

The
Torah
Spring

המאעין

הגדה של פסח
ליקוטי שעה ברכה (ח"א)

*The Hamaayan
Haggadah*

Volume I

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The family of Sammy Kalkstein

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Introduction

With immense gratitude to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, we are proud to present our readers with a collection of *divrei Torah* relating to the *Pesach Haggadah*, the Egyptian exile, and *Yetziat Mitzrayim* that have appeared in our weekly publication, *Hamaayan / The Torah Spring*, over the last 19 years. Each “piece” appears almost exactly as it was published originally. Only obvious typographical errors have been corrected and a modest effort was made render consistent some of the stylistic differences that exist between transliterations in earlier and later issues of *Hamaayan*. (In addition, some references to Torah scholars who were living when their words originally appeared have unfortunately had to be changed to reflect the fact of their passing.)

This work would not have been possible without the help of several people (in addition to the sponsors and the other supporters of *Hamaayan*). First and foremost, my wife and children, who live with the fact that I am always under pressure to put out the next issue. Second, *Harav Gedaliah Anemer* (שליטי"א) [זצ"ל], without whose active support and encouragement I would have stopped publishing *Hamaayan* long ago. Finally, my dear friends Alan and Fran Broder, who have distributed *Hamaayan* via email and the Internet for the last 15 years. In the early years, when I was still creating *Hamaayan* on a typewriter, Mrs. Fran Broder re-typed each issue for electronic distribution, and it is those files that were used to create much of this compilation.

A final note: This is the third book I have been privileged to publish, each of which has borne the title *שעה ברכה* (*She'aih Berachah*). However, I neglected to explain in either of the first two works what the origin of that name is. R' Eliezer Rokeach *z"l* (12th century) is quoted as saying that an author should allude to his name in the title of his work. I have done this with the word “שעה,” which has the same *gematria* as my first name, שלמה. The phrase *שעה ברכה* is based on the entreaty in the *bentching* for a *Sheva Berachot*, “שעה ברכת בני ישורון, בני אהרן,” and alludes to my being a son of Aharon, i.e., a *kohen*. Finally, the word “*berachah*” (blessing) is spelled the same as and, according to some commentaries is related in meaning to, the word “*beraichah*” / a pool of water. As both my first work (published in 5749 / 1989) and this one consist of *divrei Torah* drawn from *Hamaayan / The Torah Spring*, they appropriately form a *beraichah* / pool of “water” (“אין מים אלא תורה”). May it be *Hashem's* will that I will merit to continue to teach His Torah and publish other works like a *מעין נובע* / “flowing spring” for many years to come.

Shlomo Katz
וי ניסן ה'תשס"ו

שבת הגדול

R' Moshe Isserles z"l ("Rema") writes of a custom to read part of the *Haggadah* on the *Shabbat* before *Pesach*. Why? The *Vilna Gaon* z"l explains that it was on that day that our ancestors set aside animals for the *Korban Pesach*; thus, it can be considered the beginning of their redemption. However, the *Vilna Gaon* then rejects this answer based on the following *Midrash* (which is quoted in the *Haggadah*): "I might think that one can fulfill his obligation to read the *Haggadah* on the first day of *Nissan* . . . but the Torah teaches me that the *mitzvah* of *Haggadah* applies at the same hour as the *mitzvot* of *matzah* and *maror*." If the *Shabbat* before *Pesach* has a claim to being the beginning of the redemption, asks the *Vilna Gaon*, why does the *Midrash*, which considers several possibilities for when the *seder* should be held, not entertain a suggestion that it should be on *Shabbat Hagadol*?!

R' David Cohen *shlita* answers this question as follows: The *halachah* states that the *Haggadah* should begin with the low point of Jewish history and build up to the redemption. What is that low point? Rav (a Talmudic sage) says, "In the beginning, our ancestors were idol worshippers." Shmuel (another sage) says, "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt." What is the basis of their dispute? R' Cohen suggests that they disagree whether the primary redemption was spiritual (Rav) or physical (Shmuel). Such a disagreement would be consistent with other disputes between them, such as whether *mashiach* will come as a result of our repentance (Rav) or suffering (Shmuel).

Ramban, in his Torah commentary, appears to accept Rav's view, for he writes as follows (in explaining why the building of the *Mishkan* is described in the book of Exodus): "Even though our ancestors had left Egypt, they were not yet free until they had built a *Mishkan* and *Hashem's* Presence rested among them." When did the redemption start? Perhaps Rav would say that it started on the day when the *Korban Pesach* was set aside (i.e. *Shabbat Hagadol*), since the purpose of the *Korban Pesach* was to free *Bnei Yisrael* from their spiritual bondage. When *Rema* writes of the custom to read the *Haggadah* on *Shabbat Hagadol*, he is accepting the view of Rav, as *Ramban* did before him. As for the *midrash* which troubled the *Vilna Gaon*, perhaps that represents the opinion of Shmuel and others who disagree with Rav. (*Mas'at Kapi* II, p.60)



R' Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook z"l writes: Religious idealism is alive at every time and place, but the mundane in our lives obscures its light. However, *Yom Tov* comes along and lifts the veil, revealing the light once again, and then we all take pleasure in *Hashem* and His kindness. The great love which is aroused at that time drives us to occupy ourselves with *Hashem's mitzvot*, as we realize our profound debt to the One who has always loved us.

In particular, on the night when *Pesach* begins, a feeling of liberation comes over us, and the Divine spirit hidden so deeply within us makes its presence known. This spirit, in turn, allows us to see how we are in fact, gradually being redeemed. We have fought with enemies, physical and spiritual, strong and weak, and we are winning. We are witnesses that there is no spirit like the spirit of our nation which is constantly watered by the dew of renewal. (*Siddur Olat Re'iyah*)

בְּדִיקַת חָמֵץ

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

What is the purpose of this seemingly redundant effort? The *Chafetz Chaim* explains that one who is cleaning does not take pains to search in every corner. Moreover, searching by candle light forces a person to focus more carefully on each spot. (*Mishnah Berurah*)



R' Moshe Yehuda Leib Friedman *z"l* (the *Pishkaner Rebbe*; died 1947) adds that there is a *mussar* reason for the above law:

It is well known that *chametz* alludes to the *yetzer hara*. This is how one must introspect if he is to defeat his *yetzer hara* -- one act of introspection followed by another!

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

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

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

When that worker had left, the *Ba'al Shem Tov* turned to his guest and said, “You understand, do you not, that this non-Jew was sent as a messenger from Above to ask us, ‘Why are you busy with esoteric matters when you have not repaired all of your character flaws that need repairing?’ I replied that I had already perfected myself, to which Heaven answered, ‘Look harder, and you will find additional flaws to repair’.”

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

The *Ba'al Shem Tov* replied, “Don't say ‘I can't.’ Say, ‘I am not willing’.” And with this, they parted.

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

“Don't say ‘I can't,’” said the stranded wagon-driver. “Say, ‘I am not willing’.” Recognizing that he had been sent a message, R' Yaakov Yosef helped the wagon-driver extract his vehicle from the mud. Then, reversing direction, he returned to the *Ba'al Shem Tov* and acknowledged that the latter had been correct.

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



The *Mishnah (Nega'im 2:5)* states: “A person sees all *nega'im--tzara'at* wounds--except his own.” Literally, this means that a person, even a *kohen*, may not be the judge of whether he himself has *tzara'at*. Rather, he must go to another *kohen*.

Figuratively, however, this statement is frequently interpreted as referring to the fact that people are rarely objective about their own faults. A person sees everyone else's faults, but not his own.

If so, asks R' Eliezer David Gruenwald z"l (1867-1928; Hungarian rabbi and *rosh yeshiva*), how can a person assess where he stands? The answer is found in another *Mishnah*: "One does not search [for *chametz*] by the light of the sun and by the light of the moon, but only by the light of a candle." *Kabbalists* and *mussar* works teach that *chametz* represents the *yetzer hara*. The strong "light of the sun" represents wealth, and the weak "light of the moon" represents lack of success. Wealth is not an accurate indicator that a person has conquered his *yetzer hara* and therefore *Hashem* is happy with him, and lack of success is not an indicator of the opposite. Only the "light of a candle," an allusion to the verse, "A *mitzvah* is a candle" is an accurate indicator.

What does this mean? If a person wants to know where he stands in his service of *Hashem*, he should look at his attitude towards *mitzvot*. If he or she considers *mitzvot* to be a burden, then he or she has a long way to go. However, if a person enjoys performing *mitzvot*, then that person is on the right track. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Chasdei David*)



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

When he had completed the search, he turned to his faithful Chassid, R' Mordechai Chaneh, and standing before him, tore open his shirt and said, "Now, search out the Chametz in my heart." [The *Gemara* and other works refer to the "Yetzer Hara" - evil inclination- as "Chametz."]

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



The *Gemara* states that *chametz* which is found during the search must be set aside in a place where rodents cannot find it and spread it about. On this law, R' Chaim M. Hager z"l (son of the "*Ahavas Yisrael*") commented:

"*Chametz*" signifies pride. It rises and we must get rid of it. But, as with *chametz* (some of which is left over for the *mitzvah* of "*Biur*" / burning), we must leave something. Pride is sometimes needed in our service of *Hashem* (see, e.g., *Divrei Hayamim* II 17:6)

Yet man must take care that the small measure of pride which he leaves over be kept in a hidden place. He should take care lest a "rat" comes and spreads it about--lest the *yetzer hara* persuade him to make his pride public.



A man once came before R' Yisrael Hager of Vizhnitz z"l (1860-1936) and poured his heart out. He had arranged a match for his son some time before, but he had no money with which to meet the many wedding expenses. The Rebbe asked him if he had already set a date for the wedding. "No," replied the man, "I cannot pay for anything. How could I set a date?"

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

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



“*Bedikat Chametz*” — typically translated, “The search for *chametz*” — actually means, “The search of *chametz*.” What does it mean to search the *chametz*? R’ Yissochor Ber Rokeach z”l (the *Belzer Rebbe*) answered this question with the following parable:

A group of merchants was walking home from a successful day at the market, and they decided to rest under a tree. But where could they place their day’s earnings for safekeeping? After looking around for a safe place to deposit their moneybag, they decided to hang it among the branches of a tree.

Satisfying themselves that the only witnesses were the cows grazing nearby, the merchants hid their treasure in the foliage. Soon they had fallen into deep sleep.

The merchants did not stop to think that where there are cows, there may be a cowherd. From his place in the nearby brush, the cowherd had seen everything. Stealthily, he removed the gold coins from the sack in the tree and filled the bag with an equal volume of dung. He then hid the money in a hole he had dug and concealed himself in the brush until the merchants would leave and he could reclaim his ill-gotten wealth.

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

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

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

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



R’ Shlomo Wolbe z”l (famed teacher of *mussar*, died *Chol Ha’moed Pesach* 5765 / 2005) writes:

Education consists of two parts: First, building a stable human being, and second, enabling the student to continue to grow from within. These two processes are represented by *halachah* / law and *aggadeta* / ethical and philosophical teachings, respectively.

Halachah creates structure and stability. Without *halachah*, the Jewish people would not be a unique people. Furthermore, *halachah* is universal, applying equally to young and old in their respective circumstances.

Aggadeta, on the other hand, inspires growth and change, not stability. Furthermore, each person’s grasp of *aggadeta* is bound to vary depending on the refinement of his soul.

Our Sages say, “Don’t challenge statements of *aggadeta*.” Many people mistakenly take this to mean that *Chazal* endorsed an “anything goes” attitude toward *aggadeta*, i.e., nothing a person says in the realm of *aggadeta* can be “wrong.” In fact, says R’ Wolbe, that is not at all what our Sages meant. Rather, the statement, “Don’t challenge *aggadeta*,” means, “Don’t attempt to study the non-*halachic* sections of Torah in the same analytical question and answer format (“*shakla v’taria*”) with which you

study the legal sections of the Talmud. *Aggadeta* is something one comes to understand through reflection over a long period of time while living his life within the framework of *halachah*.

For example: A person who bakes *matzah* is engaged in a process strictly governed by *halachah*. He must meticulously follow the laws associated with that act, taking care of every minute detail to avoid any possibility that the dough will leaven or come in contact with *chametz*. There certainly is no time during the *matzah*-baking for philosophical or ethical reflection. But afterward, the realization sets in that the *zerizut* / alacrity with which one bakes *matzah* is a paradigm for all *mitzvah* observance. The Torah says (*Shmot* 12:17), “You shall guard the *matzot*.” In Hebrew, the word מצות / “*matzot*” is spelled the same as the word “*mitzvot*”; thus, our Sages derive from this verse that one must “guard” the *mitzvot*, i.e., perform them with alacrity. Just as *matzah*-dough can become *chametz* if it is not prepared quickly, so any *mitzvah* can be “spoiled” by laziness or delay.

Another example: One who carefully performs the search for *chametz*, checking every corner of the house and every pocket of his children’s garments, is too busy to reflect on the meaning of the *mitzvah*. But later, he realizes that *chametz* is a metaphor for the *yetzer hara*. Indeed, the *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 7b) derives the obligation to use a candle for *bedikat chametz* from the verse (*Mishlei* 20:27), “A man’s soul is *Hashem*’s candle, which searches the chambers of one’s innards.” Just as a candle is used to search for physical *chametz*, so the soul should be used to search inside oneself for spiritual *chametz*. Furthermore, the physical inspection of the house demonstrates the importance of physical cleanliness. On further reflection, we sense the importance of spiritual cleanliness as well. (*Alei Shur* Vol. II p.388)



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

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

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

“Suddenly, I shuddered. ‘The attic!’ I jumped up as if bitten by a snake. ‘There is no one here to check the attic. The neighbors won’t do it. Yet, the *Shulchan Aruch* says expressly that one must check the attic.’

“Naturally, a battle was raging within me. ‘Is it my responsibility to check the common attic that is shared by all the tenants in the building?’ Of course, my exhaustion was a major consideration. All kinds of thoughts raced through my head, but in the end I decided, ‘I will not give in. I will fulfill the *mitzvah* in its entirety.’ With that, I started to climb the steps.

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

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

“I went downstairs for a pail of water, and I came back up and started to work. Here I was, a *yeshiva bachur* cleaning years worth of grime from a common attic at midnight on the night before *Pesach*. From time to time, I paused and asked myself, ‘Am I sure that this is a *mitzvah*?’ And I reminded myself that, indeed, we are commanded by the Sages to check the whole house for *chametz*, including the attic. That knowledge gave me strength to go on. Close to dawn, I finally lit the candle and performed *Bedikat Chametz* in the attic.

“Needless to say, I could barely stay awake that morning, but there was too much to do to have time for a nap. I said to myself, ‘What kind of *Seder* will I have now that I am so tired?!’

“The *Seder* arrived, and I began to feel a great sweetness in the evening’s *mitzvot*. I also felt as if a bright light was shining before me. As I read the words of the *Haggadah*, they had a ‘flavor’ that I had never experienced. When I ate the *matzah*, I felt such a connection that I was ready to sacrifice my life for that one *mitzvah*. I experienced a feeling of closeness to G-d that I had never known. I felt so elevated, that I became another person. This feeling lasted through the entire *Seder*.

“I couldn’t sleep that night, and I stayed up performing the *mitzvah* of *Sippur Yetziat Mitrayim* / relating the story of the Exodus. As mentioned, I felt a closeness to G-d that I had never known. At first, I assumed that this was a sensation that was possible only on the *Seder* night, but I was wrong. The next day, I felt the same way.

“In the afternoon, I wondered, ‘Can this feeling possibly continue through *Chol Ha’moed*?’ [There is only one *Seder* night and one day of *Yom Tov* in Israel.] But the feeling did continue throughout the festival. That year, the seventh [and in Israel, final] day of *Pesach* was followed by *Shabbat*. That week, I experienced for the first time in my life what *Shabbat* was meant to be.

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

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוְּנוּ עַל בְּעוֹר חֲמֵץ.
כָּל חֲמִירָא וְחֲמִיעָה דְאִכָּא בְּרִשׁוּתֵי דְדָלָא חֲמִתָּהּ וְדָלָא בְּעִרְתָּהּ וְדָלָא יְדַעְנָא לָהּ לְבָטֵל
וְלִהְיוּ הִפְקָר פְּעֻפְרָא דְאַרְעָא.

בְּעוֹר חֲמֵץ

כָּל חֲמִירָא וְחֲמִיעָה דְאִכָּא בְּרִשׁוּתֵי דְחִזְתָּהּ וְדָלָא חִזְתָּהּ, דְחֲמִתָּהּ וְדָלָא חֲמִתָּהּ,
דְּבַעֲרָתָהּ וְדָלָא בְּעִרְתָּהּ, לְבָטֵל וְלִהְיוּ הִפְקָר פְּעֻפְרָא דְאַרְעָא.

עֲרוֹב תַּבְּשִׁילִין

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוְּנוּ עַל מִצְוֹת עֲרוֹב.
בְּהִדִּין עֲרוֹבָא? הֲאֵא שְׂרָא לָנָא לְאַפּוּיֵי וּלְבִשׁוּלֵי וּלְאַטְמוּנֵי וּלְאֲדִלוּקֵי שְׂרָגָא וּלְתַקְנָא
וּלְמַעֲבַד כָּל צְרֻכְנָא, מִיּוֹמָא טָבָא לְשַׁבְּתָא [לָנוּ וּלְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל הַדְרִים בְּעִיר הַזֹּאת].

כַּרְפֵּס	וִרְחֵץ	קִדְּשׁ
רְחֹצָה	מַגִּיד	יַחַץ
מָרוֹר	מַצָּה	מוֹצֵיא
צְפוֹן	שְׁלַחַן עוֹרֵךְ	כוֹרֵךְ
נִרְצָה	הַלֵּל	בְּרַךְ

Many commentators have found homiletical meaning in the above poem, aside from its obvious purpose of reminding us how to conduct the *Seder*. For example, R' Yehoshua Segal Deutsch *z"l* (rabbi of the Katamon neighborhood of Yerushalayim) writes as follows:

King David asks (*Tehilim* 24:3): “Who will climb *Hashem*’s mountain, and who can stand in His holy place?” This poem tells us how one can stand before *Hashem* and not worry about falling: “*Kadesh u'rechatz*” / Sanctify yourself and be confident! (“*Rechatz*” in Aramaic means “be confident.”)

How does one accomplish this? “*Karpas yachatza*” / Man’s material nature (which, like *karpas*, comes from the earth) cannot be reined in overnight. Rather, divide (“*yachatza*”) and conquer. According to one commentator, *Bnei Yisrael*’s defense for the sin of the Golden Calf was that *Matan Torah* / the giving of the Torah had been too sudden for them, and left them confused and disoriented.

Another tactic is “*Maggid rachtzah*” / Tell others to cleanse themselves. This will inspire you to do the same.

However, one might ask, “Who am I to rebuke others?” The answer to this is “*Motzi matzah*” / Get rid of that humility, that view of oneself as being lowly as *matzah*. As important as humility is, there is no place for it when one sees others violating the Torah. However, do not become arrogant or haughty, but rather “*Maror korech*” - Wrap yourself in a cloak of authority (=“*marah*”) which you can use when rebuking others, but can shed at other times.

In order to be an effective teacher, “*Shulchan oraich*” / Make sure your Torah knowledge is like a set table before you so that it will always be at your fingertips. Also, make sure that your rebuke does not become a weapon of the Heavenly prosecutor. Make sure that “*Tzafun baraich*” / Hidden (“*tzafun*”) within your heart should be blessings for your fellow Jews. You should also “*Hallel*” / Praise your brethren before *Hashem*.

