwich? As the Torah tells us, the Paschal Lamb was to be eaten together with matzah, representing freedom, and maror, symbolizing the bitterness of slavery. In this way, Klal Yisrael emphasized that both the bitter reality of slavery and the magnificence of freedom all come from the same G-d. This forms one of the most fundamental aspects of Pesach. Everything that happens to us throughout our lives – from the bitterest tragedy to the greatest triumph – emanates from Hashem.

In light of this, we can fully appreciate why matzah represents freedom. Freedom can be defined as a lack of dependence on externalities. The less one needs, the freer they are. The matzah's limited ingredients in contrast to the wealth of ingredients used in chametz symbolizes freedom. Chametz needs flour, oil, sugar, salt and eggs, while matzah, on the other hand, needs only flour and water. It does not take much to be matzah, and this is exactly what freedom is about. We are satisfied with the bare minimum and precisely with what Hashem has given us in life.

This is the lesson of Hillel's sandwich. By bringing together the Korban Pesach, matzah and maror, we emphasize the unity of the above concepts. Through realizing that whatever we have in life is

what we need, we will be happy with our lot. The messages of the Korban Pesach, matzah and maror, in this regard, go hand in hand. Since Hashem gives us everything in life, even if it is very little, as represented by the matzah, and we experience some bitter moments, as symbolized by the maror, we will remain perfectly content.

Rabbi Fischel Schachter - The Special Secret

While some people enjoy the taste of fish, others do not. And some, in fact, not only dislike the taste of fish, but it makes them nauseous. A cousin of mine was one of those individuals. He literally loathed fish. On Shabbos when his mother would serve fish, he couldn't stand to smell or taste it. One day, he became a chassan. Planning to get married and become part of a new family, his own family reminded him of his repugnance of fish.



"You know," they said, "you are going to have to eat fish when you get married. What will happen when your wife tirelessly works to prepare fish, and you say you don't like it? You will hurt her feelings!" Fully convinced that his like or dislike of fish would make or break his marriage, the poor boy forced the fish down his throat.

Week after week, he slowly adjusted himself to the smell, taste and texture of fish. And indeed, after a while, he was somewhat able to tolerate it. And then came the big day of his wedding. As the chuppah came to a close, he headed to the yichud room where the

chassan and kallah spend their first moments together as husband and wife. Known to be a very special time, my cousin of course was as happy as could be.

But then his kallah had a surprise for him. "Can I tell you something personal?" she said. Thinking that she had something serious and worrisome to tell him, my cousin prepared himself for the worst. "Yeah, sure, what is it?" "I know it is a Jewish thing to eat fish, but I really cannot stand it. The smell, taste and texture really make me feel sick!"

Oftentimes we worry how others will perceive us. We tend to tailor our behaviour and act in ways in order to please others. But then we come to realize that people will appreciate us for who we are. We need not be untrue to ourselves in order to curry favour and win the respect of others.

There will indeed be someone who loves us despite all our foibles and dislikes. And in fact, sometimes we will be pleasantly surprised to find out that they love us precisely because of our dislikes.

Purim During Pesach! - Yerachmiel Tilles

This amazing story was told annually by **Rebbe Yosef Meir of Spinka**, after the Seder on the second night of Pesach. Once, on the second Seder night, after finishing all the hagadah and songs, a certain young man was still not tired. The thought entered his mind that as it is written that evil Haman was hanged on the second day of Pesach, it would be appropriate to now read the Megillah. He decided to do so.

Upon finishing the reading, suddenly a soul of a deceased person appeared to him. "What do you have to do with me and what do you want from me?" he asked it. The poor soul explained: There are souls that even after being judged and receiving theirs (i.e., their punishment), they are still unable to enter the Garden of Eden until

they have a special merit. However, there is one time in the year when anyone can enter, and that is on Purim at the time of the Megillah reading.

"Many months before Purim, there is already a line of tens of thousands of souls waiting for the gates to be opened. Still, the duration of the Megillah reading is only two or three hours. Whoever succeeded to enter attains his place, but the rest must wait until the following year. Every year, I also get on line, but because of the great crowding, the time ends and the gates are again closed before I can get in.

"This year, I decided not to leave the gate; I would wait there until Purim the next year. But after only a short time, a month, I suddenly heard the Megillah being read, on Pesach night! I knocked on the gate of Gan Eden, until the guardian of the gate came out and asked me why am I knocking. I told him I heard the Megillah, so please let me in. He said, true, someone is reading the Megillah, but now is not the time for Megillah.

"I said, if the Megillah is being read, you must admit me. In the midst of this dispute, a member of the Heavenly court came out and asked what we we're arguing about. He listened to our explanations and agreed with the guard that now is not the time for Megillah. But he also said that if I were to go down to that young man who is reading Megillah, and he should decide that I can enter, then I will be permitted inside.

The veteran Spinker chasidim like to point out that whenever Rebbe Yosef Meir told a story about one of the tzadikim, he was always careful to include full details, and especially the name of the tzadik involved. Therefore, if he every year he left this young man nameless, it could not be otherwise than that it was he himself!

Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein - The Strange Stick

וְאָתָא חוּטְרָא וְהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא ***And the stick came and hit the dog***



I was once about to write out a cheque for a tzedakah collector who came to my office when he asked if I could wait a minute. "Before you give me a cheque, would you mind if I ask you a question on the Haggadah? It is the easiest question you have ever heard. If you can answer it, I don't want the cheque; but if you cannot answer it, please double the amount." Presented with this challenge, I liked what I heard. "Are you sure it's an easy question?" I asked. "It's the simplest question you ever heard on the Haggadah!" "Okay," I said, "go ahead."

"In Chad Gadya, we read how a man purchased a goat for two zuzim. Along came a cat and ate the goat; along came a dog and ate the cat; along came a stick and hit the dog; fire then burnt up the stick; water then extinguished the fire; the cow then drank the water; the slaughterer then slaughtered the cow; the angel of death then killed the slaughterer; and then Hashem smote the angel of death.

"Everything naturally makes sense in the sequence of events. Cats eat goats, dogs eat cats, water extinguishes fire, cows drink water and so on. But I have one question. How did the stick hit the dog? Sticks don't walk. It should have said that a person came with a stick and hit the dog. But it doesn't say that."

Thinking to myself how I have been reading the Haggadah for decades and never even considered this question, I sat there silently. "Double the cheque please," he said. And I did.

"Let me tell you the answer," he continued. "The Haggadah was written in this way for a reason. When you read the story of Chad Gadya, everything appears to occur naturally. But there is something the author of the Haggadah inserted into the middle of the story that doesn't make sense at all. A stick appears on its own and hits the dog.

When you read this, you immediately raise your eyebrows and say, 'Wait a second! How did the stick get there?' And then you realize that it must be Hashem holding the stick. And if that is so, the same is true of all the other 'natural' events. Even the cat eating the goat and the water extinguishing the fire is the hand of Hashem. Nothing is natural and happens by itself."

After the man finished explaining this, I said, "I will triple your cheque." I was taken aback by this answer.

Throughout all the hardships in our lives, we can never think it is natural. At the end of the Haggadah when we read about the events of Chad Gadya, we are meant to think of all the incidents in our own personal lives. And then we are to realize that even the stick that hits and the hardships that confront us are from Hashem. He is behind our lives every step of the way.



כַּמָּה מַעֲלוֹת טוֹבוֹת לַמָּקוֹם עָלֵינוּ! *"Hashem has bestowed many favours upon us*." (Haggadah)

Gratitude and appreciation are virtues that are not simply praiseworthy, they are essential traits. On the Seder night we are enjoined to recount the many wonders and miracles that Hashem wrought for us.

Ibn Ezra contends that appreciation goes a step further. We must remember how it was - how we suffered, the pain and affliction to which we were subjected, the thirst and hunger which accompanied us and the depression and hopelessness that ruled our lives. Hashem

rescued us from all that. He took us out of misery, granting us the opportunity to live as free people.

Harav Mordechai Gifter, explains that one must appreciate and give gratitude where it is due. Does one, however, analyze the good that he has received? Does one ever think about what life would have been like had he not been saved? Do we ever really evaluate the good? Do we simply say, "Thank you," and continue with "business as usual?"

One must remember what it was like; think back to the days of misery and pain, feel some of the frustration and grief that used to be so much a part of his life. Then and only then will he truly understand the essence of the favor he has received. All too quickly we pay our respects to our benefactor and forget about him. If we pay more attention to our past, we might more fully appreciate the present.

This, according to Harav Gifter, is the purpose of the Dayenu format of the Haggadah. We must delve deeper into the "good" that we have received, reviewing it, analyzing every aspect of it, so that we will experience greater appreciation at the present time. Let us appreciate all that we have so that we may merit to be blessed continuously.

Shmerl's Seder By Tuvia Bolton

It was well past midnight on the first night of Passover, and the great Chassidic master **Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev** had just concluded enacting the Passover Seder in the presence of his disciples.

They had recited the *Haggadah*, recounting the story of the Exodus and discussing the deeper meanings implicit in each of its passages; they drank the four cups of wine, dipped the *karpas* in the salt water and the bitter herbs in *charoset*, ate the matzah, the *korech* and

the *afikoman*, sang the psalms of praise and gratitude -- all in accordance with the letter of the *Shulchan Aruch* (Code of Jewish Law) and the esoteric principles found in the awesome mystical works of the saintly "Ari".

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's disciples had participated in many of their Rebbe's seders in the past, but this one surpassed them all. The Rebbe and all those present felt transported into a different world, as though they had risen above their bodily limitations and into a world of pure G-dliness.

Suddenly the room filled with the sound of a deep rumbling like thunder, and from within the thunder an awesome voice announced: "Levi Yitzchak's seder was pleasing to G-d, but there is a Jew in Berdichev called Shmerl the Tailor whose seder reached even higher!"

The Rebbe looked around him. It was obvious that only he had heard the heavenly announcement.

"Has anyone heard of a *tzaddik* called Shmerl the Tailor?" he asked his Chassidim. No one had.

After several minutes of silence one of the elderly Chassidim offered: "There is one Shmerl here in Berdichev that I know of, and he used to be a tailor about thirty years ago, but he's certainly no tzaddik. In fact he's pretty far from that. They call him now 'Shmerl the Shikker' (drunkard) and he lives with his wife in a old large shipping on the edge of town."

But Rabbi Levi Yitchak was thinking to himself, "Ahah! this must be one of the hidden *tzaddikim*. And he lives right here, in Berdichev, while I knew nothing about him!"

It was two o'clock in the morning when the Rebbe stood at the door of old Shmerl's hovel.

An old Jewish woman answered his soft knock. "Good Yom Tov!" said Rabbi Levi Yitzchak quietly. "Please excuse me for the late hour. Is

your husband Shmerl at home?" "Good Yom Tov," She answered. "Just wait one minute please, Rebbe, wait right here."

She disappeared into the house, and the unmistakable sound of a bucket being filled with water was heard from inside. Then a minute or two of silence and suddenly... SPLASH! She threw the bucket of water on her sleeping husband.

"Aaahh! Oyyy! Where am I? Ooiy vai!" he screamed, and then his wife was heard shouting, "Get up you drunk! The Rebbe has come to punish you! Wake up, you good-for-nothing!"



Poor Shmerl staggered, sopping wet, to the door. When he saw that it really was the Rebbe standing there at his door in the middle of the night, he fell at Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's feet and began weeping, "Please, Rebbe don't punish me. It's not my fault... I didn't know any better... Please, have mercy..."

The Rebbe of Berdichev was completely astounded at this bizarre scene. Could it be that this man's seder was loftier than his own?

He bent down, lifted poor Shmerl to his feet and said, "Listen, Shmerl, I didn't come to punish you. In fact I don't even know what you are talking about. Please let me in, let's sit down and talk. I only want to ask you something. Go put on a dry shirt and we'll talk."

Minutes later they sat facing each other over Shmerl's small table. The Rebbe looked at him kindly and said: "Shmerl, listen. I want you to tell me how you conducted your seder last night. Don't worry, I promise that I'm not going to punish you, I promise."

"Oy!" moaned Shmerl and began weeping again. "My seder! But Rebbe, I really didn't know any better... Oooy!"

Gradually he calmed down and began speaking. "Early this morning, that is... yesterday morning, I'm walking in the street and suddenly I notice that people are rushing about. This one has a broom over his shoulder, that one is carrying a box, the other one something else, everyone is scurrying about -- except me.

"So I stopped someone I recognized and asked him, 'What is everyone rushing for? Where are they all going?'

"So he answers me, 'Oy Shmerl, are you so drunk that you forgot that tonight is Pesach? Tonight is Pesach! Do you remember what Pesach is?'

"I tried thinking but my mind wouldn't work. Pesach, Pesach, I... I can't remember. It sounds very important though; I remember something about Matzos... and Egypt. 'Please,' I begged the man, 'do me a favor and tell me what it is again.'

"The man looked at me in a strange way, and answered 'Listen, Shmerl, tonight you have to make a seder. You know, recite the Haggadah, eat three matzos, bitter herbs, four cups of wine. You'll enjoy the wine Shmerl,' he said with a sad smile, 'though I guess you won't enjoy abstaining from your foul vodka for eight days...'

"'Eight days!' I cried. 'Why? Why can't I drink for eight days?' I was trembling and beginning to remember a little.

"'Because that's the law!' he answered. 'For eight days, if you're a Jew, no *chametz* passes your lips. Vodka is *chametz*. If you can't hold out for eight days, maybe go to Israel,' he laughed, 'there *chametz* is only forbidden seven days...'

"I was stunned. No vodka for eight days! I rushed home, took all the money I had, bought a big bottle of vodka, poured myself eight large cups one after the other, and drank them down... hoping that that would help me make it through the holiday.

"The next thing I remember is that I'm sleeping soundly in my bed when suddenly my wife throws a bucket of water on me -- you saw

how she does it -- and starts screaming, 'Shmerl, you bum! You drunk! You good-for-nothing! All Jews all over the world are making the seder tonight, and *you* are lying there like a drunken ox. Wake up and make a seder!'

"So I staggered to my feet, put on some dry clothes and sat down at the beautifully set table.

"The candles were shining brightly and making the plates and silverware sparkle so nicely. Everything was new, clean. I felt so different, almost holy. The wine and the matzos were on the table, the Haggadah was open in front of me. My wife had even set up the seder plate with all its things like she remembered from her father. She herself was sitting in her place opposite me like a queen, and was even smiling. Everything was so beautiful.

"But then -- I looked around me and didn't know what to do. The vodka was still swirling in my head, but, to be honest, Rebbe, even sober I don't know how to make a seder.

"So I took a large bowl, and put everything in there. The three matzos, the bitter herbs, the dish of *charoset*, all those little items my wife had set up on the seder plate, I poured in the four cups of wine, and swirled it all together.

"Then I lifted up my seder bowl and started talking to G-d. Just like I'm talking to you now. I started talking to G-d and I said, 'G-d, listen... I don't know You, but You know me. You know that after my father got killed I had to work all the time and I never had a chance to learn, right? So I don't know how to read this book, in fact I can't read anything! And I don't know what I'm supposed to do with all this stuff either. But one thing I do know... I know that a long time ago You sent Moses to take us out of Egypt, and I'm sure that you will send Moshiach to take us out of all our troubles now!'

"And then I gulped down the whole thing."

Rabbi YY Jacobson - 4 Lessons for the 4 Sons









כְּנֶגֶד אַרְבָּעָה בָנִים דִּבְּרָה תוֹרָה
Concerning four sons did the Torah speak

These few words contain volumes of lessons about education and pedagogy. In particular, there are four messages to be learned from this brief statement.

1) **אַרְבָּעָה בָנִים** -There are four sons. There is no one child because everyone is different. Never make the mistake that one cookie cutter model encompasses all children.

2) **בָנִים** -They are all your children. Never look at any of these children and write them off and reject them. They may be from one extreme to another, but they are all your children.

3) **דִּבְּרָה תוֹרָה** -Torah has something to say to each one of these children. No child is ever too far for Torah to inspire and uplift them and provide them with joy and wholesomeness in life. The Torah speaks to every child's needs.

4) **אַרְבָּעָה בָנִים דִּבְּרָה תוֹרָה** -The conversation the Torah has with each of them is a different one. The Torah offers a unique message for every individual and every circumstance of life.

"Hashem's love is like a flame that burns bright in the darkness. Trust in Him, and you will never be afraid." – Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev.

Rebbetzin Ruthie Halberstadt - Oh Rats!

דָּם, צְפַרְדֵּעַ, כִּנִּים, עָרוֹב... *Blood, frogs, lice, wild animals…*



At one point in my life, things were very hectic. My family had just moved from one apartment to another in Jerusalem. I was also soon expecting to have my third child and was feeling very ill from the pregnancy. Upon returning home after having been out of the country for a family simcha, we noticed a funny smell in the apartment. The first few nights we were home, we in fact heard a scratching noise in our bedroom. I never met the creature, but it was clearly something of a sizeable proportion. Moving the couch, we saw that it had made a hole and built a nest close to the wall. To our distress, we had rats in our apartment.

Unnerved, we contacted a fumigation company who later informed us that the biggest rat was the size of a small cat. This was not a comforting thought considering that we had two little children running around the house. We locked our bedroom door and slept in the kids' room, and all I could do was panic.

Spending as much time as I could out of the house, one afternoon as I was sitting in the park, I simply broke down. I was really having a hard time. The fumigation company was making little progress, and we felt like victims in our own home. But then, a woman who I hardly knew walked over to me and sat down. By the look on my face she could tell I was sulking and that something was wrong.

"What happened?" she asked. "We have rats in our apartment and we need to get rid of them," I half-heartedly said. "Oh rats! That's terrible. I myself learned a lot from rats. I remember how two weeks after I gave birth to one of my children and my family had

moved apartments, we also discovered we had rats." Listening to this woman's similar predicament, I sat there intently. "Someone then told me to look up the rat in Perek Shira, where every creature in the world is described as singing its own unique song of praise to Hashem. You should also research the rat in Perek Shira. If this is the creature you are plagued with, you ought to find out what its message is to you."

I was very intrigued. Heading home, I began sifting through my books on Perek Shira with its commentaries. When I found out what the rat's praise to Hashem was, I was very humbled. The rat says, "Every soul will praise Hashem, Hallelukah!" Taken from the culminating lines and crescendo of Tehillim, the highest praise of Hashem emanates from the rat.

This song is said by the rat because the rat has the lowliest kind of lifestyle on earth. It lives in the gutters and sewers where even air is hard to come by, and toxic if any. But the rat appreciates its life and feels that it is worth living. Despite its struggles to stay alive and low quality of existence, it doesn't give up. That is one lesson we learn from the rat: any type of life is worth living.

I was very moved. I was experiencing a hard time adjusting to our new apartment and dealing with my pregnancy and had forgotten to focus on this one simple thought: the greatest gift we have is life itself. I then proceeded to write an entire page of everything I ought to be grateful for. I was alive, carrying a healthy baby, and living in Israel with a roof over my head.

While I may have wished that the rats never entered my home in the first place, in hindsight, they taught me an invaluable lesson I will always remember. - *Every experience we have in life is there to teach us a lesson. While we may sometimes have to search high and low to find some meaning, we can be assured that nothing is coincidental. Even a lowly rat has a profound message to teach us.*

Rabbi Mashiach Kelaty - In Your Merit

בְּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרָיִם בֵּית יַעֲקֹב

When the Jewish people left Egypt, the house of Jacob…



As the Jewish people miraculously passed through the Red Sea and beheld miracles even greater than those seen in Egypt, they jubilantly sang Az Yashir. The Torah then goes on to describe how Miriam led the women in song, "And Miriam the prophetess, sister of Aharon, took the drum in her hand and all the women went forth after her with drums and dances."

While the women sang the entire song of Az Yashir as the men did, the Torah chooses to highlight one Pasuk in particular which the women sang: "Sing to Hashem for He is exalted above the arrogant; he hurled horse with its rider into the sea."

Why does the Torah single out this Pasuk as being sung by the women if they in fact sang the entire Az Yashir? Additionally, while it is understandable that the Egyptian riders drowned in the Yam Suf, what did the horses do to deserve drowning as well?

Chazal tell us, "In the merit of the righteous women of that generation, the Jewish people were redeemed from Egypt" (Sotah 11b). Besides bolstering Klal Yisrael's spiritual state and population growth throughout the long and harsh exile, the Jewish women remained firmly convinced that Hashem would one day redeem them. It was in the merit of such self-sacrifice and belief that the entire nation was released from slavery.

When the Jewish people later left Egypt and the men took the lead in the forefront, the women began to wonder what had happened. "Wasn't Klal Yisrael freed in our merit? Shouldn't we receive equal glory as the men?"

It was in response to this that Miriam answered, "Do not think that you are any less important than the men and any less a part of the redemption. To the contrary, it was rightfully in your merit that we were redeemed. Just look at the fate of the Egyptian horses. Why did they drown? Because they enabled the Egyptians to reach us at the Yam Suf. If not for the horses, the Egyptians would have been unable to pursue us. The same is true of us all. Had we not facilitated the redemption and enabled it to come to fruition, we would still be in Egypt. On that account, we have all the reason to be proud and exult."

We would be greatly remiss if we were to overlook the tremendous degree of gratitude we owe our wives, mothers and sisters for making such a Yom Tov possible. For over three thousand years, they have been the stronghold of Klal Yisrael on all fronts. Creating the infrastructure of the Jewish home within and without, in their merit we were redeemed from Egypt and in their merit we will be soon herald our future redemption.

"צא ולמד" - *"Go out and learn."*

Q: It should have said *"bo ulemad"* — "come and learn"?

A: When a student is home, there are many distractions which make it difficult for him to study properly. To really succeed in learning a prerequisite is *"tzei"* — "go out" — i.e. leave your home, leave your environment, leave the amenities to which you are accustomed, and immerse yourself in the study of Torah. (**ר' אהרן זצ"ל מקארלין**)

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld - Rosh Yeshiva



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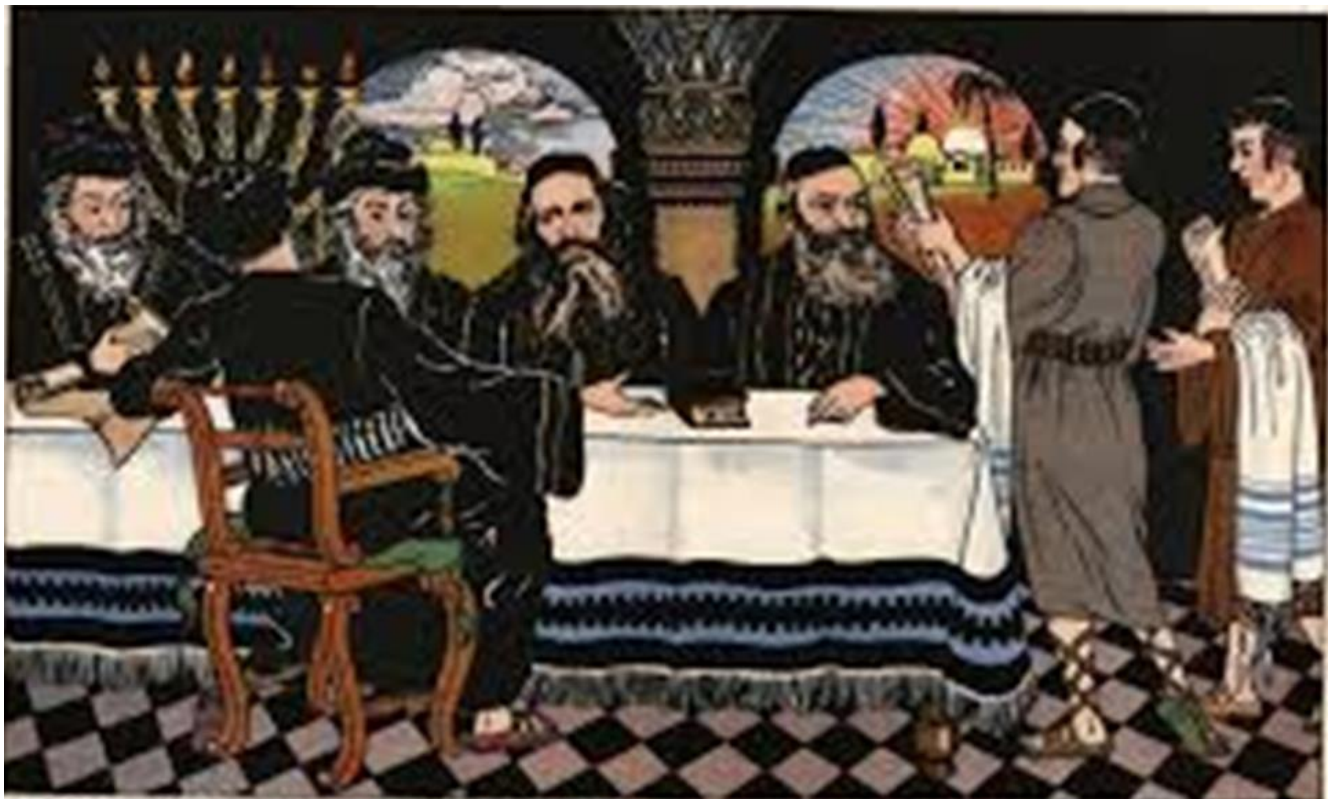
Wishing everyone a **חג כשר ושמח** and looking forward to greeting everyone in **ירושלים עיה"ק** so we can partake from the **קרבן פסח** together B'ezras Hashem. For more info on the Yeshiva and to get involved office@beisdovid - www.beisdovid.com

מעשה ברבי אליעזר - Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld

In the haggadah, we find the famous story about a group of rabbonim who sat together relating the events of Yetzias Mitzrayim. What makes this story unique? Surely, throughout history, there were many such groups that shared interesting observations with each other about this critical episode in Jewish history, so why does the haggadah single out this one?

There is a very nice explanation to this question that I have seen in several places. Had we not been told specifically about this incident,

one may have thought that the requirement to talk about Yetzias Mitzrayim applies only to those groups whose ancestors actually suffered from the servitude in Mitzrayim. Perhaps those whose ancestors were not forced to endure the harsh labour, such as Kohanim, Levi'im, and Geirim (converts), are actually exempt from this mitzvah. Therefore, the haggadah specifically relates to us this particular story because from various places in Chazal we are told that R' Eliezer, R' Elazar Ben Azariah, and R' Tarfon were Kohanim.



Similarly, R'Yehoshuah was a Levi, and R' Akiva descended from Gerim (converts). Nevertheless, they all came together to relate the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim, showing us that these groups, even though their ancestors did not bear the full burden of Egyptian servitude, are nonetheless obligated to tell over the story for future generations.

This story shows a powerful lesson of concern for others. Because these rabbis' ancestors weren't directly involved, yet they discussed it to the degree as everyone else, shows us that we should express a similar level of empathy and compassion for the trouble of others. Klal Yisroel is made up of many limbs that are parts of one body. We

are all in this together. If we think about this and act upon it, it may bring Moshiach that little bit closer and next year we can offer the korban Pesach in Yerushalayim. **אמן.**

Why Do We Make Kiddush Right Away at the Seder?



One year, upon arriving home from shul on the first night of Pesach, the **Shpoler Zeida's** son announced in the customary niggun, "Kadesh: Ven der tatte kumt aheim fun shul macht er bald kiddush" (Kadesh: When father comes home from shul on Pesach, he recites Kiddush right away).

The Shpoler Zeide asked him why, but the boy replied that this was all his melamed had taught him. The Shpoler Zeide then told him the explanation that needs to be added, "kdei di kinder zollen nit ainshloffen un freggen di Mah Nishtana" (so that the children will not fall asleep and will ask the four questions)."

At the Yom Tov seuda the next day, the Shpoler Zeide asked his son's melamed why he had not taught the reason for Kadesh, as this has been the minhag since the distant past. "I didn't think it was necessary to teach this to small children, especially since this reason isn't so important, for making Kiddush early applies to everyone, even if there are no small children at home."

The Shpoler Zeide strongly protested, "How dare you say that this reason is unimportant? Are you wiser than the melamdim of previous generations? You simply don't begin to understand why they taught

in this way. Don't ever change their minhagim according to what you consider logical!"

The Shpoler Zeide then went on to explain that the words contain great secrets: "On the night of the seder, our Father, Hashem, comes home from shul where he has seen that although the Yidden are exhausted from the laborious preparations for Pesach, they have nevertheless come to daven, and sing Hallel to Hashem with their whole hearts. Seeing this, Hashem has to 'recite kiddush right away', to renew his kiddushin with his kallah and take the Yidden out of golus. He must do this without delay. Why?

"So that his little children, the Yidden, will not fall asleep in golus and despair of ever being redeemed. So 'they will be able to ask the Mah Nishtana', why is this night, this long golus, different from all other nights? It is being prolonged more than any other golus that we have endured!" With these words, the Shpoler Zeide broke out in tears and lifted his hands, crying out, "Hashem! Redeem us from golus while our hearts are still awake, and do not let us fall into a deep slumber!"

All present were roused with feelings of teshuvah, and some even fell to the floor, quietly sobbing. But their Rebbe soon revitalized them, "It is time to gladden our Father and show him that his young son can dance even in the 'dark'!" The tzaddik directed his chassidim to begin a lebedike niggun, and together they danced with great simcha.

"The Seder night is the greatest opportunity of the year to transmit emunah to our children." ~ Rav Ovadia Yosef.

Speak when you are angry - and you'll make the best speech you'll ever regret.

Teshuvas HaRashba Foiled 13 Terrorists Rabbi Yair Hoffman



Yes, it is true. Six Hamas terrorists were killed and 7 were foiled because of the Teshuvas HaRashba (7 #20).

It happened almost four years ago, in Kibbutz Sufa at 4:00 AM Thursday morning on July 17th, 2014.

Kibbutz Sufa was founded in 1982 by evacuated settlers. It is on the border of Central Gaza very near the Egyptian border. It was shortly after 4:00 AM that the Teshuvas haRashba did the deed.

The story actually begins well over 3300 years ago. The Jews are taken out of Egypt. To commemorate the miraculous occurrence that has happened and to imbue the Jewish nation with an ever-constant source of nourishment of faith itself – the Jewish people are given the Mitzvah of consuming Matzah. We fast forward 1600 years.

We are now in Babylonia, as the Talmud is being written. Torah scholars are discussing a difficult topic. There is a fascinating exposition that the Talmud presents (Psachim 33a) in regard to the obligation to give a Kohain the gift of Trumah. The verse in the Torah states, "Venasata lo and you shall give it to him." The Talmud expounds – "Lo velo l'uro – to him, but not to his flame."

In other words, the Terumah that is given to the Kohain must, at the outset, be completely edible, it cannot be something that is prohibited in consumption – to the degree that the Kohain would be obligated to burn it as soon as it reaches his hands.

The Talmud is searching for an illustration of such a thing. The Talmud is looking for an example where this exposition might apply. Finally, an answer – wheat that is still attached to the ground which became Chometz. This is the first section of our tale, which took place in Babylonia in the late 300's.

The observant reader may now be thinking: Wait – just one second. Wheat still attached to the ground that became Chometz? Wheat that got wet? Every plant gets wet! That's how they receive nutrition! What is the Talmud talking about? A question that requires an answer.

Now we move on to the next part of our tale.

BARCELONA SPAIN

We are now in Barcelona, Spain. It is the late 1200's. We are at the home of the well-regarded Rashba, Rabbi Shlomo Ben Aderet. Indeed, the Rashba is so well regarded that even Queen Isabella of Spain has sent him to rule upon some of her country's most perplexing cases.

The Rashba receives a letter concerning our section of Talmud. It is the very same question that the observant reader had above. It is now posed for the first time to the Rashba. He responds (Volume 7 #20) with the following explanation:

"That section of the Talmud refers to wheat that became completely ripened while still attached to the ground, and it does not need any further nutrients at all. Everything that has dried out completely while still attached to the ground – it is considered as if it is resting in the pitcher – and thus susceptible to becoming Chometz if rain falls upon it."

TZFAT, ISRAEL

It is now 1563. We are in Tzfas, in Eretz Yisroel. The author of the Shulchan Aruch has just codified the Rashba's explanation of our Talmudic passage into his Shulchan Aruch (Chapter

467:5). Wheat that has completely ripened can become Chometz if it is rained upon. If it still requires sustenance from the ground to reach full develop – then there is no problem.

RADIN, POLAND

We move to Radin, Poland. It is now the late 1890's.

The Chofetz Chaim, in his Mishna Brurah explains, what apparently has been the custom for Jews in Europe for some time. He states that Shulchan Aruch only refers to an abundance of rain. However, if it rains a little bit – then the fully developed wheat is fine and can be used for the highest standard of Matzah. However, he does mention a tradition cited by Rabbi Adam Danziger in the Chayei Adam that the custom of the very pious is to cut the wheat earlier, while it is still somewhat green in order to ensure that there are no problems. The concern, of course, is the issue first mentioned in the Rashba.

The Chofetz Chaim mentions this custom of cutting the wheat early twice in his Mishna Brurah. Once regarding this topic and once earlier in a discussion (SA 453:4) about whether the wheat has to be guarded when it is cut or when it undergoes the grinding process. In his Biur Halacha, the Chofetz Chaim cites the practice of the Vilna Gaon who was careful only to eat Matzah that was watched from when it was cut. This too, the Chofetz Chaim points out, is because of the Rashba's position.

GAZA, HAMAS HEADQUARTERS

It is now either 2013 or early 2014. Hamas leaders plan a devastating attack on Israeli citizens. They will send terrorists through a tunnel. They will tunnel across the border and emerge in a completely camouflaged, carefully chosen, wheat field. The thirteen terrorists will have several types of weapons, including AK 45 Assaullt Rifles and Rocket-Propelled Grenade Launchers.

The plan is perfect. The wheat is high enough to serve as camouflage but not yet ripe enough to be harvested. Who would harvest green wheat in July? The plan to kill Israelis is more than perfect. It is brilliant.

BNEI BRAK, ISRAEL

It is now 2014. A group of Matzah bakers in Bnei Brak are in serious need of some green wheat still on the ground in order to fulfill the requirements of the responsum of the Rashba. They search almost all of Eretz Yisroel. Finally, they come across a wheat field located in the Hevel Shalom area of the north-western Negev desert.

Time is of the essence. They cut a deal with the farmer and arrange for the wheat to be reaped immediately. They compensate the farmers nicely for the wheat. It is mid-July.

KIBBUTZ SUFA

As planned, 13 terrorists emerge from the tunnel. But wait. Lo and behold, the wheat field is bare. It is completely bare! The terrorists think: "Who moved our wheat stalks?! And wait. Oh no! An IDF watch station spotted us! Arghh! Bombs! They are bombing us! Let's crawl back into our hole in the ground! Arghh! Six of us are hit! Let's abandon them! Let's go back to Gaza!"

Were it not for the Teshuvas HaRashba, the wheat field would never have been *plowed. The Teshuvas HaRashba saves the day.*

"In moments of despair, we must turn to Hashem and trust in His mercy and compassion. He has the power to heal all wounds and to bring light to the darkness of places." – Rabbi Moshe Shapiro

"Nothing is impossible. The word itself says 'I'm possible!'"

The Noda B'Yehudah - Great Pesach Miracle in Prague



A story once occurred with the Noda B'Yehudah, Rav Yechezkel Landau, who was appointed as Rav of the Jewish community in Prague in 1755. Once he was out walking, and he noticed a small boy, a non-Jew, who was standing on a corner crying bitterly.

The Noda B'Yehudah felt compassion for him and asked why he was crying. The child responded, "I am an orphan. My mother passed away and my father has gotten remarried to a mean woman who treats me terribly. She wakes me every morning when it's still dark outside and gives me a basket full of rolls to sell, and I am not allowed home until I sell all the rolls. Today, I was able to sell all the rolls, but as I was about to go home, I realized that I can't find the money from selling the rolls, and I am afraid to go home!"

The Noda B'Yehudah inquired, "How much money did you lose?"

The boy told him the amount, and the Noda B'Yehudah whispered to himself the Pasuk from Ashrei, 'V'Rachamav al Kol Ma'asav', 'And Hashem is compassionate on all His creations' (Tehilim 145:9). He took the exact amount out of his pocket and gave it to the child.

The boy was overjoyed and thanked the nice Rabbi for being so kind to him, and the Noda B'Yehudah said that one day, he should remember that the Rabbi of the town helped him out, and the boy happily went on his way home.

Many years passed, and the Noda B'Yehudah had completely forgotten about this episode. One evening, on Chol Hamoeid Pesach, there was a knock at the door of his house.

The Noda B'Yehudah's wife opened the door, and saw a young man standing there, a non-Jew, and he said that he wished to speak with the Rabbi privately. She was cautious and wondered what this could be about, but she knew better than to refuse him, and she invited him in.

When the man came before the Noda B'Yehudah, he asked, "Do you remember me?" The Noda B'Yehudah looked hard at the young man, but admitted, "I'm sorry, but I don't recognize you."

The young man said, "I am the orphan you helped many years ago. To this day, I remember how you gave me some money, and I've come now to return the favor. I need to tell you something very important. The Jews of Prague are about to suffer a great catastrophe."

The Noda B'Yehudah was apprehensive, and he asked what was about to occur. The man continued, "Last night, there was a meeting at my house. It was led by the priest, my stepmother, and all the bakers in Prague. They devised a plan to destroy the Jews. The bakers know that every year, on the day after Pesach, all the Jews buy bread from them. They have schemed to poison every loaf of bread that is baked after Pesach and kill all the Jews. All the non-Jews know not to eat any bread on the day after the holiday. I am risking my life by telling you this, but I will never forget your kindness to me so many years ago."

When the Noda B'Yehudah heard this, his face turned white. But he immediately strengthened himself, and told the young man, "I thank you from the bottom of my heart for coming to me and telling me of this terrible threat to the Jews. Your reward from Heaven will be very great, and I will never reveal that it was you who told me of this!"

For a long time, the Noda B'Yehudah tried to think of ways of how he could save the Jews, until he finally came up with a plan. He asked his Gabbai to announce that on the last day of Yom Tov after Shacharis, he would be giving a very important Drashah in the main

shul in town, and that everyone— men, women and children— must come to hear him speak.

The Gabbai set out immediately to make the announcement. That morning, on the last day of Pesach, the Shul was completely packed, as everyone was curious to hear what was so urgent.

After Davening, the Noda B'Yehudah stood up to address the crowd still wrapped in his Tallis, and said:

"My friends, unfortunately, as the generations pass, the Torah becomes more and more forgotten to us. The Rabbis become less worthy and mistakes are more frequent. This year, there has been a great mistake in the calendar. The Bais Din of Prague has made an error, and Pesach should have begun one day later than it did. The day we celebrated the first day of Pesach was really Erev Pesach. Baruch Hashem we have caught this mistake, as we have almost brought the entire Jewry of Prague to eat Chometz on Pesach. Therefore, the last day of Pesach will be one day later than we thought, and I forbid everyone to eat Chometz until after Maariv tomorrow evening, since that is really when Pesach is over."

The Jews listened in astonishment. Many had questions, but no one dared argue with the Noda B'Yehudah. If this was what their Rav decided, then they would follow his decision, and everyone accepted the ruling to extend Pesach one more day.

The next morning, all the bakers came to the Jewish part of town with wagons loaded with warm loaves of bread, as they did every year. They were sure that within a few hours they would sell all their bread to the Jews. However, the day was passing by and they hadn't sold a single loaf of bread.

One baker asked a Jew that was walking by why no one was buying bread that day, and he responded that their Rabbi said that Pesach was extended and they couldn't eat bread yet. The bakers were furious at this and they went to tell the priest what had happened.

The priest was quite angry and summoned for the Noda B'Yehudah to appear before him immediately. When he arrived, all the bakers were gathered there, along with the chief of police, and the priest accused the Noda B'Yehudah of trying to ruin the business of the bakers. He said by telling the Jewish people to not buy bread, it prevented the bakers from making a living, and he demanded that the Noda B'Yehudah explain himself.

Calmly, the Noda B'Yehudah said, "Your Excellency, I am happy to answer you, but first, I request that a dog be brought into this assembly." The priest was caught off guard by this request, but agreed to it, and a dog was brought in before them. The Noda B'Yehudah said, "I have reason to believe that the bakers are not so much interested in their livelihood but are looking to harm the large Jewish community. I would like to examine this bread to see that it is fit to be sold."

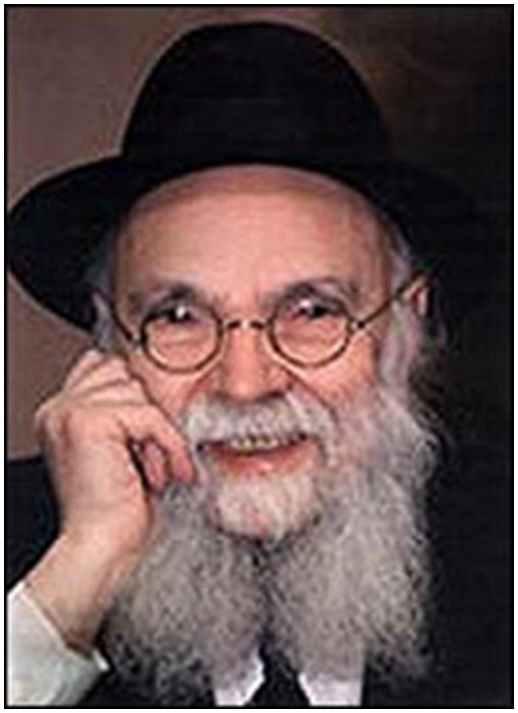
When the bakers heard this, they became very uneasy and frightened, but the police chief allowed the Noda B'Yehudah to continue. The Noda B'Yehudah took one of the loaves of bread from one of the wagons and fed it to the dog. Within a few moments, the dog began to look disoriented, barked, and fell dead to the ground. It was clear that the loaves of bread had been poisoned.

The Noda B'Yehudah said, "This is the bread that was attempted to be sold to the Jewish people." The police chief immediately ordered the bakers arrested, and under questioning, they revealed that the plot was led by the priest, and all of them were punished.

When the Jews learned what had happened and how they had been saved, they praised the Noda B'Yehudah's brilliance. The Noda B'Yehudah publicly declared what a great miracle Hashem had performed for His people, and he thanked Hashem for beginning the salvation so many years ago, by giving him the desire to help the non-Jewish orphan, whose identity he kept secret for his entire life.

Before he passed away, the Noda B'Yehudah recounted this story to his son, Rav Shmuel Landau, and he told him, "I want you to know that it was not through any special wisdom that I was able to come up with the plan to save the Jews, but it was because of a kindness that I once did for a young gentile child!"

Rav Avrohom Pam and the Matzah Bakery



Before Pesach each year, Rav [Avrohom] Pam, zt"l, would bake Matzos for the Seder with a distinguished group of Talmidim.

One year, a new Matzah bakery opened which used a number of Hidurim and Halachic stringencies in the baking process, and some of the students thought that it would be an excellent idea to use the new bakery for their Matzos.

When they presented their suggestion to Rav Pam, he said, "Just as there is a Mitzvah to be strict and have Hidurim in the Matzos we bake, it is also a Mitzvah to have Hidurim in helping another Jew to earn a livelihood."

The students understood that if they switch bakeries, the regular bakery that they have always used would lose their business, and Rav Pam was not willing to do this. Therefore, the idea was dropped and they remained with their original bakery! (*Torah U'Tefilah)*

"The only way to truly be successful in raising children is by constantly praying for them." - The Steipler Gaon

A Pesach Miracle in Alsace by Rabbi Tuvia Bolton



The year was 1848. The spirit of revolution in Europe brought confusion and disorder everywhere and the thin distinction between freedom fighters and bandits dissolved. Gangs of armed hoodlums, hungry for blood and loot were on highways everywhere robbing and pillaging and the ones that especially suffered were who else? - the Jews.

They were rarely armed, were never protected by the police or army and were considered by all the warring sides as siding with the enemy.

Passover was approaching but in the Jewish quarter in the area of Alsace there was fear and weeping.

It seems that a caravan of Jewish wagons, on their way there to spend the Holiday at home with their families had been robbed by an army of two hundred bandits who first stole all their belongings and were about to kill them all until they discovered the wine.

It seems that as well as money their wagons were laden with all the necessities of Passover: presents for the family, food and matzoth for the festive meal and, most important, fifty barrels of fine wine for the ceremonial cups of redemption.

When the bandits realized what a treasure they had stumbled upon they went berserk and immediately began fulfilling their life's goal; getting drunk! And as soon as the wine started taking effect, they decided to have some fun, untied their prisoners and scoffing out

loud told them to run home saying, "In any case we're going to take over your entire miserable town tomorrow and you don't stand a chance. So go kiss your families good bye!! Ha Ha Haaaa!!"

So when the Jews made it to their homes the next morning and told everyone what had happened there was mourning and wailing. Passover would begin in nine hours; Jews would be celebrating the Holiday of Freedom all over the world - but not them. Their lives were in danger!

The first instinct was to run, but where? The bandits were sure to catch them. Maybe they could pay them off; somehow appease them? But that was also out of the question, their intention was to steal everything. Indeed, the Rabbi pointed out that trying to appease them would only show weakness.

They decided that the only chance they had was to fight.

The richest man in the community, a born leader by the name of Shmuel Leib took command.

"Listen, everyone run home, hide your valuables, arm yourselves with anything that can be used as a weapon and come to my house with your families. If we're together we have a chance! Bring knives, meat cleavers, anything metal. My house is the second one after the gate and they have to pass it to get into the town. We'll put the women and children in the basement and give them a fight they'll never forget."

"What about the first house? The house of Aaron the butcher?" Someone asked.

"I'm sure that my house will attract them." Shmuel answered. "His is first, but it's small and what they are after is money. When they see no one is there they will pass it up. Here is where they will attack first. I'm sure of it! And here we'll surprise them. The butcher and his family will come to my house with everyone else."

In no time all the men ran home and just hours before nightfall they were all gathered in Shmuel's mansion making plans and preparing their makeshift weapons. They even sent out a few boys dressed in dark clothes to spy on the enemy and report back.

The sun set and the eerie full moon made the dark empty streets glow ominously. The air in Shmuel's house was tense with fear. Their kitchen knives were no match against swords and battle axes. They sat in darkness and waited. As soon as the enemy came near they would attack from all the doors of the house and hope for a miracle.

Suddenly they heard a pre-arranged knock on the door and opened up; it was the boys out of breath.

"They're coming! They're almost at the gate. But Aaron the butcher, he's in his home - he said he's not coming here!"

"What do you mean?" Shmuel whispered as loud as possible "He isn't coming?! What's he doing at home? Has he gone crazy!? He doesn't stand a chance!"

"He said that tonight is Pesach" the boy answered. "He said it's the night when G-d protects us and that he's not afraid. So he's going to make the Passover 'Seder' and trust in HaShem!"

Someone in Shmuel's house lifted a window shade and sure enough there was Aaron the butcher's house lit up as bright as a torch.

"They're coming!" Another of the boys entered and whispered almost hysterically.

The band of thieves silently entered the gate of the Jewish quarter like a pack of human wolves with their weapons in hand and headed toward the lights coming from Aaron's home, overjoyed that the Jews seemingly weren't even expecting them!

Their leader told them to wait and signaled two of his men to accompany him to the back of the house where he told them to lift him so he could see if it was a trap.

Two of his men lifted him and he peaked into the window.

He was shocked! It was the butcher! He recognized him! The butcher bought a cow from him once. But now he looked like a king! And his wife like a queen! And the children like little angels! The entire house was brightly lit and the family was sitting around a festive table with silver vessels on it glistening in the light of the candles and they were smiling and singing! He couldn't believe his eyes! The entire family was glowing!"

He motioned for his men to let him down and hastened back to the impatient group who were straining like hungry dogs at the leash for the word to attack.

"We're getting out of here! NOW!" He said in a loud urgent voice. "These Jews are doing witchcraft! magicians!! I knew it!! They have some sort of secret weapon. They aren't even afraid!! It's a trap!! If we don't get out of here now, we'll be destroyed forever!!!"

The words had an immediate effect. The robbers ran in terror as fast as their legs would take them and in minutes the streets were empty.

From Shmuel's house the men saw the miracle, they released their families from the cellar and in just moments everyone streamed to Aaron's door to bless and thank him and to get fire in order to cook their Holiday meals and illuminate their homes. But the butcher was as surprised as they were. He had been so involved in doing what G-d wants that he and his family were totally unaware of the miracle.

"I just did what Jews have been doing for over 3,000 years. Made the Passover Seder and let G-d do the rest."

"G-d made the human upright, unlike the animal who walks on all fours." - Kotzker Rebbe

All Who Are Hungry Come and Eat By R' Aron Moss



Q: I am always puzzled by the beginning of the *Haggadah*, where we declare, "All who are hungry, come and eat; all who are needy come and celebrate Passover." Being that this is said while sitting at the dinner table, the only people hearing it are those who are already there. What is the point of making grand invitations when the truly needy can't hear it?

A: That invitation is not intended for outsiders. We are inviting ourselves and the people around us to really be present at the Seder. While we may be sitting at the table, our minds can be miles away. But then we may miss out on the most powerful spiritual journey - the Seder.

Each one of us is hungry, and we are all needy. We have a soul that hungers for nourishment and inspiration, and we all feel a profound need for our inner self to be freely expressed. Our soul yearns to love, to give, to contribute to the world and to connect to G-d. But our soul is sometimes trapped, surrounded by obstacles to its being free - scars from the past that cripple us; fears that prevent us from opening our hearts; bad habits that waste our time and divert our energy; toxic relationships that we have become dependent on; negative attitudes that darken our vision; egotism and complacency that stunt our growth.

We are stuck in our own inner Egypt, with these internal slave-masters holding us back from becoming who we are supposed to be. Like Pharaoh of old, our ego doesn't want to let us go. Even as we sit

down to the Seder to read the story of the Israelite Exodus from slavery, we are still slaves.

So at the beginning of the Seder we invite ourselves to really come to the Seder and experience freedom. Don't let yourself be enslaved to your Egypt any longer. "Whoever is hungry, come and eat. Whoever is needy, come and celebrate Passover." If you hunger for inspiration, come and absorb the *Haggadah's* message of liberty. Don't just sit there - enter into the Passover experience with your entire being. Read the story of the Exodus, taste the *Matzah*, the food of faith, and drink in the wine of freedom.

The Seder night is more than just a commemoration of miracles of the past; it is a personal experience, the exodus of the soul. The same spiritual energies that brought about the miracles long ago are reawakened. Freedom is in the air. On Passover long ago we left Egypt; this Passover we can free ourselves from our own slavery.

We can rush through the *Haggadah* to get to the main course. Then our souls remain trapped. Rather let's take our time, allowing the eternal story of freedom sink in and become a part of us. Let yourself go - free your soul.

L'Maaseh

We say in the *Hagadah* that in every generation we have enemies that try to decimate us, but *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* always saves us from their hands. It was midday when an elderly traveller entered the Jewish quarter of Baghdad. The marketplace, where merchants from many lands sold their fabrics, spices, and other wares, seemed strangely empty for such a day.

He found the finest building in the section and determined that it must be the great *Shul*. He walked towards it and entered the courtyard and sat down to rest and opened his small sack to take out a few dried figs to refresh his strength. Yet, no sooner had he

started his lunch than he became aware of a commotion from within the *Shul*. He looked inside, and he saw hundreds of Jews fervently saying *Tehilim* amidst crying and tears. "What has happened?" he asked of the first person whose attention he could grasp.

In a voice of desperation, the man explained as best as he could, that the Sultan had decreed that the Jewish people of Baghdad must produce a leader who could perform miracles as Moshe had done.

Since Moshe was the leader of the Jewish people in Mitzrayim, and he was able to do miracles, the Sultan expected the same from the leader of the Jews of Baghdad. If they would not produce such a miracle-maker, the Jews would be expelled from Baghdad. Therefore, all of the Jews were fasting and *Davening* to *Hashem* for salvation.

In his calm and patient disposition, the wise traveller approached yet more people, until he had finally pieced together the entire story. The Sultan's chief advisor, Mustafa, was a vicious Jew-hater whose mission it was to destroy the Jews, or at least to have them banished from Baghdad. He had convinced the Sultan that the Jews were not only infidels for denying the prophet Mohamed, but that they were thieves and liars as well, deserving immediate expulsion.

At first, the Sultan was hesitant to believe Mustafa. However, the Sultan was told about what had happened when the Jews left Mitzrayim and what Moshe did to Pharaoh. He began to worry that perhaps one of the Jewish leaders of Baghdad would attack him with plagues, and he decided that he did not want to take any chances. Therefore, he issued a decree that the Jews had to produce a leader like Moshe Rabeinu or leave Baghdad immediately.

The wise, elderly traveller sat in contemplation for several moments, and then approached one of the Rabbis at the front of the *Shul* and whispered in his ear. Soon all the leaders of the community were

talking quietly, and then suddenly there was a loud clap on the *Bimah*, and one of them spoke.

"This man who is visiting our town says that he has a plan. He will travel to the Sultan immediately to try and save us. If he is successful, we will rejoice. However, if he fails, he will tell the Sultan that he acted alone. Meanwhile, we will continue to *Daven* for his success!"

The man headed for the palace, pounded on the entrance gate, and said, "I am a Jew who can do miracles, and I demand to see the Sultan immediately." Before long, he found himself face to face with the ruler of Baghdad. "So," said the Sultan, "You claim you can do miracles like Moshe. What can you do?"



Dozens of people, from the baker and the court jester to the royal guards and advisors, stared at the old man with the white beard and piercing eyes. "If you would be so kind," he said, "I will perform a miracle similar to those that Moshe himself did.

Before your very eyes, I will cut off a man's head with a sword, and then put him back together and make him live!" The Sultan smiled nervously and glanced around, not knowing what to think or make of the situation. Perhaps the fellow was completely crazy. Or perhaps he was telling the truth. After all, he seemed extremely confident, and spoke with such conviction. What if he was telling the truth? If he doubted him, then who knows what kind of wrath would be unleashed on the Sultan and his kingdom.

He continued, "There is but one condition. The man whose head I cut off must be truly wise. In fact, he must be the wisest man in the

kingdom. If not, his head will not properly reattach." Intrigued, the Sultan decided he must see for himself if the Jew was telling the truth. He looked around the room until his eyes fell on Mustafa, his chief advisor and the wisest man in the kingdom.

Before the Sultan said a word, Mustafa cried out, "No! He is lying! The Jew is an impostor! He can't really cut someone's head off and reattach it!" The Sultan replied, "That might be true, but what if he is telling the truth and we don't accommodate him? Surely you don't want to put the whole kingdom at risk! After all, were you not the one who had advised me to expel the Jews, so that we will not be put in danger?"

The Sultan cried out, "Bring the sword immediately! Mustafa has volunteered!" With that, Mustafa began to tremble and yelled out, "No, I admit it! I was both wrong and very foolish. The Jewish people do not have extraordinary powers!" Mustafa ran out of the palace, never to be seen again. The Sultan annulled the decree, thanked the Jew for coming, and said that the Jews were welcome to live in Baghdad as long as they desired.

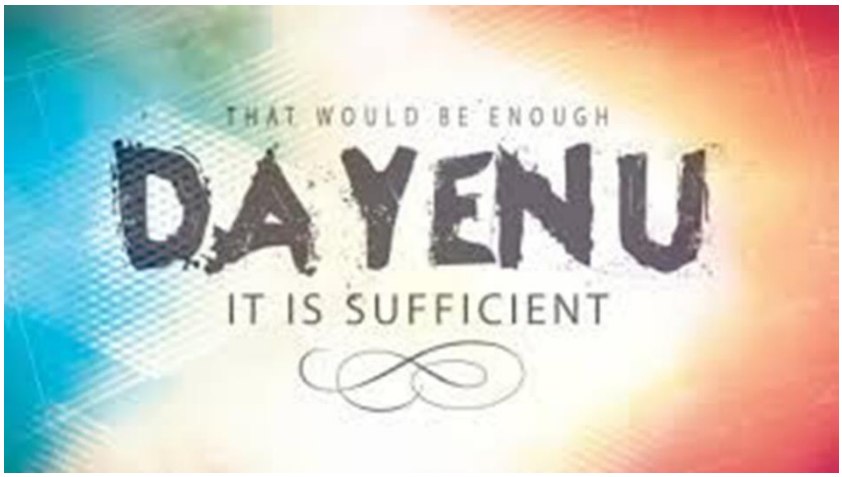
The man returned to the *Shul* to share the good news. Immediately, there was unbelievable rejoicing, and a banquet was held in honour of the miracle that *Hashem* had done for His people. Then quietly and quickly, the old *Yid* left the town before anyone could even get his name. Some people say that he was Eliyahu *HaNavi*. Some say he was a great *Mekubal*. Yet, others believe that he was just a Jew who simply cared about his fellow Jews as much as he did about himself!

The Secret of Calm

If a person truly trusted in Hashem, he would live with constant calm. All fear comes from forgetting Who runs the world. ~ R' Shalom Shwadron zt"l.

The Dayenu Jew by Rabbi Reuven Semah

דַּיֵּנוּ *"It would have sufficed for us."* (*Haggadah of Pesach*)



On the Seder night we sing the song of *Dayenu*. It's a great song that speaks about all the wonderful things Hashem did for us. For instance, the first stanza says, "If Hashem would have taken us out of Egypt but didn't punish the Egyptians, *dayenu* (it would have been enough. If He punished the Egyptians but didn't destroy their gods, *dayenu*."

The song goes on and on. If Hashem didn't give us the Torah, if He didn't give us the Shabbat, etc., it would have been enough for us. But would we really be satisfied with that?

Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, zt"l, explains that this song is said by *Dayenu* Jews. This song was sung by Jews that weren't matured yet, Jews that first got out of Mitzrayim. They would have been satisfied with no Torah and no Shabbat. We would have been happy just to get out of Egypt and would not have cared if Hashem didn't punish the Egyptians.

We would have been happy to go to a land of freedom and wouldn't have cared about the impression left on the rest of the world, as if it's ok to be wicked and get away with it. It would have appeared as a world without justice, but Hashem wasn't happy with that; He wanted to show the world that there is a Leader that runs the world. Hashem wanted to destroy their gods to show that redemption doesn't begin until idolatry is wiped out.

Had Hashem not killed the first born the world would not know that there is a justice system of measure for measure. The Egyptians

enslaved the Jews who are Hashem's first born, so He killed their first born. Hashem gave us great wealth because He promised it to Abraham. But us? We would have been satisfied without all of this. The *Dayenu* Jew is satisfied with very little spiritually, doesn't mind so much about Hashem's image in the world. The *Dayenu* Jew would like to get by with the minimum observance.

But, Hashem wasn't satisfied. He knew that without Torah, without Shabbat, a nation with a minimum appetite for these things would never remain a redeemed people. *Baruch Hashem* today we are a nation who would never make do without all of these spiritual gifts. We sing an unending thank you to Hashem for all He has done for us.

You open for him - את פתח לו : Yehudah Fine

Q : Why does it say **את** in a **לשון נקיבה** ?



A : Because the way of a man is to speak short and to the point. Women, on the other hand, like to speak a lot. To speak short and to the point is always the best thing, like the Gemara in Pesachim says that a rebbi should always learn with his **תלמידים** in a short and to the point way.

However, regarding talking about Yetzias Mitzrayim, the more you elaborate the more praiseworthy you are. That's why it uses a **לשון נקיבה** to tell us that the man should speak a lot like a lady and go on and on without stopping.

חד גדיא : Toivi Liebermann



The final phase of an event is often the climax (Neilah is the climax of Yom Kippur, and Simchas Torah is the climax of the **ימים טובים** of Tishrei as stated in the **ספרים הקדושים**. Therefore, we wonder what is special about Chad Gadya that it's sung at the very end of the Seder?

The tzaddikim of Gur zt'l explain, the goal of the Seder is to teach emunah, and Chad Gadya demonstrates that there is a reason for everything that happens. It is not by chance that a fire burns a stick, or that a stick hits a dog, or a dog bites a cat, and so on. It's a punishment for something that happened before. There is a plan and order; everything is arranged above. Things do not happen by themselves. This is the message of the Seder, and therefore it is appropriate to sing this song at the climax of the Seder.

"If you fell down yesterday, stand up today."

Yosef Comes To The Rescue

Why did the Yam Suf split? The Midrash teaches in the merit of the bones of Yosef which they were carrying when they left Mitzraim, the sea split. It says **הים ראה וינס** ; the sea saw and fled, as it saw the **וינם ויצא החוצה** ; Yosef fled and went outside (by the test with Potifar's wife). Since Yosef went against his nature by overcoming the test with Potifar's wife, the sea went against its nature and split. Is it any coincidence that when we rearrange the letters of **ים סוף** , it spells **מיוסף**. In light of this, we can comprehend why the 7th day of Pesach- the day the Yam Suf split- is the Sefira of **חסד שביסוד** - the trait of Yosef.

Mitzrayim is given the title **ערות הארץ**. It therefore is fitting that we exited Mitzrayim because of the one who succeeded in this area, Yosef. With this we can grasp why Shiduchim are compared to **קריעת ים סוף** since marriage can save one in this area. We should all merit to succeed in this area thereby causing our own seas to split.



Vedibarta Bam - A Compilation of Torah Insights in Question & Answer Format By Moshe Bogomilsky

"והיה היום הזה לכם לזכרון וחגתם אתו חג לה' לדרתיכם"
"*And this day shall be to you for a remembrance; and you shall celebrate it as a feast to G-d for your generations.*" (12:14)

Q: Why do we add the cup "*kos shel Eliyahu*" when we celebrate the *Pesach seder*?

A: Eliyahu once complained to Hashem that the Jewish people were not faithfully observing the *mitzvah* of circumcision. Hashem did not receive this complaint very well and told Eliyahu, "My children are trustworthy, and from now on you will be present at every Jewish *brit milah* to witness their dedication." For this reason, at every *brit* a special chair is set aside for Eliyahu (*Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer* 20).

According to *halachah* (12:48), the uncircumcised may not partake of the *Pesach*-offering. Therefore, Eliyahu, who is present at every *brit*, appears in each home to testify that the participants of the *seder* are all eligible to eat the *Pesach* offering, and a cup is prepared in his honour. (**ר' משה חאגיז ז"ל בספר ברכת אליהו**)

This reason can be supported by noting that in Egypt the Jews neglected the *mitzvah* of circumcision, and on the night of *Pesach* all the Jews circumcised themselves in order to be eligible to partake of the *Pesach*-offering. (*Shemot Rabbah* 19:5)

* * *

Undoubtedly, the prophet Eliyahu was in Egypt that night, because he is the messenger of redemption (see Malachi 3:23). Thus, he witnessed the redemption and is invited to participate in our freedom celebration every year.

* * *

There is a popular question: *A brit* must be performed during the day. How did the Jews in Egypt perform their *brit* during the night?

Some possible answers are: 1) The law of performing a *brit* during the day took effect *after* the Torah was given. 2) *A brit* which is not performed on the 8th day after birth may be performed either day or night. 3) According to the *Zohar,* when Hashem revealed Himself at midnight to smite the firstborn, the night became illuminated to the extent that "*velailah kayom ya'ir*" — "the night shined like the day" (Psalms 139:12). In view of this, it was permissible to perform a *brit* at night.

(הגש"פ עם לקוטי טעמים ומנהגים, מכ"ק אדמו"ר)

"ולא יתן המשחית לבא אל בתיכם לנגף" ***"And He will not permit the destroyer to enter your homes to smite."*** **(12:23)**

Q: The *Haggadah* of *Pesach* explains the passage, "I will smite every firstborn in the land of Egypt" (12:12) to mean "*Ani velo seraf*" — "I and not a fiery angel." Why was it necessary to make a sign for the destroyer, since the plague of the firstborn was inflicted by Hashem Himself?

A: In Egypt there lived millions of Jews and millions of Egyptians. In such a populace, it is normal that some people die each day. If the *malach hamavet* had killed a Jew during the night of the plague of the firstborn, Pharaoh would not have agreed that a miracle had taken place. He would have claimed that there was an epidemic which claimed Egyptians and Jews alike. Therefore, it was the will of Hashem that the destroyer *(malach hamavet)* not kill even one Jew on that night. (הגר"א)

Revach L'Neshama - Maos Chitim In Honour Of Avrohom Avinu



Our of all the Yamin Tovim there is a special minhag before Pesach to make sure that the less fortunate have all the provisions needed for Yom Tov. Why specifically Pesach?

The Minhag Yisroel Torah brings from Rav Yaakov Aharon MiAlexander who quotes his rebbe the Yehudi HaKadosh MiPeshischa, who explains the enigma of why the great tzaddik Avrohom was so concerned that Bnei Yisroel leave Mitzrayim with great wealth. The reason is that there are two tests a person can face in Avodas Hashem, poverty and wealth. Wealth is a far greater challenge than poverty. In Mitzrayim Bnei Yisroel faced the test of poverty, and Avrohom, who wanted them to ascend a higher level, insisted that Hashem bestow on the them the wealth he promised for them to achieve this elevated status.

Therefore since Yetzias Mitzrayim was a transition to the difficult challenge that accompanies great wealth, in order for everyone to

participate, we give Maos Chitim to make sure that every Jew has all the adequate means and does not lack anything for the Yom Tov.

Vechol Maaminim - Allusions to Amen in Shir Hashirim



There is a widespread custom among *chassidim* to read *Megillas Shir Hashirim* on Pesach night after the Seder. (*Shela"h Pesachim* 407, and others.) Following are a number of beautiful allusions from the *pesukim* of *Shir Hashirim*, about the great virtue of answering amen.

Birchos Hashachar Bring One Closer to Hashem.

משכני אחריך נרוצה הביאני המלך חדריו (שה"ש א ד)

מַשכני אַחריך נַרוצה is an acronym for "amen" to allude that answering amen draws a person closer to Hashem and to run after Him, and to the extent that "the King brought me to His chambers" – to serve Hashem from deep in the chambers of his heart. That is what *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 53b): "the one who answers amen is greater than the one making the *brachah*," because one who answers rises to a higher level than the *mevarech*.

Divrei Torah [Minchas Elazar of Munkatch], Ninth Edition 18

We can add that the fact that the second letters of the words **מַשכני אַחריך נַרוצה** comprise **שחר** , alludes to the special virtue of answering amen at the beginning of the day after *Birchos*

Hashachar, as the sages did many years ago. ***See Einei Ha'Eidah, Shir Hashirim* 1:4**

Beshuvcha Letzion Berachamim. Amen.

אתי מלבנון כלה אתי מלבנון תבואי תשורי מראש אמנה מראש

שניר וחרמון ממענות אריות מהררי נמרים" (שה"ש ד ח)

The end of the *passuk* relates to the Geulah, with the words **אַריות מַהררי נַמרים** – which is an acronym for "amen." This teaches us that the Shechinah will return to dwell among Am Yisrael speedily in our day in the merit of answering amen in *batei knesses* and *batei medrash*.

***Nachal Eshkol* (Chida) *Shir Hashirim* 4:8**

We can further explain on this *passuk* that it is not for naught that amen is alluded to in the words "*mimonos arayos me'iharerei nemerim*" because there are those who are embarrassed to make the *brachah* aloud or to answer amen out loud. From this *passuk* we can learn that a person should be strong like a lion and courageous like a leopard to answer amen, and to give another one the merit of answering amen.



השתא הכא לשנה הבאה בארעא דישראל, השתא עבדי לשנה הבאה בני חורין



Chazal say (*Shabbos* 12b) that "when one asks for his needs in Aramaic, the Ministering Angels are not needed for him [to bring his *tefillah* before Hashem] because the Angels do not know Aramaic." Why, if so, is the first request in the *Haggadah* said in Aramaic?

Harav Yissachar Dov of Belz explained: *Chazal* say (ibid) that in a place where the Shechinah dwells, like "above the head of a sick person" a person can daven in Aramaic as well, because when the Shechinah is in a place, the Shechinah does not need the angels to bring that person's *tefillah* to Him.

Therefore, here, as well, after we invite the guests to join us at our table, declaring "**כָּל דִּצְרִיךְ ייֵתֵי וְיִפְסַח**", we can daven in Aramaic, because from now the Shechinah is dwelling in our home. As *Chazal* say (*Vayikra Rabbah* 34 9): "This poor man stands at your door, and HaKadosh Baruch Hu stands at his side, as it says (*Tehillim* 109:31): '**כִּי יַעֲמֹד לִימִין אֶבְיוֹן**, because He stands at the right of the poor man.'"

Fascinating Insights - Rabbi Yehoshua Alt



Analysing the months of Tishrei (beginning of the year) and Nissan (first of the 12 months) we notice they are opposites. Tishrei is associated with **דין**; judgement, as that is when we are judged (Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur). This is felt even in nature at that time as that is when plant life begins to die, the birds migrate, the cold weather starts and so on. This is indicated in the letters of **תשרי** as they are in the reverse order of the **א ב** - (**ת** is the last letter, then is **ש** and so on), symbolizing **דין**. As for the last letter- the **י**, that is the letter of thought and as Tosafos says in Tishrei the world was created in thought.

Nissan on the other hand is connected to Chessed as we left Mitzrayim although we didn't deserve it. Additionally, that is when the Yam Suf split. This is also felt in the atmosphere at that juncture as that is when nature blossoms, the good weather begins and the like. In this month of Chessed, we should merit the long awaited Geula.

R' Tzvi Elimelech Spira ZT"L of Bluzhev (Tzvi L'Tzaddik) would say: "Yachatz is a segulah for good life. Since מצה equals 135 but cannot be split equally, one gets חיים טובים - which is 68 and 67!"

Is that a miracle?



After the waters of the **ים סוף** split, Hashem told Moshe **נטה את ידך על הים** – to stretch out his hand over the sea so that the waters would go back on the Egyptians.

R' Gifter asks: for the water to split is a miracle. It was therefore necessary for Moshe to stretch out his hand. However, to return the waters to its natural state is not a miracle. So why did Moshe need to stretch out his hand?

The word **טבע** ; nature is related to **טבע**; to drown, as drowning means to become one with the water. Similarly, one can drown in **טבע**; nature, as he is unaware that there is an infinite source controlling **טבע**. It is also associated to **מטבע**; coin, which has a stamp on it. If we think about the wonders of creation, we can see its stamp as it all points to Hashem and as it says נפלאות א-ל **עמד והתבונן**; stop and contemplate the wonders of Hashem.

When **Menachem Mendel of Kotzk**- the future Kotzker Rebbe (1787-1859)- was young, his teacher took the class on a Lag Ba'omer nature outing through the breath-taking terrain. When the children returned home, they realized that the young Menachem Mendel was not among them. Upon returning to the scenic area, they found him deeply entranced in the sights, repeating **לבי ובשרי ירננו לא-ל חי**; my heart and flesh will sing for joy to the living G-d.

We need to internalize that nature is the **אצבע אלה-ים** - finger of Hashem, and as the Egyptians expressed - **אצבע אלה-ים היא**.

Through studying nature, we get to see Hashem in everything since it is filled with miracles and as it says **לא ידע בכל אלה כי יד ה' עשתה**

מי זאת; *who cannot know from all these things that the hand of Hashem made this*. The following are some examples:

1) From eating grass, the cow grows. Although the cow doesn't eat actual meat, we get his meat from the grass he ate.

2) Taking a look at one's eyebrows, we notice that they arch away from the eye. It is designed this way so that when one sweats it slides off to the side of his face. If it was arched the other way, the sweat would enter his eyes.

3) When a baby is in the mother's womb, he lives in a world of water. If he would leave that environment, he would not survive. However, in a matter of minutes- when the baby is born- the reverse is true, as if he would be submerged in water, he would not survive.

In light of what we mentioned, we see that nature is also a miracle. As a result, Moshe was told to stretch his hand out on the sea to return the waters.

Awaiting Moshiach



Tzaddikim living in the time of the **Yismach Moshe, Reb Moshe Teitelbaum**, used to say that he was a gilgul of Yirmiyahu HaNavi, who prophesied the destruction of the First Beit HaMikdosh. He would constantly cry about this lengthy exile, especially during the Three Weeks, and he longed for Moshiach intensely. Whenever he

heard some hustle in the street, he would run to the window: Had Moshiach arrived? Next to his bed, his best Shabbat clothing always lay prepared. And every night, before going to sleep, he would warn his shammes to wake him the moment the shofar of Moshiach was heard.

He once received a letter informing him that on a certain date his beloved son-in-law would be arriving for a visit. The whole household prepared excitedly for his arrival. The great day came, but the visitor was nowhere to be seen. The family became restless. What could possibly have delayed him?

The Yismach Moshe sat in his room engrossed in his books while some family members waited outside impatiently, when a carriage suddenly appeared on the horizon. The Rebbe's shammes excitedly ran inside to bring him the good news:

"Rebbe, he has arrived!" The Rebbe jumped up from his chair, put on his fine Shabbat kapota and shtreimel and ran outside towards the approaching carriage. Seeing none other than his son-in-law stepping down from the carriage, he was unable to bear the pain and fell to the ground in a faint. When he came to, his family heard him moaning to himself, "Oy! It's not him… He hasn't yet arrived…"

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages

The *Sfas Emes* taught (*Likutei Pesach*) that each year on Pesach, every person has the ability to leap and grasp *Hashem Yisbarach* in a single bound, without any opposition from the *Satan* at all.

Based on this, **Rav Gamliel Rabbinovitch** explains that on Pesach, on the night of the *Seder*, every single one of us can reach levels of *Emunah* that we could not reach during the course of the year. It is as Shlomo *Ha'melech* wrote in *Shir HaShirim* (1:4), *the King (Hashem) brought me into His chamber*. Although one could usually not obtain or reach this heightened level so easily during the rest of

the year, however, the night of Pesach is unique, and one is capable of soaring to great heights without the standard progression. The only condition for this is that we prepare ourselves properly by having a sincere desire to come close to *Hashem*! (*Tiv HaEmunah*)

The Imrei Emes - Kibud Av Wins Over The Mah Nishatana



In days gone by the Mah Nistana was a much more innocent affair. Kids were not taught the Mah Nishtana in school, but rather it was up to the kid to notice strange things going on at the Seder and asking on his own volition.

On Seder night when the **Imrei Emes** was a little boy, his father the **Sfas Emes of Gur** started his Seder and waited expectantly for his young son to start inquiring about odd happenings. The Imrei Emes sat quietly without the slightest hint of a puzzled look on his face. The Sfas Emes started to do more strange things in order to get the boy to ask, but to no avail. He even started to move things on and off the table, turn the table over, and other wild antics just to break the boy's calm demeanour, but nothing would make the Imrei Emes flinch.

Finally, the Sfas Emes asked his son if he noticed anything different about that night's meal. The Imrei Emes said that of course he did. Then why, asked the Sfas Emes, did you not seem alarmed and ask any questions?

The little boy answered with pure innocence, because I know my father is a smart man and whatever he does he has a very good reason for doing. That is why I am not the slightest bit disturbed.

Embarrassing Moment 🎙R. Moshe Dweck



Many times in life, people go through embarrassing moments. We Daven to Hashem, **וְלֹא נֵבוֹשׁ וְלֹא נִכָּלֵם וְלֹא נִכָּשֵׁל. *"may we not be embarrassed and may we not be ashamed"*** Not in this world or the next. But if chas v'sholom that Hashem would at some time bring us to be embarrassed, the Torah teaches us not to underestimate what the embarrassment does for our neshama and cleanses it.

Let me give you an example.

We all know the story that Hashem comes to Moshe Rabeinu and tells him to go and take the Yidden out of Mitzrayim. Says the pasuk (Ex 6:13) **וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַהֲרֹן וַיְצַוֵּם אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶל־פַּרְעֹה מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם לְהוֹצִיא אֶת־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם**- Rashi says **צום עליהם להנהיגם בנחת ולסבול אותם** - Hashem commanded Moshe and Aaron to lead the Jewish people gently and to be patient with them. Adds the Sifsei Chachamim, that they should have respect and patience, not only with the Yidden, but also with Pharaoh! Hashem tells Moishe rabeinu, that when you talk to Pharaoh, talk to him with respect!

Now, I want to ask you a very obvious question. Pharaoh was an arch terrorist. He was a **רשע מרושע** -an extremely wicked person.

He murdered hundreds of thousands people. Does Moshe Rabeinu really need to talk to him with respect? After all, pharoah was a person who should really should have just got a slap in the face, let the Yidden go, and end of story.

There is an amazing answer. Hashem knew that He was going to take the Jews out of Egypt, however He had to ensure that the Yidden had the proper faith and Emunah in Him, that He controls the world. How could that happen? Through the spectacle of the ten plagues.

When people would see the 10 plagues that were brought upon the Egyptians, they would then have full Emunah and trust in Hashem.

The Riboino Shel Olam tells Moshe Rabeinu, that if he going to embarrass Pharoah when you tell him to let the Jews out of Mitzrayim, then what's going to happen? I'm not going to be able to bring the 10 makkos upon him anymore, because he won't deserve them because of the disrespect that you have shown him.

So Hashem tells Moishe Rabeinu, "make sure that you speak to Pharoah respectfully to enable Me to bring the makkos and ultimately take the Yidden out free. Because if he gets embarrassed, he won't deserve the makkos, even though he is a rasha.

How much more so, people like us. Imagine what the atonement is if chas v'sholom we go through an embarrassing moment.

Never underestimate an embarrassing moment!

Rabbi Yechiel Spero- ביד חזקה -With a mighty hand..

A Gentle Goodnight

Sadly, there is a great need in our community for crisis intervention and bereavement counselling. One very special organization, Chai Lifeline, handles this need with sensitivity, warmth, and understanding, focusing especially on giving the children affected by crisis the necessary coping mechanisms.

When handled correctl, this type of intervention can save a child and, G-d forbid, if not handled correctly, the effects can be devastating. Two of the most prominent members of Chai Lifeline are Rabbi Moshe Borowski and Rabbi Motti Gobioff. They have the proper blend of strength, fortitude, and warmth to help those in need navigate through trying times such as illness and death. They

often make presentations in communities around the world about their work.

Before one such presentation, they decided to ask **Rav Mattisyahu Salomon**, the mashgiach of the Lakewood Yeshivah, to review what they planned to say and to make suggestions.

Kabbis Borowski and Gobioff shared their thoughts and insights with the mashgiach, who listened quietly and sometimes

asked questions. After 45 minutes. the presentation was over, and the mashgiach complimented them on the content of their speech and how thorough they were.

Wanting to hear more, the two rabbis asked for further suggestions. The mashgiach thought for a moment and then posed a startling question, "What would you tell a child if he asked you what it feels like to die?"

The question took the breath away of the two of them as they listened anxiously to what the mashgiach had to say, unable to imagine hearing, much less having to answer, such a query.

This is a question that I asked my father when I was a boy. My father gave me unforgettable answer. He said, "Have you ever had a nightmare in the middle of the night, and you groggily cuddle up into your mother's or father's bed? The next morning you find yourself back in your own bed. What happened?'"

The mashgiach concluded this incredibly heartrending response with a message that they will never forget. "The answer is that your father who is so very strong and loving, picks you up and moves you from that bed back into your own. He kisses you and covers you with your blanket - without you feeling a thing.

"When a child dies, the opposite happens. The child is taken from his own bed and carried by his loving Father back into His. He cuddles up next to his Mommy or Tatty and sleeps beautifully there... forever...

"That is what it feels like to die."

Unfortunately, so many think of the Aibeshter's Yad Chazakah as being strong and powerful, ready to take vengeance, punish and vent His wrath on the nations of the world. But while that is most certainly true it is also true that there is none more loving, compassionate, and caring than the Almighty. The same hand that took Klal Yisrael out of Mitzravim is the one that sometimes must take a child out of his own bed and place him into His own, eventually kissing the child goodnight and covering him up to keep him warm.

Two Old Horses By Yossi Winner



During Napoleon's invasion of Russia, a group of his highly trained soldiers got stuck in a snowstorm and had to spend the night in the home of a pious Jew. Although Napoleon's cavalry was the best of their kind, the heavy winter snow would not allow them to journey on any further.

As they were getting accustomed to their new surroundings, one of the soldiers gazed out the window and saw an extraordinary sight. An old man was sitting in a carriage being led by two very old horses. They were trekking through the evening snowstorm with ease.

Puzzled, a soldier turned to his new host and asked: "How is it possible that our highly trained horses could not make it through the

snowstorm, while these two very old horses seem to be moving along without a problem?"

The host took a look outside and smiled as he recognized his neighbor enjoying his evening ride.

"You see," said the man, "I know this man for many years. He has owned these horses since they were born. They both grew up on the same farm and have always been inseparable. What is unique about them is that they feel each other's pain. When the man whips one horse, the other horse feels the pain of his friend and therefore pushes harder as well. It's the effort of both horses working in tandem that allows them to weather any storm."

The Torah tells us that it was during the difficult exile in Egypt that G-d saw the unity that the Jewish people displayed. When one slave finished his daily backbreaking quota, he would help his neighbor complete his workload. The unity inspired G-d to deliver them from the mighty Egyptian empire.

The Sale and Enslavement



During the Seder at **כרפס** we dip in salt water. This alludes to the selling of Yosef as his tunic was dipped in blood. Actually, this is hinted to in the word **כרפס** as **כר** means to sell as in **אשר כריתי לי** . **פס** on the other hand, is associated with **פסים** as the **כתנת פסים** ; fine woollen tunic, was dipped into blood. It therefore comes as no surprise that when Rashi explains the **כתנת פסים**, he uses the term **כרפס**.

The Gemara teaches that one should never treat one son differently (preferential treatment) than his other sons since it is because of

two Selaim's weight of fine wool that Yaakov gave to Yosef (**כתנת פסים**) over the brothers, they became jealous of him and our forefathers descended to Mitzraim. The two Selaim hint to **משתוקא מלה בסלע בתרין** - if a word is worth a Sela, then silence is worth two. This alludes to that Yosef should have been quiet regarding the **דבתם רעה** - evil reports, and the dreams.

Me'oros Ha'tzaddikim



Once, tzedoka collectors came to the home of the holy **Rav of Apt**, **the Ohev Yisrael**, on the day before Pesach, to collect matzos for the needy. The Rebbetzin was busy preparing for Yom Tov, and others went to provide matzos for the collectors. In the bustle, they mistakenly took the shemura matza that had been baked on the day before Pesach for the Rav and were placed under a special cloth, and gave them to the collectors, who took them before the Rebbetzin came into the room.

When the Rebbetzin entered the room, she saw that the shemura matza was not there. She investigated and learned that they had been given to the tzedoka collectors. She quaked, and her heart was struck in her chest; she did not know what to do. She feared telling her holy husband about this. She decided to take regular matza, which she placed beneath the cloth in place of the others, and she pretended to know nothing of what had happened.

The holy Rav conducted the Seder with the plain matza. After Pesach, a couple came before the Rav to divorce. The Rav asked the husband, "Why do you wish to divorce your wife?" The husband replied that this wife did not want to cook for Pesach in implements

which had been used for soaked matza (gebrokts). The Rav instructed to call for his Rebbetzin. He told her, "Tell me the truth: what sort of matzos were placed before me for the Seder?" The Rebbetzin was silent, afraid to say. He asked again, "Please tell, and do not fear." The Rebbetzin answered, "Normal matzos." And she told what had happened.

