

**והגדת  
לבנך** *And you  
will tell your  
children*

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will tell your  
children***



**KING DAVID HIGH SCHOOL  
PESACH 5781**



Rabbi Benjy Rickman

*Head of Kodesh*

## *Implications of Leaving Egypt*



We all know why we celebrate Pesach. What bothers me and what I want to bother you is, So what? Why do we obsess over this story, not just on Pesach but throughout the year *zeicher Leyetzias Mitzrayim* all the time?

Bnei Yisrael VS Egypt represents two conflicting worldviews that are mutually exclusive.


Ancient Egypt was a land of wisdom. They had a genre of literature dedicated to wisdom. They built mind boggling edifices to memorialise their culture, that mystify modern man. But their culture was predicated on the worship of stones and beasts, they were a zoomorphic people, bulls, crocodiles, beetles, apes, cats and goats were all worshiped. One king did try and establish a form of monotheism, having people worship the Sun exclusively – this failed, he died and back they came to polytheism. We must understand that where there is no vision of Hashem there can be no vision of man. Individuals had very little value in ancient Egypt. They bowed to animals whilst people were their slaves! In the time of one of the Pharaoh's, Necho 2<sup>nd</sup> 120,000 were worked to their deaths building a canal connecting the Nile and the Red Sea. When you see a pyramid stop and reflect on the lives lost building it.

In contrast to Egypt, Judaism is a protest against idolatry and inhumanity. The Jewish contemporary of Necho 2<sup>nd</sup> was King Yehoyakim, he tried to copy his Egyptian counterpart, by pushing his workers.

Yirmiyahu 22: "Perform justice and charity, and rescue the robbed from the hand of the robber, and to a stranger, an orphan, and a widow do no wrong, do no violence, and shed no innocent blood in this place."

These words of the Navi are an echo of Moshe's demand for freedom for all people and the rights of all humankind.

If Judaism is a protest against idolatry, then Pesach reminds



us that Hashem loves us very much. The principal message of Yetzias Mitzrayim is to know who YHVH is. This Divine Name is mentioned when Hashem's compassion is revealed. Hashem is like a compassionate parent and we are his children. So why does contemporary Judaism sometimes feel like commands without a commander, why can you hear Torah without so much as a reference to Hashem. Halachik minutiae but no Hashem. The answer to this is a passuk in Yishaya 65:1:

“Here I am; here I am!” to a nation not called by My name.

We have to acknowledge Hashem's love. If we believe in Hashem's love we will receive it in our lives. The more we acknowledge Hashem's love the more we will experience the love.

Rabbi Chaim Cohen

## *Pesach Parenting*



Over the past 12 months as our children have spent so much time at home, we are better prepared than ever before for Pesach. Each year, we home-school our own children as we relive the first Seder Night of 3,333 years ago, performed under lockdown conditions. Seder night is comprised of many different actions and props, but none are more important for our children than for them to witness their own parent's enthusiasm.

Every morning, we *daven* for the ability to be able to learn and teach others.

אבינו אב הרחמן...תן בלבנו להבין ולהשקיל לשמוע וללמוד וללמד.

*Our Father, compassionate Father.. Instil in our hearts (the desire and abilities) to understand and discern, to listen, learn and teach..*

Before we are able to teach, there are four different skills that we need. These do not always come naturally to us, and we pray for Divine assistance. We need these tricks most on Seder night as we undergo the responsibility of *והגדת לבנך*, teaching our own children.

On Seder night, we must be more accommodating. *כָּל דַּכְפִּין, יֵיתִי וְיֵיכֵל. Let all who are hungry come and eat.*

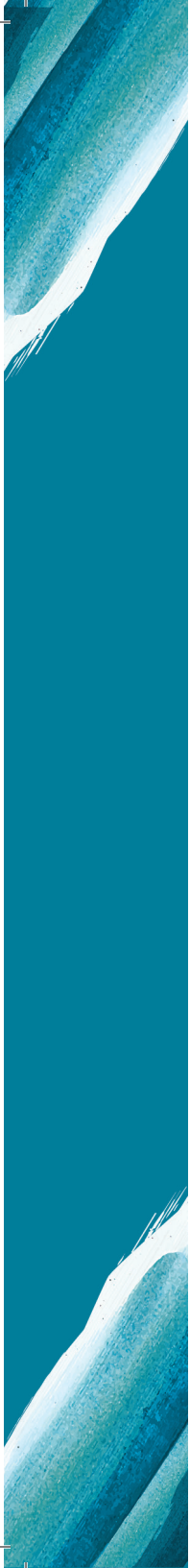
On Seder night, we must cater our teaching and parenting to each of our children, differentiating according to their ability, interest and attitude. Be they Wise, Simple or Apathetic, we must prepare an appropriate Seder experience for each of them. Even the Wicked takes a place at the Seder table.

R' Samson Raphael Hirsch (Collected Writings I, The Four Sons) shares with us the key to enthusing our children. Our children, he writes, need to see **our** enthusiasm. *Let your enthusiasm for God be fresh and unaging, and let your child look upon you with fresh, ageless enthusiasm.*

The Hebrew word for education, *חינוך*, actually means 'to consecrate'.

Everything we consecrate, we do so with actions, not with words.





The *mizbeiach* was consecrated by sacrificing on it, the *kohanim* themselves were consecrated by performing the *avoda*, and our houses are consecrated by the *mitzvos* that we perform there.

Chinuch of our children is no different. We do not expect our children to merely listen to what we tell them. Rather, we must lead by example and involve them in our Yiddishkeit. It is the parent's job to *initiate their youth into Judaism*. Every parent is capable of it, and this role cannot be replaced by anyone or anything else.

*All the textbooks, all the catechisms of the "Jewish religion," all the teaching aids - of whatever name - that had been invented as surrogates for the consecration of our youth in the home - all will be of no avail. Yes, even the best teachers and schools cannot replace the table at which your child sees you perform the precepts of your God with joyful earnestness. There, you transmit the precepts of your God to the hands of your child to be actively fulfilled.*

The Mitzva of לְהַגִּיד לְבְנֶךָ is not merely one of speaking, but by leading by example. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks would often remind parents and educators that ‘*values are caught, not taught!*’

It is our dream that this Haggada Companion will play a part in demonstrating our Parent body's enthusiasm.

לשנה הבאה בירושלים

David Gordon

## Preparing Properly



R' Yisroel Reisman שליט"א shares a powerful insight into why people put more effort (*tircha*) into preparing for Pesach than for any other *mitzva*.

The Kav Hayashar talks about all the exhausting effort that a person puts into preparing for Pesach. He explains that the hard work kills the negative influences in one's life and home. Working hard to prepare one's home for Pesach is a *segula* for *hatzlacha* in their home.

Similarly, the Arizal talks about how the hard work which goes into preparing for Pesach, as well as baking the *matzos*, has the ability to destroy the negative influences in one's life.

שמות יב:יז ושְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־הַמַּצּוֹת כִּי בִשְׁעָם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה הוֹצֵאתִי אֶת־בְּנֵי־אֲדָמָה מִמִּצְרָיִם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם חֻקַּת עוֹלָם.

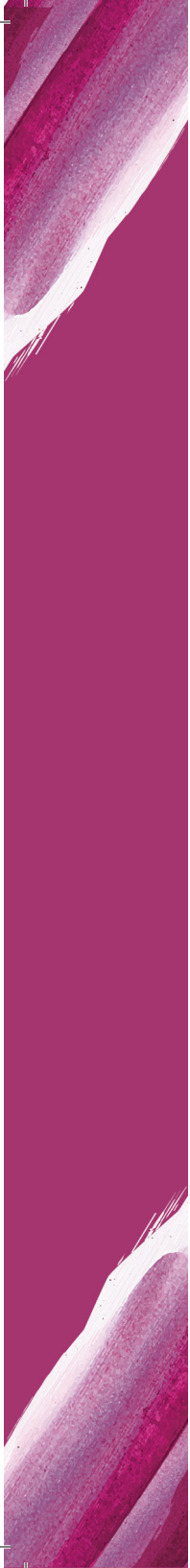
**Shemos 12:17** You shall guard the *matzos*, for on this very day I will have taken your legions out of the land of Egypt; you shall guard this day for your generations as an eternal statute.

The Netziv explains that a *mitzva* that require a tremendous amount of effort, needs a lot of *shemira* (care or guarding).

Why does the Torah only exhort us to guard the *matzos*? Why does the Torah not tell us, ושְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־הַלֵּוֹלֵב? After all, we also have to be very careful that the *lulav* stays kosher?

This *passuk* teaches us what a tremendous self-sacrifice the *Bnei Yisrael* had to undergo. They had to devote a lot of effort in order to bring a Korban Pesach in the middle of Egypt in front of the Egyptians. To prepare for this, they had to learn all of the *halachos* of the Korban Pesach within a couple of days.

When we understand that the *Bnei Yisrael* merited to leave Egypt only by working so hard, we can appreciate how careful we must be to prepare for Pesach.



We also need to be careful not to complain about the hard work of preparing for Pesach.

The wicked son asks, מָה הָעֲבוּדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם, *What is this work for you?* What is the wicked son really complaining about? The Talmud Yerushalmi explains that the wicked son is actually asking: “*Why are you working so hard for Pesach?*” That is the wicked son’s complaint.

The Rokeach says that it is forbidden to complain about it.

R’ Reisman adds that people who go away for Pesach (in non-Covid times) and don’t have to put in the same effort in their own homes to get ready for Pesach, must not lose the opportunity. They should offer to help someone else who needs help to clean. Perhaps they would appreciate an offer to clean their car or garage. Doing so is a מצוה בין אדם לחבירו, an interpersonal *mitzva* and a great *segula* for you and your home.

