

# NO CHILD'S PLAY

by Rabbi Label Lam

*Speak please in the ears of the Nation and they should request each man from his neighbor and each woman from her neighbor vessels of silver and vessels of gold. (Shemos 11:2)*

Speak please: ...So that Tzadik Avraham shouldn't say "that they served them and oppressed them" was fulfilled but "they will leave with a great wealth" was not fulfilled. (Rashi-Brochos 9A)

Why was it necessary for the Nation of Israel to leave Egypt with great wealth? Certainly that was not the purpose of the exile? Then why the special request to exact gold and silver from their oppressors? Why was it a key-promise to Avraham Avinu?

The Dubner Maggid told a story that helps to answer this question. A farmer's young son went away from home to work in the big city for a year. When the boy returned, he was deeply disappointed. The father inquired about his dark mood and his son showed him a piece of paper. It was a check made out for a handsome sum of money. The father didn't understand at first why he so saddened by this amount. Then it dawned upon him that the boy didn't understand the value of what was written on the piece of paper and how that translated into hard currency. So he played along. He pretended to send a letter of protest back to his employer but really the message apprised him of the problem and a proposed solution. When the boy came home he had a big smile on his face. His boss had given him a handful of coins inside a big tin can that rattled loudly. The big sound appealed to his primitive sensibilities even though it did not equal even a small part of the worth of the check, but for now he was extremely pleased. The ploy worked to quiet the boy and his disappointment till he could appreciate the real paycheck.

So it was that when the Children of Israel left Egypt the real reward of the Exodus would be the Torah. After 210 years in the darkness of Egypt, though, they were not yet ready to fully appreciate the value of what they were about to receive. As a compensation for all that suffering can a nation in its infancy be satisfied with words, laws, and ideals? In the meanwhile silver and gold works as a temporary consolation to be happy and buoyant until the appreciation course is complete.

It was moving day for one of the Rebbeim in the Yeshiva and many of the students were doing their best to help move the boxes of small items in cars. With me in my car was the most impish and precocious little Tzadik I had ever met. Since he was four years old I declared him to be my little Rebbe. His mouth was dripping with gems of Torah and natural wisdom. At that time he was all of seven years old. He told me that his father had just told him a story about a seven year old Rebbe.

The Rebbe would sit all morning with his Chassidim around him teaching, advising, and blessing. At the same time each day he would pick himself up abruptly and leave the company of his devotees and enter a private room for an hour.

A few Chassidim became extremely curious to discover what Kabbalistic formulas were brewing in those quiet quarters? They peaked through a key hole and found the Rebbe rolling on the floor with a blanket, crashing toy trains, and bursting into uproarious laughter. Afterwards he donned his royal robes and emerged with the aura of a Rebbe. Now more curious than ever, they apologized for intruding on his privacy, they asked the Rebbe about his un-Rebbe-like behavior to which he answered, "I may be a Rebbe but I'm also a child, and a child needs to play!" Even with all the toys this is still no child's play! DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).