The Rav told the husband, "See, my son. I ate normal matza on the first night of Pesach, pretending that I did not know and was not aware so that I would not come to anger, or G-d forbid, to a quarrel. And you want to divorce your wife over soaked matza?" The Rav made peace between them, and they left.

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

In *Dayeinu* we say that had Hashem brought us to *Har Sinai* but not given us the Torah it would have been sufficient. What would be the point of this?

The *Otzar Divrei HaMeforshim* cites the *Maharal Tzintz*, who answers that the 613 *mitzvos* is hinted to from the *pasuk*, *Torah Tzivah Lanu Moshe*. The *Gemara* says that the word Torah in *gematria* is 613, however, the *Gemara* immediately points out that Torah only equals 611!

The answer is that Moshe taught 611 *mitzvos*, and two *mitzvos*, *Anochi Hashem* and *Lo Yihiyeh*, were said directly by Hashem Himself on *Har Sinai*, in the *Aseres HaDibros*.

The *Maharsha* says that within these two *mitzvos* of *Anochi* and *Lo Yihiyeh*, all the other 611 are included. Therefore, if Hashem had brought us to *Har Sinai* just for those two *mitzvos*, it would have been sufficient because all the rest are included!

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages



One Pesach, a man entered the ***Brisker Rav's*** home and noticed a heavy wooden box sitting in the corner of the room, which was securely locked. His curiosity got the better of him and he wished to know what valuable item the *Brisker Rav* had seen fit to lock up so well, and he asked what was in the box.

The *Brisker Rav* told him that he keeps his *Matzos* in there. When he heard this, he was somewhat surprised and jokingly asked, "Do the thieves have nothing to steal except for the *Matzah*?"

The *Brisker Rav's* son responded, "My father says that since the *Torah* says that we should 'Guard the *Matzos*', one must therefore guard them as securely as possible, just as one would protect a great sum of money— in a well-locked safe!"

Bitachon Weekly - Hashem Loves a Broken Heart

Reb Shmuel Makarov Zatzal [Talmid of the famous **"Chozeh" of Lublin**] was a poor man and great Baal Bitachon, who would never make a request from another person. He trusted that Hashem would inspire others to be thoughtful of his needs. He did not give in to pressure, even when Pesach came and he was penniless.

Sure enough, his Rebbe, the "Chozeh" instructed one of his wealthy followers to send him a cartload full with all his needs for Yom Tov. At the first Seder, Reb Shmuel was full of Simcha. His heart was soaring high to the sky with happiness, for the lofty levels of Bitachon he achieved. But on the second night, he laid down before the Seder to rest, and did not wake up until he barely had time to

eat the Afikoman before Chatzos, causing him great anguish. This was his worst imaginable Seder in the universe.

When he visited the Chozeh after Yom Tov, his Rebbe remarked: In Shamayim, the second Seder was far more elevated than the first; Davka since he was so broken about it.

Jealous - Rabbi Yaakov Rahimi

Halachot Pesach from the **Ben Ish Hai** (Rav Yosef Hayim of Bagdad, 1833-1909). The rabbi writes in his Sefer a fascinating explanation of our custom for Karpas to dip celery in salt water.

In his Sefer Mekabziel he explains that this alludes to the ultimate cause for affliction in Egypt, the selling of Yosef into slavery. The brothers dipped Yosef's coat in the blood of a goat to make Yaakov think Yosef was killed. The night of the Seder we should have in mind what caused us to be enslaved in Egypt - the jealously of the brothers.

The Torah tells us in the Aseres Hadibros not to be jealous of one another. The commentaries ask the famous question, "How can Hashem command a person not to be jealous?" It is a natural thing. If you see a nice car that you don't have, you want it. It is automatic, you can't control yourself. Your heart desires it right away. You see a nice house that you don't have, you want it right away.

Chazal say that the reason why a person is jealous and wants something that he doesn't have, is because he doesn't live with Hashem or believe in Hashem. If a person would truly believe that Hashem gives you exactly what you need, not what you want, and you have this Emunah, then this is your requirement. If you don't have it, then you don't need it.

Are we jealous of birds flying in the air? No, of course not, because birds fly, and humans don't.

The Torah says, how can you be jealous of your friend? He has his world and mission, and you have yours. Every person has his specific talent and tools.

Live with Emunah and bitachon and be close with Hashem.

Always Feel the Pain of Your Fellow Jew – Rabbi Moshe Dweck

וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ means that I always feel the pain of my fellow Jew, and I am happy in their happy occasions. We learn an unbelievable lesson in how powerful a concept this is, to feel the pain of my fellow Jew.

When Pharaoh came to the Yidden and told them to work, they all came running except for shevet Levi. Initially Pharoah issued a salary, but shevet Levi said, "no, we want to sit and learn Torah." So Pharoah allowed this, and they remained exempt from the slavery.



There is an obvious question on this story.

Pharoah was akin to other dictators throughout time that wanted to destroy world Jewry. He didn't care about being honest. What was his reasoning in allowing a whole section of Yidden to be off free?

Rabbi Yonasan Eibashitz brings a very interesting interpretation. He says like this:

The astrologers came to pharaoh and told him that the leader and saviour of the Jewish people is going to come from the tribe of Levi. Pharaoh also understood that in order to be a saviour of the Jews,

you have to be a person that actually went through their suffering and experience their pain. Therefore, Pharoah said that Shevet Levi is exempt. Not because he cared about ethics, but this was his brilliant grand scheme. This plan would ensure that there would be no leader and saviour of the Yidden, and nobody is going to redeem them.

But, Pharoah made a huge error. He didn't realise that there is a concept that even if you are not obligated to be in servitude and suffer, but you will voluntarily do it. **וַיֵּצֵא אֶל־אֶחָיו וַיַּרְא בְּסִבְלֹתָם** - ***"Moshe went out to his brothers and looked at their burdens."*** (Shemos 2:11) Moshe Rabeinu actually felt his brothers pain. 'How can I help you? What can I do for you?' **"כל ישראל ערבים זה לזה"**

Pharoah didn't realise that a Jew could really feel his brother pain. And therefore, Moishe Rabeinu was able to become the saviour of Klal Yisrael. **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ**

That is the power of a Jew. To actually feel the pain of somebody else as much as if you were suffering yourself. This is what makes us great.

Finding the Real You by Rabbi Joey Haber



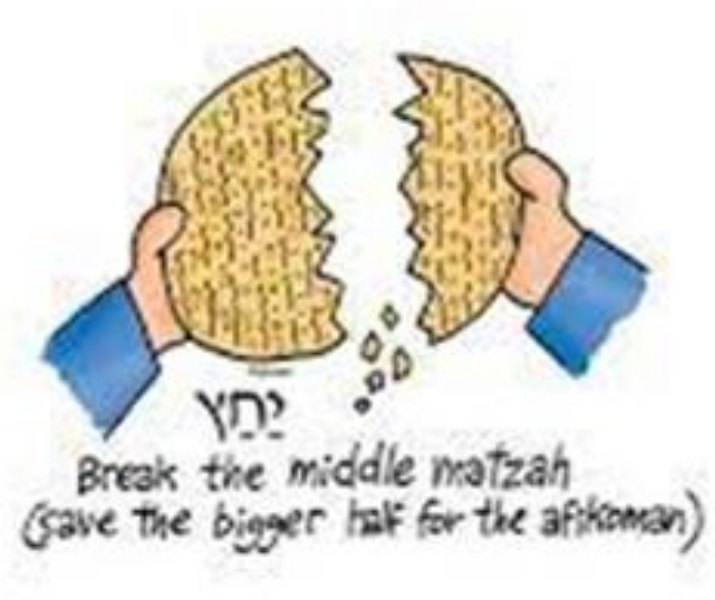
One of the more intriguing stages of the seder on Pesach is yachatz – when we split the middle matzah. We take the larger piece and put it in a bag, while the small piece stays on the table.

It is customary for the children to steal the bag with the large piece of matzah and then hide it. The bag is then brought to the table at the end of the seder, and we eat that piece of matzah.

What is the meaning of this practice? There are two parts to every person: our public persona, and our true, inner selves. The way we appear on the outside tells only part of the story. The way we conduct ourselves in public, with our friends and in the community, is the small part of our beings.

The larger portion is our inner selves, the part that people don't see. This is the way we conduct ourselves in private, when we are alone, when we are home, with just ourselves and our families. The truth of a person is expressed in the way he responds when a random collector asks for charity, when his name is not going to be on a plaque and he is not going to be honored at a dinner.

Of course, all charity is precious, but the "larger piece" of one's essence is the way he gives in private, when he is not seen. The truth of a person is expressed in the way he speaks with his wife in the privacy of their home, not when they walk into a wedding hall together smiling and happy. It is the behavior in the home that is the "larger piece."



At the seder, we break the matzah and hide the larger piece. We show that the more significant part of who we are is the part that is hidden, that can't be seen by other people. Only the smaller piece of matzah stays on the table, out in the open – to show that the public part of our beings, the part that people see, is only a small part of who we are.

The more substantial portion is the one which is hidden from public view, which nobody sees, the way we act in the privacy of our homes. We bring the larger piece to the table towards the end of the seder,

because this is what the seder is about – finding our true selves, discovering who we truly are.

This is why it is the children who hide the large piece of matzah – because the children know who we really are. They are the ones who know whether we are patient or short-tempered, generous or selfish, sincere in our religious observance or not.

People outside the home see only the tip of the iceberg, but our children see the actual iceberg – our true selves. And so, they hide the large piece of matzah, because they know who we really are. The current crisis, as difficult and challenging as it is, offers us a unique opportunity to learn about ourselves. The vast majority of us are spending the vast majority of our time inside our homes, with our families.

This is a chance to focus our attention on the "large piece of matzah," and to find out who we really are. Without leaving our homes, we are able to get a good look at our true selves, to know ourselves better, to learn about our essence.

Let us use this rare opportunity to find the "real you" – and to make sure that the "larger piece" of our beings is just as good, if not better, than the "smaller piece" that shows outside the home.

Emuna for the Seder

כרפס – Why do we dip a vegetable in salt water? One **פשט** that the **מפרשים** say is that we are remembering the fact that the **שבטים** dipped Yosef's **כתונת פסים** in to blood. The brother's jealousy of this **כתונת פסים** is what caused the whole sequence of events from selling Yosef until they ended up in mitzraim. The brothers were jealous of Yosef that he got the **כתונת פסים** … they sold him down to mitzraim… then he became king of mitzraim… the brothers needed food and came down to mitzraim… And that was the start of **גלות מצרים**.

At first glance this could look like the entire **גלות** was caused by Yosef's brothers. However, in truth this was all a manifestation of carrying out the will of Hashem.

This is the reason why we do **כפרס** at the beginning of the seder. We are showing that no one can ever do anything to anyone if it isn't the will of Hashem – this is real emunah. After we understand that Hashem was the one in control over the cause of going down to galus mitzraim, then we can start discussing the whole **סיפור יציאת מצרים** – that hashem was pulling the strings to take us out of mitzraim.



Once, in the home of **Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil** a guest was eating gebroks. Rebbe Shlomo's family wanted to stop him, but Rebbe Shlomke stopped them, motioning to them not to tell the guest anything.

Afterwards, he repeated the above lesson to his children, "In heaven, you won't be asked whether you ate gebroks or not. Instead, you will be asked whether you guarded your eyes and whether you guarded your mouth against harming another Yid."

Anger

As the family celebrated the seder, a young grandchild of **Rebbe Yochanan of Tolna zt'l** was roaming around the house and came across the closet where the items sold for Pesach were stored. The child took out a beer bottle and brought it into the dining room. The family was appalled. "Chametz in Pesach... At the seder!"

The only one who remained calm was the Rebbe. He told the young child to put down the bottle, and the Rebbe covered it with a pot. As halachah states (Pesachim 6), "If one finds chametz on Pesach,

he should cover it with a utensil," Then, he put a small tablecloth over the pot in honour of Yom Tov.

He turned to the stunned grandson and told him, "Thank you so much! You enabled us to keep a halachah in Shulchan Aruch. How often does one have the opportunity to keep this halachah? This halachah wasn't given to Goyim; it was written for Yidden, and you helped us keep it."

Others may have responded with anger, but what would anger accomplish? Would it increase love for the Yom Tov? Would it build the child's self-esteem and his interest in Yiddishkeit?

Instead, Rebbe Yochanan demonstrated the joy in keeping halachah and the joy of Yiddishkeit.

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There was a yungerman who told his rav, "I was analysing the way women clean for Pesach, and I came to the conclusion that they don't clean well enough. They clean the floors by pouring water over the floors, but what about all the crevices!? Chametz can get caught there and pouring water won't take it out. So I instructed my wife to clean the floor with a toothpick, in order to get out all the chametz stuck in the cracks but she isn't interested in taking on this chumrah. She said that only if the rav agrees that it is important to clean the floors with a toothpick, she will do so."



The rav replied, "I agree that it is important. In fact, it is so important that you should do it yourself. Do not rely on your wife or anyone else to clean the floors."
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The lesson: Husbands shouldn't make things hard for their wives. And if they feel something should be done, and their spouse doesn't want to, they can do it themselves.

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There is an old translation, in Yiddish, for each of the 15 simanim of the Seder, which is customarily recited at the Seder.

People who attended the **Chebiner Rav's** Seder tell that he would translate the simanim **קדש ורחץ כרפס** etc. into Yiddish, as customary, but when he said **שולחן ערוך** , he didn't say the Yiddish translation, which is, **און אלע מען גרייט צו די טיש מצה מיט פיש גוטע זאכן**, ***"We prepare the table with matzah, fish, and all good foods."***

One year, after the Seder, someone asked him why he didn't say the traditional Yiddish phrase. He replied, "When I said **קדש**, the Yiddish translation tells me that I should make kiddush. When I said **ורחץ** the Yiddish phrase tells me to wash my hands. But when I said **שולחן ערוך**, I was telling the women to set the table and to serve good foods. When you are speaking to others, it isn't proper to repeat it. I said it once, respectfully and calmly, **שולחן ערוך**, and that's all."

The Makkos

The Makkos were brought upon Mitriyim to show that Hashem is in charge of everything. **The Steipler zt"l** explains that each Makka was to show that hashem is in charge of different things:

דם was to show that hashem is in control over the water.

מכת צפרדע, כנים, ערוב, דבר was to show that hashem controls all creatures and animals. Hashem controls them, directing them exactly where He wants them to go.

מכת שחין was to show that Hashem controls the health of every human being – any time a person experiences physical pain, it is all
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under the control of Hashem. This belief is very appropriate, especially during these times, with coronavirus going around, we must remember that everything is being controlled by Hashem. Anyone who got sick, whether it was a simple sniffle or being R'L on a ventilator, it is all the will of hashem. The whole virus is to show that Hashem is in control of the whole world, there is no one that has a cure for this sickness, and there is no vaccine for this sickness! It is all to show that Hashem is in control, not the doctors, and not the scientists. This is emuna in Hashem.

מכת ברד was to show that hashem is in control over precipitation. The normal **טבע** is for Hashem to send down rain, snow, sleet, etc. Hashem showed us with makas shechin that all precipitation is in His control, and Hashem could make it come down in an unusual manner – fire in hail, which destroyed everything.

מכת ארבה was to show that Hashem is in control over the wind, as the grasshoppers came by the wind.

מכת חושך was to show that hashem controls the sun that gives light, and Hashem could cause darkness at His will, not b'tevah. This is something that we make a bracha on every day (it's the longest bracha), in which we are thanking Hashem for the illuminators.

ברוך אתה .... יוצר אור ובורא חושך .... ברוך אתה ה' יוצר המאורות

מכת בכורות was to show that Hashem is control over the life of every human being, and when it is His will, only He has the control to make someone die. There are many people that nebach were niftar from coronavirus, and we must have emuna that they didn't die only because they developed the virus. They were niftar because that was the will of Hashem, and the way that Hashem carried out His will was by bringing coronavirus on them.

This was the purpose of all the makkos – to show Hashem's control over everything in this world. This display of Hashem's power wasn't only to show klal Yisroel who were enslaved in mitzraim, but this was

a lesson for us today, and in every generation – Hashem is the ultimate controller everything.

When the yidden were in mitzraim, hashem gave them the mitzva of "korban pesach". The miforshim explain that the reason why hashem gave them this mitzva, to shecht a sheep for a korban pesach, is because the mazel of the month of Nissan is a sheep. Hashem wanted to show that **כלל ישראל** didn't leave mitzraim with mazel, only with the **גזירה** of Hashem.

What is mazel? Mazel means that before a baby is born, a **מלאך** asks Hashem, "Will this person be rich, poor, smart, etc." Mazel is one's **טבע** that he born with. Hashem wanted to show that mitzraim was a place that never let a slave go free.

על פי דרך הטבע there was no way that klal Yisroel were ever going to leave mitzraim. Therefore, Hashem wanted klal Yisroel to shecht a sheep, and show that there isn't any **טבע** in the world, rather everything is under the control of hashem. This was the zechus that klal Yisroel were zoche to leave mitzraim.

This is very appropriate for what's currently going on in the world. When will this virus leave us, where is the end to all of this? We don't know; we don't see the light at the end of the tunnel. Our current situation doesn't seem to be any different from how klal Yisroel felt in **מצרים**. They didn't see how they would ever be able to get out of mitzraim, but they firmly believed in hashem. They believed in Hashem's unlimited powers, and there is nothing that can ever hold him back from doing anything – this was the zechus that brought about the geula. And IYH this will be our zechus too, to be zoche to the final geula, if we have that same firm emuna in hashem.

The most truly generous persons are those who give silently without hope of praise or reward.

Hagaddah Questions and Answers from Maran Rav Chaim Kanievsky zt"l Compiled by Rabbi Yair Hoffman



1. Why is, "Ha Lachma Anya" in Aramaic and not in Hebrew? a. Because it is an invitation to all people to come and join us and that was the language that most people spoke when the Hagaddah was written. [We learn from here that we should make every effort to help the maximum people. That is a very important lesson.]
2. When we say kol ditzrich yesai veyifsach, it seems to be referring to the time when we brought the Korban Pesach. But there is a halacha that you have to have been a part of a group – before it was shechted! So it cannot be from that time, because we are inviting him now! So what does it mean? a. The answer is that it is NOT referring to the Korban Pesach back then. The whole phrase is so we can give a bracha for the last part. Hashta avdi – now we are like "slaves" in the galus, but next year leshana haba b'arah d'yisroel – we will be bnei chorim – truly free and will be able to afford our own Korban Pesach and not need to take.. [This is not stated explicitly, so as not to make the guest feel bad. That is a very important lesson.]
3. Why does the Mitzvah of Maggid, "vehigateda l'bincha start with the Mah Nishtana? a. To teach us that the best way to understand something is through a question and answer format. This can be seen from the Gemorah in Psachim 116a where Rav Nachman asked a question of Daru his servant about a master who freed his slave and gave him silver and gold. After Daru

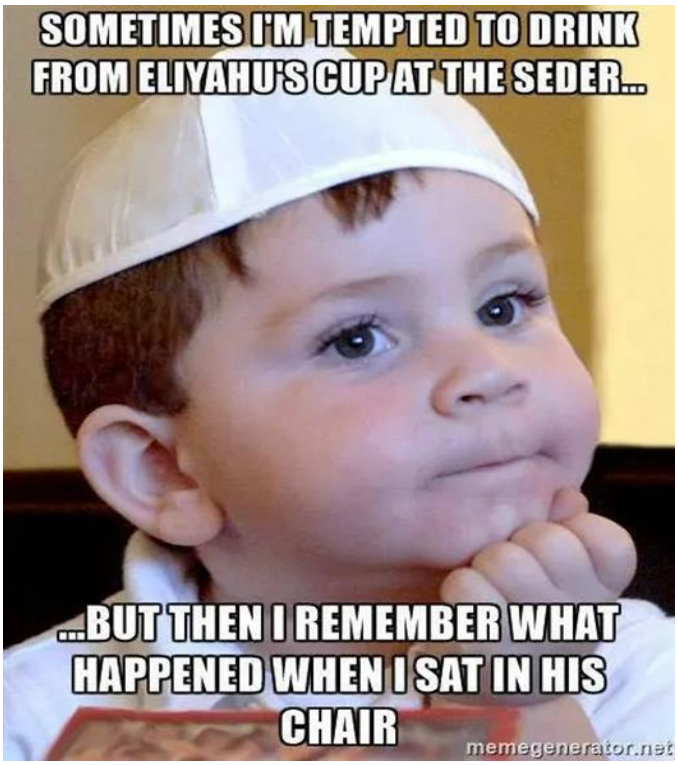
answered, Rav Nachman said we can now go on to Avadim hayinu because we fulfilled the purpose of Mah Nishtana.

4. In the Mah Nishtana, the child is asking questions about things that have not happened yet in the Seder! Why? a. It teaches us that it is very important to prepare our kids and our students for what is about to happen beforehand!
5. How does Avadim Hayinu, we were slaves in Mitzrayim, answer the questions of the Ma Nishtana? a. It means: Because we were slaves in Mitrzrayim and Hashem saved us, we celebrate this special seder with all of these Minhagim!
6. Rav Chaim always added three words in between the Mah Nishtana and the Avadim Hayinu paragraph. What were the three words? a. "The answer is." Di teirutz eez.
7. Why don't we just say, "avadim hayinu b'Mitzrayim" why do we say avadim hayinu l'paroh b'Mitzrayim? a. To teach us the attitude of always looking at the bright side of things. We could have been slaves to regular common Mitzrim – instead we were slaves to a king. So Hashem made it slightly betterer for us. [Positive attitudes even for bad things is very important.]
8. Wouldn't we eventually have been freed. Most of the world no longer has slaves. So how can we say harei anu, uvaneinum uvnai vaneinu meshubadim hayinu? a. It says meshubadim which means we would have been subservient, we would have felt inferior. We would have had a low self-esteem attitude forever. [And we would never have been able to tap into the idea – that we are a tzelem elokim and are even above the malachim].
9. The Shulchan Aruch (OC 481:2) rules that we must say over the story of yetzias mitzraim until we are taken over by sleep (or until we get physically tired). Why then does the Hagaddah say vechol hamarbeh lesaper b'yetzias mitzraim – harei zeh

meshubach (praiseworthy). He is fully obligated! a. The meaning of hamarbeh is that he should always look to add new insights and new ways to present the information.

10. Why does the Hagaddah say, "Boruch HaMakom Boruch hu?" saying the word "Boruch" twice? a. The Gemorah in Gittin 62a citing the pasuk in Divrei HaYamim Aleph 12:19 states that when greeting a king, he should greet him twice, as did Amassai when greeting Dovid HaMelech at Ziklag. Since Hashem is the King of Kings – it is proper to greet him twice. [The reason is likely because repeating it twice shows enthusiasm. If this is the case, this section should be recited with greater enthusiasm].

11. Why does it say by the Chochom, the wise son – K'hilchos haPesach? Why doesn't it say, emar lo hilchos haPesach? a. The answer is that when dealing with a talented child or student – go the extra yard and teach them the other halachos that are k'hilchos ailu – all similar halachos and denim. This will expand their minds and allow them to grow in learning.



Halacha With Rabbi Binyomin Radner



How was it that Esther, Mordechai, and the Jews of Shushan were allowed to fast on Pesach? In fact, **Rabbi Yonasan Eibshutz, ZT"L**, (Ya'aros Devash, Drasha 2) questions why the Gemara mentions that Mordechai transgressed the violation of fasting on Yom Tov. Why didn't it say that he transgressed the prohibition of neglecting to eat Matzah on the first night of Pesach, which is a *Dioraysa* (Torah requirement)?

The Aruch L'ner (Yevamos 121a) answers that, according to the Yalkut, the Jews did not fast on the nights, but only at daytime, as it's impossible to survive three consecutive nights and days without food or drink. So, they fasted during the day but broke the fast at night to eat Matzah on the night of Pesach.

However, the Gemara brings a proof from here that it is possible to survive three days and three nights without eating or drinking from the fact that the Jews of Shushan did it. Clearly, they did neglect to eat Matzah on the first night of Pesach that year, as it was a 72-hour fast. According to this, how could they fast?

Therefore, the Aruch L'ner (ibid.) gives a fascinating and "*lomdish*" answer: the mitzvah of eating Matzah on Pesach is a kezayis, an olive-sized measure of Matzah. However, they did not eat any more than a kezayis and kept the shiur (portion size) to less than a *koseves* – the size of a date. So, although the Jews in Persia ate Matzah on Pesach, they still got credit for it being a qualifying fast day since they did not eat the Amountof a koseves.

Therefore, the Gemara says that Esther, Mordechai, and the Jews of Shushan were in violation of *inuy* (fasting) that year; although they did fulfil the mitzvah of eating Matzah on Pesach in the amount of a Kezayis - olive, they were still in violation of fasting and afflicting themselves on Yom Tov since they ate less than the amount of a koseves.

On a side note, the Mishna Berura (O.C. 429:2) mentions that Shabbos Hagadol is a time to review the laws of Pesach in order to be properly prepared for Pesach; and that this is the main purpose of the *Shabbos Hagadol Drasha* – to teach and review the Halachos of Pesach.

Cleaning for Pesach



Cleaning for Pesach, and being cautious about chametz, causes a degree of discomfort. Often, the house is topsy-turvy, and we don't have a regular place to eat. Some eat on the porch, the yard, in a corner, and so on.

The Pela Yoetz writes that during these times, one should have in mind that he is enduring *galus*, exile. Even this minor displacement can be considered a *micro-galus*. And *galus* atones on his sins.



Vedibarta Bam - A Compilation of Torah Insights in Question & Answer Format By Moshe Bogomilsky

ג׳ מצות Three *Matzot*

Q : Why is it customary to take *three matzot* for the *Seder?*

A : The community of Kairuwan enquired of **Rav Sherira Gaon** why we take three *matzot* on the evening of *Pesach*, no less and no more. He replied that there is an allusion to this in the Torah: The three measures of flour which Avraham asked Sarah to use for baking cakes (*Bereishit* 18:6), for according to our tradition this happened on *Pesach*. Others say that they are a reminder of the three "mountains of the world," i.e., Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. (הגש״פ עם לקוטי טעמים ומנהגים מכ״ק אדמו״ר)

Alternatively, the reason for three *matzot* is that the Jews ate *matzah* for three different reasons:

1) While slaving in Egypt they were constantly rushed to work and were forced to eat *matzah*, due to lack of time to let the dough rise, as stated in the *Haggadah*, "This is the bread of affliction that our fathers ate in the land of Egypt."

2) Prior to leaving they were instructed concerning the *Pesach*-offering and commanded to eat it together with *matzot* on the night of the 15th of *Nissan*.

3) In the morning, upon leaving Egypt, "They baked *matzot* from the dough that they had brought out of Egypt, for they were driven from Egypt and they could not delay" (*Shemot* 12:39).

Q : *Kiddush* is recited *every Shabbat* and *Yom Tov*. What is unique about the *Kiddush* of the *Seder*?

A : 1) This *Kiddush* must be made over wine; it cannot be on *matzah* as on other *Shabbatot* and *Yamim Tovim*.

2) Everyone is obligated to drink a cup of wine; one cannot rely on the drinking of the one who recited the *Kiddush*.

3) On *Pesach*, *Kiddush* must be made after nightfall. (הגש"פ עם לקוטי טעמים ומנהגים)

ויברך אלקים את יום השביעי "And G-d blessed the seventh day."

Q : What special blessing did *Shabbat* receive?

A : *Shabbat* is a day when it is forbidden to work, yet one spends more money for *Shabbat* than for any other day of the week. A person may think that celebrating *Shabbat* properly will run him into poverty. Hashem, however, gave a special blessing to the *Shabbat* day: the more one spends for the sake of *Shabbat*, the more he will earn during the week.

The *Gemara* (*Beitzah* 16a) says that the money a person will have for his expenses throughout the entire year is decided upon on *Rosh Hashanah*. Exempted from this are his expenses for *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov*. If a person spends freely for *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov*, Hashem will provide him with additional sources of income to cover his expenditures. (ברית שלום)

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

The night of Pesach is a Leil Shimurim, a night of protection. On it, we were redeemed, and in the future, we will again be redeemed on that night. (Mechilta 2:12)

"חג המצות הזה" "This Festival of matzot."

Q: In the Torah (*Shemot* 23:15), this *Yom Tov* is called "*Chag Hamatzot.*" Why do we call it "*Pesach*"?

A: The word "*Pesach*" refers to what Hashem did for the Jewish people: He skipped over our houses when He plagued the Egyptians. *Matzah* shows the praise-worthiness of the Jewish people. Thanks to their absolute faith in Hashem, they left Egypt in a hurry without waiting for the dough to rise, and they were satisfied with simple *matzot*.

Thus, in the Torah, Hashem refers to the *Yom Tov* as "*Chag Hamatzot*" to emphasize His praise of the Jewish people. We call the *Yom Tov* "*Pesach*" to accentuate our praise of Hashem for saving our lives and redeeming us from Egypt. (קדושת לוי)

"ורחץ" - "Wash the hands without reciting the berachah of al netilat yadayim."

Q: Why are the hands washed without a *berachah*?

A: According to *halachah* (*Shulchan Aruch Harav* 168:3) before one eats something dipped in liquid, the hands must be washed. Some hold that this applies only to former times when people were mindful in observing purity. Since there is a doubt about this requirement nowadays, a *berachah* is not recited.

The washing is done tonight even by those who do not practice it throughout the year since the washing of hands without a *berachah* and eating vegetables before the meal will stimulate the child's asking questions. (שו"ע הרב סי' תע"ג:י"ד)

Judge every person with the benefit of the doubt.

"יחץ" *"Breaking the matzah."*

Q : What is the reason for breaking the middle *matzah*?

A : The *matzah* is broken before reciting the *Haggadah* because the recital is to be over *lechem oni* — bread of poverty — (the poor can afford only a broken piece — *Pesachim* 115b).

The broken piece is between the two whole *matzot* because the blessing of *Hamotzi* is to be recited over a whole *matzah*, and since there is a rule that "one must not by-pass *mitzvot*." The upper [thus first accessible] *matzah* must therefore be whole, and afterwards the second *berachah* of *"al achilat matzah,"* will be made over the middle-broken *matzah*. (הגש"פ עם לקוטי טעמים ומנהגים)

* * *

Alternatively, Hashem told Avraham of the Egyptian bondage at the *Brit bein Habetarim* — the Covenant Between the Portions. At that time He instructed him to take three heifers, three goats and three rams and split them in half (*Bereishit* 15:9). The three *matzot* commemorate the three animals, and the breaking of the middle *matzah* commemorates splitting them in half.

"הא לחמא עניא" *"This is the bread of affliction."*

Q : Why is the opening statement of the *Haggadah* said in Aramaic?

A : When a Jew prays, there are angels in heaven who become his representatives to bring his prayers before Hashem. The *Gemara* (*Shabbat* 12b) says that angels do not understand Aramaic, and therefore a person should not use it to request his needs. However, when he is sick, he may pray in Aramaic because the *Shechinah* — Divine Presence — is over his bed. Thus, he can talk directly to Hashem without the angels' assistance.

The *Zohar* (*Shemot* 40b) says that Hashem comes personally on *Pesach* night to listen to His children relating the story of the Exodus. Thus, by making our opening statement in Aramaic, we are proclaiming that tonight Hashem is personally with us, and we will speak directly to Him and not through any angels.

Alternatively, this paragraph was composed when the Jews sojourned in Babylon and at that time all spoke Aramaic. In order that everybody, including the common folk, should understand, it was said in Aramaic.

The phrase, "Next year we will be free" is in Hebrew, so that the Babylonians would not understand it and suspect the Jews of plotting against the government. This is not inconsistent with the fact that the rest of the *Haggadah* — even the *Mah Nishtanah*, the questions asked by the children — is in Hebrew; for those other parts of the *Haggadah* had been in use already in the time of the *Beit Hamikdash* (when everybody spoke Hebrew), as mentioned in the *Mishnah*. (**כל בו**)

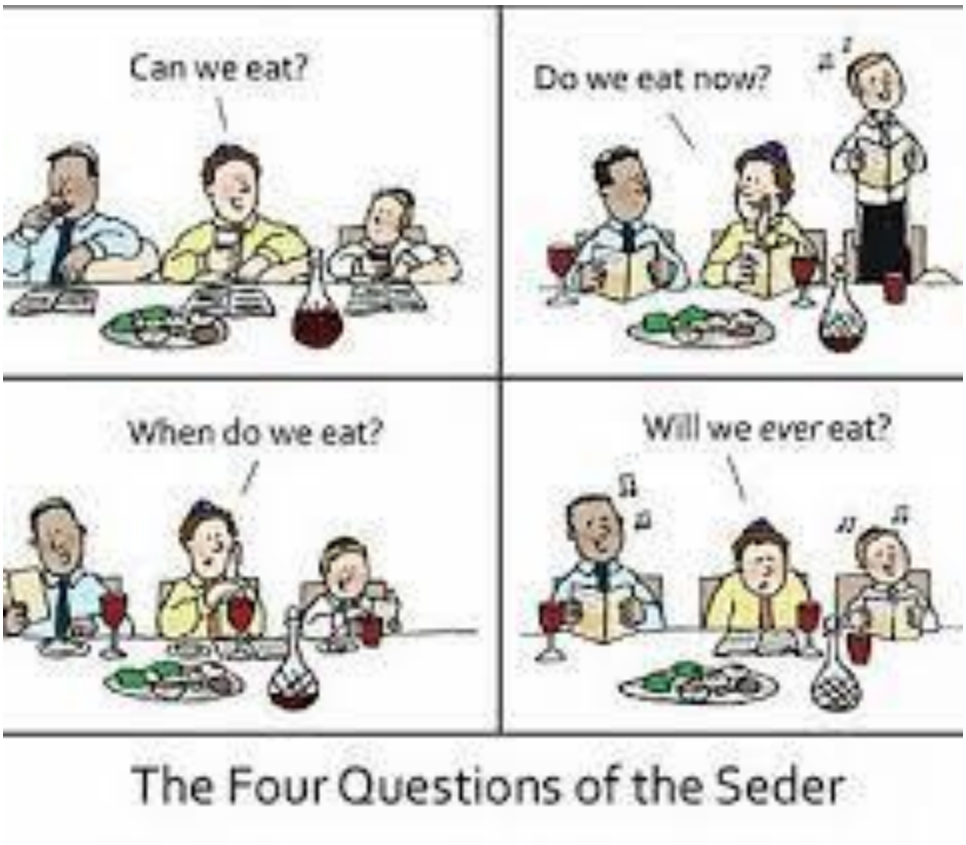
"מה נשתנה" *"Why is this night different?"*

Q: On *Shabbat* and on *Yom Tov* we usually only drink one cup of wine (i.e. for *Kiddush*). On *Pesach* we drink four. Why doesn't the child ask about this as well during the *Mah Nishtanah?*

A: The child asks about the unusual things that he sees. On the table he sees *matzah*, *maror*, salt water, *charoset*, and on the chairs he sees pillows for reclining. His inquisitive mind, thus, immediately prompts him to ask about those items. On the other hand, though he sees wine on the table initially, he only sees the drinking of *four* cups over the course of the *Seder*. (**ברכת חיים על מועדים מר' חיים יעקב ז"ל צוקרמן**)

עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים ויוציאנו ה' אלקינו משם ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה
"We were slaves to Pharoah in Egypt, and G-d took us out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm"

Q: After the child asks the four questions, the *Haggadah* is recited starting with "*Avadim hayinu.*" Where in the *Haggadah* is the answer to the four questions?



A: An answer to a young child's question has to be concise and clear. Otherwise, he will remain with his query and become more perplexed. The opening statement "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and Hashem took us out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm" briefly answers *all* the four questions.

The father is telling his child that the four things he is asking about are done to remind us: 1) We were slaves. 2) Hashem freed us. Consequently, the dipping of the food exemplifies comfort and indulgence, and it is thus a symbol of freedom. On the other hand, it can be viewed as a symbol of bondage, since the word *karpas*, when reversed, can be read **ס' פרך** (the letter *samach* has the numerical value of 60) and alludes to the sixty myriads of Jews (600,000), who were enslaved in *perach* — hard labour. The salt water recalls the bitter tears of bondage while the *charoset* resembles the mixture that was used to make the bricks.

We eat *matzah* because it was the food eaten in Egypt throughout the years of slavery and because it commemorates the fact that when we were freed, we did not have enough time to let the dough rise and instead quickly baked *matzah*. *Maror* reminds us of the embitterment of our lives through the slavery, and we sit reclining like free people. The purpose of the remainder of the *Haggadah* is to relate the narrative of the Exodus. (**אברבנאל**)

"בכל הלילות אין אנו מטבילין אפילו פעם אחת הלילה הזה שתי פעמים"

"On all nights we do not dip even once, but tonight we dip twice."

Q: Tonight we actually dip three times, not twice: *Karpas* in salt water, *maror* in *charoset*, and *chazeret* (for *koreich*) in *charoset*?

A: The reason for having *maror* and *chazeret* on the *Seder* plate is that there is a question if *maror* should be eaten plain or in a *matzah* sandwich (*koreich*). Hence, since it is an unresolved matter, we eat it both ways in order to be sure that we have fulfilled the *mitzvah* of eating *maror*. Therefore, the dipping of the *maror* and *koreich* are counted as one, and together with *karpas* dipped in salt water, tonight we dip two times.

We say, "all nights we do not dip even once," although at the beginning of any meal where bread is eaten it is dipped in salt?

The reason for dipping tonight is to express that we are free people and conduct ourselves in the manner of the affluent. Only dipping into sauces and liquids is a sign of comfort and indulgence, and not dipping into salt.

"The Seder is not a story we tell — it is a story we enter." ~ Chasam Sofer.

"הרי אנו ובנינו ובני בנינו משעבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים"
"Then we, our children and our children's children would have remained enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt."

Q : Why does it list specifically three generations instead of saying, "*kulanu*" — "all of us"?

A : According to the original decree, the Jews were to be in Egypt for four hundred years. However, they were there only two hundred and ten years. King David says that the average human lifespan is seventy years (see Psalms 90:10).

The people of the generation that left Egypt were twenty years old. Thus, had the redemption not taken place, they would have been in Egypt for another fifty years plus the seventy-year lifespan of their children and the seventy-year of their grandchildren, which totals one hundred and ninety. (**אונזער אלטען אוצר בשם ר' שאול ז"ל מאמסטרדם**)

"מצוה עלינו לספר ביציאת מצרים" - ***"We would still be obligated to discuss the Exodus from Egypt."***

Q : What is the uniqueness of this *mitzvah* on *Pesach*? Isn't there a daily *mitzvah* to remember the Exodus from Egypt throughout the year?

A : 1) The daily obligation can be fulfilled by mental remembrance and meditation, while that of the night of *Pesach* must be verbalized, as it is said, "You shall *tell* your child." 2) Every day it is sufficient to just *mention* the Exodus, while on *Pesach* there must be an elaborate recounting of the Exodus. 3) Tonight it is done in the form of responding to the child or someone else. (**הגש"פ עם לקוטי טעמים ומנהגים**)

For success, attitude is equally as important as ability.

"שהיו מסובים בבני ברק" ***"They were reclining in B'nei Brak."***



Q : Why is it important to know in which city they gathered?

A : In the *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 120b) Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah rules that the *Pesach*-offering must be eaten before midnight. Hence, the *mitzvah* of elaborating on the redemption from Egyptian bondage would not apply after midnight, since it is obligatory only at the time when *[Pesach] matzah* and *maror* actually lie before you." If so, why was he "discussing the Exodus from Egypt all that night"?

According to the *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 32b) Rabbi Akiva was the chief Rabbi of B'nei Berak. His opinion is that the *Pesach*-offering may be eaten the entire night and, thus, discussing the Exodus should be the entire night. Therefore, since he was in Rabbi Akiva's city, Rabbi Elazar discussed the redemption from Egyptian bondage the entire night in deference to him. (**שם משמואל - סאכאטשאב**)

"לחמא עניא" ***"Bread of affliction."***

The words **לחמא עניא** have the numerical value of 210, which represents the years the Jewish people spent in Egypt. **(הגר"א)**

"וכל המרבה לספר ביציאת מצרים הרי זה משבח" - ***"Everyone who discusses the Exodus from Egypt at length is praiseworthy."***

Q: The Torah (*Shemot* 13:8) commands "*vehegadeta lebincha*" — "and you shall tell to your son" — and the liturgical work that relates the Exodus is called the "*Haggadah.*" Why doesn't it say "*vechol hamarbeh lehagid*"?

A: The word "*lesapeir*" — "to tell" — resembles the word for "sapphire" — "*sapir.*" The *Haggadah* is telling us that just as the sapphire is a brilliant stone, by retelling the story of the Exodus we "brighten up" the darkness of the *galut* — exile.

To support the theory that it is necessary for all to elaborate concerning the redemption from Egyptian bondage, the *Haggadah* relates about the Rabbis who were "*mesaperim*" — "relating" — the story of the Exodus all that night [of *Pesach*]." In view of the above, it can be explained that "*mesaperim*" — they illuminated — the darkness (night) of the *galut*, and for them the time of exile shone like the brightness of the sapphire. (**הגדה של פסח צוף אמרים מר' משה חיים ז"ל קליינמאן**)

"עד שדרשה בן זומא" ***"Until Ben Zoma explained it."***

Q: What assistance did Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah receive from Ben Zoma's explanation?

A: At this time, though he appeared to be 70, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah was actually only eighteen years old. For quite some time, he endeavored to obtain the approval of the Rabbis to mention the Exodus from Egypt at night and was unsuccessful. Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah attributed his lack of success to the fact that he was very young.

Ben Zoma says, "Who is wise? He who learns from every person." (*Pirkei Avot* 1:4) When Ben Zoma's teachings became popular and

accepted, the Sages changed their attitude towards Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah, and regardless of his age, they listened attentively to what he had to say. (שער בת רבים פ' האזינו בשם נחלת עזריאל)

"ברוך המקום" - *"Blessed is the Omnipresent."*

Q : Why is Hashem referred to as *"HaMakom"* — "the Place"?

A : To dispel the myth that the world is an entity in itself, Hashem is referred to as *"HaMakom"* — "the Place" — to emphasize that the world is contained in Him and not He in the world. He is not limited by space and therefore present everywhere. (מדרש רבה בראשית ס"ח:ט)

Alternatively, according to *Kabbalists,* Hashem is referred to as *"Makom"* — "Place" — because His Holy four letter Name, the Tetragrammaton (י-ה-ו-ה) has the numerical value of one hundred and eighty-six, the same as *"makom"* (מקום), according to *gematria beribu'a* – numerology involving "squares."

The numerical value of *"yud"* when squared (10 x 10) is one hundred. The square of *"hei"* is twenty-five (5 x 5). The square of *"vav"* is thirty-six (6 x 6), and the square of the final *"hei"* is twenty-five (5 x 5). Thus, 100 + 25 + 36 + 25 = 186. (לקוטי שיחות)

Shevi'i Shel Pesach - The Source of Simcha

Sefer Toras Shmuel relates that the **Maharash of Lubavitch zy"a** said on Shevi'i Shel Pesach (5635) in the name of the **Baal Shem Tov zy"a**:

"***The seventh day of Pesach is the 'mekor hasimcha' (the source of joy), and Shemini Atzeres is the 'zeman hasimcha' (time of joy)***."

"אמר רבי אלעזר בן עזריה הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה" ***"Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah said: 'I am like a 70 year-old man.'"***



Q: Why did Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah say, "I am *like* a 70 year-old man"?

A: Once there was a dispute over a *halachic* issue between Rabbi Yehoshua and the *nasi*, Rabban Gamliel. The Rabbis were upset with the way Rabban Gamliel handled matters and decided to demote him and appoint Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah as *nasi*. Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah was hesitant to accept the position because he was only 18 years old and his beard was black. Overnight, a miracle occurred and his beard became filled with 18 streaks of white hair. Thus, he said, "I am *like* a 70 year-old man." (**מסכת ברכות כ"ז ע"ב**)

Alternatively, his *neshamah* was a reincarnation of the *neshamah* of the prophet Shmuel. Since Shmuel lived only 52 years (*Mo'eid Kattan* 28a), and Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah was now 18 years old, he said, "I am like a man of 70 years old." (**אר"י ז"ל**)

Segula of Biur Chametz - Rabbi Elimelech Biderman

Reb Yeruchem the mashgiach of Mir zt'l said "If we came to this world just to perform the mitzvah of biur chametz, **דיינו** - it would already be worthwhile, as this mitzvah imbues us with kedushah and taharah - holiness and purity.

The Bas Ayin writes, 'Erev Pesach when a person does **תְּשׁוּבָה שְׁלֵמָה** - complete teshuva before Hashem and eradicates all the chametz and evil from his heart, it is the greatest eis ratzon of the year !"

"ואף אתה הקהה את שניו" ***"You too, blunt his teeth."***



: Why does the *Haggadah* instruct us to do something to his teeth particularly?



: The word "*Rasha*" (**רשע**) has the numerical value of 570. The word "*Tzaddik*" (**צדיק**) has the numerical value of 204. The numerical difference between "*Rasha*" and "*Tzaddik*" is 366. The word "*shinav*" (**שניו**) adds up to 366. The *Haggadah* teaches us to work diligently to remove every part of "*shinav*" (366) from the *Rasha* and convert him into a *Tzaddik*. (**ברכת חיים על מועדים מר' חיים יעקב ז"ל צוקרמן**)

"אחד חכם ואחד רשע" ***"One wise, and one wicked."***



: 1) Why is the *Chacham* placed next to the *Rasha*? 2) Why "***ve'****echad*" with a "*vav*"?



: The *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 44a) says that even a Jew who sinned is still a Jew. This is due to the spark of G-dliness in every Jewish person's innermost being. In some it is obvious and revealed, while in others it is concealed, but regardless of the situation, it always remains intact. Putting the *Rasha* next to the *Chacham* is a message that the *Chacham* must do everything in his power to bring to surface the "*pintele Yid*" — "spark of G-dliness" — that is concealed in the *Rasha*.

The added "*vav*" teaches that the *Chacham* should encourage the *Rasha* to become "attached" to him. While doing this he should be careful that the relationship should provide an opportunity for him to influence the *Rasha* and not, G-d forbid, the reverse.

"Joy is wonderful. Through it, one can escape the worst of circumstances." - Kotzker Rebbe

"אחד חכם ואחד רשע ואחד תם ואחד שאינו יודע לשאול"
"One wise, and one wicked, and one simple and one does not know how to ask."



Q: Why is the word *"echad"* — "one" — repeated before each of the four sons?

A: Generally, the term *"echad"* expresses the oneness of Hashem. The *Haggadah* is teaching that every Jew, regardless of what he openly declares about Hashem or the Torah, still has a "spark" of *"echad"* — Hashem — in him. Therefore, it is proper and necessary to spend time with him and bring him closer to Hashem. **(ספר השיחות תש"ג)**

Alternatively, in a certain Yeshivah there was once a teacher who had a very difficult child in his class. Exasperated and disillusioned, he went into the principal's office and told him, "You must take this child out of my class immediately. I can no longer deal with him."

After asking the teacher to sit down and relax, the principal said to him, "Did you realize that if this child is out of your class, you no longer have a job?" The teacher, somewhat puzzled, asked, "Why? There are still another fifteen children in the class besides him." To

this the principal responded, "What I meant is the following: Think of him as the only student in your class. If expelling him would also mean the end of your position in our school due to the lack of students, would you still want him taken out?" The teacher reconsidered and decided to give the child another chance.

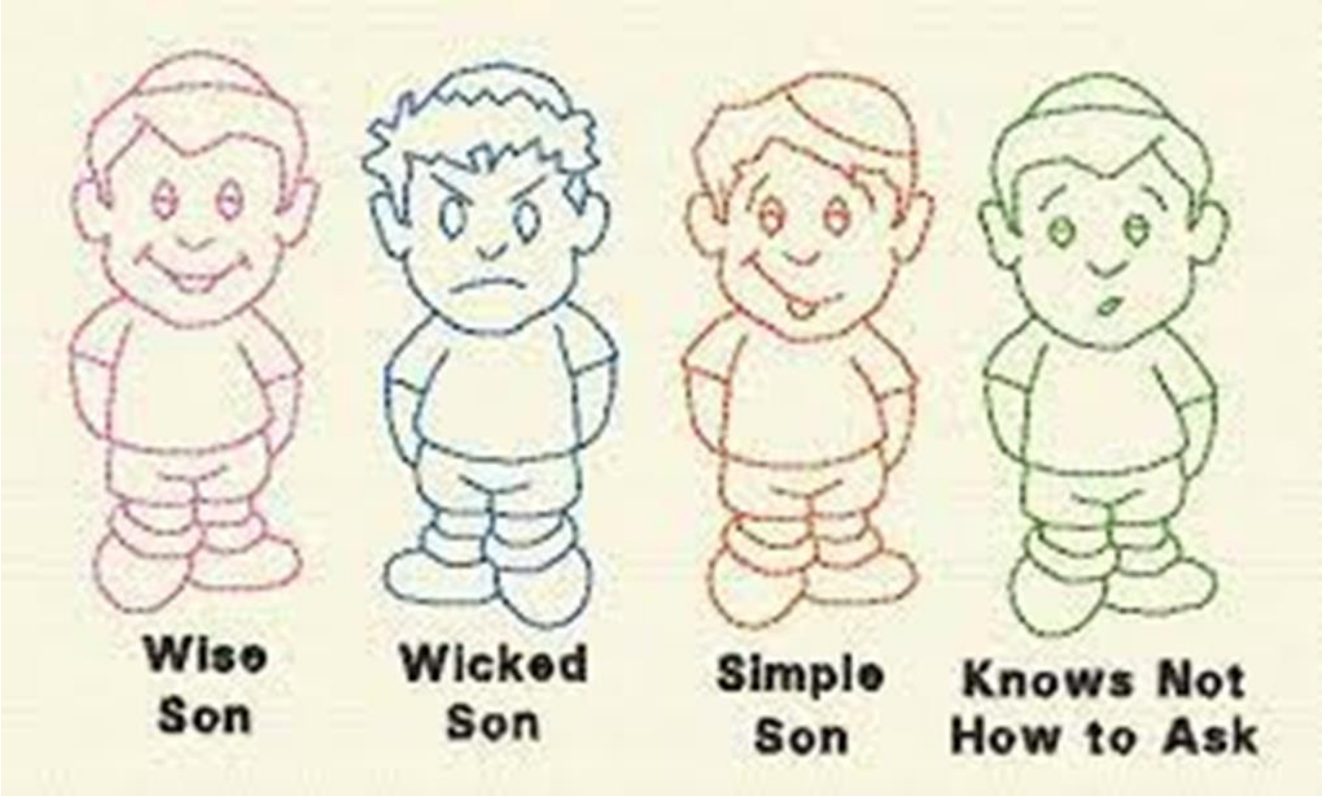
The *Haggadah* is teaching parents and educators to treat every child as if he were "*echad*" — their only one. The undivided attention and extra care usually given to an only child is something which every child deserves and which accomplishes wonders.

"תם" - *"The simple son."*

Q : Who is the *Tam*?

A : A *Chassid* of the Mezeritcher Maggid once travelled to be with his Rebbe for *Pesach*. The winter had been severe, and the roads were bad. When he reached a small village near Mezeritch, the sun was setting and it was impossible to go on before *Yom Tov*. The local innkeeper invited the distressed *Chassid* for *Pesach* and promised him a beautiful kosher *Seder*. The innkeeper and his sons said the *Haggadah* with tremendous *hislahavut* — enthusiasm. The sons asked the questions, and their father answered with great joy.

When they got to the "Four Sons" they said, "*Chacham*, what does he say?; *Rasha*, what does he say?" — all with a special emphasis unlike that of the rest of the *Haggadah*. When they came to "*Tam*, what does he say?" they became very sad, saying it with choked voices and with tears. And when they came to the answer, "With a strong hand Hashem took us out of Egypt," they read it with great happiness. The *Chassid* could not understand their strange *Haggadah* reading, which made it seem that they did not know where to be sad and where to be happy. The same thing happened on the second night, with the same tears, and the same joy.



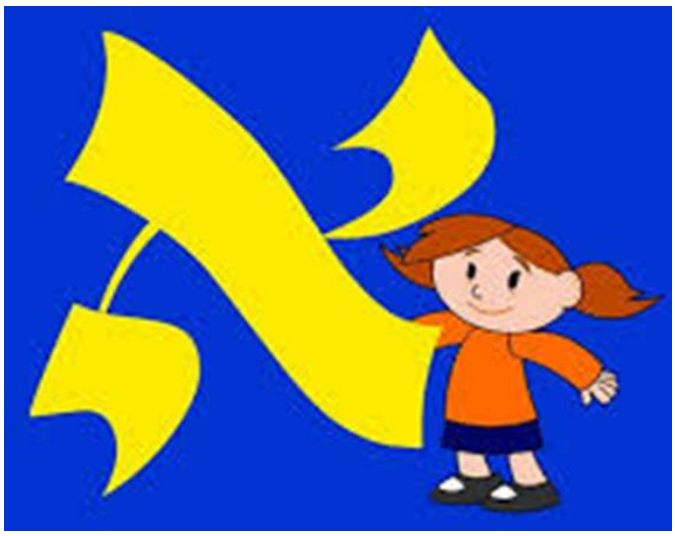
When he came to the Maggid, he told how sad he was not to be at the Maggid's *Seder*, and his great wonder at the innkeeper's *Seder*. The Maggid calmed him and said it was worth being away for *Pesach* to sit with the innkeeper and his sons, "They are great *tzaddikim* and know the true intentions of the *Haggadah*." The Maggid continued:

The *Haggadah* complains bitterly about the foolishness of man's ways. People pay attention to the *Chacham* — what does he say? They pay attention to the *Rasha* — what does he say? But they pay no attention to hear: "*Tam*" — "there" [in Aramaic *Tam* means "there" (see *Beitzah* 4b)] — i.e. in Heaven, what does *He (Hashem)* say? And if He will ask, "What you have accomplished, what have you done about your actions that have pushed off your redemption," what will *you* say?

As depressing as this may be, immediately we are comforted and gladdened by the answer: "Hashem took us out of Egypt with a strong hand." Hashem took the Jews out by force whether they were ready or deserving to be redeemed or not. He simply showed tremendous mercy and redeemed them forcefully. And thus, we too

can hope that Hashem will have mercy on us and redeem us. (התורה והעולם - ויקרא - מהרב ניסן ז"ל טעלושקין)

"את פתח לו" - *"You must initiate him."*



Q: Since the Haggadah instructs the father to teach his son, it should have said "atah" in the masculine instead of "at" which is feminine?

A: "The one who does not know how to ask" is actually a very intelligent person who unfortunately knows very little about *Yiddishkeit*. The *Haggadah* instructs us not to give him a watered-down version of the Torah, but instead *"at* (את) *petach lo"* — tell him everything from א to ת (beginning to end) about Torah and *Yiddishkeit*. (ברוך שאמר לר' ברוך הלוי ז"ל עפשטיין)

"מתחלה עובדי עבודה זרה היו אבותינו ועכשו קרבנו המקום לעבודתו"
"In the beginning our fathers worshipped idols but now the Omnipresent has brought us close to His service"

Q: The words *"mitechilah"* — "in the beginning" — and *"ve'achshav"* — "but now" — are superfluous. It should have just said our parents served idols and Hashem has brought us close to His service?

A: In the early 1930's a non-observant Jew traveling on a train was informed by the conductor that a famous Rabbi known as the ***"Chafeitz Chaim"*** was in the last car. Eager to see him, the gentleman hastened to this car. The *Chafeitz Chaim* was engrossed in a *sefer* and did not pay any attention to his observer.

Upon lifting his eyes, he noticed the man and asked if there was any way he could help him. The gentleman apologetically said, "I only came to see what you look like."

With a pleasant smile, the *Chafeitz Chaim* questioned, "And what did you see?" The man responded, "Frankly, I am very disappointed. I expected to see a well-groomed person, dressed in the most modern style, and you are garbed in the old style. You do not meet my expectations in any way."

The *Chafeitz Chaim* looked up at him and replied, "If anything, it is I who is in accordance with the latest style, and you are the one who is not with the times."

The gentlemen arrogantly said, "Rabbi, on what grounds do you make your statement? *My* wardrobe is of the latest style — *yours* is antiquated!" The *Chafeitz Chaim* responded, "In the *Haggadah* we read, *'mitechilah'* — 'In the beginning our fathers served idols.' This was the ancient style. However, *'ve'achshav'* — the present style — is being close to Hashem's service.

The religious Jew who is serving Hashem with all his heart and soul is the one who is truly in accordance with the latest style."

"וארבה את זרעו ואתן לו את יצחק" - *"I multiplied his seed and I gave him Yitzchak."*

Q: Why does it say *"va'arbeh"* — "I multiplied" — when Yitzchak was his only child?

A: The word *"arbeh"* (ארבה) has the numerical value of 208, which is the same numerical value as the name "Yitzchak" (יצחק). Although Yitzchak was an only son, he gave his father Avraham as much *"nachas"* as another parent would have had from many children. (לקוטי שיחות ח"א ע' 110)

"שהקדוש ברוך הוא חשב את הקץ לעשות" "For the Holy One, blessed be He, calculated the end [of the bondage], in order to do."



QUESTION: What calculation did Hashem make?



ANSWER: The Jews were destined to be enslaved for 400 years. In actuality, however, they left Egypt after being there only 210 years. The reason for the reduction of years was that Hashem took into consideration the *avodat perech* — extra hard labour — which the Egyptians forced the Jews to perform which was equivalent to 400 years of normal slavery. The word *"keitz"* (**קץ**) has the numerical value of 190. We praise Hashem for calculating the *"keitz"* — 190 years as *"la'asot"* — actual work.

The *Haggadah* then continues to tell us that the 400 years originated from, *"Kemah she'amar le'Avraham"* — "As He told Avraham" — that "Your children will be strangers in a land which does not belong to them and they shall serve them and be treated harshly for 400 years, and afterwards they shall come out with great wealth." (**סי' קול יעקב**)

"ועבדום וענו אתם ארבע מאות שנה" - "They will enslave them, and oppress them for four hundred years."



: When the famine was felt in the land of Canaan, Yaakov asked his children to go down to Egypt and purchase food. Seeing their reluctance, he said to them, **למה תתראו** — "Why are you afraid [to go down to Egypt]" (see *Targum Yonatan ben Uziel*). Behold, I have heard, **כי יש שבר במצרים** — "There are provisions in Egypt." **רדו שמה** — "Go down there" (*Bereishit* 42:1-2).

Why were they reluctant, and how did Yaakov persuade them?



ANSWER: They were well aware that Hashem told Avraham that his children would be enslaved in a strange land for four hundred years. Thus, they did not want to leave Canaan, out of fear

that with their departure the exile of four hundred years would commence.

Therefore, Yaakov said to them, *"Lamah titra'u"* — "Why are you afraid?" Grammatically he should have said, *"Lamah tire'u"*(**למה תראו**). Through adding the extra ,"**ת**" which has the numerical value of four hundred, he meant to say to them, *"Lamah* — Why — *taf tire'u* (**ת' תראו**) — are you afraid of the four hundred years? I saw prophetically, *ki yeish* — there will be — *shever* — a break — i.e. a reduction in the amount of years to be — *bemitzraim* — in Egypt. *Redu shamah* — the exile there will be only a total of two hundred and ten years (which is the numerical value of the word **רדו**). (**קרבן פסח על הגש"פ מהרב גדלי' ז"ל סילווערסטאן**)

"ואחרי כן יצאו ברכש גדול" - *"And afterwards they shall leave with great wealth."*



Q: Why didn't Avraham say to Hashem, "No thank you, keep the wealth and do not make my children suffer *galut* — exile"?

A: In addition to their simple meaning, the words *"ve'acharei chein yeitze'u birechush gadol"* also refer to 1) Torah, 2) redemption and 3) the Messianic era.

1) The words **יצאו ברכש** — "leave with wealth" — have the numerical value of 629, which is the same numerical value as **זהו תורה** — "This is Torah".

2) The "**ו**" in "*v'acharei chein*" — "*and* afterwards" — seems extra. It would be sufficient to say "*acharei chein*" — "afterwards."

Our father Yaakov was very concerned about the Jewish people being in *galut*. Therefore, he took the letter *vav* from Eliyahu's name

as a pledge that he will come and announce the redemption of his children (Rashi, *Vayikra*, 26:42).

During the "*B'rit Bein Habetarim*" — "Covenant Between the Portions" — that Hashem made with Avraham, Avraham was informed of all the different exiles the Jewish people would experience (*Bereishit Rabbah* 44:17). At that time, Hashem promised him that, in addition to being redeemed from Egypt, "*v'acharei chein*" — "*and* afterwards" — there will be an ultimate redemption heralded by Eliyahu thanks to the "ו" Yaakov will take from his name as a pledge.

3) The words **ברכש גדול** add up to 565 (**עם הכולל** — counting the statement itself as a total of one), which is also the same numerical value as **זה בזמן מלך המשיח** — "This — great wealth — will be in the era of King *Mashiach*."

Avraham did not argue with Hashem because Torah, redemption, and *Mashiach* are worth much more than all the difficult trials and tribulations of *galut*. (**שפתי כהן, עה"ת**)

"והיא שעמדה לאבותינו" - *"This is what has stood."*

Q : What does the word "*Vehi*" — "And *this*" — refer to?

A : The word **והיא** is an acronym for:

ו = The six sections of *Mishnah*

ה = The five *Chumashim*

י = The ten commandments

א = Hashem, the only One, Blessed be He

In the merit of learning Torah, observing *mitzvot*, and believing in Hashem, we have outlived all nations who have tried to destroy us.

"והיא שעמדה" - *"This is what has stood."*



Q: Why do we raise the cup of wine when reciting this passage?

A: Throughout history many have endeavoured to cause us to assimilate in order to detach us from Hashem and Torah and thus destroy us spiritually.In order to avoid intermarriage and assimilation our Sages instituted certain ordinances. Since wine drinking brings people together and promotes intimacy, sharing wine with non-Jews is prohibited, and we are not to drink any wine which was handled by a non-Jew (*Shabbat* 17b).

Thus, with the lifting of the cup of wine we are proclaiming that thanks to adhering to the law concerning "this" — wine — i.e. the command not to mingle with non-Jews by drinking wine — we have maintained our identity and averted their every effort to destroy us. (הגש"פ עם פי' קרבן פסח מהרב גדלי' ז"ל סילווערסטאן)

"וירד מצרימה" - *"And he went down to Egypt."*

Q: It should have said *"le Mitzraim"*?

A: The word **מצרימה** has the numerical value of three hundred and eighty-five, which is the same numerical value as the word **שכינה** — "Divine Presence."

This alludes to Hashem's promise to Yaakov "*Anochi eireid imcha Mitzraimah*" — "I shall descend with you to Egypt" (*Bereishit* 46:4). (הגש"פ מוצל מאש - בית אהרן - בפי' פאר אהרן)

"בשבעים נפש ירדו אבתיך מצרימה" - *"With seventy souls your fathers went down to Egypt."*

Q : Since *"shivim"* is plural, it should have said *"nefashot"*?

A : The *Midrash Rabbah* (*Vayikra* 4:6) relates that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korcha once explained to a heathen the difference between the Jewish nation and the nations of the world is that "In the case of Eisav six souls are mentioned in Torah, and yet the word used of them in Torah is *'nefashot'* — 'souls'— in the plural, as it is written, 'And Eisav took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the *souls* of his house' (*Bereishit* 36:4).

In Yaakov's family, on the other hand, there were seventy souls, and yet the word used for them in Torah is *"nefesh"* — 'soul' — in the singular, as it is written, 'And all the *nefesh* who emerged from the loins of Yaakov' were seventy *Nefesh* (*Shemot* 1:5). The reason is that Eisav and his family worshipped many different deities while all in Yaakov's family worshipped only one G-d."

Based on this, it could be said that with the expression *nefesh* — soul — in singular, the *pasuk* is indicating that the source of the Jewish people's strength, which helped them endure the Egyptian bondage, was the fact that they were *"nefesh"* — united as one among themselves — and they all worshipped the One and Only — Hashem. (ויקרא רבה ד:ו - עי' מתנת כהונה)

R' Tzadok Hakohen of Lublin zt"l would say: "In recalling the Exodus, a Jew should remind himself never to despair from spiritual striving, no matter how dismal his situation."

"Success is not final: failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."

ויאמרו אל פרעה לגור בארץ באנו כי אין מרעה לצאן אשר לעבדיך כי כבד הרעב בארץ כנען ***"And they said to Pharaoh: 'We have come to sojourn in the land; for there is no grazing for your servants' flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan.' "***



Q: Why did they not tell him that they came to Egypt because they had no food to eat *themselves?*

A: The brothers wanted to convey to Pharaoh how severe the famine was in Canaan. They told him: "Grass is usually reserved for the flock. People consume fruits and vegetables. The situation is so critical in Canaan that people are eating grass and there is no grazing left for the animals." (**רבינו בחיי**)

"רבבה כצמח השדה נתתיך" – ***"I made you as numerous as the plants of the field."***

Q: Usually, to describe the large number of the Jewish people, the Torah compares them to dust of the earth or the stars of the heaven (see *Bereishit* 13:16 and 15:5). Why here are they compared to the grass of the field?

A: The nature of grass is that the more it is cut, the stronger it grows back. One of the miracles experienced in Egypt was that "As much as they would afflict it (the Jewish people), so it would increase and so it would spread out" (*Shemot* 1:12). In other words, Hashem instilled in the Jews the quality of grass, which grows stronger the more it is cut down. (**אבודרהם**)

"ועתה שמך ה' אלקיך ככוכבי השמים לרב" - *"And now G-d, your G-d, has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven."*

Q : In what ways are the Jewish people like stars?

A : From earth, the stars appear very small. However, in heaven, the stars are actually immense. Hashem assured Avraham that although on earth the nations of the world consider the Jewish people "very small" (of minor significance), in reality, up in heaven they are of primary importance. (**דברי שאול**)

* * *



The stars twinkle in the high heavens. By their light, even one who walks in the darkness of night will not stumble. Every Jew, man or woman, possess enough moral and spiritual light to influence friends and acquaintances and bring them out of the darkness into the light. (**היום יום, ה' חשון**)

* * * When one stands on the ground and looks up to the sky, the stars appear to be minute specks. In reality, the stars are larger than the earth. As we approach them, we can begin to appreciate their size and beauty.

The same is true of a Jew. Although, he may superficially appear to be insignificant, as one becomes closer and gets to know more about him, one can perceive the great and beautiful "*Pintele Yid*" (spark of Judaism) within him. (**בעש"ט**)

וימת מלך מצרים ויאנחו בני ישראל מן העבדה ויזעקו ותעל שועתם אל האלקים מן העבדה ***"And the king of Egypt died, and the Jewish people groaned from the work, and their cry went up to G-d from the work."***



Q: Instead of *"min ha'avodah"* — "from the work" — it should read *"al ha'avodah"* — "because of the work"? Moreover, why didn't the Jews cry before the king died?

A: The Egyptians knew very well that if the Jews would have cried to Hashem, He would have answered their prayers and free them from slavery. Therefore, they made the Jews work extremely hard, and whenever a supervisor would notice a Jew crying, he would beat him and yell, "There is no time for crying; get back to your work!"

When Pharaoh died, all of Egypt sadly attended his funeral. The Egyptians, not wanting productivity to suffer, did not let their slaves attend. During the funeral, *while working*, the Jews cried bitterly about their enslavement. The supervisors were unable to stop them because they claimed they were mourning their wonderful "dearly departed" king.

Hashem heard the cries of the "pretend-mourners," which came to Him *min ha'avodah* — *from* the work — and He knew that they were not lamenting the king's death, but their slavery.(**שער בת רבים**)

A wise man would say: "Emunah means to see the light with your heart when your eyes only see the darkness."

"כל הבן הילוד היארה תשליכוהו" ***"Every boy that is born, you shall throw into the river."***

Q: "Every boy" includes the Egyptian male infants (*Shemot* 1:22, Rashi). What did Pharoah have against the Egyptian male infants?

A: The Jewish midwives Shifra and Puah did not obey Pharaoh's original order to kill the Jewish children. Pharaoh summoned them and asked, "The Jews have a rule — *'dinah demalchuta dinah'* — 'the law of the government is binding' — why are you not obeying my order?"

The midwives told Pharaoh that this principle applies only to a law for *all* the residents of the land. However, since "the Hebrew women are unlike the Egyptian women" — i.e. the law pertains only to the Hebrew women and not the Egyptian (ibid. 1:19) — they were not obligated to observe it (see *Choshen Mishpat* 369:8).

Pharaoh, who was eager for the death of the Jewish boys, then issued a decree that *all* new-born boys, including the Egyptian, be killed. Thus, the Jews would have to obey since "the law of the government is binding."(**פנינים יקרים על שמות בשם שב שמעתתא מקצוה"ח**)

"וכל הבת תחיון" **-** ***"And every daughter you shall keep alive."***

Q: Pharaoh's sole concern was for all the boys to be cast into the river, while the fate of the girls did not seem to interest him. Why did he add, "Every daughter you shall keep alive"?

A: The word "*techayun*" literally means "you shall give them life — i.e. you shall be the actual source of their life." Pharaoh ordered the Egyptians to cast Jewish children into the river to cause their physical death. The same Egyptians were also told by Pharaoh that those children who would remain physically alive (i.e., the girls) were to be *given life* by them, that is, assimilated and

totally raised in the Egyptian way of life in order to exterminate their Jewish souls.

This explains the difference in the command to the Jewish midwives and the Egyptians respectively: The Jewish midwives were simply told to leave the girls alone, "If it be a girl *vechayah* — let her live" (1:16). Pharaoh hoped that by telling them to let the girls live, it would be easier for him to persuade them to carry out his order to kill the boys. However, to the Egyptians he said "*techayun,*" not just to let the Jewish girls live, but to "give them life," i.e. to make sure to assimilate them into Egyptian culture.

The Torah cites both decrees together in the same *pasuk* to indicate that "Every daughter you shall keep alive" (i.e. give them life), is a decree equivalent in its harshness and even surpassing the decree regarding the boys, "Every son that is born you shall cast into the river."

To destroy the soul is equal to the killing the body, and indeed even worse — for spiritual death far surpasses physical death. (**לקוטי שיחות ח״א**)

"אני ולא מלאך...אני ולא שרף...אני ולא השליח" - *"I and not an angel...I and not a seraph... I and not the messenger."*

Q: Since it says "*malach*" and "*saraf,*" it should say "*shaliach*" and not "***ha***shaliach"?

A: The first letters of the words **מַלאך**, **שׂרף**, and **הַשליח** spell the name Moshe (**משה**). The *Haggadah* is emphasizing that what happened in Egypt on the night of the redemption — the smiting of the firstborn and the melting down of their idols — was all the work of Hashem Himself and not to be mistakenly regarded as the action of a human being — Moshe.

ואת לחצנו זה הדחק כמה שנאמר וגם ראיתי את הלחץ אשר מצרים לוחצים אתם "'And our oppression' this refers to the pressure, as it is said, 'I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.'"

Q: What exactly was the pressure they had to contend with?



A: When Yaakov and his family arrived in Egypt, they asked for permission to live in Goshen. Considering the size of their family at that time, the land was spacious and comfortable. In the course of years, not only did the families enlarge, but they were giving birth to sextuplets. Though they needed more space and pleaded for it, the Egyptians denied their requests and forced them to live in their old, cramped living quarters.(רבינו בחיי)

"ביד חזקה זה הדבר" - "With a strong hand — this refers to the pestilence."

Q: Why does the plague of *dever* — pestilence — particularly emphasize the "strong hand"?

A: Witnessing the plagues, the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is a *finger* of G-d" (*Shemot* 8:15). *Dever* — pestilence — was the fifth of the ten plagues. Since a hand has five fingers, the Egyptians now felt the "*Yad hachazakah*" — "strong *hand*." (הגש"פ מעשה נסים מר' יעקב ז"ל מליסא)

"I don't need you to agree with me, I need you to care about me!"

"ובאתות זה המטה" ***"And with signs — this refers to the staff."***

Q: From where did Moshe get the *"mateh"* — "staff"?

A: This staff was one of the ten things which were created on *erev Shabbat* at twilight (*Pirkei Avot*, 5:6). There were Hebrew letters engraved on it which were an acronym for the ten plagues. It was given to Adam when he was in *Gan Eden*, and he passed it on to Chanoch. Chanoch gave it to Noach, who in turn gave it to Avraham. Avraham passed it along to Yitzchak, and Yitzchak gave it to Yaakov, who brought it with him to Egypt and gave it to Yosef.

When Yosef died, it was put in Pharoah's palace. Yitro, who was one of Pharoah's three advisers, saw it and desired it very much. He took it and planted it in his garden.

No one was able to remove it from there until Moshe came and stretched out his hand and took it. When Yitro saw this, he was convinced that Moshe would be the one to redeem the Jewish people from Egypt, and he gave him his daughter Tziporah as a wife. (**פרקי דר' אליעזר פ"מ**)

"ובאתות זה המטה" ***"And with signs, this refers to the staff."***



Q: According to the *Midrash Rabbah* (*Shemot* 8:3), the staff weighed forty *se'ah*. What is the significance of this particular weight?

A: In describing the Jews' suffering in Egypt, the Torah says, *"Vayitnu aleinu avodah kashah"* — "They placed hard work upon us" (*Devarim* 26:6). Superficially, it should simply have said *"vaya'avidu otanu kashah"* — "they made us work very hard"?

The *Gemara* (*Sotah* 34a) says that an average person can lift a weight of forty *se'ah*. The weight which one can raise upon his shoulder is one-third of the weight he can carry when others help him to set the burden upon his shoulder. Consequently, the average person can carry one hundred and twenty *se'ah* when others help him assume the burden. With the words "*vayitnu aleinu*" — "they placed upon us" — the Torah is emphasizing that they increased the weight of our workload threefold.

According to the *Gemara* (*Mo'eid Kattan* 18a) Pharaoh was only one *amah* tall. Since the average person is three *amot* tall (see *Shabbat* 92a), Pharaoh could lift one-third of forty *se'ah* by himself and carry a load of forty *se'ah* with assistance. Because he tripled the workload of the Jewish people, he was punished through a staff of forty *se'ah*, which is three times his personal workload. (הגש"פ מוצל מאש - בית אהרן - בברכות בחשבון)

"דם ואש ותמרות עשן" - *"Blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke."*

Q: Why do we pour off from the cup when reciting these three, the ten plagues and the three acronyms?

A: There is an opinion in the Jerusalem Talmud (*Pesachim* 10:1, see also *Midrash Rabbah*, *Bereishit* 88:5) that the four cups we drink at the *Seder* are an allusion to the four cups of wrath which Hashem will ultimately make the nations of the world drink. Pouring off drops from the cup symbolizes that what the Egyptians received is only a drop in comparison to what awaits the nations of the world in the future. (הגש"פ עם פי' באר מרים מהרב ראובן ז"ל מרגליות)

Alternatively, the removal of the wine from the cup symbolizes the fact that after each plague the Egyptians lost a small portion of their resistance and strength. (הגר"א)

ערוב Wild beasts

Q: Regarding the wild beasts the Torah states that "The houses of Egypt shall be filled with the swarm of wild beasts and even the ground upon which they are" (*Shemot* 8:17). To which ground is this referring?

A: Among the animals of the world there is an extremely rare one found in the wild jungles of Africa and known as the "*adnei hasadeh.*" It has the face of a person, long hands that reach to its knees, and a very unusual relationship to its habitat.



It is always connected to the ground through a string that comes out of its navel. Although it is very dangerous and kills anyone that comes within its reach, there is one way to capture it: by shooting arrows at the string. As soon as it becomes detached from the ground, it screams bitterly and dies immediately.

Hashem brought upon the Egyptians a mixture of all animals from the entire world, including the strange and vicious "*adnei hasadeh.*" To keep them alive until they reached Egypt, they were brought together with the ground to which they were connected. Therefore, Moshe told Pharaoh, "The homes of the Egyptians shall be filled with the mixture of wild animals and also '*adnei hasadeh*' will come, together with the ground upon which they are [attached]." (**פנים יפות, ועי' כלאים פ"ח מ"ה ברע"ב ותפארת ישראל**)

דם, צפרדע, כנים Blood, Frogs, Lice

Q: The first three plagues were brought by Aharon. Moshe did not smite the waters or the earth because he personally benefited from the waters when he was cast into the river and he benefited from the earth when he killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand. (*Shemot* 7:19, Rashi)

Why would these reasons preclude Moshe from initiating the plagues so many years later?

A: From this we can learn a very important lesson in *hakarat hatov* — showing gratitude — often, when someone does a favor, we forget it in the course of time. Hashem, by instructing Aharon to bring these plagues, was conveying a lesson that one should remain thankful for a lifetime. Though the favour Moshe received from the water had happened 80 years earlier and Moshe had benefited from the earth approximately 70 years earlier, he was told to be appreciative and not hurt them in any way.

If this is true in regard to water and earth, which are inanimate, how much more so must this apply to a human being who does a favour.

ברד Hail

Q: When Pharoah asked Moshe to end the plague of hail, he responded, "When I go out of the city, I will spread my hands and pray to G-d" (*Shemot* 9:29). Why did Moshe insist on praying outside of the city only during the plague of hail, which was the seventh plague?

A: When Moshe warned Pharoah of the coming plague of hail, he told him that the Egyptians should take in all the cattle from the fields because any man or animal in the fields would die. The Egyptians who took the warning seriously brought their cattle into their houses. Others, who did not regard Hashem's words, left

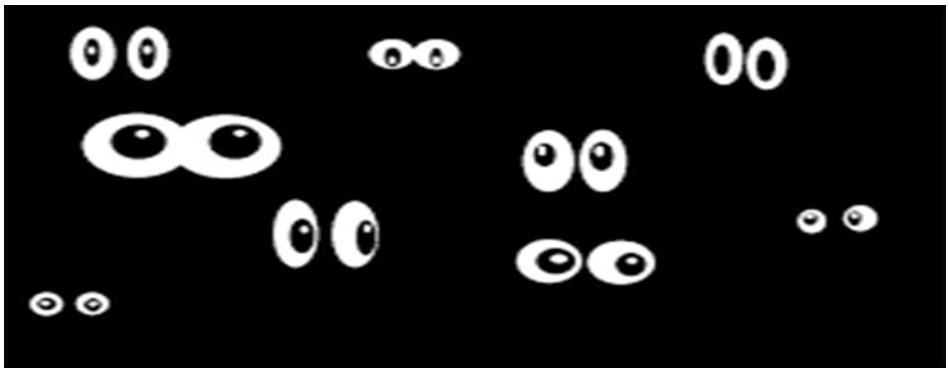
their servants and cattle out in the fields, where they were killed (*Shemot* 9:19-21).



Egypt worshipped the sheep. Therefore, during all other plagues, Moshe was willing to pray in the city since the sheep were out in the fields as usual. However, the city was filled with sheep during the plague of hail, and Moshe went out of the city to pray because he did not want to pray in a place filled with idols. (ר׳ יהונתן ז״ל אייבשיץ)

חשך *Darkness*

Q: According to Rashi (*Shemot* 10:22), "For three days no man could see another, and during the succeeding three days the darkness was so thick that if an Egyptian was sitting, he was unable to stand up, and if he was standing, he was unable to sit down."



Every plague lasted seven days (except the plague of the firstborn). Why did the plague of darkness last only six days?

A: When the Jews left Egypt and travelled in the desert, clouds of glory accompanied them. During the day the clouds would clear a path in the desert, and at night a pillar of fire illuminated the camp. When the Egyptians pursued the Jews, the Torah says,

"There was a cloud of darkness [for the Egyptians] and the night was illuminated [for the Jews through a pillar of fire]" (14:20). Thus, Hashem reserved the remaining seventh day of darkness to punish the Egyptians when they chased after the Jewish people. (**מדרש רבה שמות י"ד, ג**)

וירא ישראל את היד הגדלה אשר עשה ה' במצרים...ויאמינו בה' ובמשה עבדו
"And Israel saw the big hand which G-d wielded against Egypt...and they believed in G-d and in Moshe His servant."

Q: What "big hand" did they see that caused them to believe in Moshe?

A: Pharaoh ordered the drowning of new-born Jewish boys. When Moshe was born, his mother managed to keep his birth a secret for three months. Afterwards, she put him in a box and placed it at the river's edge.



Pharaoh's daughter came to bathe and noticed the box. The Torah (*Shemot* 2:5) relates that she sent "*amatah*" — "her handmaiden — to fetch the box. Rashi explains that "*amatah*" can also mean "her hand" so that the Torah is saying that when she stretched out her hand, it miraculously elongated and she was able to reach the box. When the Jewish people saw — i.e. learned about — the "big hand" which Hashem made many years ago in Egypt to save Moshe, they recognized his stature and had faith in Hashem and in Moshe, His servant. (**ילקוט האורים מר' משה אורי ז"ל קעללער בשם ספר לב ארי' עה"ת**)

"אלו נתן לנו את ממונם ולא קרע לנו את הים"
"If He had given us their wealth and not split the sea for us."



Q: Hashem did not *give* the Jewish people their wealth; He told them to ask for it as a loan?

A: The reason Hashem originally told the Jewish people to *borrow* gold, silver, and valuables from the Egyptians was to deceive them into thinking that the Jews would return after three days. Realizing that they were not returning, the Egyptians chased after the Jews to retrieve their money, and then Hashem drowned them in the sea as punishment for their decree to drown the Jewish children. Thus, we are proclaiming, "If He had *given* us their wealth and not told us to merely borrow it, (thus they would not have chased after us, and the sea would not be split in order to drown them) — it would have sufficed us." (**הגש"פ עם פי' ילקוט שמעוני**)

"From the great and public miracles of the Exodus, a person comes to recognize the hidden miracles that surround us every day. For there is no 'nature' and no 'habit' in the world at all. Everything is the direct will of הקב"ה. The purpose of the signs and wonders in Egypt was not only to punish Pharaoh, nor only to redeem Israel, but to teach every generation that the world has a Creator who governs it with purpose. Therefore, we are commanded to remember the Exodus constantly — morning and night, in our tefillin, in our mezuzot, in our festivals — so that the truth of Hashem's presence never departs from our hearts."
~ The Ramban.

ולא שקע צרינו בתוכו *And had not drowned our oppressors in it.*

Q: Instead of "*shika*" which means causing to drown through a direct act, it should have said "*nishka'u*" — "they drowned"?

A: According to the *Midrash*, the *pasuk* "You broke the heads of sea giants on the water" (Psalms 74:13) refers to an event that took place when Hashem split the sea.



The Egyptians were very accomplished in sorcery. When the waters of the sea began to close in on them, some used their arcane knowledge and came out alive from the sea. Hashem then sent the angel Michael, who seized them by their hair and threw them back into the sea. Thus, "*shika tzareinu*" — He *drowned* our oppressors in the sea. **(ילקוט מעם לועז על הגש"פ)**

"והאכילנו את המן" - *"And fed us the manna."*

Q: In the wilderness, all the needs of the Jewish people were provided by Hashem. Food came from heaven, and their clothing grew with them. How was one able to fulfil the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah* (helping those in need)?