*Chag kasher v’sameach*



Dina Shalom

*Yavneh alumnus 1996-2003*



## הא לחמא עניא

### *The Message of the Matzah*

The ritual of the Seder is an elaborate recounting of the story of the Exodus. The aim is to try to experience it as if we personally came out of Egypt, to bring it to life for our children.

In Yachatz, one of the main protagonists of both this ritual and this story, the Matzah, is introduced. The middle Matzah is broken, the smaller part returned to its place between the two whole matzot, and the larger part is wrapped up and put aside for later use as the Afikoman.

The Sephardic custom is to place the Afikoman portion on the shoulders, just as our forefathers carried their matzot when they left Egypt. Every family has its own traditions, and in ours, the children carry the Afikoman on their backs and trek outside. They knock on the door and the following exchange with their parents takes place with great gusto:

*Who are you?*

*The Bnei Yisrael!*

*Where are you coming from?*

*From Mitzrayim!*

*Where are you going to?*


*To Yerushalayim!*

*What are your provisions?*

*Matzah and Maror!*

Immediately after this, the Matzah is lifted for all to see - and the story, Maggid, begins.

Thus, we see that the Matzah serves a dual purpose. It is first introduced as a symbol of our freedom, when we threw off the bondage of slavery and rushed out of Egypt leaving no time to let the dough rise. In the following breath, at the start of Ha Lachma Anya, it is heralded as the 'bread of affliction', the staple food that our forefathers ate when they were slaves, a symbol of slavery. G-d chose one item to remind us of both our slavery and our freedom.



What can this teach us?

Everything in this life can be used for good or evil. One who has been given the gift of riches can use it for good – by giving charity – or evil, by using it to create envy and discontent or waste it on superficiality. This is not limited to material things. In his sefer, *Orchot Tzaddikim*, the Ramchal teaches that all middot have positive and negative aspects. Envy is described as a despicable and ruinous trait which leads one to sin. Yet there is an area in which it is extremely good and noble – the area of fear of Hashem, as it is written, (Mishlei 23.17): ‘Let your heart not envy sinners but be in fear of Hashem all the day.’ Everyone should envy his neighbour’s good deeds and emulate them.

This is the lesson of the Matzah. It may have had humble origins, but in the end, it accompanied us in our hour of triumph. So too, let us examine our lives and choose to use and elevate what we have been given for good.

*(Sources: The Sephardic Heritage Haggadah; Orchot Tzaddikim)*

Rabbi Boruch Krasner

*Kodesh Teacher*



מה נשתנה

## *Learning the Lesson of the Matzah*

Perhaps the defining contrast of Pesach is that of Chometz and Matzah. Indeed, this is the first difference mentioned in the Mah Nishtana.

We make the transition from eating the Challah of Shabbos and Yom Tov to the Matzah of Pesach.

If we look at the background to these two Hebrew words, there is an interesting message contained in their meaning.

מצה comes from the verb מצץ to 'squeeze' or 'suck'. This is because during the production of Matzah the dough is 'squeezed', and all air is 'sucked' out by the pressure applied to the dough. What is formed is a 'Matzah' which is just the 'essence' of flour and water. This is also linked to the word מיץ - juice - the 'essence' of the fruit.

By contrast, the word חלה comes from the word חלל meaning 'space'. The dough is allowed to rise so that the air occupies the empty space in the Challah.

Perhaps this etymology can also offer a lesson for us to learn.

Challah represents empty space. Its body is largely made up of nothingness. This represents 'unproductive actions' – the use of time for nothing. The process of making Challa involves a period of waiting and doing nothing while the dough rises.

Matzah is free of air and represents 'essence' - utilising the important things of life and not wasting a moment of time. Indeed, the production of Matzah is done in a rush. There is no wasted time at all.

As we munch our way through our Matzah on Pesach we can try to learn its lesson, and make every effort to use our time as productively as possible.

Michael Seidler

## מה נשתנה *Why Matza?*



שֶׁבֶכֶל הַלֵּילוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֻמֶּץ וּמִצָּה, הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה – כֻּלּוֹ מִצָּה.

Why do we eat Matza on Pesach?

The Torah says in דברים טז:

לֹא-תֹאכַל עִלְיוֹ חֻמֶּץ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תֹּאכַל-עִלְיוֹ מִצּוֹת לֶחֶם עֲנִי כִּי בְּחִפְזוֹ יֵצְאתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לִמְעַן תִּזְכֹּר אֶת-יוֹם יְצִאתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ.

“You shall not eat anything leavened with it; for seven days thereafter you shall eat unleavened bread, bread of distress—for you departed from the land of Egypt hurriedly—so that you may remember the day of your departure from the land of Egypt as long as you live.”

For the full duration of Pesach, Jews are commanded to refrain from eating any leavened bread and may eat only matza, unleavened bread. This commemorates how when the Jews were in such a hurry to leave Egypt, they could not wait for their bread to rise. They made matza instead, and we do the same today. This enables us to experience how they may have felt.

Matza also has symbolic significance. Flat and deflated in appearance – especially next to a fluffy loaf of leavened bread – matza represents the humility of poverty and slavery, and is appropriately called the “bread of affliction.” Pesach is the opportunity to take a look at life from an unleavened point of view where you see things differently

Another question is “Why are we asking questions?” One answer is this is a sign of freedom. Slaves are not allowed to question their masters yet here we are encouraged to ask questions to show we are free.

May we soon be truly free with the coming of the משיח.

Ian M. Creek

## מרור *Bitter Herbs*



Why must we eat bitter herbs tonight?

The well-known answer is to remember and feel a sense of the bitter slavery our

ancestors went through. However, let's take it a few steps further.

Not only do we eat *maror* but we say the *bracha* over the *maror* as if to say "Thank you Hashem for this bitter misery, this suffering we went through!" Are we meant to sit there crying when we eat it too? The Lubavitcher Rebbe says it is the struggles we have that make us greater. Additionally, we do not just eat *maror* by itself on seder night, we also eat it with sweet charoset. When we dip it into charoset it represents how life is not all bitter and not all sweet. We shouldn't spend all day moaning about the challenges that we have been given or spend the whole of seder night focussing only on the bitter herbs, but to try and express our gratitude for them through the *bracha* we make! Because there is always sweetness in them somewhere.

Commentators say the reason we eat *maror* and the 'journey' we go through on seder night from eating it alone to then having it with sweet charoset is the story of our lives. Life is always bitter-sweet. We take the *maror* and dip it in charoset and feel simcha, saying to Hashem, "Yes, we recognise life has bitter moments, but it is always bitter-sweet." There is always something if you look hard enough that you can be grateful for and happy about.

We eat the *maror* on seder night not only to remind us of the slavery but to put us in the right mindset of the life Hashem has laid out for us, recognising the seemingly bitter moments but being grateful for them.

Barry Radivan

*More of the Maggid  
and less of the Menu*



For many years I was privileged to receive an audio tape every Sunday afternoon. I was an avid listener of the weekly Sedra shiur given by the late great Rabbi Moshe Kupetz zt”l.

This time of year he would divert from the sedra to give two consecutive shiurim on the Haggadah. He always finished his final session with a message. Anyone who had the experience of attending a seder at the house of Kupetz will remember that after the part of the seder of Maggid, followed by the matzah, maror and charoset, came the meal the Shulchan Orech.

This consisted of a bowl of Chicken Soup with Kneidels, followed by the Afikomen. The dinner was 15 minutes followed by benching.

Rabbi Kupetz used to say that on Yom Tov, have a splendid lunch of many courses, with hot and cold meats etc, lasting as long as you desire.

19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century sederim had become a race to the Shulchan Oruch, with a meal, served quite late at night lasting longer than any other part of the seder. This behaviour had become the norm in many households across western Europe Anglo Jewry.

Rabbi Kupetz couldn't stress that the seder is all about the Magid and not about the Menu. We should take the words of Rabbi Kupetz and follow his example and enjoy a fine lunch and keep our seder meal to literally a few minutes. The Seder is about one thing and one thing only and that is Yetzias Mitzrayim, the Exodus from Egypt, and we are obliged to feel that on this night we were freed from slavery from Egypt.

May we experience a meaningful Seder and may we learn new explanations and insights from the Haggadah.



Barry Radivan

## *Passing on the Baton*



A few years ago I was working in my clinic and I had a most interesting conversation with one of my clients. The lady, quite elderly and walking with a stick, was trying to decide if she was able to attend the seder at her son's house. Her son lived a short distance on foot from her home. She was starting to lose her confidence to walk late at night from her home to her son's. I shared with her an experience I had 45 years earlier. It was around 1970, I was 6 years old, and my parents were preparing the Seder table for all our guests. I was so excited to be sitting with my grandpa and grandma, together with my grandma's brother my great uncle and a team of other elderly relatives uncles, aunties, cousins, siblings and of course my parents. My grandparents were elderly and were born around the 1890's. They shared with me their sederim from when they were under 10 with their grandparents who were born around the 1850's. These stories and experiences, tunes and minhogim spanning 120 years. I was truly spellbound by their stories, singing the tunes they learnt from their grandparents. These magical moments encompass the whole quotation from the Haggadah

In every generation, one is obliged to regard himself as though he himself had actually gone out from Egypt. The Torah says "you shall tell your son on that day, saying 'For the sake of this, Hashem did for me when I went out from Egypt.'"

I stressed to my elderly patient that her grandchildren needed her to be present at that Seder to share her memories of Sedorim of her youth, with her grandparents sharing the memories of their youth.

This unbreakable bond that links every one of us right back to Yetsitat Mitzrayim is one of the many facets of the Pesach Seder, making the Seder so special for all of us.

Please Hashem, in the not too distant future I will have that very same opportunity to be with my own grandson and share with him the memories from my grandparents, grandparents **passing on the Baton** to the next generation.