If you do this, your deeds will be “*Nirtzah*” / Accepted by *Hashem*. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Kol Yeshuah*)



Why is the *Seder* (“סדר”) called by that name?

R' David Moshe Hakohen *z"l* (son-in-law of the last *Radomsker Rebbe*; killed in the Holocaust) offers the following explanation:

Regarding all foods prohibited by the Torah, there is a minimum amount that one must eat before he is considered to have transgressed. (Usually, that amount is a *ke'zayit* / the volume of an olive.) Not so *chametz*, which is prohibited down to the smallest morsel. Also, in no case where the Torah prohibited eating a particular food did the Torah prohibit owning the food. No other food-related prohibition

requires us to search for the contraband and destroy it. Why does *chametz* have these unique requirements?

The *Radvaz* (16th century) answers this by referring to the *midrash* which alludes to a connection between *chametz* and the *yetzer hara*. [Just as *chametz* rises, the *yetzer hara* causes a person to “rise,” i.e., to become haughty.] Just as one is supposed to uproot every vestige of the *yetzer hara* from within himself, so one must uproot every vestige of *chametz* from his house.

There are four ways to interpret the Torah: *peshat* / the simplest explanation, *remez* / allusion (e.g., *gematria*), *drush* / homiletics, and *sod* / the esoteric meaning. It seems, however, notes R' David Moshe, that there is no “simple” explanation for the severity of the prohibition of *chametz*. The *peshat* is missing, and all that is left is the “*SeDeR*” – *sod*, *drush* and *remez*. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Tiferet Shlomo* p. 53)

קִדְּשׁ

R' S.R. Hirsch z”l writes that although we already fulfilled the Torah obligation of *Kiddush* through our prayers in *shul*, we repeat *Kiddush* at home because the sanctity (“*Kedushah*”) of the day must first and foremost find its expression in our homes. *Kiddush* must be recited at the place where our meal will be eaten, as the festive meal is the most obvious manifestation of the joy we feel on the festival, and that joy must be preceded by sanctity. (*The Hirsch Haggadah*)

הַנְּנִי מוֹכֵר וּמְזוּמָן לְקַיִם מִצְוֹת כּוֹס רְאִשׁוֹנָה מְאַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת לְשֵׁם יְחִוּד קוּדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא וְשְׂכִינְתָּיהָ עַל יְדֵי הַהוּא טָמִיר וְנִנְעָלָם בְּשֵׁם כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל.

(לשבת וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר)

יוֹם הַשַּׁשִּׁי, וַיִּכְלוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל-צְבָאָם: וַיִּכַּל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי, מְלֹאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי, מִכָּל-מְלֹאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה: וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי, וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ, כִּי בּו שַׁבַּת מְכֹל-מְלֹאכְתּוֹ, אֲשֶׁר-בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת: (

סְבָרֵי מְרַגְּזֵי וְרַבּוֹתֵי:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל-עַם, וְרוּמְמָנוּ מִכָּל-לְשׁוֹן, וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וַתִּתֶּן-לָנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה (לשבת שְׁבֹתוֹת לְמְנוּחָה וּמוֹעֲדִים לְשִׂמְחָה, חֲגִים וְזְמַנִּים לְשִׂשׁוֹן אֶת-יוֹם (לשבת השַׁבַּת הַזֶּה וְאֶת-יוֹם) חַג הַמִּצְוֹת הַזֶּה. זְמַן חֲרוּתָנוּ, (לשבת בְּאַהֲבָה), מִקְרָא קִדְּשׁ, זִכָּר לִיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם. כִּי בָנוּ בְּחֵרָתָ וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים. (לשבת וְשַׁבַּת) וּמוֹעֲדֵי קִדְּשָׁתָּ (לשבת בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרַצוֹן) בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְשִׂשׁוֹן הִנְחַלְתָּנוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם (לשבת השַׁבַּת וּ) וְהַזְמַנִּים:

(כשחל יו”ט במוצאי שבת מוסיפים כאן ברכות הבדלה.)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מְאוּרֵי הָאֵשׁ:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמְבַדִּיל בֵּין קִדְּשׁ לְחַל בֵּין אֹר לְחֹשֶׁךְ, בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַמִּים, בֵּין יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי לְשִׁשִּׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה. בֵּין קִדְּשָׁתָּ שַׁבַּת לְקִדְּשָׁתָּ יוֹם טוֹב הַבְּדִלְתָּ. וְאֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִשִּׁשִּׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה קִדְּשָׁתָּ. הַבְּדִלְתָּ וְקִדְּשָׁתָּ אֶת-עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִדְּשָׁתָּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַמְבַדִּיל בֵּין קִדְּשׁ לְקִדְּשׁ: (

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁחֲחִינּוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעֵנוּ לְזְמַן הַזֶּה:

Many *halachic* authorities maintain that if one has no wine, he may fulfill his obligation to drink four cups at the *seder* by taking anything that qualifies as a “national drink.” [Depending on the country, this may be juice, milk, coffee, etc.] R’ Moshe Isserless *z”l* (“Rema”; O.C. Section 483) writes that this is similar to the *halachah* which permits using a “national drink” for *kiddush* on Shabbat.

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

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



The *Arba Kosot* / four cups of wine which we drink at the *seder* are traditionally associated with the four expressions of redemption in *Shmot* 6:6-7: “I shall take you out from under the burdens of Egypt; I shall rescue you from their service; I shall redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I shall take you to Me as a people . . .” But why are there four different expressions for redemption? Also, why are these commemorated specifically with wine?

R’ Yitzchak Mirsky *shlita* explains (based on the writings of R’ Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin *z”l*): The four expressions represent four phases of the Exodus. The first phase occurred after the fourth plague, when *Bnei Yisrael* were relieved of their back-breaking labor. At that point we read (*Shmot* 8:28), “Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and he did not send out the people.” The redundant phrase, “he did not send out the people,” indicates that he did not free them entirely, but, it implies, he lightened their burden.

In the second phase of the redemption, Pharaoh began to respect his Jewish subjects. This occurred after the plague of hail, where Pharaoh refers for the first time to “*Bnei Yisrael*” (*Shmot* 9:35), rather than to “the people.”

The third phase was the actual Exodus. It will be noted that these three phases parallel, in reverse order, *Hashem*’s prophecy to Avraham (*Bereishit* 15:13): “[1] Your descendants will be strangers in a land which is not theirs, and [2] they will enslave them and [3] oppress them.”

In the fourth phase, *Hashem* took us as His people. This refers to the giving of the Torah.

Why wine? *Netziv* explains that wine is used because it changes a person’s complexion just as the Exodus brought joy to the faces of our ancestors. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Hedyonei Halachah*)



Rabbeinu Bachya *z”l* also explains the four expressions of redemption as referring to four events: The first expression refers to the end of *Bnei Yisrael*’s slavery; the second, to the actual Exodus; the third, to the splitting of the *Yam Suf* / Red Sea; and the fourth, to the giving of the Torah.

If all four of the quoted expressions describe redemption, why is one of the expressions: “I shall redeem you”? Rabbeinu Bachya explains that the third step — the splitting of the Sea — was the culmination of the redemption. Even when a master frees his slave, the slave must fear that the master will change his mind and chase after him. Only when the master is dead, as all of Pharaoh’s army perished at the *Yam Suf*, can the slave truly feel free. (*Commentary on the Torah*)



It was customary in Europe for the teachers of the very young to have their pupils memorize the key words of the order of the *Seder* (i.e. “*Kadesh U’rechatz*” etc.) along with their traditional interpretations. Once, on the evening of the *Seder*, the Chassidic Rebbe known as the “*Shpole Zeide*”

asked his little son to recite the key aloud. The child began, “*Kadesh*--when the father comes from *shul* on the evening of the *seder*, he must immediately recite *Kiddush*.”

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

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

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

The *Rebbe* became angry. “Are you the one to judge which reason is important and which is not? Are you wiser than all of the other teachers? How did you dare change that which has been taught for generations? Let me tell you what those who lived before us alluded to with this statement.

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

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

וְרַחֵץ

קודם אכילת הכרפס מביאים מים ונוטלים ידים בלי ברכה

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

כַּרְפָּס

מטבילים כרפס במי-מלח ומברכים

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלֶּךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה :

Why do we eat *karpas*? The best known reason is that the Hebrew spelling of *karpas* (“כרפס”) suggests “60 *ferach*” (“ס’ פֶּרֶךְ”)--i.e., “60 (x 10,000=600,000) Jews worked hard as slaves.” Some say that *karpas* was the herb which *Bnei Yisrael* used to heal the sores they got while working and through beatings. Finally, the name *karpas* reminds us of the “*ketonet pasim*”--Yosef’s coat which played a role in bringing about the enslavement of the Jews. (R’ Yehuda Lebowitz: Notes to *Ritva*’s *Hilchot Seder Ha’Haggadah*)



Of what does the salt-water in which we dip the *karpas* remind us? R’ Menachem Mendel Hager *z”l* of Oyber-Visheve notes that, throughout the Talmud, salt is used as a metaphor for suffering. *Chazal* teach that suffering is actually good for a person for it expiates his sins, but, being only human, we

quickly reach a point where we can stand no more. Salt reminds us of this, for a little bit of salt improves the taste of food, but if that same food is too salty, it is not edible. As we begin to recall the suffering of the slaves in Egypt, this thought should be on our mind. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Visheve-Vizhnitz Shearit Menachem*)

ימצ

עורך הסדר פורס את המצה האמצעית שבקערה לשני חלקים

Why is the middle *matzah* broken rather than the top or bottom one? There are two *berachot* that are recited before eating *matzah* at the *seder*: *Hamotzi* / the blessing for “bread” and *Al Achilat matzah* / the special blessing over the *mitzvah* of eating *matzah* on the first night of *Pesach*. The *halachah* is that whenever we recite *Hamotzi* it is preferable to have a whole loaf of bread or *matzah* before us, whereas the *berachah* on the *mitzvah* of eating *matzah* is preferably recited over a broken *matzah*, symbolizing that it is “*Lechem Oni*” / “The bread of poverty (or affliction).”

There is a *halachic* principle which states, “One may not pass over a *mitzvah* (or a *mitzvah*-object).” Generally speaking, all *mitzvot* should be done in the order in which they present themselves to us (and all *mitzvah*-objects should be used in the order in which they are brought before us). This rule obligates us to recite “*Hamotzi*” over the first *matzah* that we see when we are ready to eat, i.e. the top one in the pile of three, and because of the *Halachah* cited above this *matzah* must be whole, not broken. The blessing of “*Al Achilat matzah*” must be recited on the second *matzah* we see, i.e. the middle one, and this one should be broken. If we had broken the bottom *matzah* instead of the middle one, we would have to pass over the middle (whole) *matzah* to reach the broken one, and this should not be done. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach MiBa'al Shelah Ha'kadosh*)



A young man in Israel married into a family which did not have the custom of stealing the *afikoman*. When he had a son who was old enough to “steal” his grandfather’s *afikoman*, the latter insisted that such behavior violated the Torah’s prohibitions on theft and extortion. This dispute was then brought before R’ Chaim David Halevy *z”l* (*Sephardic* Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv; died 1998), who wrote as follows:

The *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 109a) mentions a custom of “grabbing” the *matzah* in order to keep the children awake. As explained by *Rashi* and *Rashbam*, this does not refer to a custom that children steal the *afikoman*, but rather that the *matzah* was stolen from the children. Why was this not prohibited as stealing? Apparently, writes R’ Halevy, because it is justified as one more strange thing that we do on the *seder* night to highlight for the children the uniqueness of the night.

The *Gemara* (*Bava Metzia* 61b) states that stealing is prohibited even if one does not desire the object of the theft, but merely intends to pain the victim. Interestingly, *Rambam* does not quote this law in his Code. Instead, *Rambam* writes that one may not steal, even in jest. Why doesn’t *Rambam* quote the *Gemara*’s law? Also, what is the source for *Rambam*’s law that one may not steal in jest?

R’ Halevy explains: Since we know that *Rambam* did not invent laws, nor did he ignore laws that were found in the Talmud, we may assume that *Rambam* was merely reformulating the law that one may not steal in order to pain another. *Rambam*’s use of the phrase “in jest” must be equivalent to the *Gemara*’s phrase “intended to cause pain.” Why did *Rambam* change the words? Because he wanted to teach us, incidentally, that the only time that stealing in jest is prohibited is when it is intended to cause pain. However, stealing the *afikoman* at the *seder* is not intended to cause pain. Rather, it is intended only to “liven-up” the *seder* and interest the children. (*Aseh Lecha Rav* Vol. VI, No. 35)



One year, at the *seder* of R’ Shimon Sofer *z”l* (known as the “*Michtav Sofer*”), his grandson asked him the reason for stealing the *afikoman*. At first, the *Michtav Sofer* did not respond, but after the *seder*, he explained as follows:

The Torah (*Shmot* 11:7) relates that as *Hashem* passed through Egypt killing the firstborn, not one dog belonging to a Jew barked. It seems strange, said the *Michtav Sofer*, that *Chazal* did not establish any remembrance for this miracle which the Torah troubles itself to mention. [Ed. Note: In contrast, we allude in the *Haggadah* to literally hundreds of miracles which the Torah does not mention at all.]

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

Why didn't R' Sofer answer his grandson until after the *seder*? It has been suggested that he sought to teach his grandson that a Jew must accept our Torah, *mitzvot* and customs even when he does not understand them. (Quoted in *Vayaged Moshe*)

מגיד

מגביהים את הקערה ומתחילים באמירת ההגדה

R' Shimon Schwab *z"l* (1908-1995; rabbi of the K'hal Adath Jeshurun "Breuer's" community in New York) writes:

From my earliest youth, I remember that the children would ask each other on the first morning of *Pesach*, "How long did your *Seder* last?" This was true in my youth, and it is still the case today.

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

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

On the *Seder* night, concludes R' Schwab, it is a *mitzvat asai d'Oraita* / an affirmative commandment from the Torah to retell to one's children the events surrounding *Yetziat Mitzrayim*. If one has merited to have children or grandchildren, it is a *mitzvah* for the father or grandfather to hand down to them the details of the Exodus. The saying of "*vertlach*" / short *divrei Torah* is very nice, but if these are not the details of the narrative of the Exodus – or its meaning or message – they are not a part of this *mitzvah*. On the *Seder* night, the children are encouraged to ask any question relevant to *Yetziat Mitzrayim*, and the father has a special *mitzvah d'Oraita* to respond to these questions, and to tell his children about the miracles that G-d did for us. (*Rav Schwab on Prayer* p. 541)



"In order that that you may relate in the ears of your son and your grandson how I fought the Egyptians...and you shall know that I am *Hashem*." (*Shmot* 10:2)

It is well known that in order to completely convince others of something, the speaker must himself believe what he is saying. In keeping with this, the above verse may also be read, "In order to relate to your descendants how I fought Egypt, you must believe that I am *Hashem*." (R' Yehoshua of Belz *z"l*)



Why don't we recite a *berachah* on the *mitzvah* of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim* / retelling the story of the Exodus? R' Asher Anshel Katz z"l (Hungarian rabbi; killed in the Holocaust) quotes a work called *Chessed L'Avraham* which explains:

R' Yonatan Eyebchutz z"l (died 1764) asks: Why do we not recite a *berachah* before performing the *mitzvah* of giving charity? Because, R' Eyebchutz answers, the existence of this *mitzvah* is a curse. Were we worthy, we would see the fulfillment of the verse (*Devarim* 15:4), "However, may there be no destitute person among you; rather, *Hashem* will surely bless you." We do not recite a blessing over something which has an element of a curse to it.

Similarly, states the work *Chessed L'Avraham*, if we were worthy we would see the fulfillment of the verses (*Yirmiyah* 23:7-8), "Behold! Days are coming – the word of *Hashem* – when people will no longer swear, 'As *Hashem* lives, Who brought *Bnei Yisrael* up from the land of Egypt,' but rather, 'As *Hashem* lives, Who brought up and brought back the offspring of the House of Israel from the land of the North and from all the lands wherein He had dispersed them', and they will dwell in their own land." The miracles of the Final Redemption will be so great that they will supplant the Exodus from Egypt in our national consciousness. Since we look forward to that day, how can we recite a blessing over the *mitzvah* of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim*!

R' Katz adds: Perhaps this is why we declare at the very beginning of the *Seder*, "This year, here; next year in Yerushalayim." One would expect the *Seder* to begin with a *berachah*, "Who sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us regarding the *mitzvah* of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim*." Our declaration, "This year, here; next year in Yerushalayim," is our explanation for why we do not recite such a *berachah*. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Chodesh Ha'aviv* p. 85)

הָא לַחֲמָא עֲנִיָא דִּי אֶכְלוּ אַבְהֵתְנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם. כָּל דְּכָפִין יֵיתִי וַיִּכּוֹל, כָּל דְּצָרִיךְ
יֵיתִי וַיִּפְסַח. הַשְּׁתָא הָכָא, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּאַרְעָא דִּישְׂרָאֵל. הַשְּׁתָא עַבְדִּי, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה
בְּנֵי חוּרְיִן :

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

R' Yehuda Assad z"l explains as follows: Why are we happy on *Pesach* — after all, aren't we once again in exile? The answer is that we rejoice in the knowledge that we can be redeemed at any time. Even from Egypt, where we were destined to remain for 400 years, G-d took us out early. Certainly, then, He can take us out of our present exile which has no fixed length.

How can we earn this redemption? Through charity! The *Haggadah* excerpt quoted above is not literally an invitation. It is a reminder that if throughout the year we practice feeding the hungry, then: This year here; next year in *Eretz Yisrael*. (*Divrei MaHaRY" A*)



Why do we begin the *Haggadah* with "*Ha lachma ania*," a reference to the "poor bread" (*matzah*)? This may be answered by a parable:

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

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

One morning, the king and his ministers set out to pay a surprise visit to the treasury minister's home. Arriving there, they were surprised to see how humble the home was. There was certainly no sign that the minister had come into new found wealth.

But one door of the house was locked, and there, the ministers were sure, the king would find hidden treasure. The king demanded that the door be unlocked, and all of the treasury minister's entreaties were to no avail. Entering the room, the king was shocked to see nothing but a stick and a knapsack. "What is the meaning of this?" he asked.

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

We, too, are faced with the shepherd's problem, the commentaries say. Once we were humble slaves in Egypt, but suddenly we became a proud nation with the Torah and a land of our own. We begin the *seder* by looking at the *matzah*, and this reminds us of who we were and Who made us what we are. (*Yalkut Lekach Tov: Haggadah Shel Pesach*)



"This year, we are here; next year may we be in *Eretz Yisrael!* This year, we are slaves; next year may we be free men!"

R' Yehoshua Heschel of Cracow *z"l* (known as "the *rebbe*, Reb Heschel"; died 1663) notes that the above statements appear to be redundant. He explains:

We have a tradition that the enslavement in Egypt ceased six months before the actual Exodus. Presumably, says R' Heschel, the same will be true when the Complete Redemption arrives. Six months before *mashiach* arrives we will notice a marked improvement in the Jewish People's condition. [In the discussion below, we will refer to the Complete Redemption as "Step 2" and the lightening of the burden of exile that will take place six months beforehand as "Step 1."]