A: When the Jews ate the manna, they were able to enjoy the taste of any food they imagined (*Yoma* 75a). Since many poor people had never tasted expensive foods, the *tzedakah* of a rich person was to recommend to a poor person what to have in mind while eating so that his palate would enjoy hitherto untasted delicacies. **(פון אונזער אלטען אוצר, דברים)**

"ממזרח שמש עד מבואו מהלל שם ה" - "From the rising of the sun to its setting, G-d's name is praised."

Q: Instead of "From the rising of the sun to its setting," it could have simply said, "The entire day"?

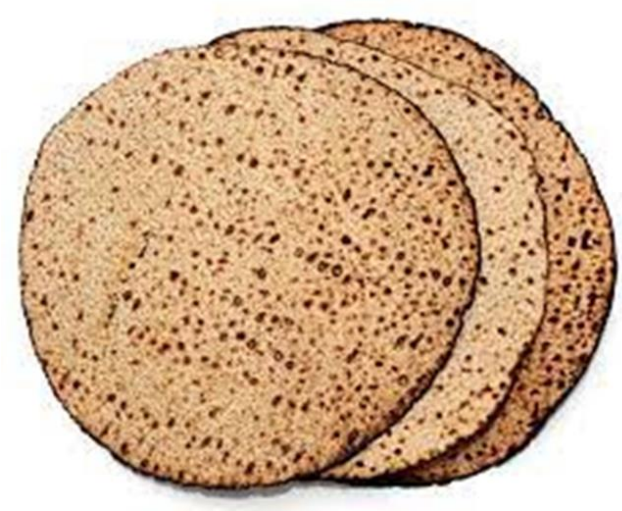
A: The rising of the sun is an allusion to periods of affluence and success when everything is "shining" for the individual. On the other hand, the setting of the sun alludes to periods of darkness when, G-d forbid, the opposite prevails. King David is saying that in whatever situation a person may find himself, regardless of whether things are shining for him or the opposite, Hashem should be praised. (שי לחגים ומועדים)

Matzo

Q: Why do we bake our *matzot* round?

A: It was *Pesach* when the three angels visited Avraham (see *Rosh Hashanah* 11a, *Tosafot*). After they accepted his invitation to eat with him, he told Sarah to quickly get flour and "*lushi va'asi ugot*" — "kneed and make cakes" (*Bereishit* 18:6). In Hebrew the word "*ugah*" means a circle (see *Ta'anit* 23a, Rashi). Since Avraham baked round *matzot* on *Pesach*, we follow suit.

"True freedom is not the ability to do whatever one desires, but the ability to rise above desire itself. A slave is not only someone owned by another; a slave is someone ruled by his impulses. The Exodus was the moment when Israel became capable of transcending the physical and receiving the Torah, for only a free people can accept a higher purpose." ~ The Maharal.



Q: What is the significance of round *matzah*?

A: In the olden days paganism was prevalent. It was common practice for one to worship more than one deity or idol, and the people would indicate through the bread they baked how many gods they had. If, for instance, one had two gods, he made his bread with two points, and if one had five gods, his bread was shaped to have five corners. In order to accentuate our belief in one G-d, it was Avraham's practice, and also the practice of our fathers in Egypt, to make round bread, indicating that we believe in only one G-d and that He has no beginning or end. (שו"ת יהודה יעלה - מהר"י אסאד - או"ח סי' קנ"ז)

שלחן עורך *Eating the festive meal*

Q: Why is it customary to eat an egg at the beginning of the meal?

A: It is customary for a mourner to eat eggs. Hence, an egg is eaten for the last meal before the fast on *Tishah B'Av*, when we mourn the destruction of the *Beit Hamikdash*. Similarly, on *Pesach* the fact that we do not have the *Pesach*-offering reminds of us the destruction of the *Beit Hamikdash*. Thus, we place an egg on the *Seder* plate and eat it at the start of the meal.

It is interesting to note that every year the first *seder* and *Tishah B'Av* take place on the same day of the week. (רמ"א סי' תע"ו, ב', ועי' ט"ז)

Alternatively, the Egyptians were strict vegetarians. They did not eat meat or fish or anything which came from the animal kingdom, such as blood, milk, or eggs. Due to this lifestyle, shepherds were

"abhorrent to Egyptians" (*Bereishit* 46:34), and they despised anyone who ate animal derivatives (see Ibn Ezra, *Shemot* 22:8).

Hence, to demonstrate that we are emancipated from Egypt and have no fear of the Egyptians or respect for their practices, we eat an egg at the outset of the festive meal and follow it up with fish, meat, and all the dainties. (**אוצר כל מנהגי ישרון מר' אברהם אליעזר ז"ל הירשאוויץ**)

Beirach

"וכל טוב ומכל טוב לעולם אל יחסרנו" – ***"...and all goodness, and may He never deprive us of all good things."***

Q : This request sounds redundant?

A : There are people who have received Hashem's blessings of goodness in abundant measure. They have a beautiful family, plenty of food and a wardrobe full of clothing.

However, due to their poor health they are unable to enjoy His blessings. Thus, we pray that He give us all good things and the opportunity to enjoy them in good health. (**סי' אוצר התפלות בפי' עיון תפלה**)

כוס של אליהו הנביא

The word **והבאתי** has the numerical value of 424, which is also the numerical value of *Mashiach ben David* (**משיח בן דוד**), whose revelation will be heralded by Eliyahu the Prophet. (**אמרי נועם**)

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.

כוס של אליהו Cup of Eliyahu

Q: Why do we add a cup for Eliyahu when we celebrate the *Pesach seder*?



A: Eliyahu once complained to Hashem that the Jewish people were not faithfully observing the *mitzvah* of circumcision. Hashem did not receive this complaint very well and told Eliyahu, "My children are trustworthy, and from now on you will be present at every Jewish *brit* to witness their dedication." Thus, at every *brit* a special chair is set aside for Eliyahu *(Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer* 20).

The Torah states *(Shemot* 12:48), "No uncircumcised male may eat of it [the *Pesach*-offering]." Therefore, Eliyahu, who is present at all *britim*, appears in each home to testify that the participants of the *seder* are all eligible to eat from the *Pesach*-offering, and a cup is prepared in his honour. (**הר"מ חאגיז בספר ברכת אליהו**)

פותחין הדלת Open the door

Q: Why do we open the door after eating the *afikoman*?

A: The episode related in the Torah regarding Yaakov's receiving the *berachot* from Yitzchak took place on the night of *Pesach*, when we perform the *Seder*. The two goats which Rivkah and Yaakov prepared for Yitzchak represented the Pesach-offering and the Chagigah-offering, and the angel Michael sent along wine for the four cups *(Bereishit* 27:9, Rashi. *Da'at Zekeinim Miba'alei Hatosafot* 27:25).

Yitzchak concluded the meal with eating the *afikoman*. This is evident from his telling Eisav, "Your brother came *'bemirmah'* — with wisdom — and took away your blessing" (ibid.27:35). The word "*bemirmah*" (**במרמה**) has the numerical value of two hundred and eighty-seven, which is also the numerical value of the word "*afikoman*" (**אפיקומן**). Yitzchak told Eisav, "Your brother is indeed very wise. He gave me the *afikoman* before you arrived, and thus, I am forbidden to eat any more food tonight."

The *Midrash Rabbah* (*Bereishit* 66:5) explains the *pasuk* "And Yaakov had scarcely left from the presence of Yitzchak his father when Eisav his brother came back from his hunt" (ibid. 27:30) to mean that Eisav swung open the door to the tent and Yaakov stood behind the open door until Eisav came in and then he quietly departed behind his back. To commemorate Yaakov's being saved through escaping via the open door after Yitzchak ate the *afikoman*, we too open the door after eating the *afikoman*.(**מנחם ציון מר' מנחם מענדל זצ"ל מרימונב, פרדס יוסף בראשית כ"ז, כ"ה**)

* * *

Alternatively, the door is opened to recall that it is "*leil shimurim*" — "a night of protection" — and that we are not afraid of anything. In merit of this *emunah* — faith — *Mashiach* will come and Hashem will pour his wrath upon the nations (*Shulchan Aruch Harav* 480:4).

Q : What is the connection with *delet* — door — and *Mashiach*?

A : The numerical value of "*delet*" (**דלת**) is 434, the same as *Mashiach ben David* (**משיח בן דויד**). (Throughout the book of Chronicles, the name David is spelled with a *yud* — see also *Veyevareich David* in the daily *Shacharit*.)

Think of giving not as a duty but as a privilege.

Questions and Answers on Hallel Nirtzah

חֲסַל סִדּוּר פֶּסַח

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi did not include the passage, *"Chasal Siddur Pesach"* — "The *Pesach Seder* has been completed" — in his *Haggadah* because the *Pesach Seder* never truly ends. Instead, it continues throughout the year.



בפי ישרים תתרומם ובשפתי צדיקים תתברך ובלשון חסידים תתקדש ובקרב קדושים תתהלל "By the mouth of the upright shall You be exalted, and by the lips of the righteous shall You be blessed. By the tongue of the pious shall You be sanctified, and among the holy shall You be praised."

Q: In some *siddurim* this statement is written in four lines of three words each to show that the first letter of the second word of each line forms an acrostic of the name "Yitzchak." Additionally, the third letter of the final word of each line forms an acrostic of the name "Rivkah."

What is the significance of this?

A: The combined numerical value of Yitzchak and Rivkah (**יצחק רבקה**) is 515, which is also the numerical value of the word **תפלה** — prayer. They are the only couple that the Torah mentions praying together (see *Bereishit* 24:2 Rashi).

* * *

Prayer is song and praise to Hashem, and it should be recited with joy and happiness. Our Sages (*Taanit* 2a) in explanation of the verse "to serve Him with all your heart" (*Devarim* 11:13) have defined prayer as the "service of Hashem performed in the heart." It is elementary that mental and emotional concentration is an essential component of prayer (Rambam, *Tefillah* 4:15).

It is interesting to note that the word "*shirah*" (**שירה**) — "song" — and also the words "*bekavanat haleiv*" (**בכונת הלב**) — "concentration of the heart" — have the same numerical value as the word "*tefillah*" (515).

עוג מלך הבשן Og king of Bashan

Q: The first time *Og* is mentioned in the Torah he is called "*Hapalit*" — "the fugitive" (*Bereishit* 14:13, Rashi). How did he get the name "*Og*"?

A: He happened to come to the home of Avraham and he found him busy making "*ugot*" — "round unleavened cakes" — to fulfill the *mitzvah* of eating *matzot* on *Pesach*. (See ibid. 18:6. Avraham fulfilled all the*mitzvot* of the Torah even before they were promulgated, *Yoma* 28b.) After inquiring about what Avraham was doing, he expressed scorn and ridicule. (See p. 176) Thus, he was nicknamed "*Og*" — "round cake" — as punishment for making fun of Avraham and the precept of *matzot*. (**מדרש רבה בראשית מ"ב ה' ועי' בפירוש מהרז"ו**)

"חד גדיא...ואתא הקדוש ברוך הוא" - *"An only kid...The Holy One Blessed be He came...."*

Q: In the *Chad Gadya* narrative who was right and who was wrong?

A: **Rabbi Yehonatan Eibeshitz** (1690-1764) was a renowned child prodigy. At a very young age he was asked the following: On the surface it appears that the cat was wrong in devouring the innocent kid. Thus, the dog was right for biting him, and the stick that hit him was wrong. Further, the fire was right in burning the stick, and the water that extinguished the fire was wrong. Consequently, the ox was right when he drank the water, and the *shochet* — slaughterer — was wrong for killing him. If so, the

angel was right when he killed the *schochet* and Hashem was wrong?! How could it be?



The young genius responded the cat had indeed done a terribly wrong thing. A cat has no right to harm an innocent kid. However, regardless of whether it was right or not, it was in no way the dog's business, and he had no right to take the law into his own hands and mete out justice. This is a matter for the authorities and not for a bystander. Thus, the stick was right for beating him, and the fire

was wrong. The water was right and the ox wrong. Consequently, the *schochet* was right and the angel was wrong. Thus, the ultimate judge, Hashem, was right.

* * *

The message of the hymn is that no one has any right to harm the *Chad Gadya* — the Jewish people. Even when they are exiled, the "angels of death" — nations of the world — do not oppress the Jews in the interest of justice or virtue, but rather, motivated by hatred and enmity. In the end of days, Hashem will take us out of exile and mete out punishment to all the nations who tortured His beloved kid.

* * *

The hymn starts and concludes with the words"*Chad Gadya*" — an only kid — to emphasize that from beginning to end, we were, are, and will be His only kid — chosen people.



Emunah Nullifies the Bitterness – Rabbi Elimelech Biderman

We are taught in the laws of Pesach that one does not lean while eating maror. This is because leaning while eating symbolizes freedom and royalty, whereas maror symbolizes servitude and oppression. However, when one eats korech - Matza and maror together, we are obligated to lean. What the difference?

It is said over in the names of the **Tiferes Shlomo**: We know that matza symbolizes emunah. In the Zohar, matza is called "bread of faith". When one wraps his maror - his pain and suffering, in matza – Emunah, and believes that everything comes from Hashem and is for the good, this will nullify all the bitterness of the "maror". Then one can lean while eating in the manner of freedom and royalty.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

14:16 וְאַתָּ֗ה הָרֵם֙ אֶת־מַטְּךָ֔ וּנְטֵ֥ה אֶת־יָדְךָ֖ עַל־הַיָּ֑ם וּבְקָעֵ֔הוּ *And you raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and split it*

The Rosh, says that he once heard from his father a pshat that Kriyas Yam Suf wasn't done with a stick. It was done with Moishe Rabeinu's hands alone. Hashem told Moishe Rabeinu הָרֵם אֶת־מַטְּךָ – Lift up your stick and split the sea before they journey. Why? because there were people coming along and saying that that *it is not Moishe Rabeinu's koach, strength or greatness, but it is the power of the supernatural stick, that has got the names of Ha'kodosh Baruch Hu on it. If any of us had it, we could do the same thing.*



The Riboino Shel Olam heard that this is what people were saying, so He told Moishe Rabeinu the following- הָרֵם אֶת־מַטְּךָ – ***separate*** the stick from yourself, put it down! He didn't tell Moishe to hit the sea with the stick but separate it, put it away and only use your hands. And this brought the realisation of וַיַּֽאֲמִ֥ינוּ בַֽה' וּבְמֹשֶׁ֖ה עַבְדּֽוֹ׃ They recognised that it was Hashem's strength and His Navi- Moishe carrying out this wonderous act, and not the *supernatural stick*.

Says the Rosh, I found support to my father's pshat from an amazing *medresh* in Tehilim 114:3 (בְּצֵ֣את יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל). The Posuk says, הַיָּ֥ם רָ֝אָ֗ה וַיָּנֹֽס ***The sea saw and fled.*** Then the Pasuk says מַה־לְּךָ֣ הַ֭יָּם כִּי תָנ֑וּס הַיַּרְדֵּ֥ן תִּסֹּ֝֗ב לְאָחֽוֹר ***What frightens you, O sea, that you flee? O Jordan, that you turn backward?*** Asks the Medrash Plioh, "what is the question, "why did you split?", as it says in the Pasuk- because the sea saw something. The question should be, not why, but "***what*** did it see?

The medresh brings a *mashul*. There was a king who had a minister who had become very ill. As he was recovering, he said to the king, "you have a beautiful orchard and private gardens.

Therein are beautiful plants, flowers and fruit, with incredible sights and aromas. If I could only get access to these gardens, it will aid in my recovery.



Please could I have access to this Pardes, to relax and spend some time there"? So the king said, "no worries, however there is a problem, as I have got a security guard who has explicit instructions to bar entry to everyone except me.



However, take my personal signet ring, which has my emblem on it, show it to the security guard, and tell him that I sent you with my permission, as a way to gain access. Please spend as much time there as you want.

So, the minister goes down to the gardens, and the guard refuses him entry. So, he shows him the ring. The Guard says, "I am really sorry, but although I know who you are, I have explicit instructions from the king to do my job, which is to bar anyone else entry. Maybe the ring is stolen or a forgery? Sorry, nothing doing".

So, the minister went back to the king, and told him everything that had transpired. The king said, "Not to worry, give me back the ring and I will come back together with you and when the guard sees me

with you, that will gain you entry. So, they walk down towards the gardens.

The guard sees the king himself returning with the minister. As soon as he sees this, he realises that he is in serious trouble for defying the command of the king. He starts to flee for his life. The king sees him running away and calls out to him, "Why are you fleeing? Come back, you have done nothing wrong. I gave you a command to ensure that no one else gains entry, and you are just doing your job to the letter. You were correct in questioning the validity and authenticity of the ring. However please note that that this man is my personal minister and from now on treat him as you would treat me. You must give him access to the gardens if he requests it".

Says the medresh, Moishe Rabeinu went to the *Sar Hayom* (Uzza of the sea) and he commanded the sea to split. The sea said, "I am not splitting for you. My command from Hashem (**ששת ימי בראשית**) is to ebb and flow. I am not going to take instructions from a human being to dry out". So Moishe Rabeinu says, "But I have with me the Matte of Hashem in my hand!" So the sea says, " That may be so, but maybe it is a forgery or stolen"?

So Moishe goes back to Hashem, who says, "Don't worry, **הָרֵם אֶת־מַטְּךָ** – put down your stick, and I will come with you". The Schechina Himself comes together with Moishe Rabeinu. As soon as the sea saw Hashem coming, it realised Oh! Oh! I am in deep trouble here, and it starts fleeing. So Hakodosh Baruch Hu call after the sea and says, **מַה־לְּךָ הַיָּם כִּי תָנוּס** "Why are you fleeing? Why are you frightened? Come back, you have done nothing wrong. I gave you a command **משת ימי בראשית**, and you are just doing your job to the letter. You were correct in questioning the validity and authenticity of the staff. However please note that that this man is my personal minister and from now on treat him as you would treat me. You must listen to his command if he requests it, as though it was Me".

Beneath the Surface - R' Shmuel Winzelberg

ואת עמלינו – אלו הבנים כמה שנאמר כל הבן הילוד היארה תשליכהו (הגדה של פסח)

"And our labour, this refers to the children, as it says: 'Every boy that is born, you should throw into the river'." (Haggadah)

The *medrash* tells us that when Pharaoh decreed that the Jewish babies were to be cast into the Nile, the mothers hid the little infant boys in cellars where the Egyptians could not find them. Attempting to flush out the infants, the Egyptians brought their own babies into the Jewish homes and made them cry, prompting the hidden Jewish babies to cry as well. The Egyptians then took away the Jewish infants, drowning them in the Nile River.

Rav Levi said that 600,000 children were thus cast into the river, for it says, "Moshe said: *'Six hundred thousand is the number of whose midst I am'"* (*Bamidbar* 11:21), and for each of the 600,000 people, one child was thrown into the river.

Rav Shimshon of Ostropoli, *zt"l*, writes an amazing statement: These children did not die! In fact, each of the 600, 000 infants lived on for another eighty years! Instead of drowning in the Nile River, they flourished miraculously in it, like fish. Later, when the *Yam Suf* parted and the Jews crossed through it, those children came out of the water, alive. They recognized their parents and were reunited with them.

It is our firm belief that in the very near future, when *Moshiach* comes, the same thing will happen, and all those who have died will return, as the *Navi* says: *"And He will turn back the hearts of fathers with their children, and the hearts of children with their fathers."* (*Malachi* 3:24) (*Torah Tavlin Haggadah*)

"The true exile is when a person forgets who he is."~ Vilna Gaon

Pesach Thoughts Ideas and Reflections by Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn



We close the *Seder* with the song of *Chad Gadya*, one kid goat. This seems to be an odd discussion to have as we walk away from such a special event. There is a beautiful explanation of the theme in this song which will shed light on its importance. Let us focus on a conversation between Avram and Nimrod quoted in the *Medrash* (*Bereishis Rabbah* 38:13).

Avram, a young man at the time— who only believed in Hashem, is brought before Nimrod to bow to Nimrod's god— fire. Avram said: "If we bow to fire, shall we bow to water which extinguishes fire?" Nimrod replied: "Bow to water also." Avram persisted: "The clouds carry water! Shall we bow to them as well?" Nimrod again answered: "Bow to the clouds as well!" Avram continued: "The wind blows the clouds!" Nimrod responded: "Then bow to the wind!" Avram: "What about man, man can contain wind within him?"

Nimrod then became flustered and returned to his original plan of serving fire. He challenged Avram's belief in Hashem by throwing him in the fire— Nimrod's god, and left it up to Avram's God to save him. As we know, Hashem saved Avram. Similarly, we can understand the *Chad Gadya*. A man buys a goat, and the Egyptians claim: "But, that is our god."

The rhetoric goes as follows: cats eat goats, and dogs bite cats, sticks are stronger that dogs, fire destroys sticks, water extinguishes fire, cows drink water, a *Shochet* slaughters cows, and he can be executed by the Angel of Death.

But above all there is Hashem, who is all-capable and can destroy the Angel of Death. Hashem, who loves us as His children, is the only One. After discussing so much of our salvation at the *Seder*, we end our discussions with a quick synopsis of a lesson we have gained, that Hashem, our G-d is the One and Only.

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember





It was just a few moments before saying *Kiddush* at the *Seder*, when **Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev** announced that he would not begin the *Seder* until his students would gather fifty Persian scarves, ten pounds of Turkish tobacco and one loaf of bread.

The *chassidim* were stunned. "But *Rebbe*," they cried, "Where are we to get these items from?! The scarves and tobacco are contraband and are forbidden to have. No one will have any! Besides that, surely *Rebbe* knows that it is Pesach— where can we find a loaf of bread in Berditchev?!"

The *Rebbe* calmly said, "I will not start the *Seder* until you find for me what I have asked for." Without any choice, the students started going from house to house throughout the Jewish community explaining the strange request of the *Berditchever Rebbe*.

After two hours of searching, and not much success, they came to the *Rebbe* with only 5 scarves, but no tobacco or *chameitz*. They laid their findings out before the Rebbe and explained to him that this was the best they could do and asked him to please start the *Seder*.

However, the *Rebbe* insisted they meet the full quota without excuses. The *chassidim* started out again, even more determined, and pleaded with the members of the community to please hand over any of these items in their possession.

After a short while they returned to the *Rebbe* hoping that this time he would be satisfied with what they found and agree to start the *Seder*. They emptied a bag with over 100 Persian scarves and another bag with four times the quota of Turkish tobacco. The *Berditchever* said, "This is very nice, but where is the loaf of bread that I asked for?" With tears in their eyes the *chassidim* pleaded with their *Rebbe*, "Please, *Rebbe*, where should we find *chameitz* in *Berditchev*? There isn't even a single crumb to be found!"

The *Rebbe* then lifted his eyes to *Shamayim* and said, "Hashem! The Russians have declared that owning a Persian scarf is punishable with 25 years of hard labour and have policemen deployed throughout the city to keep a lookout for them, but nevertheless, the Jews of Berditchev own at least a hundred scarves! Furthermore, there is a *death penalty* for anyone caught with Turkish tobacco and the borders of Russia are guarded by *hundreds of thousands of soldiers* to make sure that this item does not cross into the country! Nevertheless, there is plenty of Turkish tobacco to be found in Berditchev!

However, You, Hashem, have no visible army or police force, nor is there any physical signs of Your Heavenly court, and Your command to not possess any *chameitz* was declared *over 3000 years ago*, yet there is not one speck of *chameitz* to be found in the entire city! ***Mi k'amcha Yisroel*!" he shouted, as he then began his *Pesach Seder*.**

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember

It was the custom of **Rav Refael Baruch Toledano**, the Kabbalist from Morocco, that he would spend the day of *Erev Pesach* by himself, immersed in the holy *Kabbalah* seforim of the ***Arizal*** and others, as preparation for Pesach. He went to the *Bais Medrash* and began to learn with great concentration, when he suddenly heard the sound of someone crying.

Rav Toledano looked up and was surprised to see a young boy in the corner, sobbing. He walked over to the boy, who he immediately recognized as an orphan named Shalom, and asked him what was bothering him. The boy answered, "My shoes are torn and my mother does not have enough money to buy me a new pair. All the other boys are wearing new shoes, and mine are all ripped!"



Rav Toledano wiped the boy's tears away and told him to wait for him. He rushed to the shoemaker's shop where he saw the shoemaker closing up his shop for *Yom Tov*. Rav Toledano asked the shopkeeper to remain open a little longer and make a pair of shoes for Shalom.

The man said that it was already midday and he was on his way to prepare for the *Seder*, as *Halachah* states, but Rav Toledano told him that as the Rav of the town he can authorize him for this time only, to work after midday. "In fact," Rav Toledano said, "I will not allow anyone to begin their *Seder* until Shalom has a pair of shoes."

Hearing this, the shoemaker began work right away and Rav Toledano helped him where he could. When the shoes were finished, Rav Toledano paid the shoemaker very generously for his efforts, and

hurried back to give them to Shalom. The boy now cried tears of joy and thanked Rav Toledano for the gift, but soon the look of joy turned sad. Shalom looked up at Rav Toledano and said how sorry he was for ruining the Rav's *Erev Pesach* learning.

Rav Toledano smiled at Shalom and said, "Usually on *Erev Pesach* I learn for many hours in order to reach great levels of holiness. However, in all those years I have never reached the level that I reached today, and it is I who must thank you, for helping me reach a level that I have never attained before!"

Pesach Thoughts Ideas and Reflections by Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

At the *Seder*, following the *Mah Nishtanah*, we proclaim that we were servants to Pharaoh in Egypt, and Hashem took us out with an out-stretched arm. This is considered initiating our discussion of redemption by mentioning our shame.

R' Yosef Nechemiah Kornitzer of Cracow explains that throughout our lives we must realize that Hashem is the source of everything—*even our difficult times*.

When we were in Egypt, the *Yidden* made the mistake to assume that they were slaves to Pharaoh alone, only because he forced them into it. As such, they felt locked into a negative feeling of slavery to an oppressor. Therefore, this is shameful. The real focus should have been that the Jews were servants under Pharaoh because *that was the will of Hashem*. May we all merit to recognize Hashem's constant love for us and His involvement in our daily lives.

There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up.

Pesach Thoughts Ideas and Reflections by Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn



Why is there an obligation at every *Seder* table (even when there are no children present) to recite the *Mah Nishtanah*?

Part of the *mitzvos* on Pesach is to recall, in detail, Hashem's Providence, particularly when taking us out of Egypt. Leaving Egypt without a clear plan, just knowing we had a leader took a great deal of *Emunah*, trust and faith in Hashem. We try at this time to relive that level of *Emunah*.

Rav Ephraim Wachsman offers a beautiful understanding of how we try to achieve this. The one with the highest level of *Emunah* is a child, because he has no reason to question or to not trust others.

We therefore try to facilitate our *Emunah* growth by being "child-like" (in a positive sense) at the *Seder*, because everyone is required to ask the *Mah Nishtanah*— the child's questions, because we want to achieve that level— the *Emunah* of children.

Pesach Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

A chossid once went to visit his *Rebbe*, the ***Admor* Rav Yitzchak of Nashchiz**. He arrived with a forlorn expression on his face. "What's wrong?" the Rebbe asked when he saw his *chossid*. The *chossid* told the *Rebbe* that he had set aside wheat to bake *matzos* with, which had been watched from the time it was harvested. It had now somehow completely disappeared. Now he would only be able to prepare matzos from wheat which had *not* been watched from the time of its harvest, and he was greatly distressed over it.

The *Rebbe* answered, "Listen to me very carefully. *Shemurah matzah* is definitely a beautiful way to do the mitzvah, but the mitzvah of *simchah* during *Yom Tov* is from the Torah! It is better that you eat simple *matzah* with *simchah* than to eat *shemurah matzah* with sadness!" (*Chaim Sheyesh Bahem*)

Beneath the Surface - by R' Shmuel Winzelberg

ויעבידו מצרים את בני ישראל בפרך The Egyptians enslaved the Children of Israel with crushing labour

Why is Egypt mentioned here and not just Pharaoh? The Holy Torah wants to point out to us that all of Egypt partnered with Pharaoh when it came to the subjugation that Pharaoh decreed on the nation of Israel. For this reason, all of them were punished with the ten plagues, for otherwise they would have had a valid complaint: 'Pharaoh sinned – *he* should have been smitten, why are we all guilty?' (*Hagadah, Umatuk HaOhr*)

The Beis Avraham zt'l would tell those who needed a shidduch, parnassah, or a refuah to say the entire Tehillim on Shevi'i shel Pesach, because it's a day of salvations.

The Haggadah Speaks - A Closer Look

On Pesach night at the *Seder* we dip the *Karpas* in saltwater to remind us of the tears we cried over the hard labour we endured in Mitzrayim. We also dip the *Maror* in *Charoses* to dull the bitterness. In the *Mah Nishtanah* we make mention of this by asking why, on this night, do we dip twice.

Many *Meforshim* explain the *Mah Nishtanah* to be a single question regarding our contradictory behaviour at the *Seder*— at times we act like slaves, while at times we sit like kings.

Rav Avrohom Danzig, *zt"l*, (author of the *Chayei Adam*), explains that we dip twice to remember the dipping that *caused* the *galus Mitzrayim* in the first place. This was when the *Shevatim* dipped Yosef's coat, the *Kesones Pasim*, in goat blood. On the other hand, we also want to remember the dipping that gave us the merit to leave Mitzrayim— the dipping of the eizov, hyssop grass, into the blood of the *Korban Pesach* on the night of the tenth Plague, the Death of the Firstborn, and applied the blood to our doorposts.

We can see that the night of the *Seder* is commemorated by both symbols, that of slavery and symbols of freedom as well. These are the two types of dipping that we refer to in the *Mah Nishtanah*.

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember

The following story took place in Johannesburg, South Africa and describes how a gentile converted to Judaism because of selling *chometz*.

***HaGaon* Rebbe Moshe Shternbuch** was the Rav of the community and every year on *Erev Pesach* he would sell the *chometz* of the community to a certain gentile. One particular year after selling the *chometz* to the same man, on *Chol HaMoed* morning there was a knock on the door of a Jew of the community, and standing there

was the gentile to whom all the *chometz* was sold. "*Shalom*, I bought the *chometz* and I have the document that proves this, and now I want to complete the sale and take the *chometz* that was sold to me. Where is the *chometz*?"

He came inside and the Jew showed him where the *chometz* was being stored and among the items was an expensive bottle of liquor worth close to $800. The gentile said, "I want the whiskey". The Jew responded, "Please, take it, the bottle is yours. But don't forget that after Pesach you must pay the full value of it." "No problem", said the gentile taking the bottle with him. The Jew was astounded. He never dreamed that the gentile would take the *chometz* that he bought.

The gentile continued on his rounds. He knocked on the door of a second Jew, again requesting to see the *chometz* that he bought and again taking something. This continued for ten houses each time taking something away with him without any hesitation on the part of the Jewish owner.

On the last day of *Chol HaMoed*, *Erev Shevi'i shel Pesach*, the gentile approached Rav Shterbuch and said, "Dear Rabbi, there is absolutely no problem with the sale, but I want to convert to Judaism." The Rav responded, "That is fine, but not now. Wait another two days until after the holiday. In the meantime, tell me what happened. What made you decide to convert?"

The gentile related the following: "My wife is Jewish. When she saw that the *chometz* was being sold to me she said, 'My dear husband, all the Jews are selling you their *chometz*, but what about me? I too, am Jewish and I too, have *chometz* to sell to you'. I told her that the entire sale is fictitious, do I have the money to buy all the *chometz*? Surely, the Jews don't really want to sell the *chometz*, they are just making up stories as if the *chometz* is actually sold. The proof will be if I go to their house and ask for the *chometz* – will they give it to me?

My wife told me, 'They will definitely give it to you! I am certain that they are selling it wholeheartedly. If you go to this one on Pesach and ask for a bottle of whiskey, he will give it to you.' I told her, 'Just the opposite! I will test them and see what comes of it!'

I knocked on the first house, certain that I would disprove my wife and show her that she was mistaken, but no – I received what I asked for without any hesitation. The same thing happened at the second house and the third and all the houses after that. I knocked on ten houses and asked for something, and they all gave to me.

I said to myself", the gentile finished his story, "A nation such as this, that is ready to sell its belongings and everything it has in order to fulfil the mitzvah of the Creator, I want to belong to this nation, and therefore, I came to convert!" [*Rebbe Goel Elkorif*, *Haggadah Doresh Tov*]

Pesach Treasures - An Inside Look



Someone once asked the ***Kotzker Rebbe***, if the Torah is so strict on even one drop of *Chometz*, why do we eat *Matzah* at all? One mistake in the *Matzah* bakery and we can end up eating *Chometz*! Wouldn't it be safer to just eat vegetables for the entire Pesach and staying as far away from *Chometz* as possible?

Similarly, the *Shir Maon* asks, why do we make *Matzah* only out of a kind of grain that could become *Chometz*? Perhaps we should make *Matzah* from rice, which has no possibility of becoming *Chometz*.

They answer that our job is to conquer and vanquish the *Yetzer Hara*. Battling him and winning is our purpose in life. A person is not created like a *Malach* without a *Yetzer Hara*. The *Yetzer Hara* is called *Chometz* as he spoils one's purity. Since we cannot avoid him and we need to live with his constant threats, we are responsible to still keep ourselves free of *aveirah*. We eat *Matzah* to symbolize that just as we are able to make *Matzah* that is not *Chometz*, so too we are capable to keep ourselves pure as well.

Besamei HaTorah …Beneath the Surface - by R' Shmuel Winzelberg

ויזעקו ותעל שוועתם - הגדה And they cried and their prayers rose up (Haggadah)



The *Gaon* Rebbe Yehuda Aboud of Qalb, Syria, earned his living as a teacher of young children. Before Pesach he went to the market to purchase his needs for the holiday, and along the way, someone picked his pocket and stole all the money in his wallet. After gathering his purchases and it was time to pay, he realized that his wallet was empty. Disappointed, he put all the items back and went home. He sat down at his table, sad, when suddenly an idea popped into his head: 'The One Who redeemed our forefathers in Egypt, Who took care of our needs in the desert for forty years, He will also take care of my needs!'

He immediately sat down and wrote a letter and itemized all the things that he needed for the holiday. He placed the letter in an

envelope and wrote on it: " **לכבוד הקדוש ברוך הוא** ", "*In honour of the Holy One, Blessed is He*", and on the reverse side he wrote his name and address, he just did not affix a stamp. He went out to the courtyard and tossed the letter into the air. A gust of wind blew and swept the letter away.

A few hours later there was a knock on his door. He opened the door and saw a group of deliverymen carrying packages – all the holiday needs in large quantities and piled high, literally the best of everything! The deliverymen carried everything inside, put down their packages and left the house.

Rebbe Yehuda stopped the last one and asked him to identify himself. The man responded, "I work for Master Ezra." Ezra was one of the wealthy men in Qalb. How did Ezra know that Rebbe Yehuda's house was empty?

The wind blew the letter to the courtyard of that wealthy man and when he saw it addressed "In honour of the Holy One, Blessed is He" he was filled with amazement. He opened it and saw the list of needed supplies. He called his attendant and instructed him to buy all the items in large quantities and to deliver them to the sender of the letter.

Rebbe Yehuda went to the wealthy man's house, thanked him for all the good that he had done, and insisted that he wanted to pay back the money for all the purchases. Ezra refused to accept even a penny. "It is enough for me the honour that the letter fell on my property", he said, "That the Holy One, Blessed is He, chose me to be His messenger, to respond to the letter that you wrote."

This is the story that a Jew of Qalb always told. On second thought, isn't every *Tefillah* of ours in the same category as "a letter to the Holy One, Blessed is He"? (*Mayan HaMoed*)

The Haggadah Speaks

The *Haggadah* tells us that Rebbi Yehuda made a mnemonic to remember the 10 *Makos*: *D'Tzach*, *Adash*, *B'Achav*. Is there any significance to these words?

The *Haggadah Marbeh L'Saper* writes that as part of Yaakov's purchase of the firstborn rights from Eisav, we had to suffer slavery in Mitzrayim. The entire time *Bnei Yisroel* were in Mitzrayim, they were unhappy with the deal that Yaakov made. Only after they went out, were they happy again. This is hinted to in these words: *D'Tzach* – which can translate to mean that only now were they happy. *Adash* - with the sale of the *Bechor* for *Adashim*, lentils. *B'Achav* – that Yaakov purchased from his brother.

Pesach Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages



At the table of **Rabbi Akiva Eiger** sat a simple Jew. This person accidentally knocked over his wine and stained the tablecloth. Immediately, Rabbi Akiva Eiger secretly shook the table until his own glass overturned. He then said, "This table seems to be shaky." He wanted so much that this Jew wouldn't be embarrassed by spilling wine on the table of the *Gadol HaDor*.

On the night of the *Pesach Seder*, a guest of **Rav Hutner** knocked the table and the wine spilled on Rav Hutner's *Kittel*. Instead of getting upset and embarrassing the guest, Rav Hutner profoundly declared, **"*A Kittel* without wine stains, is like a Yom Kippur *machzor* without tears!"**

Besamei HaTorah …Beneath the Surface - by R' Shmuel Winzelberg

There is a *Minhag* – a custom, that when one burns the *Chometz*, one should also burn the candle that was used to search for *Chometz*. The reason for this is that *Chometz* hints to our sins and to the Evil Inclination, and together with the sins, one must also burn the accuser which aids in searching and investigating the sins of Israel. (*Mekor Baruch as brought in Shabbos Tish*)

One of the *Chassidim* of **Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Kotsk**, after much effort, he earned the right to sit at the table of his Rebbe on the Seder Night, and he began to see the face of Eliyahu *HaNavi*. When they reached the paragraph of '*Shefoch Chamascha*', the *Chassid* ran to the door in order to greet Eliyahu *HaNavi*, however, the Rebbe called after him and said: **"Eliyahu *HaNavi* does not come in through the door, rather he enters through the heart!"** (*Shabbos Tish*)

Pesach Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

In the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp during World War II, the Jewish inmates saved together enough flour to bake *Matzos*. They went without eating bread for an entire week to do it, but they were happy to donate their meagre portions for the Mitzvah.

Unfortunately, a German officer discovered the *Matzos*, and he destroyed them in a fit of rage. However, miraculously, the officer didn't see a small piece of *Matzah*, and it was left intact. It wasn't big enough for anyone to fulfil his obligation to eat a *Kezayis*, but at the very least, there could be one person who would be able to eat *Matzah* on Pesach.

As the *Seder* began that year in the concentration camp, everyone was sure that the ***Bluzhever Rebbe*** would have the small bit of *Matzah*. After all, he had risked his life for it, and he was their

leader. However, when the time for *Matzah* came, the Rebbe began to look around at the people gathered. His eyes set on a young, frail boy who had survived years of suffering. The Rebbe said, "Pesach is a time when we plant the future on the roots of the past. This young boy is our future! He will eat the *Matzah*!" And he called the boy over and gave him the *Matzah*. The *Bluzhever Rebbe* taught them at that Seder, that on Pesach we look forward to the future!

Pesach Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages



While he was a *Bachur* studying in the Slabodka *Yeshivah*, **Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky, *zt"l***, was invited to spend Pesach with a certain family. However, he declined the invitation because he didn't know if the level of *Kashrus* in that house was acceptable to him, but he didn't want to say that was his reason in order to not hurt anyone's feelings. Instead, he said that he couldn't go there because it was not his custom to eat *Gebrokts*, and the family that invited him was not careful in this regard.

The truth was, though, that it *was* the custom of Rav Yaakov's family to eat *Gebrokts* on Pesach. Nevertheless, from the time that he said the words "I don't eat *Gebrokts*" until he passed away, Rav Yaakov never again ate *Gebrokts* on Pesach, but he permitted his family to do so. He felt that once he said something, he must keep to his word. Otherwise he would have been dishonest and lying!

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember

Rav Avraham J. Twerski writes an amazing story. Raphael Dubzinsky was a pious Jew who lived in a village in Poland, and like so many of his countrymen who were barred from living in the larger cities and from pursuing various types of livelihood, Raphael operated an inn which he rented from the local *Poritz*, landlord. Raphael was known for his honesty and was respected and loved by all— both Jew and Gentile alike. Raphael and his wife were content, but their happiness was not complete because they weren't yet *Bentched* with children.

One day, a new priest came to the village, and he was a hateful anti-Semite, and the fact that Raphael was popular annoyed him to no end. The priest issued an edict, that none of his parishioners were allowed to visit Raphael's inn and do business with him, but since the inn had been a gathering place for these people for years, the edict was not listened to. The priest put pressure on the *Poritz* to withdraw Raphael's lease on the inn, but that also did not work.

The priest finally came up with a plan. He knew that Raphael sold his entire supply of beer and liquor to a non-Jew every Pesach, so the priest issued an edict that no one was permitted to buy *Chometz* from the Jews, under severe threat of punishment. When Pesach arrived and Raphael saw that no one wished to buy his *Chametz*, he opened wide the doors to his inn and made a public announcement: "I declare all my beer and liquor ownerless! Whoever wishes may come in and take it!" He and his wife then left to spend Pesach with relatives, and although he knew that he would now be suffering a great loss from his business, Raphael rejoiced during the festival.

When he returned home, Raphael asked the first person he met whether everyone had enjoyed all the free drinks. The man answered, "What do you mean enjoyed free drinks? We couldn't even get close to your inn with those vicious dogs you had left guarding it!"

Raphael did not know what they were talking about as he didn't own any dogs, but when he came to the inn, he saw two vicious looking dogs in front of the entrance. When they saw him, the dogs gently approached him, sniffed him, and then ran off. Raphael realized that *Hashem* had sent the dogs to protect him from losing all his beer and liquor.

He considered his situation and realized he may have a problem. If his *Chometz* had been guarded and remained in his possession over Pesach, it was forbidden to derive any benefit from it. Raphael began opening the spouts of the barrels and began to dispose of the beer and liquor, but his wife screamed at him, "What are you doing?! You did what you were supposed to do and made everything *Hefker*, ownerless. You are now allowed to use it and sell it! Ask the Rabbi!"

Raphael asked the *Rav*, and he ruled that the wife was indeed right. When Raphael opened the doors and left his inn open to all, declaring publicly that all who wished were free to help themselves, he had



indeed abandoned ownership of the *Chometz*. The fact that *Hashem* had miraculously protected him, did not change anything, and he was permitted to reclaim his goods. However, Raphael was not comfortable with the ruling. He said, "The *Chometz* was in my inn over Pesach, and even though it is *Halachically* permitted, I still do not wish to benefit from it," and he poured his entire stock down the drain. His wife went weeping to the *Rav* to tell him what happened.

Through tears she said, "Now we are both childless and penniless!" The Rabbi said to her, "In the merit of your husband's intense devotion to *Torah*, it will be a *Zechus* for you to have a child who will illuminate the entire world!" That year, this woman gave birth to a son, who later became the *Chasidic* master, **Rav Abraham of Czechanov!"**

Pesach Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

Rav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, *zt"l*, was once spending the *Pesach Seder* at the home of a student of his, **Rav Zusia Waltner**. As soon as the *Seder* began, Rav Dessler noticed how exhausted Mrs. Waltner looked as a result of the countless hours she had spent preparing for Pesach.

Rav Dessler insisted that the *Seder* be conducted swiftly to allow her to remain awake for the whole *Seder* and allow her to go rest. After they completed the *Seder*, Rav Dessler sent Mrs. Waltner to get some sleep, while he and Rabbi Waltner cleaned the dishes!

Pesach Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

A woman once consulted **Rav Shimshon Pincus, *zt"l***, about a pill that was made from *Chometz* that she had to take on Pesach. Rav Shimshon was concerned that she might not take the medication, even though she needed it, and he wanted to make it clear to her that it was permitted.

When he sensed her hesitancy, he said, "What's the problem? Put *Matzoh* all around the pill and then it's absolutely okay!" The woman was reassured and did exactly as he said to, and made sure to take her medication!

הגדה של פסח - Abridged message from Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld – Rosh Yeshivah



Tonight, we have the opportunity to instil in our children – Klal Yisroel's future – the idea that Yiddishkeit is exciting, it's relevant. The opportunity to perform mitzvos and serve H-Shem is something to be happy about, something to look forward to.

Let us use this unique opportunity, with H-Shem's help, to ensure that Yiddishkeit remains as exciting as it always was and the we merit a full Geulah with the rebuilding of the third Beis Hamikdash, Amen.

Short Story With Rabbi Mordechai Levin



Rav Leib Bakst, ZT"L, the Rosh Yeshiva in Detroit, once penned the great Mashgiach, **Rav Chatzkel Levenstein, ZT"L**, a letter. He wrote that people were talking about a four-year-old child of a Belzer Chassid in Bnei Brak who appeared to know all of Torah. When queried with the beginning of a phrase from any part of Torah, the child would be able to finish the quote! As we know, each Jewish child learns the entire Torah with a malach while in their mother's womb (Gemara, Niddah 30b). It seemed that the malach who is appointed to tap each child's mouth before they're born to make them forget everything they had learnt, had not done so to this boy.

(**The Steipler** also writes about this boy in his *Sefer Chayei Olam*, and states that the **Belzer Rebbe Reb Aharon** tapped the boy and made him forget everything.)

Rav Bakst asked Rav Chatzkel that if the story was true, the child prodigy should be sent on a publicity tour to America. This tour would be a clear proof of all of the truth of our religion and the Torah, as a young child had been born with complete knowledge of all of Torah. Rav Chatzkel responded that the story was indeed true, and that the boy lived a few doors down from him in Bnei Brak. He wrote that his son-in-law and daughter had actually seen the boy and had told him all about it. He had planned to go see for himself, but then decided not to!

Rav Chatzkel explained that if he didn't believe his own children, and needed to see for himself, he would be weakening the very foundation of his emunah, his faith in Hashem. After all, Emunah is predicated on the passage of facts from father to son. If he didn't believe a trustworthy source how could his belief in Hashem be rock solid? Rav Chatzkel answered Rav Bakst that our Emunah must come from our Mesorah, via that which has been passed down from generation to generation.

Comment: The purpose of all the Mitzvos of Pesach is to pass on to our children the story of how Hashem revealed Himself to the entire World. As per the famous Ramban (Parshas Bo) what differentiates the Jewish people from other nations is that all of mankind experienced the Awe that is Hashem, yet via our Mesorah, only we remember it to this very day.

"The world tells their children stories to put them to sleep; Jews tell their children stories to wake them up." ~ Rabbi Daniel Staum.

TORAH sweets

Holiday Insights With Rabbi Zisha Kohn - Reaching The Ultimate Level Of Emunah (Trust In Hashem)



Once upon a time, a simple unlearned Jew in Yerushalayim brought his chicken to the shochet which was soon slaughtered. The man brought the chicken home. As he was cleaning the chicken, he noticed that the chicken was covered with lice. Unsure if this condition would render the chicken unkosher, he went to the shochet to show him the chicken. The shochet replied, "So what? Where does it state in the Torah that a chicken may not have lice?"

To figure out the truth, the man sought out a rav, who concurred with the shochet: the chicken was kosher. Nonetheless, this Jew was not placated. He wanted to be certain that the chicken was kosher. The preeminent leader of the generation, **HaRav Yehoshua Leib Diskin, zt"l**, was approached. Unlike the previous halachic arbiters, Rav Diskin instructed the man to locate the chicken's head and open it up. The man returned to the shochet, located the head, opened it up and found it to be infested with lice. This meant the chicken's brain was rotting inside – rendering the

chicken unkosher. The man was so impressed and complimented Rav Diskin for having Ruach Hakodesh.

Rav Yehoshua Leib explained, "There's no Divine Inspiration here; it's a simple deduction. All chickens have bugs and lice that annoy them, which they are able to shake off. This chicken obviously was unable to shake off the lice, which led me to believe that the lice were an internal problem. As I suspected, the lice were infested in the brain. The problem was in the chicken's head."

Every person in this world is loaded with "lice," as in all sorts of problems or challenges in the spiritual or material arenas, sufferings of all types. When a person's head – their Emuna is well-functioning, all the issues get shaken away one way or another. As the Gemara (Makkos 24a) writes, the prophet Chavakuk foretold that there will be a generation when everything will be hard for them, so he established the 613 Mitzvos upon one, as it is stated: 'The righteous person shall live by his Emunah.' Yet, when one doesn't have Emunah, the annoying rodents/creatures can fully eat a person up.

We approach the Yom Tov of Pesach, the Zman Cheiruseinu, which is the time of our freedom and the first time Hashem chose us as His nation; this was the night of Emunah for those who believe. One who doesn't have the Emunah, true belief, isn't truly free because he doesn't feel that freedom. Only when we eat Matza (which the Zohar calls the Bread of Emunah) and go through Pesach, do we strengthen our Emunah in the midst of our freedom. As we prepare for this holy time, our goal is to find some practical thoughts and understandings to assist in maximizing our Zman Cheiruseinu, on a personal level and the ultimate freedom of Mashiach's coming.

We say a Pasuk every day in our Davening that refers to the Jewish nation's spiritual level as they stood in front of the Red Sea after leaving Egypt (Shemos 14:31): "They (the people) believed in Hashem and in Moshe, His Servant." **The Shem Mishmuel** asks: We know all of our Emunah was founded on how Hashem Himself plagued the

Egyptians with Ten Makkos and took the Jews out of Mitzrayim. What Emunah was still lacking that the Jews of that generation acquired when they stood before the Splitting of the Sea?

Let's look at it this way, if someone gets into a car accident, gets sick, their business goes belly up, or gets robbed – they may feel it's Bashert, from Hashem. The Jews in Egypt saw the Nile River turn into blood, frogs, and hail descend, and they saw every other plague first-hand and admitted that it came from Hashem, which is a level of Emunah. However, there is another level of Emunah that many people lack, and which is a source of tremendous stress: Emunah that our decisions and our thoughts – things that we think we do - are also coming from Hashem. The Jewish people came out after the Egyptians were brutalized and pulverized by Hashem's Judgment.

Yet, only a few days later, the Egyptians (conveniently) forgot it all and started chasing the Jewish people and shooting their arrows at them! The Egyptians saw the Clouds of Glory catching all the arrows and throwing them back at the shooters. The Egyptians saw the sea split into 12 separate rows and the tribes going through each one separately on dry land, with fruit growing out of the water walls. What on earth were the Egyptians thinking? Did they believe that Hashem was going to make the same miracle for them as He did for the Jewish people? Furthermore, no one pushed the Egyptians into the Sea.

The Ramban (Shemos 14:4) writes that the greatest Neis is that the Egyptians WILLINGLY decided to go into the Sea and ultimately met their watery deaths. When the Jewish people saw that not only can Hashem make plagues, punish or reward, make rich or poor, healthy or sick, but He can also plant thoughts into the minds of human beings and rewire their brains, they came to a whole another level of faith. They saw how far Hashem's influence goes. Now, of course, people have Bechira (free will) to do good or evil. Still, there is a major lesson to be learned from this incident.

When someone tries to do the right thing, thinking it out and speaking it over with his Rebbi/advisor and then something happens which prevents that thing from happening, one has to rest assured that the outcome is not up to him. Knowing Hashem's control over all outcomes of choices is a whole other level of Emunah. Probably the most practical way to work on this is in the most basic of scenarios. Either in our pre-Yom Tov rush or sometime during our Chol Hamoed travel, a person might make a choice on the road – only to hit an unfavourable outcome – and then say, "I should have done turned left," or "The driver in front of me made me miss the light." These words show a lack of Emunah. It wasn't the driver in front of you who made you missed the light; it was Hashem! So, what are we getting upset about?

A perfect example of having the proper attitude to how to view events with the Emunah lens is a story with **Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld**, ZT"L, who grew up amidst abject poverty. As a yeshivah student who subsisted on the good will of the individual community's lay families, Rav Yosef Chaim did not fare so well and didn't have much food. While going to bed hungry did not have a negative effect on his learning, something else did. He required clean clothes, which cost seven kroitzer for the laundress. His chavrusa who hailed from a well-to-do family, gladly offered to pay the woman.



Rav Yosef Chaim refused to accept charity. Nonetheless, by some "miracle," every week on his walk to go to the Beis Hamedrash, Rav Yosef Chaim would "find" seven kroitzer lying on the ground.

One night he dreamt of three numbers which were the winning numbers for the lottery. He could have purchased a lottery ticket

the very next day, but a ticket cost seven kroitzer and that was all he possessed. He was not about to give up the certain opportunity of having clean clothes for the Bais Hamedrash on the outside chance that he might win the lottery. He felt that there was no substance to dreams. Thus, he had his clothes washed instead. Those three numbers, however, were the winning numbers!

Rav Yosef Chaim told people that never in his life did he regret not buying those tickets, as that was the Will of Hashem and there was **nothing** he should have done differently.

The words "I should have…" should not be in our lexicon as we can start to realize that Hashem is running our lives much more than we think. This is the true Emunah that Pesach packs that the Jewish people learned at that moment when the Egyptians drowned. When we can point with our finger at every situation in life and see Hashem's Hand and say, "This is Hashem and I will glorify Him." Then, we will merit the ultimate freedom of getting rid of all the issues of our life and merit "V'Somachto B'Chagecha," to rejoice in our Festival as we should.

Why the Exodus required faith before miracles

The Netziv notes that the Israelites had to walk into the unknown before the sea split.

"The greatest miracle of the Exodus," he writes, "was not the plagues nor the splitting of the sea, but the courage of the people who followed Moshe into the wilderness with no provisions and no certainty. Their faith created the conditions for miracles. Pesach teaches that redemption begins when a person takes the first step, even when the path is hidden."

A powerful message for anyone facing their own "sea."

למודי משה - R' Moshe Harris

Understanding The Minhag Of Gebrokts (Abridged)



A very common Pesach related question is: "Do you eat gebrokt?" "gebrokt" is the Yiddish term referring to something "broken apart" – in this case, matzah. (In Hebrew, this practice is referred to more accurately as "sheruyah" – "soaked.")

Many communities refrain from eating matzah or matzah products that have come in contact with liquids on Pesach. There are varying levels of stringencies concerning utensils that have come in contact with these foods, and regarding how far one has to go in order to avoid eating gebrokts.

The minhag predates chasidus

Although the minhag of not eating gebrokt is predominantly a chasidish one, it actually has its roots in sources that predate chasidus. One of the earliest sources is the Shiyorei Knesses HaGedolah, authored by a seventeenth century posek, which forbids the use of matzah meal in cooking because of an incident that occurred. Apparently, a particular woman saw the wife of a talmid chocham prepare a dish using matzah meal and mistakenly thought that it was regular flour. She subsequently used regular flour for cooking, and it became chometz. In order to prevent this from reoccurring, the Shiyorei Knesses HaGedolah decreed that one may not use matzah meal (Sha'arei Teshuvah 460:2). However, the Pri Chodosh (461:2) argues at length against this contention and

maintains that one may not institute new decrees unless there is a basis in the Gemara or rishonim. Furthermore, we need not be concerned if one person makes a mistake.

Even though these two achronim argue whether one may or may not institute a new decree in this situation, there is actually a rishon, the Ra'avan, who sides with the stricter opinion. He mentions this incidentally while explaining the reason why some have a minhag not to soak matzah in their soup on the first night of Pesach. Although many thought the reason for this was so that the matzah should not turn into chometz, the Ra'avan writes that this is incorrect.

The correct reason is so that the taste of the matzah will remain in one's mouth the entire night and if the matzah is soaked it loses the matzah taste. He concludes by saying that it is a good idea to not make "farfel" from matzah meal in order that people should not come to confuse matzah meal with flour (Ra'avan, Pesochim 162a).

Another rishon, the Ra'avyah, also points out that there are those who are strict not to use matzah meal out of concern that one might come to confuse it with flour. However, he concludes by saying that this is a stringency for a ba'al nefesh [a very conscientious person] (Pesochim 475).

Gebrokt on seder night

As an aside, it is interesting to note that this opinion of the Ra'avan regarding eating gebrokt on the first night of Pesach is in concurrence with a tradition that comes from Rav Chaim Volozhiner and Rav Chaim Brisker. They were strict and did not eat gebrokt on the first night of Pesach, although they would do so the rest of Pesach, because of the Rambam's opinion that matzah on the first day of Pesach must be "lechem oini" – poor bread. Matzah that has been mixed with other ingredients and cooked loses the status of lechem oini. Therefore, in their opinion, by eating gebrokt on the first day as opposed to regular matzah, one is missing the opportunity to eat lechem oini.

Gebrokt takes off

Rav Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the Ba'al HaTanya and Shulchan Aruch HaRav, wrote a Teshuvah about gebrokt. Approximately two hundred years ago, Rav Shneur Zalman penned a Teshuvah that advocated the chumrah of not eating gebrokt and from that point on this minhag became one of the defining issues of chasidus.

Rav Shneur Zalman's main contention is that it is possible to see flour either on or inside the matzah that was not kneaded properly into the dough. Although flour on the surface of the matzah would be roasted by the fire and could no longer become chametz, this is not the case with flour inside the matzah.

Anticipating the question as to why poskim in earlier generations did not point out this problem, he writes that this is only an issue "with dry dough that does not knead well. In earlier generations they would spend a long time kneading and rolling until it was kneaded properly." Apparently, before Rav Shneur Zalman's time, matzah dough was much moister and took longer to knead.

He continues that this was true "until about twenty years ago when a carefulness spread among Jews to greatly hasten the kneading," by decreasing the amount of water in the dough, making the dough drier and harder. Unfortunately, this brought about the problem that "they do not knead it properly. Therefore, a small amount of flour can be found in the matzos of dry dough, as can be readily seen by those who are really careful."

It is interesting to note that Rav Shneur Zalman's main concern with gebrokt is allowing plain matzah to come in contact with liquids. This is because the flour in the matzah would then become chometz. However, with regards to kneidlach, where the matzah is crushed into powder and mixed with other ingredients, he writes that there is more room to be lenient. However, Rav Shneur Zalman concludes with the opinion of the Arizal that one should be stringent with all of the chumros of Pesach.

Many poskim are lenient

On the other hand, we find many poskim who were unconcerned about the stringent opinions and permitted the consumption of gebrokt. The Sha'arei Teshuvah (460:2) maintains that the basis for the chumrah was that at one time matzos were made very thick and the dough inside was not kneaded or baked well. Although he points out that every rov should supervise the matzah baking in his town to ensure that this does not occur, he says, nowadays when matzos are made very thin, there is no concern and one does not need to presume that there is anything prohibited unless he knows otherwise.

He cites the She'ailas Yaavetz who quotes his father, the Chacham Tzvi, that one should not refrain from simchas Yom Tov because of far-fetched concerns and that he saw "chasidei olam" – exceedingly righteous people, who ate soaked matzos. Similarly, the Vilna Gaon is quoted as permitting soaked matzos (Ma'aseh Rav). The Mishnah Berurah (458:4) quotes the Sha'arei Teshuvah that according to the basic halachah one is allowed to eat gebrokt, especially since our matzos are very thin. However, one should not spurn those who are stringent.

The Chasam Sofer's minhag. There seems to be a contradiction as to what the Chasam Sofer's minhag was in regards to eating gebrokt. On the one hand, he writes in a Teshuvah (Yoreh Deah 222) that it is a "mitzvah and prishus" not to eat soaked matzah on Pesach. This would indicate that he did not eat gebrokt. On the other hand, we find in the Minhogei Chasam Sofer (10:25) that he ate kneidlach.

It is possible that the Chasam Sofer held that there is room to be stringent according to halachah, but when it came to his minhogim, he did not wish to deviate from how his teacher, Rav Nosson Adler, conducted himself. Therefore, in his Teshuvah he wrote what he held, while in his personal conduct he acted differently. Since he

held that it was only a chumrah, he did not accept it upon himself as it meant changing a minhag.

Let us conclude with the words of the Sha'arei Teshuvah (460:2): Both those who are stringent and those who are lenient are acting lesheim Shomayim. Those who are stringent intend to avoid the slightest suspicion of the smallest amount of chometz, while those who are lenient do so because of simchas Yom Tov, as plain, dry matzah is unappealing. Regarding both of these groups whose intention is lesheim Shomayim, I apply the pasuk **ועמך כולם צדיקים** and Your people are all righteous.'"

The Nature of The Mitzvah Of Charoses (Abridged)



The Mishnah in Pesochim (114a) brings a machlokes between the Chachomim and R' Elozor ben Tzodok as to whether charoses constitutes a mitzvah. In the Chachomim the Gemara explains, that they believe that charoses merely serves to blunt the bitter taste of the maror.

The Gemara then presents two explanations of R' Elozor ben Tzodok's opinion. One explanation is that the charoses serves to remind us of the mortar used by our ancestors in Mitzrayim to build for Pharaoh when they were slaves. A second explanation is that the charoses serves to remind us of the tapuchim [apple trees] in Mitzrayim. Both Rashi and the Rashbam explain that the Jewish women in Mitzrayim would painlessly and quietly give birth beneath the apple trees so that the Mitzriyim would not discover that a Jewish male was born.

The second explanation in the Gemara is the source for the minhag amongst Ashkenazic Jewry to use apples for charoses. The Gemara continues and teaches that we should add spices to the charoses to remind us of the straw in Mitzrayim. Before spices are ground up, they are long and stringy and thus resemble straw. The straw that we remember likely refers to the decree made by Pharaoh that we must gather our own straw for building (Shemos 5:7).

Another Tosfos cites some additional sources that serve as the basis for our practice regarding the process of making charoses. Tosfos cites a Yerushalmi that states that the charoses serves as a reminder of the blood in Mitzrayim. Tosfos notes that this is the source for adding wine to the charoses. Tosfos also cites the Teshuvos HaGeonim that states that the ingredients of the charoses should reflect the food items that the Jewish people are compared to in Shir HaShirim.

Included in this list are nuts and almonds, which Ashkenazic Jews customarily add to their charoses. The Rambam (Hilchos Chometz U'Matzah 7:11) mentions that raisins and dates should be included in the charoses.



The Seder

This lofty mitzvah requires a settled mind such that one can focus properly. Therefore, one must not let chumros such as eating the afikoman before chatzos or the size of the kezayis and similar issues to distract his attention. These chumros all involve requirements which are derabonon, enacted by Chazal, whereas the mitzvah of sippur yetzias Mitzrayim constitutes an outright mitzvah de'O'raisa. Therefore, if one knows that the issue of chatzos will cause him anxiety at the seder, he can use the solution proposed by the Avnei Neizer (Orach Chaim 381:5) so he can conduct the seder and fulfil the mitzvos with joy and serenity.

The more effort we invest into this mitzvah, the more special assistance we will receive from Hakodosh Boruch Hu and succeed in instilling emunah within the hearts of all our children and draw them to Torah and avodas Hashem, amen kein yehi ratson. (Tolner Rebbe)



ואף אתה הקהה את שיניו

In one of the most famous sections of the Haggadah where we discuss the four types of sons, we say about the rosha, **ואף אתה הקהה את שיניו** . Most people understand this to mean that we should knock out his teeth. However, **הקהה** is written with a 'kuf' and not a 'chof', therefore, it means to blunt his teeth, blunt his sharpness and blunt his anger. What is the idea of blunting his anger?

Rav Aharon Kotler used to say over the following incident. He often went with the **Kapishnitzer Rebbe** collecting for chinuch atzmai. The two of them were known figures really carrying the burden of chinuch atzmai in the early years of the yishuv in Eretz Yisroel. Once the two of them came to a wealthy man's office and the secretary said that he was not in. They understood that the man was really there so they said that they would wait for him to arrive.

It became a waiting game and eventually the wealthy man gave up and came out in a temper. He derided Rav Kotler and the Kapishnitzer Rebbe. He shouted at them complaining how people always come to him for money without appointments and they come to me whether I'm at home or I'm in the office. He berated them very harshly.

Rav Kotler winked to the Kapishnitzer Rebbe that he thinks it is time to leave. The Kapishnitzer Rebbe motioned that they should stay. The man carried on and eventually became quiet. The Kapishnitzer Rebbe turned to the wealthy man and said, you have given us what we deserve now please give chunich atzmai what it deserves. The man mellowed and gave a donation.

Blunting the rosha's teeth means that we should blunt his anger, let his anger wear out. Once we do this, we will realize that underneath he's not really such a big rosha. Don't disqualify someone so quickly as they may well be a good person underneath.

Berinah Yikzoru



Why do we eat egg on Pesach night? **Rebbi Mordechai from Izbitza Zt'l** in his book "Mei Hashiluach" gives an explanation. One of the symbols that we put on the Seder plate on Pesach is an egg. He tells his hassidim, "Do not do something today that you did yesterday just because you did it yesterday…"! This is also how he explains the verse (Devarim 17, 22) "And you shall not set up for yourself a monument which Hashem, your G-d, hates". Do not freeze your potential to achieve. Do not serve Hashem out of rote. Always try to add to your service of Hashem and strive to greater heights. Do not ever stay at the same level.

This is the reason we put an egg on our Seder plate. The egg symbolizes the step that brings forward the next generation. The egg is the in between step of a chicken and a chick. This comes to tell you that the exodus from Egypt with its miracles was not the pinnacle. It was the in between step.

It's Up to You

"You are responsible for your life. No one else can live it for you." ~ R' Noach Weinberg zt"l.

The Names of the Holiday

Chag Hamatzot – The holiday of Matzot. This is the name that appears in the Torah as Bnai Yisrael ate Matzot when they came out of Egypt.

Chag HaPesach – The holiday of Passover. Hashem passed over the Jewish houses during the plague of the firstborn.

Chag HaCheirut –The holiday of freedom. Bnai Yisrael left the slavery of Egypt and were freed (Cheirut) as we say in the prayers of the day "The time of our freedom."

Chag HaAviv – This holiday of spring. This holiday will always be in the Spring. According to the Zohar "Av LeYud Bet Chodashim" – Nissan is the father of the 12 months, it is the first of the months of the year.

Chag HaGeulah – The holiday of redemption. In the future, we will be redeemed in this month as it says "In Nissan we were redeemed and in Nissan we will be redeemed in the future."

Living Jewish

At the Seder with Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev

While reciting the Haggada on Pesach, Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev was filled with tremendous hitlahavut, enthusiasm. When he reached the words Matzah Zu he would become so carried away in dveikut (attachment to Hashem) that he would fall from his chair to the floor, overturning the seder plate, the matzot and the wine.

By the time he came to, the table would be set afresh, and another long white kittel was handed to him to replace the one stained with wine. Putting it on, he would say with visible delight, "Ah! Matzah Zu…" [Sippurei Chasidim]

Matza



When a Jew eats matza and introduces it into his body, it sanctifies all his limbs and makes them holy. It is therefore appropriate that we prepare ourselves before performing this great mitzva and ensure that our mouths and bodies are worthy, as it states, "You shall eat matzot in a holy place." (Tiferet Shlomo)

A Matter of "Life and Death"

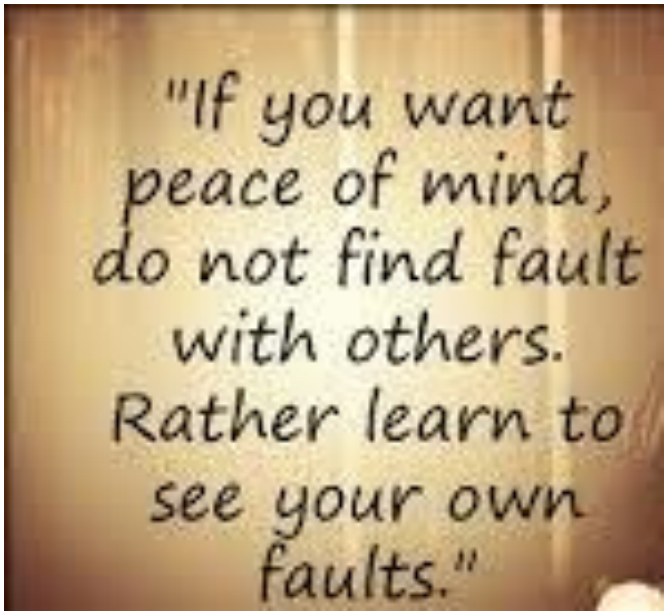
Rav Issar Zalman Meltzer (1870-1953) was a great genius and Tzaddik. Rav Issar Zalman Meltzer was sitting in his study one Chol HaMoed with Rav Dovid Finkel. [During these days, basic work is permitted, but activities such as writing are avoided unless absolutely necessary.] Rav Issar Zalman asked Rav Dovid Finkel for a pencil and paper to write something down. Rav Dovid Finkel questioned his mentor, "Rebbe, how can you write something down, it is Chol HaMoed?"

Rav Issar Zalman responded that the issue is a matter of great urgency, "almost like a life and death issue". Rav Dovid Finkel became all excited and asked, "Rebbe, what's wrong? What is the matter with you?" Rav Issar Zalman brushed him off. "There is nothing really the matter. It is just that for me this is something almost akin to a life-or-death matter."

Rav Dovid Finkel brought the pencil and paper and Rav Issar Zalman wrote down a pasuk from Proverbs [Mishlei 4:25] עֵינֶיךָ לְנֹכַח יַבִּיטוּ וְעַפְעַפֶּיךָ יְיַשְּׁרוּ נֶגְדֶּךָ "Let your eyes look ahead, and your eyes will direct

your path." Rav Dovid Finkel was perplexed. "This was the life-or-death matter — just to write down a pasuk that you already knew by heart?"

Rav Issar Zalman explained. "Hundreds and hundreds of Jews come to visit me and wish me 'Gut Yom Tov' during the course of Chol HaMoed. Some of the people who come in are not the most distinguished residents of Jerusalem. Included among those who visit are many who are mishugaim (crazies), braggarts, ignoramuses, etc. I have to sit here, patiently, with person after person and smile. Sometimes I am tempted to lash out and lose my patience. I need something to hold me back.



Every year, before Chol HaMoed, I write down this pasuk to remind me of its homiletic interpretation: 'When your eyes look at someone else, turn your eyes inward'. (In other words, 'Do not look at HIS shortcomings, look at your own shortcomings'.) This is critically important to me, to have this pasuk sitting on my desk so that I will not criticize (mentally). I absolutely need that. When people come in, I look at this pasuk and think to myself 'Do not think about them; think about yourself'.

This year, I forgot to write down the pasuk before Yom Tov. For me, it was vital to write down the pasuk — even on Chol HaMoed!" Rav Issar Zalman felt that this lesson — of taking extra care to avoid criticizing and looking at the faults of others — was truly akin to a matter of life or death.

Dvar Torah For Kids by Kids - By Akiva Solway

We say in the Haggadah the following: **"והיא שעמדה לאבותינו ולנו"**
"And he who stood for our fathers and for us"

The word **והיא** in gematria is 22. There are 22 letters in the lashon Hakodesh. The lashon Hakodesh represents the Torah. What this is saying is that the Torah gives shmira, protection.

The takeaway is that even though, throughout the generations, many nations have tried over and over again to destroy us, the reason we haven't been destroyed is because we keep learning Torah. Hashem protected us and will continue to protect us through the learning of Torah..

May we all merit to continue our Torah learning and Hashem's protection!

Parsha Thoughts by Mordechai Sapoznick



The Pasuk says Ex 12:46 **וְעֶצֶם לֹא תִשְׁבְּרוּ-בוֹ** ***You shall not break a bone of it (the Korban Pesach).***

Hashem commanded us not to break the bones of the Korban Pesach to eat the scraps of meat in the bones. The Sefer Ha-Chinuch says that it is the way of poor people to eat the scraps of meat inside the bones.

On the night of the Seder, we are supposed to act like kings, so it is improper to break the bones like poor people do. By acting with royalty, it will become a part of us forever.

Facebuker Seder Table Talk - Chag Sameach!

One year, on the night of Pesach, a man approached **R' Yaakov Kamenetzky z"l** and wished him a "Chag Kasher v'Sameach, a kosher and happy holiday."

With a big smile, R' Yaakov reciprocated and wished the man, "Chag Sameach! (Happy Holiday!/Good Yom Tov!)"

Puzzled, the man asked why R' Yaakov had changed the greeting when he responded. "I'm not worried," explained R' Yaakov, "about the Kosher part. I know that the Jewish People are very careful about their kashrus on Pesach and I'm sure you and your wife took great pains to ensure everything was done properly. However," he continued, "what people often forget is that Pesach is a time of joy, when you should be enjoying the holiday. That is why I replied that your Yom Tov should be happy."



Maror

Having previously made a bracha on the karpas, when it comes to Maror, we make only the additional bracha on it. We say, **אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מָרוֹר** "Blessed are You… Who sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to consume bitter herbs."

We all know that Maror reminds us of the way our lives in Egypt were embittered. But what is the point of that? Why dwell on the past and not look, instead, to the future? There are several approaches

here. First of all, in order to relive the Exodus as if it were happening now, we need to get into that mindset. We do that by recalling the bitter slavery so that the freedom is even sweeter.

Also, as the **Sfas Emes** teaches, we recite the bracha on Maror after that of Matza because only once one has had his redemption can he fully appreciate what he was saved from. Often, we find ourselves in difficult situations and we cannot imagine how we will survive. And yet, if you're reading this, you have! The taste of Maror is something we make a blessing on because we are supposed to reflect on all the times Hashem comes through for us and saves us from bitter circumstances. Knowing that He is always there is a taste of freedom we should not forget.

Circle Time - by Rabbi Moshe Mizrahi

The sefer Chaim L'rosh by Harav Chaim Palachi suggests a way to remember the items that are placed on the Seder ke'arah. Dovid Hamelech said (Tehillim 26:6), אָרְחַץ בְּנִקָּיוֹן כַּפָּי וַאֲסֹבְבָה אֶת־מִזְבַּחֲךָ ה׳— "I will wash my hands in cleanliness, and I will go around Your mizbe'ach, Hashem."

The word mizbachacha (acronym (notrikon a is מִזְבַּחֲךָ containing the initial letters of the words matzah, maror, zeroa, beitzah, charoses, karpas—all the items found on the ke'arah.

We wash our hands before eating the karpas, but we have to wash them again before eating the matzah, and this is the meaning of "I will wash my hands in cleanliness." That is, even though my hands have been washed, I will wash them again. And why do we do this? Because "I will go around Your mizbe'ach," meaning that we spend a long, long time reading the Haggadah while the mizbe'ach (ke'arah) is on the table.

Chametz For Pesach by Rabbi Ephraim Eliyahu Shapiro



There was a family unfortunately who were extremely poor and had very little money. However, the parents always made it their business to always bring simcha into their home, especially when it approached Shabbos Kodesh. For the children to realise the beauty of the extraordinary day of Shabbos.

And so, the father would go to the bakery before Shabbos and buy a treat for his children – one Danish, as that was all he was able to afford! He cut it up into many small pieces so that each child could get a little piece lichvod Shabbos.

This is what took place every erev Shabbos. One year it was Pesach leil seder and in the middle of the seder, the 5-year-old daughter made the following announcement to her family – " I have a treat that I would like to present to our brother Avromi. He is already learning so beautifully and is on his way to become a big talmid chacham."

She ran to her room and brought down a small piece of danish, and she said, "I saved this from last erev Shabbos. Avromi, this is a special treat for you, because of how much you love Torah"

Of course it was chometz gamor at the seder table. The father looked at his family, and said to his little 5-year-old daughter, "How special it is that you have that feeling of Ahavas HaTorah, that simchas HaTorah, that passion for Torah, for such a young child.

After, the father said that this epitomises the hidur mitzva and then went on to explain that because it was chometz, they would have to dispose of it.

That passion of who we are, displayed by a 5-year-old girl, was clearly something that was learnt by the family upbringing.

This girl grew up and was boruch Hashem zoche to marry. She was married to her husband for many decades. The name of her husband was…….. **Rabbi Moishe Feinstein Zt'l !!!** She grew up to marry the gadol hador, whose passion and life was that fulfilment.

I am sure that in part, this was due to that zechus that she had for her hidur mitzva and passion for the love of Torah.

Rabbi Paysach Krohn – Tefillah B'Seder

There was once a little boy at the seder, and he asked ," When will we reach **וְנִצְעַק** ?" The father was kind of surprised. Why specifically **וְנִצְעַק**, what about when is Ma Nishtana or Dayenu or Korech sandwich or the makkos?

The little boy said , I will tell you a story that my rebbi told me. There was once a great tzaddik called **The Apter Rav**. He was known as The Ohaiv Yisrael. [Avraham Yehoshua Heshel born in Żmigród, Poland in 1748 and died in Mezhbizh, Russian Empire (now Ukraine) in 1825].

There was a Yid in trouble because he owed a goy money and could not pay it back. The goy threatened to have him imprisoned. So he went to The Apter Rav, who said that it is shortly Pesach. When you come to the Pasuk in the seder **וְנִצְעַק אֶל ה' אֱלֹקֵי אֲבֹתֵינוּ, וַיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת קֹלֵנוּ,** ***"And we cried out to hashem, … "And Hashem heard our voice"***

At that part in the seder, daven to Hashem for what you need. This is not just a part of the Haggada but is an opportune time for tefilla.

That is exactly what the guy did, and miraculously shortly later just as he was about to run away, there was a knock on his door and somebody gave him a large commission to look after his money for him. So, his tefillos were answered in shamayim.

So, when this little boy's father asked him what do you want to daven for? The boy replied. That he wants to daven for his booba who was not well. This is the time that I want to daven for her, so that she should get well and come home from the hospital. This is exactly what happened, and the boy's wish was fulfilled.

This is a segulah from the Apter Rav, and I think that it is something that we can all take advantage of. There are two other opportune places to daven. One just before the Ma Nistana when we say מַה נִּשְׁתַּנָּה... כַּאן הַבֵּן שׁוֹאֵל and when we open the door for Eliyahu Ha Navi.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

The Hagaddah ends with Chad Gadya, and since this is the end of the Seder, it seems that this piyut is the climax, the highest point of what we accomplish at the Seder (similar to Neilah, which is the climax of Yom Kippur). In what way does Chad Gadya encompass the lessons of the Seder?

Chad Gadya is a demonstration of justice being meted out. When we see the cat eat the goat, we wonder: Where is justice? Why should the cat enjoy a meal while the goat suffers? But in the end, the cat received her payback when the dog bit her. Likewise, we live in this world, and we don't see justice. We don't see the baalei aveirah punished and tzaddikim receiving reward. But there will come a time when Hashem's justice will be revealed, and it will become known that Hashem alone leads the world.

"The more we seek to connect with Hashem and live according to His will, the more we unlock our true potential and find true fulfillment in life," – Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto.

"Crumbs of Matzah" By Rabbi Shabtai Slavatitski

A certain Chabad rabbi led a large congregation, many of whom were Holocaust survivors. Each member had his own memories and problems, of course, but all of them learned to cope pretty much. Or so it seemed. Mr. Goldvasser (fictitious name) was a seemingly normal person - a good businessman with a healthy sense of humour a generous heart and a keen mind. However, he had one idiosyncrasy; he never remained in the synagogue for the Blessing of the Cohanim (Priests) on the holidays. The Rabbi was always a bit apprehensive about asking Mr. Goldvasser for an explanation, but when his curiosity finally became too great to resist he concocted a plan.



He invited the man to his home for a meal, and after they had eaten well, sang a few songs and made a few 'l'chaims,' he asked. "Tell me Mr. Goldvasser, I've noticed that you don't stay for the blessing of the Cohanim on the holidays. Am I right? Is there some reason? Is something wrong? I know it's not that important; it's just something I have been noticing for quite a while. You don't have to talk about it if you don't want to. I just wondered."

Mr. Goldvasser became silent, and it seemed that his eyes became glossy with some past vision, or perhaps with tears. "Well, Rabbi" he

began after almost a minute, "It was like this.... I was in Auschwitz. I can't explain what happened there, I think it's even forbidden to remember such things. But there was one person; we called him 'The Rabbi,' although we never knew if he was really ordained or not. No one knew his name, but he was different than all of us. He must have lost his family and everything just like the rest of us, but he never showed it. Not only that but he used to keep everyone's spirits up. If he saw someone depressed, he would say a good word. If you ever wanted to talk he would listen. He could listen forever. He always had a hand for a bent shoulder and a shoulder for someone to weep on, and a hug for a broken heart and even a joke to break the sadness.

Anyway, once it was getting close to Passover and he announced that we had to figure out a way to get matza. Matza! Everyone was thinking about dropping dead and he made us think of matzos. And it worked. Until finally, on the way to where they took us to work outside, someone noticed a few crumbs of matzot! It took a few days, but finally we found out that one of the prisoners had a job cleaning the house of one of the Nazi officers and when the German wasn't at home this Jew risked his life and made a matza for himself. If he got caught, he would have been killed for sure. Anyway, a few crumbs must have fallen there near the road and that's how we found out. It was a genuine miracle.

The Rabbi had a talk with this fellow and at first he said it was impossible; too dangerous. But finally, he agreed…and somehow he succeeded in making two more matzot. Another miracle! The Rabbi woke us all up for the Seder. It doesn't matter that we were about eight hundred men in that bunker. Do you hear? Eight hundred! But we were actually happy when the Rabbi woke us up at midnight and showed us those matzot. He broke them into pieces and handed them out, then each of us broke them into smaller pieces until each of us had a piece. Each person held his piece in his hand while the Rabbi

recited what he remembered from the Passover Haggada by heart, and we repeated after him.

Finally he finished the recitations and made the blessing on the matza. He ate and so did we - each one ate his crumb of matza. At first we were quiet, whispering so those German snakes wouldn't hear us, but after a few minutes we kind of forgot where we were, and began talking louder. When we realized, we became frightened. But then the Rabbi demanded our attention and spoke with fire: "Listen Jews! Listen my friends and my brothers. We just left Egypt! See! No one can break our spirit. No one! We are free!" He began to sing a song and to dance. He actually danced! It was not long till we were all dancing. Everyone, even the atheists! We were free.

But then the door came crashing open and the spell was broken. There stood a Nazi officer with a few soldiers behind him like mad dogs. "What is this?" He screamed, red with anger. "SINGING?!" He screamed even louder. "In Auschwitz you cry, you don't sing!" He pulled out a pistol, put it to the head of one of the prisoners and said "Tell me who is responsible or I'll kill you. I'll kill all of you one by one! Who is responsible for this?" Everyone knew it could happen. The Rabbi stepped forward and said in a loud, calm voice. "I am. I'm responsible. You can kill me." The officer motioned to his soldiers to grab the Rabbi, lowered his pistol, put it in its holster and said, "You won't die so fast, Jew. You will die tomorrow, in public by hanging."

They took the Rabbi away and early the next morning before dawn they woke us early and made the entire camp stand in the yard. There were several thousand prisoners and Nazi guards were everywhere with pointed guns. There in the middle, on a podium between two huge Gestapo guards stood the Rabbi.

The officer stood straight, hands behind his back, his chest jutting out and yelled. "Now, Jews, you will see what happens to someone who dances in Auschwitz. Everyone will watch! Do you understand?! Everyone! Anyone caught not watching will be killed on the spot!'

As they were putting the noose around the Rabbi's neck he turned to the officer and said in a clear voice for all to hear, "As a man about to be killed I demand my last wish! Doesn't a dying man get a last wish? Where is your honour?"