Jeffrey Gilbert

## עבדים היינו



עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים ויציאנו ה' אלקינו משם ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה

“We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and Gd took us out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm.”

QUESTION: After the youngest in the family asks the four questions, the *Haggadah* is recited starting with “*Avadim hayinu.*”

Where in the *Haggadah* is the answer to the four questions?

ANSWER: An answer to a young child’s question has to be concise and clear. If not, 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 saltwater 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 also 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 of Egypt.

Mrs Esther Hoffner

Kodesh Teacher



## מעשה

### *The Five Sages in Bnei Brak*

מעשה ברבי אליעזר ורבי יהושע ורבי אלעזר בן עזריה ורבי עקיבא ורבי טרפון שהיו מסבין בבני ברק והיו מספרים ביציאת מצרים כל־אותו הלילה, עד שבאו תלמידיהם ואמרו להם רבותינו הגיע זמן קריאת שמע של שחרית.

It happened once [on Pesach] that Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarfon were reclining in Bnei Brak and were telling the story of the exodus from Egypt that whole night, until their students came and said to them, “The time of [reciting] the morning Shema has arrived.”

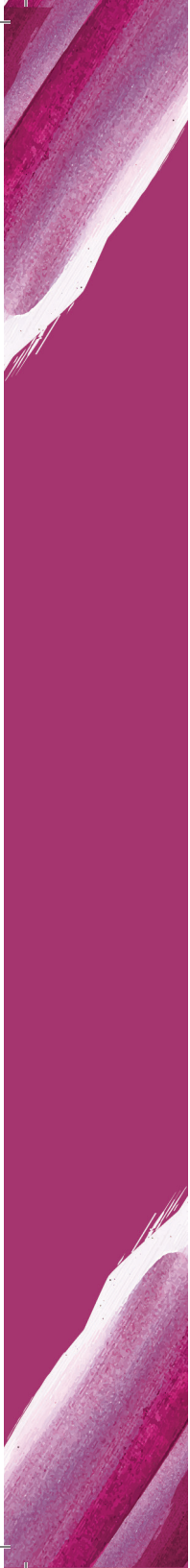
The Hagada introduces us to five illustrious Rabbis, they were the ones who had preserved the Jewish people after the destruction of the Bet Hamikdash.

Chazal find it strange that the Rabbis gathered in the home of Rabbi Akiva who was a student of Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Tarfon and Rabbi Eliezer, surely students visit their teachers on the Chagim and not the other way round?

The Aruch Hashulchan suggests that this seder took place after the destruction of the Bet Hamikdash and the failed Bar Kochba rebellion. Great sages were murdered, it was a time of total despair! Teaching Torah was forbidden, and The Romans were trying to extinguish the last remnants of Jewish religious independence. How could anyone celebrate a festival of freedom during such dark and dismal times?

All the Rabbis agreed that what better place to host the seder than in the home of Rabbi Akiva?

The Gemara in Makkot 24b relates that Rabban Gamliel, Rabbi Elazar Ben Azarya, Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabbi Akiva arrived at Har Hatzofim after the destruction of the Bet Hamidash. Upon seeing the destruction, they tore their garments in keeping with Halachic practice. When they arrived at Har Habayit they saw a fox emerging from the site of the Kodesh Hakdashim. They began weeping and



Rabbi Akiva was laughing. They said to him ‘why are you laughing?’ to which he replied ‘why are you crying?’

They quoted the pasuk in Devarim 1:51 that states ‘and the non-priest who approaches shall die’ and now foxes are frolicking around, should we not cry?’

Rabbi Akiva said ‘That is precisely why I am laughing, there are two interlinked prophecies. Uriah said, ‘therefore shall Zion be ploughed like a field.’ In Zechariah it states, ‘So says Hashem, in the future old men and women will sit in the streets of Yerushalayim.’ Now that Uriah’s prophecy has come true, I know that Zechariah’s prophecy will also come true! The sages said ‘Akiva you have comforted us, Akiva you have comforted us.’

It was Rabbi Akiva who could stare at destruction and see hope. Only Rabbi Akiva could lead these sages in the Seder believing in redemption despite the suffering. So many of us will be spending Pesach without our loved ones; grandparents and extended families, we will look at those empty seats and feel sadness. Let us adopt the philosophy of Rabbi Akiva that of the hope that we will soon see an end to this pandemic, to all pain and suffering. May the day come swiftly when Hashem will reveal His presence with great clarity to us all.

Rabbi Danny Bergson

חכם

## *The Openness of the Chacham*



The Haggadah chose 4 sons (or daughters) that are also personality types that exist within every person.

The latter three personality types are quite easy to relate to. The Wicked son rebels. He wants to carve out his own separate identity. He is driven by a strong ego. Perhaps even driven by anger and frustration at a tradition he cannot emotionally relate to.


The Tam is the voice inside us that wants to just keep things simple and not overly complicated. Sometimes we can over think about our lives and this can be unsettling and anxiety inducing. The Tam in this sense is a positive voice that promotes psychological wellbeing. The Baal Shem Tov sums up the approach of the Tam as “The wholesome simplicity of the simple Jew touches on the utterly simple essence of Gd,”

The son who does not know how to ask represents the voice of indifference which so easily creeps into our consciousness. Life’s challenges, bumps and traumas can drain us of our once youthful idealistic energy until we sadly give up and settle for mediocrity that lacks energy. For this child, life has “let them down too many times” and so they shut themselves off from the spiritual. A sort of defence mechanism to avoid further pain yet it only leads to a life of “quite desperation” as the soul receives no nourishment and cannot grow (unless as the Haggadah teaches, we open them up).

The Chacham of the Haggadah is the only son that has a curiosity to learn. He wants to uncover the depth of our spiritual tradition. His question already presupposes a deep knowledge of Torah as he breaks down the Mitzvot into Testimonies, Chukim (Mitzvot that transcend the intellect) and the Mishpatim (laws that can be rationalised).

It is interesting that the Haggadah does not describe the Chacham as a Tzaddik which would have contrasted better with the wicked son. Here is one reason why this may be.

Chassidic literature elaborates on the structure and personality



of our souls. Every soul is made up of ten components (middot) that make up its personality. In short these attributes are: Wisdom understanding and knowledge (the three intellectual components of the soul) and love, fear, compassion, ambition, humility , connection and leadership (the 7 emotional aspects of the soul). These soul aspects must work in balance with one another for us to achieve our potential.

For example, a life of only love and no fear is a life of no boundaries. Or fear and no love can be constricted. The Chacham is really known as a Talmid Chacham – a student of Wisdom. The attribute of wisdom is more than just information. **It is the openness to receive from beyond oneself.** In terms of our spiritual growth this means to accept that Hashem transcends one's intellect and therefore to connect to Hashem I need to be open to infinity. This can be seen in the word Chochma which is made of two words *koach mah* -the power of what? The question “what?” is extremely powerful as it acknowledges that we do not have all the answers and that you are opening yourself up to a new light.

This is the meaning of the Haggadah's introduction to the Chacham: “*Chacham mah hu omer?*” He is a student of “mah” totally open and not limited by his preconceived ideas or the layers of his self-conception.

The Rasha and Tam also say “Mah”. However, the “what” of the wicked son is really a deflection. “What is this worship to you?”. The Tam's “Mah” is reinterpreted by the Haggadah as “What is this?” meaning he is only interested in looking at reality on a superficial level enough so that he can function. The Mah of the Chacham is absolute. He is truly open to an infinite relationship with Hashem. His question is unlimited as every answer you give leads to a new depth of understanding which in turn leads to a new question! That is why the Haggadah concludes “And accordingly you will say to him, as per the laws of the Pesach sacrifice, “We may not eat an *afikoman* (dessert) after [we are finished eating] the Pesach sacrifice”. The Pesach sacrifice represents the quintessential Emunah of the Jewish soul. This must be the lingering taste in the soul of the Chacham. However deep he goes in his Torah journey he is only connected to Hashem and not his own ego if he remains humble in Hashem's presence.

All knowledge and all experience for the Chacham are rooted in this Emunah. This is the awareness that ultimately all of reality is just an expression of godliness - *ein od milvado*.



## Rabbanit Laura Silbermann



רשע

### *What is this service to you?*

*Reading between the lines of the  
wicked son's (רשע) question*


On Seder night, we glance around the beautifully donned table and note the four personality types beaming back at us. Aside from the child who needs the parents to reach out and teach him how to ask, each participant has a burning question. Whether the questions are laced with enthusiasm, cynicism, ignorance, etc. it is upon the parents to seek out what lies beneath the question<sup>1</sup>. We already searched the entire house to cast away all chametz, now let us search our children's hearts to find what is really there.

How do we perceive the wicked son's question? How are we meant to respond to him? The Chida interprets his question: מה” העבודה הזאת לכם” (what is this service to you) as the son turning to his father and questioning why must we be burdened with the actual commandments when the most important concern regards matters of the heart? According to his approach it is enough to be a Jew at heart. Does it really matter if I turn a light off on Shabbat? What matters most is that I *feel* connected to the spirit of the day. The Chida explains that only through fulfilling the actual mitzvot (Korban Pesach and Brit Milah) were we redeemed from Mitzrayim. If the wicked son was there, he would not have fulfilled these mitzvot because what really matters to him remains within his heart. Therefore, he would not have been redeemed!

Rav Lichtenstein suggests that possibly the wicked son is asking his parents to adapt these commandments to the new reality of living in Eretz Yisrael (contextually his question appears once Bnei Yisrael enter into the land). This same question arose when we returned to Eretz Yisrael in modern times. Essentially, the Rasha was singing along to the lyrics of Bob Dylan in his famous song:

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<sup>1</sup> For more on this idea please see Rav Menachem Leibtag's article entitled "The Four Sons in the Chumash and the Haggadah" featured on the Orthodox Union website. He writes: "In real life, when the parent hears the question of a child; or when the teacher hears the question of a student; he must listen carefully not to the QUESTION, but also to the PERSON behind the question".