There is a dispute in the *Gemara* whether the Complete Redemption will take place in the month of *Nisan* (the opinion of the sage Rabbi Yehoshua) or the month of *Tishrei* (the opinion of the sage Rabbi Eliezer). Our passage from *Haggadah* refers to both of those views. [For greater clarity, we will explain the second sentence first.] According to Rabbi Eliezer, it is not likely that we will be in *Eretz Yisrael* next year, for if the Complete Redemption (Step 2) were destined to occur in this coming *Tishrei*, we would already have seen signs of Step 1 now, six months before. If we have not seen those signs, then the most we can hope for is that Step 1 will occur by next *Pesach*, and Step 2 will occur six months afterward, in the second *Tishrei* from now. Hence, "This year, we are slaves, next year may we be free men [i.e., by next *Pesach*, Step 1 will occur]."

According to Rabbi Yehoshua, the Complete Redemption (Step 2) could indeed happen by next *Pesach*. Perhaps Step 1 will indeed occur by next *Tishrei*, six months before *Pesach*. Therefore, "This year, we are here; next year may we be in *Eretz Yisrael* [i.e., even Step 2 may occur by next *Pesach*]." (*Chanukat Ha'Torah*)



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

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

There were two destitute brothers who sold used rags that they found in other people's garbage. So poor were they that the only place they could find to live was a large barrel, which they shared.

One day, they earned an unusually large amount of money. It was the first time that they had ever possessed more money than they needed for one day, so they bought a lottery ticket. And, they won! They were now wealthy.

The brothers had different ideas about how to spend their money. One took his half and bought a large house and fancy cars. Since he didn't have to work, he spent his time traveling, hunting, and engaging in other leisure activities.

The other brother took his wealth and used it to obtain an education. Before long, he was expert in a number of sciences and other subjects. Soon, the two brothers had little in common, but they still met every year on the anniversary of their day of good fortune in order to recall how their lives had changed.

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

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

מַה נְשִׁיתָנָה הַלְיָלָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַלְיָלוֹת?

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

R' Aryeh Leib Zunz *z"l* explains: The *Zohar* says that when a person tells the story of the Exodus, *Hashem* Himself rejoices. He then gathers together the entire heavenly entourage and says to them, "Go and hear My praises which My children are saying." Thus, says R' Zunz, a person who is conducting a *seder* is never really alone. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Birkat Shir*)



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

R' Moshe Meir Yashar *z"l* (a student of the Chafetz Chaim) explained with the following story:

Towards the end of World War II, the Soviet army marched into Bucharest, Romania and liberated it from the Nazis. Among the Russian officers arriving in the Romanian capital was one, a Jew, who had somehow managed to remain observant despite the trials of military service under a Communist regime.

When *Pesach* came, this officer went knocking on the doors of Bucharest, looking for a *Seder* which he could join. Pretty soon, he found himself seated among his brethren, ready to start the *Seder*.

"Please honor us by asking the Four Questions," the host asked his Russian guest.

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

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



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

R' Avraham Danzig *z"l* (author of the *halachic* compendium *Chayei Adam*) explains: We do so many of our *mitzvot* by rote, without giving them much thought, if any. However, the lessons of *Pesach*

are the centerpieces of our beliefs as Jews, and are much too important to be done by rote. Therefore *Chazal* required us to ask questions in order to slow us down and make us think.

Nor should the questions be limited to *Mah nishtanah*, R' Danzig writes. When the *Gemara* describes the *seder*, it says, "We pour the second cup, and then the son asks." Presumably the question that the son will ask is, "Why are you pouring a second cup of wine before washing for *hamotzi*?" which is not one of the questions in *Mah nishtanah*.

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

Rather, *Mah nishtanah* is a set of more sophisticated questions, whose real meaning is, "Why will our actions tonight combine signs of slavery, such as eating *matzah*, and freedom, such as eating while reclining?" As for the children, they should be allowed to ask whatever questions strike them. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Toldot Adam*)



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

שֶׁבֶּכֶל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֵמֶץ וּמֶצֶה. הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כָּלוּ
מֶצֶה :

שֶׁבֶּכֶל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שְׂאֵר יִרְקוֹת הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה
מְרוֹר :

שֶׁבֶּכֶל הַלַּיְלוֹת אֵין אָנוּ מְטַבְּלִין אֶפְּלוּ פְּעַם אַחַת.
הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה שְׁתֵּי פְּעָמִים :

שֶׁבֶּכֶל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבֵין וּבֵין מְסֻבֵּין.
הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כָּלָנוּ מְסֻבֵּין :

עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפָרַעַה בְּמִצְרַיִם. וַיּוֹצִיאָנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִשָּׁם, בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזִרְזוּעַ נְטוּיָה, וְאֵלּוּ לֹא הוֹצִיא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, הָרִי אָנוּ וּבְגִינוּ וּבְגִי בְּנֵינוּ, מִשְׁעֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפָרַעַה בְּמִצְרַיִם.

We begin our story with the statement "*Avadim hayinu . . .*" / "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt." R' Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook *z"l* writes that this sentence describes three levels of degradation" (1) We were slaves, (2) to a foreign king, (3) in a foreign land. The Haggadah then goes on to recount that G-d saved us from all three of these troubles: (1) We were taken out of slavery, (2) by *Hashem*, our own King, and (3) we were taken from Egypt and brought to *Eretz Yisrael*. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Olat Re'iyah*)



We read in the *Haggadah*: “If *Hashem* had not taken our forefathers out of Egypt, we, our children and our grandchildren would be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt.” R’ Chaim Elazar Shapira *z”l* (the *Munkatcher Rebbe*; died 1937) writes that the purpose of this statement is to answer the question: Why is our present exile so long and drawn out? Why doesn’t *Hashem* redeem us in the same dramatic way that He redeemed our ancestors from Egypt?

R’ Shapira explains with the following parable:

A doctor was once rushed to the bedside of a sick man and, seeing the condition of the patient, he performed an emergency appendectomy that saved the patient’s life. Within days, the patient was up and about, and he thanked the doctor accordingly.

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

“A few years ago, I was sicker than this — was I not?” the patient asked.

“You were,” the doctor answered.

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

“Yes,” said the doctor.

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

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

The Exodus, R’ Shapira explains, was a “dramatic rescue” because the Jewish people were on the verge of total assimilation. Even we and our children would have been lost. This is what the above excerpt from the *Haggadah* is teaching us. The present exile, though painful, can be “cured” more gradually and less dramatically. (*Sha’ar Yissaschar: Ma’amar Aggadeta De’Pischa*, No. 22)



The primary redemption, says R’ Yaakov Moshe Charlap, *z”l* (1883-1951; student of R’ Kook and his successor as *Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshivat Merkaz haRav), is too great to be brought about through other nations. This is why, after Pharaoh had given *Bnei Yisrael* permission to leave, he had to change his mind.

The same will be true of the final redemption. The nations of the world will control *Eretz Yisrael* and will give us the right to settle there. Before the redemption can be complete, however, they will have to regret their decision, so that it will be clear that *Hashem* alone has redeemed us. (Quoted in *Ohr Ha’Techiyah* p.24)



Chazal say that *Hashem* hurried to take the Jewish people out of Egypt before they became permanently mired in Egypt’s impurity. Although the exile was supposed to last 400 years, *Hashem*, in His kindness, counted the 400 years from the birth of Yitzchak.

R’ Eliezer Nachman Puah *z”l* (Italy, 1600’s) observes that the Jews were in a “catch-22” situation. On the one hand, if they had remained in Egypt, they would have been lost spiritually. On the other hand, he writes, fruit which is artificially or forcibly ripened is not as sweet as fruit which ripens naturally, and, so too, the redemption from Egypt could not be complete because it had to be hurried. This is why the Jews had to suffer so much in the desert, and this is why we have suffered in additional exiles until today.

This also explains, he writes, why our Sages cautioned against hurrying the ultimate redemption. Rather, we should wait until the “fruit” ripens at the ordained time. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Midrash Bechiddush*)

וְאִפְּלוּ כִּלְנוּ חֲכָמִים, כִּלְנוּ נְבוֹנִים, כִּלְנוּ זִקְנִים, כִּלְנוּ יוֹדְעִים אֶת הַתּוֹרָה, מִצְוָה עָלֵינוּ לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם.

We read in the *Haggadah*, “Even if we all are wise, we all are understanding . . . it would still be a *mitzvah* for us to relate the story of the Exodus.” Of course it would be! Why would we think otherwise? asks R’ Mordechai Gifter z”l.

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



We say in the *Haggadah*: “Even if we all were sages, even if we all are understanding . . . it still would be incumbent upon us to retell the story of the Exodus.”

R’ Azaryah Berzon *shlita* explains this in light of the *Gemara* (*Menachot* 99b) which relates that a man named Ben Damah asked his uncle Rabbi Yishmael, “Since I have learned the entire Torah, may I study Greek wisdom?”

Rabbi Yishmael responded, “One is commanded to speak Torah day and night (*Yehoshua* 1:8). Find a time which is neither day nor night and study Greek wisdom.” What was the logic behind the question and what was the answer?

Ben Damah thought that the purpose of Torah study is to *know* the Torah. Rabbi Yishmael responded that that is only one aspect. There is another *mitzvah*, which is to occupy oneself with Torah.

Similarly, the *Haggadah* is teaching us that the purpose of retelling the story of the Exodus is not (only) to know the story. Rather, telling the story is an end and a *mitzvah* in and of itself. (Printed in *Hadarom*, No. 53, *Nissan* 5754)



Why is even the wisest sage obligated to retell even the basics of the Exodus story every year? R’ Nosson Zvi Finkel z”l (the *Alter* of Slobodka; died 1926) explains: No matter how wise one has become, no matter how old one is or how many times one retells the story, one still retains the incorrect images of the Exodus that he formed as a child. The story must be retold and retold until these images are uprooted. (Quoted in *Haggadat Roshei Yeshivat Chevron* p. 78)

וְכָל הַמְרַבֵּה לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם, הֵרִי זֶה מְשֻׁבָּח :

R’ Yehoshua Heschel Rabinowitz (the “*Manestricher Rebbe*”) z”l writes: The purpose of the *mitzvah* to relate the story of the Exodus is not to give thanks to G-d for the kindness which He did for us in taking us out of slavery and making us His special people. Rather, the purpose of the *mitzvah* is for the benefits which it offers in the present, strengthening us as we wander from exile to exile. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Torat Yehoshua*)

[The above explanation of the *mitzvah* answers a question which is posed by several works: Generally, one is prohibited from praising G-d excessively, for once one starts to praise G-d, how dare he stop (see *Megillah* 18a). How, then, can the *Haggadah* say, “The more one tells about the Exodus, the better?” However, if we understand that the purpose of relating the story of the Exodus is not to praise G-d, but to learn from it and apply the lessons to our own lives, then the above question is resolved.]



Siddur Avodat Yisrael writes that there is a chapter of *Tehilim* which corresponds to each *parashah*. The psalm for *Parashat Va'era*, which describes many of the plagues, is Psalm 46. On verse 1, "On the hidden things, a song," the *Midrash Shocher Tov* observes that we can't describe all of *Hashem's* wonders, for His true greatness is hidden. Similarly, the Sages of the *Gemara* criticize one who praises G-d excessively. "Have you said all of your Master's praises?" the Sages ask rhetorically of the person who begins praising *Hashem* effusively and then stops. Rather, a person should limit himself to the set prayers and psalms. (*Berachot* 33b)

Yet, our Sages say, "The more one speaks about the Exodus, the more he is praiseworthy." How can this be reconciled with the above teachings?

There is a difference between praise and thanks, says *Maharal*. When you are indebted to someone, do you refrain from thanking him just because you cannot thank him enough? For the specific event when G-d redeemed us from slavery, we must be grateful, and must praise Him as much as we are able. It is only spontaneous praise that is prohibited. (*Gevurot Hashem* ch.1)

R' Yitzchak Hutner *z"l* offers another answer: It is disrespectful to speak about the king's wealth because one might underestimate it. However, if the king has something that he wants to show off, he understands that each viewer will appreciate that object only on his (the viewer's) own level. Such is the case with the miracles of the Exodus, which G-d performed only in order to increase His own honor. (*Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach* ch.16)

Because *Hashem's* wonders are hidden, says R' Yediyah Hapenini *z"l* (13th century), Pharaoh's magicians were unable to imitate most of the plagues.



R' Ovadiah Yosef *shlita* quotes R' Yitzchak Elchanan Spector *z"l* with another answer, as follows:

The *Haggadah's* word "*meshubach*"--commonly translated "praiseworthy"--should be translated instead as "of high caliber." The *Haggadah's* message is, "The more a person is able to appreciate the significance of the Exodus, the more we can be certain that this is a person of high spiritual caliber. (*Haggadah Chazon Ovadiah* p.203)



The *mitzvah* of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim* / relating the story of the Exodus requires more than just reading the story. One's recitation of the *Haggadah* must be from the heart and also must penetrate one's heart, so that the story of the Exodus will serve as the basis for strengthening one's *emunah* / faith. Indeed, R' Simcha Zissel Ziv *z"l* (the "*Alter* of Kelm"; died 1898) used to observe that the statement in the *Haggadah*, "The more that one relates about the Exodus, the more praiseworthy it is," also can be translated, "The more that one relates about the Exodus, the more improved he is."

R' Yaakov Levitt *z"l* (Bialystok) illustrated with a parable the difference between the right way to tell the story of the Exodus and the wrong way:

A villager once took seriously ill. The doctor was called, and the doctor recognized that the villager's illness was fully curable if treated properly. He wrote out a prescription and he told the villager's wife, "Give your husband this prescription with water three times a day until it is finished, and he will be cured."

The family did as it was told. Every day, the simple village wife tore a small piece off the prescription, dissolved it in water and gave it to her husband to drink. Needless to say, his condition did not improve.

The doctor was called, but he was very perplexed. "I know that this prescription works," he said. "I have prescribed it for this illness before."

“Let me see the prescription,” he requested finally. “Perhaps I made a mistake.” The villager’s wife explained, however, that she could not show him the prescription because she had given it to her husband as instructed.

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

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



R’ Avraham ben Ha’Gra (died 1808; son of the *Vilna Gaon*) writes: the *mitzvah* of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim* / relating the story of the Exodus is virtually unique in that it has no upper limit. In contrast, most *mitzvot* are subject to the prohibition of “*bal tosif*” / “You shall not add.” [For example, one may not keep nine days of *Pesach* or place an additional Torah-portion on the parchment in his *tefilin*.]

R’ Avraham continues: the story in the *Haggadah* about Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah and his colleagues who sat all night speaking about the Exodus, until their students came and told them that the hour had arrived to recite the morning *Shema*, is meant to answer the first of the Four Questions — “Why on all nights may we eat *chametz* and *matzah*, and, on this night, only *matzah*?” How so?

The *Zohar* says that the purpose of the *mitzvah* to study Torah day and night (“You shall contemplate it day and night” — *Yehoshua* 1:8) is to destroy one’s “*chametz*.” What does this mean? *Chametz* is a metaphor for the *Yetzer Hara*, and the *Gemara* says, as if quoting *Hashem*, “I created the *Yetzer Hara* and I created the Torah as an antidote.”

Thus, on all other nights, when a person has time to study Torah, he may eat *chametz*, for the Torah he studies will destroy the “*chametz*.” However, on this night, one has no time for Torah study; one must occupy himself all night with the *mitzvah* of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim*. Therefore, one must not eat any *chametz* on this night.

How far does the obligation of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim* go? R’ Avraham notes that the Sages’ students did not say, “The time has come to pray,” but rather, “The time has come to recite *Shema*.” They knew that their teachers would stop their “story-telling” to recite *Shema* at the earliest possible time, because *Shema* also mentions the Exodus. However, they assumed that their teachers would not pray until the latest possible hour so that they could continue their *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim* as long as possible. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Ge’ulat Avraham*)



R’ Yaakov Yisrael Berger *z”l* (rabbi in Ohio before World War II) wrote in 1944: *Bnei Yisrael* were supposed to be in Egypt for 400 years, but *Hashem* took them out 190 years early. Yet we have now been in exile for thousands of years. The Jews probably suffer more in Europe now than our ancestors did in Egypt. In the Western nations, where our brethren have found rest for their bodies, there is no rest for the soul. The foundations of the Torah in these countries are collapsing. Shabbat and family purity laws are almost forgotten. Why then does *Hashem* not redeem us?

He adds: This is the meaning of the *Haggadah*’s statement, “The more that one tells about the Exodus, the more praiseworthy he is.” The more that one explores the reasons that brought about the early redemption from Egypt, the more praiseworthy he is, for such a person hastens our own redemption. This is also the meaning of Rabban Gamliel’s statement: “Whoever does not explain the following three things at the *Pesach* festival has not fulfilled his obligation — the *Korban Pesach*, *matzah* and *maror*.” It is not enough to eat these three things. One must learn their lessons; for example, one must feel the bitterness of our own exile, and do what we can to be redeemed as our ancestors were. (*Kol Yisrael Chaveirim* p. 87)



Why is it necessary for the *Haggadah* to tell us that the more that one tells about the Exodus, the more praiseworthy he is? Would we have thought otherwise? R' Avraham Shmuel Binyamin Sofer z"l (the "*Ketav Sofer*"; 19th century Hungary) explains as follows:

The *Gemara* (*Shabbat* 118b) teaches: "One who recites *Hallel* every day is a blasphemer." Why? R' Sofer explains that *Hallel* praises *Hashem* for the supernatural miracles of the Exodus. However, one who focuses too much on G-d's supernatural miracles doesn't notice His everyday wonders. Man is obligated to see *Hashem* as much in his daily life and in nature as in His supernatural acts, and therefore man is forbidden to recite *Hallel* every day.

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

In light of the above, one might think that he should downplay the story of the Exodus. No, the *Haggadah* tells us, on the *Seder* night one should elaborate as much as possible on the Exodus. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Ketav Sofer-Shir Ma'on*, p.10b)



Exactly what is the extent of one's obligation to retell the story of the Exodus? R' Shimon Sofer z"l (1850-1944; son of the *Ketav Sofer*) answers:

The next paragraph of the *Haggadah* relates that Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarfon (all sages of the *Mishnah*) sat together during the entire night and discussed the Exodus. In apparent contrast to this, the *Shulchan Aruch* (481:2) states: "One is obligated to busy himself with the laws of *Pesach* and [the story of] the Exodus and to relate the miracles and the wonders that G-d did for our ancestors until he is overpowered by sleep."

In reality, there is no contradiction, R' Sofer explains. One is, in fact, obligated to discuss the Exodus (and/or the laws of *Pesach*) all night. However, the *Shulchan Aruch* recognizes that most people cannot accomplish this, and it therefore states that one's obligation continues until he falls asleep. This means, however, R' Sofer writes, that one may not do things that will cause him to fall asleep sooner. For example, one may not drink any wine after the fourth cup and one should not overeat at the *Seder* meal. In addition, if one does fall asleep and he happens to awaken before dawn, he is obligated to resume his discussion of the Exodus until morning. (*Ibid* p.2b)



"He has established a remembrance of His wondrous deeds; He is kind and merciful. He has given food to those who fear Him; He will remember His covenant forever." (Tehilim 111:4-5)

Why has G-d asked us to hold the *Pesach Seder* and to commemorate many of the other miracles which he did for us on our way out of Egypt? It is for His honor? Does He need these observances?