The commander hesitated, smiled as though amused, and said. "Last wish is it? Alright, Jew, what is your last wish?" "I am a Cohen," he answered. "So I want to bless the crowd." "Bless? Heh! And how long will this take?" "It will take half a minute, perhaps less," he replied. The officer looked at the soldier with the noose, made a motion with his head to wait, looked at the watch on his wrist and said, "You have thirty seconds." The Rabbi's voice was clear as a child's. He stood proudly straight, closed his eyes and raised his hands with his fingers spread in the special way of the Cohanim while blessing. The fifteen words of the blessing rang out like a voice from heaven. "Yivorechechaw, HaShem, V'yishmorechaw." We all burst out crying like babies and when he finished...well, it was over.

Goldvasser looked the Rabbi in the eyes and concluded, "That blessing is what kept me alive in Auschwitz, through the rest of the war and to this very day. It rings in my ears when there is no hope and shines in the darkness when all is lost. I never want to hear another Cohen's blessing. I never want to forget that pure blessing I heard. That is why I leave the Shul."

The Biggest Miracle by R' Joey Haber

Life needs miracles, and life has miracles. The greatest symbol of those miracles is the matzah, because whatever is on your mind right now, I promise you that the Jewish people in Mitzrayim had more on their minds. I promise you that their life was way more difficult.

The matzah that we hold still in our hands today, says that this is the same matzah that the Yidden held then at the most terrible, difficult time. It is on our table today. We are still eating it.

Miracles do happen! The greatest example that miracles do happen is the matzah that we eat on the seder night.

Never forget that you are the biggest miracle.

וְהִיא שֶׁעָמְדָה Rabbi Paysach Krohn

I am at the seder, and we are about to sing **וְהִיא שֶׁעָמְדָה**. All of a sudden, I start crying. Everybody is looking at me and wondering why in the world is he crying? This is the happiest moment of the seder. The reason that I was crying was because I said these words -- **שֶׁלֹּא אֶחָד בִּלְבָד עָמַד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ, אֶלָּא שֶׁבְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ** Not only is one nation trying to get rid of us, but in every generation they are trying to get rid of us.

I am thinking, Riboino Shel Olam, we lost so many people. We lost six million people. Is that not enough? What is in store for the next generation?

After everybody went to sleep, I took out every Haggada that I had to look up the commentaries on these words to find their true meaning. I couldn't understand them, and I needed some understanding of them.

Finally, I found what I was looking for in the Haggada of **The Chida**. He asks a wonderful question. What does the baal Haggada mean - **שֶׁלֹּא אֶחָד בִּלְבָד עָמַד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ, אֶלָּא שֶׁבְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ?** That in every generation they are trying to get rid of us. There were many generations that The Yidden got along very nicely in the non-Jewish world, and lived in peace and harmony?

Look at America today for instance, 100,000 people came together for the siyum hashas. We can come and go as we please. We have our own schools, shuls, kollelim etc.

The Chida answers that the destruction of every generation is not only by the sword, but by the smile!

When you look at a great country like America, you can get a job in any bank or any place that you want without worrying about Shabbos. The goyim are so friendly and smiley that we have a frightening amount of assimilation, worse that we have ever had at any time previously. Not because they are killing us physically, but just the opposite – they are smiling at us and accept us! We are losing so many people. This is what it means - **שֶׁבְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ.**

All of you know that I am a mohel. I was called to do a bris on Chol Hamoed Pesach. The father is an Italian goy. The mother is Jewish. After I did the bris, there was a reception. You had to see to believe what was on the table.

A box of matzos, right next to the box was a beigle platter. Right next to that was a cheese platter, and next to that was a meat platter. Every Aveiro that you can think of was right there on the table. Chometz, matzoh, meat, milk.

I was thinking, what does The Reboino Shel Olam think about a display like this? What does Eliyahu Hanavi say about a bris like this? How did this happen? … Because of the smile!

So, on Pesach, we have to make a commitment of what it means to be a Yid. We came out of Mitzrayim as a free nation, to serve hashem in anyway we please. The way that we do it is by learning Torah, davening to Hashem and becoming close to one another.

Never forget the special nation that you are part of.

Why the Seder must be told as a story

The Chasam Sofer explains that the mitzvah of sippur is not merely to list events but to enter the story emotionally.

"The Seder is structured so that each person becomes a participant in the Exodus. We recline, we taste bitterness, we break the matzah, we ask questions — because the heart is

moved not by abstract ideas but by lived experience. When a Jew tells the story with feeling, he binds himself to his ancestors and becomes part of the chain of redemption."

The Mouth That Speaks by R' Ilan Meirov



Pesach is all about the mouth. ***Pe – sach.*** A mouth that tells over. A mouth that speaks. This YomTov is only about the mouth. We don't have a Lulav and Esrog. We don't light a menorah. We only have our mouth.

We tell over the Haggada. We eat matzah and marror, and we drink four cups of wine. We do everything with our mouth.

What is the significance of this? You have to realise that the greatest power and weapon that The Riboino Shel Olam gave Am Yisrael, is the mouth and speech.

Your mouth can make or break your life, relationship or children. When we daven to Hashem, if we have a filthy mouth - a mouth that curses or speaks loshon horah, it will affect the tefillos.

The Zohar Hakadosh says that everything we say, goes up to shamayim. Curses or loshon horah are the things that gets stopped by the angels from reaching shamayim.

The Zohar says that the next time you daven and beseech Hashem, as the prayer goes up, the angel takes the curses and loshon horah and attacks the prayer and taints the tefilla. Rabboissai, keep your mouth clean - ***Pe – sach.*** It is a holiday of the mouth. ***Your mouth can have the power to bring the redemption.***

'The true test of bitachon appears precisely at the moment of difficulty. Does a person panic, or does he respond with calm and clarity, knowing Hashem is with him?' ~ The Chazon Ish.

למודי משה - R' Moshe Harris

קדש



The Pesach *seder* begins with kiddush, which is the first of the four cups of wine that we are required to drink. Rashi writes in *Pesochim* (99b) that these four cups correspond to the four expressions of redemption mentioned in the Torah (*Shem* 6:6-7).

However, this begs the question: even if we want to commemorate these four different expressions of freedom at the *seder*, why must we specifically do so by drinking four cups of wine as opposed to any other food item, such as eating four apples?

Rav Shlomah Zalman Auerbach famously explains that the four expressions of redemption aren't four different phrases connoting freedom, but four different levels of freedom, with each one being higher than the one below it. Therefore, *Chazal* specifically instituted a requirement to drink four cups of wine because wine is unique in that each additional glass isn't simply more of what we've already had, but rather it qualitatively brings additional joy and happiness.

With apples or any other food, this isn't the case, as each additional fruit is essentially the same as those which preceded it, and by the

third and fourth serving one is already accustomed to it and it adds little additional value. Because we are commemorating the four expressions of redemption and the fact that each represents a higher level of freedom and joy, wine is the appropriate means for doing so.

An alternative explanation I saw brought down from **R' Ozer Alport** is, that wine is unique in that it is made from grapes. In their state as grapes, there is nothing particularly special about them, and the *berachah* recited when eating them is the same as for any other fruit. Only after they have been crushed with the proper amount of pressure does their juice come out, at which point it must be left to ferment in the right environment so that it becomes wine and not vinegar.

In this sense, grapes are a perfect metaphor for the experience of the Jewish people in Mitzrayim. The Mitzriyim constantly crushed and squeezed the Jewish slaves, but their doing so was part of Hashem's master plan to subject the Jewish people to a **כור הבזרל** - iron furnace , in order to purify them and bring out their true greatness.

In fact, the very name Mitzrayim refers to constricting borders, which describes the experience of the Jewish slaves in Mitzrayim. However, just like the liquid secreted by the grapes, the Jews had a choice to succumb to the tests and trials and become vinegar, or to rise and overcome them to maximize their potentials by becoming wine. Because wine is unique in this regard and contains this symbolic message, *Chazal* specifically commanded us to use it to represent the four expressions of redemption.

Keeping The Children Awake and Interested

The Rambam brings different customs of how to keep the children awake and interested at the *seder*. The Rambam lists three things that are done.

1) Taking away the *seder* plate. (They used to physically carry away the *seder* plate before the meal began, nowadays some just cover it.)

2) Grabbing the *matzos*, which we do nowadays when the child steals the *afikomen.*

3) giving nuts and grain to the children.

We find a *remez* [hint] to the above on the *pasuk*: **ולמען תספר באזני בנך** (*Shemos* 10:2). **ולמען** has the *trop* of a *pozer,* giving out (i.e. the giving out of nuts and grain). **תספר** has the *trop* of a *telisha ketanoh* and *telisha* means grabbing, i.e. the grabbing of the *afikomen*. **באזני בנך** has the *trop* of *kadmoh v'azloh*, meaning you take and go which is a reference to taking the *seder* plate off the table and going. The children then ask questions as to why we are doing these three things.

The *Haggadah Yerusholayim Umoi'a'deha* brings down an interesting question. During the Aseres Yemai Teshuvah many people refrain from eating nuts as *egoiz* [nut] is *gematriya cheit* [sin] and during the Aseres Yemai Teshuvah we don't want to have any connection to *cheit*. So how come the first thing we give out to the children on *seder* night to keep them up is nuts?

He answers, during Aseres Yemai Teshuvah we are afraid of *cheit*, even a hint to *cheit* we will stay well away from. On *seder* night however, we are serving Hashem with great love and we are jumping into *kedushah*. We are not afraid of *egoiz* we are not afraid of *cheit*, we jump right into *kedushah* despite the *egoizim*, despite everything, that's *seder* night.

The *Shlah* writes that *seder* night was the night that Yaakov stole the *berachos* from Eisav. We know that Yitzchok asked for two

goats, one for *korban* Pesach and one for a *shelomim*. Yaakov came and gave Yitzchok the *korban* Pesach first. How could Yaakov be sure that when he leaves Yitzchok, Yitzchok wouldn't give a *berachah* to Eisav?

He said Eisav can't get a *berachah* unless he gives something to eat to Yitzchok, after all that's why Yitzchok asked for food in the first place. So Yaakov said I will give my father the *afikomon* and the *din* is: **אין מפטירין אחר הפסח אפיקומן** – "that one isn't allowed to eat after eating the *afikomen*". So Yaakov gave Yitzchok to eat until he had finished *afikomen* and now he was no longer able to eat and then ran out of the room. Eisav then comes in and says "come and eat". Yitzchok says "I can't eat anymore because I already had the *afikoman*".

What does Yitzchok say? בא אחיך **במרמה** ויקח ברכתך – "Your brother came with trickery and took the *berachos*" (*Bereishis* 27:35). Which trickery? *B'mirma* (2+40+200+40+5=287) is equal to the *gematria* of *afikomen* (1+80+10+100+6+40+50 =287).

The question is, why out of all the days of the year did Yitzchok specifically want to give the *berachos* on Pesach? The answer is, Pesach is the night of *kadeish urchatz,* Yitzchok knew that Eisav was no *tzaddik*, however, he was hoping to give him *kedusha*. What better night could there be then the night of *kadeish urchatz,* the night that wherever we are holding we can jump straight into *kedusha*.

This also explains why right after talking about the *chocham* we talk about the *rosha*. There most probably is not any other place in the Torah in which we discuss explicitly that a *rosha* participates in a mitzvah. Sometimes it says that a *mumar* is disqualified from a mitzvah. Sometimes it says nothing. But to just sit there and say that the *rosha* is part of the *seder*, how can it be?

The reason is, because it is Pesach by night and on this night we let the *rosha* jump in and we tell him that this night we are not afraid of night, we are not afraid of nuts, and we are not afraid of you. We

are not afraid of *reshoim*, because Pesach night is a night that a *rosha* can jump into *kedusha* and fulfil *mitzvos*, and that's why Yitzchok wanted to give the *berachos* to Eisav specifically on this night.

Seder night is the night of *kadeish urchatz*, a very special night where we can jump straight into *kedusha* without even needing to wash ourselves first. *Kadeish urchatz* is therefore in the right order. *Seder* night is all about jumping, and in fact the word Pesach itself means to jump.

So let's not waste the opportunity and lets jump straight in.

קדש ורחץ



We start off the *Haggadah* with the *simonim*, *kadeish*, *urchatz*, *karpas*… the 15 *simonim* of the *Haggadah*. It is interesting to note that only between *kadeish* and *urchatz* is there a '*vov*'. If we analyze the expression *kadeish urchatz* it seems to be an inverted expression.

Kadeish means to make oneself holy, and *urchatz* means to wash oneself off from the *tumah* that he has. Normally, when one wants to clean something, he first gets rid of the dirt and then adds the shine. The order should be *rochatz v'kadeish* why is it reversed?

The lesson of *seder* night is, that even though people often think that to reach levels of *kedusha* they must rid themselves of their *yetzer horah* and of all the things that drag them down, it's not true. The lesson of Pesach is that one can jump straight into *kedusha*.

Even if one feels unworthy and that the *yetzer horah* is dragging him down, *kadeish* just jump into the *kedushah*.

Where do we see this?

We see this from what happened to Klal Yisroel in Mitzrayim. Klal Yisroel jumped from the 49th level of *tumah* straight into *kedusha*. There was no big *teshuvah* movement at the time. In fact, at *krias* Yam Suf the *malochim* said, "these serve *avodah zorah* (Klal Yisroel) and these serve *avodah zorah* (Mitzriyim)" we see they were serving *avodah zorah* and even still a *shifcha* [maidservant] at the Yam Suf merited a greater level of prophecy than Yechezkel ben Buzi.

On Pesach we have to do what our forefathers did, and just jump straight into *kedushah*. After we jump into the *kedushah* then we can worry about *urchatz*, the getting rid of our *yetzer horah*.

מגיד -Why We Don't Make A Berachah On Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim

There is a famous question which everybody asks. The question is, why don't we make a *berachah* on the mitzvah of *sippur yetzias* Mitzrayim? The *rishonim* already ask this question and offer various technical reasons as to why not.

The *Sefas Emes* offers an explanation which helps shed some light on the idea of *seder* night. The *Sefas Emes* explains that in general we do not make a *berachah* on any mitzvah that is *bein adom l'chaveiro* [between man and his friend]. When it comes to a mitzvah which has to do with benefitting another human being, such as *tzedokah* or *kibbud av v'em* there is no *berachah*.

The reason is, because the Rambam teaches that when it comes to *mitzvos sichliyos* [logical *mitzvos*], a person should think to himself, that he would do the mitzvah whether he was commanded to or not. When it comes to the mitzvah of *tzedokah*, one has to think that he

would do it, whether he was commanded to or not. Similarly, when it comes to the mitzvah of *kibbud av v'em* one has to approach with the attitude that he would do it, whether commanded or not.

When there is a mitzvah which a person would do, even if he wasn't commanded, it is inappropriate to say a *berachah*, **אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו** , blessing Hashem for commanding us to do this mitzvah, because then it sounds like we are only doing it because we are commanded.

Based on the above, the *Sefas Emes* explains, that when we fulfil the mitzvah of *sippur yetzias* Mitzrayim, true it isn't a mitzvah *bein adom l'chaveiro,* nevertheless, the main idea behind the mitzvah is feeling *hakoras hatov,* and giving thanks to Hashem for taking us out of Mitzrayim. It's a *mitzvas sichli* [logical mitzvah] and it makes no sense to say **אשר קדשנו במצותיו.**

Thanking Hashem for taking us out of Mitzrayim is a very logical mitzvah and we would have done it even without being commanded, therefore, we don't make a *berachah*.

מה נשתנה

Towards the beginning of *Maggid* the youngest child present asks the *mah nishtanah*, which is a series of four questions that highlights various actions we do at the *seder* that differ from our conduct on all other nights of the year.

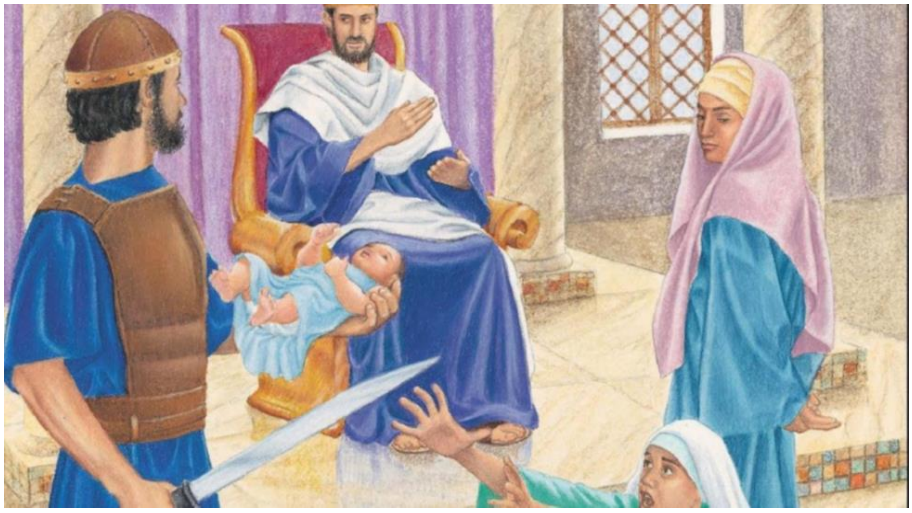
There is an unusual halachah that states that if for any reason a person finds himself alone at the *seder* with nobody to ask the *mah nishtanah*, he is required to ask himself these questions (*O.C* 473:7).

This obligation seems difficult to understand, as if we observe somebody engaged in conversation with himself, we would normally suspect that he has a psychiatric illness. If so, why did *Chazal* instruct a person to conduct the *seder* by talking to himself in such a manner?

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz explains that the mitzvah of *sippur yetzias* Mitzrayim is hard to properly fulfil. Typically, the purpose of sharing information with another person is to tell him something new that he does not already know. In this case, however, everybody at the *seder*, including the children, already knows the story of *yetzias* Mitzrayim. Moreover, the *Haggadah* explicitly states that even *talmiday chachomim*, who are certainly familiar with the details of *yetzias* Mitzrayim, are nevertheless obligated to recount it.

To make our performance of this mitzvah easier, *Chazal* said that it should be done in a question-and-answer format, as human nature is such that when we ask questions, we become emotionally involved and interested in hearing the answers.

HaRav Dan Lifshitz quotes **Rav Boruch Sorotzkin**, who adds, that the question-and-answer format benefits not only the child asking the questions, but also the parent answering them, as the process of teaching others helps us clarify our own understanding of a topic.



Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz uses the above concept to explain a well-known episode involving Shlomah HaMelech. The *Haftorah* for *Parshas Miketz* discusses a case of two women who gave birth, but one of their sons died. Each woman claimed that the living child belonged to her and the dead child belonged to the other woman.

After Shlomah listened to their arguments, the *Haftorah* records (*Melochim* 1, 3:23) that he repeated their words: "This woman said, 'This is my son and the dead son is hers,' and this woman said, 'This is my son and the dead son is hers.'"

The reason Shlomah did so is that when somebody repeats something and the words come out of his mouth, they feel more like his own words and he senses more of a connection to them.

Doing so helped Shlomah ensure that he would investigate both of their claims and positions with all of his focus in order to arrive at the correct ruling.

ואפילו כולנו חכמים מצוה עלינו לספר ביציאת מצרים

Prior to killing the Egyptian who was hitting one of the Jewish slaves, Moshe looked around in every direction to make sure there were no witnesses, yet somehow, his actions become known to Doson and Avirom.

When Moshe heard them casually invoke the fact that he had killed an Egyptian taskmaster, he became frightened and remarked: **הדבר אכן נודע**, which literally means, "Now the matter is known" (*Shemos* 2:14).

However, Rashi explains that this was Moshe's way of saying that now that he saw that there were evil Jews talking negatively about one another, he understood why they warranted such bitter and crushing enslavement, and he began to worry whether they would be deemed worthy of salvation. In other words, Moshe recognized that the sin of speaking badly about other Jews was powerful enough to prevent them from being redeemed.

In light of Rashi's interpretation, **Rav Yitzchok Hutner** explains (*Pachad Yitzchok* Pesach 1) that we can now appreciate why the mitzvah of *sippur yetzias* Mitzrayim (Shemos 13:8) is specifically done with one's mouth.

Chazal normally advise us (*Avos* 3:13): **סיג לחכמה שתיקה**, that wise people normally tend toward silence, so how come the *Haggadah* explicitly tells us: **וכל המרבה לספר ביציאת מצרים הרי זה משובח** – "that the more one talks, the more praiseworthy he is"?

The answer is, because on this night, the mitzvah is to be *mekadesh* the *dibbur*, to give holiness to one's speech, to make up for the Jews in Mitzrayim who were not careful with their speech.

With this insight we can also understand why, **ואפילו כולנו חכמים** – "even if we were all wise men", there is still a mitzvah to speak about *yetzias* Mitzrayim. Normally we would think the reverse, that even *am horatzim* have to speak about *yetzias* Mitzrayim, what does it mean "even *talmiday chachomim*"?

Based on the above we can explain that even though normally we say **סיג לחכמה שתיקה**, that a sign of wise man is silence, on this night even if we are all wise men there is a mitzvah to discuss *yetzias* Mitzrayim, and the more we do so, the more praiseworthy we are. Because our mission is to view ourselves as if we personally came out of Mitzrayim, we must rectify their sin of forbidden speech by using our mouths for *mitzvos*.

Purity of speech was an essential component of our deliverance from Mitzrayim, and it is a trait that we must work on developing within ourselves so that we too will merit the ultimate redemption.

וכל המרבה לספר ביציאת מצרים הרי זה משובח



The Torah says in *Parshas Bo*: **ואכלתם אותו בחפזון**, that the eating of the *matzah* in Mitzrayim was done in a rush. We usually picture *yetzias* Mitzrayim as a rush out of Mitzrayim, they weren't ready. However,

the *pasuk* says: **ואכלתם אותו בחפזון**, that they were commanded beforehand to eat in a rush.

How do you command someone to eat *matzah* in a rush?

There is a very interesting ***Chasam Sofer*** (*Toras Moshe, L'Yom Aleph shel* Pesach). He says there was a commandment to talk about *yetzias* Mitzrayim on that night. The *Chasam Sofer* says that the mitzvah was to talk about *yetzias* Mitzrayim as much as they could to the degree that in the end when it came time to eat *matzah* it would have to be last minute and they would have to rush to eat it in time.

The *Chasam Sofer* writes that we see that it stayed that way for generations, we talk about *yetzias* Mitzrayim and then we look at the clock and it's late and we have to hurry with eating the *matzah*. **ואכלתם אותו בחפזון** was a commandment to put their priorities in the right place. To put their priorities into the mitzvah of *sippur yetzias* Mitzrayim, even though it meant that they would have to eat *matzah, maror, korech, shulchan oreich* and *tzofun* in a big rush. That's how it was in Mitzrayim and that's how it should be today as well.

ברוך המקום ברוך הוא

R' Schwab in his only *dvar* Torah that he has on the *Haggadah* in his *Mayon Beis Hashoeva* points out, that the expression "Hamokom" is used in a number of places and that there is a common denominator between all the times it is used.

The expression "Hamokom" is used in *tziduk hadin* (when we show Hashem we are satisfied with what he did, even though it doesn't seem good). When Hashem seems to be doing something disappointing then we refer to Him as "Hamokom". Hashem is everywhere, even when we have disappointments in life, and we have to use such opportunities as a tool in serving Hashem as well.

We find most famously that we say: **המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון** – "Hamokom (Hashem) should comfort you amongst the other mourners of Tzion". We also have in *Berachos* (16b) the expression: **המקום ימלא לך חסרונך** – "Hashem should give you back what you lost." There is also a Gemara in Shabbos (12b), that when someone has a *tzorah* [tragedy] we say **המקום ירחם** – "Hashem should have mercy".

The idea behind using the expression of Hamokom in all these places, is because we are saying that even though things are very difficult and Hashem seems very distant, Hashem is everywhere and in whatever situation one finds himself, he can use it as a tool to serve Hashem.

With this introduction, R' Schwab explains why before we start the section of the *Haggadah* that talks about the four different types of sons we say **ברוך המקום ברוך הוא.**

When ones says the section of the *Haggadah* about the four types of sons, one hopes to have a *chochom* or numerous *chachomim* sitting around his table, however, that is not everyone's lot in this world. Hashem gives different people different challenges. There are some people who don't have a *chochom* at the table, rather they have a son who is a *tom* or *sh'aino yoidai'a lishol* or even *lo aleinu* a *rosha*. Some even unfortunately have no son at all.

How is one supposed to serve Hashem in such a situation?

ברוך המקום ברוך הוא ברוך שנתן תורה לעמו ישראל ברוך הוא - "Blessed is Hamokom, blessed be He, blessed is the one who gave the Torah to Klal Yisroel". Hashem gave the Torah to Klal Yisroel with instructions (**כנגד ארבעה בנים דברה תורה**), whatever comes your way, whatever life brings your way, Torah is there. Your disappointments in life are not outside of the Ribbono Shel Olam. Your disappointments in life are also tools in serving Hashem.

If someone has a disappointment, he should be able to look back at the end of his life and say I dealt with it the way the Torah wanted

me to deal with it. **ברוך המקום ברוך הוא** , Hashem is Hamokom, Hashem is everywhere, Hashem is at every *seder* table, no matter if there is disappointments, if there is excitement, if there are things that you would rather be different. Whatever your table is, use it as a tool for serving Hashem.

כנגד ארבעה בנים דברה תורה אחד חכם ואחד רשע ואחד תם ואחד שאינו יודע לשאול

The *Haggadah* teaches that the Torah addresses four different types of children and instructs us how to educate each of them about *yetzias* Mitzrayim. Specifically, we say that the Torah discusses four sons: one who is wise, one who is wicked, one who is simple, and one who does not know how to ask a question.

Rav Nissan Alpert questions why the *Haggadah* repeats the word, **אחד** – "one", for each son, instead of more concisely stating:

כנגד ארבעה בנים דברה תורה חכם רשע תם ושאינו יודע לשאול ?



Rav Alpert explains, that although it appears that we are talking about four different children, in reality we are actually speaking about one child who has four different facets to him. He suggests that this is alluded to by the fact that the numerical value of the word **אחד** - 13 multiplied by 4 (for the four times that this word is repeated) yields 52, which is the numerical value of the word **בן**

(son), hinting to the fact that each child is comprised of four different parts.

How can one person contain within him such disparate and even contradictory elements?

The answer is that children are still in their formative years and have not yet become established in their identities. Although they have many strengths and talents, they also have deficiencies. The parents job is to take each child, with his four different components, and raise him in a manner that will transform his latent potential into future success and accomplishments.

בשעה שיש מצה ומרור מנחים לפניך



There is a *moshul* brought down in the name of the **Bnei Yissaschar** which explains the symbolism of: **בשעה שיש מצה ומרור מנחים לפניך** – "[that one is supposed to fulfil the mitzvah of *sippur yetzias* Mitzrayim] whilst there is *matzah* and *maror* in front of him".

The Bnei Yissaschar told a story of a wealthy man who had a daughter as an only child. When it came time for her to find a *shidduch*, he went to look for a *talmid chochom* for his daughter. He travelled to a *yeshiva* where the *rosh yeshiva* informed him of an extraordinary *talmid* of the *yeshiva* who was very *matzliach* [successful] in his learning.

This man came from a very poor family, however, the wealthy man said that it didn't matter as he was prepared to support the young man. He met with him and spoke to him in learning and was very

impressed. He took the young man back home to meet his future *machutonim*.

The wealthy man met his future *machutonim* and said he is prepared to make the *teno'im* [engagement]. The poor man said I am sorry, but I have nothing to make a *lechaim* with; I only have some old bread. The wealthy man said ok let us each make a *berachah* on the old bread and we will make a *lechaim* to celebrate the *shidduch*.

Subsequently, the wealthy man asked his new *eidim* [son in law] for one of his old shirts so that he could take it to a tailor to get some new shirts made for him.

The *chosson* got married and moved into the town of the wealthy father-in-law. There came a point in time some years later that there was friction between the father-in-law and son in law. The father-in-law had prepared for just such a moment and took out the old ripped shirt that he had taken to the tailor to make new ones with and said to his son-in-law; don't forget from where you come, you are dependent on me and listen to what I tell you.

Not to be outdone, the son in law pulls out of his pocket some old dried out bread. The son in law said, remember how much you wanted me for a son in law that you even made a *lechaim* with this? They looked at each other and remembered how much each side wanted the other and embraced lovingly.

The **מצה ומרור מנחים לפניך** – "*matzah* and *maror* that we have in front of us on *seder* night" represents the same idea. The Ribbono Shel Olam says, look at the *maror*, look what I redeemed you from, such a difficult time.

Then Klal Yisroel show Hashem the *matzah* and say, Ribbono Shel Olam, you wanted us to rush out of Mitzrayim so fast that we couldn't even prepare bread, instead we took out this dry piece of *matzah*. The dry piece of *matzah* is a symbol of how much Hakadosh

Baruch Hu desired us. The *matzah* and *maror* represents the love between Klal Yisroel and the Ribbono Shel Olam.

"Everything that happens to us in life is by divine providence, and there is always a purpose for it, even if we cannot see it at the time." – Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

מלמד שהיו ישראל מצוינים שם

We *darshen* in the *Haggadah* that Klal Yisroel in Mitzrayim were *matzuyonim*. What does it mean they were *matzuyonim*? It means that Klal Yisroel stood out, they were noticeable, and they were distinctive.



The difficulty is, Klal Yisroel were on the 49th level of *tumah,* what distinctiveness could possibly be praiseworthy of Klal Yisroel?

We see from here a big lesson. No one is perfect, we all have a *yetzer horah* and at some time or another most people do *aveiros*. However, there are two types of reactions to a person who realizes that he has a *yetzer horah* and that he is doing an *aveirah*. There is one group of people who do *aveiros* and because of that they rationalize and they say oh you don't really have to keep the Torah, it is not so important.

There is another group however, who do *aveiros*, but they realize that what they are doing is wrong, however, they had a strong *tievos*

[desire] and they couldn't hold themselves back. There is a very big difference between the two groups.

Those Yidden who were in Mitzrayim who did *aveiros* and fell to the 49th level of *tumah*, had they become like the Mitzriyim and started to dress and talk like the Mitzriyim then they would have pulled themselves away from Klal Yisroel forever, like what happened later with the Greeks. The *Misyavnim* became like the Greeks and disappeared from Klal Yisroel forever.

מלמד שהיו ישראל מצוינים שם means, that even when Klal Yisroel did *aveiros*, they didn't change their dress code, they didn't change their names and they didn't even change the way they spoke, they stayed *metzuyanim*.

It is important, even when a person has a weakness in *avodas* Hashem that the way he dresses and the way he talks and his mannerisms should stay like that of *ben* Torah.

The lesson of **מלמד שהיו ישראל מצוינים שם** is that one has to stay with the attitude of a *ben* Torah no matter where in the world he may be found at the moment.

צפרדע



The Gemara in *Pesochim* (53b) relates that the righteous Chananya, Mishoel, and Azarya allowed themselves to be thrown into a fiery oven rather than flee or bow down to Nevuchadnezzar's idolatrous statues.

The Gemara explains that they derived the propriety of their conduct from the frogs in Mitzrayim. They reasoned that if the frogs, which did not have a mitzvah to die *al kiddush* Hashem, nevertheless willingly entered the Egyptians' hot ovens, they, who had such a mitzvah, should certainly be willing to perform it by being thrown into the burning furnace rather than transgress or flee.

The *Shagas Aryeh* questioned the above *kal v'chomer*. Although it is true that the frogs did not have a mitzvah to make a *kiddush* Hashem, they were commanded to jump into various places, one of them being the ovens. If so, how could Chananya, Mishoel, and Azarya derive a source for their actions from the frogs when they did not have any similar explicit instructions to enter the fiery oven?

At the age of **seven**, the **Vilna Gaon** answered that the *pasuk* simply states that there must be some frogs in each of these locations. However, no individual frog was commanded to enter any specific place. Therefore, every single frog could have exempted itself from entering the ovens with the claim that it would infest a more comfortable location and leave the ovens for the other frogs.

From the fact that we nevertheless find that individual frogs were willing to enter the ovens even though they were not explicitly commanded to do so, Chananya, Mishoel, and Azarya were able to derive the propriety of their actions.

Upon hearing this clever answer, the excited *Shagas Aryeh* picked up the young Vilna Gaon and kissed him on the forehead.

Applying this brilliant insight on a practical level, the ***Darchei Mussar*** notes that many times a teacher, parent, or communal organization asks for volunteers to assist with a project or act of kindness. Not a single hand goes up as each person excuses himself with the thought that somebody else can do it.

The Vilna Gaon teaches that we must learn from the frogs to take responsibility to personally see to it that the job gets done properly.

Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes it's the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, "I will try again tomorrow." ~ Inspired by the teachings of Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner (1906-1980)

"Sometimes a kind word or a small gesture is all someone needs to remind them they are not alone. Never overlook the power of small acts of kindness." ~ Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky (1891-1986)

חסל סדור פסח



In the *Nirtzah* section of the *Haggadah*, we declare **חסל סדור פסח** , which is normally translated as, "We have completed the Pesach *seder*." However, the verb **חסל** is normally associated with ending something in the sense of destroying it, as in (*Devorim* 28:38) **כי יחסלנו הארבה** – "for the locust will devour it".

Similarly, in modern Hebrew, the word **חסל** means "to assassinate." Why do we use this unusual term that seems to imply the destruction of the Pesach *seder*?

Rav Yisroel Reisman explains that in addition to proclaiming that we have successfully finished the Pesach *seder*, we are also including a hidden *tefillah* that Hashem should destroy the *seder* that we have today. We allude to our hope that this will be the last time we have a *seder* in *golus* without the ability to eat the *korban* Pesach, as we beseech Hashem to rebuild the *Beis HaMikdosh* and return the *korban* Pesach that we are presently unable to offer, may it be speedily in our days.

"Never cease to implore your heavenly father. The more you speak to Him as a father, the more He will hold that role. ~ The Maggid of Mezritch.

Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant

Lessons from the matzah



There many lessons that we need to learn from the *matzah*. The *Shulchan Aruch* (459:2) states: **לא יניחו העיסה בלא עסק ואפילו רגע אחד** – "Don't leave the dough idle – even for a moment – without kneading the dough…".This is because as long as the dough is kneaded, it won't become *chometz*, but when it is left alone, it can become *chometz*.

The Satmar Rebbe *zt'l* said that this alludes to the virtue of always being active, to always do something for *avodas* Hashem. As *tzaddikim* say, "If you don't have the strength to learn Torah, say *Tehillim*. If you don't have strength for saying *Tehillim*, give *tzedokah*…".

As we say at the beginning of *Pirkei Avos*, **רצה הקב"ה לזכות את ישראל לפיכך הרבה להם תורה ומצוות** – "Hakadosh Boruch Hu wanted Bnei Yisroel to have many merits, therefore He gave them a large Torah with many *mitzvos*…". With its 613 *mitzvos*, the Torah enables a

person always to be involved in Hashem's service, no matter where he is, and no matter what is happening in his life.

Rebbe Zusha of Anipoli *zt'l* said that there are three lessons we should learn from children:

1) If you want something, continue crying until you get it.

2) When your needs are met, be happy.

3) Always be active.

The *matzah* teaches us several lessons: The letters of **מצה** and **חמץ** are almost the same. The only difference is in the **ה** and the **ח**. The *heh* is broken. **Rebbe Shlomo Dovid of Slonim *zt'l*** says that the broken **ה** hints to a broken heart and to humility.

The close similarity between the letters of **חמץ** and **מצה** tells us that it is often hard to differentiate between *kedushah* and *tumah*, and that is how the *yetzer horah* ensnares people. As the *Meor Einayim* writes, "*Kedushah* is called *matzah*, and the *kelipah* is called *chometz*". There's barely a difference between them, other than the small drop that differentiates a *ches* from a *heh*.

This is because the *yetzer horah* generally doesn't tell a person to do an *aveirah* because who will listen to him? Rather, the *yetzer horah* tells him that an *aveirah* is a mitzvah…". The *yetzer horah* convinces him that an *aveirah* is a mitzvah, and that is the great test.

We can also say that the small difference between the **ח** and **ה** indicates that with a drop of good, one can reach very high levels. We shouldn't underestimate the value of one good deed or one *kabolah tovah*.

וחמושים עלו בני ישראל



At the beginning of *Parshas Beshalach* it says that when Klal Yisroel left Mitzrayim, they were **חמושים** (*Shemos* 13:18). Rashi cites two interpretations of the word **חמושים** . There are in fact at least three seemingly disparate interpretations of this word found among the *meforshim*.

According to one interpretation in Rashi, **חמושים** comes from the word **חומש** (one-fifth) and indicates that only one fifth of the Jewish population in Mitzrayim merited to leave, while the other eighty percent died during the three days of (*makkas choshech*).

The *Targum Yerushalmi* interprets the word **חמושים** to mean they were armed. Rashi alludes to this interpretation, but seems to interpret it to mean that they were literally armed with weapons. The *Targum Yerushalmi*, on the other hand, interprets it figuratively – they were 'armed with good deeds'.

The Targum *Yonasan ben Uziel* gives a third interpretation: **חמושים** means that everyone went out with five children.

Superficially, these are three disparate interpretations: (a) one-fifth of the population left; (b) armed with good deeds; (c) bringing along five children each.

The interpretation of the *Targum* Yonasan ben Uziel is statistically mind- boggling. Shall we presume that everyone had exactly five children? In addition, even if that was the family size of each family unit, but the implication is that they were all children, of roughly the same age! What is the meaning of this?

Rav Yosef Salant gives a beautiful interpretation. He links all three seemingly independent interpretations of the word **חמושים** into a single narrative with a single theme.

He writes that if four-fifths of the Jewish people died during *makkos choshech*, one can likely presume that specifically the adults died. Granted, the adults might have sinned and been unworthy of *yetzias* Mitzrayim, but how can we speak of the "sins of young children"?

Therefore, Rav Salant suggests that the children of these 'wicked Jews' did not die, which would imply that four-fifths of the Jewish children at the time of *yetzias* Mitzrayim were orphans.

Imagine the scene – tens of thousands of little Jewish orphans wandering around. Who is going to take care of them? What is going to be with them?

The answer is that every one of the remaining Jewish families 'chipped in' and said, "We'll take these orphans with us." Thus, mathematically, every remaining family adopted four families worth of orphans. Therefore, when the *Targum* Yonasan ben Uziel says "five children", he does not mean that everyone went out with five children. He means that everyone went out with five families worth of children – their own set and the set of four other families worth of orphans whose parents died during *makkos choshech*!

This then fits in perfectly with the interpretation of the *Targum Yerushalmi* – they went out armed with good deeds! The good deeds were the fact that they adopted the poor orphans left over from the people killed during the ninth plague.

The *Targum* Yonasan ben Uziel is suggesting an amazing thing, which was a source of extraordinary merit. Consider that after the Holocaust, there were undoubtedly thousands of orphans. What happened to these kids? This is equivalent to everyone who survived the Holocaust taking in X number of orphans. Anyone who takes in

an orphan is doing an amazing act of *chessed*. However, we must understand that these people were refugees themselves. They were not people who were living a normal life who then decided to "take in a few orphans". These were displaced people themselves. These people did not know where tomorrow's bread was coming from!

When Klal Yisroel adopted the attitude "We can't leave these kids in Mitzrayim" and dismissed all the natural concerns about their own welfare and the welfare of their own families in a time of great uncertainty, this was a tremendous act of courage and selflessness. This brought them great merit. This "armed them" with the merit of great acts of kindness.

Thus, all three interpretations: "one-fifth", "five children", and "armed with acts of kindness" dovetail together, according to the insight of Rav Yosef Salant.

I Just Need You – Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein Zt'l

כי-חולת אהבה אני - ***I am lovesick***. That is all Shloime Hamelech said: - Just tell G-d, "I love You. I just need You." (Shir Hashirim 2:5)

["*Shir Hashirim" is one of the five megillos. It is attributed to Shloime Hamelech. It records poetic conversations between two people, describing their pursuit of each other through vineyards and fields of blossoming flowers. It is traditionally understood as a metaphor for the loving relationship between Hashem and the B'nei Yisrael and is often read publicly on Pesach or on Shabbos evening.]*

And if that's your prayer, you don't even have to tell Him what you need. Because if my daughter says, "Father, I just need you. I love you dad, more than anything else in the world." I will take care of her needs. She won't need to ask me or tell me. I will ask **her** what **she** needs.

It is so comforting to know that there Hashem is looking out for us all the time. He knows our needs and wants. He has the ability to help us with everything. When we do receive the help we need, it is because of His loving kindness. Even if we do not receive the help we want, it is also because of His loving kindness. He decided that at this moment it would be in our best interest not to receive what we desire. However, the knowledge that we could be helped at any moment gives us chizuk for the future.

There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up.

Happiness doesn't result from what we get, but from what we give.



Rabbi Elimelech Biderman – Chad Gadya

Reb Yankele of Pshevorsk *zt'l* from Belgium told me the following:

At the end of a Pesach Seder, 2:30 a.m., a scholarly son-in-law became very emotional when *Chad Gadya* was recited. His unlearned father-in-law watched his son-in-law's excitement and asked, "What is *Chad Gadya* all about?"

The son-in-law replied, "A father bought a goat for two *zuzim*. A cat ate it…" and told him the story.

The father-in-law didn't understand, so the son-in-law repeated the story. But the father-in-law still didn't understand. The son-in-law replied, "There are a lot of secrets in *Chad Gadya*."

The father-in-law agreed. "I always knew that *Chad Gadya* has a lot of secrets."

Now it was the son-in-law's turn to be impressed.

"What secrets did you find in *Chad Gadya*?"

"I'm seventy years old, and you can't sell me *lokshen*. You can't fool me.

A goat costs at least 100 *zuz*. Why was it sold for two *zuzim*? And why was it sold at 2:30 a.m.? Who does business at this unearthly

hour? So, I understood that the goat was sold secretively on the black market. That market is open at 2:30 a.m., and in that market, one can buy a goat for two *zuz*."

The lesson is as follows:

Some people feel dejected. They ask, "How can our mitzvos compare to those of tzaddikim generations ago? What can we accomplish with our paltry, imperfect deeds?

However, just as at the black market, one can find amazing bargains. Similarly, when the world is dark, in a spiritual sense, every small deed accomplishes so much!

The Fascinating History of Coffee and the Jews By Yehuda Shurpin

Coffee originated in the Ethiopian highlands and then spread east to the Arabian peninsula. But it was not until around the 15th century that roasted coffee beans, and the beverage made out of them, became popular.



In those days, coffee was not brewed at home but rather in coffeehouses, which were springing up everywhere. By the 17th century, coffee had made its way to Europe and had become popular across the continent as well as in the New World.

Jews, too, became very involved in the coffee trade. In fact, according to some historians, coffee was first introduced in England by a Jew named Jacob, who opened a coffeehouse in Oxford in 1650. This drink was so strongly associated with the Jewish people that the chief rabbi of Egypt, Rabbi Avraham ben Dovid Yitzchaki (1661–1729), referred to it as the "Jewish beverage."

Paralleling the spread and popularity of coffee, many fascinating halachic questions arose regarding this beverage. The following are just some of the halachic issues concerning coffee.

Cooked By Jews

The very first recorded responsum addressing coffee seems to be from Rabbi David ibn Zimra (the Radbaz, c.1479–1589), the leading rabbi in Egypt and later in Safed, Israel.

There is a halachic principle that Jews may only eat food cooked by fellow Jews, known as *bishul Yisrael*. Now, this does not apply to foods that are either ordinarily eaten raw or are inferior and not "fit to be served at a king's table."

Thus, the question was asked: Is coffee a royal beverage and therefore only kosher if cooked by a Jew?

The Radbaz started off his responsum by explaining that he researched coffee and concluded that it was indeed served at the tables of kings and ministers and never consumed raw.



Nevertheless, he ultimately ruled that there was no concern of *bishul Yisrael* concerning coffee. This issue was further discussed by rabbis of subsequent generations and most concurred with his ruling. One of the main reasons given is that coffee mostly consists of water and is not a food. There are, however, some who are strict and refrain from drinking coffee brewed by a non-Jew.

This leads us to another question regarding coffee.

What Blessing Is Said?

Generally, if one cooks fruits or vegetables in a liquid, the blessing on the liquid would be the same as the blessing made over the fruit or vegetable. Since coffee beans grow on a tree, the question arose whether one should make the blessing of *Ha'etz* before coffee, just as one would do before enjoying a tree fruit.

In the final analysis, however, the blessing over coffee is *Shehakol*. One reason for this is that the above-mentioned rule only applies when the fruit is cooked with the intent of consuming it together with the liquid, such as a fruit compote.

In this case, however, the beverage is never enjoyed together with the coffee beans and therefore becomes a separate item with a separate blessing.

After-Blessing Following a Hot Drink

Although we recite a blessing before eating or drinking any amount, when it comes to making a *berachah acharonah*, one must eat or drink

a specific quantity in a specific time frame. Now, when it comes to food, this is generally not too difficult since the time frame is to eat food equal to the size of an olive in about 3-4 minutes (this time frame is known as *bichdei achilat peras*). However, according to many, the time frame for beverages is to drink a *revi'it* (approx. 3 oz.) in the time it takes to normally drink that amount of liquid (30 seconds or even less). As such, this rule would pose a difficulty when it comes to hot beverages such as coffee, which are usually sipped slowly.

Indeed, there are some who rule that if you just sipped the hot beverage and didn't consume it in the very short time frame, you would not make an after-blessing. Others suggest leaving the last three ounces of coffee in your cup and, once it's cooled off a bit, drinking it in one shot.

However, **Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi** rules that in terms of making an after-blessing, liquids have the same time frame as solid foods (*bichdei achilat peras).* So as long as you drank the required amount in that time frame, you would still make a blessing after sipping your coffee.

Coffee With Non-Jews

As coffee and coffeehouses became popular, another concern arose: As a rule, the rabbis forbid drinking beer and other alcoholic beverages in places frequented by non-Jews (such as in their bars or homes) due to the concern that this can lead to intermarriage.

Does this enactment apply to a common coffeehouse as well?

Ultimately, many authorities are lenient for multiple reasons, including the argument that the enactment only applies to intoxicants. However, they caution that a pious person should take care not to frequent non-Jewish coffeehouses, at least not regularly.

Making Coffee on Shabbat

With the advent of home-brewed coffee, the issue arose as to whether coffee may be brewed on Shabbat.

It is clear that grinding beans and cooking are forbidden. Generally speaking, once water has been poured from the urn into a second vessel and from there into a third vessel, it has cooled to the point where it is not hot enough to cook.

As such, when using instant coffee, one should pour hot water from the urn (which has been on since before Shabbat began) into a dry cup, and from there into a second dry cup, where it is mixed with the coffee (and milk and sweetener).

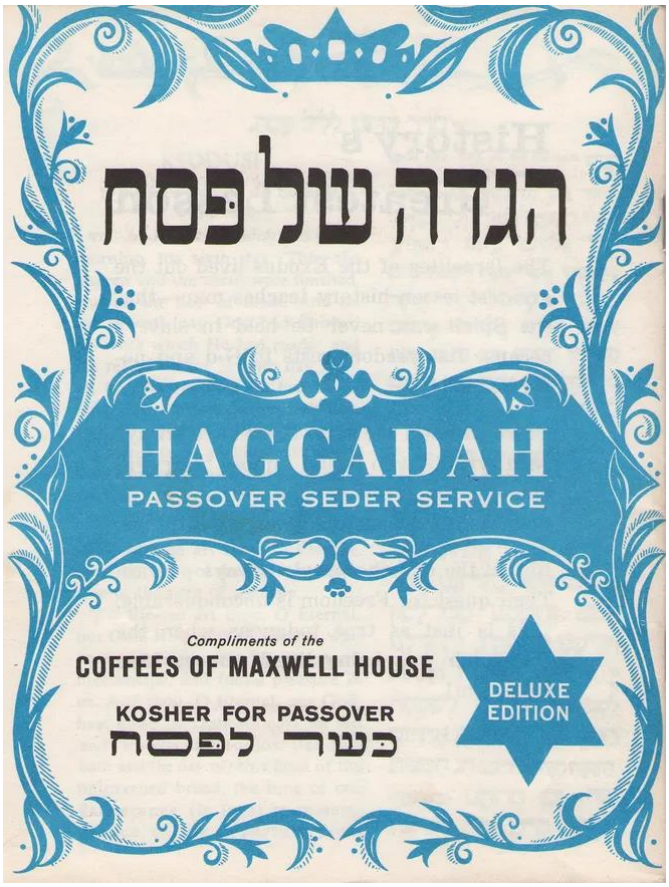
When using the pour-over method, one would do the same: Pour the water into a dry cup, and from that cup, pour the water over the grinds.

Kashrut of Coffee

Plain, black, unflavored coffee is essentially kosher as long as one can ascertain that no milk, creamer or flavor was added. Additionally, the utensils used to make the coffee cannot have been used to make other non-kosher foods or beverages.

(Interestingly, this issue is addressed in the very first responsum about coffee cited earlier. The conclusion was that the pots used to roast and make the coffee were used exclusively for coffee and posed no concern, but much has changed since then.)

Coffee on Passover



Since it is the custom of Ashkenazi Jewry to avoid the consumption of *kitniyot* (certain beans and legumes) on Passover, the question arose as to whether coffee falls under this category.

Some halachic authorities mistakenly thought that coffee beans were actual beans. In fact, coffee beans are the seeds of a cherry-like fruit, and there isn't an issue of *kitniyot*.

Nevertheless, there were some who were strict and would only drink coffee that had been ground before the holiday. They feared that since coffee is referred to as a "bean," people would assume that bona fide beans are permitted on Passover.

According to all, coffee enjoyed on Passover must be free of *chametz*. This is particularly an issue with regard to decaffeinated coffee, which is often processed with ethyl acetate, which can be derived from *chametz*. Thus, decaf coffee must bear a kosher-for-Passover certification in order to be used on Passover.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt - Pesach Greetings





Before Purim, we wish others "Freilichin Purim" and prior to Pesach we tell others to have a Kosher Pesach.

R' Dovid Cohen (born in 1932) related that in Ukraine, where his parents were from, they would say "Have a Kosher Purim" since many get drunk. Wishing a Freilichin Purim wasn't necessary since it will be Freilich as everyone is in good spirits on Purim.

On the other hand, when it comes to Pesach, the way people work to prepare for it, they don't have to worry about it being Kosher. However, they need to make sure that it will also be Freilich. Consequently, they would wish each other a Kosher Purim and a Freilichin Pesach.

In the greeting Chag Kosher V'Sameach, many need to emphasize the Sameach part, as preparing for Pesach can be more stressful than usual due to the quest of cleaning for Chametz.

L'Maaseh

In certain communities, people are careful to only use water which was drawn before Pesach, considering freshly drawn water 'chometzdik'.

R' Aharon Leib Shteinman zt"l was one of those people who were strict in adhering to this chumrah. One Pesach, his wife forgot to prepare an ample supply of water to last them though the entire Pesach and she was extremely distraught. R' Aharon Leib assured

her that there was nothing to worry about, since that was an old custom based on the reality in Europe, but now that they were in Eretz Yisroel, there was no reason to be particular about this. He had only kept up the practice because that is what he was used to, and so the Shteinman family used water from the faucet for Pesach that year.

The next year, R' Aharon Leib made sure that they didn't prepare any water in advance, and this went on for decades, until the Pesach after the rebetzin was no longer in this world, at which point, he asked his family to prepare water in advance of yom tov.

He explained that had he returned to his original custom at any point while his wife was still alive, she would have realized that he was only being lenient for her sake, and she would have felt bad for forgetting so many years before.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

רָשָׁע מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר?

The *rasha* of the *Haggadah* asks (*Shemos* 12:26) **מה העבודה הזאת לכם** - "***Why do you do this work?***"

The Pele Yoetz explains that the *rasha* is asking why are you so *machmir* on Pesach? Why do you go beyond the letter of the law?

We tell the *rasha*, **אילו היה שם לא היה נגאל** "***If you were in Mitzrayim, you wouldn't be redeemed***." We were redeemed because of our chumros and for going beyond the letter of the law.

The Meshech Chachmah writes that we have many chumros on Pesach, more than the rest of the year because it is because of the chumros of the Yidden in Mitzrayim to live separately as Yidden, which was their merit to leave Mitzrayim.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה



Somebody told us a story at the shivah of my shver **Dayan Gershon Lopian, zt"l** (1938-2014).

Somebody made a l'chaim in shul just after Pesach. Afterwards, I saw the Dayan around the back of the shul, pouring the bottle of whiskey down the drain! I thought what a waste, as I was at the l'chaim, and I knew that this was a very expensive bottle of whiskey, and the Dayan liked whiskey.

I thought maybe he'd lost his mind! I interrupted his flow, and asked him what he is doing?

He said, "I'm pouring the whiskey down the drain."

I said, "I can see that, but it is a very expensive whiskey, it cost a fortune, why are you pouring it away?"

He told me, it's **חמץ של ישראל שעבר עליו הפסח** and it's **אסור בהנאה.**

So I said, "How do you know?"

So, in his inimitable style he replied, "Well, I sell the chametz in this shul, and I know for a fact, that the man that bought this whiskey, didn't sell his chametz."

I said, "But, maybe he bought it after Pesach?" "Yes, good, but When I saw this rare whisky, I asked him where he got it from, and he told me that he bought it in Duty Free during his winter holiday."

"I don't understand – this guy just made a l'chaim after davening- I was there! I drank from that whiskey, and you are telling me that it's **חמץ של ישראל שעבר עליו הפסח**? – Why didn't you announce this publicly, to stop everyone drinking it?"

My Shver replied that " **חמץ של ישראל שעבר עליו הפסח** is a **דְּרַבָּנָן** (some even hold that whiskey is is *taaroves chometz)* – whereas shaming another Yid is a **דְּאוֹרַיְתָא**!



Why the *Seder* is Called So?

Why is the Pesach *seder* referred to as such? Why don't we call it something else?

R' David Moshe HaKohen *zt"l* (son-in-law of the last Radomsker Rebbe) offers the following explanation:

Regarding all foods prohibited by the Torah, there is a minimum amount that one must eat before he is considered to have transgressed. (Usually, that amount is a *ke'zayis* [the volume of an olive].) *Chometz* however is different and is prohibited down to the smallest morsel. Also, in no case where the Torah prohibited eating a particular food did the Torah prohibit owning the food. No other food-related prohibition requires us to search for the contraband and destroy it. Why does *chometz* have these unique requirements?

The *Radvaz* famously answers this by referring to the Medrash which alludes to a connection between *chometz* and the *yetzer horah*. Just as *chometz* rises, the *yetzer horah* causes a person to

"rise," i.e., to become haughty. Just as one is supposed to uproot every vestige of the *yetzer horah* from within himself, so one must uproot every vestige of *chometz* from his house.

There are four ways to interpret the Torah: *peshat* - the simplest explanation, *remez* – allusion (e.g., *gematria*), *drush* - homiletics, and *sod* - the esoteric meaning. It seems, however, notes R' David Moshe, that there is no "simple" explanation for the severity of the prohibition of *chometz*. The *peshat* is missing, and all that is left is the "*SeDeR*" – *sod, drush* and *remez*. (*Haggadah Tiferes Shlomah*)

The Mitzvah Kibud Av V'eim

The mitzvah of kibud av v'eim is very great. It is a mitzvah that is as valuable as gold. And people can clearly see with their own eyes that it carries a great reward in this world, either providing serenity or success in all of one's endeavours or granting a person a long life."

Sefer B'didi Hava Uvda relates that one Pesach night, **Rav Yissochor Dov of Belz zy"a** was leading the seder, with his family seated around the table. As is the minhag, he did some unusual things in order to get his son to ask what was different about this night. However, his 4-year-old son, Aharon – who would later become the famed **Rav Ahrele of Belz zy"a** – only looked at his father in curiosity and he did not say a word.

Finally, Rav Yissochor Dov said to his son, "Aren't you wondering why I am doing these strange things? Don't you want to ask me anything?" The boy answered, "Yes, I was wondering why you were acting so funny. But I didn't ask because - ***we don't question our father***."

"To clarify one subtle point in emunah is worth more than anything else that I might teach." - Rambam

A Clever *Pshat* in An Interesting Gemara and a Great Reason Why We Have Four Cups by the *Seder*

ומושב בני ישראל אשר ישבו במצרים שלשים שנה וארבע מאות שנה – "Now the sojourning of the people of Yisroel, who dwelt in Egypt, was 430 years" (*Shemos* 12:40).

The Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 91a) describes a legal claim the Egyptians brought before Alexander the Great. They were trying to recoup the vast fortune that the Yidden had taken from Mitzrayim at Moshe's behest. Their argument was that the Jews had only borrowed this great wealth, and now it needed to be returned.

Geviha ben Pesisa advocated on behalf of the Jews. His counterclaim was that 600,000 people left Egypt (*Shemos* 12:37), who had been in Egypt for 430 years. Geviha demanded, "Pay us wages for that many people working for those many years." After thinking it over for three days, the Egyptians realized that whatever was taken from their country was not adequate compensation for all those years of servitude.

Case dismissed!

The *Maharsha* asks: We did not work in Mitzrayim for 430 years. We weren't even there that long; we were only in the country for 210 years. And most of those years were not spent as slaves. When we first descended to Egypt, we were treated royally. We were the family of Yosef, the saviour of Egypt. Only after all the *shevotim* died did the mistreatment begin.

In fact, the Medrash (*Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 2:11) writes that there were only 86 years of hard work. (The *gematria* of **אלה-ים** , which alludes to *Middas HaDin*, is 86.) These years began from the birth of Miriam, Moshe's older sister; that is why she was called Miriam, which comes from the root of **מר** , bitter, since that was when the Egyptians began to embitter the lives of the Jews, as it is written,

וימררו את חייהם בעבדה קשה – "They embittered their lives with hard work" (*Shemos* 1:14).

So how could Geviha ben Pesisa state that we were there for 430 years and claim wages for all those years? The *Maharsha* says that the 86 years were so harsh that it was like 430 years.

Rav Marcus Lehmann, in his *Haggadah shel Pesach*, explains it differently. It's true that we did not work for 430 years, but only 86. On the other hand, although 600,000 people left Egypt, five times that amount did the actual work.

The Torah tells us, **וחמשים עלו בני ישראל מארץ מצרים** – "And the Children of Yisroel were armed when they went up from Egypt" (*Shemos* 13:18). Rashi gives an alternative definition for the word *chamushim*, armed. **חמשים** can come from the word **חמשה** , which means five; one fifth of the Bnei Yisrael ascended from Egypt, while four fifths died during the Plague of Darkness.

Thus, three million people worked for 86 years, which is the same as 600,000 people working for 430 years: 600,000 x 5 = 3,000,000; and 86 x 5 = 430.

Geviha ben Pesisa did not have to fear that the Egyptians would question the validity of his claim, even though he said that the Jews had been in Egypt for 430 years. For if they would have countered that this was not the case, he could have brought up the abovementioned fact.

Rav Lehmann writes that based on this, we can bring a hint to why we have four cups at the *seder*.

כוס , cup, is 86 in *gematria*. We raise the **כוס** four times to thank Hashem for the four times **כוס** – 4x86 – which he took off of the calculation.

By all rights, we should have worked for 430 years, five periods of 86, or **כוס** . (Our accounting of 430 years actually began from the *bris bein habesarim*, when Avram was told that his children would go

into exile. The 400 years that Hashem told him about at that time began with the birth of Yitzchok; see Rashi *Bereishis* 15:13.)

Hashem, in His kindness, only had us work for 86 years, one period of **כוס** .

This is as it says in *Tehillim* (116:13): **כוס ישועות אשא ובשם ה' אקרא** – "I will raise the cup of salvations and the Name of Hashem I will invoke." (R' Avraham Bukspan)

"Stealing" the *Afikomen*



A young man in Eretz Yisroel married into a family which did not have the custom of stealing the *afikoman*. When he had a son who was old enough to "steal" his grandfather's *afikoman*, the latter insisted that such behaviour violated the Torah's prohibitions on theft and extortion. This dispute was then brought before R' Chaim David Halevy *zt"l* (Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv; *niftar* 1998), who wrote as follows:

The Gemara (*Pesochim* 109a) mentions a custom of "grabbing" the *matzah* in order to keep the children awake. As explained by Rashi and Rashbam, this does not refer to a custom that children steal the *afikoman*, but rather that the *matzah* was stolen from the children. Why was this not prohibited as stealing? Apparently, writes R' Halevy, because it is justified as one more strange thing that we do on the *seder* night to highlight for the children the uniqueness of the night.

The Gemara (*Bava Metzia* 61b) states that stealing is prohibited even if one does not desire the object of the theft, but merely

intends to pain the victim. Interestingly, the Rambam does not quote this halachah. Instead, the Rambam writes that one may not steal, even in jest. Why doesn't the Rambam quote this halachah? Additionally, what is the source for the Rambam's halachah that one may not steal in jest?

R' Halevy explains: Since we know that Rambam did not invent new *halachos*, nor did he ignore *halachos* that were found in the Gemara, we may assume that Rambam was merely reformulating the halachah that one may not steal in order to pain another. The Rambam's use of the phrase "in jest" must be equivalent to the Gemara's phrase "intended to cause pain." Why did Rambam change the words? Because he wanted to teach us, incidentally, that the only time that stealing in jest is prohibited is when it is intended to cause pain. However, stealing the *afikoman* at the *seder* is not intended to cause pain. Rather, it is intended only to "liven-up" the *seder* and interest the children. (*Aseh Lecha Rav* 6:35)

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה... "Why is this night different..."

The Question-and-Answer Format, Even When Alone – Why?

The Gemara says that the story of *yetzias* Mitzrayim should be told in a question-and-answer format. Even if a person is all alone, he is expected to follow this format. Why?

R' Aryeh Leib Zunz *zt"l* explains: **The *Zohar*** says that when a person tells the story of *yetzias* Mitzrayim, Hashem Himself rejoices. He then gathers together the entire heavenly entourage and says to them, "Go and hear My praises which My children are saying."

Thus, says R' Zunz, a person who is conducting a *seder* is never really alone. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Birchas Shir*)

The *Mah Nishtanah* is Not Designed to be An All-Encompassing List

Shortly after beginning the *maggid* portion of the *seder*, one or more of the children asks the *mah nishtanah*, a series of four questions highlighting atypical actions that we perform during the *seder*. **The *Abarbanel*** points out that there are several other unusual features of the *seder* that are not mentioned. For example, why don't we ask about the fact that at every other Shabbos and Yom Tov meal, we begin eating immediately after *kiddush*, while at the *seder* there is a lengthy delay? Why don't we also inquire about the four cups of wine, which we are unaccustomed to drink on other occasions, or about the saying of *Hallel*, which is not a part of any other meal and is not normally recited outside of *shul*?

The *Abarbanel* explains that change can occur in one of three ways: Something can be added, removed, or switched. The first three questions that we ask at the *seder* correspond to each of these categories. We begin by asking why on other nights we eat both *chometz* and *matzah*, but tonight we take away the *chometz* and eat only *matzah*. Next, we ask why on all other nights we consume other types of vegetables, but tonight we switch and eat *marror* instead. We then ask why on other nights we are unaccustomed to dip even once, yet tonight we add and dip not once, but twice. Each of these first three questions focuses on a change in the meal, while the final question deals with a change in the attendees, namely that on other nights we do not recline while eating, but tonight we do so as a sign of our freedom.

In other words, the *Abarbanel* says that we are not attempting to create an exhaustive and all-encompassing list of every abnormal component of the *seder*, but rather to give one example of each type of change that we are experiencing.

Rav Eliezer Ashkenazi takes this concept one step further and suggests that the *Abarbanel's* explanation can help us understand

that the four questions correspond to the four sons. The wise son is satisfied with his lot, so he questions the need to add to it by dipping twice when he is normally quite content without dipping even once.

On the other hand, the wicked son is never happy with what he has and always desires more, so he focuses his query on the obligation to take something away, as he asks why we must relinquish the *chometz* that we are permitted to enjoy throughout the year?

The simple son is unsophisticated and is only capable of inquiring about a switch from that which he is accustomed to, namely why we replace the traditional vegetables with *marror*. The last son does not even know how to ask a question. The proof of this is that he observes the numerous changes that we make at the *seder*, not only to the meal, but also to our bodies when we recline, yet none of them inspires him to ask for an explanation, thereby demonstrating that he is incapable of asking a question. (R' Ozer Alport, *Parsha Potpourri*)

What Does Dipping *Karpas* into Salt Water Represent?

R' Menachem Mendel Hager *zt"l* notes that, throughout the Gemara, salt is used as a metaphor for suffering. *Chazal* teach that suffering is actually good for a person for it expiates his sins, but, being only human, we quickly reach a point where we can stand no more.

Salt reminds us of this, for a little bit of salt improves the taste of food, but if that same food is too salty, it is not edible. As we begin to recall the suffering of the slaves in Mitzrayim, this thought should be on our mind. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Visheve-Vizhnitz Shearis Menachem*).

Remaining Subjugated to Pharaoh in Mitzrayim

R' Yosef Chaver zt"l notes that the *Haggadah* does not say, "We … would have remained enslaved to Pharaoh in Mitzrayim," but rather, "We … would have remained subjugated to Pharaoh in Mitzrayim." He explains: Mitzrayim was a land where a belief in astrology and in the supposed powers of the heavenly bodies reigned supreme. The purpose of the Ten Plagues was to demonstrate that those powers are false, and that Hashem is in control of every detail of existence. Not only the Egyptians needed this education; Bnei Yisroel needed it too.

Thus, "Had not the Holy One, Blessed is He, taken our fathers out from Mitzrayim, then we, our children, and our children's children would have remained subjugated [to the false beliefs of] Pharaoh in Mitzrayim. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Zeroa Netuyah*)

Why Hashem is Referred to as HaMakom

The Izbitzer Rebbe in his *Haggadah, Beis Yaakov,* offers a novel *peshat* as to why Hashem is referred to as HaMakom. The well-known *peshat* is based on the *Chazal* which explains that Hashem is the place of the world - **מקומו של עולם**- Nothing can exist whether physical or spiritual without space. Hashem gives space to everything.

The Izbitzer Rebbe however, suggests that Hashem is referred to as HaMakom as Hashem has space for anyone to enter, whether to speak to Him, to *daven* to Him, hear out what someone has to say, to let Him be thought of, or to be comforted by Him etc. Something which human beings don't have.

I once heard a story from Rav Tzvi Meir Silverberg about a young 9-year-old orphan whose father before his death made him promise that although he went to Hebrew afternoon School and had a limited education of Torah, he wants him to register in a Yeshiva and truly

learn Torah. After his father's death he went with his mother to Yeshiva Torah Voda'as to speak to the principal about his entering the Yeshiva. The principal asked him what Mishnayos he was presently learning. He answered I never learned any. Surprised the principal asked further what *Parsha* in Chumash are you learning now? The young lad answered that he is not learning Chumash. Realizing the boy's lack of Torah learning and skills and the impossibility of joining an appropriate age class, he told them both that unfortunately there is no more room for another child in the classroom.

Disappointed but not to the degree of despair, the determined child requested to go to a lower class as long as he could learn Torah like he promised his father. The principal's heart went out to him but his better judgement said there is no room there either. The child asked to see the classroom saying I will squeeze in someplace. As the principal's heart strings were played, he had no choice but to take the child to the classroom and as he claimed there was no room the way the classroom was set up.

As they returned to the office the principal apologized to both of them and said to the boy, I see your determination is very special and out of the ordinary for a child your age, may you be able to learn Torah sometime soon. Before they left, the boy asked the principal if he could write for him a note. The principal agreed thinking to himself if I can't possibly take him into the Yeshiva for he'll be doomed to failure, the least I can do is write for him a note. What should the note say, asked the principal? To his surprise the child said, "can you please write that you had no room to take me into the Yeshiva and sign it"?

The principal was shocked at his request. Why would you want such a note? The young child answered innocently, "so that when die, I make sure that the *chevrah kadisha* will take this note and place it in my coffin. When I get to *shomayim* I will meet my father. I am

sure he will ask me why I didn't go to Yeshiva as I promised him. I will answer there was no room. He will scream out "What no room to learn Torah". He won't believe me. Then I will take out the note you wrote and signed and give it to my father so he will believe me and won't be angry. The principal was so touched and moved by the tenacious determination of this pure innocent child to learn Torah that he could not hold back his tears. "You know what" he said. "You come tomorrow and somehow I will squeeze you in to one of the classrooms. You won't need this note any more".

How many of us hang out no vacancy signs to Hashem advertising sorry Hashem I have no room for you or time to talk to You. We say to ourselves, well this does not apply to me for I keep Torah and *mitzvos* meticulously. This is where we are wrong. When it comes to challenging *mitzvos* or *aveiros* many of us hang out no vacancy signs. We tell Hashem even if we don't say these exact words, that these "ones" are not for me, they are too challenging, so You too Hashem are not invited in. **ברוך שנתן תורה לעמו ישראל** , only through the learning of Torah can we continuously make more space for Hashem to enter our lives.

Sometimes we don't really feel that Hashem is listening. After all, He runs the entire cosmos and it's hard to believe that He would have some spare time and space to listen to a micro mini nano microscopic speck of dust on earth, never mind of the universe.

To rid oneself of such a falsehood *Chazal* tell us to fix a place for one's *davening*. However, we can explain it according to the above, that one should think that he is *davening* before Hashem who is called HaMakom which means He has space to let everyone in.

Therefore, even if 10 million people are standing right next to you and they are all talking to Hashem He is nevertheless focused on you alone and hears every word, breath, whisper and *krectz* that you convey to Him as you are talking to Him. (R' Shmuel Brazil)

Why the Treatment We Give the *Rosha* on *Seder* Night is Very Different to How We Treat Him on Yom Kippur?

There are two days in the year when we address the wicked: Yom Kippur and Pesach. But the approach we take toward the wicked on these two days varies greatly.

On Yom Kippur, at the beginning of the Kol Nidrei, we announce: **עַל דַּעַת הַמָּקוֹם וְעַל דַּעַת הַקָּהָל, בַּיּשִׁיבָה שֶׁל מַעְלָה וּבִישִׁיבָה שֶׁל מִטָּה, אָנוּ מַתִּירִין לְהִתְפַּלֵּל עִם הָעֲבַרְיָנִים** - "***With the approval of the Omnipresent and with the approval of the congregation; in the convocation of the Court Above and in the convocation of the Court below, we sanction prayer with the transgressors***", meaning that on this day we accept sinners and do not turn them away.

On *seder* night, however, when the wicked son comes to participate and pose his question, we treat him very differently, blunting teeth and rejecting him. Why do we not draw him close, as we do on Yom Kippur?

The answer is that if the wicked person wishes to join us on Yom Kippur, when we serve Hashem through fasting and abstaining from physical pleasures, he shows that his motives are pure, and we can therefore accept him.

On *seder* night, however, when we sit at the table like princes, it is no surprise that the wicked son wishes to join, and his desire to participate does not indicate any genuine interest in listening and drawing closer. Since he has excluded himself from the community of believers, we need not exert ourselves to accept him. (R' Yisroel Meir Druk)

"The most important thing in life is to recognize the hand of Hashem in everything that happens to us." – Rabi Avigdor Miller.

A *Vort* That Had To Be Written Down On *Chol Hamoed*

והיא שעמדה לאבותינו ולנו שלא אחד בלבד עמד עלינו לכלותנו אלא שבכל דור ודור עומדים עלינו לכלותנו והקדוש ברוך הוא מצילנו מידם

And it is this that has stood for our ancestors and for us; since it is not [only] one [person or nation] that has stood [against] us to destroy us, but rather in each generation, they stand [against] us to destroy us, but the Holy One, blessed be He, rescues us from their hand.

When we recite these words during the *seder*, it is customary to cover the *matzah* and to lift the cup of wine. Why? Is not the *matzah* a mitzvah *de'O'raisa*, while the four cups are only a rabbinically-ordained mitzvah? Why do we seem to attribute more importance to the rabbinic mitzvah than to the Torah mitzvah?

R' Menachem Mendel Kalish *zt"l* (Rebbe of Vorka) said: What is it that has held the Jewish people together and has stood us in good stead throughout the millennia of exile and persecution?

It is the *talmiday chachomim* of each generation who have ensured the continuity of halachah and mitzvah-observance, and it is our adherence to their words that has preserved us as a nation. This is why we point out a rabbinic mitzvah and say, "It is this that has stood by our fathers and us."

When R' Aharon Rokeach (father of the current Belzer Rebbe) repeated R' Kalish's explanation to his father, the Belzer Rebbe, **R' Yissochor Dov Rokeach**, the latter ordered that it be written down immediately. When he was reminded that it was *chol hamoed*, when writing should be avoided if possible, R' Yissochor Dov responded that such a thought is too important to forget. It must be written down, even on *chol hamoed*. (*Mi'saviv La'shulchan*)

The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today.

Unity ויהי שם לגוי מלמד שהיו ישראל מצוינים שם *"They became a nation" - This teaches that the Yidden were distinctive there.*

R' Yosef Zvi Duschinsky *zt"l* explains this passage in light of the *pasuk* (*Shemos* 1:9), "[Pharaoh] said to his people, 'Behold! the nation (*am*), Bnei Yisroel, is greater (*rav*) and stronger than we." Pharaoh expressed this concern at the beginning of Bnei Yisroel's stay in Mitzrayim. Is it possible, asks R' Duschinsky, that at that time, before they began multiplying miraculously, Pharaoh could imagine that they would outnumber the Mitzriyim? Surely Bnei Yisroel were an extremely small minority in Mitzriyim, which was one of richest and most secure world powers of that period!

What concerned Pharaoh was the unity of Bnei Yisroel, a trait not shared by the Mitzriyim. That is what Pharaoh meant when he exclaimed that "the nation (*am*), Bnei Yisroel, is greater (*rav*)." "*Am*" and "*rav*" are singular, alluding to the unity that Pharaoh saw among Bnei Yisroel. This is what we allude to also when we say in the *Haggadah*, "They became a nation [a unit]' - This teaches that the Yidden were distinctive there." They were united by their distinctive language, style of dress and feelings toward each other.

In addition, R' Duschinsky continues, this passage in the *Haggadah* alludes to the promise that Hashem made to Yaakov when he descended to Mitzrayim. Hashem said to him (*Bereishis* 46:3), "Have no fear of descending to Mitzrayim, for I shall establish you as a *goy gadol* (great nation there)." Yaakov was afraid that his descendants would assimilate in Mitzrayim, so Hashem assured him that they would remain a *goy gadol* (again, a unit) - recognizable by the fact that they were united in their distinctiveness.

If it was important for the Jewish People to preserve their distinctiveness in a country where they were, in any case, the lowest rung of society, how much more so is it important when we have the ability to assimilate. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Maharitz* p.74)

Why Would One Think to Start *Sippur Yetzias* Mitzrayim from Rosh Chodesh?

R' Avraham ben Hagra *zt"l* explains: The ancient Egyptians worshiped the sheep, and to counter this fallacious belief, Bnei Yisroel were commanded to slaughter sheep for the *korban* Pesach.



Not coincidentally, the sheep (Aries) is the astrological sign for the month of Nissan. Therefore, I might think that the time to speak of *yetzias* Mitzrayim and of Hashem's mastery over all other forces begins on Rosh Chodesh, when the sign of the sheep first ascends.

For the same reason, the *Haggadah* states that I might think the time to discuss *yetzias* Mitzrayim is on the afternoon of *erev* Pesach. That is the time when the *korban* Pesach was slaughtered. (*Geulas Avraham*)

The Nations Know Hashem's Kindness More than Us

R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach comments: Although the Torah never mentions explicitly that Lavan wanted to kill Yaakov, *Chazal* testify that such was his intention. And, just as the details of Lavan's plot against Yaakov remain hidden, so it has been throughout history.

We read in *Hallel*: "Praise Hashem, all nations… For His kindness has overwhelmed us…" The *meforshim* ask: Why should the nations praise Hashem because His kindness has overwhelmed us?

The answer that is commonly given is that only the nations can truly appreciate Hashem's kindness to us, because only they know how many times they have plotted against us and failed. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach* R' Shlomah Zalman Auerbach)

Why Was Pharoah Punished for Implementing Hashem's Word?



Why was Pharaoh punished for implementing Hashem's word? After all, Hashem told Avraham that his descendants would be enslaved as punishment for Avraham's questioning the fulfilment of His promise (see *Bereishis* 15:8).

R' Rephael Yom Tov Lipman Halpern *zt"l* (the *Oneg Yom Tov*) explains as follows: There are two different ways that Hashem deals with the Jewish people. Sometimes He deals with them in a completely miraculous manner, without regard to the laws of nature. At these times, Hashem makes specific decrees as to what will happen to the Jewish people, whether for good or for bad. At other times, because of our sins, Hashem leaves us to be ruled by the laws of nature, and He stands by and does not interfere, whatever happens. (This is known as *hester ponim* [hiding His face].)

Says the *Oneg Yom Tov*, Hashem never decreed that the Jewish people should be slaves in Mitzrayim. Rather, because of Avraham's sin, and later, the sin of Yosef's brothers in selling him, Hashem decided to stand back and let nature take its course. Along came Pharaoh with an evil nature, and mistreated the Jewish people. If not for Pharaoh's evil character, the fact that Hashem was "standing aside" would not have resulted in Klal Yisroel's enslavement.

This explains, as well, why we consider it a kindness that Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim. Had He been the cause of our enslavement, we might have considered Hashem to be obligated to redeem us. However, since He did not make us slaves in the first place (but merely refrained from saving us when Pharaoh enslaved us), it was a kindness to save us.

The World Was Created for My Sake

במתי מעט כמה שנאמר בשבעים נפש ירדו אבותיך מצרימה, ועתה שמך ה' אלקיך ככוכבי השמים לרב ***"As a small number" - as it is stated (Devorim 10:22), "With seventy souls did your ancestors come down to Mitzrayim, and now the Hashem your G-d has made you as numerous as the stars of the sky."***



R' Moshe Rosenstain ***zt"l*** said: It is a basic principle of the Torah that we are bound to value every individual. Each person must say, "The world was created for my sake." Yet how is it possible to view each man as a world onto himself? When we see that man is as numerous as the fish in the sea, are we truly to think that each is worthy to have Hashem create the world for his sake? How can we imagine that Hashem would make a covenant with each and every one?

When we gaze upwards to the heavens, towards the billions of stars, and realize that each star is a world in itself, immense and important, then we can believe that, even if the people of the world are like the sands of the seashores, each is a world onto himself. Hashem created all for his sake and he is worthy to hear the word of Hashem and enter His covenant. (Artscroll *Haggadah*)

"We must always remember that our actions have the power to bring us closer to Hashem and to inspire others to do the same." – Rabbi Moshe Feinstein

Why Moshe and Aharon Needed Staff's

ובאתות זה המטה כמה שנאמר ואת המטה הזה תקח בידך אשר תעשה בו את האתות ***"And with signs" - this [refers to] the staff, as it is stated (Shemos 4:17): "And this staff you shall take in your hand, that with it you will perform signs."***



What was the staff's role in creating the wonders and plagues? asks **R' Zalman Sorotzkin *zt"l***. Why couldn't Moshe and Aharon just wave their hands or utter commands to make the plagues happen?

Having the staff gave Moshe credibility as the redeemer because it was a physical manifestation of his status as Hashem's messenger. The importance of physical evidence of reality is illustrated in the Gemara (*Yevamos* 25a), which states that a person who testified that a man had died is prohibited from marrying the man's widow lest he be lying, whereas a man who delivered a *get* [bill of divorce] is permitted in some cases to marry the divorcee. Why? Because the divorce document itself gives the messenger credibility [even though he might have forged it].

So, too, Moshe's staff gave him credibility. Likewise, writes R' Sorotzkin, this explains why Hashem gave part of the Torah to Moshe on stone tablets, as opposed to simply dictating the *Aseret Ha'dibros* to Moshe and having him write them, as Moshe recorded the rest of the Torah. The *Luchos* were physical objects that added credibility to Moshe's teaching of the Torah. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Ha'shir Ve'ha'shevach* p.92)

Determining Hashem's True Interest Behind Redeeming Us

אלו שקע צרנו בתוכו ולא ספק צרכנו במדבר ארבעים שנה דינו If He had drowned our oppressors but had not provided for our needs in the wilderness for 40 years, it would have sufficed for us.

We say in the *Haggadah*: "If He had drowned our oppressors in [the Sea] but had not provided for our needs in the wilderness for 40 years, it would have sufficed for us." Nevertheless, says **R' Abdallah Somech *zt"l* (rebbe of the Ben Ish Chai**), the fact that Hashem did provide for our needs in the wilderness for 40 years demonstrates His intentions in redeeming us from Mitzrayim. He explains:

Once a nobleman's son was kidnapped by a duke and held hostage in the dungeon of the latter's manor. The king sent the duke a warning to release the boy, but the duke refused. Moreover, the duke sent a belligerent message back to the king.

The king was incensed, and he sent a battalion of troops to destroy the duke's home and free the nobleman's son. And so, it was. People wondered, however, "Did the king do this because he was concerned about his friend's son or because he was angry at the duke?" How could they tell? If the king's troops destroyed the duke's house and left the former prisoner on his own, then it would be apparent that the king's primary concern was the duke's disrespect. On the other hand, if the king's soldiers carried the boy home triumphantly and also brought him to the king's palace, then all would know that the king was interested in the boy's welfare.

When Hashem first sent Moshe to Pharaoh, Pharaoh responded, "Who is Hashem that I should heed His voice?" As *Chazal* understand it, Pharaoh was asking, "Why hasn't Hashem sent me gifts like other foreign kings do?"

Later, when Hashem brought about the ten plagues, one could legitimately wonder whether Hashem's true motivation was

Pharaoh's disrespect or the welfare of the Jewish people. However, the fact that Hashem did provide for our needs in the wilderness for 40 years demonstrates that His real interest was Bnei Yisroel. (Quoted in *Haggadah Shel Pesach Sha'arei Armon* p. 129)

Spiritual Failure Becomes Easier with Each Step

Chazal say that when Moshe and Aharon first appeared before Pharaoh, they miraculously walked through a heavily guarded doorway into the midst of a large state dinner. Despite this obvious miracle, Pharaoh hardened his heart and ignored them.

The second time that they visited Pharaoh, they performed another miracle (turning Aharon's staff into a snake), and even though Pharaoh's magicians mimicked Aharon's act, he won the day when his staff swallowed theirs. Nevertheless, Pharaoh still ignored Moshe and Aharon. The next time that the two brothers appeared before the king, they turned water into blood. Again the magicians did the same, and this time, Moshe and Aharon did not even score a victory over them.

R' Yechezkel Levenstein *zt"l* notes that each of these tests was easier for Pharaoh to fail than the preceding one had been. Each of Moshe and Aharon's miracles was smaller than the one before it. This is Hashem's way - he tests a person, and should the person ignore the challenge, Hashem leads him down the path which he has chosen. Spiritual failure becomes easier with each step. (Quoted in the Artscroll *Mussar Haggadah* p.82)

From the words of the Bostoner Rebbetzen some 40 years ago: "Don't make Purim too sameach that it's not kosher, and don't make Pesach too kosher that it's not sameach!"

It All Depends on the People's Crying Out

ונצעק אל ה' אלקי אבתינו וישמע ה' את קלנו וירא את עניינו ואת עמלנו ואת לחצנו ***"And we cried out to Hashem,"… and He saw our affliction, and our toil and our duress" (Devorim 26:7).***

R' Yosef Yitzchok Schneerson *zt"l* (the Lubavitcher Rebbe) once commented: People mistakenly think, "If only we had a Moshe Rabbeinu today, he would rescue us from our exile."