“The Times They Are A-Changin’”. The response in the Torah refers to the Korban Pesach: ‘you shall say, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, because He passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but saved our houses,’ **and the nation kneeled and prostrated themselves.**’ (Shemot 12,27). The commandment of the Paschal sacrifice for the future generations (which is *different* than the way it was brought in Mitzrayim) reflects the flexibility of change to a new reality when necessary. The kneeling and prostrating at the end of the verse communicates our unwavering devotion to halachah. Innovation can only occur when we are completely dedicated to the mitzvah.

In our world there is a huge emphasis placed upon *feeling connected* in order to perform. In addition, we are very much impacted by our surroundings, and wish our Judaism wouldn’t get in the way of fitting in. What happens if I wake up in the morning and I’m just not feeling the spiritual buzz I aspire to attain while praying? What do I do when the prevalent contemporary message of ‘you can be/do whatever you want to be/do’ conflicts with the demands of halachah? As we respond to the Rasha, we can respond to our own questions. The intricate details of halachah and our motions really do matter. We are fully anchored in our commitment to halachah as we take into account the perpetual changes of our reality. We don’t wait for the inspiration to come before we act; *through our actions we are redeemed.*

Mrs. Jennifer Lalouche

רשע

## *The Wicked Son*



The gematria of Rasha equals 570. We are commanded to *Hakeh et shinav* – to blunt his teeth. When we do so, and subtract the gematria of Shinoav (366) from the Rasha, we are left with a ‘Tzadik’ (gematria of Tzadik being 204).

The Four Sons are listed in a peculiar order. One would expect the Evil son should be mentioned last -- not second.

The reason is understood by the quality of each one's questions. The “bad son's” question is second best. He specifically enquires about the service. This shows he is thinking and alert. He is just a little off focus. But at least he's clear on what bothers him. He's easier to reach because if you answer him in the right way, you can get him to change.

The Sages tell us that a good question is better than a good answer. Life cannot be better tomorrow unless you are aware of the problems today. This is the value of a question. Nobody is irredeemable, but the degree to which a person can be helped is relative to his questioning mind. The more we honestly question, the better our hope for fulfilment, satisfaction, and true peace of mind.

We learn something else from the Evil Son: Thinking itself does not imply the person is good. Society mistakenly rewards those who are smart. Perhaps we'd do better to honour those who are good.

Rav Ari Silberman



תם

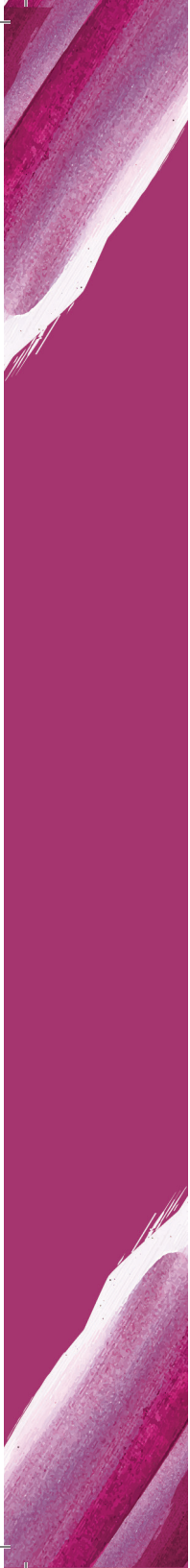
## *The Central Place of the תם*

We often disregard the תם, the simple son. Who wants to be simple when we can be complicated, deep, authentic? Although we should prize depth of thought, I want to argue for the special place of the תם.

For one, Rebbe Nachman, the great Chassidic Rabbi, teaches the value of being simple, in believing in Hashem with purity, without complexity. Especially in our days when things are so fast and convoluted, a return to simplicity in our עבודת השם is refreshing.

However, I want to share another take on the תם, from an unlikely source. Natan Alterman, the secular Israeli writer, argues in a famous poem that the תם is the one who is responsible for saving our entire memory of the events of יציאת מצרים. He writes '...You had to see the תם, the opening of his eyes when the sea split.... He looked on in shock and though his body was still stiff, said only, "What's this?" ...for the תם what [else] could he say?' In the beginning, according to Alterman, all the people were in awe of the miracles, but by the time the sea split, people began expecting miracles. There were so many miracles, and they were so great that people became complacent. Yet the simplicity of the תם meant that he was still always surprised by them. 'If not for his eyes seeing what they saw, and if not for his heart knowing what he knew, it is difficult to think ... what would have remained of the entire Hagaddah.' Alterman teaches us that without the simplicity of the תם and his constant surprise, we would not remember many of the events. People may have focused on some of the plagues, but the other miracles would have appeared run of the mill after that. It is the wonder of the תם which managed to preserve all of the miracles of יציאת מצרים.

Rav Yisrael Salanter, the father of the מוסר movement, taught this slightly differently. For Rav Salanter, the entire purpose of the הנהגה is to relay the truth of יציאת מצרים to our *hearts*. Whereas according to Rav Salanter, the *mind* is wise, the heart is like a child – it is pure



and simple. Therefore, on ליל הסדר we are required to talk to the child within all of us to appreciate the truth of the Exodus. We need to tap into the תם within us.

These themes are also relevant in our day, as is the הגדה. We don't only tell the story of יציאת מצרים but are required on Seder Night to recount our personal stories of redemption. Although writing about the תם, Alterman is also writing to his generation who witnessed the founding of the state.

The miracles we have seen via the establishment of מדינת ישראל, and indeed the miracles that we experience every day with science and progress, have become something we expect. Many do not even know how lucky they are. The message of the תם though should teach us to realize what we have - the miracles Hashem has bestowed upon us. The תם then also for us represents the way to most deeply appreciate the הגדה and represents some of the most important ideas about יציאת מצרים and Yiddishkeit in general.

## Rabbi Benjy Simmonds

Kodesh Teacher



### צא ולמד

צא ולמד מה בקש לבן הארמי לעשות ליעקב אבינו: שפירעה לא גזר אלא על הזכרים, ולכן בקש לעקר את-הכל. שנאמר: ארמי אבד אבי, ויורד מצרימה ויגר שם במתי מעט, ויהי שם לגוי גדול, עצום ורב.

Go out and learn what Lavan the Aramean sought to do to Ya'akov, our father; since Pharaoh only decreed [the death sentence] on the males but Lavan sought to uproot the whole [people]. As it is stated ([Devarim 26:5](#)), "An Aramean was destroying my father and he went down to Egypt, and he resided there with a small number and he became there a nation, great, powerful and numerous."

Why is the story of Yaakov and Lavan so important in the Haggadah? The following idea is based on a Dvar Torah by Rav Moshe Eisemann.

Lavan is known for his dishonesty and deceit. He tried to trick Yaakov a number of times. Yaakov was the antithesis of Lavan -the man of truth "Titen Emes Leyyakov."

Despite Lavan's tricks, Yaakov worked honestly and hard for Lavan and remained a man of integrity -true to his values and his upbringing.

Yaakov passed the *middah* of truth down to his descendants.

"The seal of Hakodosh Baruch Hu is Truth." As Hashem's people, we have sought to preserve His message faithfully, with commitment and truth.

Through thick and thin, we are true to who we really are and what we stand for.

The man of truth is the ancestor of the nation of truth.

In Egypt we were true to our values, we did not change our names, language or clothes.

Our identity was preserved, despite suffering. So what Lavan tried to do and how Yaakov resisted and was steadfast is intrinsic to the story and to the Jewish future. We will always strive to be true to Hashem and to ourselves.



## Philip Landes

### *Tzei Ul'mad*



The Maharal points out that it seems surprising that the Rabbis in the Haggadah see Lavan as worse than Pharaoh, who is normally considered as the arch nemesis of the Jewish people.

Also, why is Esav's open, stated intention to kill Yaakov not mentioned in the Haggadah at all? Lavan on the other hand, never openly claimed he wanted to kill Yaakov.

Superficially, it seems totally unreasonable to claim Lavan wanted to destroy Yaakov as his daughters were married to Yaakov, and their children were his grandchildren!

The Haggadah's claim that Pharaoh only wanted to destroy the males also seems odd, because although that may have been true at the beginning, later on however, he clearly wanted to obliterate all the Jews completely.

The Maharal explains that the Rabbis focus on Lavan precisely in order to teach us the classic example of the incomprehensible, supernatural hatred of the Jewish people, for no obvious reason at all.

Pharaoh at least attempted to justify his persecution of the Jews, however tenuous, by claiming they would join with Egypt's enemies. Also, the plan to destroy the Jews only came after they defected and it would have been normal to punish slaves who attempted to escape.

Esav also had a very good reason for hating Yaakov, who after all, had stolen his birth right.

Lavan, on the other hand, showed an even greater, total hatred of Yaakov, who far from harming him, had actually tended his flock and brought him wealth! It's abundantly clear from Lavan's own words after pursuing Yaakov, that if Hashem hadn't intervened and warned him not to touch Yaakov, he would have killed all of them.

The Maharal explains on a spiritual level that the battle between Yaakov and Lavan is between holiness and impurity, like matter and anti-matter which cannot exist simultaneously. Without Hashem's intervention, Lavan's destruction of Yaakov would have been complete.

Rabbi Aaron Lipsey

צא ולמד

## *Go and Learn: The Lesson of History*



Our family seders were always joyous and memorable occasions. One year I remember one of my cousins – a boy of 5 or 6 – asking “Mummy, where are we up to?”

My aunt said “Tze u’lemad”.