R' Yehuda Mintz z"l (16th century) found the answers to these questions in the above psukim from Tehilim (Psalms). Why did Hashem establish our holidays as a remembrance of his wondrous deeds? Because he is kind and merciful. Commemorating the miracles which were done for our ancestors will help us to appreciate and remember important principles of faith. This, in turn, will allow Hashem to reward us for performance of the *mitzvot* which flow from that faith. The reward which Hashem seeks to give us is also alluded to in the above verses. "He has given food (symbolic of all material blessings) to those who fear Him, He will always remember his covenant." (*Haggadah Zichron Nefli'ot*)

מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר, וְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, וְרַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲזַרְיָה, וְרַבִּי עֲקִיבָא, וְרַבִּי טַרְפוֹן,
שֶׁהָיוּ מְסַבִּין בְּבֵנֵי בְּרַק, וְהָיוּ מְסַפְּרִים בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם, כָּל אוֹתוֹ הַלֵּילָה, עַד שֶׁבָּאוּ
תְּלַמְּדֵיהֶם וְאָמְרוּ לָהֶם: רַבּוֹתֵינוּ, הִגִּיעַ זְמַן קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע, שֶׁל שַׁחֲרִית:

אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲזַרְיָה. הֲרִי אֲנִי כֶּבֶן שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה, וְלֹא זָכִיתִי, שְׁתֵּאמֹר יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם בְּלִילוֹת. עַד שֶׁדָּרְשָׁה בֶּן זֹמָא. שֶׁנֶּאמַר: לְמַעַן תִּזְכֹּר, אֶת יוֹם צֵאתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ. יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ הַיָּמִים. כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ הַלֵּילוֹת. וְחֻכְמַיִם אֹמְרִים: יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ הַעוֹלָם הַזֶּה. כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ לְהַבִּיא לִימוֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ:

“In order that you may remember all the days of your life, the day on which you left Egypt.” (Devarim 16:3)

The *mitzvah* to remember the Exodus on a daily basis not only allows us to thank *Hashem* for His kindness in redeeming us from slavery and making us His chosen nation, it actually strengthens us and assures our continued existence as we wander from country to country in our exile. As we are persecuted and despised [openly or more subtly] in our host nations, we can easily despair. If someone says that we are the lowliest of peoples, we might believe him, but remembering the Exodus tells us that this is not so. Look at all of the “trouble” (so-to-speak) to which *Hashem* went to take us out of Egypt and turn us into His people.

In *Shmot* 19:5 we read *Hashem*’s words, “And it will come to pass if you listen to My voice...and you will be My treasure among the nations...” We can interpret this as meaning that listening to *Hashem*’s voice means realizing that we are His chosen nation. This is not meant in a vain or haughty way, G-d forbid, but this knowledge can prevent our assimilation into the lands of our exile. [Ed. note: In *World of Prayer* (vol. I, pp.26 and 48), R’ Elie Munk *z”l* enjoins us to see “Choseness” as duty, not a privilege, and certainly not a cause for conceit. Please see that work for a more complete explanation of this often misunderstood concept.]

Remembering the Exodus reassures us that we are not abandoned, and we can in fact see evidence of this every day. How else [in *Chazal*’s words] can a lamb exist among seventy wolves? This is possible only if the lamb is protected by an exceptional shepherd. This may explain why the Torah says that the Exodus occurred through *Hashem*’s mighty hand and outstretched arm. The mighty hand refers to the strength which *Hashem* demonstrated as the events of the Exodus unfolded. The outstretched arm refers to *Hashem*’s constant presence in our lives, always rescuing us when we are in danger. (R’ Yehoshua Rabinowitz: *Haggadah Shel Pesach* Torat Yehoshua)

בְּרוּךְ הַמָּקוֹם. בְּרוּךְ הוּא. בְּרוּךְ שֶׁנִּתְּנָה תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל. בְּרוּךְ הוּא כִּנְגֹד אֲרַבְעָה בָּנִים דְּבָרָה תּוֹרָה. אֶחָד חָכָם, וְאֶחָד רָשָׁע, וְאֶחָד תָּם, וְאֶחָד שֶׁאִינוּ יוֹדְעֵי לְשִׂאוֹל:

Why does the *Haggadah* introduce the passage about the “Four Sons” with a blessing over the gift of Torah? R’ Moshe Yisrael Feldman *z”l* (rabbi of Dragomiresti, Hungary; killed in the Holocaust) explains:

The *Mishnah* (*Eduyot* Ch. 2) teaches that wisdom is hereditary. If so, how is it possible for one person to have four sons like the Four Sons of the *Haggadah*: a wise son, a wicked son, a simple son, and a son who does not know how to ask? The answer may be found in the teaching of the *Gemara* (*Nedarim* 81a): “Why is it rare for Torah scholars to have sons who are Torah scholars? Because they do not recite the blessings over the Torah first thing [in the morning].” [The *Mefarsh* / Anonymous Commentary on *Nedarim* explains that the Torah scholars referred to are in such a hurry to return to their studies when they awaken that they neglect to recite the blessings, including the prayer, “May we and our descendants . . . be students of Your Torah.”]

Says R’ Feldman: Now, as we are about to speak of the Four Sons, we remind ourselves to recite the blessings over the Torah, lest our sons grow up to be as different as these four. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Shem Yisrael*)

חֲכָם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה הָעֵדוּת וְהַחֲקִים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים, אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתְכֶם?
וְאִף אֶתָּה אָמַר לוֹ כְּהִלְכוֹת הַפֶּסַח: אֵין מִפְּטִירִין אַחַר הַפֶּסַח אֶפְיִקוּמָן:

R' Avraham Shaag z"l (1801-1876; Hungary and Yerushalayim; *rebbe* of R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld z"l) said in his *Shabbat Hagadol derashah* in 5622 / 1862:

We read later in the *Haggadah*: “In every generation, one is obliged to regard himself as though he himself had actually gone out from Egypt.” One must regard himself as if he is on a continual journey out of Egypt. After all, the Exodus was supposed to be the Final Redemption, except that our ancestor’s “rebelled under the *chuppah*,” i.e., they sinned in the desert. Thus, as long as the Final Redemption has not taken place, the Exodus is not over.

In this light, says R' Shaag, we can obtain a new understanding of the wise son’s question and the *Haggadah*’s answer to him. The wise son asks: “What are the testimonies, statutes and laws that *Hashem* our G-d has commanded you?” What do we answer him? “One may not eat anything after eating the *Pesach* sacrifice.”

The wise son’s question is as follows: Certainly the *mitzvot* are eternal. They will be performed even after the Final Redemption occurs and they must be relevant to that time as well. Yet, presumably, we will no longer remember the Exodus after the Final Redemption because the miracles of the Final Redemption will far surpass the miracles of the Exodus. (Precisely this issue is discussed earlier in the *Haggadah* in the paragraph beginning “Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah said . . .”) What role does the *Korban Pesach* play in the future?

We answer him: One may not eat anything after eating the *Pesach* sacrifice. Rather, *halachah* requires us to eat the *Korban Pesach* after the meal, when we are satiated. This symbolizes that the Exodus, which the *Pesach* sacrifice represents, will not be complete until we are satiated with the miracles of the Final Redemption. (*Derashot Ha'rash*)

רְשַׁע מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה הָעֵבֻדָּה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם? לָכֶם וְלֹא לוֹ. וְלִפִּי שְׁהוֹצִיא אֶת עַצְמוֹ
מִן הַכֶּלֶל, כִּפָּר בְּעֵקֶר. וְאִף אֶתָּה הִקְהָה אֶת שְׁנָיו, וְאָמַר לוֹ: בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה, עָשָׂה יְיָ לִי,
בְּצִאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם, לִי וְלֹא לוֹ. אֵלוֹ הָיָה שָׁם, לֹא הָיָה נִגְאָל:

The *haftarah* that is read on *Shabbat Hagadol*, the *Shabbat* before *Pesach*, concludes with the words (*Malachi* 3:23-24), “Behold — I send you Elijah Hanavi, before the great and awesome day of *Hashem*. He will restore the heart of fathers to children and the heart of children to their fathers . . .” In an essay entitled “The Fathers and the Sons,” R' Yaakov Moshe Charlap z"l (died 1951) writes:

“There are many aspects to redemption and each brings salvation in some form. However, if even one aspect is missing, the redemption is incomplete. Moreover, a darker situation may arise as a result.

“Every division is a form of *galut* (literally: ‘exile’) and every coming together is a redemption. Certainly, however, the most dangerous division is the division between fathers and sons. Thus, when *Hashem* chooses a metaphor for the exile, He says (see *Berachot* 3a), ‘Woe to sons who have been exiled from their father’s table.’ In contrast, the highlight of the redemption will be when the hearts of fathers will be restored to their children and the heart of children to their fathers.

“The redemption from Egypt, the root of all redemptions, began by revealing the wonders of *Bnei Yisrael*’s allegiance to their families. Just as ‘with Yaakov, each man and his household came’ (*Shemot* 1:1), so, when they left, the sons were attached to their fathers. ‘And it shall be when your children say to you . . .’ (*Shemot* 12:26 & 13:14). Even the wicked son, although he asks with *chutzpah*, he nevertheless bows his head to his father and grandfather and awaits an answer. (*Mei Marom: Ma'ayanei Ha'yeshuah, Ikvita De'meshicha* Ch. 2)



In the *Shabbat Haggadol derashah* which he delivered in 5683 / 1923, R' Yitzchak Yosef Zylberberg explained that the Four Questions of the *Haggadah* parallel the Four Sons. Thus, for example, the second question (Why do we eat *maror*?) parallels the *rasha* / wicked son. How so?

The *rasha* asks, “What is this service to you?” Why do you focus on the bitterness of Egypt and not on the delicacies which we ate there for free (see *Bamidbar* 11:5)?

To this son we say in the *Haggadah*, “If he had been there, he would not have been redeemed.” If a person allows creature comforts to obscure the fact that we are indeed in exile, that person has no hope of redemption. (*Atzei Zayit*)

תָּם מֶה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מֶה זֵאת? וְאִמְרַתְּ אֵלָיו : בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצֵאתָנוּ יְיָ מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים :

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

R' Chaim “Brisker” Soloveitchik *z”l* asks: Since we nightly fulfill the *mitzvah* of remembering the Exodus [by reciting the last verse of the third chapter of Shma], why do we need the additional *mitzvah* of reading the *Pesach Haggadah*? He explains that there are three differences between the daily performance of this *mitzvah* and its performance on *Pesach*.

(1) A person’s daily obligation is to privately recall the Exodus, but on *Pesach*, a verbal question-answer format is required. Thus, even a person who conducts the *Seder* alone is required to “ask himself” appropriate questions and to read the *Haggadah* aloud.

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

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

וְשִׂאתָנוּ יוֹדַע לְשָׂאוֹל, אֵת פֶּתַח לוֹ. שְׂנַאֲמַר : וְהַגִּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ, בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר : בְּעָבוּר זֶה עָשָׂה יְיָ לִי, בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם :

“You shall tell your son on that day, saying, ‘It is because of this that *Hashem* acted on my behalf when I left Egypt’.” (*Shmot* 13:8)

Rashi comments: “‘Because of this’ — i.e., in order that I could keep the *mitzvot* such as *Korban Pesach*, *matzah* and *maror*.”

R' Yerucham Halevi of Mir *z”l* (died 1936) taught: We are used to thinking that the purpose of the Exodus miracles was to ingrain in us belief in G-d and His greatness. Indeed, many verses support this interpretation of events. However, *Rashi* is teaching us another aspect of the Exodus — the purpose of the Exodus miracles was to obligate us in the *mitzvot* associated with those events.

A similar interpretation is given by R' Yosef Yaavetz *z”l* (known as “The *Chassid Yaavetz*”; 1435-1507) in his commentary to the *mishnah*, “If there were no Torah, there would not be *derech erez* / the way of the world; If there were no *derech erez*, there would not be Torah.” He explains: *Derech erez* means our daily activities such as planting, harvesting, lying down, getting up, building a house, eating, etc. *Hashem* created all of these activities only so that *mitzvot* could revolve around them.

We are used to thinking that because we have a father and mother, we have a *mitzvah* to honor them. This is not so; rather, because there is a *mitzvah* to honor our parents, *Hashem* “had” to give us parents. Similarly, *Hashem* told Moshe (*Shmot* 16:4) that *Bnei Yisrael* would be given the *mahn* “so that I can test them whether they will follow My teachings or not.” The purpose of the *mahn* was not to feed

Bnei Yisrael, it was to be an object with which *mitzvot* could be performed (for example, saying blessings). (*Yalkut Lekach Tov*; see also *Shai Latorah*; *Alei Shur* Vol. II p.390)



We read: “And so that you may relate in the ears of your son and your son’s son that I made a mockery of Egypt and My signs that I placed among them -- that you may know that I am *Hashem*.” (10:2)

R’ Yehuda Gruenwald *z”l* (rabbi in Satmar, Hungary) explains that there are two goals when telling the story of the Exodus. First, it should be in such a manner that it enters “the ears of your son” (i.e., makes an impression). The second requirement is that it should cause you (the parent) to “know that I am *Hashem*,” i.e., to be awakened to realize that there is a G-d who is One and Who conducts the World.

Alternatively, this verse can be understood as follows: *Chazal* say that if one teaches his grandson Torah, it is as if he (the teacher) received the Torah at *Har Sinai*. Thus the verse means to teach: In the merit that you are committed to relate in the ears of your son and your son’s son that G-d made a mockery of Egypt, you will receive the Torah at *Har Sinai* and know that He is *Hashem*. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Olelot Yehuda*)

יְכוֹל מֵרֵאשִׁי חֲדָשׁ, תִּלְמֹד לֹמַר בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא. אֵי בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא. יְכוֹל מִבְּעוֹד יוֹם. תִּלְמֹד לֹמַר. בְּעִבוּר זֶה. בְּעִבוּר זֶה לֹא אֶמְרְתִּי, אֶלָּא בְּשַׁעַה שְׁיִישׁ מִצָּה וּמְרוֹר מִנְחִים לְפָנֶיךָ :

Why might I think this? R’ Avraham ben Hagra *z”l* (died 1808; son of the *Vilna Gaon*) explains: The ancient Egyptians worshiped the sheep, and to counter this fallacious belief, *Bnei Yisrael* were commanded to slaughter sheep for the *Korban Pesach*. Not coincidentally, the sheep (Aries) is the astrological sign for the month of *Nissan*. Therefore, I might think that the time to speak of the Exodus and of *Hashem*’s mastery over all other forces begins on *Rosh Chodesh*, when the sign of the sheep first ascends.

For the same reason, the *Haggadah* states that I might think the time to discuss the Exodus is on the afternoon of *Erev Pesach*. That is the time when the *Korban Pesach* was slaughtered. (*Geulat Avraham*)



We read in the *Haggadah*, “I might think that I should start telling the story of the Exodus from Rosh Chodesh Nisan; therefore the Torah (*Shmot* 13:8) says, ‘Because of this.’ This verse teaches us that the *mitzvah* of the *Haggadah* applies at the time when ‘this’ (the *Korban Pesach*, the *matzah*, and the *Maror*) are before us.”

However, says R’ Mordechai Gifter *z”l* (*Rosh Yeshiva* of Telshe), the *Haggadah* does not tell us whether the *mitzvah* of the *Haggadah* applies only when those three items are actually before us, or merely at the hour when those three *mitzvot* apply. What if one does not have *matzah* and *Maror*? The answer may be found in the *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 116b), however. There we learn that according to the view that the *mitzvah* of *matzah* is only an obligation of rabbinic origin now that the *Bet Hamikdash* is not standing, so the *Haggadah* is also a rabbinic commandment. Why does this view consider *matzah* to be only a rabbinic obligation? Because we don’t have a *Korban Pesach* on the table. We see, therefore, that the *mitzvah* of the *Haggadah* applies on a Torah level only when the other three *mitzvah*-objects are actually before us, not only at the time when they apply.

The question arises, since it is clear that the *mitzvah* of *Haggadah* applies “*miDeoraita*” only at the hour when the *mitzvah* of *Korban Pesach* applies as well, why did R’ Elazar ben Azaryah remain at the *Seder* with his colleagues past midnight (as told in the *Haggadah*)? R’ Elazar ben Azaryah maintained, after all, that the *mitzvah* of *Korban Pesach* could be performed only until midnight!

The answer is that even if the time for the *mitzvah* of the *Haggadah* has ended, the *Haggadah* and the story of the Exodus are nevertheless Torah study. By remaining at the *Seder* he was thus able to perform that *mitzvah*. (*Pirkei Mo'ed* p.23)



R' Menachem Mendel Schneerson *z"l* (the "*Lubavitcher Rebbe*"; died 1994) asks: The very source for the *mitzvah* of retelling the story of the Exodus is the above verse, "You shall tell your son on that day, saying, 'Because of this *Hashem* acted on my behalf when I left Egypt'." And, as the above passage indicates, the word "this" in the verse refers to the *matzah* and the *marror*. Since the *mitzvah* of *Haggadah* is thus connected with the *matzah* and the *marror* (whose time is *Pesach* night), how could the author of the *Haggadah* entertain the possibility that the *mitzvah* of telling about the Exodus begins on *Rosh Chodesh*, fifteen days before *Pesach*?

He explains: We are taught that the Patriarchs observed the Torah before it was given. However, there is a difference between their Torah observance and ours. For us, there are such things as holy objects (for example, *tefilin*) and unholy objects (for example, a non-kosher animal). However, to the Patriarchs, such concepts did not exist. Although they could observe the laws of *tefilin* and the laws of *kashrut*, the objects themselves were not yet invested with sanctity or impurity (as the case may be) because the Torah did not yet exist in the physical world. (This, says R' Schneerson, is why Avraham did not circumcise himself before *Hashem* commanded him to do so. Before the *mitzvah* of *milah* was given, there was no impurity to the foreskin.)

The *mitzvot* of *matzah* and *marror* were first given to Moshe on *Rosh Chodesh Nissan*, two weeks before *Pesach*. It was on that day that the idea of *matzah* and *marror* as *mitzvah*-objects first came into being, and the author of the *Haggadah* thought that perhaps that was sufficient basis to begin retelling the story of the Exodus. No, the *Haggadah* concludes, the *matzah* and *marror* are not invested with their full holiness until it comes time to eat them, and that is when there is a *mitzvah* to retell the story of the Exodus. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach: Admor Mi'Lubavitch*)

מִתְחִלָּה עוֹבְדֵי עֲבוֹדַת זָרָה הָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ. וְעַכְשָׁו קָרַבְנוּ הַמָּקוֹם לְעֲבוֹדָתוֹ. שְׁנֵאמַר :
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָשִׁעַ אֶל כָּל הָעָם. כֹּה אָמַר יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעֵבֶר הִנָּהָר יֵשְׁבוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם
מֵעוֹלָם, תִּרְחַ אֲבִי אֲבִרְהֵם וְאֲבִי נַחֲוֹר. וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים : וְאָקַח אֶת אֲבִיכֶם אֶת
אֲבִרְהֵם מֵעֵבֶר הִנָּהָר, וְאוֹלַדְ אוֹתוֹ בְּכָל אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן. וְאֲרַבָּה אֶת זֶרְעוֹ, וְאָתָּן לוֹ אֶת
יִצְחָק : וְאָתָּן לְיִצְחָק אֶת יַעֲקֹב וְאֶת עֵשָׂו. וְאָתָּן לְעֵשָׂו אֶת הַר שְׁעִיר, לְרֵשֶׁת אוֹתוֹ.
וַיַּעֲקֹב וּבָנָיו יָרְדוּ מִצְרָיִם :

"Originally our ancestors were idol worshipers, but now the Omnipresent has brought us near to His service . . ."