Those people are wrong. The redemption is not delayed because we don't have a Moshe Rabbeinu. Even in Mitzrayim, Hashem sent the redeemer only after the people cried out to Him. If we would cry out to Hashem similarly, He would send out redeemer.

A Nice *Chap* from Rav Belsky

ובמורא גדל זו גלוי שכינה כמה שנאמר או הנסה אלקים לבוא לקחת לו גוי מקרב גוי במסת באתת ובמופתים ובמלחמה וביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה ובמוראים גדולים ככל אשר עשה לכם ה' אלקיכם במצרים לעיניך

"And with great awe" - 'this Divine Presence', as it is stated (Devorim 4:34), "Or did G-d try to take for Himself a nation from within a nation with enigmas, with signs and with wonders and with war and with a strong hand and with an outstretched forearm and with great and awesome acts, like all that Hashem, your G-d, did for you in Mitzrayim in front of your eyes?"

R' Yisroel Belsky *zt"l* writes: This *pasuk* is one of only two *pasukim* in the whole Torah that contains every letter of the *Aleph-Beis*. The message is that when Hashem reveals Himself, it touches every aspect of the universe which, say *Chazal*, was created using all the letters of the *Aleph-Beis*. Likewise, it teaches that Hashem "personally" supervises every aspect of the universe. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach B'tzeis Yisroel*)

דם - Blood



All the Fish Will Die

When Moshe warned Pharaoh about the plague of blood he said: **והדגה אשר ביאר תמות** - "***The fish that is in the water shall die***" (*Shemos* 7:18). **R' Eliezer Dovid Gruenwald *zt"l*** asks: Why was this included in Moshe's warning to Pharaoh? Obviously, if the Nile turns to blood, all of the fish will die!

He explains: Pharaoh's magicians ostensibly mimicked the plague and turned water to blood. However, what they actually did was an illusion; the water did not turn to blood but just looked like blood. Anticipating that, Moshe warned Pharaoh, "When I turn the Nile to blood, it will be the real thing and the fish will die." (*Keren L'Dovid*)



A Split for a Split: Connection of Avraham Splitting the Wood for the *Akeida* and Hashem Splitting the Sea

וישכם אברהם בבקר ויחבש את חמרו ויקח את שני נעריו אתו ואת יצחק בנו ויבקע עצי עולה ***And Avraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his donkey and took two of his young men with him, and Yitzchok his son, and split the wood for the burnt offering (Bereishis 22:3).***

It says in the Medrash (*Shemos Rabbah* 21:8) that years later, when the Jews were leaving Mitzrayim, Hashem said, "in the merit of

Avraham that Hashem split the sea for the Jews. Before the *Akeidah*, it says that Avraham split the wood for the offering, and at Krias Yam Suf, the *pasuk* says that Hashem split the sea – both times with the *shoresh* of **בקע**.

What is the *middah keneged middah*? The magnitude of Avraham's merit shouldn't lie in his splitting the wood, but rather in the culmination of the *Akeidah*, where he tied down his son and brought the knife to bear. Chopping the wood seems incidental to the greatness of the act later on, where he showed his willingness to slaughter his own son at the request of Hashem. Is the Medrash merely using the play on the same word to reference the *Akeidah* of Yitzchok as a whole, or is there a correlation between splitting the wood and splitting the sea?

Rav Shmuel Vitzik of Baltimore relates the following thought, which he heard directly from **Rav Yehoshua Leib Diskin**. The Gemara writes that it is easier to carry ten *kav* (a dry measure) of gold than ten *kav* of straw. While both weigh the same amount, the gold – with its denser mass – is compact and manageable. That amount of straw, on the other hand, is very bulky; carrying it is both awkward and cumbersome.

If so, why did Avraham chop the wood before embarking on what was to be a three-day trip? The *pasuk* cited above finds Avraham preparing the wood the very morning he and his party left. Schlepping a bag of chopped wood is more unwieldy than taking an intact log. It would have been easier to take a whole log and do the chopping upon arriving at the as-of-yet unknown destination.

What's the problem with that scenario? Avraham would take out his trusty hatchet. As Yitzchok looked on, he would carefully chop up the log and then set up the wood on the altar that he built. As willing as Yitzchok may have been to give his life for Hashem, there would still be an element reminiscent of what is known as *inuy hadin* – not prolonging the mental anguish.

In order to be more compassionate toward his son, Avraham chopped the wood before leaving. He was willing to take on the extra hassle of carrying the cut wood, which was bulkier, in order to alleviate the distress his son would experience were Avraham to chop it on-site.

This same compassion was in play when Hashem split the Yam Suf. **Rav Tzvi Pesach** brings a Medrash that says that initially Hashem intended to have the water recede as the Yidden walked in. They would walk in the water for the distance of one foot, and the water would recede one foot. They'd take another step, and the water would again back up. Says the Medrash that Hashem had compassion and He split the water from beginning to end.

Were the water to back up as they progressed, the Yidden would have still been terrified. Although they were witnessing the ongoing miracle of the water receding, they would have faced a mountain of water, and they would always worry if the miracle will continue. There would have been an element of constant dread – *inuy hadin*. By splitting the sea all the way through, Hashem assured them that the path would stay open.

The Medrash says: In the merit of Avraham splitting the wood before his trip, making it more difficult on himself in order to alleviate the stress of another, Hashem split the water in a way that also alleviated the stress of others. Interestingly, although one Medrash says that Avraham made two cuts of wood, others say that there were 12 cuts. Therefore, the water split into 12 separate paths for the Yidden, as a reward for the 12 pieces that Avraham made.

We see that it wasn't just the splitting that Hashem did for Avraham's children in the merit of his splitting, but the compassion with which He did the action; this was the reward for Avraham's display of compassion toward his son. (**R' Avraham Bukspan**)

Sixty Children at Once

The Medrash Rabbah states that the Jewish women in Mitzrayim gave birth to sextuplets. Another opinion says they gave birth to sixty children at a time.

The Maharal Mi'Prague writes: The Medrash does not literally mean that women gave birth to sixty children at a one time. Indeed, he observes, if it were possible for one woman to carry that many children, each one would be so small as to not be viable. Rather, the Medrash means that women who gave birth, rather than suffering the weakness that normally follows birth, felt so strong that they could have delivered sixty babies if such a thing were possible.

As for the opinion that they gave birth to sextuplets, the *Maharal* suggests that this was Hashem's response to the fact that Bnei Yisroel were enslaved six days a week. (*Gevuros Hashem* ch.12)

Emunah (Rav Sholam Schwadron's *Haggadah*)

ויאמינו בה' ובמשה עבדו – "*And they believed in Hashem and in His servant Moshe*." (*Sh*emos 14:31)

The way to attain *emunah* is by using one's simple common sense and understanding things straight, without any philosophy. Everything is quite simple and makes good sense. Long before a philosopher understands something with his intellectual analysis, someone with good common sense understands it almost instantaneously. The philosopher must write tractates with reams of paper of analysis and mathematical and logical proofs that the universe couldn't have evolved by itself, while a simple young child can understand this with no effort whatsoever.

Even worse. The more a person gets into the habit of thinking using research and analysis, he loses his common sense. He has trained himself to ask regarding everything: who says it has to be this way?

Maybe it's a different way? Eventually he can even convince himself that Man is descended from the monkeys! It's amazing how the whole world is going crazy from this nonsense.



There are those who believe that the world was created from a Big Bang! I've always wondered how such intelligent individuals could entertain such an idea. Everyone knows that when a glass falls on the floor and explodes you have to work very hard sweeping up all the tiny pieces. How can anything positive come out of an explosion?

Someone once asked me, "Reb Sholam. Maybe the world was created from a Big Bang?"

I answered, "If you were 5 meters tall, and 10 meters wide, and one leg was long and fat while the other was short and skinny; and one of your eyes was planted on top of your bald head, and the other in the middle of your forehead; and your nose was on your stomach and your mouth was on your back; etc. Maybe then you could think about a big bang, because that's how you would expect yourself to look after an explosion. But when you are laid out so beautifully and organized, and standing normal in front of me, you most certainly did not evolve from any big bang or accident!

The same is true about Torah. Anyone who studies the holy Torah is convinced it is stupendously deep and logical. Even if he doubts that it is *min hashomayim*, but it most certainly didn't grow from the ground. And what kind of human had the ability to compose such a work like that? Common sense tells us it is *min hashomayim*.

They once brought a primus (kerosene burner) to the Mirrer Mashgiach, **Reb Chatzkel**. As soon as he saw it, he exclaimed, "Ah! Torah *min hashomayim*!"

His family questioned him about his remark - what does a primus have to do with Torah *min hashomayim*?

He pointed to the little paper that came with the primus. It was the sheet of instructions how to use it. "If such a simple thing as a kerosene burner needs an instruction manual, how much more so the complicated creation called Man! He definitely needs an instruction manual from his Maker!"

Understanding the Custom of Walking Around with *Matzos* on Our Back

מצה זו שאנו אוכלים על שום מה... This matzah that we are eating, for the sake of what [is it]?...

R' Shlomah Luria (*Maharshal*) writes that one should wrap the *matzah* in a sack, throw it over his shoulder, and walk around the room in this manner saying, "This is how our ancestors left Mitzrayim, their belongings tied to their clothes, on their shoulders." R' Shlomah Kluger explains this custom as follows:

Hashem told Moshe, "When Bnei Yisroel leave Mitzrayim, they should not leave empty-handed. Rather, each woman should borrow items of value from her neighbour, etc." Isn't this *pasuk* redundant? If each woman is borrowing things from her neighbour, of course they will not leave Mitzrayim empty-handed!

The Gemara says that after slaughtering the *korban* Pesach in the *Beis HaMikdosh*, each Jew would carry it home, thrown over his shoulder the way an Arab carries his load. Why is it important for the Gemara to tell us that the *korban* was carried like an Arab's load?

To remind us that the reason the Jews ended up in Mitzrayim in the first place was that Yosef's brothers sold him to a caravan of Arabs.

Did the Jews deserve to be paid for the work that they did in Mitzrayim?

Only if they were subjugated unfairly. However, since we now know that this exile was a punishment for the sale of Yosef, apparently the Jews did not deserve to be paid. This is why the Jews could only borrow items from their Egyptian neighbours.

To remind Bnei Yisroel of this, Hashem told Moshe, "The Jews should not go empty-handed." They should carry these items in their own hands, and not place them on the animals or wagons. More explicitly, they should carry these items on their shoulders the way an Arab carries his load, so that they would be reminded of the reason that they went to Mitzrayim in the first place.

This is what *Maharshal* tells us to do: We too should know why our ancestors were enslaved in Mitzrayim. Carrying the *matzah* around the room on our shoulders reminds us of the reason.

כנים - Lice

Proof that Lice Were Present in Goshen

Several *meforshim* (Rambam, Rabbeinu Yonah, Meiri, Vilna Gaon) write in their commentaries on *Pirkei Avos* (5:4) that although nine of the ten plagues in Mitzrayim did not affect the Jews in any way, the lice that afflicted Mitzrayim during the third plague also infested the land of Goshen where the Jews lived. Nevertheless, the lice did not cause the Jews any suffering as they did the Mitzriyim. Where is this astonishing fact alluded to, and what was the reason for it?

The *Mishmeres Ariel* brings a strikingly simple proof to this claim. Rashi writes (*Bereishis* 47:29) that one of Yaakov's reasons for asking Yosef not to bury him in Mitzrayim was to avoid the lice that would be swarming in the ground. However, if the lice were nowhere

to be found in the land of Goshen, Ya'akov could have simply made Yosef swear to bury him there instead of burdening him to carry his body all the way to Eretz Yisroel. From the fact that Ya'akov made him do so, we can deduce that he knew that this option would not be sufficient to alleviate his concern because the lice would also be present in Goshen.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky *zt"l* suggests, the reason for this peculiarity was that in the first two plagues, Pharaoh's magicians were able to duplicate the actual plague. As such, the only proof that Moshe and Aharon's plagues were caused by Hashem and not through sorcery was the fact that they miraculously stopped at the borders of the Jewish land of Goshen. During the plague of lice, on the other hand, Pharaoh's magicians were unable to copy the plague. They freely admitted that it must have been performed by Hashem, and there was therefore no need for the additional miracle of preventing the lice from entering the land of Goshen.

Women are *Hakol* [Everything]

R' Levi Yitzchok Horowitz *zt"l* (Bostoner Rebbe) asks: Why do we say, "Lavan sought to uproot *hakol*," rather than, "Lavan sought to uproot the females as well"?

He writes: The answer came to me in a dream. The term "*hakol*" alludes to women. For example, the Gemara (*Yevamos* 62a) teaches: A man who has no wife lives without joy, without blessing, without goodness, without Torah…" In short, such a person lacks *hakol* [everything]!

The Torah writes in *Bereishis* (24:1), "Hashem had blessed Avraham *bakol* (with everything)." The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 16b) states that Avraham had a daughter and her name was "Bakol." In light of the above Gemara, we can understand why that name was appropriate.

The Bostoner Rebbe continues: One of the terms for a wife is *akeret bayit*, for she is the *ikkar* [essence] of the house. Especially on Pesach night, concludes the Bostoner Rebbe, women are "*hakol*." After all, *Chazal* teach that *yetzias* Mitzrayim occurred in the merit of the women. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Ezras Avoseinu* p.116)

Yisroel Saw the Mitzriyim Dying on the Seashore

The *pasuk* (*Shemos* 14:30) says: **וירא ישראל את מצרים מת אל שפת הים**. "***Yisroel saw the Mitzriyim dead on the seashore***."

However, **R' Eliezer Nachman Foa *zt"l*** translates it differently: "Yisroel saw the Mitzriyim dying on the seashore." As a precedent for this translation, he cites *Bereishis* (35:18): **ויהי בצאת נפשה כי מתה ותקרא שמו בן אוני** - "*And it came to pass, as her [Rochel's] soul was departing– for she was dying – that she called his name Ben Oni*." Although some translate, **כי מתה**, as "she died," this cannot be correct, for how could she give her son a name after she died?

What is the significance of the fact that "Yisroel saw the Mitzriyim dying on the seashore"?

R' Foa explains that just as the Jewish People saw the Mitzriyim dying, the Mitzriyim saw in their last moments that the Jewish People had survived. This increased even more the sanctification of Hashem's Name that resulted from the miracle. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Medrash B'chiddush* p.110)

"Hashem's love for us is greater than we can ever imagine, and it is our privilege to reciprocate that love by serving him with all our hearts." – Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

The German Shepherd - Ron Yitzchok Eisenman Rav
Congregation Ahavas Israel Passaic, NJ

Bernard Hillstein (name changed) had finally conceded he could no longer live alone and had to enter an assisted living facility. He always craved warmer weather.



So, when Bernie found an assisted living complex in southern Florida, which had a Shul and was completely Shomer Shabbos, he hurriedly signed the lease. He noticed the fine print only after his deposit was cashed, and he gave up the lease on his apartment in New Jersey.

Ever since Ethel, his wife of 56 years, passed away six years ago, Bernie welcomed Oakley into his home on the advice of his doctors. Bernie acquired Oakley, a German Shepherd, as a service-guide dog to help him get on his own.

Over the last six years, Oakley has become Bernie's constant companion. Without Oakley, Bernie doesn't know how he would have survived Covid.

As he and Ethel had no children and his own eyesight was failing, without Oakley in the apartment, Bernie would have suffered the greatest pain of all, complete loneliness.

As you can imagine, Bernie was worried when he noticed in the fine print that no pets, including service animals, were allowed in the assisted living facility.

Bernie immediately came to my office and asked me to help him get some waiver or exception to the no-pets rule. Bernie could not imagine moving without his beloved Oakley.

I called the facility. The manager listened to me calmly and politely, yet he was firm in explaining the rule of no pets meant no pets, period. No waivers and no exceptions are possible.

I called the Rabbi, the Chaplain of the facility, yet, he, too, explained that his hands were tied. He had no clout or authority to allow Bernie to bring Oakley to the facility.

Bernie was beside himself with grief. He had already given up his New Jersey apartment and signed the lease in Florida. Yet, the thought of abandoning Oakley, which meant living alone, felt like a death sentence to Bernie.

I made more phone calls, and finally, the exasperated assisted living manager said, "Look, these are the rules. If you want, call Mr. Hertzler; he owns the facility, and only he can give you permission. However, he's an elderly Chassidishe Yid. I highly doubt he will be interested in allowing a dog in his facility."

As only Hashem could orchestrate things, Mr. Hertzler, who rarely left Florida, would be in New York for a family Simcha. I was able to arrange a face-to-face meeting with him that evening.

When I arrived at the house where he was staying in Boro Park, my expectations were not high for success. Mr. Hertzler, who was more comfortable in Yiddish than English, was a Chassidishe Yid. When I shook hands, I could not fail to notice the blue numbers on his forearm. I realized this would be a mission in futility as what 95-year-old Holocaust survivor would allow a German Shepherd to live as a guest in his facility?

Nevertheless, after making many phone calls to set up this meeting and traveling to Brooklyn from Passaic, I had to make my plea. If (or more likely, when) he says no, I'll know I tried my best.

Mr. Hertzler was extremely hospitable, offering me delicious kokush cake and strong sweet tea. After schmoozing a little about my Shul, I got down to the point and explained the situation and why Bernie needed to have Oakley live with him. I stressed how Oakley was all Bernie had in his life and what a Mitzvah it would be to allow him to have Oakley live with him.

Mr. Hertzler listened patiently and then responded by quoting a passuk, **וּלְכֹל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יֶחֱרַץ־כֶּלֶב לְשֹׁנֹו** - ("But not a dog shall growl against any of the people of Israel" – Shemos 11:7).

I thought perhaps Mr. Hertzler was not focusing on what I said. I repeated my plea, and he repeated the passuk.

He then looked at me and said with a smile. "I have been waiting for you to come for seventy-eight years. Of course, your friend can bring his dog. In fact, I will personally pay for all of the dog's needs."

My perplexed expression must have conveyed my confusion, as Mr. Hertzler explained: - "In 1945, towards the war's end, the Nazis were evacuating the Lager (Concentration Camp). As I knew the Russians were just days in arriving, I decided to hide under the barracks in a crawl space.

The Nazis took their German Shepherds to sniff out any Jews. Anytime the dog smelled a Jew, it began barking. As the Nazi and his dog neared my crawl space, I repeatedly davened with all my heart, **וּלְכֹל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יֶחֱרַץ־כֶּלֶב לְשֹׁנֹו**.

To my amazement, the dog passed right by me. I could smell its breath, yet the dog made no sound and kept moving.

It was then I made a promise to Hashem. Just as Hashem paid the dogs back for not barking by Yetzias Mitzrayim, I would also pay back a German Shepard for not barking at the time of my own personal Yetzias Mitzrayim.

Finally, the day I have been waiting for has arrived. Tell your friend he and Oakley will be my honoured guests."

I sat there stunned and speechless.

Mr. Hertzler placed another piece of koksuh cake on my plate as he said with Simcha, "You thought you came to ask me for a favour. However, the opposite was true; Hashem sent you here to allow me to pay back my seventy-eight-year-old debt. Please, let us make a L'Chaim together to thank Hashem for His kindness."

"If Not Now, Then When?"- Hillel

Seeing the Torah's Perfection



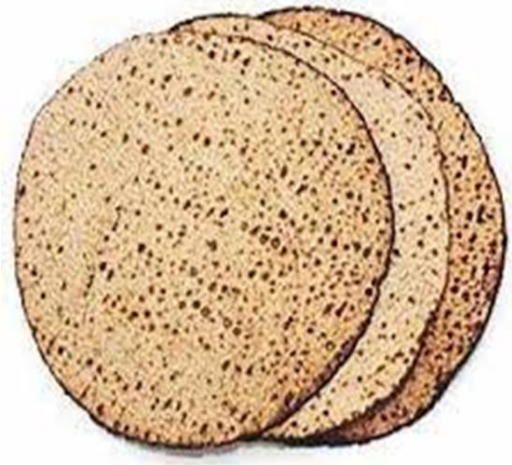
R' Dovid Hakochavi *zt"l* writes: When one contemplates the mitzvah of eating *matzah*, one sees the Torah's perfection. How so?

Hashem wished to prohibit us from eating *chometz*. Had the prohibition been for only one or two days, it would not have made the necessary impression. Therefore, the prohibition on eating *chometz* lasts for a week [eight days in the *Chutz La'aretz*].

In contrast, we are not commanded to eat *matzah* for seven days. One's obligation to eat *matzah* is only on the first night [the first two nights in *Chutz La'aretz*], and only one *kezayis* [a very small volume]. Why is there this difference between the prohibition on eating *chometz* and the commandment to eat *matzah*? Because the Torah takes into account the fact that too much *matzah* can make a person ill. (*Migdal Dovid*: 151)

"The key to success in life is to maintain a constant awareness of Hashem's presence." – Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk

Why We Eat Round *Matzos*



R' Yekusiel Yehuda Halberstam *zt"l* (Klausenberger Rebbe) writes: There is a longstanding custom to make the *matzos* for the *seder* round, not square.

The reason is that square *matzos* can be placed next to each other so that they look like one; round *matzos* cannot be joined in this way. This reminds us that the cause of our long exile is our inability to get along. There is jealousy and hatred between us, and what one person considers to be a mitzvah, another considers to be a sin.

Additional reminders of this sad situation are the custom to have a *matzah* cover with three separate compartments so that the *matzos* are kept separate, and the custom to name the *matzos*, "Kohen, Levi and Yisroel," emphasizing their individuality. Appropriately, the Yom Tov of Pesach is known as "*Chag HaMatzos*" – plural – not "*Chag HaMatzah*" – singular. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Halichos Chaim* p.21)

Staying Awake

The Brisker Rav used to say: One must take care to nap on *erev* Pesach so that he can stay awake all night relating the story of *yetzias* Mitzrayim. He used to wonder aloud: "Why are so many people meticulous to stay awake on Shavuos night, which is merely a custom, while they neglect the halachah that one should try to stay awake all of Pesach night?" (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Mi'Beis HaLevi* p. 34)

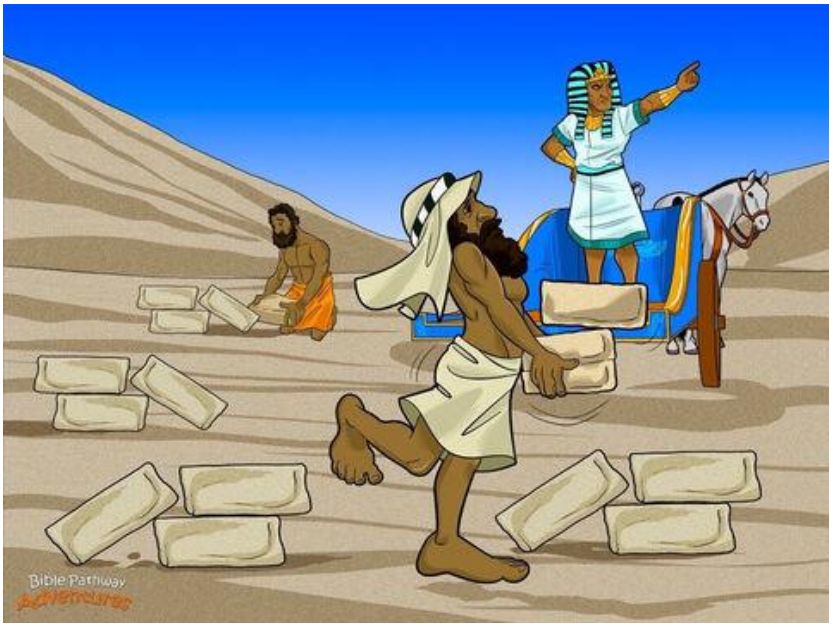
The 19th century Chassidic Rebbe, **R' Yechiel Meir of Gostynin *zt"l***, barely slept all of Pesach. His family was worried about his health and asked him why he would not sleep. He replied, "If I had won the

lottery, would you ask me why I couldn't sleep? Believe me! Every minute of Pesach is like winning the lottery."

What did he mean by this? Why did he feel more fortunate on Pesach than on any other day?

The Amshinover Rebbe explained: *Chazal* say that *chometz* represents the *yetzer horah*. Thus, Pesach is a time that is free of the *yetzer horah*. Every minute of such a time is priceless.

No Going Home Early



The *pasuk* writes: **וימררו את חייהם בעבודה קשה בחמר ובלבנים ובכל עבודה בשדה** - "***They embittered their lives with hard work, with mortar and with bricks, and with every labour of the field.***"

R' Shlomah Zarka *zt"l* and R' Yehuda Chermon *zt"l* ask: Why does the *pasuk* begin with construction work ("with mortar and with bricks") and then switch to farm work ("every labour of the field")?

They explain: Bnei Yisroel had a quota of bricks they had to produce each day. If they finished early, they could go home for the day. However, on their way home, Egyptians would grab them and force them to do farm work and perform other tasks, i.e., "every labour of the field." (*Haggadah Rinah V'yeshuah* p.102)

שולחן עורך

This expression literally means "He is setting the table" (in the present tense), and it alludes to Hashem. The story is told of a beggar who "worked" the homes of his neighbourhood for only two hours a day, yet collected more than any of the beggars who struggled from door to door all afternoon long. When he was asked the secret of his success, the beggar said, "I knock on doors only at mealtimes. Since the table is already set, no one minds feeding me as well. You, however, arrive at the houses when people are busy with other things, and they cannot be bothered to open the kitchen just for you."

Hashem, says **R' Yosef Chaim of Baghdad**, is not like a human. He (G-d) is always "setting the table" for us and thus we find sustenance at all times. (*Sefer Orach Chaim: Peirush Al Haggadah Shel Pesach*)

ברך

The Gemara says that after a person eats, he has only one heart. What does this mean?

Before a person eats, he has a *yetzer hatov* [good inclination] and *yetzer horah* [evil inclination]. After he eats, however, he has only one. If he has eaten "for the sake of Heaven," the *yetzer hatov* subjugates the bad, but if he ate merely too fulfil his own desires, then it is the *yetzer hatov* that is subjugated.

Reciting *birchas ha'mazon* enables the *yetzer hatov* to prevail, for in it we acknowledge that all food is Hashem's. (*Haggadas* R' Tzadok Hakohen)

"Coincidence is Hashem's way of remaining anonymous." – Rabbi Nachman of Breslov

חסל סדור פסח

In the *Nirtzah* section of the *Haggadah*, we declare, **חסל סדור פסח** which is normally translated as, "*We have completed the Pesach seder*." However, the verb **חסל** is normally associated with ending something in the sense of destroying it, as in (*Devorim* 28:38): **האַרבה כי יחסלנו** – "*for the locust will devour it*". Similarly, in modern Hebrew, the word **חסל** means "to assassinate." Why do we use this unusual term that seems to imply the destruction of the Pesach *seder*?



Rav Yisroel Reisman explains that in addition to proclaiming that we have successfully finished the Pesach *seder*, we are also including a hidden *tefillah* that Hashem should destroy the *seder* that we have today.

We allude to our hope that this will be the last time we have a *seder* in *golus* without the ability to eat the *korban* Pesach, as we beseech Hashem to rebuild the *Beis HaMikdosh* and return the *korban* Pesach that we are presently unable to offer, may it be speedily in our days.

The Missing Pesach Silver by Rabbi Mendel Weinbach zt"l

In the little Lithuanian town of Vabolninkas there lived a saintly woman by the name of Batsheva Shach. Her charitable deeds were legendary. Despite her own limited means, she would deliver baskets of food at the doors of poor families in town and quickly depart before anyone became aware of her good deed.

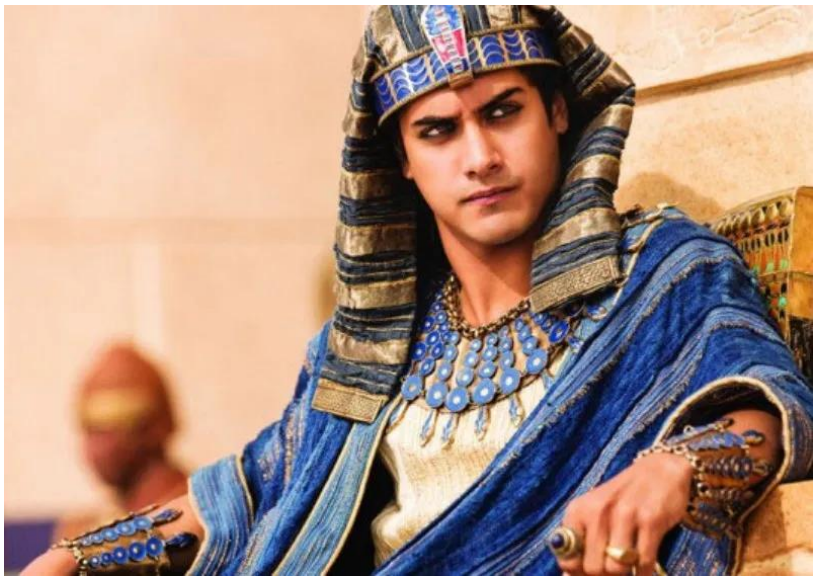
Her charitable activities reached their peak when the need arose to provide funds for the wedding of an orphaned girl. As she racked her brain for some way to help the poor kallah, her eyes fell upon

the closed cabinet containing silver vessels that her husband had given her as an outright gift. These were precious vessels that were used only on Pesach and she was sentimentally attached to them.

Without even informing her husband she opened the cabinet and delivered the vessels into the hands of the trustees collecting for the wedding. When Pesach came and her husband opened the cabinet in order to decorate the Seder table, he asked his wife where the vessels were. Her reply was that those vessels helped establish a Jewish home.

This was the woman whose son, **Rabbi Eliezer Shach**, was destined to become a leader of world Jewry.

In Search of the Historical Pharoah By Rabbi Yair Hoffman



The Gemorah in Psachim (116b) informs us that, in each generation, we are obligated to view ourselves as if we actually left Mitzrayim.

Rav Dessler zt"l writes in his Michtav M'Eliyahu that since time does not progress linearly, but rather travels in a carousel-like circle or spiral, the 15th of Nissan of the year 2448 is, in a manner of form, actually the very same 15th of Nissan of our own year now.

This is one of our obligations on the night of Pesach. This being the case, that halachically we must view ourselves as actually leaving Mitzrayim, in our mind's eye we should envision and picture the escape.

The Vision

So let's give it a try. Before us, standing at the water's edge about to enter it, stands Nachshon Ben Aminadav. His sister is married to Aharon HaKohain! He strikes a very noble image, and is a direct descendant of Yehudah. He will also be an ancestor of Dovid HaMelech

Behind us, on a chariot, Pharoah is leading his hordes of well-trained soldiers. They are rapidly catching up. Yes, it is Pharoah – the short, obnoxious leader of the Mitzrim that dared to present himself as a god.

Who Was He?

But who exactly was he? What was his name? What do we know about him?

In the 77th chapter of a work called Sefer HaYashar, which was first printed in Venice in 1525, there are details as to what his name was, and more about who he may have been. [Alter Bergmann published a more recent edition of it in Tel Aviv]. The author of this Sefer HaYashar is anonymous, and there seems to be a debate as to whether it was written in the times of the Tannaim or is a much later compilation.

So, what do we know about Pharoah according to the Sefer HaYashar?

Well, apparently he took the throne at the age of twenty. His father, Melol, was sick for the last ten years of his life but had reigned for some 94 years. His name was Adikam Ahuz. In Egyptian, according to the Sefer HaYashar, Ahuz means short, and short he was.

He was an Ammah and one half, exceedingly ugly, and had a beard down to his feet. [One perhaps could best picture him as one of the seven dwarfs a la Snow White, but with a crown instead of a nightcap]. The Sefer HaYashar states that his reign started in the

206th year of Israel's going down to Mitzrayim, so he reigned for four years.

It seems, by the way, from the Sefer HaYashar, that only his advisors and confidants appended the pejorative Ahuz apelation to his name [the modern equivalent of shorty]. His subjects called him Adikam.

Is Sefer Hayashar Reliable?

Is the Sefer HaYashar reliable?

Good question. Looking through the work, we do find some interesting tidbits of information that do not seem to have other parallels in our extant Midrashic ouevre.

For example, Tzipporah, Moshe Rabbeinu's wife is described as being on par with the Imahos, Sara, Rivkah, Rochel and Leah. **Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan z"l** does use the work in his Chumash, and there are many parallels in other Midrashim and Gemorahs. Let's assume that it is reliable.

Let's now ask another question. Secular historians have all the pharoahs named. What is the secular name of Pharoah? It is possible to accept the secular name and the surrounding history as accurate without necessarily having to accept the secular chronology as accurate.

If we follow the standard dating, of when the old Pharoah (Basya's father) died and a new Pharoah arose (See Shmos 2:23) which occurred in 2444, this gives us the figure of 1316 BCE. The Pharoah at that time was called Horemheb, according to secular historians.

The name of one of the cities that Klal Yisroel built was Ramses (See Shmos 1:11). It might be tempting to accept Ramses II as the Pharoah. But his secular dating is much later 1134 BCE. Nonetheless, the thesis presented earlier might be acceptable that there was a mess up in their dating, somehow.

If we follow the 166 year discrepancy (or 163 years according to Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan) then the Pharoah is Thutmose III, who, according to the secular calculation, reigned from 1490-1436 BCE.

Pepi

There is another possibility, as well[1]. It seems that there was a Pharoah known as Phiops II or Pepi, who is mentioned by Manetho, an Egyptian priest from Heliopolis. Manetho compiled an Egyptian history under the patronage of Ptolemy I, entitled Aegyptika. It was written in Greek and finished c.271 BCE. It is now only extant in translation and is available to us in Josephus. According to Manetho, Pepi ruled from age six to age one hundred. Manetho's datings have been questioned by historians who claim that there was political gain for the Egyptian priest in extending the lengths. However, the account has been verified through an Egyptian papyrus discovered in 1822 and called the Turin Royal Canon. (See Alan Gardiner, Royal Canon of Turin. Griffith Institute, 1959)

[Parenthetically, The Turin papyrus dates to Ramses II and mentions the names of all Egyptian rulers preceded by the register of the "gods" who ruled over Egypt before the Pharaonic era. It was discovered in Thebes by an Italian traveler named Bernardino Drovetti. Eventually it was donated to the Museo Egizio by the king of Sardinia.]

The Seforno

There is also one more tidbit. According to the Seforno, the term "Tzefardaya" means crocodiles—not frogs. The Ipuwer papyrus mentions crocodiles coming out of the Nile left and right on a path of destruction.

The halacha of envisioning us being there is not just theoretical. It involves physical action as well. The Rambam writes (Hilchos Chometz UhMatzah 7:6) based upon the verse in Dvarim 5, "And you shall remember that you were a slave in Mitzrayim" as follows: "In

other words, as if you yourself were a slave and you left to freedom and you were redeemed." The juxtaposition of this Rambam with the next halacha gives us remarkable insight. The Rambam writes, "Therefore when a person eats and drinks on this night he must lean in the manner of free men."

In other words, it seems that the obligation of leaning is a manifestation of this biblical obligation of imagining and visioning that it was actually us. So this Pesach let us go through the extra effort of picturing it with even more detail. A short, ugly Pharoah named Adikam Ahuz chasing us in a chariot.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב זצ"ל- נפטר כ׳ט שבט תשע׳ד

Part of the Seder which is always worthwhile investing in, is the Makkos, because generally and certainly with younger members of the family, because by the time we have gone through the seder of the pesukim, everybody gets a little bit disengaged!

The 10 Makkos are an amazing way to really re-engage the children. **Rav Yisrael Salanter** said that we **should** use the visual with regards to the Makkos as is mentioned by Matan Torah - רַ֚ק הִשָּׁמֶ֣ר לְךָ֔ וּשְׁמֹ֥ר נַפְשְׁךָ֖ מְאֹ֑ד פֶּן־תִּשְׁכַּ֤ח אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים֙ אֲשֶׁר־רָא֣וּ עֵינֶ֔יךָ - One should not forget that which one's eyes saw. (Devarim 4:9)

Obviously, our own eyes did not see the giving of the Torah at Har Sinai, or Kriyas Yam Suf or the makkos that took place in Mitzrayim. - But in our minds eye, we can see that which happened. And if we allow our imagination to visualize and re-connect to these pivotal moments in time – utilizing the pesukim, midrashim etc, we can re-live them to the best of our imagination.

This can be an amazingly powerful tool, with which to give over and explain and re-live the Emunah and bitachon to our children.

The sefer Seder Hayom (author of Modeh Ani) says that the makkos were not just brought to punish the Mitzryim, but that primarily, the 10 Makkos themselves were brought to give opportunities for Klal Yisrael to prepare for Kabalas HaTorah!

He explains how each makkoh starting at **דם** corresponds to the Aseres Hadibros and are equated one with the other. It was for us to use as a basis for our Emunah and bitachon.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series





The Chasam Sofer says that there are two Malachim. One who has control over **זכרון** (memory) and one that controls **שִׁכחָה**. (forgetfulness).

Rav Shamshon Ostrapoli says the name of the malach for **זכרון** is spelled – **דזך**. And one that controls **שִׁכחָה** is spelled – **ריב.**

There is a Gemarah in Arvei Pesachim, that tells us that we are meant to dip our maror into charoses – **משום קפא**. Rashi/Rashbam/Toisfos say that **קפא** is some sort of enzyme in the marror that is toxic. So, to nullify this toxicity, we dip it into charoses.

Chazal asks - is this toxic enzyme is only prevalent on Seder night? What about the rest of the year?

The Chasam Sofer explains that there is obviously something else going on here. He says that the name – **קפא** represents Tumas Mitzrayim. This is gematria of 181.

When this malach overpowered the malach of **זכרון** – As the goal of the malach of Mitzrayim was to make Klal Yisrael forget **תורת האבות**.

Therefore, they wanted to take that *koach* of memory that we had – the **דזך** , and engulf it with the koach of **קפא**.

If you add **דזך** (31) to **קפא** (181), you get the gematria of 212 - **ריב**. (the gematriah of the malach that controls **שִׁכחָה**.(forgetfulness).

So, on Seder night we nullify the koach Mitzrayim in order to remain with our koach of memory!

This explains what Chazal want us to accomplish on Seder night. To discuss the causes for going down to Mitzrayim, the shibbud, the tefillah and eventually the geulah – So that we re-connect with our **תורת האבות**.

How do we know that this is the goal?

If you look at the end of the Haggadah, this is the crescendo of Seder night. **Reb Avrohom Gurvitz** says over from **Rav Yoinosson Eibeshitz**, that this is why we say the Pizmon of **אֶחָד מִי יוֹדֵעַ** right at the culmination of the Seder.

This gives us a deep insight into what we are meant to have achieved this night.

There is a thing called 'word association.' Pen/pencil, hot/cold, big /small, knife/fork etc.

We want people to be so invigorated and infused and proud of where we come from and so connected to Yiddishkeit, that by the end of the night, if you say, "One, they will reply- Hashem etc etc

So, Seder night is not just about recanting the past – but about looking at the past and creating a vision and platform for the future.

"Hashem is the true source of our strength and success, and everything we achieve is thanks to His kindness." – Rabbi Avigdor Miller.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series - אֶחָד מִי יוֹדֵעַ



Calculate the numbers in the following way: אֶחָד מִי יוֹדֵעַ =1

שְׁנַיִם מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שְׁנַיִם אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: שְׁנֵי לֻחוֹת הַבְּרִית. אֶחָד אֱלֹקינוּ שֶׁבַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ = 2+1. And then add on the previous paragraph + 1.

שְׁלשָׁה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שְׁלשָׁה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: שְׁלשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לֻחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹקינוּ שֶׁבַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ = 3 + 2 + 1 plus the previous paragraphs (2+1 plus 1)

אַרְבַּע מִי יוֹדֵעַ? אַרְבַּע אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: אַרְבַּע אִמָּהוֹת, שְׁלשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לֻחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹקינוּ שֶׁבַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ. = 4 + 3 + 2 + 1 (plus 3 + 2 + 1 plus 2+1 plus 1.)

If you continue with this formula, you get a grand total of 1820.

What is the significance of this?

There are 1820 Sheimos י-ה-ו-ה in the Torah! What does י-ה-ו-ה represent? הָיָה הַוֹוה וְיִהְיֶה. (Was- Is-Will Be). The Riboino Shel Olam runs the world, from the beginning, in the middle and at the end. This is why this calculation works as it does – you are always going forwards and backwards. We thus see the Hashgacha of Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

If you count the number of pesukim in the Torah, the 1820th Pasuk is הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם (Shemos 12:2). This is why we say - יָכוֹל מֵראשׁ חֹדֶשׁ.

If you count from the beginning of מַגִּיד till גָּאַל יִשְׂרָאֵל, there are 1820 words! - What's the significance?

The fact that there are 1820 Sheimos י-ה-ו-ה – That Hashem will always be here. In the past, the present and the future! And when we sit together on Seder night, that's what we engage in.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series – Shabbos Hagodol

Shabbos Hagadol is a preparation for Pesach. Pesach is called Shabbos. My father-in-law Zt'l would wish me a 'Good Shabbos' on the 1st night of Pesach!

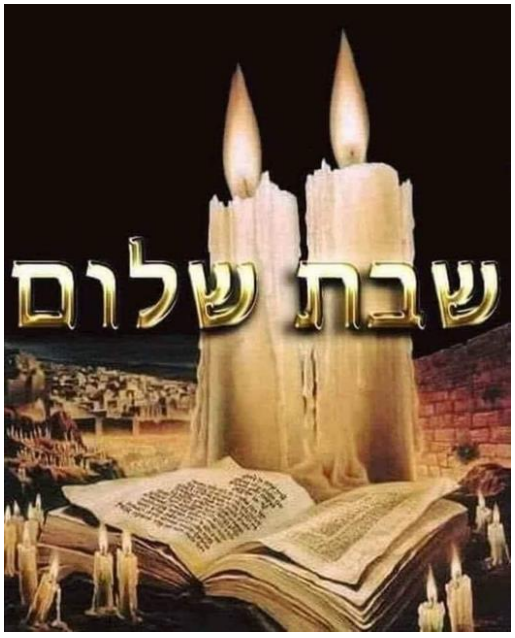
I noticed a twinkle in his eye and a wry smile, that we both knew that it was Yom Tov and not Shabbos.

I asked him, "What do you mean?"

He replied, "**The Vilna Gaon** used to wish people on the 1st day a Pesach, a 'Good Shabbos'. Why?

Because the Torah calls it **מִמָּחֳרַת הַשַּׁבָּת**. That we start counting Sefiras Haomer the day after Pesach falls, which equates Pesach with Shabbos. But why is Pesach called Shabbos?

The Meshach Chochmo says (Parshas Emor) that there are two considerations as to why Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave us the mitzvah of Shabbos and why He gave us the mitzvah of Yom Tov.



Shabbos is a time when Klal Yisrael are supposed to be focusing their relationship primarily with The Riboino Shel Olam. Yom Tov however, is where Klal Yisrael focus their relationships with one another. E.g. On Shabbos we can't do any melachos, whereas on YomTov we can prepare and cook extra food – just in case extra guests arrive. Because Yom Tov is all about the closeness that we have for each other, hence **אוכל נפש** is **מותר**.

Shabbos is not like that. Shabbos is about focusing on my relationship with Hakadosh Baruch Hu – And therefore, the need to be more limited in the interaction with each other.

Says the Meshach Chochmo [Rav Meir Simcha of Dvinsk (1843-1926], that Pesach has the element that is very similar to Shabbos. By the korban Pesach, you could only eat and partake of it, if you were booked in and prepared prior to Yom Tov. So, although YomTov is normally a family time and we share and are there for each other, (as expounded by Rav Shamshon Rephael Hirsch in parshas Bo.) but for Pesach, it must be pre-prepared.

Hence Pesach is called Shabbos! (Shabbos HaKaton) **יאכַל בְּשַׁבָּת מִי שֶׁטָּרַח בְּעֶרֶב שַׁבָּת .** The Shabbos beforehand – Shabbos Hagadol – that's a real Shabbos.

Korban Pesach is what Leil HaSeder is all about, and revolves around it – The Matzah, the marror, the sippur yetzias Mitzrayim. And for that, one must be prepared beforehand. One cannot go into the leil HaSeder without preparation. It is a night when we focus on emuna and bitachon in Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman



The kittel

At the Seder, the father wears a *kittel*, which represents *tachrichim*, shrouds. **The Chasam Sofer *zt'l*** explains that we want the father to remember that he won't live forever. There will be a time when he will be dressed in *tachrichim* and buried in the ground, and then he won't be able to tell his family about *yetzias Mitzrayim*.

This realization will inspire him to take advantage of the night, to tell his children about *yetzias Mitzrayim*, and to implant in them *emunah* in Hashem.

Reb Shimon Shwab Zt'l said that when a father speaks to his children moments before his *petirah*, the children listen very well, and try their best to keep his final wishes. At the seder, the father wears a *kittel* because he wants the children to listen carefully to what he tells them, with the same awe and earnestness that they will have during his final moments in life.



בחודש האביב

It states (*Shemos* 13:3) **אתם יוצאים בחודש היום האביב**, "Today you are leaving, in the month of Aviv."

Rashi asks, "Don't we know when they left? Moshe told them: Take note of the *chesed* Hashem performed for you: He redeemed you from Mitzrayim when the weather is comfortable, when it isn't too hot or cold, and there is no rain."

However, the joy of *yetzias Mitzrayim* is so great that it seems odd that the weather should be mentioned.

To understand the question, imagine a Holocaust survivor telling you that he jumped out the window of a speeding train headed towards the concentration camps, and that is how he saved his life. - And then you ask him, "How was the weather that day?"

He will respond, "Did you hear what I'm telling you? My life was saved! The weather is irrelevant!"

Nevertheless, the Torah tells us to take note of the comfortable weather the Yidden enjoyed when they left Mitzrayim. - This is because even the weather on the day of *yetzias Mitzrayim* wasn't by chance – it was by Hashem's decree. Everything, down to the smallest detail, is from Hashem, and we should note even the most minor details.

A Tiny Difference

Chametz and matzah share the same letters except for one small difference. **מצה** has a **ה**, while **חמץ** has a **ח**. The letters **ח** and **ה** are quite similar. If the foot of the **ה** would reach its roof, it would be a **ח**.

Rav Eliyahu Dessler zt'l explained that the small line that differentiates between the **ח** and the **ה** of the words **מצה** and **חמץ** indicates that small steps in the right direction can make an impact and can be the difference between holiness and impurity.

One shouldn't say, "What can my insignificant actions accomplish?" - because what seems minor to you can generate incredible spiritual growth.

Mah Nishtanah

Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt'l* asked some children the day after the Seder, "Did you ask *Mah Nishtanah*?"

"Yes."

"And what answer did you get?"

"**עבדים היינו**"

"Did you ask the *Mah Nishnatah* last year?"

"We did."

"And what answer did you get last year?"

"It was the same answer, "**עבדים היינו**"

"If you received this answer last year, why did you ask the same questions again this year?" The children tried to explain in various ways.

Reb Shlomo Zalman commented, "When I was eight years old, I was walking home from the Kosel with my father, and we met **Reb Yosef**

Chaim Sonnenfeld *zt'l*. He asked me the same question I just asked you: 'If you asked *Mah Nishtanah* last year, why did you ask it again this year?

But when Reb Yosef Chaim asked me this question, I cried! - but when I asked you this question, you tried to answer me in different ways…"

The Holiness of the Seder

The Sar Shalom of Belz *zt'l* once said to his grandson, Rebbe **Yissachar Dov of Belz *zt'l***: "Eliyahu HaNavi comes to the Seder of every Yid, and there are great tzaddikim who see him. But an even greater level is when one doesn't see Eliyahu, but he *believes* that Eliyahu is there, at the Seder."

Every year, after saying **שפך חמתך**, the **Noda b'Yehudah** would escort Eliyahu HaNavi *z'l* out of his house, down the stairs, and into the street.

The Chidushei HaRim praised this deed immensely and said, "The Noda b'Yehuda didn't actually see Eliyahu Hanavi, but he believed that he was there. And believing is a higher level than seeing."

Eliyahu HaNavi is not the only one who comes to the Seder. Hashem is also present.

In the *Haggadah*, we say that Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim, **ובמורא גדול זה גילוי שכינה** - when His *Shechinah* became revealed in Mitzrayim. - This happens again each year at the Seder. The *Shechinah* is present.

Rebbe Aharon of Belz zt'l rarely cried, but when he burned the chametz (and when he said קרובץ on Purim), he would cry.

The Simanim of The Seder

Chassidim once heard **Rebbe Yehoshua of Belz *zt'l*** silently repeat to himself the *simanim* of the Seder (**קדש ורחץ כרפס יחץ** etc.) before he began the Seder.

Chassidim explain that he was reminding himself of all the wonderful steps of the Seder so that he could keep each step properly. This is because sometimes a person reaches **נרצה** and he regrets that he didn't take better advantage of the holy Seder with all its mitzvos, *segulos*, holiness, and bounties.

Rebbe Yehoshua of Belz *zt'l* wanted to make sure that he took advantage of all the mitzvos of this holy night, so at the beginning of the Seder, he reviewed what was coming up, so he could perform the mitzvos properly.

The order of the Seder, **קדש ורחץ** etc., are called *simanim*. When someone claims a lost object, he must give evidence of ownership (*simanim*), and then he can take back the lost object.

Throughout the year, due to sins, a person loses his holiness. When he does the *simanim* of the Seder, he gets his *kedushah* back. What was lost is returned to him.

A Seder for Everyone

The Avnei Nezer *zt'l* said, "My father-in-law, the **Kotzker *zt'l***, always appeared like a *malach*, but at the Seder, he appeared like a *saraf* (a higher form of *malach*)…. At the Seder, the Kotzker appeared elevated in ways we didn't see even on Yom Kippur. During the second half of the Seder, sparks of fire came out of his mouth." (Abir HaRoim).

The Shlah HaKadosh writes that there were chassidim who kissed the matzos when they lifted them at the Seder.

The Rebbe of Riminov *zt'l* said that if he weren't embarrassed, he would shake the matzos in beis medresh with **נענועים** as we do with the *lulav* and esrog.

Perhaps we aren't on these high levels; nevertheless, the Torah was given to everyone, and to us the Torah says (*Shemos* 12:18), **בערב תאכלו מצות** , "In the evening you shall eat matzos." - Hashem is happy with our mitzvah of matzah, and our Seder, too.

The final *siman* of the Seder is *nirtzah*, which means "It was accepted and desired." We are confident that after we went through the Seder, Hashem is happy with it, and He accepted it.

Everyone aspires that his Seder should be beautiful, the children should behave, and the atmosphere be happy and uplifting, but, alas, it isn't always so. - We must know that Hashem is happy with our Seder precisely as it was.



אָז יָשִׁיר־מֹשֶׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת (Shemos 15:1)

Late one Friday night, **Chacham Rabbeinu Avraham Tzorfati zt"l** dozed off in the middle of his learning and he saw, in his dream, a vision of an old man with a long flowing white beard coming towards him. The man was clearly Eliyahu HaNavi and he spoke to the Chacham.

"My son, who was the greatest prophet in history?" "Moshe Rabbeinu, of course," was the quick reply. "If so," replied Eliyahu HaNavi, "Why didn't Moshe Rabbeinu sing Shirah (songs of praise) even before the Egyptians drowned? Shouldn't the greatest of prophets have known beforehand that his enemies would drown in the sea and his nation would be saved? If so, why didn't he trust in this miracle and begin to sing before?"

The Chacham realized that this was no ordinary question and certainly coming from no ordinary individual. He understood immediately that he was being tested. He chose his words carefully. "Surely, Moshe Rabbeinu could have sung before the Egyptians drowned," said Rabbeinu Avraham. "But as a dedicated shepherd to his flock, he understood that his people were not fully convinced and were as yet afraid. Thus, they were not prepared to sing Shirah and Moshe did not want to sing without his people."

Eliyahu HaNavi beamed. "This is the correct response and and the manner in which a true leader must lead."

Smile



It states in *Tehillim* **אנכי ה' אלקיך המעלך מארץ מצרים הרחב פיך ואמלאהו** 81:11 "***I am Hashem your G-d, who took you out of Mitzrayim, open your mouth wide [ask for a lot], and I will fill it.***

Why does the *pasuk* say, **הרחב פיך** - ***widen your mouth?*** It should have said, **פתח פיך**, ***open your mouth.***

When one widens his mouth, he smiles. Thus, we can explain that the *pasuk* is saying, "Smile, be happy, and Hashem will give you all your needs!"

Rebbe Leibele Eiger said that we eat eggs at the Seder to indicate that just like an egg becomes a chicken when it is kept warm under a hen, similarly, many great things can happen to us on this night, but we must bring forth warmth— our enthusiasm and joy — and then we will merit it.

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־הַמַּצּוֹת כִּי בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה הוֹצֵאתִי אֶת־צִבְאוֹתֵיכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם חֻקַּת עוֹלָם (Shemos 12:17)

Throughout the year, helping others was so naturally a part of their parents' home that it was difficult for the family and talmidim of **R' Moshe Feinstein zt"l**, to recall specific stories that left an impression.

People tend to recall unusual events, not everyday occurrences. Before Pesach, however, a number of incidents truly stood out in their minds. When **R' Nissan Alpert zt"l** was still a young bochur, R' Moshe once asked him for a favor. He had received a letter from a needy person asking for financial help before Pesach, but he had misplaced the letter. All he remembered was that the sender was a Belzer Chasid who lived on Rivington Street, on the Lower East Side of Manhattan.

"Nissan, please come with me to Rivington Street and let's try to find him," said R' Moshe, and young Nissan complied. They went together, but failed to find their man. Rivington Street was crowded with all sorts of Jews. R' Moshe was distressed but there was nothing he could do.

On Erev Pesach, R' Moshe suddenly arrived at the Alpert apartment and asked for Nissan. He had found the letter and wanted to deliver the money immediately; a poor family's Yom Tov would be much more festive if they knew there was some cash on hand. Would Nissan accompany him?

Of course, his talmid would not turn down this chance to do a mitzvah with his Rebbi. The two went to the Rivington Street address and delivered the money to the thankful Belzer Chasid.

On their way back, it started to rain. R' Moshe told Nissan to hurry home; he, R' Moshe, had to make a detour to buy a newspaper, he said. Nissan wanted to go along, but R' Moshe insisted that he should

not walk unnecessarily in the rain. It seemed strange to Nissan that his Rosh Yeshivah should want to read a paper on Erev Pesach, and to walk two blocks in the rain to buy one, but he did not dare ask why.

Several weeks later, Nissan found an opportunity to satisfy his curiosity. He told R' Moshe that he had been wondering about the newspaper and thought he had solved the mystery. R' Moshe asked to hear the solution.

"The Rebbetzin would not have wanted the Rosh Yeshivah to deliver the money himself on such a busy day; so the Rosh Yeshivah said he was buying a newspaper. In order not to break his word, the Rosh Yeshivah had to go for a paper even though it was raining."

R' Moshe smiled and nodded. When it came to the mitzvah of baking matzos, as a rule, R' Moshe personally supervised the baking of his own matzos. He would always emphasize that he came to perform the mitzvah, and not because he questioned the kashrus of the bakery.

There were some who urged him to change to a larger, newer, more efficient bakery, but he always refused, explaining that people might take such a change as an aspersion on the kashrus of the older bakery. Those who accompanied R' Moshe to the matzah bakery recall his zealousness in performing this mitzvah and his joy when the finished matzos were taken from the oven. To someone who was overzealous in rejecting matzos, he gave the gentle, humorous rebuke, "Rabbi Akiva would eat our matzos, but we would not eat his."

The same person was in the habit of breaking off parts of many matzos because he maintained that they were not well baked. R' Moshe opposed this practice. He told the gentleman that he should pay for the complete matzos because the breakage was unnecessary.

One year, he asked someone to bring some of these matzos to a man who had made a number of appeals for funds on behalf of R' Moshe's

yeshivah, Tifereth Jerusalem. The Rosh Yeshivah knew that the man sought nothing in return for his efforts, but was hopeful that the very personal gift he was now sending would be accepted as a token of his appreciation.

Chumros

Rebbe Simchah Bunim of Peshischa *zt'l* taught that one doesn't have to be *machmir* with the mitzvos more than what is the accepted halachah. However, he said, Pesach is an exception. One should be *machmir* and go beyond the letter of the law to be chametz-free on Pesach.

But even when we take on *chumros* on Pesach, it is essential to keep them joyfully and without worry.

Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa *zt'l* said that the *chumros* we keep on Pesach decorate the *kallah* (the *Shechinah*) with jewelry and ornaments.

When one adorns a *kallah* for her *chasunah,* there's an atmosphere of joy and excitement in the air. We should have a similar happy ambiance as we keep the *chumros* of Pesach.

One isn't obligated to take on all the *chumros* on Pesach, but one is compelled to follow the *chumros* and the traditions of his family.

This is based on the *Pasuk* (*Mishlei* 1:8) - **אל תטוש תורת אמך** "***Don't forsake the Torah of your mother***," and Chazal explain that this means we must abide by the customs and *chumros* we received from our parents.

"Bitachon is not the absence of fear, but the faith that allows us to face fear head-on." – Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak Ruderman

שׁוֹמְרִים הַפְקֵד לְעִירְךָ כָּל הַיּוֹם וְכָל הַלַּיְלָה, תָּאִיר כְּאוֹר יוֹם חָשְׁכַּת לַיְלָה, וַיְהִי נִרְצָה - בַּחֲצִי הַלַּיְלָה

Guards appoint for Your city all the day and all the night, illuminate like the light of the day, the darkness of the night, and it was in the middle of the night.

A story is told about an ancient city in Eastern Europe whose inhabitants were growing older and were soon met with a sticky situation. Apparently, the old cemetery at the edge of town was filling up fast and soon there would be no more room to bury any newly deceased citizens.



A new bais hachaim was required to accommodate the population and the chevra kadisha got to work clearing a new area which would soon serve as the new bais hachaim in town. However, try as they might, they were unable to attract any "takers". No one wanted to commit to purchasing a plot in the new cemetery, and the old cemetery kept right on filling up.

What did they do? The chevra kadisha announced that the first person to agree to be buried in the new cemetery in town will receive 200 ruble. The catch was that the money would be given only after the person passes away and the 200 ruble will be delivered to the grieving spouse.

Huge signs went up around town announcing this new promotion. However, even this lucrative offer was met with resistance. Nobody wanted to be buried in the new cemetery.

One of the local townspeople saw the sign and had an idea. He had recently experienced a tremendous downturn in his business dealings and he could barely make ends meet. There was little food in the pantry and prospects were not looking good. After seeing the sign, he told his wife, "You know, Pesach is coming soon and we don't have any money to buy the necessities for Yom Tov. I have an idea. I will get into bed and you tell everyone that I am sick. Tomorrow, you will announce that I passed away and I will lay in an aron. They will come to bury me and you tell them that you are agreeing to allow me to be buried in the new cemetery. The chevra kadisha will give you the 200 ruble and we will have what we need for Yom Tov."

His wife was simpleminded and agreed to go along with the plan. That night, the poor man built a coffin from firewood and laid himself down inside. His wife ran outside and burst into tears, telling anyone and everyone that her husband passed away suddenly and that before he died, he agreed to be buried in the new cemetery.

The chevra kadisha came by and took the coffin to the local synagogue, where a short funeral was conducted. From there, two members of the burial society carried the coffin to the new cemetery to "break ground." The woman received the money and returned home with her windfall.

The night was stormy and cold and as the two members of the chevra kadisha carried the coffin to the new cemetery, a chill passed through them and they decided to stop at a local inn and warm themselves up with a hot drink. They placed the coffin on the ground outside and went in.

The moment the aron touched the ground, the "deceased" man opened the lid and climbed out. Nobody saw him and he clandestinely snuck back into town, ran into his house and hid in his bed. Meanwhile, the two pallbearers came outside and lifted the coffin. Instantly, they realized something was wrong. The coffin was much

lighter than before and when they opened it, they realized that the body was gone!

Terrified, they came to the conclusion that someone must have "stolen" the body and if the chevra kadisha found out about it, they would get into a lot of trouble. So, they continued onto the cemetery and buried the casket as is, empty and weightless, in the first grave. They promised one another that they would not say a word to anyone as they made their way back to the city.

On the night of Leil HaSeder, all the preparations were complete. The 200 ruble had really come in handy and a beautiful table was set. The husband had secluded himself inside his house for weeks and was getting restless. He decided it was time to "show his face" and he arrived in shul Pesach night to the astonished and bewildered looks of his compatriots. People surrounded him and bombarded him with questions.

Suddenly, the head of the chevra kadisha burst into the ring of people and shouted, "You liar! You thief! You faked your own death just to get 200 ruble! Give it back - it does not belong to you!"

But the man was prepared for this. "Why does it bother you so much that I am alive? Why does this make you so angry? I'll tell you what. The moment I die for real, you can bury my body in the new cemetery and I won't ask you for a penny ....!"

"Bitachon means to trust in Hashem with complete confidence, relying on Him for everything, even when it seems impossible." – Rabbi Nachman of Breslov.

'Gratitude is the foundation for serving Hashem' – Aalei shur

הָא לַחְמָא עַנְיָא דִּי אֲכָלוּ אַבְהָתָנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרָיִם. כָּל דִּכְפִין יֵיתֵי וְיֵיכֹל, כָּל מַגְיִד - דְּצָרִיךְ יֵיתֵי וְיִפְסַח

It was the first night of Pesach, and after Maariv in Shaarei Chessed's "Khal Chassidim" synagogue, **R' Sholom Schwadron zt"l** noticed a man who had remained behind in shul.



Though the fellow's appearance bespoke a man of sense, perhaps even a Torah scholar, both sight and smell of his soiled and threadbare clothing testified to the fact that their last cleaning was lost in the mists of time. In fact, on closer scrutiny, fleas were clearly visible on his suit.

On the spot, the famed Maggid of Jerusalem decided to bring the man home for the Seder. To invite him to sleep over at their house was impossible, however, because of the fleas. This problem troubled R' Sholom to no end. Where would the man sleep that night?

"We have to find him a place to sleep. The meal will be over late. Where will we send him after midnight?" he whispered anxiously to his son-in-law.

Back home, the family was impatiently awaiting R' Sholom's arrival before the little ones succumbed to sleep. But R' Sholom did not appear. As time passed, his wife told the children, "Abba probably found some mitzvah to attend to. We'll wait."

Sure enough, R' Sholom was completely caught up in the momentum of the mitzvah at hand. Back at shul, he thought for a few minutes, and came up with an idea. "Let's go," he told his son-in-law. "We'll track down the owner of the Yerushalayim Hotel."

Before he left, R' Sholom went over to the unfortunate Jew, shook his hand warmly, and said, "Good Yom Tov. You're invited to our house

for the Seder! We'll be back in a little while and walk home together. Please wait for us."

The man mustered a grateful smile, then sat down at a table to wait, a sefer open in front of him. R' Sholom and his son-in-law left. The streets were deserted. Everyone was already seated at their tables like kings, inaugurating the Seder by announcing Kaddish!

R' Sholom and his son-in-law hurried to the hotelier's home, where R' Sholom requested a single room for his guest. "We'll be responsible for any damage that may result," he promised. The man agreed; a key exchanged hands. The two returned to the shul and R' Sholom happily collected his guest. Together, the three walked to the Schwadron home.

As R' Sholom led his guest inside, the Rebbetzin and her daughters moved quickly away. The girls whispered among themselves in agitation. "Who is he?" "Where did Abba find him?" "Look out, that chair is going to be full of fleas!" "The smell is unbearable!"

The Rebbetzin stepped forward with a pleasant smile, offering the man a seat. R' Sholom, as usual, seated the guest at the head of the table. The person at the man's other side surreptitiously moved his chair until a full meter separated the two. The stench was truly unbearable. Tiny creatures were already beginning to crawl around under the guest's chair.

Kaddish. Urchatz. Karpas. Yachatz. Maggid. This was where R' Sholom ascertained that his guest's interior was indeed of far finer quality than his exterior: He was a learned man. Enthusiastically, R' Sholom engaged the man in a spirited dialogue on various aspects of the Haggadah and its commentary.

The animated talk continued all through the Seder. At midnight, R' Sholom and his son-in-law went out into the dark street to accompany the guest to his hotel, where they parted warmly.

After that night, the hotelier was forced to dispose of the mattress that the man had used, along with all the bedclothes. True to his word, R' Sholom paid for all the damages.



Miracle - נס

The Chiddushei HaRim says that the word NES which means miracle, is comprised of 2 letters. A nun which stands for nefila, falling down, and samech which stands for smicha, which means support.

The miracles that Hashem does for us are not only when He saves us. It is also the fact that we fell. If we would never experience falling down or darkness, we would never appreciate light. It is all one thing. Bitterness is also an attitude. Some people can see the bitterness in a good situation and others see good in something bitter. Life is what we choose to see. The way to free ourselves from our slavery is by choosing to see the good in the bitter.

On Leil HaSeder we don't eat maror alone. We dip it in charoses. Charoses is made up of all the sweet things that Am Yisroel is compared to in Shir HaShirim - nuts, wine, apples. Slavery is when we are drowning in bitterness. Freedom means focusing on the sweet.

Let us not only say these words at the seder. Let us say them every day and internalize their message, so that we can truly get out of Mitzrayim this year and truly be free to be the best Yidden that we can be.



Besamei HaTorah …Beneath the Surface R' Shmuel Winzelberg

ה' איש מלחמה (שמות טו:ג) - *Hashem is a Man of war* (15:3)

The ways of HaKadosh Baruch Hu are not like the ways of a flesh and blood person. The way of a flesh and blood person, when he goes out to war, he goes out with many soldiers; and when he goes out for peace, he only goes out with a few people.

But HaKadosh Baruch Hu, when He goes out to war, He only goes out by Himself, as it says, 'Hashem is a Man of war'; and when He comes in peace, He comes with a great multitude. (Sifri Beha'aloscha Piska 102:25a – Otzer HaMidrashim)

L'Maaseh

The great Mashgiach of Ponovez, Rav Chatzkel Levenstein, zt"l, was characterized by **the Chazon Ish** as one whose hands actually held Emunah, one whose faith in Hashem was physically apparent.

Rav Chatzkel lived and breathed Yetziyas Mitzrayim, the Jewish People's Exodus from Mitzrayim. He was once observed privately reenacting Krias Yam Suf, using chairs and Shtenders to simulate the dry path that the Jews took through the walls of water.

Early one morning, a student came into the empty and quiet Ponovez Bais Medrash. The only person there was the Rosh Yeshivah, **Rav Dovid Povarsky, zt"l**, who was known to come early to learn every morning at 4:00 A.M., and learn in solitude until Shacharis. When the student arrived and saw his Rosh Yeshivah, Rav Dovid signaled for

the student to come over to him. Very quietly, Rav Dovid said, "I am overcome with chills!"



The student asked what had happened, and Rav Dovid held his finger to his lips. He said, "Listen to what I hear coming from the Mashgiach's private office."

Suddenly, the sound of the Mashgiach's voice was heard. In a sweet and clear voice, he was singing the words of Az Yashir.

Later, the Talmid related, "As we heard each word, we felt the joy and elation that one should have to recite Az Yashir properly. As we listened, the Rosh Yeshivah commented, 'I have chills going through my body as I comprehend the great level that a Yid can reach while singing Az Yashir, and the loftiness of the Mashgiach's Emunah'!"

Short Story Of The Week - Rabbi Mordechai Levin

In the tumult liberation of the infamous Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, after the Nazis (yimach shimom) had fled and the emaciated survivors were desperately searching for food. An American Jewish soldier came upon the stunning sight of one person who had miraculously found a Gemara Bava Kama, and was sitting in a corner learning! He was **Rav Gershon Leibman, ZT"L**, the Rosh Yeshiva of Novardok in France.

Rav Gershon informed the soldier that he planned to immediately open a yeshiva in Bergen-Belsen! A conversation ensued; "We have wasted enough time over the past six years." "Who will be the Rosh Yeshiva?" "I will." "Who will be the fundraiser?" "I will." "How about students? You cannot have a yeshiva without students."

"I will be the student!" the Rav answered. "When someone wants to achieve, he cannot worry about who, what or when. He must do, and trust in Hashem." Shortly thereafter, the soldier joined Rav Gershon in his new yeshiva.

Comment: The Haggadah teaches us that each person must envision himself as if he went out of Mitzrayim. Notice the choice of wording, "as if he". Not his family, not he and his friends, etc. Each person must internalize the lesson of Yitziyas Mitzrayim (the Exodus), he himself can solidify his Emunah in Hashem by reliving the time when Hashem revealed Himself to the entire world. Then he himself can do, and accomplish great things for Hashem.

From our Sages

שֶׁלֹּא אֶחָד בִּלְבָד עָמַד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ - *For not only one stood against us to destroy us* (from the Hagadah)

Why have our enemies sought to destroy us? Because we were "***not only one***." Lack of unity among the Jewish people is the primary cause of all our troubles. (**Sefat Emet**)

יוֹם שֶׁצַּדִּיקִים יוֹשְׁבִים וְעַטְרוֹתֵיהֶם בְּרָאשֵׁיהֶם - Birchas Hamazon

The Spinka Rebbe Shlita says What is the explanations of these words on the day when the Tzaddikim sit with their crowns in their heads? The crown is supposed to be above the head and not inside it, so why don't we say 'and their crowns on their heads ?'

The Rebbe said: Indeed, you can walk around with the most magnificent crown on your head, be decorated with any title or royal crown, you can wear a shiny shtreimel or receive respect from all around - But inside your head you are preoccupied or busy with side things and sad things.

In such a situation, what value does the crown or the glittering crown on your head have !?

And on the other hand, you can walk around with a simple hat, not be the most respectful in the Beit Midrash - but in your head there is a crown! For this we ask: their crowns - in their heads !

Parshah Thoughts - Ideas and Reflections - Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

On the first Pesach after the Makkos, we were directed to eat Marror. Rashi (Shemos 12:8) notes that this was to remind us of the bitterness of our servitude.

Rav Yissocher Frand quotes a Sefer named Ikvei Erev who addresses the question: Why was it necessary to have a reminder of the bitterness of Egypt on the first Pesach after getting out of the slavery?

He answers that it is a part of human nature that we can easily forget the goodness that was done for us. Therefore, even shortly after leaving Mitzrayim we could have forgotten how bad it really was being enslaved in Egypt, and this would require us to need a reminder of the bitterness.

Rav Frand adds that this reminds us of the importance of proper Hakoras HaTov, recognizing the true good that others do for us, and not allowing our human nature to minimize their efforts.

"Happiness is not something that can be pursued directly. It is the by-product of a life with meaning and purpose." – Rabbi Avigdor Miller

L'Maaseh

Rav Yissocher Frand once stated that so often in life, something happens to people that becomes a wake-up call, and they suddenly realize how far they have gone.

There is a story about a Jew named Shlomo Mordechai Sobol, who passed away a few years ago. He was born and raised in Russia, and he was orphaned at the age of seven. He was raised in a religious home, but being orphaned and then being drafted into the Russian army pulled him away from Yiddishkeit. During the war, food was very hard to come by. The Russian soldiers had it relatively good because when they would invade a town, they would have free reign of the town and could seize whatever they wanted in terms of food and provisions.

Mr. Sobol, who by then was not very religious, walked into a bakery and took two loaves of bread. Shortly afterwards, he was walking in the town, and he saw a Mezuzah on the door of a little house, so he knocked on the door. The woman inside, seeing a Russian soldier at the door, did not want to answer the door. But he kept knocking. Finally, she answered the door. When he saw the Jewish woman, the soldier offered her one of his loaves of bread. She refused to take it. He persisted in his request that she take the loaf from him to feed her family during this time of famine, but she refused.

He told her in Yiddish, "I am a Jew. I want to do a Mitzvah. Please take this loaf of bread."

The woman looked at him again and said, "It is Pesach!"

Mr. Sobol was astonished. "It's Pesach now?"

That very day, Shlomo Mordechai Sobol, realizing how far he had drifted, made a vow to Hashem. He said, "Hashem, if You get me out of this war alive, I promise You I will return to the ways of my parents. I will become religious again. I will raise my family religious, and I will remain a religious Jew until the day I die!"

And so it was. Mr. Sobol lived in West Hartford, Connecticut, where he lived and died as a religious Jew!

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

Rav Yechiel Michel Stern, Rav of Yerushalayim's Ezras Torah neighborhood, is a nephew of **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l**. On Erev Pesach, Rav Shlomo Zalman would distribute envelopes of money to needy families. His trusted partner in this endeavor was Rav Stern, who described making those rounds.

"My uncle gave me precise instructions about what to say to each family. For example, he told me to tell one large family that the money is only to be used for Chol HaMo'eid trips, to take the children to the park or the zoo. And if they used the money for something else, I was to tell them that it would be considered *Gezel*, stealing.

Rav Shlomo Zalman explained to me that this particular family was extremely poor and would surely want to buy Matzos and other things for Yom Tov with it. But when all was said and done, in the end, they would have those other things. There were funds and organizations that would send Matzos and wine to needy families, so my uncle worried about something else for them.

My uncle told me, 'On the day after Yom Tov, all the children would return to Cheder, and their friends would be discussing what they had done on Chol HaMo'eid, and these children would be forced to sit quietly. But why should the children have to suffer like that? Let them also have some exciting trip to talk about with their friends!'

That was Rav Shlomo Zalman's concern, and that was why he gave such specific instructions for that family!"

Nothing is more expensive than a missed opportunity.

Pesach Treasures



The Klausenberger Rebbe, zt"l, taught through example what devotion to Mitzvos is. The Rebbe survived the Holocaust, making sure to observe whatever Mitzvos he could, risking his life not to transgress any Mitzvas Lo Sa'asei, negative commandments. His dedication and commitment were legendary.

A very difficult time for him was during Pesach, when his body, which was already suffering in pain from the labor, had to be sustained without eating the smallest crumb of Chomeitz.

Together with a small group of fellow prisoners, he was able to collect a few potatoes, and he hid them in the cracks of the walls of the barracks and between the bunks.

One day, a Nazi guard found the treasure and confiscated them. The Rebbe's reaction was characteristic of his Emunah, "We have done our part, and Hashem will do what is good in His eyes."

The Rebbe's words became a reality. On the day before Pesach, the Nazis, for no apparent reason, assigned an entire group of Jews to help the farmers whose fields were around the camp. Their job was to open the stores of potatoes which had been underground all winter. This work assignment provided them with the opportunity to smuggle a large quantity of potatoes back to the camp.

By an obviously open miracle, they were able to obtain some wheat, which they crushed with their fingers and some rocks until it was fine enough to be flour. They baked tiny little Matzos in secret and prepared for the Seder.

Men gathered around the Rebbe, as he recited the entire Hagadah from memory. His bitter weeping as he described the suffering of Mitzrayim shook the entire group, who listened with tears running

down their faces. While they certainly did not have four cups of wine, and Marror was a part of their daily routine in the concentration camp, they did have Matzah.

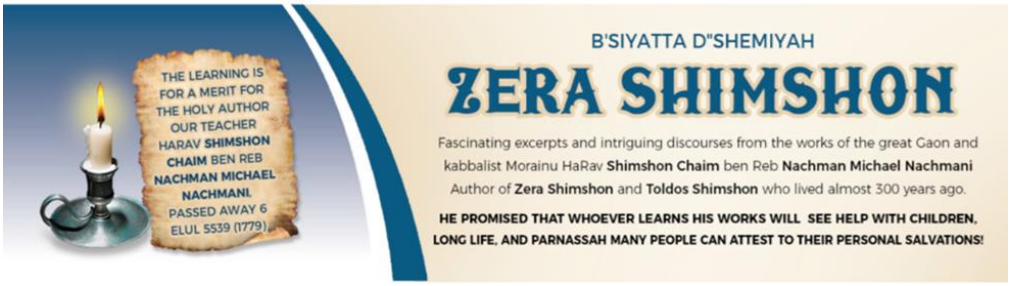
The Rebbe spoke words of encouragement to his Talmidim. They were amazed how he spoke about a future filled with hope. When others were filled with depression, the Klausenberger Rebbe's mind was full of Ruchniyus.

There was a non-observant Jew who had been invited to the Seder, and he sat silently, watching, listening, and absorbing everything that was taking place. He did not say a word, until he could no longer contain himself.

Then he exclaimed, "Jewish brothers! If I did not personally experience this beautiful scene, I would never have believed that such a thing was possible! That Jews should observe the Mitzvah of eating Matzah right under the noses of the Nazi murderers, with death staring them in the face! I would never have believed it!"

Surviving the week of Pesach took extraordinary strength, both physically and emotionally. The Rebbe hardly ate anything. He refused to eat Chomeitz of any sort, and he would not touch his daily portion of bread. He would eat nothing more than unpeeled potatoes that were occasionally obtained for him, baking them in an empty can that he Koshered in boiling water before Pesach.

On the last day of Pesach, the Rebbe was on a work detail outside of the campgrounds. He refused to eat a baked potato that someone had managed to obtain for him, because it was not prepared in something that had been Koshered for Pesach. As he was working, he happened to find the head of a sweet beet. He felt that this was his reward for not eating the potato. As he ate the beet, he remarked, "I have never eaten anything as sweet as this!"



פֶּסַח, מַצָּה, וּמָרוֹר

It is written in the Hagadah, "Rabban Gamliel used to say, 'Anyone who did not mention the following three things on Pesach did not fulfill his obligation. They are: the Pesach sacrifice, matzah and marror.'

Zera Shimshon asks since we eat marror to remember the bitterness of our bondage in Mitzrayim and we eat the Matzah to remember that Hashem redeemed us from that bondage, it would seem to be more correct for Rabban Gamliel to mention marror before matzah and not after it!

Right after the Hagadah quotes Rabban Gamliel it is written, "Every person should look at himself as if he left Mitzrayim." In other words everyone has to feel that until the night of the seder he was still in Mitzrayim and tonight (the night of Pesach) he is leaving.

According to this Zera Shimshon explains that if Rabban Gamliel would have mentioned marror before matzah it would imply that we were slaves (by eating the marror) and after that we were freed (by eating the matzah) and that this state of freedom never stopped.

If that would be the case, however, then we would not be able to "look at ourselves as if we left Mitzrayim". Therefore Rabban Gamliel mentioned marror after matzah which alludes to the fact that we are still in "some type" of bondage and therefore on Seder night we are able to bring ourselves to a state that we feel as if WE ourselves left Mitzrayim and not just our forefathers.

The second explanation is based on an idea that Zera Shimshon mentioned in other places. (This idea is also mentioned by many other meforshim, among them the **Dubna Maggid and the Sefas Emmes**.)

Hashem originally decreed at the Bris Bein HaBesarim that we would be slaves for four hundred years. If we would have remained in Mitzrayim the whole four hundred years then no nation would have ever been able to rule over us . However after two hundred and ten years of suffering Bnei Yisroel argued and prayed to Hashem to take into account the tremendous suffering that they experienced and that the two hundred ten years that they were slaves should be counted as the whole four hundred years! Hashem partially accepted their argument and Hashem took Bnei Yisroel out of Mitzrayim after being there only two hundred and ten years. However the premature exodus came with a price; we had/have to suffer other exiles to "finish off" the final one hundred ninety years.

Therefore Rabban Gamliel mentioned marror after matzah; that because we left Mitzrayim hurriedly before the original designated time we have to "eat marror" for more than two thousand years.

The Zera Shimshon – The Limud that Brings Yeshuos

עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפַרְעֹה בְּמִצְרָיִם We were slaves to Paroah in Mitzrayim and Hashem took us out....



The mefarshim on the Haggadah ask why does the Haggadah mention that we were slaves to Paraoh and it also mentions that the place of bondage was in Mitzrayim? Seemingly if it was only written that we were slaves to Paraoh we would know that we were slaves in Mitzrayim since Paraoh was the king there. What then is the Haggadah teaching us by writing that not only were we slaves to Paraoh but that we were also slaves in Mitzrayim?

Zera Shimshon answers in light of two ideas that the Shach on the Torah (written by a student of the Arizal. Not to be confused with R' Shabsai Rappoport the commentator on Shulchan Aruch) writes. Firstly, Mitzrayim was a place full of black magic, sorcery, and witchcraft. This wasn't just a coincidence. Hashem specifically chose Mitzrayim for our exile in order that when He eventually took us out from there we saw that Hashem is stronger even than those superpowerful evil forces.

The second idea is that the reason that Paroah was so interested to subjugate Bnei Yisroel and take us to be his slaves was because of his ancestry. He was a descendant of Noach's son Chawm who acted improperly with his father Noach. As a punishment for that act Hashem cursed him and his descendants to be slaves to his brothers (and their descendants) forever.

Since Paraoh was technically a slave, his kingship was not really genuine (the law in Mitzrayim was that a slave could not be a king). Therefore he hoped to use the sorcery to transfer his being a slave to the Jewish people in order that he will be able to legally rule Mitzrayim.

According to this, the Zera Shimshon explains that the haggadah relates not only that we were slaves to Paraoh, but that it was in Mitzrayim because they are really two points. Paraoh enslaved us because he wanted to transfer his curse on Bnei Yisroel. This he would have tried to do regardless if he was in Mitzrayim or some other place.

The Haggadah adds that this took place in Mitzrayim because Paraoh tried to use the sorcery and witchcraft that was so widespread there in order to carry out his plan to put his curse on Bnei Yisroel.

"In every generation, a person is obligated to see himself as though he personally went out from Egypt."

The Zera Shimshon – The Limud that Brings Yeshuos



The Plague of Blood: Lucrative For The Jews

וְהַדָּגָה אֲשֶׁר־בַּיְאֹר מֵתָה ***And the fish that were in the Nile died*** (Shemos 7:21)

The Medrash (Rabba 9:9) says that the Jewish people became rich from the plague of Blood. This came about because the Jews were the only ones that had access to fresh drinking water, which they subsequently sold to the Egyptians.

The Zera Shimshon asks - how did Chazal learn this in the aforementioned passuk?

The Zera Shimshon explains that the Egyptians allowed the Jewish people to catch and eat fish free of charge. This is clearly seen from the passuk where the Jewish people complained about the Mann in the desert, saying, (Bamidbar 11:5) "We remember the fish we ate in Egypt free of charge." Now that the fish died, the Jewish people just lost their source of free nourishment and they would now have to spend money they did not have, to buy food.

The Zera Shimshon learns that the Medrash understood that if the Jewish people just lost their source of free food, Hashem had to have brought a remedy along with this loss. This must have been from the fact that they were now able to sell the most precious and most necessary commodity at a tidy profit – water.

This being the case, they were no longer in need for free food since they now had the means with which to acquire food.

The Zera Shimshon – The Limud that Brings Yeshuos

No Dogs Barking: The Sign That The Jews Were Ready To Leave Egypt

וּלְכֹל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יֶחֱרַץ־כֶּלֶב לְשֹׁנוֹ Against any of the B'nay Yisrael, no dog will bark (sharpen) its tongue, from man to beast (Shemos 11:7).

The Zera Shimshon asks - why did Moshe Rabbeinu find it important to inform Pharaoh that during the plague of the dying of the firstborns, the dogs would not bark at the Jewish people when in reality, the main miracle was the fact that only the Egyptian firstborns would die. As well, why was it worth mentioning that not only will the dogs not bark at the Jewish people but they will even refrain from barking at their animals?



