

# PESACH ANSWERS - CHAD GADYA

*by Rabbi Yehudah Prero*

What is the meaning of Chad Gadya, the last song we sing at the Seder?

The Medrash ( Bereishis Rabba 38) tells us the following incident: Terach, the father of our forefather Avraham, used to make and sell idols. One day, Terach asked Avraham to mind the store while he was out. A man came into the store and told Avraham that he wished to worship an idol. Avraham asked him how old he was. When the man mentioned that he was around 50 or 60 years old, Avraham commented "Oh my - here you are so many years old and you want to worship an idol that is but a day old!" The man left the store ashamed.

On another occasion, a woman came into the store with a large flour offering she wanted to leave for the idols. After she left, Avraham picked up a stick, smashed all of the idols in the store except for the largest one, and placed the stick in the hands of this idol. Terach returned to the store to find all of his wares destroyed. He asked Avraham who caused all the damage. Avraham explained that a woman brought an offering into the store, and each idol wanted to be the first to partake of the offering. The largest idol, however, took a stick and smashed all of the other idols so that he would be the one to eat the offering. Terach was upset with this response. "How can you be so cruel to me? Do you think the idols can really talk, move or understand! " Avraham responded "Don't you hear what you are saying about these idols!"

Terach, who was not happy with this disobedience, took Avraham to the great King Nimrod. Nimrod said to Avraham "If you will not worship these idols, then you should worship fire." Avraham responded that if anything he should worship water, as water extinguishes fire. Nimrod then told Avraham to worship water. Avraham responded that as clouds are really water that has been drawn into the heavens, he should worship clouds. Nimrod told Avraham to worship clouds. Avraham replied being that the air has power to move clouds via the wind, he should worship the air. Nimrod then instructed Avraham to worship the air. Avraham pointed out that as man has the ability to retain air although he is full of holes, man should be the object of worship. At this point, Nimrod was no longer amused by all the responses. He told Avraham "You are speaking empty and meaningless words. I worship only fire, and I will therefore cast you into fire, and let the G-d who you worship save you." Avraham was cast into fire and miraculously saved by Hashem.

According to the Maharal, the songs we sing at the end of the Seder are part of Hallel - our praises of G-d. On the Seder night, we recall how in Egypt, the Jews were spared from the tenth plague, Makas Bechoros - The Death of the First Born, which occurred on the night that the Jews were

eating the special offering they had been commanded to bring. This offering was to be either a lamb or kid - that which the Egyptians worshipped. Yet, the Egyptians did not harm the Jews for doing this heretical act. The Jews were saved from this threat, and they were saved from the final plague. The Torah (Sh'mos 12:42) tells us that this night was a night of "protection for all the children of Israel for their generations."

On this night of protection, we conclude our Seder with a dialogue similar to that which Avraham had with Nimrod. We start with the little kid, the object of worship of Egypt. But a cat can eat a kid, and a dog can bite a cat, and a stick can smite a dog, etc.. Each of these items which people have worshipped has a superior. The conclusion of the song, and the conclusion of the Seder as well, is a conclusion that we all know, and that we sing with great thanks: G-d is supreme, and He is the One that is our protector.

(based on the thoughts of Rav Re'uvain Margolis)