Many commentaries observe that this sentence fulfills our Sages' direction: "We begin with disgrace and conclude with praise." But whose praise? R' David Hanaggid *z"l* (1224-1300; grandson of *Rambam*) explains:

We begin with our own disgrace – "Originally our ancestors were idol worshipers" – and we conclude with praise of *Hashem* – that despite our lowly standing, He performed miracles for us and, in His kindness, took us out of Egypt.

R' David adds: There also is praise of *Bnei Yisrael* implied here – that despite their tribulations, they did not lose faith and did not assimilate among the Egyptians. Rather, they clung to that which their father Avraham had taught.

However, concludes R' David, this leads back to *Hashem's* praise, for it was He who chose Avraham from among all the other people of his generation, gave him Yitzchak, etc. (as the remainder of this paragraph in the *Haggadah* relates). (*Midrash R' David Hanaggid: Haggadah Shel Pesach* p.55)



Why is it relevant to the story of the Exodus that our ancestors were idolators? R' Moshe ben Machir z"l (16th century) explains that the *Haggadah* is contrasting Avraham with our ancestors in Egypt and with ourselves. In the process, we see *Hashem's* greatness and kindness.

Avraham abandoned the idolatry of his fathers and rose to great heights. His descendants in Egypt again became idolators.

Despite *Bnei Yisrael's* idolatry, *Hashem* redeemed them. So, too, he redeems us repeatedly from our oppressors in the merit of His covenant with Avraham. (*Seder Hayom*)



Why were our ancestors exiled to Egypt? R' Shlomo Halevi Alkabetz z"l (1505-1584; Tzefat, Israel; author of the poem *Lecha Dodi*) answers:

The Torah states (*Devarim* 32:30), “[I]f not that their rock had sold them out.” Who is “their rock”? The prophet Yishayah answers this question (*Yishayah* 51:1): “Look to the rock from which you were hewn,” i.e., Avraham.

How did Avraham sell us out? The *midrash* relates that *Hashem* allowed Avraham to choose what would happen to his descendants when they sinned, and he chose exile. And, since Avraham was a loving father, the paradigm of *chessed* / kindness, we can presume that he chose something that is good for us, his children.

How is exile good? What does it accomplish? The Torah tells us (*Vayikra* 26:41), “Perhaps then their uncircumcised heart will be subdued, and then they will gain appeasement for their sin.” When *Hashem* exiles us, it is not an act of vengeance, but rather a means by which we can be purified.

The ultimate goal of our existence is to purify ourselves. This is the meaning of the Sages' comment on the verse (*Bereishit* 1:31), “And G-d saw all that He had made, and behold it was very good” — “This refers to death.” Why is death “very good”? Because it is at death that one finally frees himself of his *yetzer hara* and is left with a pure soul.

This allows us to understand why *Hashem* expelled Adam from *Gan Eden* and posted guards at the gate, “lest he stretch out his hand and take also from the Tree of Life, and eat and live forever” (*Bereishit* 3:22). Wasn't it G-d's desire originally that man live forever? Yes, before Adam sinned. However, after man sinned, he could only purify his soul through death.

This also explains why Moshe Rabbenu broke the first *Luchot* / Tablets. The *Zohar* says (making a play on the words of *Shemot* 32:16) that mankind was freed of the Angel of Death when the *Luchot* were given. Yet, after *Bnei Yisrael* made the Golden Calf, they needed to repent and purify their souls once again. Thus, as just explained, immortality would have been a curse for them, and therefore Moshe broke the *Luchot*. (*Berit Halevi* Ch. 1)

בְּרוּךְ שׁוֹמֵר הַבְּטָחָתוֹ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל. בְּרוּךְ הוּא. שֶׁהִקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא חָשַׁב אֶת הַקֶּץ, לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּמָה שֶׁאָמַר לְאַבְרָהָם אֲבִינוּ בְּבְרִית בֵּין הַבְּתָרִים, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיֹּאמֶר לְאַבְרָם יְדַע תְּדַע, כִּי גַר יִהְיֶה זְרָעְךָ, בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לָהֶם, וַעֲבָדוּם וְעָנּוּ אֹתָם אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה: וְגַם אֶת הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲבֹדוּ דָן אֲנֹכִי. וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן יֵצְאוּ, בְּרִכְשׁ גָּדוֹל:

“*Baruch shomair havtachato l'Yisrael*” is commonly translated, “Blessed is He Who kept His promise to Yisrael.” In truth, this is difficult to understand; would we then think that *Hashem* does not always keep his promises?

Rather, says R' Eliezer David Gruenwald z"l, the above expression should be translated: “Blessed is He Who *guarded* His promise to Yisrael.” We read in the Torah that Avraham questioned *Hashem*, “How do I know that [my descendants] will inherit [the Land]?” Logically speaking, Avraham argued, my children should assimilate and disappear in Egypt, just as most nations do when they migrate to a foreign land and remain there for several hundred years.

But this did not happen? Why, because *Hashem* guarded us from that fate so that His promise would be fulfilled. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Chasdei David*)



There is a disagreement between the twelfth century sages *Rambam* and *Ra'avad* (in *Hilchot Teshuvah* ch. 6) regarding the answer to the following question: if *Hashem* decreed that Avraham's descendants would be exiled and enslaved, why were the Egyptians punished for enslaving them? *Rambam* answers that *Hashem* did not say in what country *Bnei Yisrael* would be enslaved. The Egyptians so-to-speak volunteered to enslave *Bnei Yisrael*, and for that they were punished. *Ra'avad* disagrees; he writes that the Egyptians were punished for treating their slaves more harshly than necessary.

R' Gavriel Ze'ev Margolis z"l explains *Rambam's* and *Ra'avad's* disagreement as follows: The *Gemara* (*Nedarim* 36b, and Rabbenu Nissim there) teaches that if a person (Reuven) says, "Let whomever wants come and separate *terumah* from my produce," a volunteer who comes and separates *terumah* (Shimon) would not be considered to be an agent of the produce-owner (Reuven). Accordingly, even if Reuven had previously undertaken a vow not to derive any benefit from this Shimon, Shimon would be permitted to separate *terumah* on Reuven's behalf, since Shimon would be acting on his own and not technically acting for Reuven.

On the other hand, if Reuven said, "Let whomever hears me come and separate *terumah* from my produce," a volunteer who comes and separates *terumah* is considered to be Reuven's agent. Therefore, if Reuven had previously undertaken a vow not to derive any benefit from Shimon, Shimon would not be permitted to separate *terumah* on Reuven's behalf.

Rambam writes elsewhere that there is no contradiction between our having free-will and *Hashem's* knowing the future because His knowledge is different from our knowledge in a way that we cannot comprehend. Somehow, the fact that He knows that a certain event will happen and a certain person will be involved does not force that person to play that role. Rather, every person has free-will.

Thus, continues R' Margolis, when *Hashem* decreed that *Bnei Yisrael* would be enslaved, His knowledge that the enslavement would take place in Egypt did not force the Egyptians to enslave *Bnei Yisrael*. It was as if *Hashem* had said, "Let whomever wants come and enslave *Bnei Yisrael*," in which case the person who responds is not deemed to be an agent. It follows, then, that the Egyptians who did respond were deserving of punishment.

Ra'avad on the other hand, contends that *Hashem's* omniscience somehow limits man's free-will. Thus, when *Hashem* decreed that *Bnei Yisrael* would be enslaved in Egypt, He effectively appointed the Egyptians as agents to fulfill His will. It was as if He said, "Let whomever hears come and enslave *Bnei Yisrael*," in which case the one who responded was deemed to be an agent. Therefore, since the Egyptians were merely His agents, they would not have been deserving of punishment if not for the fact that they treated their slaves too harshly. (*Torat Gavriel* to *Shmot* 1:1)

Elsewhere, R' Margolis writes that in light of *Ra'avad's* view that the Egyptians were punished only because they enslaved *Bnei Yisrael* too harshly, the verses quoted above can be understood as follows: When Moshe first spoke to Pharaoh, Pharaoh responded by worsening *Bnei Yisrael's* working conditions, as described near the end of *Parashat Shmot*. That *parashah* then ends with Moshe questioning why *Hashem* allowed this to happen.

Parashat Va'era opens with *Hashem's* answer to Moshe's question: "Elokim (the Attribute of Justice) spoke to Moshe: 'I am *Hashem*' (the Attribute of Mercy)." My harsh judgment and My mercy are one and the same; in order to redeem *Bnei Yisrael* before the end of the 400 years that the exile was supposed to last, I had to increase the harshness of the exile."

That *Hashem's* harsh justice can at the same time be merciful is something that *Hashem* never revealed to the Patriarchs, for they could withstand justice alone. "With My Name *Hashem* I did not make Myself known to them." And, why did *Hashem* ignore *Bnei Yisrael's* suffering until now?

Because, “I established My covenant with them” — it was My decree in My covenant with Avraham that they would be enslaved.

But now, “I have heard the groan of *Bnei Yisrael* whom Egypt enslaves” more harshly than I had decreed. “Therefore, say to *Bnei Yisrael*, ‘I am *Hashem*’,” the merciful G-d who will redeem them and punish their oppressors. (*Torat Gavriel to Shmot 6:2*)



R’ Elazar Lew *z”l* (died 1837) observes that *Chazal* gave three reasons why *Bnei Yisrael* were redeemed from Egypt before the 400 years of the exile had passed, and all three of them are alluded to in the verses: “G-d spoke to Moshe and said to him, ‘I am *Hashem*! I appeared to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Yaakov as *Kel Shakkai*, but with My Name *Hashem* I did not make Myself known to them. Moreover, I established My covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their sojourning, in which they sojourned. Moreover, I have heard the groan of *Bnei Yisrael* whom Egypt enslaves and I have remembered My covenant’.” (*Shmot 6:2-5*)

First, our Sages teach that *Hashem* applied the merits of the Patriarchs to their descendants and redeemed them early. “I appeared to the Patriarchs as *Kel Shakkai* – with My Attribute of Justice – but with My Name *Hashem* – My attribute of Mercy – I did not make Myself known to them.” Therefore, all of the kindness and mercy that the Patriarchs had earned was stored away for their children to draw on.

Second, our Sages say that *Bnei Yisrael* had sunk to a very low spiritual level and would have disappeared into spiritual oblivion if they had not been redeemed immediately. “Moreover, I established My covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan – and if I don’t keep this promise soon, it will be too late.”

Third, *Chazal* teach that *Hashem* increased the level of the oppression in Egypt so that the suffering that should have taken 400 years was compressed into 210 years. “Moreover, I have heard the groan of *Bnei Yisrael* whom Egypt enslaves.” (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Shemen Rokeach* p. 73)



R’ Chaim Yosef David Azulai *z”l* (*Chida*; died 1806) writes: *Hashem* told Avraham (*Bereishit 15:13*), “Know with certainty that your offspring shall be aliens in a land not their own, they will cause them to be enslaved, and they will oppress them for four hundred years. But also the nation for which they shall slave I shall judge, and afterwards they shall leave with great wealth.” *Hashem* told Avraham that He would punish the nation that would enslave *Bnei Yisrael*. Why didn’t *Hashem* also say that He would punish the nation that would oppress *Bnei Yisrael*? Likewise, why does our verse refer only to slavery and not to oppression?

Chida explains: The Egyptians did not deserve to be punished to the extent that they were only fulfilling *Hashem*’s decree. Therefore they were not punished for oppressing *Bnei Yisrael*. However, the decree of slavery was lifted from *Bnei Yisrael* as a result of Yosef’s slavery. [As the trailblazer for the Avraham’s descendants in Egypt, Yosef could fulfill the decree on behalf of all of them.] Thus, the Egyptians did deserve to be punished for enslaving the Jewish People. That is why our verse says that *Hashem* heard the groans specifically of *Bnei Yisrael* who Egypt enslaved. (*Nachal Kedumim*)



We read: “G-d spoke to Moshe and said to him, ‘I am *Hashem*. I appeared to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Yaakov [by the Name] *Kel Shakkai*, but with My Name *Hashem* I did not make Myself known to them’.” (*Shmot 6:2-3*)

These verses were *Hashem*’s answer to Moshe after he questioned *Hashem* at the end of *Parashat Shmot*. Moshe had asked why the Egyptians’ subjugation of the Jews became harsher after Moshe presented himself to Pharaoh as G-d’s messenger.

R’ Avraham Abish Lissa of Frankfurt *z”l* (died 1768) explains as follows: Although *Hashem* had told Avraham that his descendants would be sojourners in a foreign land for 400 years, the actual exile to

Egypt lasted only 210 years. The early redemption was possible because the Egyptians subjugated the Jews more harshly than *Hashem* had planned, thus condensing the pain of 400 years into only 210 years.

Had Pharaoh not increased his subjugation of *Bnei Yisrael*, the exile would have lasted longer. And, had that happened, the Jews might never have been redeemed, for *Chazal* say that *Bnei Yisrael* were already at the brink of spiritual oblivion (i.e., 50th gate of impurity) when *Hashem* took them out of Egypt.

When *Hashem* first appeared to Moshe, writes R' Abish, Moshe could not understand why *Hashem* was speaking about the redemption; after all, 190 years remained in the planned exile! And, after Moshe presented himself to Pharaoh and Pharaoh cracked down on the Jews, Moshe could not understand why G-d was allowing this to happen. G-d replied, "I am *Hashem*" — the Name associated with His mercy. "It is because of My mercy that I am condensing the suffering of the exile into a shorter period, for otherwise, there will be no redemption," *Hashem* told Moshe. "What of My prophecy to Avraham that the exile would last 400 years? I never revealed Myself to him as a merciful G-d. In that role I can change My plan." (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Machazeh Avraham* p.57)

R' Shmuel Avigdor Halevi z"l (R' Abish's son-in-law — see above) asks: Surely *Hashem* knew from the beginning that the exile would last only 210 years! Why then did He tell Avraham it would last 400 years?

He answers: There are two reasons commonly given for the exile in Egypt — to prepare *Bnei Yisrael* to be G-d's servants and to rid them of bad traits such as the jealousy which caused Yosef's brothers to sell him. When *Hashem* told Avraham of the exile, the sin of the brothers was not yet committed and they had the option not to commit it. [Although *Hashem* knew what they would choose, He does not punish until man actually makes his choice.] Originally, *Hashem* planned a 400 year period in which *Bnei Yisrael* would prepare to accept His yoke.

However, after the trait of jealousy manifested itself among the Jews, the subjugation had to be intensified in order to rid them of that trait. As a result, the exile ended sooner.

In this light we may understand a strange statement of *Chazal* (quoted in *Rashi* to 11:2). *Chazal* say that *Hashem* pleaded with Moshe: "Please make sure that the Jews receive gifts from the Egyptians lest Avraham say that I did not keep My promise to Him that they would leave with gifts." This *midrash* implies that *Hashem* was thinking of not keeping His promise. Why? Because the purpose of the exile had changed since He had spoken to Avraham, and now the Jews were no longer deserving of riches. (*Ibid* p.54-55)



Why was Pharaoh punished for implementing G-d's word? After all, *Hashem* told Avraham that his descendants would be enslaved as punishment for Avraham's questioning the fulfillment of G-d's promise (see *Bereishit* 15:8).

R' Rephael Yom Tov Lipman Halpern z"l (the *Oneg Yom Tov*; 1816-1879) explains as follows: There are two different ways that *Hashem* deals with the Jewish people. Sometimes He deals with them in a completely miraculous manner, without regard to the laws of nature. At these times, *Hashem* makes specific decrees as to what will happen to the Jewish people, whether for good or for bad. At other times, because of our sins, G-d leaves us people to be ruled by the laws of nature, and He stands by and does not interfere, whatever happens. (This is known as "*hester panim*" / "hiding His face.")

Perhaps, says the *Oneg Yom Tov*, *Hashem* never decreed that the Jewish people should be slaves in Egypt. Rather, because of Avraham's sin, and later, the sin of Yosef's brothers in selling him, G-d decided to stand back and let nature take its course. Along came Pharaoh, a man with an evil nature, and mistreated the Jewish people. If not for Pharaoh's evil character, the fact that *Hashem* was "standing aside" would not have resulted in the *Bnei Yisrael*'s being enslaved.

This explains, as well, why we consider it a kindness that *Hashem* took us out of Egypt. Had He been the cause of our enslavement, we might have considered G-d to be obligated to redeem us. However, since He did not make us slaves in the first place (but merely refrained from saving us when

Pharaoh enslaved us), it was a kindness to save us. (*Oneg Yom Tov Al Drush, Drashah Leshabbat Hagadol*)



The *midrash* states: “‘Thereafter they will leave [Egypt] with great possessions’--this is the meaning of ‘All the Jews had light in their homes’.” (The first verse quoted is *Bereishit* 15:14, the second is *Shmot* 10:23)

R’ Nachum Mordechai Friedman z”l (the *Tchortkover Rebbe*) explains as follows:

As quoted on the first page, *Hashem* was “concerned” lest Avraham feel that his descendants did not receive their due upon leaving Egypt. But why would *Hashem* expect that the *tzaddik* who refused the material wealth offered by the King of Sdom would want the wealth of the Egyptians?

Another question: Why did Avraham pray that Sdom should not be destroyed, but he did not pray that his children should not be enslaved? R’ Nachum Mordechai explains that there are two ways to contribute to the correction of Adam’s sin--through Torah study and *mitzvot*, or through being exiled to a spiritual wasteland.

Avraham understood that this was the purpose of his descendant’s enslavement. First they would collect the spiritual “sparks” from Egypt, then they would receive the Torah. And this was *Hashem*’s concern--not that Avraham would demand material wealth for his descendants. Rather, as the *Arizal* teaches, *Bnei Yisrael*’s “cleaning-out” Egypt materially merely that Egypt had become barren of spirituality as well.

Finally, we may understand the *midrash* with which we began, i.e., that the great wealth with which *Bnei Yisrael* left Egypt was a spiritual “light.” (*Doreish Tov: Pesach*)



Yet another explanation of the above *midrash* is offered by R’ Meir Bergman *shlita* (son-in-law of R’ Elazar M. Shach z”l). Of course, *Hashem* keeps His promises, not only because Avraham might complain. However, the great reward which *Hashem* intended to give the Jewish people was a spiritual reward, not a material reward.

Hashem had “intended” that the suffering of slavery would refine the Jews and enhance their spirituality. But people have free will, and *Bnei Yisrael* allowed themselves to sink into the 49 Gates of Impurity. Thus, the spiritual reward which *Hashem* had intended was no longer fitting. Instead, *Hashem* had to shower the Jews with silver, gold, and clothing, simply for the sake of keeping His promise to Avraham. (*Sha’arei Orah* Vol. II)



We read in the Torah that *Hashem* foretold to Avraham that the Jews would be exiled. [Some commentaries say that the exile was a punishment for Avraham because he questioned G-d’s promise that he would inherit *Eretz Yisrael*.] On the other hand, *Chazal* tell us that the exile in Egypt was caused by Yosef’s brothers selling him as a slave. Which is the real reason?