The Zera Shimshon explains that as long as the Jewish people were associated with impurity, they were not able to free themselves from Egypt. The passuk says (Yirmi'a 2:3), "Holy is Yisrael to Hashem, His first produce (firstborn), all those that eat it (His produce, the Jewish people) are held accountable.

The Midrash (Bamidbar Rabba 2:13) says that this passuk refers to those that steal from the Jewish people. This teaches that the Jewish peoples status of Hashem's firstborn sanctifies not only them but their possessions as well.

The status of the firstborn's holiness was one that began with the creation of the world. However, after the sin of eating for the Etz Hada'as, during which Chava was defiled by the snake, the firstborn retained some of this impurity that the snake contaminated Chava,

the mother of all mothers, with. It was only through the purifying slavery in Egypt that this impurity left us.

Now, we as a nation, were ready to leave Egypt as Hashem's holy firstborn after severing all connection to impurity. The fact that the dogs did not bark at the Jewish people and at their animals proved that the Jewish people were now totally unassociated with impurity and entirely Hashem's firstborn.

Therefore, the dogs, which symbolize the impure, did not even bark at the Jewish people's possessions, namely their animals, since even their possessions were now holy.

Moshe Rabbeinu told this to Pharaoh to show him that the Jews were ready to leave Egypt and he was not going to be able to stop them.

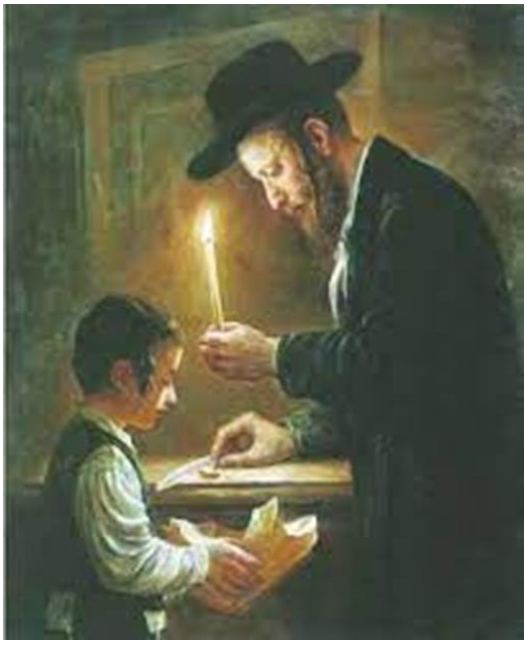
The Zera Shimshon offers another explanation:

The Midrash Rabba (Shemos 1:35) says that Moshe Rabbeinu was wondering why it was that of all the nations, only the Jews had to suffer so much under Egyptian bondage, until he saw that there was lashon hara between them. It was then that he exclaimed (Shemos 2:14), "now the matter is known".

The Gemara says (Makkos 23a) that one who speaks lashon hara is deserving of being thrown to the dogs. When the dogs refrained from barking at the Jews, it was a proof that they had repented from the sin of lashon hara and were now worthy of leaving Egypt, and there was nothing Pharaoh could do to stop them.

"The Exodus is not merely the story of a people freed from slavery. It is the story of a people summoned to moral purpose. Freedom is not the right to do what we wish, but the duty to become what we are called to be." ~ Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch.

Chametz: Search And Destroy, by R' Doniel Neustadt



Question: Should ten pieces of chametz be hidden throughout the house before the search for chametz takes place?

Discussion: The poskim differ in their views regarding this practice. There are four basic approaches:

1.**The Rama** states that the custom is to hide pieces of chametz around the house before the search takes place. Since it often happens that no chametz is found during the course of the search, the blessing over the bedikah could possibly be a berachah l'vatalah. To avoid this eventuality, one would be required to hide some chametz before the search begins.

2. Although l'chatchilah pieces of chametz should be hidden, the Rama himself holds that if they were not, the blessing would nonetheless be valid, for the mitzvah is to search for chametz, even in the event that one does not find any.

3. Many poskim hold that one need not be concerned about a berachah l'vatalah at all and one need not hide any chametz before the search.

4. Some poskim hold that the practice of hiding chametz should be abandoned. They are concerned that some pieces may be lost or overlooked, with the result that chametz will remain in the house over Pesach. The Mishnah Berurah agrees with the poskim who are not concerned about the possibility of a berachah l'vatalah. He nevertheless states that it is not proper to discontinue a longstanding Jewish custom. Indeed, the majority of homes today observe this time-honored practice.

Nowadays, there is an additional reason for maintaining this custom. The halachah demands that the home be thoroughly searched during

bedikas chametz. Any place into which chametz may have been brought during the year must be checked. In many homes, unfortunately, the search has become merely ritualistic, taking but a few minutes with no serious search conducted.

One reason why the bedikah has become perfunctory is that today, homes are thoroughly cleaned and scrubbed for days or even weeks before the search takes place. Consequently, most people assume that no chametz will be found and are satisfied with going through the motions. Although there is a possible justification (limud zechus) for people who conduct such a perfunctory bedikah, many other poskim do not agree with this leniency and require that a proper bedikah be conducted.

In order to satisfy the views of all poskim, it is recommended that one hide chametz around the house before the bedikah. Since the searcher is aware that there definitely is some chametz to be found, he will necessarily have to conduct a proper bedikah.

Therefore: • Unless one has a custom to the contrary, ten pieces of bread should be hidden in various places around the house before the bedikah begins.

• Care must be taken that the pieces are wrapped well so that no crumbs will escape. Only hard pieces should be used. The exact location of the pieces should be recorded and carefully checked. Upon concluding the search the pieces must be properly discarded.

• Each piece should be smaller than 1 fl. oz.

• The custom has become that the pieces are hidden by household members who are not going to be searching the house. However, the searcher himself may also hide the piece. Some poskim rule that a person who is leaving home for Pesach and therefore conducts his bedikah in advance of the 14th of Nissan without a blessing, need not hide pieces of chametz.

PESACH TRIVIA



1. On Succos we pick up the Arba Minim and then make a bracha, but at the Pesach we will drop "it" before we make the *bracha*. What is "it"?



2. Who is/are the first one(s) recorded in the Torah that ate matzah?



3. In which parsha is the Torah's first implicit mention of the Korban Pesach?



4. What was the taste of the matza that we baked from the unrisen dough which we took out of Mitzrayim?



5. After entering Eretz Yisroel, when was the 1st day that we switched from eating *mann* to eating the produce of the Land?

PESACH TRIVIA:

1. After the *bracha* of *HaMotzi*, we let go of the bottom matza before we make the bracha of *Al Achilas Matza*.

2. The *malachim* who visited Avraham (Vayeira). Lot baked matzos and they ate them.

3. Toldos. Rivka instructed Yaakov to take two goats. One of them was to be used for Korban Pesach [Rashi to Bereishis 27:9]

4. It tasted like *mann*! [Rashi to Yehoshua 5:11]

5. The 2nd day of Pesach [Yehoshua 5:11].



***Rav Chaim – The Life and Legacy of the Sar HaTorah, Rav Shmaryahu Yosef Chaim Kanievsky* by Naftali Weinberger**

"They Stop Off by Me As Well"

As he approached eighty-six, the age of his father's *petirah*, Rav Chaim Kanievsky began to speak less. He told one of his sons that since it is written in *sefarim* that the number of words a person will say in this world is predetermined, he was minimizing his speech.

Rav Chaim began saying "*Buha*" (which is an abbreviation for *berachah v'hatzlachah*) on the *Chol HaMoed Pesach* after the Rebbetzin's passing. Thousands came to him for *berachos* during *Chol HaMoed*, and he said *Buha* during that time to shorten the waiting time of the people standing on line for blessings and enable him to continue seeing the increasing number of people who came to him for advice and berachos. (See *Orchos Yosher*, Ch. 2, p. 9, where Rav Chaim quotes sources that the number of words a person speaks is allocated by Hashem when He creates a person's soul.)

Rav Chaim, for his part, had equal faith in the power of his wife's blessings. "What is the reason so many people come to seek your advice?" R' Gedaliah Honigsberg asked his grandfather.

"They come to get advice and *berachos* from Savta," Rav Chaim replied. "While they are here, they stop off by me as well."

"Exile begins when a Jew forgets who he is." ~ Vilna Gaon

Berachah for Good Matzah



Rav Chaim's father, **the Steipler Gaon**, once told Rav Chaim that Rebbetzin Batsheva's *berachos* have an impact in Heaven. Based on this, for many years, before heading to the *matzah* bakery, he would ask her for a *berachah* that the baking of the *Pesach matzos* should be successful.

One year, the *matzos* were not coming out well, and most of the batches had *halachic* problems. Rav Chaim said to his son, "Perhaps the *matzos* didn't come out right because we forgot to get a *berachah* from Ima this year."

From then on, Rav Avraham Yeshayah made sure every year to get a *berachah* from his mother before baking *matzos*, just in case Rav Chaim forgot to ask.

He doesn't remember a year since then in which there were problems with the *matzos*!

Dumpster Diving

One night, about a week before *Pesach*, Rav Chaim could not find the *lulav* he had used on *Succos*. The custom is to burn the *lulav* with the *chametz*, since it had been used for a *mitzvah*. He searched extensively as he had seen the *lulav* earlier that day, but could not find it anywhere.

Finally, Rav Chaim and the Rebbetzin went to sleep. At about 2 a.m. the Rebbetzin noticed that Rav Chaim was not in his bed. Alarmed,

she began looking for him and, not finding him indoors, she went outside. There she saw Rav Chaim inside the large dumpster in front of their house, sifting through the trash.

"I think maybe one of the visitors mistakenly threw the *lulav* into the garbage," he told the Rebbetzin, who promptly climbed into the overflowing receptacle and joined him in picking through the rubbish, to no avail.

The next morning, one of their sons arrived before *netz*. It turned out that he had previously put the *lulav* in the upstairs apartment for safekeeping. He knew how meaningful it was for his father to adhere to *minhagim* and did not want the *lulav* to be misplaced. He never imagined that his well-meaning action would cause his father and mother to spend part of their night in a dumpster!

Korban Pesach

Before *Pesach*, for many years, an *avreich* in Bnei Brak prepared a detailed guide to the *halachos* of *korban pesach* and made an arrangement with a farm to check several sheep and make sure they were blemish-free. There was also a form to fill out to be counted as part of a *chaburah* for the *korban pesach* of that year, in the hope the *Mashiach* would come and the *korban* would be offered. Rav Chaim was among the many *rabbanim* who joined before *Pesach*.

He often related that the Steipler had a special coat he never wore because he had prepared it for *Mashiach*'s arrival. Rav Chaim also had a special new frock that was pressed and ready so that he would be able to greet *Mashiach* in special clothing.

"The Exodus shows that no force can stand against a Jew who trusts in Hashem." ~ Rav Shach.

Ability To Soar



Reb Meilech on the Haggadah – Insights, Stories and Commentaries from Rav Elimelech Biderman Written by Yisroel Besser

Rav Shimshon Aharon Polansky, known as the **Tepliker Rav**, was one of the *geonei Yerushalayim*, and the most accomplished *talmidei chachamim* in the city went to learn under him.

A few days before *Pesach*, he entered the full *beis medrash* and looked around. He stood up in front of the *aron kodesh* and announced that he had a list of local women who were making *Yom Tov* alone and were in need of help with some basic tasks. The *rav* asked if any of the men were prepared to close their *Gemaras* and have a share in this great *mitzvah*. Almost as one, the young men lining the benches stood up, each of them understanding the magnitude of the *zechus*.

"In order to protect their privacy," the *rav* said, "I would ask each of you to approach me separately and I will give you a piece of paper with an address and instructions."

They lined up and approached, one at a time, and each one received a paper with...their own address, and a very clear message about what their role was on that day!

"Pesach is the revelation that a Jew's essence is kedushah, not slavery." ~ Rav Aharon Kotler.

Giving Her Parnassah

Reb Dovid - The Life and Legacy of Reb Dovid Feinstein by Yisroel Besser



Rav Dovid Feinstein was very *machmir*, for himself, with regard to using *chametz gamur* that had been sold over *Pesach* once *Pesach* ended. One year, *Motza'ei Pesach* was Thursday night, as it is this year, and since he would not use flour from the Jewish stores because of his *chumrah*, *talmidim* wondered how he would have *challos* for *Shabbos*.

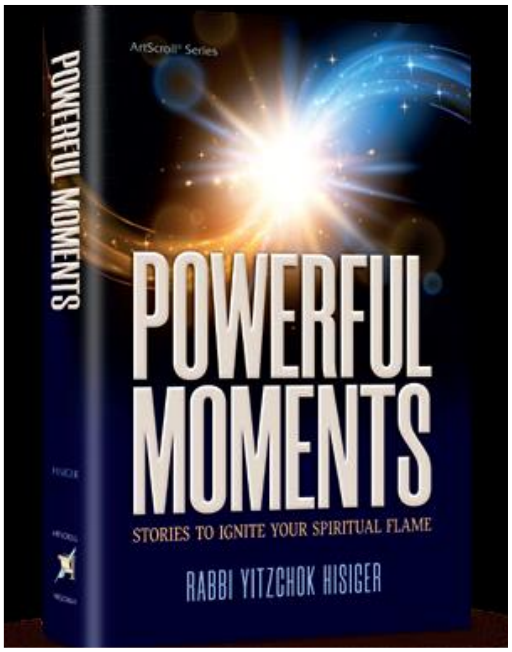
One *talmid* took care of it, purchasing the flour and yeast from stores where there was no Jewish ownership, and on Friday morning he notified the *rosh yeshivah* that his wife would prepare extra *challos* for the *rosh yeshivah's* family as well.

Reb Dovid thanked him but said it was not necessary. The woman who owned the local bakery, Reb Dovid explained, had been closed for a week and had not had any income during that time. "Today she can finally reopen, and I will be there to give her *parnassah*," he said, even though it meant giving up a *chumrah* he took seriously. - Clearly, this *chumrah* of benefiting another Jew was taken even more seriously.

"In every generation, a person must show himself as though he personally left Egypt… therefore one must eat, drink, and rejoice on this night, for it is the night of freedom." ~ Rambam.

"There" - The Four Sons

Powerful Moments by Rabbi Yitzchok Hisiger



The *Baal Shem Tov* once told his followers that in a certain village lived a *Yid* whose *Seder* was extolled in the heavens and brought great light to the world. The *Baal Shem Tov* sought to find this jewel of a *Yid* and perhaps learn what he did that made such an impact on High.

After some searching, the *Baal Shem Tov* was told where this *Yid* lived and arranged to visit him on *Erev Pesach*. The *Baal Shem Tov* put his plan into action, found the hovel where this gentleman lived, and knocked on the door. A decidedly poor-looking soul answered. Hearing that this stranger sought to share in his *Seder*, he was overjoyed. He took the *Baal Shem Tov* for an itinerant peddler who sought somewhere to be for *Pesach*. Night fell and the *Yid* put on his threadbare *kittel* and started his *Seder*. The *Baal Shem Tov* was astounded. Nothing he heard or saw was especially remarkable. He was left wondering what it was that set this sweet, poor man's *Seder* apart from the many thousands that were being held throughout the world.

Just then they reached the passage of "*Tam, mah hu omer*? What does the simple son say?" With a great cry, the man broke down and kept repeating these words. "*Tam, mah hu omer… Tam, mah hu omer…*" Again and again he said these words, with tears streaming down his weatherworn face.

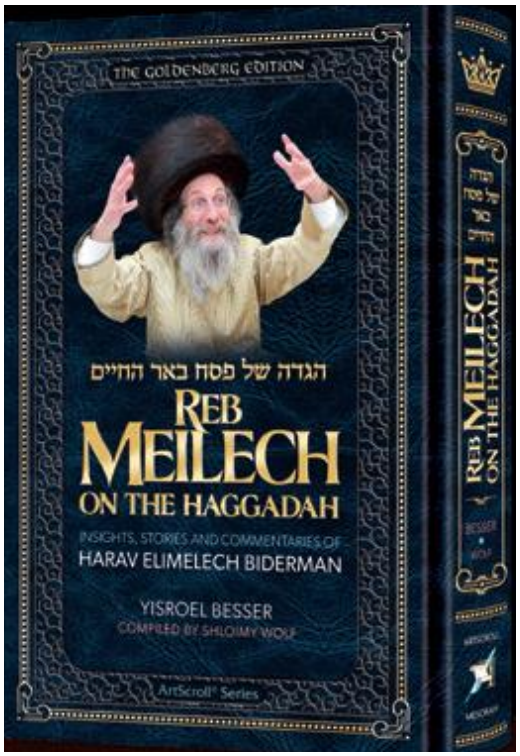
After some time, the fellow composed himself and continued his *Seder* without further disruptions. Afterward, he had an engaging conversation with his guest. The *Baal Shem Tov* couldn't restrain

himself and asked his host what it was about that one passage that caused him to cry with such intensity.

The *Yid* explained simply: "I learned that the word *tam* can mean *there*. When I reach these words, I stop and think: Where am I? I am at the same place as I was last *Pesach*! Nothing has changed. I haven't really grown. Then I think: What will I say when I arrive 'there,' at my final destination after 120 years, in the *Beis Din Shel Maalah*? I will be ashamed to have to admit that I didn't take the opportunity to become stronger in my *emunah*. I just remained firmly rooted to where I was."

The *Baal Shem Tov* had his answer. He now understood why this man and his *Seder* were so special.

All lives are complicated. We can opt to stay put, but we can also choose to move ahead. It is worth stopping a moment to ask: Tam — what will I say "there"?



Ability To Soar

Reb Meilech on the Haggadah – Insights, Stories and Commentaries from Rav Elimelech Biderman Written by Yisroel Besser

There was an older Yid in Bnei Brak, R' Moshe Baum. He was close to a hundred years old, and he had been a ben zekunim to his father, who had the merit of having the Rebbe Rav Bunim of Peshischa serve as his sandek. There was a real mesorah there, and the tzaddikim would go visit R' Moshe, eager to hear any memories of prewar Poland.

He described being by the Yismach Yisrael of Alexander for the Seder - and what an experience it had been! In contrast to other

Chassidic courts, all the chassidim joined for the Seder, and the room was filled with thousands of chassidim.

He recalled how the Rebbe stood there in his kittel before the Seder, seemingly frozen in place, his face white with awe and fear. The chassidim did not dare disturb the silence, and then, suddenly, the Rebbe approached his seat and called out, "Leil hiskadash hachag! A Yid who does not believe that on this night he climbs from the lowest depths to the highest heights (fuhn nidregste bechinah biz tzum hechsten madreigah), he is the rasha referred to in the Haggadah!"

And with that, the Rebbe said "Kaddeish," banging on the table to start the Seder. This was the vort said by the Yismach Yisrael in his sefer and this was the way he actually started his Seder!

A wise man heard this story and shared his reflection with me. The Rebbe did not just say who the *rasha* refers to, but also who it does *not* refer to; the one who stumbled, who fell into the depths of sin, is not considered a *rasha,* for he can climb up. The way one earns the title of *rasha* is only through not believing in one's own ability to soar.

Parsha Thoughts By Mordechai Sapoznick

The פָּסוּק says וְעֶצֶם לֹא תִשְׁבְּרוּ בּוֹ - "***You shall not break a bone of it (the Korban Pesach*)."**

Hashem commanded us not to break the bones of the Korban Pesach to eat the scraps of meat in the bones.

The Sefer HaChinuch says that it is the way of poor people to eat the scraps of meat inside the bones. On the night of the Seder we are suppose to act like kings, so it is improper to break the bones like poor people do. By acting with royalty, it will become a part of us forever. [Dvar Torah from **ספר טללי אורות**]

בס"ד
Menucha
A Shabbos table companion for the whole family
לע"נ ר' ברוך חיים בן סלמון ז"ל

Miracle Of Maror By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach Zt"L



Pesach was approaching and a group of Jews in wartime Siberian exile were desperately searching for a source for the romaine lettuce they needed to fulfill the mitzvah of eating maror on Pesach eve. Virtually no vegetables grew in that frozen wasteland so that the prospects for acquiring maror were bleak indeed.

The revered **Rav of Tsheben, Rabbi Dov Berish Weidenfeld**, asked Yechezkel Klagbard, who later served as the first chazan in Bnei Brak's Central Synagogue, to make a search for the maror. His initial efforts proved futile and he came to the conclusion that it was up to Hashem to provide a miracle. To fulfill his own responsibility he returned to the frozen streets of the city and began to sing his most beautiful melodies.

Although most people who heard his loud singing thought he was deranged, one old gentile woman suddenly came out of an alley and said, "I love the song you just sang. Sing it again for me and I will reward you."

He sang as requested and when he finished he told her that he was not interested in money, only in romaine lettuce. To his pleasant surprise she went down to her cellar and brought from there enough of the precious vegetable to supply all the Jews in that group with their maror needs.

Haggadah Pearls

At the Seder, we explain several verses in the Torah that discuss *galus* and *geula*. One of them is the following verse from parshas Ki Savo: **אֲרַמִּי אֹבֵד אָבִי וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרַיְמָה וַיָּגָר שָׁם בִּמְתֵי מְעָט וַיְהִי־שָׁם לְגֹוי גָּד�ֹול עָצוּם וָרָב** (Devarim 26:5)

The Haggadah extrapolates the last word of the this verse (**וָרָב** - *and great in number*) by quoting a verse from the prophet Yechezkel (ch. 16, verse 7): **רְבָבָה כְּצֶמַח הַשָּׂדֶה נְתַתִּיךְ** ... - *I have made you great in number like the plants of the field...*

Then, the Haggadah, does something very peculiar. Instead of quoting the next verse, i.e., verse #8, it goes backwards, and quotes verse #6! (**וָאֶעֱבֹר עָלַיִךְ... וָאֹמַר לָךְ בְּדָמַיִךְ חֲיִי וָאֹמַר לָךְ בְּדָמַיִךְ חֲיִי**) You might think that the reason why the Haggadah does not quote verse #8 is because it's not relevant to Yetzias Mitzrayim. But this is not so. The commentators on Tanach explain that verse #8 is referring to Yetzias Mitzrayim. So why did the author of the Haggadah decide to quote verse #6 instead of verse #8?!

To answer this question, let's take a look at verse #8...

וָאֶעֱבֹר עָלַיִךְ וָאֶרְאֵךְ וְהִנֵּה עִתֵּךְ עֵת דֹּדִים וָאֶפְרֹשׂ כְּנָפִי עָלַיִךְ...וַתִּהְיִי לִי *And I passed over you and I saw you. And behold, your time [now] is a time of love. And I spread My wing over you...and you became Mine.*

Perhaps, the reason why the author of the Haggadah decided not to quote this verse, is to avoid jealousy from the non-Jews who will also read the Haggadah for educational purposes.

In any event, what the prophet Yechezkel revealed to us is that Yetzias Mitzrayim (and Pesach of each and every year), is "a time of love" between us and Hashem.

Make the best out of this year's *Chag*. It's an opportune time to rejuvenate your love for Hashem.

Parsha Potpourri, by R' Ozer Alport

מגיד מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות

At the beginning of the Maggid section of the Haggadah, one or more children ask about the unique nature of the night by pointing out several unusual features of our conduct at the Seder.



The Zohar HaKadosh (Vol. 2 38a) adds another distinguishing element, stating that on the night of the Exodus, a tremendous light shone that was as bright as day. Since Hashem does not perform miracles needlessly, what was the purpose of the bright light that illuminated this night?

Rav Chaim Zvi Senter explains that many people view Galus as Hashem abandoning us and leaving us to languish in the darkness of night, but in reality, it serves as a furnace that purifies us and brings out our best. Hashem therefore brightened the night of the Exodus to teach us that even though we cannot always see it, galus is always filled with Hashem's loving light.

As the years of our bitter exile drag on, it behoves us to internalize this lesson of Pesach. At times when it feels like our darkest hour has come, we should remind ourselves that the light of redemption is already present and waiting to shine. If we persevere and resolve to make that extra effort, the day will come when Hashem will reveal the ultimate light, may it be speedily in our days.

"From the great and open miracles, a person comes to acknowledge the hidden miracles, which are the foundation of the entire Torah. For a person has no portion in the Torah of Moshe Rabbeinu until he believes that all our affairs are miracles—there is no טבע or natural order at all… rather everything is the decree of Hashem." ~ Ramban.

Responding with Ahavas Chinom

Rav Frand relates that **Rav Avraham Yitzchok HaKohein Kook, zt"l**, the first Chief Rabbi of Eretz Yisroel in modern times, was an outstanding genius, but he was a controversial figure. Certain people took issue with many of his ideas and positions.

Rav Kook was once speaking somewhere, and one of the zealots started yelling at him in the middle of his Drashah. The outburst did not faze Rav Kook. He continued with his Drashah, but it was certainly an embarrassment for this Torah giant.

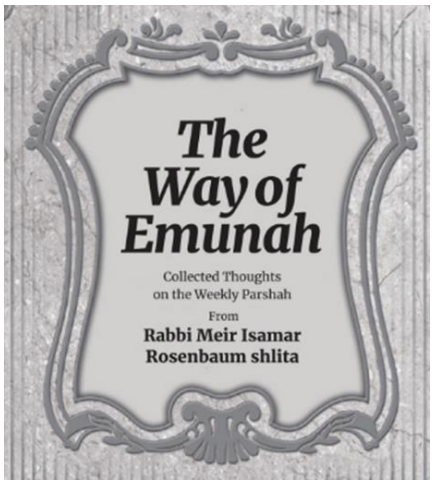


Later that same year, by Pesach time, Rav Kook distributed Maos Chitim, Tzedakah for Yom Tov, to those who needed. He gave his Gabai a list of the poor people that should be distributed to, and this very person who had so inappropriately embarrassed the Chief Rabbi earlier that year, was on the list to receive Tzedakah! The Gabai told Rav Kook, "I refuse to give him the money! How could you give such a person money after what he did to you?"

Rav Kook responded to him, "If you do not deliver the money to him, then I will!" The Rav explained, "Chazal say that the Bais HaMikdash was destroyed because of Sinas Chinam, unjustified hatred of another Jew, and if the Bais HaMikdash was destroyed because of Sinas Chinam, the only way it will be rebuilt is with Ahavas Chinam, unjustified love of another Jew. Ahavas Chinam means that you like the person for no reason, just like Sinas Chinam means that you hate the person for no reason.

When one Jew loves another Jew for 'no reason,' that is not really Ahavas Chinam, because there is a Mitzvah to love your fellow Jew like yourself. I need to love every Jew according to Torah law. The fact that I love another Jew cannot be called Ahavas Chinam.

That is an Ahavah that we are bound to from the time of Har Sinai! What then, is Ahavas Chinam? It is when a person insults you and embarrasses you, and you have every justification in the world to put him on your 'enemies' list, and to totally ignore him, and nevertheless, you show him love and compassion, and give him money when he is in need. That is Ahavas Chinam!"



Midas Hadin Won't Shame a Broken Heart

The pasuk states לֵב־נִשְׁבָּר וְנִדְכֶּה אֱלֹקִים לֹא תִבְזֶה (Tehillim 51:19): "***A broken and lowly heart, Elokim will not shame.***"

It is said in the name of the **Ruzhiner Rebbe zy"a** that when a person has a broken heart, even the middas hadin (which is symbolized by Hashem's name of Elokim) will have mercy on him and it will not shame him.

One year, during the Seder of the **Riyatz of Lubavitch zy"a**, when the Hagaddah was being recited and the Rebbe reached the words "V'nitzak el Elokeinu. (And we cried out to our G-d)", he said, "Some people say that if we had a leader like Moshe Rabenu today, we would be redeemed.

They are mistaken. The redemption is not being delayed because we are lacking a Moshe Rabenu. When Klal Yisroel was in Mitzrayim, Hashem sent them Moshe Rabenu only after they cried out to Him. The same applies to us. If we would cry out to Hashem, He would then send us a Moshe Rabenu to redeem us."

"The essence of Yetziyas Mitzrayim was not only leaving slavery, but becoming a nation dedicated to a higher purpose." ~ Netziv

Hashem Personally Provides Light on Pesach



In order to remember that all of the miracles and wonders are sent directly from Hashem, we eat matzoh on the night of the Seder.

The Bnei Yissochor (Nissan 8:2) explains the mitzvah of eating matzoh on Pesach by stating that the difference between chometz and matzoh is that chometz bread rises and puffs up on its own once it is in the oven, without the baker's help.

Matzoh, however, does not rise or puff up any more than the size that the baker made it. Whatever size the baker made the dough, that is how big the matzoh remains.

This hints to the fact that on Pesach, all of the light and influences of the day are created in Shomayim and are not completed by us or any other earthly force. Everything is made by the "Baker", i.e., by Hashem Himself.

In this way, there is a difference between Pesach and all other yomim tovim. On all other holidays, there are mitzvos that are performed by us, such as blowing the shofar, sitting in the sukkah, taking the daled minim, etc. We perform these mitzvos and, through our actions, we cause an abundance of Heavenly influences and light to come down to this world.

On Pesach, however, the divine influences and light come down directly from Hashem and are not a result of anything we do. The reason for this is because when Klal Yisroel left Egypt, they were on the 49th level of impurity. They were not worthy of doing anything on their own to bring down Hashem's light. They did not have enough time to correct their ways to be able to do this. Therefore, Hashem

had mercy on them and sent down His holy influences without the need for them to do anything on their own. He broadened their minds, without them having to do anything, so that they could accept the holy influence and light.

That is why the same occurs every year on Pesach. The Divine light of the day is sent directly from Shomayim, without the need for us to do any of our own mitzvos in order to bring it down. This is hinted to from the matzohs, which do not rise at all on their own, and this is what we should have in mind when we eat the matzohs.

Reaching Perfect Emunah

Rav Menachem Mendel of Rimanov zy"a said that on the night of Pesach one can reach the perfect state of emunah in Hashem. And if one makes sure that he engages deeply in holy thoughts on the night of Pesach, he can reach the perfect state of emunah that Klal Yisroel reached when they left Egypt.

This is an eternal fact that is true every year. Every individual should be inspired by this and should realize that he has a serious responsibility to use the night of the Seder as a time to strengthen his emunah in Hashem.

The Reward of a Mitzvah

Sefer Likutei Yesharim relates a story that shows how the **Rov of Yerushalaim, Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld zt"l**, fulfilled the words "kol dichfin yeizei v'yeichal" (anyone who is hungry may come and eat) to the utmost.

A group of guests from Chutz La'aretz once showed up at Rav Yosef Chaim's house on erev Pesach and asked if they could eat the Seder with him. He told them that he would be overjoyed to have them as

his guests. The men then took some money out of their pockets and put it down in front of him.

Rav Yosef Chaim took the money and gave it to his wife, saying, "This money is for the guests' seudah." The guests enjoyed the Seder in the Rov's home immensely. They ate and drank to their hearts' content and were thoroughly inspired by the uplifted atmosphere.

On Chol Hamoed, the guests were shocked when the Rov came to their hotel room to return their money to them. However, they refused to accept it. Rav Yosef Chaim said to them, "Did you think I would take payment for the mitzvah of hachnasas orchim? Chas v'shalom!"

The guests asked, "If so, why did you take the money from us in the first place?" He replied, "I wanted you to eat your fill at the Seder, as if you were paying for your own food. That is why I took your money."

The Connection Between Bnei Yisroel and Hashem



Rav Menachem Mendel of Rimanov zy"a explained the meaning of "Yachatz" with the following moshol: There once were two good friends who were extremely close to each other. When a time came that they had to depart from each other, they wondered how they could keep their bond of love and remember their closeness.

They concluded that the best way to do this was for them to each take a picture of their friend, which they could keep with them at all times.

What did they do? Each one had a picture of himself. They cut both pictures in half, and each took one half of each picture. Thus, each one now had half a picture of himself and half a picture of his friend.

This is what we do by Yachatz. We divide the matzoh to remind us that we will remain connected to Hashem and He will remain connected to us.

An Auspicious Time For Parnassah

The Minchas Elozor of Munkatch zy"a quotes the **Sar Shalom of Belz zy"a** as saying that the night of the Seder is an auspicious time for Klal Yisroel to be blessed with an abundance of parnassah.

This is hinted to in the words "kol dichfin yeisei v'yeichal", which can be understood to mean that anyone who is lacking parnassah can come at this time to receive sustenance. "Kol ditzrich yeisei v'yifsach" – and anyone who is in need of any other form of salvation can also receive Divine assistance. (The Targum of the word "Pesach" is "di chas", to be cared for.) This is because the Seder is a time when Hashem provides us with blessings from Heaven for whatever we need.

The Hagaddah continues to say: "This year, we are here. Next year, in Eretz Yisroel."

The Minchos Elazar explains that at this time, when we can be blessed with whatever we need, one should not merely ask Hashem for parnassah. One should also ask Him for the most important thing that every Jew needs – to be redeemed from golus and brought back to Eretz Yisroel.

"יציאת מצרים occurs in every generation and within every person. For 'Mitzrayim' represents all constraints and limitations.

When a person awakens a desire for truth and closeness to Hashem, he is helped from Above to leave those confines." ~ Sfas Emes.

The Power of Mesiras Nefesh is Aroused Every Year

The verse states (Shemos 14:22): וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם בַּיַּבָּשָׁה "***And the children of Yisroel came into the midst of the sea.***"

The Tzemach Tzedek of Lubavitch zy"a said that on the seventh day after the nation left Egypt, as they stood by the banks of the raging sea, Hashem commanded them to enter the water and Nachshon ben Aminadav risked his life and jumped in. A miracle then occurred and the sea split. This power of Nachson's mesiras nefesh made an impression that affects every generation until today.

On the seventh day of Pesach, the power of mesiras nefesh to fulfil Hashem's will is especially strong in the heart of every Jew.



15th Nissan, *leil haSeder*, 1943. The few surviving *Yieden* in the Warsaw Ghetto were on high alert. The uprising against the Nazis **ימ"ש** had just begun, and the sound of gunfire and smell of smoke filled the air. Nevertheless, despite the fear and worry, groups of starved but proud *Yieden* came together to partake in what would surely be their last *Seder* in this world.

A young boy called Moishele started asking his father the *Ma nishtanoh.*

"*Tatte zisse, ma nishtano halaylo hazeh mekol haleilos?* Why is this night so long and so much more difficult than any other night before?"

Moishele's father sadly looked at his child, just a fragile boy who had already endured so much in his young lifetime and was about to respond with *avodim hoyinu.* But Moishele had one more question….



"*Tatte zisse*, will you be alive next year to answer the *Ma nishtanoh?* Will I be alive to ask the *Ma nishtanoh?* Will there be any Jewish child left on Earth to ask the *Ma nishtanoh*?"

The room was silent. Tears streamed down anguished faces as those gathered waited with bated breath to hear how Moishele's father would respond.

Moishele's father put his arm around his young precious son and said, "I don't know. I don't know if I will be alive next year and I don't know if you will be alive next year. But I know one thing. *'Ki beshem kodshechoh nishbato lo, shelo yichbe neiro le'olom vo'ed', Hashem* swore in His holy name, that **His light, *Klal Yisroel*, will never be extinguished**. I know that there will always be a Moishele, someplace, somewhere, asking his father the *Ma nishtanoh*, for *Hashem* has promised that He will never forsake His precious children…"

FACEBUKER SHABBOS TABLE TALK

Continuing the Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Winiarz of blessed memory

Eiruv Tavshilin

An Eiruv Tavshilin is a halachic device (an accommodation, not a loophole) which enables you to cook on Yom Tov for Shabbos following it (assuming the food you're making could not have been made beforehand without the quality suffering.)

It is performed by setting aside some food before Yom Tov begins. The logic behind it is that by using a cooked food (egg, fish, etc.)

and a baked item (matzah), you have already begun your preparations for Shabbos ahead of time.

When the Mon fell in the desert, Moshe told the people they would not receive any on Shabbos. Rather, on Friday they were to cook or bake it as needed and save it for Shabbos. By having begun to prepare, you are now allowed to prepare more items.

The concept is relevant to our lives. We live in the workaday world, awaiting Olam Haba which is a Sabbath. We should be preparing now for later. We should perfect our midos and our mitzvos and plant seeds so even when we're gone, we'll have a revenue stream of good deeds. The same applies for the time of Moshiach. Get Ready NOW!

והיא שעמדה



In one of the more moving moments of the Seder we raise our glasses as if to drink a lechayim and sing about how in every generation there are those who have sought to wipe us out, but Hakodosh Boruch Hu saves us from their hands.

As Yieden we have firm emunoh in Hakodosh Boruch Hu, the infinite Creator, yet many people think that it would be easier to have stronger emunoh if they could just see a few miracles now and then.

One of the reasons why we are so particular about all of the mitzvos of Seder night, especially the Haggodoh is because this is how we keep the nissim alive. We know that Hashem does not perform open miracles nowadays so we preserve the memory of the time when He did overturn the laws of nature.

However, there is one miracle that is actually plain for all to see and all you have to do is look in the mirror to experience it.

Rav Yaakov Emden zt"l in the hakdomo to his siddur Beis Yaakov says, '***By the life of my soul! When I contemplate these wonders of our survival, they appear greater to me than all the miracles and wonders that Hashem Yisborach performed for our forefathers in Egypt, and the wilderness, and the Eretz Yisroel...***'

The fact that we are here today as Yieden defies all the laws of history, sociology and anthropology. The survival of Klal Yisroel, a tiny, persecuted, scattered minority, has no parallel in world history. The only possible explanation for the fact that we are here today as Yieden, keeping the exact, same Torah that our ancestors did, is because Hakodosh Boruch Hu matzlienu miyodom.

We may not be able to see Hashem, but we can see what He does. The extraordinary hashgocho that Klal Yisroel have experienced, is only because of vehi sheomdo.

Now, that's worth thinking about the next time you see your reflection in the mirror!

וירד מצרימה... ויהי שם לגוי – מלמד שהיו ישראל מצוינים שם



The Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer says that *Klal Yisroel* were *metzuyonim*, unique, by not changing their names, language or clothing, to avoid assimilating with the *Mitzriyim*.

Rav Boruch Mordechai Ezrachi points out how remarkable this *Chazal* seems to be.

Klal Yisroel were physically and spiritually enslaved to *Mitzrayim*, and were drowning in the *mem tes shaarei tumoh*. They even served *avodoh zoroh*, which is why the *malochim* questioned the *zechus* of *Klal Yisroel* to be redeemed. Why then do we consider it special that they didn't change their names,

language or speech if they were otherwise in such a poor state of *ruchniyus*?

Rav Boruch Mordechai answers. *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* saw that despite all the *aveiros* and *tumoh* that *Klal Yisroel* were wallowing in, their inner essence was different. So much so, that was the reason they were *zoche* to be redeemed. They may have been in the darkest and most unfortunate of circumstances, but their true identity shone through.

Hashem differentiates between actions and essence. We may stumble and fall at times, but we have a pure *neshomoh*.

We may find ourselves in a less than ideal place, but we will always be different. We will always be special because we each have a pure, unsullied *Neshomoh*.

Every *Yied* is unique and special no matter what *matzav* he finds himself in.

ונצעק אל ה'...

Reb Meilech Biderman tells a story that occurred with the *Apter Rov* involving a poor *Yied* who was facing a prison sentence by the town's overlord if he didn't come up with the requisite funds to pay his upcoming rent. Left with no other options, the wife sent her poor husband to the ***Apter Rov*** on *Shabbos HaGodol*, hoping that her husband would be able to get a *brocho* from the *Rebbe*.

On Shabbos afternoon the *Rebbe* said during his *drosho*, "At the *Seder*, when a *Yied* reads the words *'vanitzak el Hashem Elokei avoseinu,'* it is a time when *Hashem* performs miracles, so whatever you ask for will surely be answered.

The Ohr Hachaim HaKodosh points out that the verse states, "*K-el motziom miMitzrayim,*" which is in the present tense, meaning that

Hashem is actively, in the present moment, taking people out of their individual *Mitzrayim*, in whatever form it plagues them."

Pesach arrived and the couple sat down to their *Seder*. As they reached the passage of "*Vanitzak el Hashem Elokei avoseinu,*" the husband, remembering the *Rebbe's* words, rose excitedly out of his seat. Together with his wife they began crying the verse "*Vanitzak*" all the while thinking of their desperate plight and how in just two days' time they could end up in a deep cold dungeon if they didn't come up with some money.

At that moment there was a knock at the door and a non- Jew turned up with two oversized sacks of gold. He dropped them on the floor and said, "One is for me and the other for you, and if I don't return by a specific date then they are both yours."

On *Motzoei Yom Tov*, the *Yied* went straight to the *Poritz* to pay what he had owed him. When he entered, the amazed *Poritz* saw that the once poor Jew had come upon wealth and was willing to negotiate more favourable terms for the man and his wife to remain there long term...



מצה

Rav Tzvi Kinstlicher was the *Rov* of Sebin, Romania, before the Second World War. One year before *Pesach*, he started suffering from terrible stomach pains and went to see a specialist in nearby Cluj (Klausenberg). The doctor informed him that he was suffering from an awful abdominal disease and needed immediate surgery.

Rav Tzvi couldn't bear the thought of being in a hospital over *Yom Tov* and begged the doctor to postpone the operation until after *Pesach*. The doctor agreed, but warned Rav Tzvi that he shouldn't eat anything other than egg, milk and orange juice, and that he definitely shouldn't digest bread or *matzoh* which could be harmful to him.

On *leil haSeder*, Rav Tzvi couldn't hold himself back and ate *matzoh* soaked in milk. After the second *Seder* he suddenly felt no pain.

The following *Shabbos* he went to the *bimoh* after *davening*, and beseeched the *Kehilla* to *daven* for the operation to be a success. He travelled back to Cluj for the operation and the doctor once again performed a scan. He was astonished to see that the disease had totally disappeared! He was sure that Rav Tzvi had been to a different specialist in the interim and asked him which doctor he had gone to see.

Rav Tzvi responded that he hadn't been to any other doctor, but rather he had eaten matzoh which *Chazal* call *meichloh de'asvesoh*, food which heals!

ברך

הרחמן הוא ינחילנו יום שכולו טוב יום שכולו ארוך

At first glance, *boreich* is the regular *birkas hamozon*, however there is one notable difference between this *bensching* and every other one we say during the rest of the year. Tonight, we add in a special *horachamon*, brought by the Kitzur Sheloh in the name of the **Maharil**.

We ask *Hashem*, the Merciful One to send us the *yom shekulo tov, yom shekulo oruch*, the day that is all good and all long, as it will not be bound by time.

This *horachamon* is a clear reference to *olam habo*, about which the gemoro (Brochos 17a) tells us the *tzaddikim* will 'sit with crowns on their head, basking in the glory of the *Shechinoh*,' the same *nusach* as our *horachamon* for *seder* night.

At this auspicious time towards the conclusion of a night jam-packed with *mitzvos* and *emunoh*, we beg *Hashem* that we too should be included in that select group.

Given that we will not have a physical head in *olam habo*, the **Rambam** (Hilchos Teshuvo 8:2) wonders what this crown will actually be.

He explains that the *atoroh*, crown, that we will wear is a *moshol* for the level of *daas* that we have achieved in this world. It is this knowledge that will enable us to sit at ease in the presence of the *Shechinoh* and bask in its glory. - On this night of *cheirus* it is vital to appreciate the connection between our freedom and our *limmud haTorah.*

The Maharal explains that one is not considered free until there is no possibility that they will be enslaved. This freedom is only found among one who learns *Torah* because the mind is a free being and is not beholden to any external element.

Indeed, the purpose of being set free from *Mitzrayim* was so that we would receive the *Torah* at *Har Sinai.* The *daas* that we earn in this world as a result of our *Talmud Torah,* gives us the ability to unlock the most incredible amount of wisdom and knowledge.

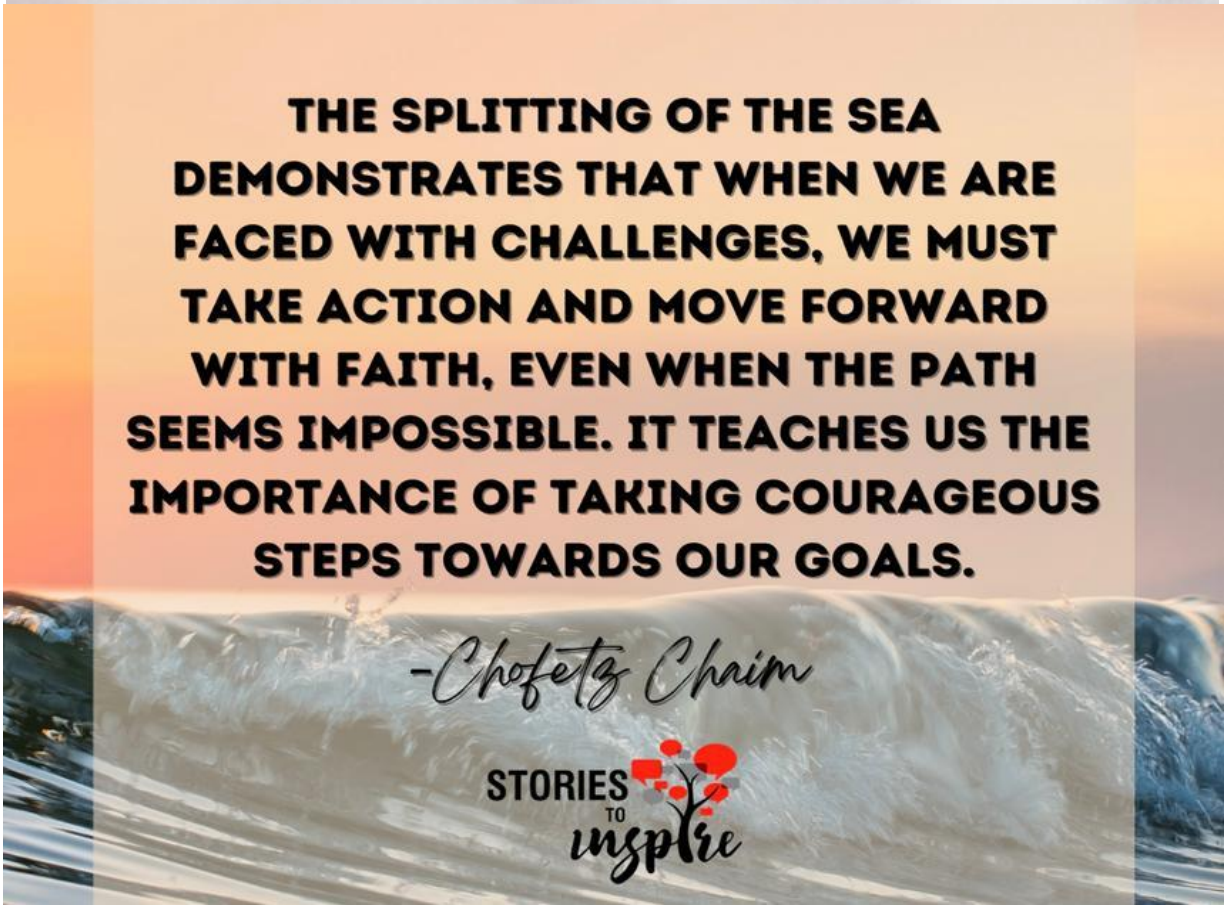
It is this *daas* that will stay with us forever and will enable us to perceive *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* for all of eternity.

The remarkable thing about this short, yet powerful *tefilloh* is that we realise and recognise that each and every one of us has the ability and potential to be part of that inner circle. None of us ever has the right to sell ourselves short, to think that for some reason our actions are insignificant or worthless. Rather, whenever we learn *Torah* and perform *mitzvos* we are literally creating a *kinyan* on something far greater than we can ever imagine.






THROUGH THE SEDER,
WE REENACT THE EXODUS
FROM EGYPT AND EXPERIENCE
A TASTE OF THE SPIRITUAL
REDEMPTION THAT AWAITS
US IN THE FUTURE.
-Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook
STORIES TO inspire


THE SPLITTING OF THE SEA
DEMONSTRATES THAT WHEN WE ARE
FACED WITH CHALLENGES, WE MUST
TAKE ACTION AND MOVE FORWARD
WITH FAITH, EVEN WHEN THE PATH
SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE. IT TEACHES US THE
IMPORTANCE OF TAKING COURAGEOUS
STEPS TOWARDS OUR GOALS.
-Chofetz Chaim
STORIES TO inspire

Should You Make Kiddush Using A Silver Or Glass Cup? By Yisroel Shalitsky

The Sefer **Kaf Hachaim** mentions that one should use silver goblets, because silver alludes to chesed.

The sefer **Neziros Shimshon** states that one should not drink in a golden goblet, but only in a vessel of glass.

In the siddur of Rav Shalom Sharabi, it is also mentioned that the goblets should be either silver or glass.

The Divrei Chaim of Sanz used only glass goblets for the seder. One reason for this minhag was to see the red wine and be reminded of the דם.

The Komarna Rebbe used crystal dishes to adorn his seder table.

The Munkatcher Rebbe used a silver becher for the first of the arba kosos, and used a special glass vessel, which he had inherited from his zeide, the **Lanzuter Rov**, for the other three kosos.

Why Do We Open The Door After Eating The Afikoman?

ANSWER: Yaakov received the berachot from Yitzchak on the night of Pesach when we perform the Seder. The two goats which Rivkah and Yaakov prepared for Yitzchak represent the Pesach-offering and the Chagigah-offering. The angel Michael sent along wine for the four cups (Bereishit 27:9, Rashi. Da'at Zekeinim Miba'alei Hatosafot 27:25).

Yitzchak concluded the meal with the afikoman. This is evident from his telling Eisav, "Your brother came 'bemirmah' — with wisdom — and took away your blessing" (ibid.27:35). The word "bemirmah" has the numerical value of two hundred and eighty-seven, which is also the numerical value of the word "afikoman."

Yitzchak told Eisav, "Your brother is indeed very wise. He gave me the afikoman before you arrived, and thus, I am forbidden to eat any more food tonight."

The Midrash Rabbah (Bereishit 66:5) explains the pasuk "And Yaakov had scarcely left from the presence of Yitzchak his father when Eisav his brother came back from his hunt" (ibid. 27:30) to mean that Eisav swung the tent door open and Yaakov stood behind it until Eisav entered. Only then did Yaakov secretly escape.

To commemorate Yaakov's liberation through the open door after Yitzchak ate the afikoman, we too open the door after eating the afikoman.

From All Tzaros - Rabbi Elimelech Biderman

Rav Tzadok Hakohen of Lublin zy'a taught that the point of remembering Yetzias Mitzrayim is that you should never forget that no matter what situation you are in, no matter how terrible it may be for you – when you turn to Hashem for help, He will save you.

Despite the Yidden being in the depths of impurity in Egypt, Hashem redeemed them.

Never stop davening to Hashem, and never give up hope of being saved from your tzaros. [Pri Tzadik Bo 9]

Shulchan Orech

The Ma'ainah Shel Torah says in the name of the **Admor M'Gur** that one may wonder how we can split the Hallel we say into two parts, with a meal in the middle. Isn't the meal considered a "hefsek", an impermissible interruption?

The answer lies in how we conduct ourselves during this meal. As our eating of the meal is to be made into a spiritual as well as a physical

experience, the meal can be considered further praise to Hashem. Hence, there is no interruption in our "saying" of Hallel.

The Chasam Sofer points out that by other festivals mentioned in the Torah, there is an explicit commandment of Simcha, rejoicing. However, one will not find such a commandment by Pesach. The reason for this lies with the meaning of Simcha.

In Moed Katan 9b we are told that "Ain simcha ela b'achila ushitiya", there is no rejoicing without eating and drinking. On the other holidays, the main mitzvos are purely spiritual, leaving a person with a spiritual high. However, we see that for rejoicing, one needs physical pleasure as well. Therefore, the Torah adds a special commandment of Simcha, So that the rejoicing will be complete, on both physical and spiritual planes.

However, Pesach is different. Pesach by nature is a time of happiness and rejoicing, as we were released from slavery. Furthermore, eating and drinking, the essentials of rejoicing, are themselves the mitzvos we are to perform. Therefore, no special directive of Simcha is needed for Pesach.

Miracles All Around by R' Joey Haber

How do you know that miracles happen to you? I will tell you. Because you have experienced miracles.

I once said to my 9th grade class of girls that when they come back to school tomorrow, I want them to tell me a story of a miracle that happened to their father, for his income. And every single one came back with a story.

Miracles happen to you. Maybe the whole world doesn't know about your miracles, but you know your miracles.

This is symbolic of taking the middle matzah, breaking it into two parts, hiding the larger part and leaving on show the smaller piece.

Why is the small piece left on display?

Because the part of our life that people are able to see, that's exposed, is only the small part. The big part of our life – all the real stories, remain hidden. People don't know what's on your mind. People don't know all the miracles that Hashem does for you on a daily basis. But you know!

That's why we break the matzah in this fashion. To demonstrate that what we are doing is not historic but is something that we are living.

Do you know who usually knows your miracles? Maybe not the whole world, but your children do. They know and see the miracles that Hashem does for you. That's why the children are the ones that take the big piece and hide it. Because they are the only ones that really know the hidden stories and miracles in your life.

A Story to Keep in Mind at the Seder

During the Holocaust, the **Bluzhever Rebbe** was in one of the concentration camps and had already lost his wife and family. It was coming close to Pesach and some people were able to get some flour and managed to make just a few matzos. The question was who should get the matzos, the adults or the children? The Bluzhever Rebbe said you have to give it to the adults, since they have an obligation to eat matza at the seider whereas the kids do not.

However, a lady who had already lost her husband and many other family members, heard about the Rebbe's p'sak and came over to the Rebbe and said "Rebba, I hope you don't mind, but I beg to differ with you. Please listen to me. We don't know who will get out of here alive. If the adults get out of here alive, they will already know how to make a seider because they will have already experienced it as children. But if we don't give matzos to these children, how are they going to know about matzos in the future. Imagine the impression of these holy children that we could make if we give the matzos to

them so that they can continue the legacy of Klal Yisroel?" The Bluzhever Rebbe was blown away and said "You are right." Two things happened. The Rebbe changed his p'sak and gave the matzos to the kids, and two, he married her after the war. **~ R' Paysach Krohn**

אהל שלום
OHEL SHOLOM
REB YECHIEL EMANUEL | ר' יחיאל עמנואל שליט"א

Rav Shimon Scwab Zt'l says that when the Yidden sang Shirah, it was a display of total Achdus.

He brings as a proof from the word **שיר** itself:

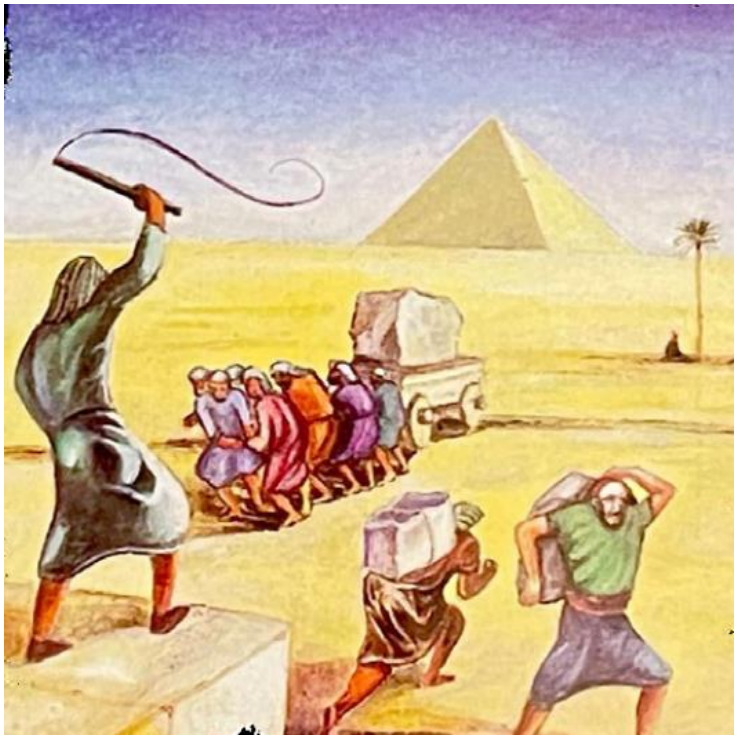


The Mishna in Shabbos 5:1 discusses that an animal is allowed to carry certain items in the public domain that are not considered to be a burden. If the item is designated to protect the animal or to prevent it from fleeing, it is not considered a burden. - One of those things is a שֶׁיר - **a chain** (around its neck).

There is nothing greater in Hashem's eye, when we display this middah of total Achdus and unity with each other. We must ensure that we retain the links of the chain, so that we are always attached to one another!

"Pesach is a time to reflect on the miracles that Hashem performed for us and to express our gratitude for His constant presence in our lives." – Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz

Rabbi Paysach Krohn – Project Mesorah



There were two brothers – Moshe and Mendel Brafeld who were of the last survivors of Krakow. They were still hiding in the ghetto although it had already been liquidated. They were hiding in an attic, and they were making a seder on the first night of Pesach. They managed to procure a small amount of flour to make matzoh and used beetroot juice instead of wine.

The younger brother – Moshe – was crying inconsolably. He said to his brother, "Why are we even making this seder? What are we celebrating? Our parents are no more, our families are gone."

Finally, Mendel said to Moshe something so incredible, "We say in the davening every night in Maariv - **וַיּוֹצֵא אֶת־עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִתּוֹכָם לְחֵרוּת עוֹלָם** '***Hashem brought out His people, Israel, from their midst to everlasting freedom***.'

What does it mean - '***eternal freedom***'? We have been enslaved in many countries and eras – Spain, Portugal, Germany, Poland etc etc. However, you should know that there are two different types of freedom – Physical freedom, which can be taken away from us, (eg if a person is locked up in jail or is killed chas v'sholom.) and **חירות עולם** - a spiritual freedom. This is a freedom that can never be taken away from us. And that is the reason why we were able to survive through difficult times, and revive Yiddishkeit. This is why we celebrate the seder tonight."

Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzensky (1863-1940)

Rav Chaim Ozer for many years was the Chief Rabbi of the city of Vilna. He took upon himself personal responsibility to support the yeshivas in Lithuania and Poland. They all turned to him for advice, and they recognized him as their leader.

When Hitler (Y"S) began his war against the Jewish people, thousands of people turned to Rav Chaim Ozer for help and direction. He called all of the yeshivas to join him in Vilna. In Vilna, he worked very hard to help the Jews that were running from Hitler (Y"S). Many people were saved with the help of Rav Chaim Ozer.

Rav Chaim Ozer loved the yeshivas and talmidei chachamaim. He also felt a responsibility to help every single Jew in any way that he could.

One year, three weeks before Pesach, a young non-religious Jew, who was head of the Jewish socialist organization in the University of Vilna, received a message. Rav Chaim Ozer wanted to see him.

When he arrived, he was warmly greeted by the rabbi who invited him to join him in some cake and tea. 'I will make the *beracha*, he said to his secular guest, and all you have to do is say Amen'. He then got to the point. Pesach is drawing near and there are many hundreds of Jewish students in the university who will not be at a Pesach Seder. If I make a Seder for these irreligious students hardly anyone will come. But if you, as head of the socialists make one, you will get a big crowd. I will supply you with all the money you need to see that everyone who wishes to be at the Seder will have matzah and maror and four cups of wine.

There were a thousand students at that Seder!

"Pesach is not only about what happened then—it is the זמן of discovering what is enslaving us now." ~ Rav Wolbe

From Rebellion to Return… The Seder That Changed Everything by Rabbi David Genish

Here in Israel, there is an organization called Arachim that helps Jews reconnect to Torah and mitzvot. Around 13 years ago, a woman named Tali became a ba'alat teshuvah through one of their programs. She had grown up on a kibbutz and knew very little about what a proper Pesach Seder looked like.

She asked to record the mock Seder they conducted so she could review it and do it properly at home. She was determined — even though her husband and children were not religious, she said, "If I'm doing this, I'm doing it all the way."

With help from Arachim, she prepared everything — matzah, wine, and a beautiful table fit for royalty. She even received recordings of the Seder songs to guide her.

When the night arrived, however, no one was really interested. Her husband sat on the side. Her children were distracted. The only one who came was her elderly father — a strong, quiet man — who agreed to sit and watch.

Tali led the Seder as best as she could. Then they reached the part of the Four Sons. She began, "The wise son — what does he say…" Suddenly, her father interrupted. "Stop," he said. "Now I will speak." He looked at her and said: "I am the Rasha!"

She had never heard him speak like this before. Then he began to tell his story. "I was born in pre-war Poland in a religious home," he said. "My parents sacrificed everything so I would grow up with Torah." "But as I got older, I began to rebel." At one Seder, when asked to say the Mah Nishtanah, he instead stood up and attacked everything — mocking Judaism and humiliating his parents in front of the entire family. He walked out and shut himself in his room. - From behind the door, he heard his father say: "We must never

reject the Rasha. Every Jew has a spark inside. Sometimes he is trapped — but he can return."

The next day, his father came to him and said: "My son, I received a torch from my father, and from his father — all the way back to Sinai. I want to pass that torch to you."

But he rejected it. "That torch is finished," he said. "The future is something new."

His father responded: "Maybe while I'm alive you won't come back. But after I'm gone, you will. No prayer is ever lost."

Soon after, he left home and went to Israel. He abandoned everything — his appearance, his beliefs, his identity — and built a new life on a kibbutz.

Years later, he learned that his parents and sisters were all murdered in the Holocaust. "I never said goodbye," he said. Still, he continued his life — until slowly, everything began to collapse. The ideology he believed in failed. The kibbutz declined. His own family became fractured.

Then came this night. "When I came to your Seder," he told Tali, "I didn't expect anything. But when I saw the table… the songs… the matzah…" "It all came back."

"For the first time in my life, I realized — my father was right."

Tali looked at him and said: "If that torch was passed to you… then pass it to me."

One year later, in that same kibbutz, an elderly man sat at the head of the table — wearing a kippah, leading the Seder with precision and confidence.

The same man who once walked away… Had come back. The spark never dies.

The Seder That Brought Her Home -Rabbi YY Jacobson

I want to share with you a personal story. It happened to me in 1997. That year, instead of spending Pesach in Brooklyn like most people, I decided to do something different. I traveled to Kobe, Japan. There was a small Jewish community there — a few thousand Jews, a beautiful shul — but they didn't have a rabbi.

They asked if I could come run the Sedarim. So I went.

More Than We Expected

When I arrived, they told me: "Usually about 20 people come to the Seder." I said, "Twenty? There must be more Jews here." So we spread the word as best as we could: "There will be a public Seder. No background necessary. No knowledge necessary. If you're Jewish — come."

The first night of Pesach, I walked into the social hall… There were 250 people! The leadership of the shul went into panic mode. They held an emergency meeting and came to a conclusion: Only the original 20 people who signed up could stay. Everyone else would have to leave.

I said, "Are you serious? These are Jews who may not have been at a Seder in 10, 20, maybe 30 years. How can we send them away?" They said, "It's not organized. It's not fair."

I said, "Let me ask you honestly — is the issue money?" - They didn't answer.

I said, "I'll cover everything. Every extra expense. Just let them stay." - They agreed.

A Completely Imperfect Seder

We began the Seder. And I'll be honest with you: It was a complete disaster. Nothing was in order. People were eating at the wrong times. Drinking at the wrong times. The Manishtana came after the meal. Some people were already on their sixth cup of wine before I

even started the second. From a halachic perspective? It made no sense. But the people were there. They were engaged. They were alive.

The Story That Came to Me

In the middle of the Seder, I paused. I asked myself: What do I say to this crowd? And suddenly, a story came to my mind.

I stood up and said: "Let me share something with you." The great Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev once asked in Heaven: "Which was the most beautiful Seder in my town?" The answer came: "A simple water carrier."

He called him in and said, "Tell me about your Seder."

The man said, "Rebbe, I'm embarrassed." "I'm an alcoholic. I don't know how to read. I don't know the Haggadah." "I missed most of the Seder." "But I gathered my children and said — I don't know how to read the Haggadah, but I'll tell you the story in my own words."

And he spoke from his heart: About creation. About exile. About redemption. And then he looked up and said: "Ribbono Shel Olam… You took us out once. Do it again."

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak said: "That was the greatest Seder in the entire town."

A New Understanding

I looked at the crowd in Kobe and I said: "I grew up in a home where the Seder was done perfectly. Everything was in order." "But tonight… nothing is in order." I paused. - "And yet, I have a feeling…" "If Hashem were asked tonight which Seder He loved most…" "Maybe He would say — Kobe, Japan." "Because this Seder is real." "No one here is pretending." "No one is performing." "You came because you wanted to be here." "And that… is something very special."

The Woman Who Was Crying

As I was speaking, I noticed a woman sitting across from me. She was crying. Not quietly. Deep, uncontrollable tears. I didn't understand why.

After the Seder, she came over to me. "Can I speak to you?" she asked.

Her Story

She said: "I grew up in Brooklyn, in a Jewish home." "But my experience of Judaism was very negative… very empty." "So I left." "I moved to Japan. I've been here for 25 years."

"For 25 years, I haven't been at a Seder." A few days before Pesach, a friend told her: "There's a Seder in Kobe. You should come." She said: "I'm not part of this anymore." But then she asked: "Will there be gefilte fish?" They said yes. She said: "Fine. I'll come for the gefilte fish."

Coming Home

She looked at me and said: "I was sitting here completely detached." "But then you started telling that story…" "You mentioned Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev." She paused. "My grandmother used to tell me…" "You come from very holy blood." "Our ancestor was Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev."

"I never understood what that meant." "But she always told me — he will be there for you."

She looked at me through her tears. "Tonight… I felt like he was there." "I felt like I came home." "And you were just the messenger."

The Lesson

That night, I understood something very deeply. A Seder doesn't have to be perfect to be powerful. Sometimes the most imperfect Seder… Is the most real. And sometimes the most real… Is what brings a person home.

All About Pesach *(Adapted from the 'Ta'amei ha'Minhagim')*

❖ No 'Simchah' on Pesach

The reason that the Torah does not write "Simchah" on Pesach, says the Tanya Rabasi, is because the Egyptians were drowned on Pesach.

Therefore, says the Medrash, it inserts an extra "Simchah" on Succos, one for itself and one for Pesach, seeing as, when all's said and done, the Mitzvah of "***ve'somachto be'chagecho***" applies equally to Pesach (and the omission is merely symbolical).

❖ The Kittel

Why do we wear a Kittel at the Seider?

The Taz explains that we wear the garment in which one clothes the dead, to prevent the Simchah from going to our heads and causing us to become vain. According to this reason, a mourner is obligated to wear a Kittel too just like everybody else.

The Taz's reason is also the basis for the Minhag that a Chasan in the first year does not wear a Kittel at the Seider, the Kuntrus Acharon explains, since he has a Mitzvah to rejoice with his new wife, and the last thing we want to do is to dampen his Simchah.

❖ Eating the Two Matzos Simultaneously

We eat the two Matzos at the same time, the Z'chor le'Avraham explains, because, on the one hand one is obligated to eat the 'Motzi' immediately, whereas on the other hand, if one eats it first, then one will have already fulfilled the Mitzvah of Matzah by the time one eats the 'Lechem Oni', and the main Mitzvah is to fulfill the Mitzvah with 'Lechem Oni'.

❖ The Charoses

We do not recite a B'rachah over the Charoses, even though it is a Mitzvah, the Ya'avatz explains. This is because it is not a Mitzvah to eat it (only to dip into it).



R' Shmuel Winzelberg

ויעבידו מצרים את בני ישראל בפרך - *The Egyptians enslaved the Children of Israel with crushing labour.*

Why is Egypt mentioned here and not just Pharaoh?

The Holy Torah wants to point out to us that all of Egypt partnered with Pharaoh when it came to the subjugation that Pharaoh decreed on the nation of Israel. For this reason, all of them were punished with the Ten Makkos, for otherwise they would have had a valid complaint: 'Pharaoh sinned – he should have been smitten. Why are we all guilty?' (Hagadah, Umatuk HaOhr)

Pesach Treasures

Someone once asked the **Kotzker Rebbe, zt"l**, if the Torah is so strict on even one drop of Chometz, why do we eat Matzah at all? One mistake in the Matzah bakery, and we can end up eating Chometz! Wouldn't it be safer to just eat vegetables for the entire Pesach and stay as far away from Chometz as possible?

Similarly, the **Shir Maon** asks, why do we make Matzah only out of a kind of grain that could become Chometz? Perhaps we should make Matzah from rice, which has no possibility of becoming Chometz.

The Kotzker Rebbe answered that our job is to conquer and vanquish the Yetzer Hara. Battling him and winning is our purpose in life. A person is not created like a Malach without a Yetzer Hara. The

Yetzer Hara is called Chometz as he spoils one's purity. Since we cannot avoid him and we need to live with his constant threats, we are responsible to still keep ourselves free from Aveirah.

We eat Matzah to symbolize that just as we are able to make Matzah that is not Chometz, so too we are capable to keep ourselves pure as well!



The Chessed Only You Can Give - The Rav Meir Shapiro and Chachmei Lublin Haggadah by Rabbi Dov Weller

כָּל דִּכְפִין יֵיתֵי וְיֵיכֹל - ***Whoever is hungry, let him come and eat***



The Seder begins with us inviting guests into our homes, thinking and caring about another Yid, and being mindful and sensitive to the needs of those around us.

R' Meir Shapiro teaches that chessed goes beyond giving physical things. When someone fails to use his abilities for the good of others, he is denying the gift Hashem entrusted to him.

In Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin, R' Meir established that the senior talmidim set aside time each week to learn with the younger students. That was their maaser, the tithe of their time and ability.

The Kozhiglover, quoting the **Chiddushei HaRim**, taught that within every Jew lies a 'nekudah tovah', - one point of greatness, in which he excels beyond all others. It may be intellectual, emotional,

spiritual, or practical. Every Jew has something uniquely his from Hashem that can be used to benefit others.

When R' Meir served as Rav in Sanok, the yeshivah was in desperate need of furniture, clothing, and basic supplies. One Motza'ei Shabbos he invited the city's craftsmen to a spirited melaveh malkah. After singing and dancing together, R' Meir spoke to them: R' Meir explained that we must tithe not only from our financial resources, but from our every skill, talent, and gift. - Every person has a unique talent.

"A person can acquire his share in the World to Come in one moment. How? Some of you are tailors, some are shoemakers, and some are carpenters and craftsmen — but all of you possess a skill that no one else can offer in the same way. Use that skill to support these talmidim. That is how one earns his place in the World to Come."

The artisans took his words to heart. Each offered his craft and materials to help the yeshivah and its students. By using their talents for Torah and for another Yid, they merited tremendous zechusim.

R' Chaim Kreiswirth, who learned in Chachmei Lublin when the Kozhiglover Rav was rosh yeshivah, shared the following story.

"When I was a young man, I once entered the home of the gadol hador, **R' Chaim Ozer Grodzinski**. He led the rabbinate of Vilna with strength and clarity and carried the burden of the Jewish world on his shoulders. His home was constantly filled with people seeking counsel, support, and tzedakah. - "On his desk lay his sefer, Achiezer, filled with brilliant responsa to the many halachic questions that came to him.

With youthful boldness, I asked, 'Rebbi, when will the next volume of Achiezer be printed?'

"R' Chaim Ozer did not dismiss me. Instead, he brought me into an inner room and showed me rows and rows of neatly arranged

notebooks. 'Here is the second volume of Achiezer,' he said. "They were records of his tzedakah and chessed — distributions to hundreds of widows, orphans, and families in need.

'This,' he said, 'is my next volume of Achiezer.'"

R' Chaim Kreiswirth explained that loving-kindness, speaking about it, admiring it, or praising it, is not sufficient. That is only an idealistic emotion. That is not what the Torah is demanding. True loving-kindness leads to acts of kindness. Real love for kindness expresses itself through actual chessed, through time, effort, and resources.

A person can learn about chessed for hours, listen to shiurim, become inspired, even moved — but if nothing changes in how he treats others, all this has no lasting value. Ahavas chessed means giving of yourself, helping others, and bringing good into the world. It means turning what is in your heart into lived reality — not only wanting, and not only thinking, but doing.

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

"Karpas and Yachatz hint to Krias Yam Suf. The letters of the word 'Karpas' stand for: 'כָּל־סוּס רֶכֶב פַּרְעֹה, which means 'every horse and chariot of Pharaoh'. - When we dip the Karpas into salt water, we commemorate how Pharaoh and all his chariots were submerged in the salty waters of the Red Sea. - Similarly, splitting the Matzah by Yachatz, represents the splitting of the Yam Suf!" ~ **Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, zt"l**.

"A person is obligated to see himself as if he personally left Mitzrayim—meaning, to recognize Hashem's hand in his own life." ~ Rabbeinu Yonah.

Balanced - The Story Begins… by Rabbi Yechiel Spero



For most of his life, **R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach** ate machine matzah on Pesach. Aside from the *kezayis* (halachic measure, based on the size of an olive) at the Seder, that first essential portion on the night of Pesach, his practice was consistent and unchanging.

Year after year, he used machine matzah. In homes where *minhagim* run deep and lines are rarely crossed, this was simply "how R' Shlomo Zalman did it."

Then, late in his life, without announcement, R'Shlomo Zalman stopped eating machine matzah and began using only hand matzah. People were puzzled. Such practices are usually fixed for generations. One eats this, another eats that. Shifts like this are uncommon, especially in old age. What could have happened?

The answer lies in an extraordinary story.

For many decades, R' Shlomo Zalman acquired his matzos from a specific machine-matzah factory. It was a place he trusted, one he knew well, one whose standards he relied upon fully.

Then, the factory was sold. The new owner, aware of who R' Shlomo Zalman was and what his patronage meant, invited him to continue purchasing from there.

R' Shlomo Zalman came to inspect the facility. What he saw troubled him. The level of kashrus, the care, the meticulousness — things had changed. Standards were no longer what they had been. R' Shlomo Zalman saw issues with his own eyes, matters he could not overlook. - With no fanfare and no public statement, he stopped buying matzah from that factory.

When word reached the new owner, he was devastated. He came to R' Shlomo Zalman's home in Shaarei Chesed and pleaded, "Rebbi, I invested everything I have to buy this factory. If people hear that you no longer buy from me, it will ruin me. No endorsement could matter more than yours. I will lose everything."

R' Shlomo Zalman responded carefully. "I feel your pain. But I cannot eat matzos from your factory anymore. I saw problems myself. And understand: If you knew I was coming, if you knew I would be inspecting the place, then even from a business standpoint you should have made sure everything was at the highest level. - That did not happen."

Then, R' Shlomo Zalman added, "I do not want you to suffer because of me. So, I will do something else. From now on, I will no longer eat machine matzah at all. I will use only hand matzah. This way, if people ask why I no longer buy matzah from you, you may say in my name that I decided to start eating only hand matzah. Nothing more."

From then on, R' Shlomo Zalman ate only hand matzah, for the Seder and throughout Pesach. But there was one detail he never forgot.

A minhag, a custom, once practiced for decades, resembles a *neder,* a vow. And so, every year, R' Shlomo Zalman made sure that once, usually during Chol HaMoed, he ate a single *kezayis* of machine matzah — just enough that it was not as if he had taken upon himself to eat only hand matzah as a *neder.*

One year, after Minchah of the last day of Pesach, he rushed out of shul toward his house. His family members were startled. Where was he running?

"I just realized," he replied, "that I didn't yet eat that piece of machine matzah this year. The sun will be setting soon."

And with that, the *gadol hador* hurried to keep a commitment no one else would have noticed, but that he never forgot.

Rabbi Joey Haber - Of Dreams and Destiny

My father would frequently share the following original insight.



If you think about it, the Four Sons are not symmetrical. The opposite of a *chacham* (wise person) is a *tipesh* (fool), not a *rasha*. And the opposite of a *rasha* (wicked person) is a *tzaddik*, not a *chacham*. - And then we have a *tam* (simple person) and one who is *she'eino yodea lish'ol* (does not know how to ask), descriptions that do not form neat opposites at all. Why then does the Haggadah group them this way? *Chacham, rasha, tam*, and *she'eino yodea lish'ol?*

My father explained something remarkable. - The Four Sons correspond to four figures in the Torah, each of whom had two dreams, and whose dreams ultimately brought Klal Yisrael down to Egypt: Yosef HaTzaddik (*Bereishis* 37:5-7; v. 9-10); Pharaoh (ibid. 41:1-7); Yaakov Avinu (ibid. 28:12-15; 31; v. 10-13); and the *Sar HaMashkim* (butler) and *Sar Ha'Ofim* (baker; ibid. 40:9-11; v. 16-17), which are counted together as one.

Now watch how this unfolds. - When Yosef is brought before Pharaoh to interpret his dreams and offer counsel for Egypt's

survival, Pharaoh declares: "*Ein navon v'chacham kamocha*—There is no one as discerning and wise as you" (ibid. 41:39). Yosef is explicitly called a *chacham*.

Next is the רָשָׁע. - Later in the Torah, Pharaoh himself says to Moshe: "ה' הַצַּדִּיק וַאֲנִי וְעַמִּי הָרְשָׁעִים —Hashem is righteous and I and my nation are wicked" (*Shemos* 9:27). Pharaoh identifies himself as a רָשָׁע.

Now the *Tam*. How does the Torah describe Yaakov Avinu in his youth? "*Yaakov ish tam*—Yaakov was a simple man" (*Bereishis* 25:27). Yaakov was a wholesome, complete person.

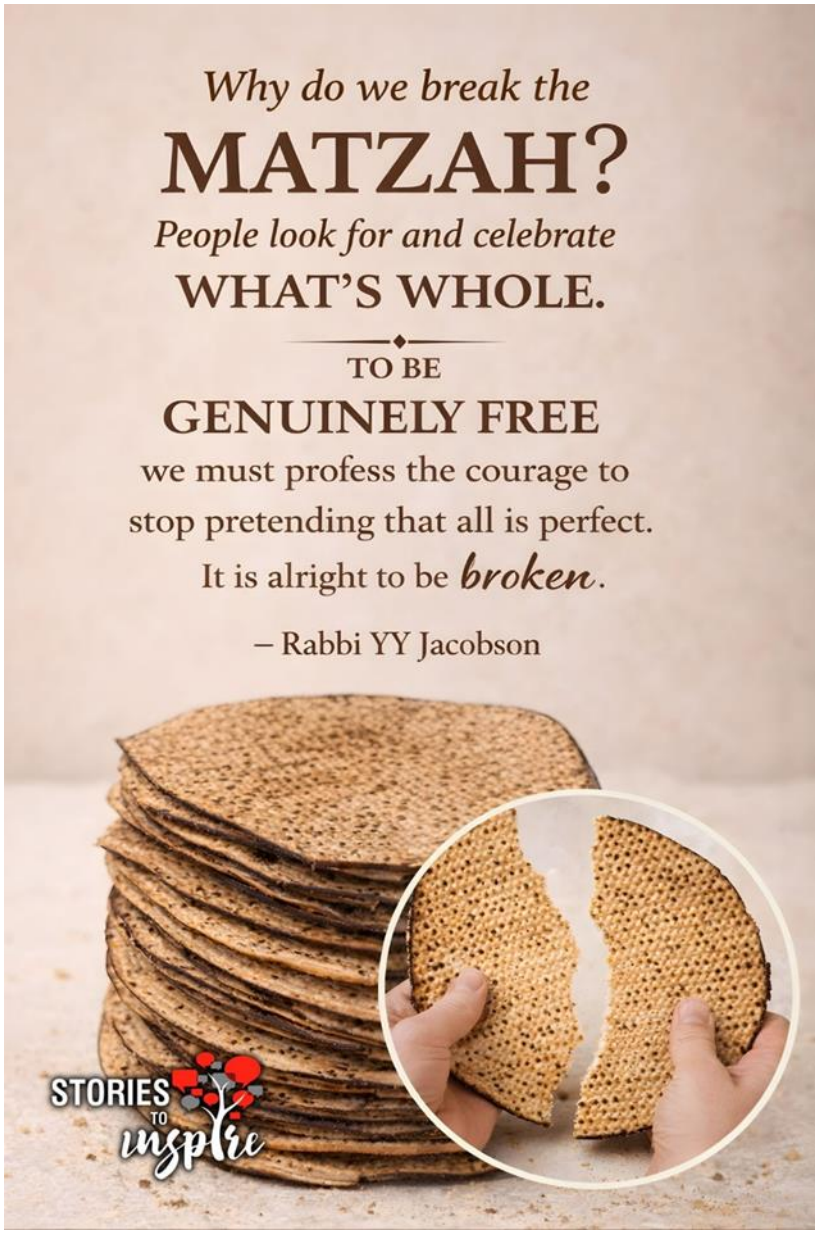
Finally, the subtlest of all: *She'eino yodea lish'ol*.

When Yosef encounters the butler and baker in prison, the Torah tells us they appeared troubled. Yosef noticed their distressed expressions and asked them what was wrong (ibid. 40:7). They had dreams, but they did not even articulate their distress until Yosef initiated the conversation. - They are the ones who "do not know how to ask."

Four titles in the Haggadah. Four individuals in the Torah. Each with two dreams and each playing a role in bringing Klal Yisrael down to Egypt. Yosef, the *chacham*. Pharaoh, the *rasha*. Yaakov, the *tam*. And the butler and baker, *she'eino yodea lish'ol*.

What does this teach us?

The descent into Egypt, the exile that defined our nation, did not come from one personality type alone. It involved wisdom and wickedness, wholesomeness and confusion, leadership and vulnerability. And so, at the Seder, when we look around the table, we see all four types within our children, within our families, and within ourselves. Each one plays a role in the unfolding of Jewish destiny.



In the Magid section of the Haggadah when explaining the verse from Devarim (26:7): וַנִּצְעַק אֶל ה' אֱלקֵי אֲבֹתֵינוּ וַיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת קֹלֵנוּ – "And we cried out to Hashem, the G-d of our fathers, and Hashem heard our voice."

The Apter Rav, the great Chassidic master - Rabbi Avraham Yehoshua Heshel of Apta (1748-1825), author of Ohev Yisrael explains that this is a very special moment and segulah during the Haggadah when heartfelt tefillah is particularly powerful.

The Haggadah uses this verse to describe how the Jewish people in Egypt were redeemed because they cried out to Hashem. The emphasis is on the power of a sincere cry rather than formal prayer.

When one says the words וַנִּצְעַק אֶל ה' at the Seder, If a person cries out sincerely from the heart, Hashem answers that cry.

Dust is not chometz, and your kids are not the korban pesach. ~ The Kotzker Rebbe zt"l.

"The Seder is not a ceremony of the past, but an educational act of the present. We do not merely recount what happened—we recreate it, so that the next generation will not only know, but feel that they themselves were redeemed." ~ Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch.

"Chametz represents stagnation; matzah represents simplicity and renewal—Pesach is the זמן of מחדש being oneself." ~ Rav Hutner.

Pharaoh in Pyjamas…

In Shemos (12:30) it says that on the night of the slaying of the Egyptian firstborn, "Pharaoh arose at midnight."

Rashi comments that Pharaoh rose "from his bed." Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk famously notes that Pharaoh was actually able to fall asleep even though he was warned that his nation was about to be decimated by the Plague of the Firstborn — and he himself was a firstborn! - This is a rasha of the highest order.