To which my young cousin immediately responded “U’lemad”...

That was a long time ago, but I still recall how we laughed, and to the chagrin of my own children, I insist on repeating the story every year at that point of the seder.

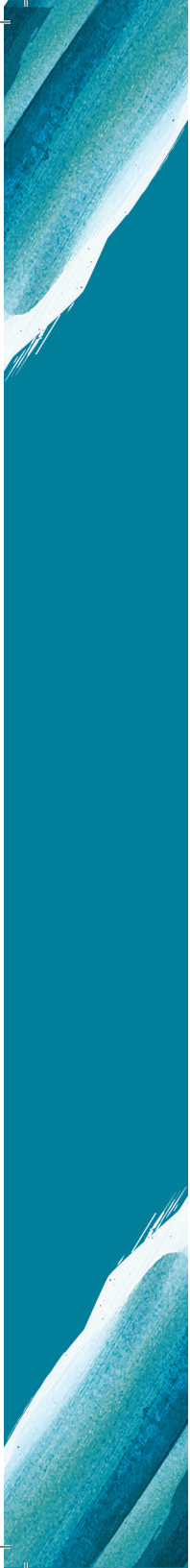
But the truth is that Tze u’Lemad is no laughing matter. Many Jews mistakenly think that the way to solve the ancient scourge of anti-Semitism is to embrace the motto “If you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em!” They argue that if we stopped being so ‘otherly’, so different, if we were only more like ‘them’ there would be no more anti-Semitism. We would all get along just fine.

And so the Haggadah reminds us how mistaken this way of thinking actually is. Just after discussing the perennial condition of anti-Semitism – “In every generation they stand up against us to destroy us” – by immediately stating: “Tze u’lemad: go and learn from Laban the Aramite.”

Who he? And what’s the connection?

Well; consider this; was there ever a gentile in Jewish history who was closer to the Jews than Laban? Laban was our patriarch: Jacob’s uncle, father-in-law (4 times over!), employer, and Zeide to his children. Laban was truly our family! Yet, his anti-Semitism was so legendary that the Haggadah claims that it was worse than Pharaoh’s.

In other words, attempts to break down the walls between Jews and non-Jews by assimilating and intermarrying do not fix anti-Semitism. Look at Germany before the Holocaust where Jews were



not just accepted as equals in German culture but they were the epitome of Germany itself with prominent figures in the arts and the sciences. Yet, it was right there, at the heart of the intersection between Jewish and non-Jewish people that the worst ever outbreak of anti-Semitism occurred.

The only solution to anti-Semitism is, as the Haggadah itself states: “And this – Gd’s covenant and promise – is what stood by our parents and us. For not just one alone has risen against us to destroy us, but in every generation they rise against us to destroy us; and the Holy One, blessed be He, saves us from their hand!”

As we celebrate our exodus from Egypt the Haggadah reminds us that it was true then and we would do well to remember that it is true today. We are witnessing the reawakening of anti-Semitism in all its nefarious guises around the world and only a strong and proud Jewish nation with unshakeable trust in Gd can break it. It is only when the Labans of this world see that our Jewishness is non-negotiable will they respect us and live in peace with us.

*Next year in Jerusalem!*

David Levine

## *Vehi She'Amdah*



It wasn't just Yaakov Shwekey who popularised the singing of this passage. Traditionally it has always been sung. The question is Why?

Singing has always played a very important role in Judaism. From the times of the Beis HaMikdosh through to the invention of the printing press, not everyone had easy access to Siddurim and Machzorim. Singing is one way to help people remember the words of Tefillah. And singing with others connects us to those others and enhances the sense of community - of a Kehillah.

But again - why?

Singing is a very mystical thing. It reaches parts of us that are closed off. Singing has a way of moving us emotionally in ways that are very unique. It brings back memories. It conjures up images. It places us back to previous times and places when we sung the same songs. The thought of singing something that was sung not just last year, or the year before but even hundreds of years ago is very powerful.

Singing is experiential - when we sing we experience emotions and the power of song touching our very neshomos.

Singing is Hope. The very name of Israel's National Anthem means The Hope. It was written 71 years prior to the establishment of the State when the idea of such a state was hard to imagine.

Jewish People have always hoped. We have always looked upon the calamities we have had to endure with a sense of optimism and hope knowing that Hashem is by our side.



Family Bolel

והיא שעמדה

## *Is Anti-Semitism Good for the Jews?*

*By Rabbi Yossy Goldman*




One of the traditional songs from the Pesach Haggadah which has become hugely popular in recent years is *Vehi Sheamdah*. An original version composed by Yonatan Razel was turned into a mega hit by Shwekey and was named Song of the Decade in Israel!

The passage in English reads, *“And it is this that has stood by our fathers and us. For not just one alone (Pharaoh) has risen against us to destroy us, but in each and every generation they rise against us to destroy us – and the Holy One, Blessed be He, saves us from their hand!”*

What is meant by the opening words *Vehi* – “It is *this* that has stood by us”? What does *this* refer to? The simple meaning seems to be that it follows on the previous paragraph in the Haggadah where we read “Blessed is He who keeps His promise to Israel.” It refers to G-d’s promise to redeem the Children of Israel from the Egyptian exile. According to commentary, it also refers to G-d’s ongoing promise to redeem us from all our exiles and persecutions, including the Final Redemption at the End of Days. This promise has sustained the Jewish People throughout all the dark and difficult days of our long and tortuous history. We have always believed and trusted in G-d’s promise that, in the end, it would all come right.

That is, the simple meaning. But a few years ago, I had this brain wave of a rather alternative interpretation. Later, I was gratified to see the same idea in the writings of earlier rabbis much more learned than I.

What occurred to me was that the Haggadah may have been giving us another message as well. And that is that the very fact that “in every generation they rise against us to destroy us,” **THAT ITSELF** is what has stood by us and given us the strength to persevere. Anti-Semitism - and the fact that despite all the existential threats we as a people have suffered, we have survived - all bear testimony to the



Almighty's watchful eye which continues to guide us through our special providential mission on earth.

Jews and non-Jews alike have marveled at our miraculous survival. Over 300 years ago, King Louis XIV of France asked the philosopher Pascal to give him proof of the existence of G-d. Pascal famously replied, "Why the Jews, Your Majesty, the Jews!"

Our tiny nation's survival, while all the greatest empires of the world have come and gone, remains a powerful confirmation that there is a Higher Power ensuring our continuity and our destiny.


Indeed, there is a strong argument to suggest that Anti-Semitism has been good for the Jews. The French philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre, made that point in his book *Anti-Semite & Jew*. History records that under regimes that persecuted us, we remained steadfastly Jewish. Whereas, under more enlightened, liberal forms of government, we became comfortable in our newfound freedoms, gradually embracing a welcoming but dominant culture and forfeiting much of our own.

Back in the early 19th century, Napoleon was conquering Europe and promising liberty and equality for all. When he squared up against Russia, many Jewish leaders sided with him, hoping he would finally bring an end to Czarist persecution and extend to Russian Jewry full civil rights. However, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of Chabad, thought differently. He actively opposed Napoleon and even had his Chassidim assist in intelligence gathering for the Russian army.

When his colleagues challenged him and questioned his apparent lack of concern for the well-being of his own people, he argued that while Napoleon might be good for the Jews materially, his victory would result in spiritual disaster. Tragically, the record proves him correct. Minus the Little Emperor, Russian Jews remained staunchly Jewish, while French Jewry virtually vanished. How many Jewish Rothschilds are left in the world? Gd knows we could have used them. Most of French Jewry today hails from North Africa. The originals are few and far between.

And the American experience confirms beyond a shadow of a doubt that freedom, democracy, and equal rights, while wonderful blessings for Jews for which we should be eternally grateful, also present a profound challenge to our Jewish identity and way of life.





In the melting pot of the United States, Jews have integrated so successfully that they are virtually disappearing!

Back in the 70's, when I was working with Jewish university students, we were struggling to break through a wall of icy indifference towards Judaism. It was so frustrating that my colleagues and I even considered going onto campus in the dead of night to paint a few swastikas on the Student Union building! Maybe that would jolt them out of their apathy. Of course, we never actually did it, but the fact that the thought crossed our minds demonstrates how external threats have a way of making Jews bristle with pride and righteous indignation.

We see it today as well. Outside many Shuls around the world, you will find young men and women who volunteer to stand security. Many of them are never seen inside the Shuls they protect. Going to Shul and prayer are not their thing. But when enemies of Israel threaten Jews, these brave young people respond as loyal, committed Jews.

It appears that as repugnant as anti-Semitism may be, in a strange, perverse sort of way it may have contributed to the stubborn determination of Jews over many generations to stand up for their convictions and live by the principles of our faith no matter what.

So, when you sing *Vehi Sheamdah* at your Pesach Seder this year, instead of bemoaning our enemies' hatred for us, find the positive side. *Vehi* - this very hostility and the never-ending attempts at our annihilation have only served to strengthen our resolve to remain steadfastly Jewish. Indeed, it has stood us well!

## The Family Deacon

### אלו עשר מכות

### *These are the Ten Plagues*




For many, when they have been sitting through the Seder – even on the second night – there is a sense of thrill and remembrance of years gone by – when we have sat around the table with grandparents, parents, brothers, sisters, other family members and friends – and in unison sung, shouted, thrown (cuddly toys, jumping frogs, [insert] whatever your family does) whilst dipping your finger to remove wine from your cup.

This particular point in the Seder may conjure up these real-life memories and hopefully also remind us of the reason of MAGGID – reciting the Haggadah – to tell the narrative of what things were like, what happened, and how things are now. It must be spoken aloud and shared with others. We must learn from this shared experience.