Similarly, the *Gemara* teaches in one place that the *Bet Hamikdash* was destroyed because of the prevalence of murder, adultery and idolatry. In another place, the *Gemara* states that the *Bet Hamikdash* was destroyed because the Jews did not study Torah. Again, which is the real reason?

R’ Yisrael Reisman *shlita* explained (in one of his *Motzaei Shabbat Navi* classes) that *Hashem* runs the world the way a person does a jigsaw puzzle. How does one decide where to place each piece of the puzzle? The answer is that there are often multiple reasons for placing a particular piece in a specific location, i.e., the right side fits the piece on the right, the left side fits the piece on the left, etc.

So, too, we should not look for one reason for why *Hashem* acts the way He does. There may be multiple reasons.

וְהִיא שְׁעֵמֶדָה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ. שְׁלֹא אֶחָד בְּלִבָּד, עִמָּד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ. אֲלֵא שְׁבָכָל דּוֹר וְדוֹר, עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ. וְהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְצִילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם:

“This is what stood by our fathers and us.”

What is “This”? R’ Yitzchak Yaakov Weiss *z”l* (1902-1989; “*Dayan Weiss*” of Manchester and Yerushalayim) explains that this statement refers to *Hashem*’s words to Avraham quoted in the previous paragraph of the *Haggadah*: “Know that your offspring will be aliens in a land not their own . . .” It is the fact that we have always been aliens, keeping some distance from our host nations, that has maintained us in all of our exiles. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Minchat Yitzchak*)



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

R’ Menachem Mendel Kalish *z”l* (1819-1868; *Rebbe* of Vorka, Poland) explained: What is it that has held the Jewish people together and has stood us in good stead throughout the millennia of exile and persecution? It is the Torah scholars of each generation who have ensured the continuity of *halachah* and *mitzvah*-observance, and it is our adherence to their words that has preserved us as a nation. This is why we point out a rabbinic *mitzvah* and say, “It is this that has stood by our fathers and us.”

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

צֵא וּלְמַד, מֵהַ בְּקֵשׁ לָבוֹן הָאֶרְמִי לַעֲשׂוֹת לִיעֲקֹב אָבִינוּ. שְׁפָרְעָה לֹא גָזַר אֲלֵא עַל הַזְּכָרִים, וְלָבוֹן בְּקֵשׁ לַעֲקֹר אֶת הַכֹּל, שְׁנֵאמַר: אֶרְמִי אֲבִד אָבִי, וַיִּרַד מִצְרַיִמָּה, וַיִּגַר שָׁם בְּמֵתֵי מֵעַט. וַיְהִי שָׁם לְגוֹי גָדוֹל, עֲצוּם וָרֹב:

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

R’ Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *z”l* (1910-1995) comments: Although the Torah never mentions explicitly that Lavan wanted to kill Yaakov, our Sages testify that such was his intention. And, just as the details of Lavan’s plot against Yaakov remain hidden, so it has been throughout history. We read in *Hallel*: “Praise *Hashem*, all nations . . . For His kindness has overwhelmed us . . .” Commentaries ask: Should the nations praise *Hashem* because His kindness has overwhelmed us? The answer that is commonly given is that only the nations can truly appreciate *Hashem*’s kindness to us, because only they know how many times they have plotted against us and failed. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach R’ Shlomo Zalman Auerbach*)



Why, on the *Seder* night, would we want to downplay the evil of the Egyptian king? To the contrary, on the night which is set aside for relating *Hashem*’s miracles, we should emphasize how terrible conditions in Egypt were!

R’ Levi Yitzchak Horowitz *shlita* (the *Boston-Har Nof Rebbe*) explains that the quoted phrase is meant to demonstrate the truth of the preceding statement in the *Haggadah*: “In every generation they rise up against us to destroy us.” We don’t necessarily see evidence of this, and we might doubt that it is true.

By the same token, though, there is no clear statement in the Torah that Lavan wanted to destroy the fledgling Jewish People. Yet, just as we accept our Sages' assertion that Lavan really did want to uproot everything, so we accept their teaching that our enemies rise up to destroy us in every generation and *Hashem* saves us from them, sometimes without our knowledge. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Ezrat Avoteinu* p.115)



Why doesn't the *Haggadah* mention that Esav also wanted to "uproot everything"? R' Chaim Kanievski *shlita* answers that the statement quoted above actually alludes to Esav.

How so? R' Kanievski explains: The Torah does not say anywhere that Lavan wanted to destroy Yaakov and his family. If so, to what is the *Haggadah* referring? It is referring to the *Midrash Sefer Hayashar* which relates that Lavan sent a messenger to Esav saying, "Yaakov has left my territory and is traveling toward you. Do with him as you wish." In other words, how did Lavan try to uproot everything? By provoking Esav. (Quoted in *Haggadah Shel Pesach Shirat Ha'leviim* p.57)



R' Shalom Schwadron *z"l* ("The *Maggid*") writes in the name of his mother: *Hashem* has promised that, regardless of our enemies' attempts to destroy us, *Bnei Yisrael* will exist forever. If so, Lavan's plan to "uproot" Yaakov's entire future could not possibly have succeeded. No miracle was necessary to save us from him. In contrast, Pharaoh's decree affected only a portion of the nation; therefore, *he* might have succeeded. In this paragraph of the *Haggadah*, we praise *Hashem* that Pharaoh did not succeed. (Intro. to *Da'at Torah*, vol. 2)

וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרַיִם, אָנוּס עַל פִּי הַדְּבִיר. וַיִּגֵּר שָׁם. מִלֵּמַד שְׁלֹא יֵרֵד יַעֲקֹב אֲבֵינוּ לְהַשְׁתַּקֵּעַ
בְּמִצְרַיִם, אֶלָּא לְגֹר שָׁם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיֵּאמְרוּ אֶל פַּרְעֹה, לְגֹר בְּאֶרֶץ בְּאֵנוּ, כִּי אֵין מִרְעָה
לְצֹאן אֲשֶׁר לְעַבְדֶּיךָ, כִּי כִבֵּד הָרַעַב בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן. וְעַתָּה, יֵשְׁבוּ נָא עַבְדֶּיךָ בְּאֶרֶץ גֹּשׁוֹן:

בְּמַתִּי מֵעֵט. כִּמָּה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: בְּשִׁבְעִים נַפְשׁ, יֵרְדוּ אֲבֹתֶיךָ מִצְרַיִם. וְעַתָּה, שָׂמַד יֵי
אֱלֹהֶיךָ, כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם לְרַב.

"With seventy persons your forefathers descended to Egypt, and now *Hashem*, your G-d, has made you as numerous as the stars of the heaven." (*Devarim* 10:22)

R' Moshe Rosenstain *z"l* said: It is a basic principle of the Torah that we are bound to value every individual. Each person must say, "The world was created for my sake." Yet how is it possible to view each man as a world unto himself? When we see that man is as numerous as the fish in the sea, are we truly to think that each is worthy to have G-d create the world for his sake? How can we imagine that G-d would make a covenant with each and every one?

But when we gaze upwards to the heavens, towards the billions of stars, and realize that each star is a world in itself, immense and important, then we can believe that, even if the people of the world are like the sands of the seashores, each is a world unto himself. G-d created all for his sake and he is worthy to hear the word of G-d and enter into His covenant. (Quoted in *The Artscroll Mussar Haggadah*)

וַיְהִי שָׁם לְגֹי. מִלֵּמַד שֶׁהִיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מְצִינִים שָׁם:

We read in *Tehilim*: "Acknowledge *Hashem*, declare His Name, make His acts known . . . Remember His wonders which He wrought [and] His marvels . . . Thus Yisrael came to Egypt . . . And He made His nation exceedingly fruitful . . . He turned their hearts to hate His nation, to plot against His servants." (*Tehilim* 105:1,5,23,24,25)

These verses are difficult to understand, writes R' Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveitchik *z"l* (rabbi of Brisk; died 1892). As the opening verses suggest, the 105th chapter of *Tehilim* is devoted to the kindness

that G-d showed the Patriarchs and the generations which preceded the Exodus. How does the report that G-d caused the Egyptians to hate *Bnei Yisrael* demonstrate G-d's kindness?

R' Soloveitchik explains: Our Sages teach that as long as *Bnei Yisrael* were in Egypt they neglected the *mitzvah* of *Brit Milah* / circumcision. Yet this presents a difficulty in light of the verses calling *Bnei Yisrael* G-d's "servants." (See verse 25 quoted above, and see *Sanhedrin* 47 where the expression "G-d's servant" is interpreted to refer only to the righteous.) Certainly a person who willfully neglects the *mitzvah* of circumcision cannot be called righteous!

The above questions may be resolved as follows: *Bnei Yisrael* knew that they would remain in Egypt for several centuries, and they therefore sought ways--within the bounds of Torah observance--to make their lot easier. What did they do? After performing a circumcision, they would perform a second operation which would hide the fact that the circumcision had been done. (This is called "*mashaich orlato*.") They reasoned that the more similar people's bodies are, the closer their hearts can come. Perhaps the servitude that was imposed upon them would then be lighter.

Although they violated no commandment--*mashaich orlato* is only a rabbinic prohibition--their actions were bound to lead to assimilation. After all, one of the reasons for the *mitzvah* of *Brit Milah* is to set *Bnei Yisrael* aside as a separate and distinct people. What was *Hashem's* response? "He turned [the Egyptians'] hearts to hate His nation, to plot against His servants." This foiled the plan of the assimilationist Jews. This was certainly one of *Hashem's* kindnesses, for had the Egyptians not hated *Bnei Yisrael*, they would have assimilated and disappeared long before the arrival of the Exodus. (*Bet Halevi:Parashat Shmot*)

גָּדוֹל עָצוּם, כְּמֵה שְׁנֵאֵמַר : וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, פָּרוּ וַיִּשְׂרְצוּ, וַיִּרְבוּ וַיַּעֲצְמוּ, בְּמֵאֵד מְאֹד,
וַתִּמְלֵא הָאָרֶץ אֹתָם :

"He said to his people, 'Behold! The people, the Children of Israel, are more numerous and stronger than we [literally: 'from us']." (*Shmot* 1:9)

R' Shmuel di Ozeida z"l (16th century; author of *Midrash Shmuel*) explains that Pharaoh wanted to make his evil plot more palatable to the Egyptians. He said: "All these years, Yosef ruled over us and protected his people while they multiplied and grew stronger. Who is to blame for this? We are; it is 'from us'! Wouldn't we have shown sufficient gratitude to Yosef if we had just released him from jail, rather than appointing him to be the viceroy?! Didn't we strengthen the Jews by mourning Yaakov for 70 days?! Now, therefore, it is time to turn the tables." (*Derashot Rabbi Shmuel di Ozeida*)

וָרַב. כְּמֵה שְׁנֵאֵמַר : רַבְּבָה כְּצִמַח הַשְּׂדֵה נִתְתִּיף, וַתִּרְבֵּי, וַתִּגְדְּלֵי, וַתִּבְאֵי בַעֲדֵי עַדְיִים :
שְׂדֵיִם נִכְנוּ, וַיִּשְׁעֲרֻ צִמַח, וְאֵת עֵרֶם וְעֵרְיָה :

וַאֲעֵבֶר עָלֶיךָ וְאַרְאֶךָ מִתְבוֹסֶסֶת בְּדַמְיֶךָ וְאֵמַר לְךָ בְּדַמְיֶךָ חַיִּי.

R' Samson Raphael Hirsch z"l writes in his introduction to the Book of *Shmot*: "With this second book, the history of the Jews as a nation starts. We are led out of the history of the individuals and families into that of the Nation by a list of those men [i.e., the twelve sons of Yaakov] who are already known to us as the "main stem" of the Jewish people. It is out of these men, with their different individualities and characteristics, that the Jewish Nation developed. But there was one basic trait which they all had in common, and this formed the foundation of Jewish nationality: 'Each one with his household came with Yaakov' [*Shmot* 1:1].

"Later on, when the national body, dismembered by Pharaoh's mishandling, appeared to lie helplessly on the ground as a welcome feast for the vultures of history (as it had appeared in the prophetic vision of the ancestor [i.e., Avraham — see *Bereishit* 15:11]), and, at the call of G-d, was to arise 'in its blood' [*Yechezkel* 16:6 — i.e., through the *mitzvah* of *milah*] to immortal life, G-d began the building up of His people on the rock-like foundation of 'homes' — 'a lamb for a household' [*Shmot* 12:4 — i.e., the *Korban Pesach*] — on the bond of children to parents and parents to children. And here we are told that

this foundation of the immortal People of G-d — even if it had been forcibly and violently crushed and disturbed [by Pharaoh] at the time of the redemption — was implanted in them when the Children of Israel originally moved down into the Egyptian womb, out of which, through suffering and woe, they were to be born into a nation. (*Commentary on the Torah*)

וַיִּרְעוּ אֶת־נֹוֹ הַמִּצְרַיִם וַיַּעֲנוּנוּ. וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה :

R' Simcha Wasserman z"l taught: During the period of the infancy of the Jewish people, they went through several distinct periods.

The first one was when they became a nation. This occurred when they were in exile in Egypt, where they underwent terrible tortures. It could be said that they were in a very unhappy and tragic ghetto. But that is where they became a nation. They came into that ghetto as a *family*, and they came out a *people*.

The next period was a time of training in beliefs. It lasted for one year, the year prior to their leaving Egypt. The entire year was dedicated by Providence to implanting in their minds three basic beliefs: 1) the existence of *Hashem*; 2) that *Hashem* is concerned with human behavior; 3) that there is such a thing as Divine communication with a living human being, i.e., prophecy.

This is of the utmost importance, because these three basic beliefs, culminating with the demonstration of prophecy, were the necessary preparation for the giving of the Torah. If a person does not accept that there is a possibility of Divine communication with a human being, he would consider that whatever Moshe gave us is man made. Then the Torah loses all of its value. (*Reb Simcha Speaks*)



When *Bnei Yisrael* arrived in Egypt, they gathered together and made a pact among themselves that they would always remain one people, that they would perform acts of kindness for each other, and that they would maintain in their hearts the covenant of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov to serve only their Father in Heaven. They agreed not to abandon the language of their fathers, and not to learn the Egyptian language because of the idolatrous references which proliferated throughout the language.

The Egyptians used to ask them, “Why don’t you worship our gods so that your work will be lightened?”

The Jews answered, “Did our ancestors ever abandon their faith? They did not, and neither will we!”

When the Jews would perform the *Brit Milah*, the Egyptians would ask, “Why don’t you abandon this practice so that we may deal more lightly with you?”

Again the Jews answered, “Did our ancestors abandon their obligation to G-d’s commandments. They did not and neither will we!”

Sometimes, when a *Brit Milah* was performed, the Egyptians would ask, “Why do you bother? Before long we will throw your child into the Nile and drown him as Pharaoh commanded.”

The Jews would answer, “We must fulfill our obligations and then you may fulfill yours.”

Similarly, when the Jews would observe the *Sheva Berachot*, the Egyptians would ask, “Why do you celebrate? Don’t you know that the newlyweds will soon be taken as slaves?”

The Jews would answer, “We must fulfill our obligations. You can harm no one on whom G-d has not decreed harm.” (*Midrash Tanna D’vei Eliyahu*)

וַיִּרְעוּ אֶתְנֹו הַמִּצְרַיִם. כָּמָה שְׁנָאֵמֶר: הִבֵּה נִתְחַכְמָה לוֹ. פֶּן יִרְבֶּה, וְהִיָּה כִּי תִקְרָאנָה מְלַחְמָה, וְנוֹסֵף גַּם הוּא עַל שְׁנָאֵינוּ, וְנִלְחַם בָּנוּ וְעָלָה מִן הָאָרֶץ:

“He said to his people, ‘Behold! The people, the Children of Israel, are more numerous and stronger than we [literally: ‘from us’].” (1:9)

R’ Shmuel di Ozeida z”l (16th century; author of *Midrash Shmuel*) explains that Pharaoh wanted to make his evil plot more palatable to the Egyptians. He said: “All these years, Yosef ruled over us and protected his people while they multiplied and grew stronger. Who is to blame for this? We are; it is ‘from us’! Wouldn’t we have shown sufficient gratitude to Yosef if we had just released him from jail, rather than appointing him to be the viceroy?! Didn’t we strengthen the Jews by mourning Yaakov for 70 days?! Now, therefore, it is time to turn the tables.” (*Derashot Rabbi Shmuel di Ozeida*)

וַיַּעֲנוּנוּ. כָּמָה שְׁנָאֵמֶר: וַיִּשְׂימוּ עָלֵינוּ שְׂרֵי מַסִּים, לְמַעַן עֲזֹתוּ בְּסִבְלָתָם: וַיָּבֹן עָרֵי מְסֻכָּנוֹת לְפָרְעָה, אֶת פֶּתֶם וְאֶת רַעַמְסֵס: וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה. כָּמָה שְׁנָאֵמֶר: וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ מִצְרַיִם אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּבָרָךְ:

R’ Yehoshua Heschel Rabinowitz z”l (1860-1938; the “*Manostricher Rebbe*” in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn) writes:

The exile in Egypt was twofold. Besides the physical exile in which the Jews were enslaved with bricks and mortar, the Jews’ spirits were not able to develop. This spiritual exile was itself twofold. There was the exile of the *da’at* / knowledge and the exile of the *midot* / character traits.

The exile of the *da’at* came from their being “slaves to Pharaoh” (in the words of the *Haggadah*). Pharaoh himself said (5:2), “I do not know *Hashem*.” [Therefore, *Bnei Yisrael* too did not know *Hashem*.] When a king is small-minded, his people will be too, for the king is to his nation as the head is to the body. This is what King Shlomo meant when he wrote (*Kohelet* 10:16), “Woe to you, a land whose king acts as an adolescent.”

The exile of the *midot* relates to the degeneration of the Jewish people’s own character. This came from the fact that the land of Egypt is itself an impure place which is called (*Bereishit* 42:9), “The nakedness of the land.” The Torah similarly introduces the prohibition on incest with the words (*Vayikra* 18:3): “Do not perform the practice of the land of Egypt in which you dwelled.” It does not say, do not perform the practices of those who dwell in the land, but rather, the practice of the land itself. The land itself is impure. One can see how deeply the land of Egypt negatively influenced *Bnei Yisrael* in their complaints in the desert that they missed the food of Egypt. [Imagine, after all the suffering that Jews endured in Egypt, they missed its food!]