Rabbi Label Lam - The Noblest and Highest

Here is a loaded word: freedom. But what does it truly mean?

Freedom is not the license to do whatever one desires. A person is not a single impulse, but a complex inner world composed of competing drives, values, and aspirations. When one simply follows every urge, there is often another, deeper part of the self that feels diminished, even violated.

Freedom is the ability to give expression to the noblest, highest, and holiest dimensions of our being. It is the courage to say "yes" to what elevates us, and the strength to say "no" to what degrades us. It is not the absence of restraint, but the mastery of it.

Beyond Prison Doors

One Shabbos Chol HaMoed Pesach, **R' Aryeh Levin** went to the prison in Yerushalayim for his usual Shabbos visit to the young men interned by the British for their underground activities to gain Israel's independence. R' Aryeh was curious to know how the prisoners had managed with their *seder*.

One prisoner answered him with a smile, "We had a wonderful time, in high spirits. We observed the *seder* quite properly, with all the details. There was only one difficulty: When we said *Sh'foch chamascha* we could not open the door for Eliyahu HaNavi."

"You know," said R' Aryeh, "you are making a mistake. Every man is put in a prison of his own self. He cannot leave it by going out of the door of his house, but only through the door of the heart. And to make an opening for himself in his own heart – that anyone can do, even a prisoner behind bars. And then he will be truly free – in spiritual freedom." (A Tzaddik in our Time)

HADERECH

The Chasam Sofer asks why is it that one is only yotzeh the Mitzvah of achilas matzah with something which is capable of becoming chometz (see Pesachim Daf 35 regarding why we are not yotzeh with millet or rice).

He explained that this teaches us that every middah has the inbuilt capacity to be used both to fulfil the Ratzon Hashem and sometimes the same middah can achieve the opposite. Anavah (humility) at the right time is the ratzon Hashem but at the wrong time it can be an Anavah pesula (invalid humility). Gaavah (pride) at the right time is gaavah dekedusha (holy pride)!

The Sefas Emes says that Matzah symbolises anivus (humility) and Chometz symbolises gaavah. That's why we only use the ingredients for matzah which have the potential to become chometz.

The composition of matzah is Mayim (water) which flows downstream and thus symbolises humility. We use fire to bake it, and fire always wants to go up and thereby represents gaaveh. In order to achieve Kevod shomayim we need to use both esh and mayim.

Once **Reb Chazkel Abramsky Zt"l** was asked to speak about the personality of **Reb Chaim Brisker!** He said it is impossible because his personality changed to whatever was the ratzon Hashem at that time!

Rabbi Aviv Bar-Ilan

Rabbi Ari Bensoussan - The Tea Man

וְשֶׁאֵינוֹ יוֹדֵעַ לִשְׁאוֹל - *'The son who does not know how to ask…'*

It is no exaggeration to state that the heart of **Reb Aryeh Levin *zt"l***, the tzaddik of Yerushalayim, was acutely tuned in to the quiet pain of others.

One winter day, Reb Aryeh was walking past a small *cheder* in Jerusalem. The children were outside during recess, playing in the yard. It was cold, the air carrying the kind of winter dampness that seeps into your bones. Until suddenly, you could hear a familiar sound echoing down the street. - Not the ice cream man. The tea man.

In those days, a man would go around with a large urn of hot water, a small flame flickering beneath it, selling cups of steaming tea to warm up passersby. He stopped near the *cheder*, as the children ran toward him, clutching their small coins, eager for a cup of hot tea.

As they lined up, Reb Aryeh noticed one boy standing off to the side. The child was clearly freezing. His pants had holes at the knees and his legs trembled in the cold. But he did not join the line.

The tea seller noticed him too. "My dear boy," he called out cheerfully, "which tea would you like?"

The boy looked at him. "No thanks," he said. "I don't like tea."

The tea seller shrugged and turned back to the paying customers.

Reb Aryeh Levin had been watching. Quietly, he approached the tea seller, handed him a coin, and took a cup of tea. Then he walked over to the boy and gently placed the steaming cup into his hands. - The boy grabbed it immediately.

You know that feeling—when you are freezing and suddenly you feel a surge of warmth in your palms. He held the cup close, absorbing the heat. And then he made a *beracha*, and desperately drank it down, gulp after grateful gulp.

The tea seller turned to Reb Aryeh, puzzled. "I don't understand," he said. "I asked him if he wanted tea. He told me he doesn't like tea."

Reb Aryeh looked back at the man, an understanding twinkle in his eye. "You heard him say he doesn't like tea. - I heard him say, 'I would love a cup of tea, but I'm too poor to afford it.'"

That was Reb Aryeh Levin. He did not only hear words. He heard what lay beneath them.

People often speak in code, their words camouflaging an invisible secret. They do not speak of it, out of fear of embarrassment and the desire to protect their dignity. "No, it's okay." "I'm fine." "I don't need anything." "I don't like tea."

But beneath those words may be a quiet plea. "Notice me." "See me." "Care about me."

So perhaps the next time someone says, "No, I'm not interested," or "I'm good," pause and ask: what are they really saying? Is there a story behind those words waiting to be heard? Because, more than often, there is.

Rabbi Daniel Glatstein - Powerful Pesach Prayers

וַנִּצְעַק אֶל־ה׳ אֱלֹקֵי אֲבֹתֵינוּ, וַיִּשְׁמַע ה׳ אֶת־קֹלֵנוּ, וַיַּרְא אֶת־עָנְיֵנוּ וְאֶת־עֲמָלֵנוּ וְאֶת־לַחֲצֵנוּ - *We cried out to Hashem, the G-d of our fathers, and Hashem heard our voice…*

It is often thought that the reason we wash before Karpas is simple. We are eating a vegetable dipped in liquid, and as the Mishnah Berurah rules (*Orach Chaim* 473:51), one must wash before eating something dipped in one of the seven liquids (see *Pesachim* 115a).

Even though there is discussion as to whether that applies when eating less than a *kezayis* and one might not strictly be required to wash, on the night of Pesach we do so anyway because of the night's elevated and endeared stature (*Levush*, 473:6). Others (see *Shaar Hatziyun*, ibid.; Aruch HaShulchan, *Orach Chaim* 473:18) explain that the washing is meant to provoke the children to ask questions.

Those are the standard explanations.

But the **Darkei Moshe** (*Orach Chaim* 473) offers a remarkable insight.

He writes that perhaps the reason for washing before Karpas is because saying the Haggadah is like *tefillah*. We are recounting the praise of Hashem, and therefore it requires washing the hands just as one washes before prayer.

This opens an entirely new dimension to the Haggadah. One might have thought that the Haggadah is simply *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim*, the *mitzvah* of telling over the wonders of Hashem. But the Darkei Moshe is classifying it as *tefillah*!

May our tefillos on this Pesach pierce the heavens, and may the power of this night bring us to the ultimate geulah.

The Bracha That Echoed 40 Years Later Rabbi Yehuda Zev Klein

I'd like to share with you an incredible story. A story about emunah… about connection… and about how one moment can echo across generations.

Back in the 1950s, there was a talmid chacham who had been married for many years… without children. It was a quiet pain. The kind people don't always speak about — but carry with them every single day. He had a close friend, a Lubavitcher chossid, who would constantly encourage him: "Go to the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Ask for a bracha." But the man resisted. "I'm a Litvak," he would say. "I don't go to Rebbes. I have one G-d — and that's enough for me."

But his friend didn't give up. "What do you have to lose?" he told him. "If nothing happens — you're no worse off." "But if it works…" "Your entire life could change."

Finally, one year, right before Pesach… He agreed. He entered the Rebbe's room. And instead of immediately asking for a bracha, something unexpected happened. They began speaking. Not about children… But about Pesach. About the Seder. About the responsibility to transmit the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim to the next generation.

It was a deep, meaningful conversation. As the meeting was coming to an end, the man hesitated. And then he said: "Rebbe… I want to be honest with you." "Your chassidim are pressuring me to ask for a bracha for children." "It's not something I usually do…" "But I'm asking… because of them."

The Rebbe smiled. He took the man's hand into both of his hands… And gave him an unusually warm handshake. Then he said something very simple. But very powerful.

"This is so that you should be able to tell your child the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim."

Within a year… The man had a son. The only child he would ever have.

Years passed. The family eventually moved to Eretz Yisrael. The boy grew up in Bnei Brak — in a completely non-Chassidic environment. But his father never let him forget. "You were born from the Rebbe's bracha," he would tell him. "And if you ever hear someone speak negatively about chassidim…" "Walk away."

Fast forward forty years. That little boy is now a father himself. And for the first time in his life… He travels to America. He's attending a wedding in Lakewood. But he feels something inside him. A pull. "I have to go to the Rebbe." So he makes his way to Brooklyn.

He waits for hours, just for a few seconds. Finally… He's standing in front of the Rebbe. And in that moment… He says nothing. The Rebbe gives him a dollar. He turns to leave. And then— The Rebbe calls him back. He turns around. The Rebbe gives him another dollar. And then… He says the exact same words he told his father… Forty years earlier. "This is so that you should be able to tell your child the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim."

In that moment… Everything came together. The past… The present… The hidden… Now revealed. The Rebbe didn't just give a bracha. He showed him something deeper. That nothing is random. That moments echo. That what begins in one generation… Continues into the next.

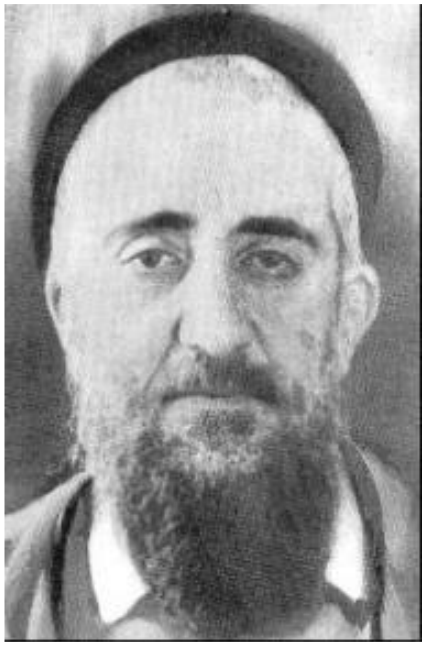
And that's what the Seder is all about. Not just telling a story. But creating a moment… Where something suddenly becomes real. Where a child understands something they never understood before. Because when that happens… The story is no longer history. It becomes life.

"The main mitzvah of Seder night is to implant emunah in the hearts of the children." ~ Chofetz Chaim.

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Kiddush on Chametz





R' Chaim Kadir Matzliach Mazuz (1912-1971) was asked by the Cheshinover Rebbe, **R' Yechezkel Shraga Rubin-Halberstam** (1913-1986) about a prisoner who has access only to chametz. Since abstaining would be life-threatening, he must eat chametz on Pesach. The question was: may he recite Kiddush on the night of Pesach over chametz? It would seem contradictory to say Kiddush on chametz while saying "Chag Hamatzos."

R' Mazuz responded by drawing a parallel to Sukkos. When it rains on Sukkos night, one makes Kiddush inside the house. This is not considered contradictory, because the sanctity of the day remains unchanged, as it is still Sukkos even if circumstances prevent the ideal fulfilment of the mitzvah.

So too here: although one is forced to eat chametz, the time is still intrinsically Pesach. Therefore, reciting Kiddush over chametz under such circumstances is not a contradiction.

When one says the brachah, "Who redeemed us and our forefathers," and believes that Hashem continues to redeem us even today, he will be saved from all trouble. ~ The Apter Rav.

Rabbi Don Jarashow - Can't Get It Wrong

A fire department executive once explained something powerful about training new firefighters.

"Most people," he said, "practice until they get it right. But in firefighting, we train until we can't get it wrong."

That distinction is everything.

It is not about occasional success, but repetition to the point where the response becomes instinctive and automatic.

And this is precisely what the Seder is meant to be.

The Seder is not a one-night experience. It is not a temporary connection, not a brief "trial period" of spirituality that expires after Yom Tov. It is about building something enduring: a relationship with Hashem that is so deeply rooted, so fully internalized, that it cannot simply be "peeled away" the next day.

Each year, there is a window that opens. It is a spiritual atmosphere that is unlike any other time of the year. But it does not remain open forever.

We are given one Seder, perhaps two. And within those moments lies an extraordinary potential.

So how do we respond?

We sit with our families—with our children, our spouses, our parents—and we go over the message again and again, until it becomes clear, until it becomes real, until we cannot get it wrong. Where we understand, with clarity and conviction, that no matter what name, what leader, what country, what force appears to dominate the moment, there is only one true source of power.

Only Hashem.



The Vilna Gaon – Emunah at Its Peak

The Vilna Gaon says: 'The highest level of emunah was reached at the ים סוף. Yet—only days later, they struggled again. - Even the highest inspiration fades unless we work to hold onto it.'

On The Haggadah

Two Questions to Ask at the Seder

Who perhaps, of all people, deserves the be mentioned the most in the Haggadah? Moshe is the obvious answer. Yet, in the entire retelling of Yetziyas Mitzrayim (the story of the exodus from Egypt), there is only one passing reference made to him (within Rabbi Yossei HaGelili's explanation of how many plagues the Egyptians were afflicted with at the splitting of the sea). And that is all!

For the greatest leader in Jewish history that is shocking. How could that be?

And the second question. The song of "Dayenu" where we detail our thanks to Hashem for all of the miracles and kindness that he bestowed upon us throughout the exodus from Egypt until the building of the Bais HaMikdash (Holy Temple) that we recite during the Passover Seder is quite lengthy – it has 15 stanzas. In addition, right after Dayenu there is another narrative which recaps the Dayenu. Why is such a lengthy narrative necessary? Why not just say, "Thank You, Hashem, for everything You did for us?"

These two questions — why is Moshe barely mentioned in the Hagaddah, and why Dayenu is so lengthy have a similar answer. And the answer teaches us one of the most important lessons in the entire Torah: the importance of giving credit where credit is due.

Imagine if we were to tell the Yetziyas Mitzrayim story with Moshe as its main character: "Moshe took us out of Egypt. Moshe split the sea. Moshe led us through the desert." After a generation or two, Hashem may slip into the background — officially acknowledged, technically important, but not really the focal point of the story.

This is exactly the concern raised by the Vilna Gaon in his commentary on the Haggadah. The most famous answer to why references to Moshe are scant is that including him would pull attention away from the true message of Yetziyas Mitzrayim — that

Hashem alone saved us, without any human intermediary. In the Haggadah's own words: "Lo Al Yedei Malach, Lo Al Yedei Saraf, Lo Al Yedei Shaliach — Ani V'Lo Acher" - not through an angel, not through a seraph, not through any agent. Hashem Himself, and no one else.

And the whole point of Yetziyas Mitzrayim is to realize that now that Hashem alone has saved us, we owe it to Him to join His covenant and embrace the mission He has set out for us.

And now, on to our answer to the second question that we posed. When someone does a huge favor for us, it is easy to say, "Thanks so much for everything!" It feels and sounds grateful. But is it really? When we say "everything," we have not actually identified anything specific that we are thankful for.

And that is why Dayenu is so lengthy and detailed.

The Haggadah breaks down the period of Yetziyas Mitzrayim through the splitting of the sea to the building of the Bais HaMikdash into fifteen separate stanzas and forces us to stop and say thank you at each one. Splitting the sea gets its own stanza of gratitude. Crossing on dry land — that is another separate stanza of gratitude. Reaching Har Sinai is different from actually receiving the Torah and deserves its own separate, "Thank you" – and so on and so forth. The Dayenu does not let us bundle everything together into one, "Thank you for everything, Hashem."

Putting the two answers to the questions above together, reveals the Hagaddah's unmistakable message.

References to Moshe do not appear in the Hagaddah to ensure that we give credit to Hashem where it is due. And Dayenu teaches us that when we give credit and say thank you, to do it the right way, we must give credit with precision and specifics to ensure that gratitude is shown for each and every kindness that has been bestowed upon us.



Leaving Mitzrayim

When Klal Yisrael left Mitzrayim they did not just experience physical salvation; they were taken out by Hashem to be His chosen people which constituted their birth as a nation. And this did not just occur when they left Mitzrayim - it occurs each year on *Leil haSeder*. Every year, on this very special night - *Leil Shimurim* - Klal Yisrael as a nation and each individual Yid, is born anew.

Klal Yisrael were taken out of Mitzrayim "*b'chipazon*" - in a hurry. They attained enormous spiritual heights in an extremely short time span. The same is possible each year on *Leil haSeder*. We can reach prodigious heights that are usually unattainable to us, only made possible by the power of the night. We must, however, ensure that it is done "*b'chipazon*". This process, as we will explain, begins some time before Pesach.

Before we can be reborn and recreate ourselves, we must rid ourselves of our entire former makeup which has been saturated by the *Yetzer Hara*. This is alluded to in our *minhag* to take ten pieces of *chametz*, hide them, search for them, find them, and burn them.

The process hints at the internal work we undertake at this time—searching within ourselves - in every nook and cranny - to find the various forms of *Yetzer Hara* that have infected us, removing them and burning them. (As a person discovers and burns his *chametz*, he should simultaneously intend to search for and eradicate the *Yetzer*

Hara within him. He should daven for *siyata diShmaya* in completing this important *avoda*, as stated in the *tefilla* printed in *machzorim* following *Kol Chamira*).

Many ponder why other forbidden foods, including *chazir,* can become *batel*, whereas *chametz* on Pesach, does not. Additionally, one is not only forbidden to eat *chametz*, but also to own it. Why is the *issur* of *chametz* so strict?

The answer to these questions is that we are reborn on the night of Pesach, as explained above. During a birth, everything must be sterile. Even one germ can be dangerous, or even fatal. For this reason, even a crumb of *chametz* is forbidden. For a full week after the birth of a nation - "*Bal yeira'eh u'bal yimotzei*" - keep everything absolutely sterile!

Vehigadetah L'vincha

When we sit down to our seder, it may seem to us a modest and simple act. We may wonder: what real impact does this night have? Yet we must realize that the soft voice of *"v'higadeta l'vincha"*—the voice of recounting what we learned from our parents and passing it on to our children which will then be passed on to the next generation —is the strongest, most enduring voice of all.

By sharing the *mesora* of our ancestors and recounting the *emuna* instilled in us by generations past, we become a vital link in the eternal chain. Through our words, the message carries louder and farther than any roar, reaching all the way to the final generation, preparing the world for the coming of Mashiach.

Why do we wear a *kittel*?

There are two days in the year when we wear a *kittel*: Yom Kippur and *Leil haSeder*. The *sefarim* discuss the significance of the *kittel*

at length. It is a sign of *malchus*, of *cheirus*, and also alludes to the fact that on *Leil haSeder* we rise to such a lofty level that we are compared to *malachim*.

However, the common theme of *Leil haSeder* and Yom Kippur warrants deeper exploration.

On Yom Kippur, we wear a white *kittel* because it is a day of *teshuva*. After a person's passing from this world, he is dressed in *tachrichin*—simple white burial shrouds. Wearing the *kittel* on Yom Kippur reminds us of *Yom haMisa*, and this sobering thought stirs us to do *teshuva* and return to Hashem with sincerity.

But why do we wear the same garment on *Leil haSeder*, a night of freedom and joy? On the surface Pesach seems completely unrelated to this idea.

Pesach is a day of rebirth. When Klal Yisrael left *Mitzrayim*, they did not just gain freedom from bondage; they were born as a new nation. This was not just a one-time event; it occurs each year anew and is embedded in the very nature of the time.

Every year on *Leil haSeder*, we are reborn—not only as a nation; each and every individual experiences a personal renewal.

Rav Pincus explains: On Yom Kippur, we do *teshuva*. We reach a state of purity and merit a new beginning. But Pesach is even more profound. On Yom Kippur, we are forgiven for our sins—our slate is wiped clean. On Pesach, however, we are *born anew;* it is as though we never sinned in the first place. We are like a newborn child, pure and fresh.

On *Leil haSeder*, we wear the *kittel* to remind ourselves: we have been granted new life, a fresh year full of opportunities. But we must reflect on the past and, even more importantly, plan how to maximize the year ahead—to seize every moment for Torah, mitzvos, and connection to Hashem.

The Ka'arah

Leil HaSeder is a magnificent time. The table is set, the father of the household wears a Kittel, and at the centre of the table lies the Seder plate. Every element of this night is rich with depth and significance, especially the Seder plate, which is adorned with three matzos and various simanim on top.

While we often focus on the more straightforward p'shat of the mitzvos and minhagim, here we will delve a little deeper into some of the profound *yesodos* that lie within every aspect of the Seder plate and the night itself. While there is infinitely more depth hidden within each part of the Seder, this brief glimpse offers a small window through which we can begin to appreciate just how deep and meaningful this night truly is.

As we have explained, a complete entity comprises ten components. This is true of the world, physical man, and, as we will explain, spiritual man.

Prior to Leil HaSeder, we have searched for, found, and entirely burned the ten parts of the Yetzer Hara. Now we are ready for our rebirth as new people.

The centre of the majestic Seder table is certainly the ka'arah, the Seder plate holding six items (the zeroa, beitza, maror, charoses, karpas, and chazeres). Beneath it we store the three matzos, representing Kohen, Levi, and Yisrael. The six components on top, the three matzos below, and the Seder plate itself make up ten components. This represents the ten components of the new person that is born on this night.

The Matzos

Let us explore arguably the central mitzva and greatest symbol of Pesach: the matzah. We go to great lengths to obtain the most mehudar matzah, for it is a *mitzvah min haTorah* that we imbibe.

According to some opinions, we even fulfil an additional mitzvah with every kezayis we consume throughout Pesach. But what is the deeper reason for this important mitzvah, and why is it the central aspect of Pesach?

We all know the simple answer: Klal Yisrael rushed out of Mitzrayim, *b'chipazon*, in a hurry, which meant the dough they prepared did not have time to bake. As they left Mitzrayim, they carried it on their shoulders, and it baked into matzos.

The question is: why? Hashem was able to bring makas dam, turning all the water into blood, yet without affecting a single Jew. They were able to drink from the same cup. He brought tzefardea, kinnim, arov, dever, shechin—ten of the most astounding miraculous plagues—all for Klal Yisrael. Yet He could not make them some sandwiches or prepare food for their journey? They had to eat sun-baked crackers?

And this became the central theme and mitzvah through which we commemorate *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, more than all the plagues and miracles that saved our lives and punished the Mitzrim. There must be a deeper message.

When Klal Yisrael left Mitzrayim, it was not merely a physical departure; it marked a spiritual exodus. This represents every Jew's journey away from their *meitzarim*—their spiritual limitations, *nisyonos*, and *yetzer ha'ra*. Each aspect of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* teaches us how to transcend our personal Mitzrayim throughout the year, especially on *Leil HaSeder*.

We all have tremendous aspirations in our *avodas Hashem*. We want to learn more Torah, attend an extra shiur, daven better, improve our relationships with our families, and overcome our anger or other negative traits. So, what is stopping us from reaching our goals and fulfilling our lofty aspirations? We want to do it, so why does it not happen?

The answer is simple: we procrastinate and say, "Tomorrow, I'll attend the shiur when I have more time. I'll daven better when I have more *menuchas ha'nefesh*. I'll increase my *tzedaka* when I have more money."

Rav Chaim Friedlander explains that this is the yesod of Pesach. Hashem was not merely taking us out of Mitzrayim; He was teaching us how to emerge from every challenge, break through our boundaries, and ultimately reach the tremendous heights we strive to attain—but we must do it *bechipazon*, rushing, right away.

Yes, life is full of excuses, full of reasons not to act, and this is what Hashem was teaching us. Certainly, He could have prepared ready-baked bread—after all, He gave us mann from shamayim—but He specifically placed us in the least prepared situation, full of the best reasons to delay. Not only were the cases not packed, the bread was not ready; it was still dough. The natural thing would have been to say, "Yes, we are ready to go, but just wait until the bread is ready." Yet, as soon as we had the opportunity, we did not wait even one second. We left *b'chipazon*, leaving behind every excuse to delay.

We arrive on the night of Pesach, excited and inspired, the Seder table set in its majesty, with the Seder plate arranged and the white kittel on, ready for the enormous wealth of *emunah*, *bitachon*, *chizuk*, and *dveikus*. Yet, what is the most important aspect and the centre of the night? The matzah. It reminds us how we grow, how to leave our *meitzarim*, by jumping out right away—not even waiting for our bread to bake.

Let us take the chizuk we acquired on this astounding night and move forward with it. Yes, the next day the *yetzer hara* will present little excuses. We may be tired and feel that we've used up all our strength from the night before. Yet let us not wait—let us act, not even waiting for the bread to bake, and get on the "wagon of chizuk."

The Arba Kosos

As we've discussed, every small detail of the Seder carries deep meaning. But the real question is: how do we bring that knowledge into the heart? As the pasuk says, "*Veyadata hayom v'hasheivoso el levavecha.*"

That is the avodah of the entire night of the Seder – taking that awareness and making it part of who we are.

As Rav Pinkus explains, wine is not drunk once. Throughout the Seder we drink again and again – the *dalet kosos*. With every kos we take the knowledge the matzah gave us and draw it deeper inside ourselves.

Matzah is white – the truth is simple and clear. Wine, however, is red. There is an inyan that it should be red, because it colours that knowledge, bringing it to life. *Ki hadam hu hanefesh* – it enters the nefesh and becomes part of us.

And wine does something else. *Yayin yesamach levav enosh* – it gladdens the heart. It awakens feeling and excitement, allowing the emunah of the mind to become the emunah of the heart.

Even within the *dalet kosos* there is a progression. Kos b'kos, we rise higher and higher, until by the end of the Seder the emunah that began as knowledge has settled deep within us.

קדש – Kadesh

We begin the Seder with Kadesh – holding a cup of wine and making Kiddush. Yet, as with everything on this night, there is profound meaning beneath the surface.

The sefarim discuss the tremendous value of *Leil HaSeder* and the immense *nachas ruach* that this night brings to Hashem. The Zohar reveals that on this night Hashem gathers His entire *pamalya shel ma'alah* – His heavenly entourage – and they all descend to observe

our Seder night. We should pause and wonder: what is the immense value of our Seder? We are simple people, sitting around with some matzah and a Seder plate – how does that even compare to the awe-inspiring avodah of the malachim and serafim in the heavens above?

This is precisely what Kadesh comes to teach us.

Hashamayim shamayim la'Hashem, v'ha'aretz nasan livnei adam – the heavens are the heavens of Hashem, but the earth He gave to mankind.

The malachim are occupied all day with singing shira and serving Hashem; the heavens are a constant, bustling display of *kavod shamayim*, the most magnificent *kiddush Hashem* imaginable. We, however, live down here in a world of *gashmiyus*. We eat, we sleep, we work for our *parnasa*. Everything in this world pulls us toward the physical.

Yet that is precisely our greatness. We have the power to do what even the loftiest malachim cannot: to choose – with our free will – to take the *gashmiyus* and elevate it into *ruchniyus*.

This choice, this transformation, gives Hashem more *nachas ruach* than all the songs of the malachim and the entire *pamalya shel ma'alah* combined.

This is precisely what the first step of the Seder – Kadesh – teaches us.

We begin the night by making Kiddush. We take a cup of wine. But what is wine? In the world around us, wine represents the most physical of pleasures. It is something that can cause a person to lose his daas. Across cultures, wine is often associated with indulgence and even with people sinking to their lowest levels, used simply for physical enjoyment.

Yet on Seder night we do the exact opposite. We take that very same cup of wine – something so deeply connected with *gashmiyus* –

we hold it and make Kiddush, we exclaim *asher bachar banu*, we are *mekadesh* it. We sanctify it. We elevate it.

In that moment we declare a powerful message about what a Yid is. A Jew does not only take something spiritual and keep it spiritual. The unique mission of a Yid is something far greater – to take the physical world itself and elevate it, to transform *gashmiyus* into *ruchniyus*.

That is exactly what the entire Seder night is about. Throughout the night we will eat matzah, drink wine, recline like royalty, and enjoy a festive meal. Yet every act is infused with meaning. Every physical action becomes a doorway to something higher. The matzah becomes the bread of faith. The wine becomes the cup of redemption. The meal itself becomes a stage upon which we relive the birth of our nation.

This is the secret of the Seder.

Holiness is not only found in the *beis midrash* or within the walls of a shul. Holiness can fill a dining room table. Holiness can live within a cup of wine. Holiness can be created through the way a Jew eats, drinks, speaks, and remembers.

Kadesh therefore sets the tone for the entire night. The very first act teaches us the message of Pesach: the ability of a Jew to elevate the world.

ורחץ - Urchatz

What is the idea of *Urchatz*? We wash our hands at this point—not because we are eating bread, but because we are about to eat *Karpas* - a vegetable dipped in liquid.

In truth, although *Urchatz* is an act of preparation for *Karpas*, the seder considers it a separate step, due to its deeper significance.

As we explained, on *Leil haSeder* we seek to build the *Adam haShalem*—the complete person. We are beginning anew, step by step through the *ka'arah* and the seder, building a person filled with *emuna* and *deveikus* to Hashem.

However, before we begin to build, we must ensure that the vessel we are using is clean. We cannot hope to construct a pure, new person if we start with dirty *keilim*. Therefore, we first perform *Urchatz*. We wash our hands—not merely to physically cleanse them, but to spiritually purify ourselves as well. If done with the right *kavanah*, *Urchatz* can bring tremendous *tahara*, making us ready and prepared to embark on the journey of the seder night.

This brings us to a deep and important question: If purity and preparation are so crucial, how is it that we first begin with *Kadesh*, the first step of holiness, without first washing and purifying through *Urchatz*? Shouldn't we first cleanse and then begin to sanctify ourselves?

Here Rav Pincus reveals a tremendous *yesod*, a foundational idea of the seder night. When Klal Yisrael were in Mitzrayim, they were sunk deeply into the *mem-tes sha'arei tumah*. Had they remained even a moment longer they would have reached the fiftieth level, the point of no return. Hashem, with great mercy and speed, pulled them out *b'chipazon* before they were ready, before they could purify themselves.

This is not only history, but an ongoing reality. We are in a barren wilderness, devoid of spirituality. Yet every year on *Leil haSeder*, no matter what level a person is on, Hashem comes Himself—not through a *malach*, not through a *shaliach*—and pulls us out of our personal Mitzrayim, *b'chipazon*, with haste and love.

This is why we begin with *Kadesh* before *Urchatz*. Tonight, even before we are fully ready, Hashem lifts us up and grants us tremendous *madreigos*. Tonight is a night of *chessed*, of *chipazon*, of jumping beyond where we naturally could reach. However, after

we experience this elevation, it is upon us to follow with *Urchatz*—to wash, to cleanse, and to begin the work of internalizing and building upon the spiritual gifts we were granted.

When we wash our hands for *Urchatz*, it differs from a regular *netilas yadayim*. Here, no *bracha* is recited. However, later at *Rachtzah*, before eating the matzah, we again wash our hands, this time with a *bracha*. The reason for this is that the first washing is only a cleansing of the *keilim ha'chitzonim*, the outer vessels. At this early stage, it is still external, and thus no *bracha* is made.

But as we ascend through the seder and reach deeper levels—working with the *keilim ha'penimiyim*, the inner vessels—we require a deeper washing, accompanied by a *bracha*. (And as we will see, after *Shulchan Orech*, when we reach even greater depths, we will again wash for *mayim acharonim*, preparing ourselves for the final parts of the seder.)

כרפס – Karpas

We take a little piece of a vegetable and dip it into some saltwater and make *borei peri ha'adama* and have in mind to exempt the maror. It's a quick moment, but have you ever wondered why we do this? What's the deeper significance of Karpas? And what does it truly mean to' exempt the Marror' whilst making the bracha?

Often, we perceive *Karpas* and *Yachatz* to be merely the beginning of the seder; small rituals before we reach maggid and the main part of the seder. However, they are actually crucial components of the seder, addressing this very question. A question that, if we do not resolve, we simply cannot continue the seder.

Karpas is an act of dipping. Let us look back at the events that sent us to Mitzrayim in the first place. It was not Hashem, it was us, Klal Yisrael. We sold Yosef as a slave, sent him to Mitzrayim, eventually leading to our descent to Mitzrayim. What did we do? We took

Yosef's *kesones passim* and dipped it into blood. The *Tur* notes that the word *Karpas* is related to the phrase, "*kesones pasim*, " The *Shlah HaKadosh* similarly emphasizes that *Karpas* reminds us of Yosef's cloak.

Karpas prompts reflection on our role in exile. When we ask, "Why did Hashem allow this to happen to us?" our answer must be that it was our actions that caused it. We are like a child who has eaten too much candy and chocolate. When he sits in the dentist's chair and his teeth are being drilled, he asks the dentist, "Why did you do this to me?" And the dentist replies: "You brought it upon yourself."

Often, as we experience challenges, we wonder why Hashem has caused us to suffer. But the question we must ask ourselves is, "Is this challenge a direct consequence of my own actions?"

As we move into the seder, before we can even ask the big question, we are shown that while Hashem took us out of *galus*, we placed ourselves in it. We brought it upon ourselves; we are to blame. During *Karpas*, we are given a stark reminder of why we were sent to *galus.*

יחץ - Yachatz

In this step, we take the three matzos, remove the middle one, and split it in half. The larger half becomes the *afikoman*, which we hide away until the end of the meal, while the smaller half is returned to the seder plate. While it is true that we seek to create excitement to engage the children, there is also a profound depth to this act. We must ask: why do we break the matzah and hide a piece? What is this symbolic act truly teaching us?

On a simple level, breaking the matzah and setting aside the larger portion reflects the condition of *aniyus*—poverty. It reminds us of our time in Mitzrayim, when food was scarce and we needed to guard our meagre provisions carefully. This is indeed the essence of matza, referred to as *lechem oni*, the bread of affliction.

Later in the seder, we will point to the matza and declare, *Ha lachma anya*—this is the bread of poverty that our ancestors ate. Yet we must probe deeper. Yes, we were impoverished, but why is this the defining feature of matza? What deeper message are we conveying here at the beginning of the seder?

To understand, we must reflect on the true meaning of wealth and poverty. In our minds, a wealthy individual is someone with a padded bank account, a sprawling mansion, luxury cars, and lavish vacations. A poor person struggles to pay rent, wears worn-out clothing, and barely manages to find enough to eat.

However, *Chazal* teach us a deeper truth: *Eizehu ashir? Ha'sameach b'chelko*—who is truly rich? One who is happy with his portion. Wealth is not about possessions; it is about satisfaction. A person can own little but feel completely full, while another may possess vast fortunes yet feel an endless void inside. As Rav Dessler explains in *Michtav Me'Eliyahu*, in a sense, the wealthier a person becomes, the poorer he truly is, for the more he has, the more he desires, and the more lacking he feels. This is indeed what *Chazal* teach us: One who has a *maneh* desires two.

Yet the question remains: Hashem is *tov u'meitiv*—He is the ultimate good, who always acts for our benefit. Why, then, did He place us in a situation of *aniyus*, of lack?

The answer is hidden within a deeper understanding: it is precisely through the experience of lacking that we are brought closer to Hashem.

The *Maharal* explains that when we break the matza, the *lechem oni*, the bread of affliction, we immediately confront brokenness. We start the seder with three whole matzahs, complete and unblemished, yet within moments, one is broken. This, says the *Maharal*, symbolizes *galus*.

Yet the act of breaking the matza carries an even deeper message. The smaller half remains on the seder plate with us, while the larger half is hidden away for the *afikomen*. The *Maharal* explains that the smaller piece represents our current existence in *galus*—fragmented, incomplete, and waiting. The larger piece, hidden away, represents the *geula*, the ultimate redemption. It is not lost forever; it is hidden, waiting to be discovered.

Throughout the seder, the children search eagerly for the *afikomen*, mirroring our search for the final redemption. When we find it and eat it during *Tzafun*, we are symbolically tasting the *geula* itself. *Tzafun*—hiddenness—becomes the direction of redemption, the longing for the hidden light that will one day shine once again.

Hashem, our loving Father, has hidden the fullness of His presence not to punish us, but to stir within us the desire to seek Him out. Just as the father of the household hides the larger piece of matza with the intent that it should be found, so does Hashem hide His face, hides the *geulah*, so that we should yearn for it, cry for it, and search for it with all our hearts.

מגיד – Maggid

The Maggid is, in many ways, the very heart of the *Leil HaSeder*. This is the moment when we begin to immerse ourselves in the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* – what life in Mitzrayim was like, the terrible *avdus*, the suffering of our people, and the astonishing *nissim* that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* performed to redeem us. Here we begin fulfilling the central mitzvah of the night – *"V'higadeta l'vincha."*

The Torah itself makes it clear that the entire purpose of the miracles of Mitzrayim was that they be told over from generation to generation. The *asarah makkos*, *Kriyas Yam Suf*, and the entire unfolding of the redemption were all performed for one purpose –

וּלְמַעַן תְּסַפֵּר בְּאָזְנֵי בִנְךָ וּבֶן־בִּנְךָ אֵת אֲשֶׁר הִתְעַלַלְתִּי בְּמִצְרַיִם- "So that you will tell into the ears of your children and your grandchildren what I wrought in Mitzrayim."

The language of the *pasuk* seems strange. It does not merely say that we should speak to our children. Rather, it says *"b'oznei bincha"* – into the ears of your children.

The Ponovezher Rav asked a penetrating question. Why this unusual wording? If the Torah wished to command us to tell the story to our children, it could simply have said *"l'ma'an tesaper l'vincha"* – that you should tell your child. Why the emphasis on speaking into their ears?

The Rav explained it with a simple, powerful image.

When a father sits with his child in a quiet room, he can speak normally and the child will hear him. The atmosphere itself allows the words to travel easily from one to the other.

But imagine a different setting – a crowded chasunah hall. Music is playing, people are talking from every direction, the room is full of movement and noise. In such a place, even if the father raises his voice, the child may still not hear him. The noise swallows the words.

What must he do?

He pulls the child close and whispers directly into his ear.

The Ponovezher Rav explained that this is exactly what the Torah is teaching us when it says: *"l'ma'an tesaper b'oznei bincha."* Not merely that we should speak to our children, but that we should speak into their ears.

And therefore the Torah tells us how the *mesorah* must be given over. *B'oznei bincha* – directly into his ears, when you want to whisper something into someone ears how do you do that? your draw them close to you.

We must draw our children close. Not only physically at the Seder table, but emotionally as well. They must feel connected to us. They

must feel that what we are talking to them, and we are deeply connected to them. Only when that closeness exists can the words truly enter their ears.

Then the father can lean toward his child and quietly pass on the greatest treasure we possess – the *mesorah* that we received from those before us. The story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. The story of how Hashem took us out, chose us, and made us His people. - And through that closeness, the chain continues – from generation to generation.

The Chida would say: "If we, as parents, want our children to be inspired by Torah and all it represents, it can only happen if we ourselves are burning with passion!"

This answers our question above: how do we transmit *emunah* to our children and grandchildren? The answer lies in our own enthusiasm – by igniting within ourselves a deep understanding of what transpired, preparing in advance, and fully grasping the significance of this extraordinary night and *Yom Tov*. When we invest in this preparation, we will arrive at the Seder table ablaze with inspiration, passing that fire to the next generation and ensuring the eternal transmission of our faith.

רחצה - Rachtzah



Following Maggid, we enter a new stage of the Seder, one that the sefarim call *ha'avoda b'keilim haPnimiyim*—the inner vessels. Until now, much of our focus was on the external framework—the stories, the words, the retelling. But now we begin to internalize. It is no longer about speaking about freedom and emuna—it's about tasting it, living it, becoming

it. The matza, the maror, the korech, and even the meal—*Shulchan Orech*—are not mere customs or history; they are deep, spiritual engagements that awaken and elevate the inner soul.

The Arizal explains that the first washing, Urchatz, was a necessary beginning, but it only purified the outer layer. It was done without a bracha, for the external preparation does not yet touch the innermost essence. But now, as we approach Rachtzah, we return to wash again—but this time with a bracha, for this is the washing of *keilim ha'pnimiyim*. This is the washing of the soul's hands, the vessels of action, preparing us to not just eat the *nahama d'mehemnusa*—the bread of faith—but to absorb it into every fibre of our being.

What is the significance of washing? And why specifically the hands?

The Zohar reveals that our hands represent our actions, our power to impact the world. They are the tools we use to build, to give, to change, to sanctify. They are also the most exposed to corruption and misuse. If the vessels of action are unclean, the divine *hashpa'a* cannot flow. But when we wash, we purify. The Arizal explains that washing the hands is a *tikun*—a correction and elevation. It aligns our physical deeds with spiritual truth. It is not just our hands we wash, but all of our faculties. The hands are the gateway to the entire body; when they are clean, the rest follows.

A pure heart follows clean hands. When our actions are holy, our hearts naturally yearn for Hashem.

This is what Urchatz and Rachtzah are all about. Let us wash our hands—but not just our hands; let us cleanse all of our deeds, come in clean, and with that come through with a clean heart and achieve wonders.

מוֹציא מצה

With our hands washed and our hearts realigned, we are now ready to take part in the next stage of the Seder – eating matzah, a *mitzvah min haTorah*.



This is not merely a symbolic act.

The *Chasam Sofer* explains that in the times of the *Beis HaMikdash* we merited many mitzvos that actually entered the body and became part of the person himself – eating *kadshim*, the *Korban Pesach*, *terumos*, and other sacred foods. These mitzvos were not only performed externally; they were internalized. One physically absorbed the mitzvah.

Today, however, without the Beis HaMikdash, we barely have these opportunities. We perform many mitzvos, but most remain external acts – done with the body but not literally taken into the body.

But on this night, everything changes. On *Leil HaSeder*, we are granted a rare and extraordinary gift: the mitzvah of eating matzah. This is a moment when a mitzvah itself becomes part of us.

Normally, as we go through life, we do not feel Hashem's presence in a tangible way. We live, breathe, and move without sensing the constant flow of life being given to us by Hashem. But in truth, Hashem is giving us life every single moment.

How can a person experience this more clearly? - Through eating.

Eating is one of the clearest ways a person can feel that life is being granted to him from Above. When someone goes without food for a day or two, he begins to feel weak. His strength fades. Life itself seems to drain from him.

What does he do? - He eats.

Suddenly strength returns. Energy flows back into his body. In a very real sense, he experiences life returning to him. In that moment, he is actually feeling the life that Hashem is giving him.

This is why eating can be such a powerful spiritual experience – when we pause and recognize what is truly happening.

Which food most fundamentally sustains life?

Chazal teach that grain holds a unique role. The *Pnei Yehoshua* explains that the *Eitz HaDaas* from which Adam ate was wheat. Why wheat? Because grain grants a person *daas*.

Chazal say: *ein ha'tinok yodea likros abba v'imah ad she'yit'om ta'am dagan* – a child does not begin to recognize and call "father" and "mother" until he has tasted grain. Grain nourishes the mind.

In truth, fruits, vegetables, meat, fish – all are beneficial and nutritious, but they are not the most basic sustenance of life. The most fundamental food is far simpler: flour and water. The basic bread that sustains existence. - That is matzah.

On *Leil HaSeder*, when we seek to absorb the *nahama d'meheimnusa* – the bread of faith – we take the purest form of sustenance. Nothing complicated. Nothing inflated. Just flour and water.

Through this simplicity we internalize something profound. We are not merely eating a food. We are absorbing *daas* and *emunah*.

When we eat matzah properly, with awareness and intention, we are not just fulfilling a mitzvah externally. We are literally taking faith into ourselves. We are internalizing the knowledge of Hashem.

Eating matzah is a moment when we take the most fundamental sustenance – flour and water – and transform it into a vehicle for *daas* and *emunah*. Through this mitzvah we quite literally absorb the awareness of Hashem into ourselves.

מרור – Maror



This may be one of the most challenging mitzvos of the night. We take bitter herbs and eat them. However, precisely in that bitterness lies one of the most powerful tools for the *avodah* of the Seder.

Tonight we are commanded: *chayav adam liros es atzmo k'ilu hu yatza miMitzrayim* – every person must see himself as if he personally left Mitzrayim. But to truly feel the joy of redemption, one must first taste, even faintly, the bitterness of the bondage.

That is not easy. None of us stood in Mitzrayim. Most of us have never experienced anything remotely close to the crushing slavery, the relentless labor, and the deep suffering that Klal Yisrael endured there.

For a brief moment we willingly accept bitterness and discomfort. The sharp taste is meant to linger – it is meant to be felt. Each person takes an amount that still carries that sting, a reminder that the slavery of Mitzrayim was not an idea or a story, but a painful reality.

Through this small act we begin to sense, however faintly, what our ancestors endured. The bitterness awakens the heart. It allows the suffering of Mitzrayim to become a little more real to us. And once the bitterness becomes real, the redemption becomes real as well.

Because when we touch that bitterness, even for a moment, our gratitude for *Yetzias Mitzrayim* becomes deeper, more alive, and more heartfelt – and the story of the night becomes our own.

כורך - Korech



This is the moment when we take the *maror* and place it inside the *matzah*, eating them together like a sandwich. On the surface, it may appear that we are simply eating another *kezayis* of matzah. But in truth, there is something very special about this matzah.

We are not taking just any piece. We take the *third matzah* – the matzah that represents Yisrael.

Yet there is something even deeper hidden within this.

As we explained earlier, *matzah* represents *daas*. The *Zohar* calls *matzah nahama d'mehemnusa* – the bread of faith. When we eat matzah on the night of the Seder, we are not merely fulfilling a ritual command. We are absorbing *emunah*. We are allowing the awareness of Hashem to enter into us.

Earlier in the Seder, we ate the first *kezayis* of matzah. That was the central mitzvah of the night – a *mitzvah from the Torah itself*. By comparison, *Korech* is only *zecher laMikdash k'Hillel* – a remembrance of the practice in the time of the Beis HaMikdash, instituted by the sages.

If so, it would seem that this moment is of lesser significance.

However, Rav Shimshon Pincus offers a beautiful insight that reveals something very profound. He offers a simple *mashal*.

Imagine a father who asks his child for a cup of water. The child goes to the kitchen and returns not with water, but with a warm, carefully prepared cup of coffee – made exactly the way he knows his father loves it.

The father would be deeply moved.

The child did not have to do this. It was not what the father asked for. But precisely for that reason, it reveals something much deeper. It shows thoughtfulness. It shows love. It shows a desire to give more than what was required.

That is the meaning of *Korech*.

The mitzvah of matzah itself is magnificent. It is a command from the Torah, something we must do.

But *Korech* represents something different. It represents the moment when we move beyond obligation.

It is the moment when we embrace the words of the sages – the *divrei sofrim* – and say: *Ribbono shel Olam, we want to do more.*

We do not want to suffice with the minimum that is required. We want to come closer. We want to add something of ourselves.

Korech is that cup of coffee. It is the expression of a relationship that is not built only on duty, but on love.

שולחן עורך - *Shulchan Orech*

Shulchan Orech is the moment when we celebrate the *simchas Yom Tov* of the night through the seudah. Yet something remarkable is happening. Consider this: we are eating this meal in the middle of *Hallel*! We began *Hallel* earlier in the seder, before washing for the matzah and the meal, and we will continue *Hallel* again right after *bentching*.

Why place a full meal in the middle of praising Hashem?

The Baal HaHaggadah is teaching us a profound idea – one that we already began to see at *Kadesh*. Being a Yid is not about escaping the physical world. True holiness is not found only in separating from *gashmiyus*, but in elevating it. A Yid has the ability to take ordinary physical actions and transform them into *avodas Hashem*.

A Shabbos meal is not just a matter of eating. A Yom Tov seudah is not just celebration. When it is filled with *divrei Torah*, songs of praise, and gratitude to Hashem, the meal itself becomes holy.

That is why the Seder is structured this way. On *Leil HaSeder*, the eating itself becomes part of the *Hallel*. Through a joyful seudah we show Hashem how grateful we are to be His people and how deeply we celebrate the redemption of Pesach.

Therefore, when we reach this stage of the Seder, we do not step away from the holiness of the night. On the contrary, we continue it. We use the table to sing praise to Hashem, to share *divrei Torah*, and to elevate even the physical act of eating. In this way we sanctify not only the *ruchniyus*, but the *gashmiyus* as well – continuing the great *avodah* of this extraordinary night.

צפון – Tzafun

We have been sent deep into *galus*. We have a deep relationship with Hashem, yet we have been sent far away. We will be distant, yet we wish to ensure that regardless of how far we are, we will not forget Hashem—we will not forget our relationship. And we will always yearn, look, and search for Hashem and the rebuilding of this relationship.

Therefore, during *Yachatz*, we break the matzah. We keep half for ourselves, but the other half is hidden. This is the *Afikoman*, which represents the *korban Pesach* that we will have upon the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash.

We yearn for the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash and search the whole house in hopes of finding the "other part of the relationship." More importantly, we make sure not to eat too much during *Shulchan Orech*—we must have an appetite, a desire for this piece of matza. After all, this is our "other part."

Eating the *Afikoman* is a special moment. *Tzafun* represents the *geula ha'asidah* for which we so yearn. And when we eat the matza,

we are moving forward into the moment of reconnection, of rebuilding our relationship, of returning to the Beis Hamikdash, and eating the *korban Pesach*.

ברך – Barech

Throughout the year we bench after our meals. If we are honest with ourselves, we probably wish that our bentching looked different. How often do we think about saying *Birchas HaMazon* more slowly, with more *kavana*, with a deeper sense of gratitude? After all, it is a *mitzvah min haTorah*.

Tonight, however, something profound is happening.

At first glance, the bentching seems no different from any other night of the year. We recite the same words we say every day, perhaps adding *Yaaleh Veyavo*. But in truth, tonight is entirely different. As we have been discovering throughout the Seder, this is the night when Klal Yisrael was born. The foundations of the entire year are being laid tonight.

And that means that this bentching is not just another bentching. It is the beginning. It is the seed from which all the *Birchas HaMazon* of the coming year will grow.

After eating the matzah and celebrating the joyous *Shulchan Orech*, we pause and turn to Hashem in gratitude. This is the moment to bench slowly, carefully, with thought and feeling – paying attention to every word and truly recognizing the kindness Hashem constantly showers upon us.

In fact, tonight is the perfect time to reflect honestly on our bentching throughout the year and to make a small but meaningful commitment to improve it.

Some of the great *baalei mussar* adopted a simple yet powerful practice. They understood that bentching is often rushed. Therefore, they accepted upon themselves that from the moment they began bentching, they would not leave their place for at least

five minutes. Even if they finished earlier, they remained seated until the time had passed. In this way, bentching could never become hurried – it would always be said calmly, with focus and gratitude.

Another small but powerful step is to commit to benching from a *bencher*. Instead of relying on memory or rushing through the words, we take the *bencher* in our hands and read the words carefully, allowing them to guide our thoughts. This simple act alone can transform bentching, helping us slow down and connect more deeply to the words we are saying.

Tonight gives us a unique opportunity. As the foundations of the year are being laid, we can begin shaping what our bentching will look like going forward – not rushed and mechanical, but thoughtful, grateful, and filled with *kavana*.

הלל – Hallel

A large part of the night of *Leil HaSeder* is not just knowing that Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim but feeling the gratitude for that redemption. The entire Seder is designed to awaken that feeling within us. And when gratitude fills the heart, it cannot remain quiet – it bursts forth in song, praise, and thanksgiving. That moment is Hallel.

Many people, when they finally reach Hallel, are already exhausted. After the long night, they rush through it quickly. But this is a great mistake. - Hallel is the climax of the Seder.

Everything we have done until now has been leading to this point.

Matzah opens our understanding and fills us with the emunah of the night. Korech carries its own deep avodah. Shulchan Orech restores our strength and joy. But what is the goal of it all? What is the moment the entire Seder is building toward?

Hallel.

This is when the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* turns into living praise. What we have spoken about all night now becomes song to Hashem, said slowly and thoughtfully, word by word.

The *Maharal*, quoting *Rav Hai Gaon*, explains that the Hallel of the Seder night is different from the Hallel of the other mo'adim. On other days, Hallel is recited as praise. But on this night, it is *shirah* – song to Hashem.

Because of this, the halachah requires real *kavanah*. If a person simply rushes through the words without thinking about what he is saying, he has not truly fulfilled the unique Hallel of this night.

And therefore, even if we are tired, we must gather our strength for this moment. The entire Seder has brought us here.

Now is the time to lift our voices, sing slowly, and thank Hashem from the depths of our hearts – for the redemption of the past, and for the countless salvations He continues to perform for us every day.

נרצה – Nirtzah

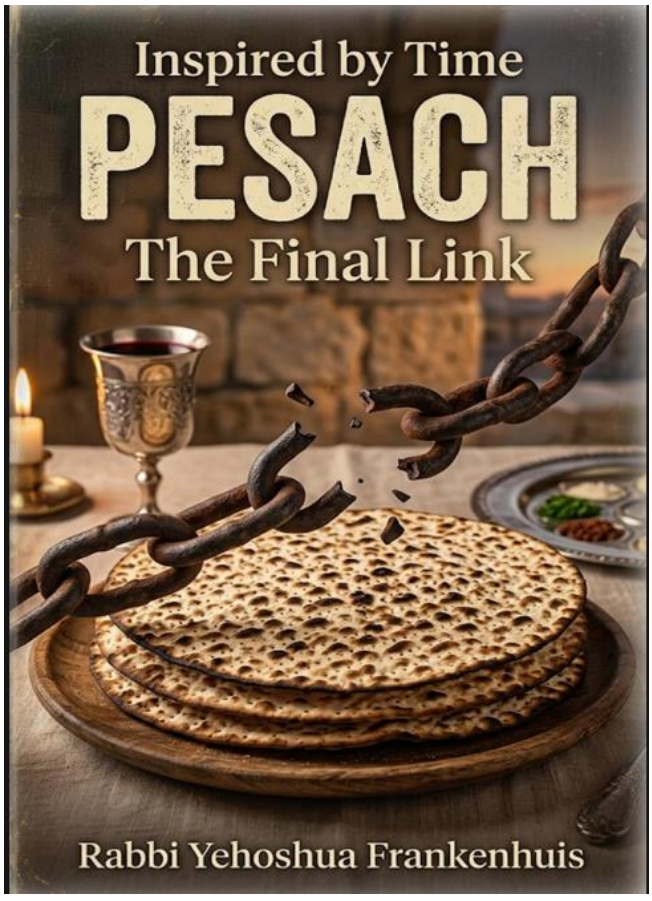
On Leil HaSeder we are building a connection to Hashem in the greatest possible way. We do so by eating – by imbibing life. However, we do not just eat any food. We specifically ingest matzah which is composed of plain flour and water, and which did not even have time to ferment or incorporate any flavour or taste. This represents the essence of life in its purest form. By imbibing that, we feel life and connect to Hashem in the purest fashion.

Throughout Leil HaSeder we fulfil many mitzvos, some *min haTorah* and some *mi'd'rabanan*. However, at the very end of the Seder, after *Nirzah*, when essentially we can all go to sleep – that is when the greatest love and deepest intimacy is present.

There is no *mekor*, neither in *nigleh* nor in *nistar*, for the minhag of reciting *Shir HaShirim* at the end of Leil HaSeder. Rather this is a spontaneous act following a wonderful and great night of connection,

ahavah and *dveikus*, when we simply cannot get enough of Hashem. Rather than drop off to sleep, we grab hold of Him, embrace Him, sing out from a place deep, deep within, "**יִשָּׁקֵנִי מִנְּשִׁיקוֹת פִּיהוּ כִּי טוֹבִים דֹּדֶיךָ מִיָּיִן**". And while kissing Hashem, we receive a kiss in return.





The Voice of the Bird

Let us share a beautiful mashal related by Rabbi Hool, that is both profoundly insightful and beautifully simple:

Deep within the jungle, a commotion stirred. The animals were arguing; each claimed to have the loudest voice, yet no agreement could be reached. It was decided to hold a competition to see which creature could project its voice the farthest. Judges were stationed every 100 meters, stretching across several kilometers, prepared to measure each call.

The hyena stepped up first, bursting with enthusiasm, and let out a wild, piercing scream that echoed for a full kilometer—an impressive start! Next came the elephant, firmly planted, who bellowed a deep,

thunderous sound. The judges reported his call had travelled two kilometers—a tremendous performance!

One after another, many animals tried their luck, each reaching impressive distances, some even spanning several kilometers. Finally, the king of the jungle, the lion, stepped up to take his turn. With confidence and majestic poise, he let out a mighty roar that reverberated through the forest.

After a tense pause, the judges announced the final measurement: eight kilometers! Everyone was convinced the lion had won. The other contestants resentfully withdrew, ready to present the trophy to him.

But then, a small voice was heard—the dove stepped onto the stage. The judges chuckled. "You think you can outdo the lion?"

"Try me," said the dove with a twinkle in its eye. Fair is fair; the judges allowed him to compete. The little bird chirped—a soft, almost inaudible sound that carried just 200 meters. But then, another dove heard the chirp and echoed it. Then another, and another. Like ripples across still water, the message spread farther and farther, until it reached the very end of the jungle.

The pasuk tells us: the reason Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim, the reason He brought all the miraculous makos upon Egypt, was **לְמַעַן תְּסַפֵּר בְּאָזְנֵי בִנְךָ וּבֶן בִּנְךָ** - so that you relate into the ears of your children and grandchildren that which Hashem did in Mitzrayim.

Hashem did not bring the makos for the loud, thunderous noises they would make, nor to impress the nations with mighty displays. The purpose was to create a quiet whisper from parent to child, from generation to generation. That is the sound that carries through the ages.

A Vital Link in the Eternal Chain

When we sit down to our Seder, it may seem to us to be a modest and simple act. We may wonder: what real impact does this night

have? But we must realize that the soft voice of וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ - the voice of recounting what we learned from our parents and passing it on to our children, which will then be passed on to the next generation—is the strongest, most enduring voice of all.

By sharing the mesorah of our ancestors and recounting the emunah instilled in us by generations past, we become a vital link in the eternal chain. Through our words, the message carries louder and farther than any roar, reaching all the way to the final generation, preparing the world for the coming of Mashiach.

This is the power of our voice on leil HaSeder.



Living Kiddush Hashem FOUNDATION מקדשי שמך

Proof and Truth in a Bottle of Liquor

In the 1950s, **Rav Moshe Sternbuch** served as a rav in Johannesburg, leaving a deep impression on the community. In his Haggadah, he shares the following story:

Each year in his Shabbos HaGadol derashah, Rav Sternbuch emphasized that mechiras chametz is not a mere formality. The chametz is genuinely sold to a non-Jew on credit, and while the buyer usually sells it back after Pesach, he has the legal right to keep it if he pays its full value, minus a small agreed-upon percentage. - Rav Sternbuch stressed that this transaction is legally binding, even under secular law.

One year, this teaching was put to the test. On the first day of Pesach, the non-Jew who had purchased the community's chametz approached Rav Sternbuch and requested to take possession of what he had bought.

"No problem," the Rav told him calmly. "You simply need to pay for it, minus the two percent."

Since Rav Sternbuch himself did not sell actual chametz or even mixtures containing chametz, the man found nothing to take from his home and left.

When the Rav arrived at shul, he heard that the man had gone from house to house, list in hand, visiting those who had sold him their chametz. At each door, he requested alcoholic beverages. And at each home, he received the same response:

"Of course. Just pay the value, minus two percent."

He took the liquor, promising to settle the payment after Yom Tov.

Rav Sternbuch was pleased. His words had clearly been taken seriously. - But then, to his surprise, the man returned.

This time, he came with an entirely different shocking request. He wanted to convert to Judaism!

He explained that he was married to a Jewish woman. Though she was not observant, she had insisted before Pesach on selling her chametz properly. When she suggested selling it to him, he laughed it off.

"It's all a game," he told her. "The Jews pretend to sell, and then pretend to buy it back."

His wife strongly disagreed.

"They mean it," she insisted. "They sell it so they won't transgress owning chametz on Pesach."

"I'll prove it," he said. "I'll go ask for their liquor. You'll see they won't give it to me."

But when he went and saw, with his own eyes, that people readily allowed him to take their valuable bottles without hesitation, he was stunned. To him, this was no game. It was real. It was a true sacrifice. It was mesirus nefesh.

And that, he said, is what moved him to want to become a Jew.

Rav Sternbuch attempted to dissuade him from converting in order to check his sincerity. He explained that Judaism demands far more than giving up liquor. It is an all-encompassing way of life, requiring deep commitment and transformation.

But the man remained resolute.

Seeing his sincerity, Rav Sternbuch made one request: that he delay the conversion until after Pesach, so as not to create complex halachic issues for the community's chametz.

Being completely loyal servants of Hashem, reflecting His will in the world, is the essence of Pesach. It is what defines us as a nation of mekadshei Hashem.



Rabbi Paysach Krohn – Project Mesorah

A good Erev Yomtov to all my listeners. This is your friend Rabbi Paysach Krohn speaking to you, Erev Yomtov, and I would like to tell you something fascinating.

The very first word that the father says to the child who asks the מַה נִּשְׁתַּנָּה is the word עֲבָדִים as we say in עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ.

I once heard that if you look at the word עֲבָדִים you will see the letters spell out - דָּוִד בֶּן יִשַׁי עַבְדְּךָ מְשִׁיחֶךָ

[Interestingly, the Gematria דוד is 14. Yishai was the 14th generation from Avraham. This number is often linked to the "hand" (*Yad* = 14) of Hashem working through history.]

And that comes to show us that sometimes there's a hidden illusion or a hidden hint to the ultimate redemption when something happens difficult or bad.

And so therefore we should never lose ourselves if we have emunah in Hashem that the thing that had to happen happened and it's good that could come out of it.

A person in St. Louis Missouri told me happened to him. He was this Sephardi Jew and he was one of the founders of the 'Shaar Ha'shamayim shul' in St. Louis and he told me that one time he was coming home from shul on Shabbos morning and unfortunately he was hit by a car and he ended up in the hospital and he was able to be healed except for his knee. His knee had to be replaced, and they had to put in metal plates and steel bars.

He told me he was a businessman so every time he travelled it was such a pain in the neck for him or I should say pain in the knee, because the detectors at security had always rang up those metal plates and bars that were in his knee and he was always delayed because of that.

And he told me that many times he would ask Hashem, 'If you allowed me to heal my whole body why didn't you allow my knee to heal?'

And he told me that one day he found out the answer, and you could look it up it was on May 23rd 2004, he was in France at Charles de Gaulle airport which had just been remodelled and refixed.

He said that he was going through security and of course his knee set off the detectors because of the metal plates and the steel bars and all of a sudden as they were checking him about 10 feet in front of him there was a tremendous crash of tons of cement that came down from the ceiling.

Obviously, when they repaired the airport, that piece of chunk of concrete from the ceiling was loose and it came down and it crushed and killed the people that were right in front of him!

And he told me that he was saved only because of those steel plates. Because he was off to the side.

So here he had a terrible thing. He had that accident. But because of that accident and those metal plates, that's why his life was saved.

So we should never give up and never be despondent of something that we think is bad happens.

Just like in עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ we were in slavery, and that was terrible. But still, it stood for דָּוִד בֶּן יִשַׁי עַבְדְּךָ מְשִׁיחֶךָ, because that was the beginning of Klal Yisrael's redemption and becoming a nation of Hashem. And then eventually that led to the Geula. And that's going to lead to the Geula of Moshiach, which will happen in our time.

And may this Yomtov be the Yomtov of Geulah for all of us. And next year we'll be able to meet all together in Eretz Yisrael.

Chol HaMoed — A Time Not to Be Taken Lightly

Adapted from Pele Yoetz

Chazal teach that one who treats *Chol HaMoed* like an ordinary weekday risks forfeiting his share in the World to Come. This refers to conducting oneself as on a weekday—whether through unnecessary work or by failing to honor the day in eating and conduct.

These are matters people often take lightly, yet their seriousness is profound. Because certain labors are permitted on *Chol HaMoed*, many mistakenly assume that all work is allowed, without seeking to understand the halachah. This leads to further decline—becoming absorbed in business or distractions, allowing the day to pass without proper meals or any sense of its sanctity.

One who is mindful of his soul should take care to learn what is permitted and what is forbidden, and conduct himself accordingly. He should also elevate the day through more dignified eating and drinking, clearly distinguishing between the holy and the mundane.

Chazal further teach that Shabbos and Yom Tov were given for engagement in Torah. *Chol HaMoed* serves as a test of this ideal. Those who claim they are too burdened with livelihood to learn are

challenged by these days, when such pressures are diminished. One who uses this time properly—turning from idleness to Torah—earns merit even for times when he is occupied with work.

A person should be especially mindful during these **ימים** of judgment: on Pesach, the world is judged for grain; on Sukkos, for water, with the final sealing on Hoshana Rabbah. At such a time, when one's deeds are weighed, it is fitting to strengthen oneself and add even a single mitzvah.

For one who reflects, this is message enough: ***Chol HaMoed is not merely a break from routine—it is an opportunity for elevation***.

During his long imprisonment in the Soviet Gulag, **Reb Mendel Futerfas *zt"l***, a legendary *Chabad* figure known for his unwavering faith and resilience, was occasionally allowed to receive packages from his family and friends in London. These parcels were lifelines, containing basic necessities, clothing, and non-perishable food. However, his family had to be extremely cautious. They could not include any religious objects, like a *tallis* or *tefillin*, because doing so would not only result in immediate confiscation but would also compromise Reb Mendel's safety by marking him as a religious subversive.

As the *Yom Tov* of *Pesach* arrived one year, Reb Mendel hoped dearly that a package might arrive containing some *matza* with which to sustain him over the eight-day period. Since *matza* is technically a food item, he prayed his jailers would view it as mere crackers and allow it through, enabling him to fulfil one of the most important *mitzvos* of the year.

Unfortunately, sundown of the first night of *Pesach* arrived - but no package arrived. It was a crushing blow for Reb Mendel. Bread was his staple food, and *chametz* - leavened bread, is strictly forbidden on *Pesach*. Therefore, Reb Mendel was left with almost nothing to

eat for the duration of the holiday. He spent the eight days of the festival surviving on nothing but water and small cubes of sugar, hovering on the verge of starvation and collapse.

The day after *Pesach* ended, Reb Mendel was suddenly called to the warden's office. There, the guards handed him a package. When he opened it, he found exactly what he had prayed for: it was *matza*. He saw the guards laughing at him and the warden beamed with a self-satisfied smile - and he knew right away. It became immediately clear that the prison authorities had received the package well before the holiday began but had deliberately withheld it, specifically to deny him the spiritual and physical sustenance of the Jewish commandments he held so dear.

Driven by intense hunger after over a week of fasting, Reb Mendel tore into the package and began to devour the *matza*. This caused the guards to double down with glee as crumbs stuck in his beard and on his clothes like wood shavings on a newly trimmed piece of furniture.

But almost as soon as he started, Reb Mendel stopped himself. With incredible self-discipline, he took the remaining pieces, wrapped them carefully in paper, and tucked them into his pocket.

Looking at the surprised guards who had stopped laughing at this point, he spoke softly, mostly to himself: "I can use this next year on the first day of *Pesach*."

Even in the depths of the Gulag, having just been tortured by hunger and psychological cruelty, his first thought was not for his current comfort, but for the assurance that he would be serve *Hashem* properly when the holiday returned a year later.

"The Seder is not about saying over the Haggadah—it is about reliving it." ~ Rav Shlomo Wolbe.

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

An unusual situation was once presented in the *Beis Din* of **R' Yaakov Reischer *zt"l***, the **"Shvus Yaakov."** A Jewish man married a non-Jewish woman, r'l. As if this wasn't bad enough, he came to the rabbi a few days before *Pesach* with an important *halachic* query. He explained that although his wife is a non-Jew, he himself is a practicing, religious Jew, and aside from the fact that he is married to a gentile, he is careful to keep the *Torah* and *mitzvos* in every other way.

The *dayanim* looked at him with shock and unmitigated surprise, but the man was undeterred. He turned to the sitting judges and presented his case to the esteemed rabbinate: are the *chametz* products that his gentile wife purchased over *Pesach* permitted to him immediately after the holiday as they belonged to a non-Jew during *Pesach;* or perhaps they are forbidden to him because the *Talmud* states that whatever belongs to a wife belongs to her husband, and therefore, her *chametz* falls under the category of forbidden *chametz* that was in the possession of a Jew during *Yom Tov*?

The words dropped like stones. One *dayan's* face drained of colour. Another shifted uncomfortably. A third stared at the table, stunned. It was not merely a *halachic* problem - it was a spiritual tragedy. But R' Yaakov maintained his composure.

He conferred with his colleagues for a few minutes. Then he called an attendant and asked for a *sefer*. He opened the *sefer* entitled, "*Shvus Yaakov*" and turned a few pages. He read through a number of paragraphs and then he looked up satisfied.

Turning to the questioner, he spoke with measured clarity. "In *halacha*," he said, "the rule that a husband acquires what his wife acquires applies only within a Jewish marriage." He then quoted the principle exactly as he wrote it in his *teshuvah*: - "*This rule, that*

whatever a woman acquires her husband acquires, applies only to a Jewish woman." He explained that the halachic mechanism of a husband's rights over his wife's property exists only when the marriage itself is *halachically* recognized. A gentile woman, however, is not considered a wife in Jewish law.

Thus, he continued, again using the language preserved in his written ruling: *"But regarding a gentile woman - the husband has no rights whatsoever in her acquisitions."* - The man listened intently, absorbing every word.

R' Yaakov concluded reading with the words: *"Therefore, her chametz is like the chametz of any gentile."* The ruling was complete. The *chametz* was permitted to him after *Pesach*!

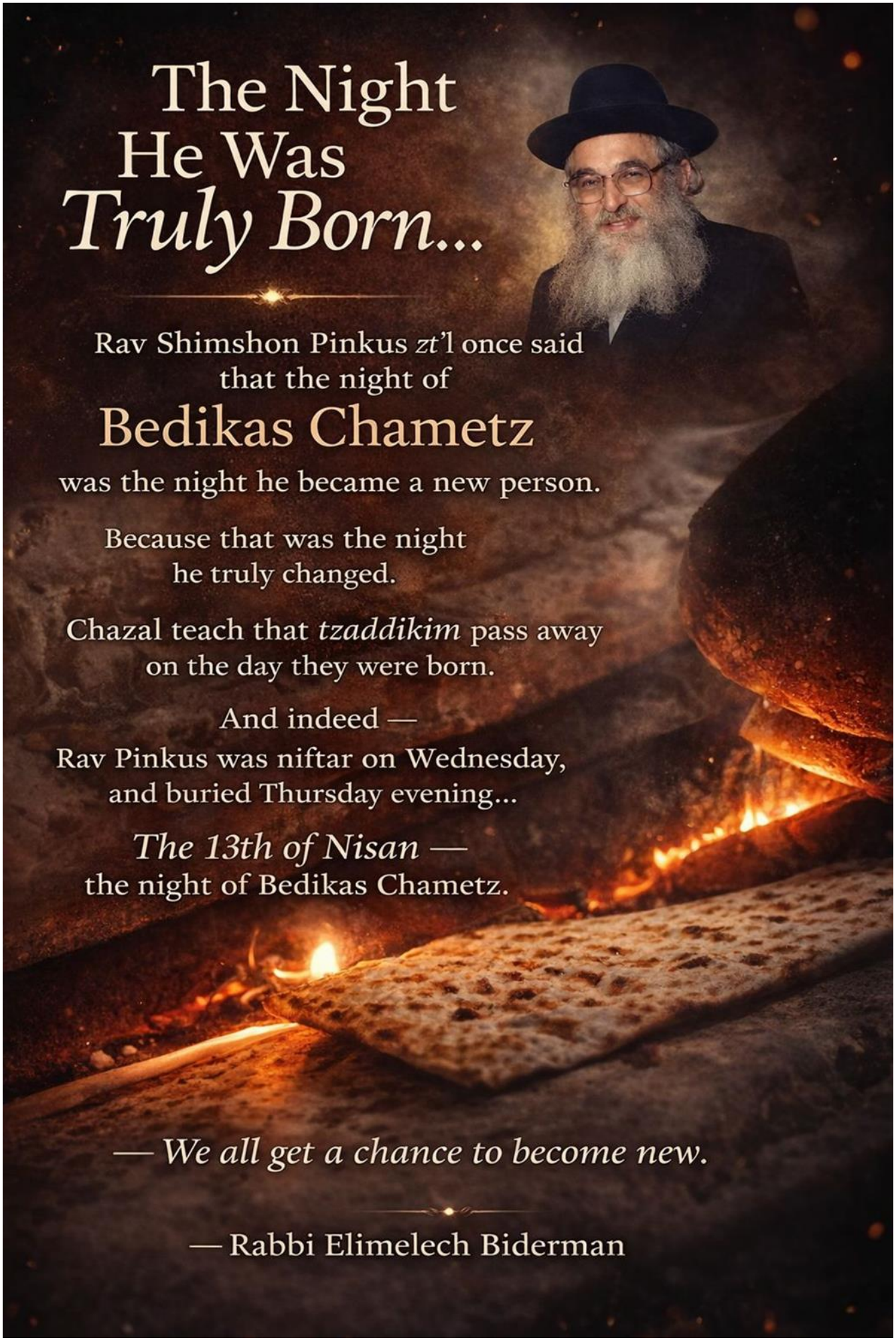
The man thanked the *Rav* with relief and left the *Beis Din*. Only after the door closed did the tension in the room break.

One of the *dayanim* turned to R' Yaakov, his voice trembling. "*Rebbe*, please teach us. How could you answer him so calmly? A Jew married to a non-Jew - and he asks about *chametz*?"

R' Yaakov closed the *sefer* gently. Looking around at the quizzical looks on every face in the room, he declared in a soft tone, "If this man still cares enough to ask a *sh'eilah* about *chametz*," he said with conviction, "then a spark of *Yiddishkeit* still burns within him. If we push him away now, we may extinguish it forever." - The *dayanim* fell silent.

This story was retold in later generations and according to one accepted version, that spark did not go out. The man eventually returned - not with another *halachic* question, but with a heart seeking *teshuva* and repentance.

The *Rav's* calmness, his refusal to shame him, had opened a door. In time, he separated from the gentile woman and returned to *Torah*.


The Night
He Was
Truly Born...
Rav Shimshon Pinkus zt'l once said
that the night of
Bedikas Chametz
was the night he became a new person.
Because that was the night
he truly changed.
Chazal teach that tzaddikim pass away
on the day they were born.
And indeed —
Rav Pinkus was niftar on Wednesday,
and buried Thursday evening...
The 13th of Nisan —
the night of Bedikas Chametz.
— We all get a chance to become new.
— Rabbi Elimelech Biderman

Rabbi Jeremy Golker

A Short idea: Pesach, Matzah, and Morar. That's one of the centerpieces of this whole Seder. The question that is often asked is that the order seems out of place. Pesach, Matzah, and Morar, what should the order be?

Well, presumably Morar comes first because that was the persecution, the Shibbud. Then you have the Korban Pesach, and then you have Matzah. So it seems strange that the Morar is at the end. Why is the order so?



So, I once had the following answer, and I'm sure there's plenty of answers to this question, but I just want to share a simple answer. But I think it's actually very important. Maybe you remember him. There was a fellow here in this community called Dr. Max (Meir) Glatt. He davened in Hendon Adass. Dr Glatt (1912–2002) was a pioneering German-British psychiatrist and addiction expert who revolutionized the treatment of alcoholism and drug dependency in the United Kingdom. - He grew up in Germany.

After earning his medical degree in Leipzig in 1936, he fled Nazi Germany following the 1938 November pogrom. In Britain, he was initially interned as an "enemy alien" and sent to Australia.

Born into a Jewish family in Berlin, Glatt survived the Dachau concentration camp before being allowed to settle in England in 1942.

Deeply religious and an Orthodox Jew, Glatt often attributed his compassion for "underdogs" and addicts to his own experiences as a refugee. He is widely credited with shifting medical and social

attitudes by treating addiction as a manageable disease rather than a moral failure. He worked until shortly before his death at age 90.

And I was aware of this story that I'm going to share with you in a minute, but it was fascinating because when I went to be menachem avel, his son, Julian Glatt, this is at the Shiva, I forget how long ago, 20-odd years ago. On my way to the Shiva, I made a sort of a mental note. I must ask Julian this story about this incident. And as I got there, just literally as I walked through the door, he was just about to begin telling this story. So it was very bashert. But this is the story he told:

And there are other people also involved in this incident. Rebetzin Rabi, whose late husband, was the Rosh Yeshiva here in Golders Green. There were others on this boat as well.

Dr. Glatt was a young medical student in Germany.

He grew up in the 1910s, 20s, and when he became a doctor in the 1930s, he realized that the writing is on the wall, that there's limitations to how they're going to allow him to practice as a Jewish doctor. And eventually, in the late 1930s, he came to England. War broke out, and as a German citizen, he was considered an enemy alien. And it was wartime.

The British deported many enemy aliens, German citizens, for fear of them having a harmful effect on the country. They often deported them to Australia, part of the empire.

And he gets on a boat, and they're only allowed one suitcase each. So imagine, he's very bitter. He's finally, you know, he's escaped Germany. He's restarting his life in Britain. He'd begun to do so to the degree of success, and then he's deported to Australia. And you're only allowed one suitcase, your whole life packed in one suitcase. What do you take already? Some items of clothing, your tefillin, some memories from home.

It's a long trip, and after several weeks at sea, they're getting close to Australia. But the ship is manned by British soldiers, and they're deporting enemy aliens. It's wartime, it's tense.

There was some altercation between the German civilians who were on the boat and the British guards, (soldiers). And for whatever the infringement was, the British officers told the German civilians to bring their suitcases up onto the deck. And as a punishment, they had to throw their suitcases overboard. - And for him, that was the salt in the wound. His whole life is now being thrown overboard.

A short while later, they get to Australia and eventually Dr. Glatt makes his way back to England. The war ends, he builds a life for himself, and he becomes a very accomplished doctor. In the 1960s, he's traveling, he's lecturing a lot and he finds himself in Europe somewhere lecturing.

And he's at a conference where he's lecturing, and he's also listening to lectures. At one point, he's in the audience listening to some lectures. And in front of him, he overhears a conversation between two doctors. The conversation is in German. He, of course, understands it. It is his mother tongue. And one doctor is saying to the other doctor, so tell me, where were you in the war? Which is a very intriguing question. - Dr. Glatt's ears prick up.

And one of them starts telling his story. He says he was a U-boat officer, and they would patrol the line from Britain to Australia. And they were talking about it, and he said, you know, I remember one time, there was a boat, a British boat, coming to Australia, and we were about to go out and send our guns onto it and attack it. But then all of a sudden, these cases came overboard.

It was a bit strange. So, our officer told us that we should send divers out to see what this was all about. They retrieved some suitcases. They opened them up. They realized there's some German literature. They realized they're deporting German citizens. We held back our fire. We let the German citizens disembark. And then

as the boat left port and headed back to Britain, we destroyed the ship. - And this is documented.

Dr. Glatt realized that was his boat! The salt in the wounds actually became the very thing that saved his life. Sometimes you only realize that many years later.

That's the Pesach, Matzah and Maror. The Moror, sometimes comes at the end because it's only with hindsight that we realize that actually it's many years later that we actually understand the purpose of it. - So therefore, the Maror is at the end.



In Dayeinu it says אִלּוּ קֵרְבָנוּ לִפְנֵי הַר סִינַי, וְלֹא נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת הַתּוֹרָה, דַּיֵּנוּ which is mind boggling, because the whole purpose was to get the Torah.

The answer being that the achdus was so amazing, that this was enough, hence the description of וַיִּחַן־שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגֶד הָהָר in the singular to emphasize the achdus.

Reb Itzele mi'Vorka says that the root of the word וַיִּחַן is חֵן connoting "grace" or "favour" that the Yidden displayed to each other.



The Beis Aharon zt'l writes, "The שירת הים (Oz Yashir) has everything in it: what was and what will be. All redemptions and concepts can be found in the shirah. If a person says it with all his heart, with mesirus nefesh, according to his level, everything will be corrected, for his body and soul."



"The obligation to remember Yetzias Mitzrayim is not memory—it is re-experiencing." ~ Baal Shem Tov.



בס"ד

למודי משה

Maror

The *gematria* of the word *perech* (פרך) is 300. The Medrash explains that the Yidden were forced to produce a daily quota of six hundred bricks, twice the value of the word *perech*. However, **Rav Chaim Kanievsky** asks that we should have rather used a word worth the *gematria* of 600. What is the significance of the number 300 used twice?

He explains that this is a hint to another comment in the Medrash, that says that the women used to come to the fields and help their husbands fill their quota. Thus, there truly were 300 bricks made twice.

This might also be the source of the puzzling *minhag* (mentioned in an eighteenth-century *Haggadah* printed in Frankfurt) to point at one's wife while reciting the paragraph about *maror*. Based on this Medrash, we can explain that it is an expression of *hakaros hatov* for helping with all the difficult work. (R' Moshe Oelbaum *shlita*)

למי שעשה לאבותינו ולנו את כל הניסים האלו – "To the One That Did To Our Forefathers and Us These Great Miracles"

The *meforshim* ask, why don't we mention the name of the one who did all these miracles, why do we mention: "The **one** who did miracles" without mentioning who it was?

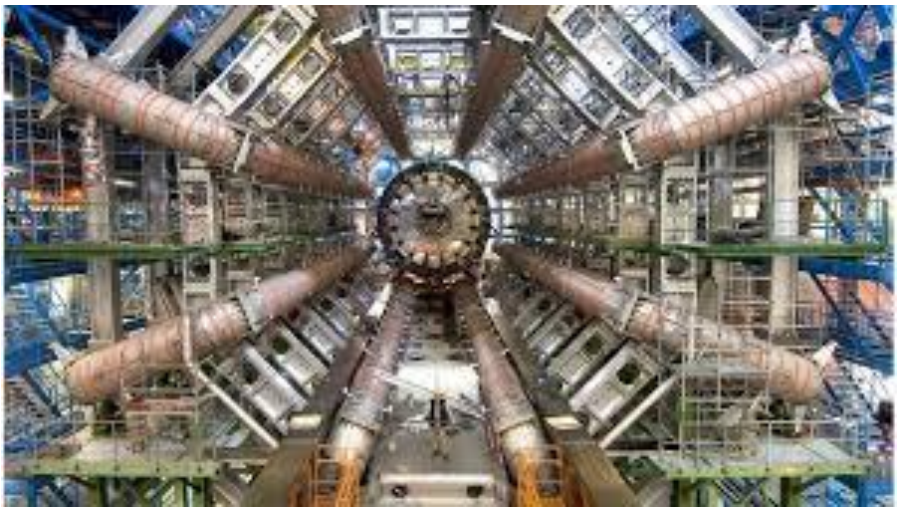
R' Yitzchak Hutner (*Pachad Yitzchak*, Pesach, *Ma'amer* 5) answers that the way to fulfill the mitzvah of *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim* is to say it in a question and answer format (דרך שאלה ותשובה) therefore, we specifically say this part of the *Haggadah* very vaguely to

encourage one to ask, "who is the **one** we are referring to" and the answer to this question is Hakadosh Boruch Hu.