It may be hard to distract ourselves from the imagery of the bloody Nile, of jumping amphibia and leaping parasites; of the darkness and death – but we ought to – because there is the bigger question we can often bypass as it is the more difficult one to get our heads around! The WHY?

The 10 Makos are a complete suspension of the physical laws of Nature – evidence beyond doubt that Hashem intervened in the natural process that exists in the world – leading to *yetzias mizrayim* – and by progression, the necessity to follow the teachings of the Torah. This is how the Sfar Emes (Rabbi Isaac Meir of Gur) explains that through the 10 Makos, the 10 statements made in the Creation of the world (Pirkei Avos 5:1), turned into the 10 Commandments and thus revealed Hashem to human beings.

But why 10? Why ten plagues? Why did Moshe Rabbeinu have to warn Paroh multiple times – each time Paroh pleading for reprieve but only after the most devastating event did Paroh finally take heed. It is human nature that perhaps even after one or two episodes in our experience we refuse to learn – but what is it that makes us persistently and obstinately follow our own beliefs and not pay



attention to the logic that hits us fairly and squarely between our eyes?

Like Paroh, who and what we are can be determined by our egos – our concept – ‘my’ own idea – of how ‘I’ deal with reality. Often, we may be right – but probably also it would be really useful to examine our own thoughts and behaviours – to step back – and consider the possibility that irrespective of our certainty that what we are doing is right, that we may be mistaken.

We are not the creators of this world – we are part of the creation - and responsible for looking after it, the people and all living creatures.

None more so has this been truer than the period of time we have just lived through – and unfortunately still experiencing. When the temptation might be there to thwart the current guidelines / advice / the law in the face of confused logic (but logic it is) – we are still in the midst of this modern-day plague. It may be for us or others to determine the WHY? – the reason for what is happening now – but we should not and must not ignore the reality - and even though we cannot be with our wider family and friends this Pesach Seder – it is so important to speak aloud the shared experience of the 10 Makos and the time we are living through - so we learn and remind ourselves of the reason we recount the narrative - of both our spiritual and physical liberation - that joins us to the past, present and the future.

Martin Ross

פסח

## *Missing Present*



Whilst the *mitzvos* of *matzah* and *marror* have been continuously present on every seder night throughout history, the *korban Pesach* has been in a state of pause for the last two thousand years, since the destruction of the second *Beis HaMikdosh*. We are actually forbidden from eating any roast meat at the *sedarim* to avoid anyone mistakenly thinking that we are eating the real *Pesach* offering (*Shulchan Aruch* O.C. 476:1-2) and are reduced to having a mere prop of a roasted bone on the *seder* plate.

There is a strong theme of connecting the past, present and future which recurs at the *seder*. A good example of this is the mitzvah to teach your children the story of going out of Egypt (*Shemos* 13:8). In a typical year, many families have several generations present at the *seder*, but this year there is a similar disconnect between the past and the future as many grandparents will not be *sedering* with their grandchildren due to Covid.

There is another *halacha* that every part of a *korban Pesach* had to and will have to be eaten on the night of the *seder* (*Shemos* 12:10). A lamb will typically provide enough food for approximately fifty people for a single meal, so part of the effect of the *Pesach* in the Temple era is to create large festive gatherings where a number of different families would group together to share a single *korban*.

*Pesach* is the season of Spring – the season of hope and renewal. Whilst we have been unable to have our usual *yom tov* gatherings this year or last, the *korban Pesach* can act as a reminder for us that the past that we were used to will return. Please G-d next year we will be able to again share our *sedarim* with our extended families and that we should all merit to share a proper *korban Pesach* in a fully rebuilt *Yerushalayim* with the third *Beis HaMikdosh*.

## Rabbi Daniel Walker

### מצה



מצה זו שאנו אוכלים, על שום מה? על שום שלא הספיק בצקם של אבותינו להחמיץ עד שנגלה עליהם מלך מלכי המלכים, הקדוש ברוך הוא, וגאלם, שנאמר: ויאפו את-הבצק אשר הוציאו ממצרים עגת מצות, כי לא חמץ, כי גרשו ממצרים ולא יכלו להתממה, וגם צדה לא עשו להם.

The source of this section of the Haggadah is the Mishna in Pesachim 10:5. There is however a stark difference between the words of the Hagadah and its Mishnaic source, the Mishna merely states that we eat Matza, שנאלו אבותינו במצרים, “Because our ancestors were redeemed from Egypt.”

The author of the Haggadah expands on this teaching and explains the specific connection between Matza and the redemption from Egypt. –

על שום שלא הספיק בצקם של אבותינו להחמיץ עד שנגלה עליהם מלך מלכי המלכים, הקדוש ברוך הוא, וגאלם.

*“because our ancestors’ dough was not able to rise, before the King of the kings of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed Himself to them and redeemed them.”*

Clearly the author of the Hagadah understood the Mishna to mean not only that we eat Matza because our ancestors were redeemed but also because of the way they were redeemed.

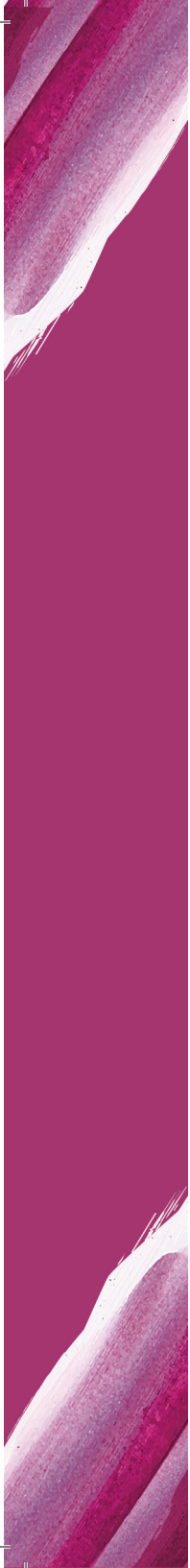
The Lubavitcher Rebbe points out that these two ideas – redemption from Egypt and the hurried way that it took place are really one and the same concept.<sup>2</sup>

This is because the only way the redemption could have taken place was with great haste. Without haste the redemption would never have happened!

R’ Avrohom Sava (1440-1508) – one of the exiles from Spain and a great Rav and Kabbalist expounds on this concept at length in his commentary Tzror HaMor<sup>3</sup>.

He explains that the Bnei Yisroel has sunk into the muck of sin

2 הנדה של פסח עם לקוטי טעמים ומנהגים 30  
3 שמות יצי: צרור המור על התורה



throughout their centuries in Egypt and that it was their sins that kept them mired in the physical mud of servitude and affliction. So terrible was our spiritual state that nothing could free us from the clutches of evil. It was only the miraculous smiting of the Egyptian first born together with our performance of the mitzvos of Pesach, Matza & Maror that allowed us to be redeemed.

Furthermore, says R' Avrohom, this redemption came at the very last moment and therefore in a very great hurry, a micro second later and we would have sunk too far, we would have been overcome by the evil inclination and we would have become unredeemable, until the coming of Moshiach, as we say in Avodim Hayinu.

וְאֵלֹהֵינוּ לֹא הוֹצִיאָה הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, הֲרִי אֲנִי וּבְנֵינוּ וּבְנֵי בְנֵינוּ מִשְׁעָבָדִים הָיִינוּ לַפְרֶעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם.

*"And if the Holy One, blessed be He, had not taken our ancestors from Egypt, behold we and our children and our children's children would [all] be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt."*

This last second salvation is mirrored in the Mitzva of Matza, only the blink of an eye separates Matza from Chometz and only the blink of an eye separated between our Redemption and permanent servitude.

We are all familiar with the teaching of the Mechilta:

כְּדֶרֶךְ שֶׁאֵין מִחְמִיצִין אֶת הַמֶּצֶה כִּי אֵין מִחְמִיצִין אֶת הַמֶּצֶה, אֲלֵא אִם בָּאָה מִצְוֶה לִידֵךְ עֲשֵׂה אוֹתָהּ מִיָּד,

*"just as we may not allow Matza to become Chometz [by leaving it too long] so likewise do not allow a Mitzva to become "Chometz", rather as soon as you have the opportunity do it immediately."*

We may be tempted to think that "immediately" still allows for some procrastination.

The split-second redemption embodied in Matza reminds us that Mitzvas can never be deferred even for the slightest moment because: וְאֵם לֹא עַכְשָׁיו, אִימָתִי, If not now when?



## Kate Lurie

### מצה



Most Jews will attend or conduct a Seder of some kind and even the least identifying Jew will buy a box of Matza to have during the week of Pesach.

Matza equates to Pesach like a Menorah is a symbol of Chanukah, and it completely amazes me each year, the incredible number of varieties of Matza available around the world. If Darwin was around these days and wanted a new project he would have a field day creating species and sub-species of Matza.

Both matza and bread have one thing in common, they only need two ingredients. Flour and cold water.

People think you need to add yeast to make bread, but as most people discovered when they joined the sourdough craze of the first lockdown in 2020, all you need for your starter is flour and water.

So, if the basic ingredients are the same, what causes the change between a flat piece of matza, and something which, after much nurturing, becomes a delicious loaf of sourdough? The answer is just time. Over time, yeast bacteria, found in the air, colonize the dough, rapidly multiply and cause fermentation.


Fermentation leads to bubbles of CO<sub>2</sub> which cause the dough to rise and become airy and light.

In the Torah, it was highlighted that Bnei Israel were in a rush to leave Mitzrayim and therefore, their bread was unleavened and flat.

I recall an article, written by David Hoffman for the Jerusalem Post in 2011, which focussed on the events in Parshat Bo which gave a slightly different interpretation on unleavened dough.

In Parshat Bo, after the Egyptians had suffered with the plagues they were extremely eager to get rid of Bnei Israel as quickly as possible. *“And the people took their dough before it was leavened.”* (Shemot 12:34). Everyone knows this part of the story and thus why we eat Matza at our Seder.