(Do not ask, writes R’ Rabinowitz, that the same verse in *Vayikra* says, “Do not perform the practice of the land of Canaan.” He explains that the immorality of the Canaanites turned Canaan into a “sick” land, but it could be, and was, cured, when *Bnei Yisrael* settled there and kept the Torah.) (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Torat Yehoshua* p. 27)

וַנִּצְעַק אֶל יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וַיִּשְׁמַע יְיָ אֶת קוֹלֵנוּ, וַיִּרָא אֶת עַנְיֵנוּ, וְאֶת עֲמָלֵנוּ, וְאֶת לְחִצָּנוּ:

R’ Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson z”l (the *Lubavitcher Rebbe*; died 1950) once commented: People mistakenly think, “If only we had a Moshe Rabbeinu today, he would rescue us from our exile.” Those people are wrong. The redemption is not delayed because we don’t have a Moshe Rabbeinu. Even in Egypt, *Hashem* sent the redeemer only after the people cried out to Him. If we would cry out to *Hashem* similarly, He would send out redeemer. (Quoted in *Otzrot Tzaddikei U’geonei Ha’dorot*)

וּנְצַעַק אֶל יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, כָּמָה שְׁנָאֵמָר: וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הָרַבִּים הָהֵם, וַיָּמָת מֶלֶךְ
מִצְרַיִם, וַיִּאָּנְחוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן הָעֲבֹדָה וַיִּזְעָקוּ. וַתַּעַל שׁוֹעֲתָם אֶל הָאֱלֹהִים מִן
הָעֲבֹדָה:

“During those many days, it happened that the king of Egypt died, and *Bnei Yisrael* groaned because of the work and they cried out. Their outcry because of the work went up to *Elokim*.” (*Shmot* 2:23)

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



R’ Eliezer Nachman Poah *z”l* (Italian kabbalist; rabbi of Modena; died 1701) explains this verse differently. He writes: When one is in such pain that he cannot formulate his prayers properly, he should simply cry out to G-d. Those prayers will go up to *Elokim*, a reference to G-d’s Attribute of Justice. The Heavenly Tribunal will then evaluate these sincerely uttered prayers and the proper Divine Attributes (i.e., manifestation of G-d’s powers) will come to the fore in response.

He adds: *Bnei Yisrael* in Egypt did not know what Divine Attributes *Hashem* would use to redeem them, so they did not know how to formulate their prayers. This is why Moshe asked (3:13), “When they say to me, ‘What is His Name?’ – what shall I say to them?” Since each Name of *Hashem* refers to a different manifestation of Him, Moshe meant, “What Attribute shall I tell them will redeem them?” (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Midrash Be’chiddush*)



R’ Yaakov David Willowsky *z”l* (1845-1913) observes: The seemingly redundant language, “*Bnei Yisrael* groaned because of the work and they cried out,” means: They groaned because of the work and they cried out because of the Egyptian taskmasters who oppressed them. Significantly, only their cries that were because of the work went up to G-d; their cries that were because of their Egyptian taskmasters do not seem to have been answered.

Why? It is always proper to call out to G-d to save yourself from your own suffering. However, *Chazal* teach that if the oppressed calls upon G-d to judge his oppressor, G-d will judge the oppressed first.

We read later (3:7): “I have indeed seen the affliction of My people that is in Egypt and I have heard its outcry because of its taskmasters, for I have known of its sufferings.” Does this verse not appear to contradict the lesson stated above? R’ Willowsky explains that it is to answer this question that *Hashem* concluded, “For I have known of its suffering.” This means: It is true that one is not supposed to complain about his oppressor, only about the oppression, but I have seen how great their suffering is and I know that the fact that they complained against their taskmasters is involuntary. Therefore the Torah continues, emphasizing (3:9): “And now, behold! The outcry of *Bnei Yisrael* has come to Me.” Although they cried out against their oppressors, I view it as if they cried out for themselves alone. (*Nimukei Ridvaz*)



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

Why did this fact draw *Bnei Yisrael* closer to G-d such that they now cried out to Him? Because the fact that they were not freed caused them to recognize that their slavery was not a natural phenomenon but rather a Divine decree. (*Avodat Ha’kodesh* Ch.34)



We read: “Therefore, say to *Bnei Yisrael*, ‘I am *Hashem*, I shall take you out from under the ‘*sivlot*’ / burdens of Egypt. . . I shall take you to Me for a people and I shall be a G-d to you; and you shall know that I am *Hashem* your G-d, Who takes you out from under the *sivlot* / burdens of Egypt.’” (*Shmot* 6:6-7)

Why is word “*sivlot*” / “burdens” written in the lacking / *chasser* form (i.e., without the letter *vav*) in verse six and in the full / *malai* form (i.e., with the letter *vav*) in verse seven?

R’ Yosef Zvi Salant *z”l* (Yerushalayim; died 10 *Shevat* 5741 / 1981) explains: *Bnei Yisrael* experienced two types of persecution in Egypt--physical and spiritual. However, the enslaved people were primarily conscious of only the physical oppression. The spiritual damage that was being done to them was less apparent. Thus we read (2:23-25), “*Bnei Yisrael* groaned because of the work and they cried out. Their outcry because of the work went up to G-d. G-d heard their moaning, and G-d remembered His covenant with Avraham, with Yitzchak, and with Yaakov. G-d saw *Bnei Yisrael*; and G-d knew.” *Bnei Yisrael* groaned only because of their physical labors, and that outcry surely went up to G-d. However, G-d Himself knew that they were suffering from another cause as well; they were losing their spiritual connection to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov.

In this light, the word *sivlot* is written here “lacking” (i.e., without a *vav*) to indicate that *Bnei Yisrael*’s suffering was lacking a dimension. However, *Hashem* takes us out from all of our *sivlot*--written “full”--because He recognizes when we are suffering spiritually as well. (*Be’er Yosef*)

וַיִּשְׁמַע יְיָ אֶת קִלְנוֹ. כָּמָה שָׁנְאָמֶר: וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶת נַאֲקָתָם, וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת בְּרִיתוֹ, אֶת אַבְרָהָם, אֶת יִצְחָק, וְאֶת יַעֲקֹב:

וַיֵּרָא אֶת עֲנִינּוֹ: זֹו פְּרִישׁוֹת דְּרָדָךְ אֶרֶץ. כָּמָה שָׁנְאָמֶר: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. וַיֵּדַע אֱלֹהִים:

What is it that “G-d knew”? R’ Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveitchik *z”l* explains: The Midrash records that the angels complained, “What is the difference between *Bnei Yisrael* and the Egyptians? Just as the latter are idolators, so are the former!”

Hashem answered, “Would you have Me judge an involuntary transgressor (‘*onnes*’) as a willful sinner (‘mazed’)?” Whereas the Egyptians worshipped idols by choice, *Bnei Yisrael* in Egypt became idolators only because they were confused by the pain of the exile.

Only *Hashem* knows when a transgression is truly involuntary. While it may sometimes appear that a person is being forced to sin, we cannot say that he was truly entrapped unless he was not predisposed to commit that sin. However, if he would have transgressed even without the pressure of external circumstances, he is not an “*onnes*.” This is the meaning of the above verse, “[A]nd G-d knew,” i.e. He knew that the idolatry of *Bnei Yisrael* was a true case of “*onnes*.”

The preceding idea has *halachic* applications as well. For example, the *Gemara* states that a couple which remains childless for many years should divorce, yet the practice in the Diaspora is not so. Why? Because we assume that it is the sin of living in the Diaspora which has caused the childlessness, and not the incompatibility of the couple. The 18th century sage, R’ Pinchas HaLevi Horowitz *z”l* (known as the “*Ba’al Hafla’ah*”), asks: Is this so? Do we not follow the *halachic* view that one is exempt from the *mitzvah* of settling in *Eretz Yisrael* in times of economic hardship? Why then should people be punished for not settling in *Eretz Yisrael*? [Apparently, most, if not all of the last 2,000 years would fall within this exemption.]

His answer is none other than the principle explained above. A person is not called an “*onnes*” unless the only factor which induces his action or inaction is the one that “forces” him to choose that course. However, there are many people who have no desire to settle in *Eretz Yisrael*, and the land’s

economic difficulties are only an excuse that they give. Such a person cannot be called an “*onnes*.” (*Bet Halevi: Parashat Shmot*; also in *Haggadah Shel Pesach Mi'bet HaLevi*, p. 153)

וְאֵת עַמְלֵנוּ אֱלוֹ הַבְּנִים. כָּמָה שְׁנָאִמָּר: כָּל-הַבֵּן הַיְלֹוד הַיְאָרָה תִּשְׁלִיכֶהוּ, וְכָל-הַבֵּת תִּחְיוֹן:

“The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives . . . ‘When you deliver the Hebrew women . . . if it is a son, you are to kill him.’” (*Shmot* 1:15-16)

R’ Joseph B. Soloveitchik *z”l* (1903-1993) observed: The method employed by the haters of Israel throughout the generations has been not only to oppress the Jew but also to discredit or dehumanize him in the eyes of the world. They have wanted to prove that he is a subhuman, an immoral being, and therefore does not deserve the sympathy of other people.

This was exactly the method employed by Pharaoh. He wanted to show that *Bnei Yisrael* were not worthy of sympathy in that the Hebrew midwives themselves had no sympathy for the newborn babies. Pharaoh wanted to show that the midwives were willing to kill the babies at birth in order to save themselves from punishment. (Quoted in *The Rav*, Section 18.06)



“Pharaoh commanded his entire people, saying, ‘Every son that will be born -- into the River shall you throw him! And every daughter shall you keep alive!’” (*Shmot* 1:22)

“She [Yocheved] could not hide him [Moshe] any longer, so she took for him a wicker basket and smeared it with clay and pitch; she placed the child into it and placed it among the reeds at the bank of the River. His sister [Miriam] stationed herself at a distance to know what would be done with him.” (*Shmot* 2:3-4)

Later, after the splitting of the Yam Suf, the Torah relates that (15:20): “Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aharon, took her drum in her hand and all the women went forth after her with drums and with dances.” Why did the women have musical instruments with them? *Rashi* writes that the righteous women in that generation were confident that God would perform miracles for them and they accordingly had brought musical instruments with them from Egypt. R’ Levi Yitzchak Horowitz *shlita* (the “*Bostoner Rebbe*”) notes that the men were not similarly prepared.

R’ Horowitz continues: Miriam’s faith in G-d’s miracles is evident in our verses as well. Miriam was confident that Moshe would be saved; therefore, she “stationed herself at a distance to know what would be done with him.” “At a distance” may also refer to her foresight, to her prophetic look into the future to see that this baby would grow-up to be the redeemer of the Jewish people. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Ezrat Avoteinu* p. 136)



Pharaoh conspired to enslave the Jewish People and prevent them from growing as a nation. At one point, he even commanded that every newborn baby be thrown into the Nile.

Rashi z”l writes that this last decree was not against *Bnei Yisrael* alone, for the Torah says (1:22), “Pharaoh commanded his entire people, saying, ‘Every son that will be born -- into the River shall you throw him!’” *Rashi* explains that Pharaoh’s astrologers told him that the savior of *Bnei Yisrael* would be born on a certain day, and he might be Jewish or he might be Egyptian. (They were confused because the savior, Moshe, actually would be a Jew who would grow up in the palace of an Egyptian.)

R’ Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld *z”l* (1848-1932) observes that this story illustrates how *Hashem* pulls all the strings behind the scenes and uses every person to bring about the result that His Will has ordained. The *Gemara* (*Chagigah* 15a) teaches that everything in the world has an opposite. In the physical world, for example, there are mountains and valleys, etc. In the spiritual world, there are *tzaddikim* and *resha'im*, *Gan Eden* and *Gehinnom*, etc. In the same vein, we are taught that the opposing forces of good and evil must be balanced in the world in order to preserve man’s ability to exercise his free will. According to *Hashem*’s own design, if a soul enters the world that has the ability to become a

great *tzaddik* like Moshe Rabbeinu, another soul must come into the world that has the potential to counter-balance that holiness by spreading unspeakable evil and impurity.

Whatever became of the impure soul that was destined to counter-balance the soul of Moshe Rabbeinu? We never hear of such a person! The answer, says R' Sonnenfeld, is that "Pharaoh commanded his entire people, saying, 'Every son that will be born -- into the River shall you throw him!'" Unwittingly, Pharaoh killed the one person who could have prevented Moshe Rabbeinu's future mission from succeeding. (*Chochmat Chaim*)

וְאֵת לְחַצְנֵי. זֶה הַדִּחְק. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְגַם רָאִיתִי אֶת הַלַּחַץ, אֲשֶׁר מִצְרַיִם לְחַצִּים
אֲתֵם:

We read: "Moshe spoke before *Hashem*, saying, 'Behold, *Bnei Yisrael* have not listened to me, so how will Pharaoh listen to me?'" (*Shmot* 6:12)

Many commentaries observe that Moshe's argument seems illogical. The Torah tells us why *Bnei Yisrael* did not listen; it was, in the words of verse 6:9, "because of shortness of breath and hard work." However, this reason did not apply to Pharaoh, so maybe he would listen!

R' Chaim Elazary *z"l* (died 1984) answers that Moshe's argument was as follows: No one can be rescued from exile unless he feels the exile and wants to be redeemed from it. If Pharaoh sees that *Bnei Yisrael* are satisfied with their present situation, why should he listen to me and let them go? (*Netivei Chaim* II p. 91)

וַיִּצְיָאֵנוּ יְיָ מִמִּצְרַיִם, בְּיַד חֲזָקָה, וּבְזֶרַע נְטוּיָה, וּבְמַרְא גְדוֹל וּבְאֲתוֹת וּבְמוֹפְתִים:

R' Yehuda Loewe *z"l* (the *Maharal* of Prague; 16th century) comments in *Gevurot Hashem* (Ch. 56) that "a mighty hand" alludes to those plagues that occurred because G-d distanced himself from man, while "an outstretched arm" refers to those plagues in which G-d actively struck man. R' Aharon Lopiansky *shlita* (*rosh yeshiva* at the Yeshiva Gedolah of Greater Washington) explains:

G-d brought the plagues upon the Egyptians not only to punish them, but to teach both them and us. There are two erroneous viewpoints that the plagues were designed to counter. Some philosophers assert that G-d does not exist at all, while others acknowledge that He exists and that He is the Creator, but claim that once He finished creation, He can no longer intervene in the world's affairs. To counter the first belief, G-d sometimes pulls back from the world and says, "Look what would happen if I did not exist -- the world would fill with darkness and evil." This is the meaning of the verse (*Eichah* 3:38), "From the mouth of the Most High will not emanate evil." When evil strikes man, it is not because G-d did it, but because He distanced himself from man, thus creating a spiritual vacuum that was filled by evil.

To counter the second belief -- that G-d is subservient to the laws of nature -- G-d sometimes intervenes directly in the world. We read regarding the drowning of the Egyptians in the sea (*Shmot* 15:1), "A horse with its rider He hurled into the sea." Why is it important that the Egyptians were riding on horses when they drowned? A soldier mounted on his powerful steed is a symbol of man's might. Thus, this verse reminds us that G-d is mightier still. Nothing can stop Him from intervening in man's affairs when He chooses. (*Heard from R' Lopiansky* 26 Adar 5763)

וַיִּצְיָאֵנוּ יְיָ מִמִּצְרַיִם. לֹא עַל יְדֵי מְלָאָךְ, וְלֹא עַל יְדֵי שְׂרָף. וְלֹא עַל יְדֵי שְׂלִיחַ. אֶלָּא
הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּכַבּוּדוֹ וּבְעֶצְמוֹ. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְעַבְרַתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּלִילָה הַזֶּה,
וְהַפִּיתִי כָּל בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, מֵאָדָם וְעַד בְּהֵמָה, וּבְכָל אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֶעֱשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים
אֲנִי יְיָ:

The day before *Pesach* is *Ta'anit Bechorim* / the Fast of the Firstborn. The usual explanation for this fast is that it commemorates the fact that *Hashem* killed the firstborn of Egypt but spared the firstborn of *Bnei Yisrael*. However, observes R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *z"l* (1910-1995; one of the foremost

halachic authorities of the second half of this century), there are several serious objections to this explanation. These are:

(1) If the fast commemorates the plague of the firstborn, why is it observed on the day before that plague occurred and not on the day of the plague itself?

(2) *Erev Pesach* is itself a *yom tov* (equivalent to *Chol Ha'moed*). Why was it made into a fast day?

(3) Notwithstanding its popular name, the plague of the firstborn struck not only firstborn children, but also the oldest child in each household. Why, then, are only the firstborn required to observe the fast?

(4) If the fast is a way of thanking *Hashem* for the fact that the Jewish firstborn were saved in Egypt, why do present-day firstborn fast? The fast should rather be observed by descendants of those firstborn who participated in the Exodus!

(5) Why has it become customary to excuse the firstborn from fasting if they participate in a *mitzvah*-meal such as a *siyum* / completion of a Talmudic tractate?

In answer to all of these questions, R' Auerbach explains that the common understanding of the fast of the firstborn is incorrect. Before the sin of the golden calf, the firstborn, not the family of Aharon, served as *kohanim* to *Bnei Yisrael*. The firstborn attained this status because *Hashem* so-to-speak acquired them as His own when He spared them from the plague of the firstborn. (This priestly status was reserved, however, for the male firstborn of their fathers.)

How great then is the embarrassment of the firstborn every *Erev Pesach*, when each Jew brings his *Korban Pesach* and the firstborn can only watch as the *kohanim*, who are descendants of Aharon, perform the service that once was reserved for the firstborn themselves! (Their embarrassment is particularly acute on *Erev Pesach* because it was in connection with the *Korban Pesach*, whose blood was placed on the doorposts to identify Jewish homes, that the firstborn were originally sanctified as priests.)

This explains the custom that the firstborn eat at a *siyum* instead of fasting, for what the firstborn are doing is drowning their sorrows in Torah study. (Quoted in *Haggadah Shel Pesach Arzei Ha'levanon*, Vol. II, p.8)

וְעִבְרָתִי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּלֵילָה הַזֶּה, אֲנִי וְלֹא מִלְאָד. וְהִפִּיתִי כָל בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם.
אֲנִי וְלֹא שָׂרְף. וּבְכָל אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֶעֱשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים, אֲנִי וְלֹא הַשְּׁלִיחַ. אֲנִי יְיָ. אֲנִי הוּא
וְלֹא אֲחֵר:

We read: "And Pharaoh rose up in the night . . ." (12:30) *Rashi* comments: "From his bed."

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

בְּיַד חֲזָקָה. זֶה הַדָּבָר. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: הִנֵּה יָד יְיָ הוֹיָה, בְּמִקְנֶךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשָׂדֶה, בַּסּוּסִים
בַּחֲמֹרִים בְּגַמְלִים, בְּבָקָר וּבַצֹּאן, דָּבָר כֶּבֶד מְאֹד:

וּבְזָרַע נְטוּיָה. זֶה הַחֲרֵב. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַחֲרָבוּ שְׁלוּפָה בְּיָדוֹ, נְטוּיָה עַל יְרוּשָׁלַיִם:

וּבְמוֹרָא גָדוֹל, זֶה גְלוּי שְׂכִינָה. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: אוּ הִנְסָה אֱלֹהִים, לָבוֹא לְקַחַת לוֹ גּוֹי
מִקְרֵב גּוֹי, בְּמַסַּת בְּאֵתֶת וּבְמוֹפְתִים וּבְמִלְחָמָה, וּבְיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזָרוּע נְטוּיָה, וּבְמוֹרָאִים
גְּדֻלִים. כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לָכֶם יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם בְּמִצְרַיִם, לְעִינֵיכֶם:

וּבְאֵתוֹת. זֶה הַמִּטָּה, כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: וְאֵת הַמִּטָּה הַזֶּה תִּקַּח בְּיָדְךָ. אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה בּוֹ אֵת הָאֵתוֹת:

Chazal say that when Moshe and Aharon first appeared before Pharaoh, they miraculously walked through a heavily guarded doorway into the midst of a large state dinner. Despite this obvious miracle, Pharaoh hardened his heart and ignored them.

The second time that they visited Pharaoh, they performed another miracle (turning Aharon's staff into a snake), and even though Pharaoh's magicians mimicked Aharon's act, he won the day when his staff swallowed theirs. Nevertheless, Pharaoh still ignored Moshe and Aharon.