However, perhaps we can suggest a different answer: After one has reached this part of the Seder it should be well rooted in his heart that Hakadosh Boruch Hu created the world and constantly overwatches everything, therefore, there is no need to mention who the person who did all the miracles for us is, as it's obvious that it's Hakadosh Boruch Hu. (*Abir Yaakov*)

Every Last Crumb

(The following is based on an unbelievable article written by R' Efram Goldberg shlita)



The Large Hadron Collider (LHC) is the world's largest and most powerful particle accelerator. The circumference of the collider is 16.565 miles, and it contains thousands of magnets. It was built in collaboration from over 10,000 scientists and hundreds of universities as well as more than 100 countries and it cost $4.75 billion.

In 2009, the collider overheated and shut down. Scientists were perplexed and investigated what went wrong. The problem was found at a compensating capacitor, one of the points where the mains electricity supply enters the collider from above ground. Sitting there was a bird munching on a baguette. It turns out a crumb had fallen into the collider causing the overheating. 10,000 scientists and $5 billion dollars couldn't stop the impact of one crumb.

The power and potency of a crumb is at the core of Pesach. The Gemara (*Pesachim* 29b) tells us *chametz* is forbidden in the smallest quantities, and that while in many cases with prohibited food we apply the concept of "*bittul*" – nullification of a small amount amidst a much larger amount – when it comes to *chametz*, one crumb is not nullified, even in a thousand parts.

Says the ***Meor Einayim***, the *yetzer hara* works not by convincing us to violate a major boundary or commit an egregious mistake. It works perniciously by telling us that something is only a *mashehu*, it's tiny, insignificant, what difference does it make? What does it matter if you come a bit late to *shul* or schmooze a little during davening? Does Hashem really care if a *mashehu* of what you declare as a business expense aren't really? Is a *mashehu* of *lashon hara* really going to hurt anyone?

Slowly, those small things add up until a person doesn't recognize himself anymore. On Pesach, *chametz* is *assur b'mashehu* to teach us how important everything, even what seems so small, truly is. One crumb can bring a $5 billion dollar machine to a grinding halt, and one crumb of *yetzer hara* can corrupt an invaluable *neshama*.

The *Be'er Heitev* in his commentary on *Shulchan Aruch* quotes the *Arizal* who says that a person who is careful about a *mashehu*, a negligible amount of *chametz* on Pesach, is guaranteed not to make a mistake the whole year.

I don't read this statement as a metaphysical promise as much as a strategy for change. If over Pesach you can learn to be disciplined even about the "*mashehu*"s of life, if we can learn not to dismiss or minimize the small things, we will live our most disciplined selves.

Don't underestimate the impact of a crumb. One *mashehu*, a drop of ink, is the difference between a *hay* of *matzah* and a *ches* of *chametz*. Don't let the *yetzer hara* convince you not to care about the *mashehu*.

But maybe the message of Pesach is not only the danger and damage of even a crumb, a *mashehu*. If a *mashehu* matters, if it can make all the difference, then isn't it true that a *mashehu* of a mitzvah or of a good thing also matters, it means something, it makes a difference. The meaning of *mashehu* works in both directions.

The typical approach to self-improvement or changing habits is to set a large goal, then try to take big leaps to accomplish the goal in as little time as possible. But this method often ends in burnout, frustration, and failure. Instead, focus on a *mashehu* at a time, continuous but steady, slow, incremental improvement.

It is so easy to dismiss the value of making slightly better decisions on a daily basis. Making *mashehu* improvements isn't going to make headlines, but it makes a difference.

We have to realize a crumb can destroy, a *mashehu* of *chametz* is *assur*, but a *mashehu* of a mitzvah, a *mashehu*, a moment of nobility, righteousness, discipline, spirituality, moves the cosmos, can change the world, can change your life, and that of your family.

A *mashehu* of *mitzvos* matters to Hashem and is measurable over time in us. Like the Jews in Egypt, many of us are enslaved, not to external oppressors but to our own habits and patterns, between us and Hashem, us and others, or even with ourselves.

This Yom Tov we are pledging to liberate ourselves from bad habits, to make meaningful changes. We are dedicated to do so in the merit that the *matzav* for our people improves, that miracles of salvation happen in our days. If you want to change the way you live, how you learn, daven, treat others, it isn't by hoping to wake up one morning and being radically different.

One crumb can shut down a collider and one crumb can start up your life.

Riddles and Intriguing Questions and Answers

The Minhag for People to Paint Their Homes Before Pesach

Q: Many people have the *minhag* to paint their homes before Pesach, can you think of a source for this popular *minhag*?

A: The *Sefer Eleph Kesav* (*ois* 199) writes that the *minhag* people have of painting their homes before Pesach is a remembrance of what happened in the *Beis HaMikdash* where they would whiten the walls of the *Heichel* before Pesach. He quotes R' Yitzchak HaLevi Rabinovitz (the *Mechaber* of the *sefer Batim LeItim*) who said over that in Lita they would say that the source for this is the Mishnah in *Middas* (3:4) which says that they would whiten the walls of the *Hichel* **פעם אחת בפסח** – "once a year for Pesach", and to remember this people had the *minhag* to whiten (to paint) their walls before Pesach.

When Performing *Mechiras Chometz* [The Sale of *Chometz*] Should One Sell His and His Families Illnesses to the Non-Jew?

Q: Is it possible for a person to sell his illnesses and diseases to someone else, and if yes, should one try and sell it to a non-Jew when performing *mechiras chometz*?

A: The *Sefer Chasidim* (445) brings a story where someone was very ill and about to die and someone who was present jokingly said "sell me the illness". The sick person responded, "if you give me such and such amount of money, I will sell it to you", the joker agreed, and immediately the sick person recovered and the joker got ill and died in his stead.

The *Shu"t Mishneh Halachos* (12:471) writes that it's forbidden for a Yid to sell his illness to another Yid, as just like it is forbidden for a person to hurt himself, it is forbidden to buy an illness, and if a sick person does sell it he violates the prohibition of *lifnei iver*

[being a stumbling block]. However, when it comes to selling it to a non-Jew then it's allowed.

Based on the above, I saw a very interesting *hanhogah* [mode of conduct] brought down by R' Zev Zikerman *shlita* in his *Otzar Pelois HaTorah Haggadah*. He writes that when he sells his *chometz* to a non-Jew before Pesach he adds onto the sales document: **הנני מקנה כל חולי ומחלה שיש לי ולבני ביתי** – "I am giving over as an acquisition to the non-Jew, any illness or diseases that either I have or people in my household have."

He suggests that this *hanhogah* is hinted at in the *pasuk*: **ולא יראה לך חמץ** – "It shall not be seen by you *chometz*" (*Shemos* 13::7), as the beginning letters of these words can be rearranged to spell **חולי**, to hint to the fact that through selling *chometz* one can be saved from the *issur chometz*, and also from:

כל המחלה אשר שמתי במצרים לא אשים עליך – "All the plagues and diseases I brought upon the Egyptians, I will not bring upon you."

R' Zikerman writes that he discussed this with R' Chaim Kanievsky *zt"l* and he asked R' Chaim how it works on *motzei* Pesach when he buys the *chometz* back from the non-Jew, and what happens with any illnesses or diseases, and R' Chaim told him that one only needs to buy back the *chometz* and not the diseases.

R' Zikerman then asked if it's okay to do such a thing, and R'Chaim said that it is no problem.

בא אל פרעה

Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu to "come to pharaoh" instead of "go to pharaoh" because when life presents us with difficult challenges ("going to pharaoh"), Hashem says to us "come, we'll go through this together" ~ The Kotzker Rebbe.

The Sanzer *Minhag* of Not Using any Iron When Baking *Matzos*, and Why the Steipler Wouldn't Leave a Pen on Top of His Gemara



: The *minhag* in Sanz is not to use iron (metal) rollers when making holes in the *matzos*, can you think of why? And can you think of what this has to do with the Steipler's custom not to leave a pen on top of his Gemara?



: The Sanzer *Chasidim* have a *minhag* not to use metal rollers to make holes in their *matzos*. The reason for this was once revealed to the *Shefa Chaim* in a dream. He was told that *matzah* is a **מיכלא דאסותא** - bread of healing, and it gives a person long life. *Chazal* tell us that iron shouldn't be used on the *mizbayach*: **דלא יונף המקצר על המאריך** - "As we don't like to lift up something which shortens people's lives over something which extends life." I.e. The *mizbayach* lengthen lives and iron (which is used for killing) shortens lives, therefore, we like to keep them separate. Since *matzah* brings healing and long life, we like to keep metal away from it.

Practically, many *matzah* bakeries use plastic rollers and throw them out after each time they are used, this takes care of the above issue.

R' Zev Zikerman in his *Otzar Pelois HaTorah Haggadah* brings that he discussed this *minhag* with R' Chaim Kanievsky *zt"l* and he said that his father the *Kehillos Yaakov* was particular not to leave his pen on top of his Gemara for the same reason. The Gemara brings a person life and metal shortens it, therefore, he would make sure not to leave a metal pen on top of his Gemara.

The story of Pesach teaches us that Hashem has the power to redeem us from any situation, no matter how dire we must trust in His plan and have faith that He will guide us through difficult times. ~ Rabbi Moshe Feinstein.

Were Any Women Present in the Famous Seder Night That Took Place in Bnei Brak?

Q: One of the most famous parts of the *Haggadah* is the story with R' Eliezer, R' Yehoshua, R' Elozor ben Azariyah, R' Akiva and R' Tarfon who were in Bnei Brak, and they spent the entire night talking about *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. In the *Haggadah* we find a mention about their *talmidim*, however, we find no mention of their wives, were they present? (I have looked in countless picture *Haggadah's* and have never seen any pictures of their wives!)

A: When R' Moshe Sternbuch *shlita* was asked this question, he answered very simply that their wives were present, and they were sitting next to their husbands throughout the Seder.

Why Do We Start *Shulchan Oirech* with An Egg?

Q: The *minhag* Yisrael is to start *Shulchan Oirech* by eating an egg dipped into salt water, what is the reason for this *minhag*?

A: **i)** The *Rema* (*Orach Chaim* 476:2) explains that we eat an egg as a remembrance of *aveilus*, as Tisha B'Av is always the same night of the week as Seder night. The *Rema* offers an additional reason, which is so that we remember the *Churban HaBayis* and the fact that we are unable to bring a *Korban Pesach*.

ii) The *Mei HaShilo'ach* offers another approach. He writes that an egg is the only thing in the world which is born twice: 1) When the egg is laid, 2) When the egg hatches. The same thing happened with Klal Yisrael when they were taken out of Mitzrayim. The first birth was that they were taken out of Mitzrayim and out of the 49th level of *tumah* that they were in. The second birth was at Har Sinai when they received the Torah. We eat an egg on Seder night to hint to the fact that this is just our first birth (the laying of the egg) however, we still await a second birth, the giving of the Torah on Shavuos.

The *Mei HaShilo'ach* takes this further and says, once an egg is laid it needs to be kept warm until it hatches, and without that the chick won't hatch. Similarly, on Pesach we got laid, however, we need to keep ourselves warm between now and Shavuos in order that we are able to hatch when Shavuos arrives. The way to do this is by being busy with the 48 *kinyonei haTorah*, and only if we keep the egg warm, will it be able to hatch on Shavuos.

iii) The *Imrei Emes* (Pesach, Year 5675) explains based on the Gemara in *Beitzah* (2b). The Gemara says: "Any egg that hatches today was completed yesterday." Similarly, a person won't merit the *hashpo'as* [special effects] of a Yom Tov unless he prepares properly beforehand. If one doesn't prepare, then *chas vesholam* he won't gain properly from the *hashpo'as* of the Yom Tov. We eat an egg on Seder night to remind us that before Pesach starts, we need to prepare. (These answers I saw in the *Abir Yaakov Haggadah*)

Why Couldn't the Egyptian Sorcerers Create Lice?

Q: In (*Shemos* 8:14) we learn that the Egyptian sorcerers tried to create lice, and they were unsuccessful. Rashi explains that the reason they were not able to create lice is because **שאין השד שולט על בריה פחותה מכשעורה** – "demons are powerless when it comes to creatures smaller than the size of a barley."

The question is, it may be true that demons have no power on creations less than the size of a barley, however, the smallest lice that were brought upon the Egyptian's were the size of a chicken egg, which is way bigger than the size of a barley.

The Medrash (*Yalkut Shimoni, Remez* 182) brings: Fourteen types of lice were brought upon the Egyptians, the smallest the size of a chicken egg and the biggest the size of the egg of a goose. If so, surely the lice the Egyptians were trying to copy were larger than the size of barley, so why couldn't they manage to create them?

A: The *Merafsin Igri* answers: The large lice that afflicted the Egyptians started off the regular size, and in order to intensify the suffering of the Egyptians they grew bigger and bigger reaching the size of the egg of a chicken and some the size of a goose egg. However, at the beginning they were the size of a barley, and this is what the Egyptians were trying to copy.

Until Today, Mitzrayim Seemingly Gained from One of the *Makkos*, Which *Makkah*?

Q: Although the Ten *Makkos* were brought upon the Egyptians to make them suffer, it seems that in one area they seemed to have gained from one of the *makkos*, can you think of what this is?

A: At the end of the *Makkah* of *Arbeh* [Locusts], Moshe Rabbeinu *davened* that they should leave the borders of Mitzrayim. *Rabbeinu Bechayeh* writes: This *tefillah* is in place until today, and locusts won't cause harm in the borders of Mitzrayim, and even if they enter the borders, they won't eat or destroy anything. *Rabbeinu Bechayeh* concludes, "this is a well-known fact".

So, it comes out that in some way the Mitzriyim gained from the *Makkah* of *Arbeh*, as until today within the borders of Mitzrayim locusts won't cause any harm.

***Sfas Emes* –Walking Into the Unknown**

The Sfas Emes (Pesach) explains: Kriyas Yam Suf represents entering a place where there is no טבע- natural path at all. - Real emunah is not when things make sense. It's when you walk into something that has no visible way—and trust anyway.

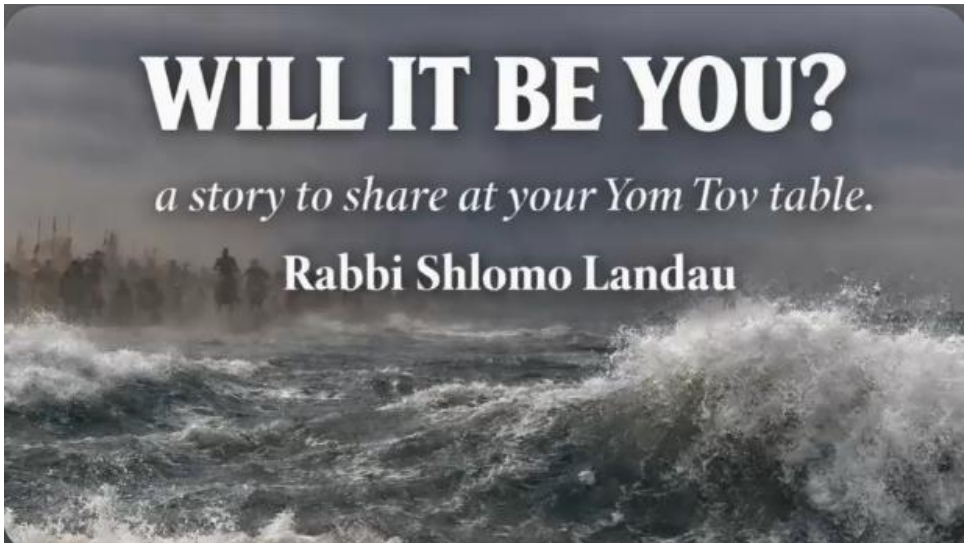
From a letter from Rebbe Kalonymus Kalman Shapira, the Piaseczno Rebbe, to his followers before Pesach 5699 (1939).

'When you sit at the Seder table, imagine yourself sitting down to a festive meal in the Garden of Eden itself, participating in the celebration of the final redemption. All the aspects of the Seder-eating the matzah and maror, drinking the four cups of wine, and reciting the Haggadah, Hallel and other songs of praise-comprise a holy service to G-d. The angels above are crowded around to hear our praises of G-d. Even G-d himself rejoices in delight, as is known from the esoteric literature, as He receives our praise and song.

A Jew has the ability to feel G-d's delight with each word that he utters from the Haggadah. He is imbued with such holiness that he is replete with sorrow when he finishes each word; if only he could go back and recite the Hallel another 1000 times, he would do so. His whole being is at one with his Creator as he recites words of incredible sweetness, the Haggadah lying open in front of him. - One must endeavour to provide sanctuary for the holiness of this night, so that it will abide by him for the whole year.'



"When the sea split, it opened salvations for all future generations for the individual and for the public. Even if the gates of parnassah or the gates of shidduchim are chas veshalom closed, one should pray at this special eis ratzon by kriyas yam suf... And Hashem will save כְּלַל יִשְׂרָאֵל when they shout out to Him. " ~ The Ateres Tzvi.



I want to share with you one of my absolute favorite stories that I hope you could share at your **יום טוב** table.

There was a small community where there was one **פרום שול**, that **שול** had a **רב** that was dedicated and it was a smattering of all types of different Jewish people. Every day between **מנחה** and **מעריב**, the **רב** would teach a **דבר הלכה**, he'd say a **דבר תורה**, something so that he could use the time between **מנחה** and **מעריב** in a productive way. One day the **רב** is not there.

He went out of town. It's between **מנחה** and **מעריב** and they're not sure what to do and they notice that there's a guest. It's a **יונגערמאן**, a **כולל** fellow, he must have been a visitor and he's there between **מנחה** and **מעריב** so the **גבאי** comes over to him and says to him, we usually have a **דבר תורה**, the **רב** is not here, could you say something? The fellow says sure. And he gets up there, it's **פרשת בשלח**, the story in the **פרשה** is about **קריעת ים סוף**, the splitting of the Red Sea and he gets up there and he says I want you to know something as the Jewish people stood at the cusp of the Red Sea, the Egyptians closing in from behind, in front of them the raging sea, on either side **נחשים** and **עקרבים**, snakes and scorpions, one fellow stood there at the banks of the sea contemplating what he should do and that fellow's name was **גמליאל בן עמינדב**.

All of a sudden people in **שול** go, **גמליאל בן עמינדב**? You mean **נחשון בן עמינדב**, the fellow who jumped into the sea and it went all the way up until his nose? And he continues ignoring them. He says and as **גמליאל** is standing there and everyone is in danger, he's considering jumping into the sea to show his dedication. And everyone calls out and they

said, not **גמליאל בן עמינדב**, but **נחשון בן עמינדב** , throw the guy out! He's an **עם הארץ**, he's ignorant! And he continues and he says and as **גמליאל בן עמינדב** is about to jump in, one guy screams out, sir if you can't get it right, stop speaking! It's **נחשון בן עמינדב**!

And he ignores them. And he says and as he's about to enter the sea all of a sudden there's a splash and **נחשון בן עמינדב** jumps into the sea, the sea gets all the way up until his nostrils and magically and majestically it splits.

And he says for time immemorial everybody knows the name **נחשון בן עמינדב**, the fellow that jumped in, the one that took action, but nobody's heard of **גמליאל בן עמינדב**, the fellow that was sitting there contemplating if he should take action or not.

And he says to the people in the **שול** that many times in your life there'll be an opportunity to take action. Somebody will. The question is are you going to be a **נחשון בן עמינדב** and live on for time immemorial or a **גמליאל בן עמינדב** that no one will ever hear about?

What a great **מוסר השכל**, what a great story, what a great life lesson! There's so many opportunities in life, somebody's gonna do it. - The question is who? Will it be you?

א גוט יום טוב, have a wonderful, magnificent, and elevated last days of **יום טוב**.

Whoever says the Haggadah with joy, without anger, without laziness, and without feeling that it is a burden, chas veshalom, the Shechinah spreads its wings over him, protecting him wherever he goes, and he merits miracles. ~The Yesod Yosef zt"l

"True freedom is not doing what one wants, but being free from the control of one's desires." ~ Rav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler.

Rabbi Elchonon Jacobovitz - Chart Your Own Course

Have you ever wondered how an entire nation could march straight into the *Yam Suf*, fully aware that it meant destruction? How could they not see what was happening?



In 1916, the French scientist Jean-Henri Fabre conducted a fascinating experiment with processionary caterpillars, creatures known for moving in single-file lines, each one following the one directly in front of it. Fabre arranged a group of them along the edge of a circular plate and placed food in the center. Then he set them in motion.

For five days, the caterpillars walked in a continuous circle, each one following the next, never breaking formation. The food remained just inches away—visible, accessible, life-sustaining. Yet not one caterpillar deviated. Eventually, they died of starvation.

How could the Egyptians enter the Yam Suf? The answer is not that they were foolish. It is that they were following.

The soldier in the back assumes the general knows what he is doing. The general assumes the leader knows what he is doing. And at the front? Chazal note something striking. The Pasuk says that, "The horse of Pharaoh entered the sea" (Shemos 15:19). Not Pharaoh, but his horse. The *Pirkei D'Rebbi Eliezer* (Chapter 42) states that Pharoah's male horse saw a female horse and ran after it.

People rarely walk into destruction because they consciously choose it. They arrive there by following trends, following crowds, following impulses that originate somewhere far removed from thoughtful

awareness. One person follows another, who follows another, until no one is actually thinking. At the front is not clarity, but desire.

If we want to escape that cycle, we must reclaim the ability to stop. To step out of the line. To think. And that begins with a simple but powerful decision: not to follow blindly.

Do not be carried by instinct. Do not be led by the crowd. Choose deliberately. Chart your own course.



The *Heilige Rebbe* the ***Pnei Menachem***, the *Gerer Rebbe*, still as *Rosh Yeshiva*, was once speaking to the *bochurim* about the importance of *tefillah* and he repeated a personal story that happened with him when he was a child. The *Heilige Pnei Menachem* was born to his father, the ***Heilige Imrei Emes***, when the *Imrei Emes* was older and the *Gerer Chassidus* was a very, very large *chassidus*. And the *Imrei Emes* designated for his son *Pinchas Menachem* an older *bochur* to keep an eye on him when there were big gatherings, big *davenings*. *Binem Likever* was his name.

Binem was in charge to make sure that *Pinchas Menachem* was where he was supposed to be when he was supposed to be. And was one *Shabbos* that after playing by *Leining*, *Pinchas Menachem* didn't come back into *shul*. And *Binem*, like his job, reported back to the *Imrei Emes* and said that *Pinchas Menachem* stayed playing outside and he missed *Mussaf*, he didn't come back in time for *Mussaf*. *Pnei Menachem* told the story that after the *seudah*, his father called him in and he told *Pinchas Menachem*, "where were you by *Mussaf*?" And embarrassedly he said, "I was playing outside, I didn't come in."

And the *Heilige Imrei Emes* told him, "do you know the *Medrash* says that every day there's a crown that goes up to the *Aibeshter*, *atarah*, a beautiful crown, and the jewels on that crown are the *tefillos* of *Yidden*.



Every *tefillah* is another jewel. Today the crown is going to go up missing one jewel, *Pinchas Menachem's Mussaf* is not there." And the *Pnei Menachem* said what impact that had on him. His *tefillah* is a jewel in the *Aibeshter's* crown because our words have a real *koach*. We head in to the *Heilige Yom Tov* of *Pesach* where we are going to be speaking *sippur yetzias mitzrayim*.

We're going to be holding *matzah*. The *matzah* looks like just a piece of *matzah*, but the *mashgiach zecher tzadik livracha Reb Moshe Wolfson* said, we know the *Zohar Hakadosh* teaches us *matzah* has two names, *Michlah d'mehemanusa*, food of *emunah*, and *Michlah d'asvasa*, food of *refuah*. And *mashgiach* said that simple-looking *matzah* is really an envelope which has in it *shemos hakodesh* and many, many different *yeshuos* that we need. And when we put down the *matzah* on the table and we say the *haggadah*, words of *emunah*, it's called **לחם עוני שעונין עליו דברים הרבה**.

We say a lot of words on it. Those words get absorbed into the *matzah*. And as we tell the story of *yetzias mitzrayim*, we tell the story of *emunah*, that *Michlah d'mehemanusa*, that food of *emunah*, gets saturated with our words of *emunah*. As we pick up that *matzah* and we make the *bracha al achilas matzah*, let's remember how each word is like a jewel and how saturated and full this *matzah* is with words of *emunah* because each word has a real value.



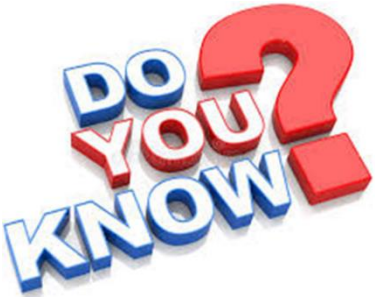
ערב פסח

On **עֶרֶב פֶּסַח** we have the **מִנְהָג** not to eat any food which is used as a **מִצְוָה** at the **סֵדֶר**. If so, asks **פני מנחם (בדרך צחות)**, - why on **עֶרֶב פֶּסַח** do we talk about **יציאת מצרים**, after all that is also a **מִצְוָה** at the **סֵדֶר**?!

Answers the **פני מנחם** that **תורה** is the exact opposite of food. With food the more you eat the less appetite you have. However, with **תורה** it is the reverse. The more one learns the greater his desire is aroused to learn more.

The Sefas Emes once said pshat in **וְהִיא שֶׁעָמְדָה** - **שֶׁלֹּא אֶחָד**, that when **כְּלַל יִשְׂרָאֵל** is not unified, this alone – **בִּלְבָד** – causes the goyim to be **עָמַד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ**.

יום ב' דפסח



The **משנה ברורה** in **סימן תצ ס"ק ב** writes that on the second day of **פסח** one should eat something during the **סעודה** as a remembrance of the **סעודת אסתר** which took place on the second day of **פסח** and on this day **המן** was hanged.

Your worth is not something you earn; it's something you uncover. Hashem looks at you and sees infinite value – your task is not to become worthy, but to recognize the worth that was always there. ~ Inspired by the teachings of the Ruzhiner Rebbe, Rabbi Yisrael Friedman (1796-1850).



A Second Birthday



Every year, Reb Yosef Shimon Kinderlehrer would approach the gabbai of the Cincinnati shul with the same request: "Could he please receive an aliyah on Shevii shel Pesach?" - Year after year, without fail, he asked for that particular day.

Eventually, people noticed the consistency, and someone asked him why it meant so much to him. Reb Yosef Shimon shared the following story: It was the spring of 1945 in the Lodz ghetto. Though the war was nearing its end, the suffering remained unbearable. Reb Yosef Shimon had endured years of starvation, fear, humiliation, and loss. By then, he felt completely broken. Lying weakly on the floor, drained of all strength and hope, he no longer saw a reason to continue. In his mind, it would be easier simply to let go. To stop fighting. To leave this world behind.

Suddenly, he felt a gentle tap on his shoulder. Another Yid had approached him. With warmth and sincerity, the man said softly: "Yosef Shimon, today is Shevii shel Pesach. Today is the day that Klal Yisrael defeated the Mitzrim at the sea. This is a day when a

Jew can find renewed strength. A day when we can overcome our enemies."

Those few words pierced the darkness. Until that moment, Reb Yosef Shimon had felt utterly defeated. But somehow, the warmth in that man's voice, the encouragement, the reminder of what this day represented, awakened something within him. He decided then and there that he would not surrender to despair. He would keep fighting. He would push himself to survive, one moment at a time, until he pulled through the nightmare.

And he did. Reb Yosef Shimon would later say that Shevii shel Pesach became his new birthday, the day his life began again. That was why, every single year, until his passing in 1996, he asked for an aliyah on that day — to commemorate the moment a few heartfelt words restored his will to live.

We often underestimate the power of a kind word, a gentle gesture, a soft rub on the shoulder, or a few sincere moments of warmth. But to someone carrying pain, those small acts can breathe life back into a broken heart. They can illuminate a shattered soul. And sometimes, they can give a person the strength to keep going when they were ready to give up.

"If we came to this world just to perform the mitzvah of biur chametz, דיינו, it would already be worthwhile. This mitzvah imbues us with kedushah and taharah." ~ R' Yeruchom Levovitz zt'l.

"If I have any good qualities today, it is from that mitzvah d'rabbanan of bedikas chametz, which I did with mesirus nefesh." ~ R' Shimshon Pinkus zt'l.





Horav Yisroel Friedman Shlita - Letters Of Chizzuk During The Coronavirus Pandemic

רב ישראל פרידמן רב קלויז טשארטקוב מנשסתר

מכתב התחזקות

י״ג ניסן תש״פ

One of the main mitzvos of the Leil Haseder is drinking the 4 cups of wine. Everyone knows that we drink 4 cups of wine at the Seder to commemorate the 4 expressions of redemption **והוצאתי והצלתי וגאלתי ולקחתי**. It is not commonly known that Chazal give an additional reason for drinking 4 cups of wine. To remind us of the 4 times the word **כוס** is mentioned in the story of Sar Hamshkim, when a fly fell into the cup of Pharoah.

רבי יהושע בן לוי אמר כנגד ארבעה כוסות של פרעה 'וכוס פרעה בידי', 'ואשחט אותם אל כוס פרעה', 'ואתן את הכוס על כף פרעה', 'ונתת כוס פרעה בידו'.

The Meforshim ask, why is this incident so important that we need to commemorate it at the Seder night, to drink 4 cups of wine, to ensure we do not forget the story of the Sar Hamaskim?

If we would have been present on that day when the above incident took place, we would not have placed any great importance to it. One of the workers in Pharoah's palace had been careless, Pharoah got annoyed and threw him into prison. End of story. It wouldn't have made headline news in the papers and was not an event of world shattering importance.

This is when you look at the story through the lens of a journalist or politician. Now let us examine this story through the eyes of the Torah.

Hashem had told Avrohom Ovinu at the Bris Bein HaBesorim that the time would come when his children will be strangers in a foreign land. Now, how was this to come about? Yaakov Ovinu was not interested in leaving Eretz Yisroel for all the money in the world. So Hashem set into a motion a series of events which would culminate in Yaakov Ovinu coming down to Mitzrayim, - and it all started with a little fly buzzing around the palace of Pharoah.

Stage 1: A little fly buzzing around the room falls into Pharoah's cup.

Stage 2: Pharoah becomes enraged and has the Sar HaMashkim put in prison, where he meets Yosef HaTzaddik.

Stage 3: The Sar Hamaskim has a dream and Yosef interprets his dream.

Stage 4 The Sar HaMashkim is released from prison and reinstated as Yosef had foretold.

Stage 5: Pharoah had a dream which none of his advisors could interpret, and the Sar HaMashkim then revealed Yosef's powers to Pharoah.

Stage 6: Pharoah orders Yosef to be released from prison and he interprets Pharoahs dream to his satisfaction.

Stage 7: Pharoah appoints Yosef as ruler over Egypt.

Stage 8: Yosef sends a message to Yaakov Ovinu who then comes down to Mitzrayim.

Thus it emerges that the fly falling into the cup was not some minor incident, but was an integral part of Hashem's Masterplan which had major consequences for all times, and shaped the history of Klall Yisroel and the entire world. This is what Dovid Hamelech meant when he wrote in Tehillim (ch.92) **מה גדלו מעשיך ה' מאד עמקו מחשבתך איש בער לא ידע וכסיל לא יבין את זאת** "How great are your actions

Hashem, how profound are your thoughts. A simple person will not know, and a fool will not understand this".

The Ramban (end of Parshas Bo) writes that the purpose of learning about Yetzias Mitzrayim is to teach us and to reinforce that nothing in this world happens by chance. When a Yid sits down at his Seder, it isn't enough just to acknowledge that major events such as an earthquake, a tsunami, a volcanic eruption etc, come from Hashem. When we drink the 4 cups of wine, we are acknowledging and showing that we understand that nothing in the world happens by itself, and even the most minor incidents, such as a fly falling into a cup is only by Divine Decree.

This year we are all witness to a similar story. If we would have been asked just a few months ago what are the chances of the entire world grinding to a total standstill, we would have said it is almost impossible, what could possibly cause the entire world on all 5 continents to stop everything and grind to a halt. But Hashem has His masterplan and it all started in an outdoor market in a town most of us had never heard of.

A diseased bat (if the Chinese are to be believed in their official version) was bought by an unsuspecting customer. He became ill and passed on the infection to others, who then passed it on to others. Travelers from around the world came to China and came into contact with carriers of the disease. These travellers then exported the virus back to their home countries. By the time world governments woke up to the terrible threat, the virus was already swiftly spreading far and wide. A small little bat has brought the entire world to its knees. Indeed **מה גדלו מעשיך ה' מאד עמקו מחשבתך איש בער לא ידע וכסיל לא יבין את זאת** we are being shown that it is Hashem who runs the World and everyone is in the hands of Hashem.

When I spoke to the Boyaner Rebbe shlita a few days ago, he told me that this year we should all merit to eat **מצה עשירה** and he explained that the gemara (Nedorim 41.) tells us "the greatest

pauper is a person who is poor in knowledge", but this year we have all come to the level of **ומלאה הארץ דעה את ה' (ישעיה יא, ט)** "the entire world has come to the recognition of Hashem". We have all been enriched with a new appreciation and understanding how we are all in Hashem Hands, and therefore we will eat the matza as an **עושר** with a clear and full understanding that Hashem rules the world **מה גדלו מעשיך ה'**!

ויהי רצון שנזכה לקיום סיום פיוטי ההגדה "ואתא הקב"ה ושחט למלאך המות" וימים אלו יתהפכו "מיגון לשמחה ומאבל ליום טוב ומאפלה לאור גדול ומשעבוד לגאולה ונאמר לפניו שירה חדשה הללוי-ה

ידידכם ישראל פרידמן



May you be blessed with an awesome and amazing Pesach and May we all merit a Chag Kosher v'Sameach







Horav Yisroel Friedman Shlita - Letters Of Chizzuk During The Coronavirus Pandemic

רב ישראל פרידמן רב קלויז טשארטקוב מנשסתר

מכתב התחזקות

י״ט ניסן תש״פ

Our minds are perplexed, how can we happily usher in "Shevei Shel Pesach" and to joyfully sing the Shira, whilst the terrible plague of Corona is circulating in our midst **רח״ל** and many people have already succumbed and others are dangerously ill. Not a day goes by without hearing more terrible and sad news of more people who have been taken from us **רח״ל** and have been chosen to be a pure offering to atone for Klall Yisroel.

Chazal tell us (**שמו״ר פכ״ג ד**) that from the day the world was created no one ever sang Shira to Hashem until the Yidden sang Shira at the Yam Suf. The Meforshim ask, how can this be we find that many people have already sung Shira? Indeed Odom HoRishon, even sang Shira and composed **מזמור שיר ליום השבת**.

Explains the Sefas Emes, the Beis Halevi and Rav Gedalia Schorr, that Klall Yisroel sang Shira thanking not only for their redemption, but also on for their enslavement in Mitzrayim. No one had ever thanked Hashem until then for their suffering. The Yidden at the Yam Suf were the first ones to openly declare that their suffering must somehow also be for their own good, and if so they needed to thank Hashem for that as well.

It is not difficult to thank and to sing Shira when things are going smoothly. It is a great madreiga to be able to thank Hashem when things are not going well. This is what we mean when we say in Hallel

כוס ישועות אשא ובשם ה' אקרא, צרה ויגון אמצא ובשם ה' אקרא in every situation a Yid has to sing Hallel and declare "**ובשם ה' אקרא**".

Gedolai Yisroel were always on this level to be able to see the good in even the most dire situations, and to thank Hashem for it. During the 1st World War, the fighting between the Russians and the Germans uprooted and destroyed whole kehilos in Eastern Europe, causing hundreds of thousands of Yidden to lose their homes and their jobs, and to flee as refugees to other countries. The town of Chortkov was also not spared the ravages of the war. Fierce fighting took place in the city, during which much of the town including the Chortkover Rebbe's own home was destroyed.

Although the Rebbe lost his home and most of his belongings, he nevertheless accepted his loss with love and complete faith. The words that he said then (100 years ago in 1920) ring true today as well: "Our Sages have told us that **סתירת זקנים בנין** 'The demolition by elders is not a negative act of destruction, but is in its essence a positive act of building'. All the more so **the destruction that is an act of Hashem is definitely only for our ultimate good and is no doubt part of the preparation needed to herald a truly splendid building, that of the Beis HaMikdosh speedily in our times.** It is this belief that gives us the strength to overcome our suffering for we are sure that this is all for the ultimate good."

One of the very holy seforim, is the sefer **אש קודש** that which was written by the Picesna Rebbe zt"l. In his sefer, he transcribed the divrei Torah that he gave to the Yidden in the Warsaw Ghetto in their last hours, before they were all brutally murdered. In a dvar Torah on Parshas Mezorah (1940) the Rebbe wrote as follows:

We have no understanding of the depth of the Torah and the mitzvos, despite this we all know and believe that whatever Hashem does, even when we are being punished – all is for the good.

But when we see that we are being afflicted not only physically but also in ways which are causing us to become distant chas vesholom,

from Hashem, **there is no Cheder for the children, no Yeshiva, no Beis Hamedrash to daven with a minyan, no Mikva and so on,** a doubt might enter our minds, how can this also be for the good?! If it is for the good, why are we not being afflicted in ways that can bring us closer to Hashem and not in a way which causes the silencing of Torah and Tefillah?

We see however from the Torah, that a person, whose house was afflicted with tzoraas, may not say that it is definitely tzoraas, he may only say **כנגע נראה לי בבית** it appears and it looks like tzoraas, but he may not say that it is for sure tzoraas. The reason is because underneath the tzoraas was a hidden treasure, and when the tzoraas is removed the hidden treasure will be revealed. Therefore one can only say that **כנגע** it looks like a punishment.

The Sefas Emes writes (**פסח תרנ"ה**) "Every tragedy that befalls Klall Yisroel is part of the preparation to bring the redemption as it says **בערב ילין בכי ולבוקר רנה** the evening of tears will be followed by the dawn of rejoicing. This is so even if we are not worthy, nevertheless in the future the salvation that the tragedy heralded and caused, will be revealed. This is how it was when they left Mitzrayim, and at the Yam Suf their tears were changed into joy and this was their Shira.

I wish to conclude with the holy words of the Belzer Rebbe zt"l, which he said during his first Shabbos in Eretz Yisroel. During the War, all his children and grandchildren were killed, some of them brutally murdered in front of his eyes. The Rebbe arrived in Eretz Yisroel a few days before Shabbos Shira 1944.

At his first tish, the Rebbe said the following devar Torah. On the possuk **אז ישיר משה** Rashi tells us the word **ישיר** which is written in the future tense, alludes to **תחיית המתים**, in the future all those who were niftar will arise and will sing Shira to Hashem.

What did Chazal see in this possuk more than other pesukim that are written in the future tense, that davka here is an allusion to

תחיית המתים? Explained the Belzer Rebbe: When the Yidden left Mitzrayim, only one fifth went out, four fifths had been niftar during **מכת חושך**. Almost every person had lost close relatives, everybody was in mourning for the many family members who had just died. How could they possibly now sing a Shira and be besimcha after going through such a tragedy?

Chazal understood that it was their emunah in **תחיית המתים** which gave them the inner strength to be able to sing Shira. They knew and believed that one day they would all be reunited, and then they would all sing a Shira together, this is what gave them the ability to sing the Shira at the Yam Suf. Concluded the Belzer Rebbe that it is with this emunah that we have to carry on and sing a Shira to Hashem until we will soon be zoche **ונאמר לפניו שירה חדשה הללוי-ה**.

It is not easy in the present situation to be besimcha, but this is our avodah; especially now over Yom Tov. We have to be mechzeik ourselves with emunah, and to believe that in the very near future we will all be zoche to sing a new Shira together with all previous generations, our zeides and bubbes, who will marvel at our perseverance and inner strength, that despite all the travails of our long and hard golus, Yidden have not given up and continued to keep the Torah and mitzvos besimcha.

ידידכם ישראל פרידמן

"Just as the first redemption came suddenly, so too every personal redemption can come in an instant." ~ Rav Avigdor Miller.

"Pesach is the training season for emunah—reviewing again and again that Hashem runs everything." ~ Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik.

102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar - V'nitzak

This story happened before Pesach 5782. I heard it first- hand from Mr. and Mrs. Cohen, a couple with quite a few children. They were in touch with a couple who had been married for fifteen years and was still waiting for children.

The childless couple, let's call them the Rosens, did a lot of hishtadlus in the physical arena, as well as offering many tefillos and doing different segulos, but the doctors were very pessimistic. They told the couple that medically, there was zero chance that they would have children, and suggested that they think about adoption.

The Cohens were very close to the Rosens; they would invite them often for Shabbos and Yom Tov meals. They heard about the segulah of the **Apter Rav**, who says that Leil Haseder is an auspicious time for any yeshuah. The day when Am Yisrael was miraculously taken out of Mitzrayim is a day when anyone can be set free. It's a night of miracles, and when one says the word "V'nitzak" in the Haggadah, the gates of Heaven open. Anyone can make any request - and the request will be granted.

One of the Cohens' sons heard about this sequlah from Rav Meilech Biderman shlita and suggested to his parents that this Pesach, at the Seder, the whole family should daven with all their hearts for this couple. The father was hesitant, as they had invited a few guests, the Rosens themselves among them. He had been there for them throughout their difficult journey, and he knew how much pain they were in, how many times their hopes had been dashed.

The father agreed, finally, but told the son that he wasn't sure how they would manage to do this without making the couple uncomfortable.

Leil Haseder arrived. During the Seder, they drank a bit of wine... and when they got to "V'nitzak," the son urged his father to tell

everyone about the Apter Rebbe's segulah. The guests thought it was a great idea and also wanted to bring about a yeshuah for the couple. Everyone davened out loud, from the depths of their hearts, for this couple to have children soon. They felt very connected to Hashem and to the desire to see this couple have a son or daughter within the year.

They continued the Seder as usual, and close to the end of the evening, the seven-year-old boy turned to his father and said, "You know, we will also have a baby boy or girl this year."

The father said, "No, we meant to daven for the childless couple." "But we don't have a baby either," the son answered. "I'm the youngest and I'm already seven, so I davened that I would also get a brother or sister this year."

"Okay," said the father, "I hope you'll be answered, too." But the father added to me, "I didn't think he'd be answered. We're living in a time of hester panim, and it didn't make sense to me that our tefillos would be answered for both the Rosens and my little boy.

"Then my son asked me, 'When is another nine months?' I told him that it comes out in Teves. But I reminded him that when the malachim came to Avraham Avinu, they told him he would have a baby in another year. So he said, 'Fine, so by next Leil Haseder, I'll have another brother or sister."

After a few months, both women found out they were expecting. Mrs. Cohen gave birth to a baby girl on Leil Haseder. Because they were in the hospital and they already had older children, their children made the Seder on their own, with the invited guests, including the childless couple.

"We felt so close to Hashem, we felt His 'kiss.' This was a Seder night that I would never forget.

"When we thought of a name for our daughter, it was clear that her name had to allude to the great miracle of her birth. I thought about

the word tefillah, which is not a name, so my wife thought of Shira. And shira has the same gematria as tefillah."

Two weeks later, the couple who had waited for children for fifteen years was zocheh to hold a baby boy. They called their son Michael, because they liked the name. It turns out that the malach who had told Sarah Imeinu (on Leil Haseder!), K'eis chayah v'hineih ben l'Sarah- "At this time next year, Sarah will have a son," was the malach Michael!



Why There's No Fireworks On Pesach

It's really magnificent. Seder night arrives and everything is perfect. The house is sparkling. The silver shining. The atmosphere is calm. The smell of delicious Yom Tov food fills the house. The table is set. The kittle is still white. It's about to begin. We are celebrating our freedom. Four cups of wine, three matzahs, and so much more.

Let's be honest. Is this really the way you would imagine celebrating freedom? I don't know about you, but I would imagine huge events, performances in every city, firework displays, maybe even drone displays, singers, concerts. This will give over the message that we made it. We're free.

Wouldn't this stimulate us a little bit more than sitting at a Seder munching on some matzah and reading the Haggadah?

After the Seder of The "Heiliger Dinover Rebbe" - **Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech Spira** (1783–1841). (the ***Bnei Yissaschar)*** he heard some

Yidden relating how amazing Seder was by the Rebbe. He interrupted them and he said, "My Seder was nothing compared to the Seder of Moishe the water carrier."

The Chassidim now ran to Moishe the water carrier to find out what had happened at his Seder that made it so unique. At first, he was reluctant to share some details until the Rebbe prodded him.

Moishe admitted he got drunk before Pesach. He was making sure to finish up every drop of whiskey. When Seder night came, he was too drunk to conduct the Seder for his family, which upset them greatly. Towards the end of the night, he called over his family to his bed, apologizing and assuring them he would never do this again.

And then he said, "I'm too tired to conduct the Seder, but I want you to know that Hashem created the world and he rested on Shabbos. Some bad things happened until Avraham Yitzchak and Yaakov came along. The holy nation had to go down to Mitzrayim, but Hashem loves us and wants to purify us. The same G-d that took us out of Mitzrayim will take us out of this galus, this exile, and will bring us back to Yerushalayim with the Beis Hamikdash."

And with that, he fell back fast asleep.

The Bnei Yissaschar said, "No Yid had ever stated our redemption in as clear and as sincere manner as Moishe, the water carrier, finding great favor up in Shamayim.

Perhaps this is the answer to our question. Yes, loud and colorful celebrations may be more exciting, but it simply cannot penetrate the soul's depths. So, yes, you can jump up and down in joy, but it hasn't really gone inside. Fireworks on a dark night light up the sky, but seconds later, they're gone.

What we are doing on the night of Seder night is showing that seemingly small actions are actually able to reach much deeper and will inspire us for much longer. It's self-evident because for over

3,000 years, we are still performing our Seder without fireworks and musical instruments, yet it's so fresh and exciting every year.

As we sit around the table this Seder night, we thank Hashem for his gift of cheirus, of freedom. 80 years ago, Yidden sat in Auschwitz making a Seder with no child to ask the Mah Nishtanah, no food on the table.

Tell your child or yourself about it. Tell them that Yidden had to hide in cellars for years during the Spanish Inquisition to avoid being killed or baptized. Tell them that in the old days all year long constantly running to shelters to ensure they don't get hit by a ballistic missile from Iran. Tell them that all around the world they're trying to get us.

But we will always be here. Hashem is watching us. He cares. And he'll take us out of this galus and bring us all back to Yerushalayim.

Wishing all my listeners a kosherin yom tov.

TheYeshiva.net
BY RABBI YY JACOBSON

There was a Jew living in Babruysk. Babruysk is a city in what they used to call White Russia, *Weissrussland*. Like all of Jews of Belarus, most of them were decimated and murdered by the Germans during the Second World War. This Jew lived in Babruysk, his name was *Reb Zushe Margolin*.

As the Second World War broke out and in June 1941 Hitler invaded the Soviet Union and his Blitzkrieg, Stalin did not expect it. Russian casualties exceeded any other country because of the success of Germany initially in Russia. And like many citizens, *Zushe Margolin* was drafted into the Russian army. Most people who were drafted to the Russian army in the Second World War never returned.

He left a wife, her name was *Nechama*, *Nechama Margolin* and she had three children. She had a baby boy and two daughters who were

around nine or ten years old. The older daughter was Mina and the younger daughter was Toiva. The Germans were invading Belarus.

She realized that they will not survive here, so she decided to escape like many Jews to Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan was safe, the Germans did not reach there, to the city of Tashkent. Tashkent had a larger Jewish community, was more concentrated, but it was a long journey. So she took her three children, and they started the journey to Uzbekistan.

The hunger at that time in Russia was devastating. People were dying from hunger day in and day out, *yom yom*. There was such a shortage of food, and indeed *Nechama* too had very little food and on this long journey she had barely morsels of bread and most of them she gave to her children so they would survive. Until one night, she couldn't bear the hunger anymore and she went into a faint and she died from starvation.

So now you had two little girls with a baby boy to fend for themselves. And after a few weeks, the baby boy didn't survive either. He also died. So these two girls buried their mother and then they buried their brother, so they're alone.

So there was some good people, Russian gentiles who met them and saw what's going on and they put them in an orphanage. It was 600 kilometers from Tashkent, but at least they had a bed and they had food, they could survive. And they spent all the years of the war there until the end of the war which was 1945. The Second World War came to an end and here these girls are in this orphanage literally alone and the war is over.

So the woman who ran the orphanage came over to them and said now the war is over. Do you have any family? So she said you know our story, our father is gone, he was in the war, our mother died, our brother died, we don't have anybody, we're the only ones. Is there maybe an uncle, an aunt, a cousin, a grandparent? They said we have, but where are we going to find them? So the woman says, do you

have any recollection of an address, an address, a home address of anybody who may be related to you or any Jew who might be interested in you? And they're thinking an address, where are they supposed to have an address from? So she says listen don't worry, if you don't find anybody you'll just stay here. Mina knew very well that means complete disconnect from the Jewish people for eternity for her and her sister.

So she's trying to rack her brain, does she know an address of any person. And then she remembers something that happened when she was a little girl. They grew up in Babruysk. They had a farm.

The farms in Belarus produced good chickens and good geese and good turkey, *gutte katchkes*. Now some of you still do this, some of you remember it from your mother and grandmother. They did not use oil on *Pesach*. What did they use? *Schmaltz*! And how do you make *schmaltz*? From the fat of the chicken or the geese or the turkeys.

Their farm had such good geese that their mother, *Nechama*, would make *schmaltz* every year before *Pesach* and send it to her sister living in Leningrad and she would send *schmaltz* to Leningrad so her sister would be able to have a *gishmake Pesach*. How do you send *schmaltz* from Babruysk to Leningrad? Her mother would wrap up the *schmaltz* in diapers and then she took the diapers and put it into a wooden box, sealed the box and sent it to Leningrad. One day she was sending the *schmaltz* to Leningrad, so they went to the post office, and it was a lot for the whole *Pesach* for her and other family. So her mother asked her, Mina, if she could come with her to the post office *schlepping* the *schmaltz*.

She said of course. So, they went to the post office and the man in the post office takes it and he says, this *schmaltz* is going to leak from the wooden box. I am not sending this. To Leningrad, you need to go and get many more diapers to wrap up the *schmaltz* so it doesn't leak.

And then they got into an argument. The mother was very frustrated and annoyed. It was a long walk; to *schlep* it all back home was impossible, so the mother looked at *Minna* and said, "You know what? You stay here, watch the *schmaltz*—it was a precious commodity. I'll go home, I'll get more diapers, I'll come back, and we'll wrap it again." So *Minna* had to stay two hours in the post office waiting for mommy to come back.



So *Minna* said, "What did I do for two hours? I was staring at the box of *schmaltz*." What did the box have on it? The address of *Draiza Raskin* in Leningrad. And she said, "I remember the address." And she told the woman running the orphanage the address. So she sent a letter to this address saying, "You have two nieces, they don't have anybody, maybe you want to pick them up and raise them." But the *Raskins* already moved to another city; they weren't living there anymore. So when the letter came, there was nobody to receive it.

They had a son; he forgot one day that they moved, so he got off on the train station near his old house. So he's walking by his old house and he realizes it's not, but then he says, "You know what? Let me check in the mailbox, maybe there's mail." They moved three months earlier, so maybe there's mail. Now, nobody was expecting some exciting mail, but you never know. So he goes, he takes out the mail and he sees a letter addressed to the *Raskins* in Leningrad from an orphanage 600 kilometers from Tashkent.

He brings home this letter and he shows it to his parents. They say, "That's it, we're going." And he was sent to the orphanage and he picked up these two girls and they were reunited with their uncle and aunt. And later they escaped Russia and they moved with them to *Kfar Chabad* and *Tova* married a fellow by the name of *Altois* and *Minna* married a fellow by the name of *Rifkin* and they both built beautiful, beautiful families in Israel. I know some of the children.

When I heard the story the first time, I thought to myself: when she was staring there two hours in a post office, what would you do for those two hours? You'd be upset at Russia, be upset at the post office, be upset at the system, for good reason; it's annoying, it's frustrating. Nobody knows; it was those two hours that literally changed this family.





Seder Pearls - Rabbi Yosef Shloime Cohen

Reb Moshe Sternbuch Shlita in his Nussach Hagaddah writes he was once spent the Seder by one of the Gedolei Yisrael zichrono livracha. And this Gadol asked him, what is the most difficult Mitzvah to mekayem Seder nacht?

The most difficult thing to mekayem is **חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים**. That thing a person should be'emes feel in his heart and experience and live with the **חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים**, that's the most difficult.

Reb Simcha Zissel of Kelm Z'tl wrote a letter to one of his talmidim on this inyan and he wrote, "I want to be megaleh to you a sod, something which was became clear to me and I'm only being megaleh to you because you're a very dear talmid of mine. And he wrote to him, how come Chazal are mechayev every single simple poshete Yid a chov, **חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים**, a person is chov, Chazal didn't say it's a nice thing to do, it's not optional at all, it's a chov, a person has to actually imagine **כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים**."

How can that be? It's a very, very difficult job, it's practically impossible. A meyleh gedolei Yisrael, but how can that be expected of every simple person to feel **כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים?**

Reb Simcha Zissel explained it in the following way. He said, yes, it's a chov, it's absolutely imperative, it's a must for a person to go through in order to have even basically successful Leila Seder.

Reb Simcha Zissel says the tachlis of sippur yetzias Mitzrayim are very, very, very great. It's the yesod of emuna of our whole year. We have to build on this. We can't just have dry facts, knowing, talking about it.

It'll have very little effect. In order tahkeh to be able to have the desired maximum effect, ***you have to feel it, you have to experience it***. It's only by mamash experiencing it that you'll come out with something tangible, you'll come out with something tahkeh andersh to wake up the next morning with a different darga of emuna. Only if you feel it.

So **חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים**. You've got to mamash put yourself into the matzav. You can't go through a Seder and remain cold because your emuna won't change. But if a person relives it and experiences it, **דאס איז א אנדערע מעשה גאנצע**. And b'emes, that's takeh what Chazal wanted.

The whole Seder, the difference between **זכירת יציאת מצרים בכל השנה** and Haggadah and Sippur, is this is not a lecture. You're not

supposed to lecture the kids about what went on in Mitzrayim, because when you lecture kids, then they just drop off, or they become disinterested. It's got to be a Sippur in a way that they experience it. And that's why Chazal made it so hands-on. - This is all to make it an experience which they'll live and remember.

May we be zocheh bezras Hashem to **גאולה שלימה במהרה בימינו אמן**.

TheYeshiva.net
BY RABBI YY JACOBSON

365 Cigarettes for Matzah

Rabbi Lau says that one day he was sitting in the *Beis Din*, he was sitting in the courtroom and a fellow came in, 42 years old, a Jew who grew up in Russia in the Soviet Union, identified himself as a Jew made *Aliyah* to Israel and now he wanted, so to speak, to be endorsed and approved and receive a certificate that he is indeed a *Yehudi*, a Jew.



So he had to bring some evidence. This man had two witnesses. The first witness was an elderly Jew who also came from Russia and he said that he was at his *Bris*, he was at his circumcision, 42 years earlier when this boy was born.

The second witness was a *Chabad Chossid*. And the *Chabad Chossid* shared the following story, not about him, but about his mother. He knew his mother for many years, and this is what he told Rabbi Lau.

This man's mother had a prominent position in a hospital, she was director of a hospital, administrator, a director.

Because of that, she was privy to get two cigarettes a day. And this was a time when cigarettes in Russia were extremely, extremely precious. Most people smoked, but to get a cigarette was very, very difficult. And this woman was privy to get two cigarettes a day.

One cigarette she would smoke, another one she would hide in a special box, in a special container under her bed, nobody should find it. And this *Chabad Chossid* says: Every year, *Purim* time, she would come to me with a box that contained 365 cigarettes because every single day she got two and she put one away. And she would say to me, 'And now get me the *Matza*.' And I would take the cigarettes, sell them on the black market, get flour and bake her a certain amount of *Matza* so she would have *Matza* for *Pesach*.

And he tells Rabbi Lau, 'You know, to get an extra cigarette in Russia was very, very precious. But she put it away every single day so she should be able to eat *Matza* on *Pesach*.'

Rabbi Lau was extremely moved by the story and he asked this fellow, 'Is your mother still alive?'

He said, 'Yeah, she's living in Russia.' He said, 'Could I speak to her?' And of course, they arranged a telephone call and Rabbi Lau from his office in Jerusalem where he was, calls this woman. And she gets on the phone and he starts talking to her and she confirms the entire story.

And then he says to her, 'You know the difference between you and I?

I observe the *Seder* night once a year. You observe the *Seder* 365 days out of the year.'

Kriyas Yam Suf is the moment when a person walks into a place where there is no path— and discovers that Hashem is there too. ~ Sfas Emes.

"The search for chametz is a search within oneself—for even the smallest flaw." ~ Sfas Emes.



Alligator Chase - R' Hillel Eisenberg

I once found myself in Gatorland, which is a theme park in Orlando, a park that boasts more alligators and crocodiles than almost any other place on earth. And after strolling through its massive grounds, looking at all the alligators from every corner of the globe, seeing them swallow whole chickens in one bite, watching thrill-seekers zip line over a pond filled with these 15-foot 1,000-pound beasts, and trying to stop my four-year-old from dumping in his entire bag of *Bamba* into the mouth of one of them, we made our way to the park's main attraction: the alligator wrestling show.



So we're in the arena, packed with people, and a trainer enters the pit. He's facing off with a massive gator and with a mixture of skill and craziness, he managed to climb on top of the alligator's back and hold its powerful jaws shut.

And the crowd is a mixture of awe and horror. My kid has his hands over his eyes, tighter than a rich man holds his $10,000 *etrog* on *Sukkos*. And then the trainer, who's calmer than someone having tea with the Queen of England, he turns to the audience, and he asks: If an alligator is chasing you, what should you do?

So hands in the crowd shot up. One kid shouted: "Poke it in the eye!" And a woman yells: "Hit its tail!" And a man screams: "Throw something at its snout!" And someone else says: "Freeze and wave your hands to look really strong." And another guy calls out: "Start whistling in a low whistle then retract in a zigzag pattern."

Everyone has a theory, everyone has a strategy, and the trainer just laughs, shakes his head and he says: "Folks, it ain't that complicated.

You want to survive an alligator chasing you? There's only one thing you do. You just run as fast as your two feet can take you."

Sometimes in life we search for complicated and sophisticated solutions to our spiritual struggles. *Segulahs*, inspiration hacks, graves in far-flung countries.

Matzah teaches us something else. It whispers a quiet truth: try making things simpler, try going back to the basics. How many of us can truly claim to have souls free to live the spiritual lives that they want to live? How many of us are holding our own souls hostage in prisons built on money and food and ego and the illusion that we can conquer the world if we just work a little bit harder? *Pesach* isn't just a celebration of *Hashem* freeing us from physical slavery. It's a celebration of being freed from the mindset of slavery.

Pesach is the *Yom Tov* in which we are spiritually reborn, both collective and individually. The *Avodah* is to go back to the basics. To stare at the increasingly complicated world and choose to see through the illusion. To ask ourselves: are we slaves to our pleasure-hungry, hyper-stimulated, overly complicated bodies? Or are we governed by our souls, pure, calm, and free? *Chametz* is banned on *Pesach* in the harshest of terms because *Hashem* wants us to rediscover the pleasure of simply being a *Neshamah*.

And our *Neshamot* can't breathe when they're trapped in a dungeon of complicated materialism. Yes, we're a people that have rich rituals and depth and nuance. And there's beauty in that. But there's a reason the symbol of our freedom, perhaps the most famous spiritual symbol in the world, is nothing more than two ounces of flour and an ounce of water.

Because real freedom isn't flashy, it's not complicated, it's honest, it's immediate. You just have to pick up your *Matzah* and run.

The Damascus Phone Calls - R' Joey Haber



So I'm sitting on the dais in Switzerland, and an older rabbi, Rabbi Levy, leans over to me. He says, "You're part of the Syrian committee, right?"

I said, "I just mentioned it four times in the speech, yes."

He said, "Let me tell you a story."

I said, "What's the story?"

He says, "Years ago in the '80s, my father got a call, I think it was from a person in Panama, who said that the Jewish community in Damascus, we just got word that the gentiles, the Arabs are planning a pogrom against the Jews in Damascus. Rabbi Levy, can you speak to the Swiss government, who's supposed to be neutral, and maybe they could coax and inspire the Syrian government to stand down?"

He says, "My father got off the phone, he says, 'I know the government of Switzerland. They're neutral because they're neutral, because they never get involved. There's no way they're getting involved.'"

He says, "Hereby I have a piece of information that there's a Jewish community in Damascus that's going to have a pogrom. Gentiles are going to massacre people and yell and scream and hit and maim and hurt. What am I going to do?"

"My father sat thinking for a few hours, and then he called the *Rosh Yeshiva* of the Philadelphia *Yeshiva*, ***Rav Elya Svei***. He says to *Rav Elya*, 'I don't know what to do.'

Rav Elya said, 'Let me try.' *Rav Elya* called the president of *Agudat Yisrael*, ***Rav Moshe Sherer*** at the time.

Rav Moshe Sherer called a man named Caspar Weinberger. Caspar Weinberger was the Jewish Secretary of State. Caspar Weinberger spoke to the President of the United States, and the President of the United States spoke to President Assad of Syria, and the Syrian government stood down, and the pogrom never happened.

Some man in Panama called some rabbi in Switzerland. If there ever was a useless phone call, it's that one. From Panama to Switzerland, you're going nowhere fast. And then all of a sudden he calls a rabbi in a *yeshiva* in Philadelphia in America, and that rabbi calls *Agudat Yisrael*, *Agudat Yisrael* calls the Secretary of State, the Secretary of State calls the President.

And I don't know when it was, but I know only a short time after that, there was a night on the last day of *Chol HaMoed* that the rabbi of Damascus, I think it was *Rav Hamra*, was called to the palace or called to the government office.

And everybody knew what it meant. It meant he was going to be thrown into jail and thrown into some kind of dungeon, who knows what the government would do to him.

What actually happened that night as the rabbi came back and said, 'The President of Syria just told us that he is freeing all of us to leave the country.' And on that night, **שביעי של פסח**, as *Shvii Shel Pesach* began, our community, the remnants of the Syrian community that was still, the thousands of families that were still in Syria, all got the opportunity to leave. Because the story of *Mitzrayim* is not a story of something that happened to them.

It's a story of something that happened to us. *Yud-Kay-Vav-Kay*, the name of *Hashem*, the name of *Hashem* that controls the world needs to be written on every single one of our arms."

R' Joey Haber

The Haggadah begins with **הא לחמא עניא**: "*This is the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat.*" Then, almost immediately, we say:

השתא הכא, לשנה הבאה בארעא דישראל; השתא עבדי, לשנה הבאה בני חורין — *This year we are here; next year may we be in the Land of Israel. This year we are servants; next year may we be free.*

Why do we begin the Seder by talking about next year? Wouldn't that be a more fitting conclusion?

I found a beautiful answer in Haggadah **מעפר קומי** by Rabbi Ronen Shahrabani. Chazal teach that **בניסן נגאלו ובניסן עתידין להיגאל**—just as we were redeemed in Nissan, the final redemption will also come in Nissan. Every year, as Nissan begins, our hope is renewed. Maybe this will be the year.

Yet by the time we sit down at the Seder, there's often a quiet disappointment. Pesach has arrived, and Mashiach has not. Every year someone predicts, "This is the year," and every year we are still waiting.

That feeling isn't limited to waiting for Mashiach. Many people come to the Seder carrying their own hopes: for children, for health, for a livelihood, for marriage, for peace of mind, or for a loved one to find their way back. They celebrate the chag, but they also feel the ache of what is still missing. Some even blame themselves, believing they must somehow be undeserving.

The Sforno, commenting on Yosef's sudden release from prison to stand before Pharaoh, writes: **כדרך כל תשועת ה'—שנעשית כרגע**. This is the way of Hashem's salvations—they happen in an instant. So too, the redemption from Egypt came so quickly there wasn't even time for the bread to rise.

That is what the matzah represents. Not only that Hashem redeems, but that He can redeem in a moment.

This is why the Haggadah begins with hope. Before we tell the story of the Exodus, we remind ourselves that salvation can come faster than we imagine. Whatever we are waiting for—Mashiach, children, health, parnassah, marriage, healing, or any personal redemption—Hashem can change everything in an instant.

So we open the Seder with these words: **לשנה הבאה בני חורין**. Not as a distant dream, but as a declaration of faith that redemption can arrive at any moment, and that by next year, everything we're praying for can be different.



Here's a remarkable insight, by Rabbi Glatstein.

From **הא לחמא עניא** until **גאל ישראל**, the blessing that concludes Maggid, the Haggadah contains exactly 1,820 words.

Why is that number significant?

Because 1,820 is also the number of times the four-letter Name of Hashem (**י-ה-ו-ה**) appears in the Torah.

What is the connection?

Consider Pharaoh. Did he believe in G-d?

On one hand, when Yosef interpreted his dreams, Pharaoh declared, "**האיש אשר רוח אלקים בו**"—"Can we find another man with the spirit of G-d within him?" Clearly, he acknowledged a Creator.

Yet when Moshe came demanding, "Hashem said, 'Let My people go,'" Pharaoh replied, "**מי ה' אשר אשמע בקולו?**"—"Who is Hashem that I should obey His voice?"

Which was it? Did Pharaoh believe or not?

The Shelah HaKadosh explains that these verses refer to two different revelations of Hashem.

The name **אלקים** represents G-d as the Creator and Sustainer of nature. Seeds grow, the sun rises, people eat and are satisfied—creation follows the natural order that Hashem established.

The name **י-ה-ו-ה**, however, represents something greater: Hashem's absolute mastery over nature. He is not bound by the natural world; He governs it, changes it, and can suspend it whenever He wills.

Pharaoh accepted **אלקים**. He believed there was a Creator who designed the universe and left it to run according to fixed laws. But **י-ה-ו-ה**—a G-d who intervenes, performs miracles, and controls every detail of history—that he rejected.

The Exodus was Hashem's answer. The plagues, the splitting of the sea, and every miracle of Yetzias Mitzrayim demonstrated that Hashem is not merely the Creator of nature; He is its Master.

That is why the Haggadah contains 1,820 words. Every word tells the story of **י-ה-ו-ה**—the Hashem who guides history, overrides nature, and remains fully in control.

A Jew does not see the world as Pharaoh did. We recognize nature, but we know it is never independent of Hashem. The same G-d who established the laws of nature can change them in an instant.

Living with that awareness transforms the way we face life. We are not defined by predictions, circumstances, or what appears inevitable. We live with the certainty that Hashem is always in control, and that nothing is beyond His power.



Rebbe Michel of Zlotchev zy'a teaches: 'When a person serves Hashem beyond his natural limits, Hashem will act with him beyond the rules of nature and perform miracles for him.'



After **הא לחמא עניא** and **מה נשתנה**, we arrive at **עבדים היינו**, where we say: **כל המרבה לספר ביציאת מצרים הרי זה משובח**— Whoever elaborates on the story of the Exodus is praiseworthy.

What does **הרי זה משובח** really mean?

The commentators explain that the things we invest the most time, energy, and resources into are the things we value most. Parents pour endless effort into their children because nothing is more precious to them.

The story of **יציאת מצרים** is, in a sense, the story of Hashem's investment in us. He altered nature, brought the Ten Plagues, protected us with the Clouds of Glory, gave us water from a rock, fed us with manna from Heaven, and split the sea. Every miracle proclaimed how deeply Hashem cared for His people.

After leaving Egypt, when the nation reached a place with no water, the Torah says, **וילן העם על משה**—"the people complained to Moshe." Chazal explain that the word **העם** here refers to the **ערב רב**, not the Jewish people. They had not experienced the Exodus in the same way, nor did they feel the same sense of Hashem's love and investment. Without that feeling, complaint came easily.

This sheds light on the Haggadah's words. **כל המרבה לספר ביציאת מצרים** means the more we speak about the Exodus, the more we reflect on everything Hashem did for us. And **הרי זה משובח** does not simply mean we are praised—it means we become elevated.

Why? Because the more we recognize how much Hashem invested in us, the more we appreciate our own worth in His eyes. The Seder is not just about remembering what happened long ago. It is about realizing how much Hashem loves us, cares for us, and continues to guide our lives.

That is why the mitzvah is specifically **לספר**—to speak, to tell the story. Through speaking about Hashem's care for us, we strengthen our awareness of our own value, and in doing so, we ourselves become **משובח**.

כל המרבה לספר the more you talk **הרי זה משובח** you become elevated, you become greater because you start to realize how much **השם** invested in you.



Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah famously says:

"**הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה, ולא זכיתי שתיאמר יציאת מצרים בלילות**..."
"I was like a man of seventy years, yet I did not merit to find the source for mentioning the Exodus at night."

But this raises a question. Why was he so certain that the Exodus had to be mentioned at night? It sounds as though he already knew the law—he simply hadn't found the verse to support it.

The explanation is rooted in the length of the Egyptian exile. The Jewish people were destined to remain in Egypt for 400 years, yet they left after only 210. According to one opinion, Hashem "counted the nights" as well as the days. Since the suffering extended into the nights, the exile was effectively accelerated, allowing the redemption to come 190 years earlier. This is the meaning of **חשב את הקץ**—Hashem shortened the end. (**קץ** gematria 190)

This idea is hinted to in the verse "**קץ שם לחשך**"—Hashem brought the end through the darkness. The nights themselves became part of the redemption.

That is why Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah assumed we must mention **יציאת מצרים** at night. The night was not incidental to the Exodus—it was one of the main reasons the redemption came sooner.

The Torah even says that Hashem took us out of Egypt **לילה**. We physically left during the day, but it was because of the nights that we were able to leave when we did.

There is a powerful lesson here.

Every person experiences periods of darkness. We naturally recognize Hashem when life is bright and everything is going well. But it is much harder to see Him during the "night"—times of struggle, uncertainty, or pain.

Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah teaches that a Jew speaks about the Exodus at night because Hashem is just as present in the darkness as He is in the light. Often, we only understand later how the difficult moments were part of our redemption. Our challenge is to believe that Hashem is with us even before morning arrives.

That is why we mention the Exodus by day and by night. We don't only recognize Hashem when life is easy. We affirm that even in the darkest moments, He is guiding us toward redemption.



The Haggadah declares:

ברוך המקום ברוך הוא. ברוך שנתן תורה לעמו ישראל. ברוך הוא. "*Blessed is Hashem. Blessed is He. Blessed is the One who gave the Torah to His people Israel.*"

At first glance, this seems out of place. Pesach celebrates the Exodus from Egypt. Isn't the giving of the Torah the theme of Shavuos?

The answer is that the Exodus was never an end in itself. We were not redeemed simply to become free—we were redeemed in order to receive the Torah.

The greatest gift Hashem ever gave the Jewish people was not the Ten Plagues, the splitting of the sea, the manna, the Clouds of Glory,

or the water from the rock. Those were extraordinary miracles, but they were all leading to something greater.

The greatest gift is the Torah.

The Torah gives us purpose and direction. It teaches us to pause on Shabbos, to speak to Hashem through tefillah, to live with emunah and bitachon, to honor our parents, to respect other people's property, and even to refine our thoughts and desires. Every mitzvah is an expression of Hashem's love and guidance.

That is why, in the middle of the Haggadah, we stop to thank Hashem for giving us the Torah. We are reminding ourselves that freedom was not the destination—it was the pathway to our true mission.

Only after making this declaration do we introduce the Four Sons.

Before we can educate a child—whether the wise son, the wicked son, the simple son, or the one who does not know how to ask—we must first be clear about what we ourselves believe. The foundation of Jewish education is the conviction that the Torah is our greatest treasure.

ברוך שנתן תורה לעמו ישראל. Thank You, Hashem, for giving us the Torah. It is the greatest gift we have ever received, and it is what gives meaning to both the highest and the most challenging moments of our lives.



The Seder is not merely a historical retelling, but an active infusion of spiritual energy for the year ahead:

"Every year, on the night of Pesach, the same light that shone during the Exodus shines again. It is a time when every Jew can receive the power of freedom—not just from Pharaoh, but from their own personal limitations (meitzarim)." ~ The Sfas Emes.



The Aryan's Haggadah

I want to share with you a beautiful story about a man by the name of Dovid or David. In 1950, David was in Prague. It was right after World War II. The world was slowly but surely starting to come together.

As he's walking in Prague on business—he was not from Prague, he's from Zurich, Switzerland—a man comes over to him and says to him, "Excuse me, sir, are you Aryan?" which means non-Jewish German.

He says to the fellow, somewhat cautious, "No, I'm a Jew."

And the fellow says to him, "I used to be a Jew, but now I'm an Aryan. After what I went through, I'm not a Jew anymore."

He says, "I understand, of course."

He says, "But I know something. I know that you're not supposed to throw out Sifrei Kodesh, holy Jewish books. And I have a few books that I got when I went back to where I lived: a Chumash, a Siddur, Tehillim, Haggadah. - Would you take them from me because I'm never going to need them again. I'm no longer Jewish."

He said, "Okay, I'll take them." And he takes these Sefarim and he brings them back to his apartment in Zurich, Switzerland. And he puts the Siddur with the Siddurim, the Chumash with the Chumashim, the Tehillim with the Tehillims, and he puts the Haggadah in the Haggadah box.

Fast forward a bunch of years later. It's Erev Pesach. He's in center city in Zurich and all of a sudden he sees a man that looks familiar. He goes over to the man and he says to him, "Do we know each other from somewhere? Did we ever meet?"

The man says, "Maybe we one time met, maybe."

He says to the fellow, "It's Erev Pesach. Do you have a Seder? Do you have a place to go to tonight?"

He says, "I don't."

He says, "Why don't you come to me? We have like thirty people at our Seder. You'll feel comfortable. It's every type of Jew, it's every type, it's every stripe. Come to me."

And that night the guy shows up a little bit late. They give him a chair, they give him a place to sit.

And then David's daughter, Dovid's daughter, Naomi was a teenager. She goes around with a big box of Haggadahs. And she gives a Haggadah to every single person around the table. And when this fellow gets the Haggadah, he begins to tremble.

He turns white in the face and he bursts into uncontrollable tears. And David runs over to him and he says to him, "Are you okay?"

And he points to the Haggadah that he's holding in his hand. "This is my Haggadah," he said. "I thought I could be an Aryan, but tonight Hashem helped me understand that I'm a Jew."

[And just a side note, the woman Naomi, the girl who gave out the Haggadahs, that's my mother. And David is my grandfather who Baruch Hashem is 102 years old. And if you get the Mishpacha magazine, there's a twenty-page article about David Rothschild, who's my grandfather, and this is the first story in the article which obviously I heard from him many times as I had this Zechus to spend Pesach with him.]

You know what happened to that guy? He thought he could turn off the switch. He thought he could be like everybody else, ke-achad ha-goyim. And at that moment, Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to him, "Don't trade away who you are. You're great. Embrace your greatness. If you embrace your greatness, it'll be a totally different existence."

זכרו תורת משה
לעילוי נשמת ר' משה בן החבר צבי זצ"ל ור' משה יצחק בן אברהם צבי הכהן זצ"ל
HEARTWARMING STORIES FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

The Haggadah To The Rescue



Rabbi Yechezkel Munk once owned a rare Haggadah shel Pesach that had been passed down through generations of his family. Printed in the late 1800s, it had originally belonged to his great-uncle and was treasured as a family heirloom.

One day, while a collector of *sefarim* was visiting the Munk home, Rabbi Munk showed him the antique Haggadah. After examining it carefully, the collector remarked that it might be quite valuable and encouraged him to have it professionally appraised.

The appraisal came back with a startling figure: $42,000.

This was in the 1980s, when that amount represented a tremendous fortune, the equivalent of roughly $150,000 to $160,000 today.

Rabbi Munk immediately began thinking about the greatest *zechus* he could perform *l'ilui nishmas* his great-uncle. His first thought was to commission a Sefer Torah. Before making such a significant decision, however, he sought the guidance of the Steipler Gaon, **Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky** *zt"l* (1899–1985).

Those were years when many *yeshivos* were struggling to survive financially. The Steipler advised him not to commission a Sefer Torah but that the money would accomplish far more if it were used to support struggling institutions of Torah. Rabbi Munk accepted the Steipler's guidance without hesitation.

He divided the proceeds into four equal checks of $10,500 each and sent them to four different *yeshivos*.

One of those checks was mailed to an old friend who had made *aliyah* several years earlier. That friend, **Reb Shaul Dulenger**, had founded Kiryat Chinuch L'Banim, an institution in Ashdod dedicated to helping struggling teenagers. Several weeks later, Rabbi Munk received an emotional phone call. His friend was crying. "What happened?" Rabbi Munk asked.

Reb Shaul composed himself and began to explain. "This very morning," he said, "I gathered all my *rebbeim* together and informed them that we would have to close the yeshivah. We simply could not continue. I had exhausted every possible avenue. There was no money left to pay salaries or cover our expenses.

"After the meeting, I left with a broken heart. On my way home, I decided to make one last attempt. I stopped at the bank to see whether they would increase my line of credit once again, but they refused. I walked out, knowing there was nothing left to do.

"On the way home, I stopped at the post office to collect my mail." He paused. "Your envelope was waiting for me. That check," Reb Shaul said through tears, "saved the yeshivah. It allowed us to continue operating."

Today, nearly fifty years later, Kiryat Chinuch L'Banim continues to flourish, having guided thousands of *talmidim* toward productive Torah lives.

Years later, Rabbi Munk's son, Chaim Munk, experienced an extraordinary epilogue to the story. While attending a wedding in

Baltimore, an Israeli Jew approached him and asked whether he might be able to drive him back to New Jersey. During the drive, the man mentioned that he was from Ashdod.

Chaim responded, "I know a Rav there," and began recounting the remarkable story of the antique Haggadah and the donation that had kept the institution alive.

Before he could finish, the passenger interrupted him. "I was there," he said quietly. "I was one of the rebbeim in that yeshivah. I was sitting in that very meeting when Reb Shaul told us that the school had reached the end of the road and would have to close." He paused, overcome by the memory. "And then your father's check arrived."

A treasured Haggadah had been preserved by one family for generations. It could easily have remained nothing more than a valuable collector's item. Instead, following the Steipler's guidance, it became the catalyst that saved a Torah institution, one whose influence continues to be felt by thousands of Jewish lives to this very day.

Rabbi Yechiel Emmanuel - Makkas Bechoros and Taanis Bechorim

There were several dimensions to the makkah. When the bechorim heard the warning, they went to their fathers and said, "You're crazy! You're sending out the Jews, and we're going to die!" Their fathers replied, according to the Midrash, "Fine, we'll lose you—we have other children." This reflects the mentality of the Mitzrim.

The bechorim then ran to Paroh, hoping that, as a bechor, he would have rachmanus. Instead, Paroh said that even if he himself died and Mitzrayim was destroyed, he would not send out the Yidden.

The bechorim therefore took up arms, and the Midrash says they killed more than 600,000 Mitzrim. This is why **מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת** is unique: there were effectively two makkos—the bechorim were killed, and they themselves caused another makkah by killing other Mitzrim.

That's why **מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת** is the only one that's got two names: '**מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת**'. Because it wasn't just the bechorim who died, there was a makkah that the bechorim caused as well. They went and killed other Mitzrim. So it's got in it two makkos: the '**מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת**.'

The Paneiach Raza, one of the Rishonim, writes that when the bechorim died, their bodies immediately began to rot, while malachei chavalah entered Mitzrayim and struck other Mitzrim. Imagine a mother watching her bechor die while seeing the rest of her family being struck as well.

The Mitzrim tried to protect themselves by putting their children in the homes of the Yidden, but the Ribono Shel Olam dealt with that too. The Midrash tells of an old Mitzris woman who had no husband, son or brothers and therefore thought her house would be safe. But the Mitzrim used to make images from dough representing the people who had died and keep them as memorials. Even these images cracked and turned to powder at chatzos.

The Midrash further says that animals went to the batei kevaros, brought back the bones of the dead bechorim, and placed them in their former homes, fulfilling "**אֵין בַּיִת אֲשֶׁר אֵין שָׁם מֵת**."

The Beis HaLevi gives another explanation: as the bodies decomposed, an infection immediately spread and caused further deaths. Again, Makkas Bechoros contained more than one makkah.

The Chasam Sofer explains that the avodah zarah of the Mitzrim was destroyed through this makkah. That is why Klal Yisrael could subsequently take the clothing of the Mitzrim without the problem of avodah zarah.

Taanis Bechorim

The simple explanation for Taanis Bechorim is that we fast because the bechorim of Klal Yisrael were saved during Makkas Bechoros. But **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach** asks several powerful kashas.

If we are commemorating a yeshuah, why a taanis? It should be a zman geulah and a time for a seudah. Why do Kohanim and Leviim fast when they were not part of the bechorim in Mitzrayim? And if the fast is because of those original bechorim, why does being a bechor today determine anything? Perhaps we are descended from a different child entirely.

Rav Shlomo Zalman gives a completely different pshat.

Imagine Erev Pesach in the Beis HaMikdash. A bechor watches Klal Yisrael enter in three groups. He hears the shir of the Leviim, sees the avodah of the Kohanim, and witnesses the extraordinary **קרבה להקדוש ברוך הוא** of Erev Pesach. And he stands there with tremendous agmas nefesh: "Look what I could have had! Look what I could have been involved in, had I not participated in the cheit haEigel. Because of that, I lost the kehuna."

He cannot eat because of his agmas nefesh. That is the origin of Taanis Bechorim.

How do you menachem such a bechor? - You tell him the words of Shlomo HaMelech: "**יְקָרָה הִיא מִפְּנִינִים**", which Chazal explain means **יקרה היא אפילו מכהן גדול שנכנס לפני ולפנים**.

"What are you worried about? You cannot perform the avodah? Even the greatest avodah, that of the Kohen Gadol entering lifnai v'lifnim on Yom Kippur, is surpassed by something you can have: limud haTorah.

Therefore, how do we menachem the bechor? We finish a masechta and make a Siyum.

And that is why Taanis Bechorim is unique: it is the taanis that we break with a Siyum. The Siyum tells the bechor: you may have lost the kehuna, but you have something even greater—the opportunity to be involved in limud haTorah.



The table was set with a crisp, white tablecloth. Bottles of wine, Haggados, and sparkling kossos adorned the table, which was graced in the center with the majestic Seder plate. The entire family, together with guests and talmidim, sat around the table of the holy **R' Yisrael Salanter**.

Suddenly, and for no apparent reason, the saintly R' Yisrael collapsed in a faint.

The talmidim rushed to revive him. Once he was stable, the alarmed talmidim asked him, "Rebbi, what happened? Why did you faint?"

R' Yisrael answered, "I just realized — es is shoyn bald Elul — it is almost Elul!

The Beis Aharon zt'l (p.93:) writes, "The six days of Pesach are a preparation for the seventh day, the primary day of Pesach. It is the perfect day, the day they sang shirah."

"Chametz represents arrogance—removing it is the beginning of true avodas Hashem." ~ Rav Yerucham Levovitz.

The Tzemech Tzedek zt'l said: "Shevi'i shel Pesach is Rosh Hashanah for mesirus nefesh."

Even a small kabbalah (a personal commitment to grow) before Pesach can lift a person to great heights. ~ R' Eliyahu Dessler.