Anyone who has ever made bread, knows that you need to dedicate



time to it, in order to get the best results. Most doughs take kneading and at least two stages of rising to achieve a good loaf.

The ‘unleavenedness’ of the Matza dough, equates to the haste and lack of time, lack of attention to detail, or possibly lack of interest that the dough is given.

David Hoffman takes this one step further and uses this term ‘unleavenedness’ to referred to this generation, the ‘unleavenedness generation’.

Hoffman continues to say that in this generation there is a great lack of patience, of attention span. Instant gratification is the name of the game, be it reality television, relationships, or most forms of written communication. More people tend to want an instant solution to problems.

Unleavenedness is the lack of waiting for something, anything, to come to fruition. It has taken the excitement out of receiving a letter or a parcel, think Amazon Prime or Same-Day delivery. iPlayer has done away with the anticipation of viewing your favourite weekly television show. I find that trying to get children to make one packet of sweets last an entire Shabbat is a hard enough task. Saving some for another day, never seems to be an option.

This article was first penned in 2011, exactly a decade ago, and I feel things have just got worst. However, we did retrieve a slower pace of life during the first lockdown, when people were able to hear the bird singing due less traffic on the roads.

Bnei Israel were not unleavened. They endured unthinkable persecution over the course of their enslavement in Egypt.

The Seder itself can be a test of patience for younger family members, especially as they wait for the meal. But as we tell the story of our journey to freedom, and we get, after having to wait a while for our goal, as Hoffman calls a “leavened” feeling which is has no feelings of instant gratification at all.

## Sarah and Jonathan Harris



### מרור

## *Maror in Modern Times*

In Shemot 12:18 we learn of the Torah obligation to eat *matzo* on Seder night. However, the mitzvah of eating *maror* is conveyed in the description of the detail of the Korban Pesach: “*In the second month, on the fourteenth day, in the afternoon, shall he make it [the Korban Pesach]; with matzos and bitter herbs shall he eat it*” (Bamidbar 9:11).

It is clear from the posuk that the obligation to eat *maror* was in combination with *matzo*, as part of the Korban Pesach. However, until the Temple is rebuilt, we cannot currently fulfil the mitzva of the Korban Pesach, and consequentially there is no Torah obligation to eat *maror*. In the absence of the Temple, eating *maror* therefore has a less stringent Rabbinic obligation compared to the eating of *matzo*.

*Matzo* signifies our redemption and liberation, *maror* our bitterness and suffering. Surely, given our current exile there should be a greater obligation to partake in the *maror* as we yearn for better times. However, we are instructed to the contrary: eating *matzo* is mandatory, d’oreisa; whereas eating *maror* is more lenient, d’rabanan. This teaches us that whatever challenges and difficulties we encounter, the importance of reflecting on times of freedom and faith - *matzo* - will constantly offset moments of anguish and distress - *maror*.

*Chag Same’ach*

Rabbi Avi Schwartz  
Kodesh Teacher



## מרור

### *An Easy Bitter Pill to Swallow*

מרור זה שאנו אוכלים, על שום מה? על שום שמרור המצרים את-חיי אבותינו במצרים, שנאמר: וימררו את חייהם בעבדה קשה, בחמר ובלבנים ובכל-עבדה בשדה את כל עבדתם אשר עבדו בהם בפרך.

It seems to me that out of all the elements that make up our annual Pesach Seder, *maror* is the most misunderstood. Even my 4 year old knows that we eat *maror* to remember the bitter times the ancient Israelites experienced in Egypt for their 86 years of slavery and servitude. Juxtapose that with the jubilation we experience in all other aspects of the Pesach Seder, and *maror* does indeed seem out of place.

I heard in the name of the Sfas Emes (1847-1905) that we need to examine *maror* in a different light. *Maror* is, at its very core, an expression of pain, bitterness and acrimony. And yet, it is our duty on Seder night to celebrate this bitterness and accept it as a vital cog in the wheel that turns out the Jewish people from Egypt.

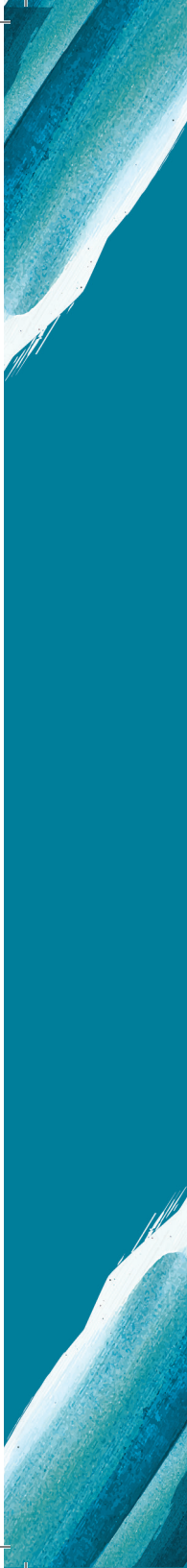
The bitterness we celebrate is the fact that Hashem, in all His omniscience, makes it so the Egyptians hate the Israelites.

הפך ללבם לשנא עמו להתנכל בעבדיו (Tehillim 105:25)

We see from Tehillim, that Hashem causes the Egyptians to hate the Israelites, in fact negating the possibility of any type of assimilation. Their hate is just too strong. This keeps the Israelites close, together. It allows them to remain loyal and sacred to the Almighty, without any chance of change. Further, we see in Shemos:

ויהי בימים הרבים ההם וימת מלך מצרים ויאנחו בני-ישראל מן-העבדה ויזעקו ותעל שועתם אל-האלהים מן-העבדה. (Shemos 2:23)

This is the first instance of the Israelites crying out to Hashem. A very handy tool that they will continue to use for the next few thousand years.



So we see quite clearly that the bitterness and negativity that was experienced then is indeed something we should celebrate year after year on Seder night.

Another example is the fact that it was all necessary to transform a family of Israelites into a nation of Jews.

וְאַתֶּכֶם לֶקַח ה' וַיּוֹצֵא אֶתְכֶם מִכּוּר הַבְּרָזִל מִמִּצְרַיִם לֵהֱיוֹת לוֹ לְעַם נַחֲלָה כִּיּוֹם הַזֶּה.  
(Devarim 4:20)

Through the iron crucible of Egypt was the Jewish nation forged. Each and every aspect of Egypt was needed to alter our collective spiritual DNA in order to be ready for that momentous occasion 7 weeks after leaving Egypt. Every brick that was made, every tear that was shed and every scream heard throughout the land were ingredients necessary to our ultimate survival and acceptance of the Torah as a newly made nation.

Even more so, the experience of Yitzias Mitzrayim is embedded in our consciousness as one of the most important and watershed events in our history. But in Judaism, we do not remember to dwell. We reflect to move on. Even in the midst of another exile now, we are comforted by the knowledge that if Hashem redeemed the Jews then, He will surely do so again. *Maror* is that special ingredient on Seder night that allows us to recall the pain and the hardships of Egypt, but it is also the vital component that is the foundation for our eventual and ultimate redemption.

*Chag Kasher V'Sameach*

Ben Sallou

*Maror*

## *The bitterness of today's slavery*



Did you know that there are tens of millions of people trapped in various forms of slavery throughout the world today? Researchers estimate that in 2021, 40 million humans are enslaved worldwide, generating \$150 billion each year in illicit profits for traffickers

I believe it was 7 years ago Michelle and I were honoured by my parents to host and plan the 2nd Seder every year for the family and close friends. Until COVID restrictions of last year, it was inconceivable not to expect a minimum of 30 free souls to create what has always been a highlight of our Jewish calendar.

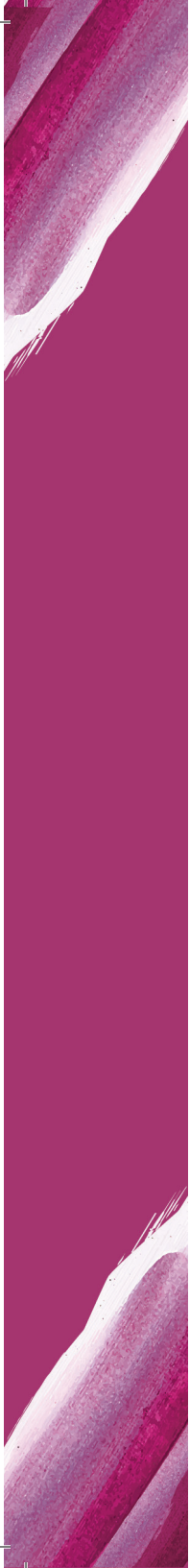
Ensuring an emotional and mental relevance of Yetzias Mitzrayim, to all members at the table, no matter what their religiosity or hashkafic outlook, can take many forms. However, we need not look too far into the constant stream of news bombarding us from around the world, such as those in Uyghur China, abuse of children in Sierra Leone, the torture in prisons of North Korea, to feel the magnitude and relevance of the story of our freedom from slavery.

Jewish philosophy today presents that we all are considered slaves. Slaves to our own inhibitions, fears, habits, cynicism, and prejudices. These self-appointed pharaohs are layers of ego that prevent us from expressing our true inner self, from reaching our spiritual potential. Our souls are incarcerated in selfishness, laziness and indifference.

No doubt this huge concept of self-improvement, arguably perfectly laid out for each of us to work on as individuals throughout the period of the Omer, can be brought home in part, by recognition of real-world politics.

However, as you eat your Maror, there are more than 20 million humans in the world who are victims of labour slavery, just as we were in Egypt. There are more than 10 million Children under 18, who are officially recognised as slaves & 5 million people are permanently held in sex trafficking. Even in the UK, it is reported





that there are 13,000 people who are officially considered to be in some form of recognised slavery!!

