

# PESACH: THE OBLIGATION OF PROFOUND APPRECIATION

*by Rabbi Label Lam*

So even if we were all sages, all wise, all learned in Torah, it would still be a Mitzvah for us to tell about the exodus from Egypt and the more one increases in telling the story of the exodus from Egypt the more he is praiseworthy. (Haggadah)

In each and every generation a person is obligated to see himself as if he went out of Egypt. (Haggadah)

Why shouldn't there be an exemption for those who are familiar with the Haggadah? They already saw the movie and read the book. What more is there for them to learn? It may sound too cynical for the wise one to ask but, "What's different about this night from all the other past nights of Pesach?"

It was a huge and elaborate celebration. The groom was marrying the only daughter of a wealthy holocaust survivor. At the meal the father-in law stood up to say a few words. In his broken English he tried to grab the people's attention but many were lost in conversation until he declared;

"Everyone has a story that they like to tell about themselves. I would like to tell a story about myself! When the day of liberation came to the camps I was 60 or 70 pounds at most. I had lost my will to live. I had only one wish and that was to crawl beyond the barbed-wire fence of the camp if only to defy my oppressors, and so I did. After that I made peace with my creator and with my last ounce of strength rolled into a pit resolved that this would be my final resting place. I was there for I don't know how long. I didn't know which world I was in. Suddenly I feel that I am being jostled and lifted up. I am being carried by a "Bais Yaakov"- girl. She carries me some 5 or 6 mile and brings me to her family in a nearby city. They had managed to hide themselves.

They didn't know what to do with me. I was too weak and sick. They were people of means and influence so they got me a bed in a crowded local hospital. They fed me there and gradually my strength grew.

After a month I could stand on my own and the bed was badly needed by others so they released me. I didn't know where to go so I made my way back to the apartment of that family. They were gone. Everyone was going to someplace different. I scraped some monies together and got on a boat for North America. I ended up in Toronto. I started to work to make a living but my main obsession was to find the broken pieces of my youth. They had these meetings that were advertised in the papers. People from a certain town or region would gather to see if they could find anyone

who knew anything about their family or any other fragment of their lost lives.

I went to many of these gatherings and never recognized a soul until one time I spotted a familiar face. Could it be? Yes it was that Bais Yaakov. I went over and introduced myself. It was her. I began to thank her. I thanked her and thanked her and thanked her as no one has ever thanked another human being before. Three weeks later we were married. Today we are marrying off our only child and I have never let this story escape from my lips. I have been waiting all these years to have this many people together to have a chance to say thank you to someone who has been the best friend and partner a person could ever ask for and someone who literally saved my life. I would like to say thank you to my wife!"

If that is the thanks due to one who carried us a few miles, what is owed to One Who has carried and fed us an entire a lifetime. When we consider the many miles of kindness that have followed us and our people through the rough terrain of our history, our hearts should be overflowing with endless gratitude.

The Pesach Seder is not just a place to download cold bytes of information through the ages. The more we tell the story year after year and feel it real for ourselves the more praiseworthy we become, and no one is too sophisticated to have outgrown the obligation of profound appreciation. Text Copyright © 2004 Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).