So it is because of this that each year before Pesach we make a family donation, on behalf of all our guests, to a non-for-profit organisation call 'Free The Slaves'. Sadly there are many such lobbies – but they are active and effective.

To assist us in the mitzvah of remembering that we were slaves in Mitzrayim, we proudly present a home-made certificate on the Seder table (printed 3 times so all can see!) and I read out this year's global facts about slavery, so there is no doubt that the issues of humans wishing to enslave fellow humans is still with us, and we should feel their pain when we eat maror, to realise our own precious place at the Seder.

The Jews have not had it easy in their freedom to be Jews, but at least a glance into other parts of the world today, will make anyone count their blessings that we were able to leave Egypt when we did.

*Wishing you all a kosher, happy & healthy Pesach!*

Sandi Mann

## *Experiencing Freedom*



As we enter the final stage of the fight against Coronavirus restrictions in the UK and much of the world, I cannot help but reflect on the curious juxtaposition of the Chag HaHerut (Festival of Freedom) book-ending one of the most challenging periods in recent history. At a time when we celebrate and commemorate the quest for freedom of the Jewish people from their slavery in Mitzrayim, we can recognise that we have actually witnessed and lived through a fight for our own freedoms. Of course, we cannot compare the brutality of slavery with the order to 'stay home', but it is a dramatic curtailing of our freedom, with drastic consequences for many, nevertheless.


Last Pesach saw the start of the total and to some, catastrophic loss of our basic freedom, as we were no longer permitted to enjoy even the most basic liberties that we had previously enjoyed for generations. Suddenly, simple acts such as meeting up with a friend, hugging a grandparent, going to shul or kicking a ball around a park were forbidden. We lost the freedom to go to school or to work, some lost the ability to earn a living, and we all lost the liberty of choice in many areas of our lives. For a year now, our most basic freedoms have been governed by R numbers, Tiers and protecting the NHS.

But now, Pesach 2021, sees the start of the return of those freedoms. Indeed, on 2<sup>nd</sup> day Yom Tov this year, we can meet up to 6 people in our garden – a simple freedom that we have rarely been permitted to enjoy in Manchester since before last Pesach.

Who could have imagined that in our time, the quest for freedom that we read about in the Haggaddah, should be so relevant and resonate so much? It states in Pesachim 116b:

בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיִּיב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ כְּאִילוֹ הוּא יֹצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם, שְׁנֵאֲמַר: "וְהַגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר בְּעֶבְרָה זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם".

In each and every generation a person must view themselves as though they personally left Egypt, as it is stated: "And you shall tell your child on that day, saying: It is because of this which the Lord



**did for me when I came forth out of Egypt”** (Exodus 13:8). In every generation, each person must say: “This which the Lord did for me,” and not: This which the Lord did for my forefathers.

Most years, this is a big ask. It is hard, if not impossible, for us to genuinely imagine that it is us (and not our forefathers/mothers) who have left Egypt. Most years it is very difficult to imagine what it must have been like to yearn for freedom – the freedom to live life according to our values and wishes. But this year is special; this year, whilst we might not personally have left Egypt or slavery, we have personally lost and now regained our freedom.

Last Pesach we were enslaved by severe Lockdown restrictions; this Pesach, freedom finally beckons. And next year?

לשנה הבא בירושלים!

## Rabbi Jonny Goodman

*Kodesh Teacher*



### *Chad Gadya*

As the *Seder* night comes to a close, long after the Four Questions have been asked and answered, after the festive meal has been eaten and the tiredness descends; after the evening's *mitzvot* have been observed and the fourth cup of wine emptied, we raise our voices in song at the end of the *Haggadah* and sing *Chad Gadya*. This lively tune is one of the most popular of the many *Pesach* songs, whilst at the same time, one of the strangest.


On the surface, *Chad Gadya* appears to be a simple nursery rhyme filled with odd images suitable for the very child who sang the Four Questions early in the *Seder*. However, one is still left with the following questions:

Why was *Chad Gadya* placed in the *Haggadah*? What has a song that goes on and on about goats, cats, dogs, sticks, and butcher shops have to do with the night of *geula*? Is this the correct way to conclude *sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim*? Even if the song's purpose is to keep the children awake, the song's theme and images appear depressing and cruel?

Over the centuries, different interpretations have been offered to explain this profound song. Many see in its dark imagery the history of the Jewish people, the lone, innocent kid.

The father *Avinu Shebashamayim*, selected the lone kid, when giving two *zuzim*, two tablets of the covenant. The animals, objects and people who subsequently destroy and beat one another are the various nations that persecuted, and oppressed the "one lamb among the seventy wolves" throughout history. Ultimately the Holy One, blessed be He, comes to bring about the final redemption of His beloved kid.

Another explanation takes the form of a debate between a Jew and an Egyptian. According to this interpretation is the understanding that the kid is an animal worshipped by the Egyptians. Seeing in this worship the essence of idolatry, the Jew wonders how the Egyptian can worship a kid that can be devoured by a cat. When the Egyptian responds that he will then worship the cat, and the Jew responds that a dog can overpower the cat, the Egyptian quickly transfers his



allegiance to the dog.

The debate continues until the Jew concludes, “But all powers on earth are subservient to the Holy One Blessed be He, Why don’t you finally realise that only Hashem is to be worshipped?”

The various explanations of *Chad Gadya*, always surround the central theme that Hashem is the Master of the world. No true story begins or ends without Hashem. Whether we like it or not, whether we want it or not, whether we are able to recognise it or not. Hashem must enter into every story of our individual and collective life. Hashem is the Master of all. He conducts the affairs of the world according to His plan which may not always conform to our own wants. Each and every action, even one as “simple” and “ordinary” as buying a goat in the market place, is part of Hashem’s plan.

As we look back over the last year, the world at times has appeared chaotic, unfair and in disarray. The final message then of the long, Seder night is not a silly song about goats, or cats, or dogs but that there is *seder* in what may appear to be confusion, chaos and uncertainty. Hashem is running all the events – There is ultimately a Seder to this world!

Rabbi Avrohom Zeidman

## *The Farmer's Pesach*



If it was your job to compose the Haggadah, to come up with a standard script that Jews around the world would use to tell their children about what happened.

What text would you use?

I know what text I'd use! The Book of Exodus. The live event as reported by God Himself!

But that's not the text we use.

Instead we use the text of a farmer.

A farmer who wasn't even alive at the time the story took place.

Living at least 40 years after the event!

Why do we use the farmer's pithy little declaration instead of the Torah's own account of how we actually left Egypt?

I want to present a theory by a Rabbi Fohrman:

Why retell the story of the Exodus at all?

If the Seder night is just about relating dry history –it doesn't have to be done every year – and there would be no need to make myself queasy with all that matzah and wine.

There's got to be more than that's happening.

At Pesach, we are less interested in objective history, rather G-d wants us to focus on how that story relates to us. The Pesach story lays down the roots, but now we acknowledge that we are the latest branches.

The farmer has HIS perspective in relating the story.

What is it about his perspective that we are meant to adopt?

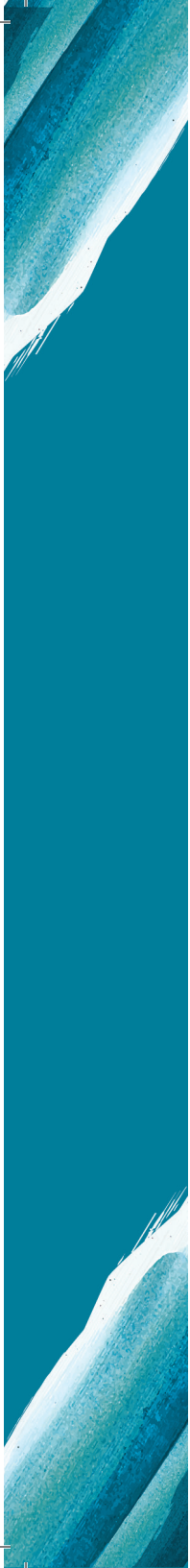
What is the farmer doing when he talks about the past?

He's giving personal thanks to God.

The farmer is testifying that God fulfilled a long deferred promise, a promise he made to our ancestors that we would survive and be given the land of Israel.

It took many centuries for that promise to be fulfilled but when the





farmer stands there with those fruits, he is living proof that it has been fulfilled.

The farmer by acknowledging that truth, is relating to God as the promise-keeper.

THAT is how we too are meant to retell the story - WE are living proof that God kept the promise.

By telling the story, we testify – *Am Yisrael Chai* – I am a living witness that the Jews are eternal. G-d has kept His to US.

You can't declare that God has kept his promise without ecstatically praising God for having done so. And you can't praise God for taking us out of Egypt without praising Him for all He does for us and our families.

It is a personal testimony of thanks to G-d for letting the Jewish Nation live until 2021!

It's a recognition followed by Gratitude.

Allow me to take the message of personalisation further:

At the seder table, The wise son asks:

*'what are these edut, chukim and mishpatim –testimonies, statutes and laws that G-d commanded us to do'*

Clearly he's an academic.

But how do we answer the young academic scholar?

We tell him the law that after eating the Korban Pesach –you may not eat any ice cream.

The taste of the Mitzvah has to be fresh in your mouth.

(I don't think he was expecting to hear THAT answer!)

The answer to the wise son –is the answer we give to the 'academic Jew' the one who views Judaism as a theoretical subject to be learnt in the lecture halls of University.

Yes, you may have a PHD in Jewish literature. But that's not the point...

LIVE IT, TASTE IT, EXPERIENCE IT!

Our faith is not an exquisite antique to be marvelled at a distance.

It is something to be lived. It is His story and our story.