The next time that the two brothers appeared before the king, they turned water into blood. Again the magicians did the same, and this time, Moshe and Aharon did not even score a victory over them.

R' Yechezkel Levenstein z"l (1885-1974) notes that each of these tests was easier for Pharaoh to fail than the preceding one had been. Each of Moshe and Aharon's miracles was smaller than the one before it. This is *Hashem's* way -- he tests a person, and should the person ignore the challenge, *Hashem* leads him down the path which he has chosen. Spiritual failure becomes easier with each step. (Quoted in the Artscroll Mussar *Haggadah* p.82)



We read: "When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, 'Provide a wonder for yourselves,' you shall say to Aharon, 'Take your staff and cast it down before Pharaoh -- it will become a snake!'" (*Shmot* 7:9)

What is meant by "Provide a wonder for yourselves"? Wasn't the wonder provided for Pharaoh? R' Shalom Rokeach z"l (the first *Belzer Rebbe*) explains:

For himself, Pharaoh did not care to see a sign from *Hashem*, as *Mishlei* (18:2) states, "The fool does not desire understanding." We read similarly in *Yishayah* (17:11-12) that *Hashem* invited the wicked king Achaz to challenge and test Him, and Achaz responded, "I will not ask [for a sign] and I will not test *Hashem*."

Rather, Pharaoh's intention was to impugn the *emunah* / faith of Moshe and Aharon. "Surely you have doubts and would like to see a sign," he implied.

R' Rokeach continues: [Obviously Moshe and Aharon had no doubt as to the truth of their mission.] However, the typical Jew does sometimes experience doubts in matters of faith. Why did *Hashem* create us this way?

The answer is that such experiences are meant to be growth opportunities, for a person who has doubts will either research the answers to his questions in our holy literature or he will go to a *tzaddik* to find answers.

Deep down, every Jew wants to know the truth. In contrast, the wicked (such as Pharaoh) are terrified of the truth. This is why Pharaoh was not content to deny the veracity of Moshe and Aharon's message. Instead, he had to goad them as if they did not believe either. (*Midbar Kodesh*)



All of the miraculous signs which Moshe and Aharon performed, such as turning the staff into a snake, were only for Pharaoh's benefit. *Bnei Yisrael* did not need such signs in order to believe Moshe.

Why then did *Bnei Yisrael* believe Moshe? R' Mendele "Rosh Yeshiva" z"l of Minsk explains that this is the secret of the Holy Name, "I Shall Be As I Shall Be," which *Hashem* taught Moshe (*Shmot* 3:14). What this means is, "It is My will that My will shall be done."

In reality, R' Mendele explains further, *Bnei Yisrael's* situation in Egypt was hopeless from any natural perspective. How could they ever be extracted from their slavery in Egypt? Yet, when Moshe spoke to them, they believed him -- they felt a glimmer of hope -- and that feeling of hope was itself the proof that Moshe was sent by G-d and spoke the truth. (*Midrash Menachem: Ma'amar Nevuat Moshe*)

וּבְמוֹפְתֵימָם. זֶה הַדָּם. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: וְנִתְּתִי מוֹפְתִים, בְּשָׂמִים וּבְאָרָץ

נוהגים להטיף מעט מן הכוס בעת אמירת דם ואש, וגם באמירת דם צפרדע, וכו', וגם באמירת דצ"ך עד"ש וכו'

דָּם. וְאֵשׁ. וְתִמְרוֹת עֶשֶׂן:

דָּבָר אַחֵר. בְּיַד חֲזָקָה שְׁתֵּים. וּבְזֶלַע נְטוּיָה שְׁתֵּים. וּבְמוֹרָא גְדוֹל שְׁתֵּים. וּבְאִתּוֹת שְׁתֵּים. וּבְמִפְתֵּים שְׁתֵּים: אֵלּוּ עֶשֶׂר מְכוֹת שֶׁהֵבִיא הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַל הַמִּצְוִים בְּמִצְרַיִם, וְאֵלּוּ הֵן:

Why were the plagues ten in number? R' Yosef Moshe z"l (Polish rabbi; died 1815) offers the following explanation:

On the verse (*Yirmiyahu* 31:19), "Is Ephraim My dear son," the *midrash* comments (as if quoting *Hashem*): "How dear is he to Me? How many frogs did I pay? How many lice did I pay?" The *Midrash* refers to these plagues as if *Hashem* gave the frogs and lice as a ransom for Ephraim, a nickname for the Jewish people.

Was it *halachically* proper to pay a large ransom for *Bnei Yisrael*? *Halachah* in fact prohibits paying exorbitant ransoms in order not to encourage kidnaping. There is one case, however, where *halachah* not only permits, but demands, that a huge ransom be paid. Specifically, the *Gemara* states that if one sells his slave to a non-Jew, and the non-Jewish buyer prevents the slave from observing *mitzvot*, the seller is obligated to redeem the slave even for ten times the slave's value.

Such was the case in Egypt. The verse (*Devarim* 26:6), "The Egyptians treated us badly," also can be translated, "The Egyptians made us bad." They lowered our spiritual stature by preventing us from performing the *mitzvot*. *Hashem* therefore had to ransom us even for a ten-fold ransom. This is why we introduce the plagues in the *Haggadah* with the statement: "These are the ten plagues that *Hashem* brought on the Egyptians in Egypt." The last two words are seemingly redundant, but they emphasize why there were ten plagues: *Bnei Yisrael* were enslaved in Egypt, where they could not perform *mitzvot*. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Be'er Mayim* p.72)



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

The answer, says R' Ashkenzai, is that this was not the only purpose of the Plagues. Perhaps it was not even their primary purpose. We should not forget that the *midrash* illustrates how each of the Plagues was a punishment *midda-k'negged-middah* / measure-for-measure for the ways in which the Egyptians had oppressed *Bnei Yisrael*. (*Derashot R' Betzalel*)



R' Dovid Bornstein z"l (died in 1942 in the Warsaw Ghetto) observes:

Kabbalists teach that the Ten Plagues paralleled the Ten Utterances with which *Hashem* created the world, as taught in *Pirkei Avot* chapter 5. This is why the first *mitzvah* after the Ten Plagues is the commandment to sanctify the new moon, for the waxing and waning of the moon is a constant reminder of Creation.

Our Sages say that Moshe could not comprehend the new moon until *Hashem* showed him: "Like this you shall see it and sanctify it." In light of the above, R' Bornstein comments: The *Midrash* states: "To tell man about the greatness of Creation is impossible, so He told His nation the greatness of His ways." This seems contradictory at first, but it actually means that it is impossible for man to grasp

Creation except through the eyes of the Torah. Man, being material, cannot fathom something as esoteric as G-d's Creation unless he looks at it through spiritual lenses. Even Moshe could not understand the secret of the new moon except through the Torah – through the *mitzvah* of sanctifying it.

If we understand the Ten Plagues and the *mitzvah* of sanctifying the new moon as alluding to Creation, we can understand why those sections are followed by *mitzvot* that involve eating. When we recognize that *Hashem* created us, we necessarily recognize that we are His servants. It is part of the “contract” between a master and a servant that the servant will be fed. (*Hashem* would not have created us if He did not intend to sustain us.) This is incidentally why the introductory portion of *Birkat Hamazon* refers to G-d as *Elokim* (as in “*nevaraich l'Elokenu*” / “we will bless our *Elokim*”). “*Elokim*” is the Divine Name associated with strict justice, and strict justice requires that a master feed his servants. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Chasdei David* p. 5)

דָּם . צַפְרֵדָּע . כְּנִים . עָרוֹב . דְּבָר . שְׁחִין . בְּרָד . אֲרָבָה . חֲשָׁד . מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת :

All told, the plagues lasted twelve months. R' Leib Broida *z"l* (brother of the “Alter of Kelm”) writes that one of the reasons that the plagues lasted so long (rather than merely 10 weeks or so) was so that *Bnei Yisrael* could enjoy the revenge which was being exacted from their enemies. As everyone knows, there is nothing sweeter than revenge.

What lesson is the Torah teaching us? That despite the prohibition on exacting revenge, there is a place for it. And where is that? Man should take “revenge” on his greatest enemy--the *yetzer hara* (evil inclination).

Chazal say that man should serve *Hashem* with both of his inclinations: the good and the bad. How can man serve *Hashem* through the *yetzer hara*? The Alter of Kelm explains that if a person asks himself why this great enemy was placed as an impediment to his service of *Hashem*, he will realize that *Hashem* demands hard work. When he then succeeds in serving *Hashem* completely, the *yetzer hara* will have aided him. (*Kitvei HaSaba MiKelm VeTalmidav*)



“Go and gather the elders of *Yisrael* . . . They will heed your voice. You and the elders shall come to the king of Egypt.” (*Shmot* 3:16-18)

Why was it necessary for Moshe to convince the elders that *Hashem* would take the Jewish people out of Egypt? Why was it necessary for the elders to participate in Moshe's mission? Why would it matter if the Jews did not believe Moshe at first?

R' Shlomo Eliasoff (Elyashiv) *z"l* explains that *Hashem* could have brought about the Exodus without the ten plagues and without all of the miracles which *Bnei Yisrael* witnessed. Rather, the purpose of those miracles was to teach us that our existence is supernatural--that G-d can change nature for our benefit at any time.

Accordingly, it was necessary for *Bnei Yisrael* to actively place their faith in G-d. This is why Moshe said later (6:12), “Behold *Bnei Yisrael* have not listened to me, so how will Pharaoh listen to me?” This is also why, in response to Moshe's question, *Hashem* commanded him to speak to *Bnei Yisrael* again, before returning to Pharaoh. Without our ancestors' faith, the Exodus could not have taken place. (*Sha'ar Leshem Shevo V'achlamah* p.402)



We read: “*Hashem* is the Righteous One.” (*Shmot* 9:27)

Why did Pharaoh acknowledge this specifically after the plague of hail? R' Chizkiyah bar Manoach *z"l* (13th century) explains that it was because *Hashem* warned the Egyptians to take their sheep indoors. Human warriors do not give such warning to their victims. (*Chizkuni*)



We read: “Moshe said, ‘When I leave the city I shall spread out my hands to *Hashem* . . .” (*Shmot* 9:29) *Rashi* explains that Moshe did not want to pray inside the city because it was full of Egyptian gods.

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

One of Egypt’s gods was the sheep. Just before the seventh plague, the Torah says (9:20), “Whoever among the servants of Pharaoh feared the word of *Hashem* hurried his servants and livestock to the houses.” Before this plague, the sheep were in the fields, so Moshe prayed in the city. Now, the sheep were in the city, so Moshe prayed in the fields. (*Chanukat Ha’Torah*)



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

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

רְבִי יְהוּדָה הָיָה נוֹתֵן בָּהֶם סְמָנִים :

דִּזַּח אֲדָשׁ בְּאָחָב

“Rabbi Yehuda made a mnemonic for them: *Detzach adash be’achav*.” These words are composed of the initial letters of the ten plagues, but what, if anything, do these words mean? Presumably it did not require the intellect of a sage of the *Mishnah*, Rabbi Yehuda, to think of abbreviating the names of the plagues. And, if all Rabbi Yehuda is teaching is that it is a good idea to use mnemonic devices to remember one’s Torah lessons, what place does this lesson have in the *Haggadah*?

R’ Yedidyah Tiah Weil *z”l* (1721-1805; rabbi of Karlsruhe) explains: The *Midrash* says that when Yaakov purchased the birthright from Esav, he told Esav, “You don’t want the birthright because the descendants of the firstborn will have to fulfill the promise that *Hashem* made to Avraham, ‘They shall enslave them and oppress them for 400 years’.” Thus, during the entire period that *Bnei Yisrael* were in Egypt, they regretted the fact that their ancestor Yaakov had purchased the birthright. This is why the last plague attacked Egypt’s firstborn, as if to say to *Bnei Yisrael* (in the words of *Shmot* 4:22), “Yisrael is My firstborn.” It was as if *Hashem* told them, “Do not regret being the firstborn, for you are Mine as a result.”

The word “*dizah*” means “happiness” (as in the last of the *Sheva Berachot* recited at a wedding). The first of R’ Yehuda’s acronyms -- pronounced “*deetzach*” (not “*detzach*”) -- means “your happiness.” “Adash” refers to the “*nezeed adashim*” the lentil soup that Yaakov gave Esav in exchange for the birthright. “Be’achav” should be read “B’ach bet” (the same letters in Hebrew) meaning “with the second brother.” Or, it could be short for “with the brother who is the b[echor].” Taken together, the entire phrase indicates that our happiness with the purchase of the birthright by the second brother in exchange for lentils is now complete. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Marbeh Le’Sapper*)



The *Mishnah* (*Avot* 5:8) teaches that Moshe’s staff was one of the ten things that were created in the last moments of the Six Days of Creation. R’ Eliezer Felkeles *z”l* (rabbi of Prague; late 18th century) explains the significance of this fact as follows:

Rambam writes that the Divine Attribute which we refer to as “*Ratzon*” / G-d’s Desire was utilized only during the Six Days of Creation. Everything that will exist at any time in the future was

“desired” by G-d during the Six Days of Creation. Even things which appear to be deviations from the laws of nature, notably, the Ten Plagues, actually are built into the Creation.

The *Midrash* relates that the Ten Plagues (or their initials) were engraved on the staff. This alludes to the same idea, writes R' Felkeles. The Ten Plagues were already planned during the Six Days of Creation and were not a suspension of G-d's laws. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Ma'aseh B'Rebbe Eliezer*)

רבי יוסי הגלילי אומר: מנין אתה אומר, שלקו המצרים במצרים עשר מכות, ועל
הים, לקו חמשים מכות? במצרים מה הוא אומר: ויאמרו החרטום אל פרעה,
אצבע אלהים הוא. ועל הים מה הוא אומר? וירא ישראל את היד הגדלה, אשר עשה
ין במצרים, וייראו העם את יי. ויאמינו ביי, ובמשה עבדו. כמה לקו באצבע, עשר
מכות: אמור מעתה, במצרים לקו עשר מכות, ועל הים, לקו חמשים מכות:

After *Bnei Yisrael* witnessed the splitting of the Red Sea, “*Yisrael* saw the great hand that *Hashem* inflicted upon Egypt . . . and they believed in *Hashem* and in Moshe, His servant.” R' Kalonymous Kalman Shapiro of Piaseczno z”l asks (in the name of his father): If they saw, what room was there to believe? Moreover, why did they believe now more than after the ten plagues? He explains as follows:

True sight is not with the eyes alone, but is a combination of what the eyes take in and all of man's experiences (which give context and meaning to what the eye “sees”). For example, one person may look at a *yom tov* feast and see only a lavish banquet, while another person will look at it and see the service of G-d in progress.

True vision occurs deep within the soul. Thus *Chazal* sometimes use the expression, “Even though he did not see, his *mazal* / inner awareness saw.” In order to believe in *Hashem*, one must have a certain basic awareness; he must have “seen” certain things within his soul. This is what *Bnei Yisrael* “saw” at the Red Sea that enabled them to believe.

Why didn't they believe after the plagues? When Moshe resisted being *Hashem*'s emissary to the Jewish people, it was because any leader would have to transfer from his soul to the people's souls the basic foundation of belief. Moshe recognized that his own understanding, unparalleled by any later prophet, far exceeded what the people could attain, and he doubted that he could impart the necessary foundation to *Bnei Yisrael*. They, too, doubted, and when they felt themselves believing in G-d, when they saw the impossible transfer of belief from Moshe's lofty soul to their own, they were sure that it could not last. Because of that, it didn't, and only at the Red Sea, when they “saw” again, were they able to believe. (*Derech Hamelech*)



The Exodus was not complete until *Kri'at Yam Suf* / the splitting of the Red (or Reed) Sea, says R' Zalman Rotberg *shlita* (Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Bet Meir in Bnei Brak). Until then, *Hashem*'s purpose, to reveal His power and majesty, was not accomplished. At the sea, though, *Bnei Yisrael* did not just see five more fingers (see *Shmot* 8:15), they saw *Hashem*'s great hand (14:31), i.e. they saw the completed deed of *Hashem*.

The main purpose of *Hashem*'s miracles was to teach *Bnei Yisrael*, not to impress the Egyptians. Unlike *Bnei Yisrael*, Pharaoh and his servants were not moved to spontaneous song by the miracles which they witnessed. [Note: The *Midrash* says that Pharaoh survived the splitting of the sea.] Now, after *Bnei Yisrael* witnessed the culmination of these miracles, the same Pasuk can tell us, “They believed in *Hashem*.” (*Tuv Da'at* III, p.57)

רבי אליעזר אומר: מנין שכל מכה ומכה, שהביא הקדוש ברוך הוא על המצרים
במצרים, היתה של ארבע מכות? שנאמר: ישלח בם חרון אפו, עברה וזעם וצרה.
משלחת מלאכי רעים. עברה אחת. וזעם שתים. וצרה שלש. משלחת מלאכי רעים
ארבע: אמור מעתה, במצרים לקו ארבעים מכות, ועל הים לקו מאתים מכות:

רבי עקיבא אומר: מנין שכל מכה ומכה, שהביא הקדוש ברוך הוא על המצרים במצרים, היתה של חמש מכות? שנאמר: ישלח בם חרון אפו, עברה וזעם וצרה. משלחת מלאכי רעים. חרון אפו אחת. עברה שתים. וזעם שלש. וצרה ארבע. משלחת מלאכי רעים חמש: אמור מעתה, במצרים לקוי חמשים מכות, ועל הים לקוי חמשים ומאתים מכות:

Many commentaries have dealt with the question: How could *Hashem* inflict the plagues on Egypt if Pharaoh's refusal to release *Bnei Yisrael* was the result of *Hashem*'s hardening Pharaoh's heart, i.e., strengthening Pharaoh's resolve not to release *Bnei Yisrael*? R' Avraham Dov Berish Flamm z"l (1804-1873) explains as follows:

Chazal say that *Bnei Yisrael* became idol worshippers in Egypt. The plagues, writes R' Flamm, were a response to this fact. Their purpose was not to punish Pharaoh at all; rather, their primary purpose was to disabuse *Bnei Yisrael* of their idolatrous notions and to demonstrate to them the existence of G-d and His power. (This is borne out by the fact that the first of the *Aseret Hadibrot* reminded *Bnei Yisrael*: "I am your G-d Who took you out of Egypt.") Indeed, some commentaries interpret the words at the beginning of *Parashat Shmot*, "And My Name *Hashem* I have not made known to them," to mean, "... I have not made it known to *Bnei Yisrael*." The Jews in Egypt simply did not know G-d and they had to be taught.

When *Hashem* hardened Pharaoh's heart, it was only so that He could have additional opportunities to teach *Bnei Yisrael* about His strength. Pharaoh was not punished for refusing to release *Bnei Yisrael* after his heart was hardened.

Nevertheless, R' Flamm inquires further, was it fair to Pharaoh that he should suffer so that *Bnei Yisrael* could learn about G-d? Yes, it was, because Pharaoh needed to learn the very same lessons. Had not Pharaoh said (5:2), "Who is *Hashem* that I should listen to Him?"! Moreover, whose fault was it that *Bnei Yisrael* had forgotten G-d? It was Pharaoh's fault, and it was therefore appropriate that he should suffer for as long as it took *Bnei Yisrael* to recognize *Hashem*. (*Shemen Ha'mor: Ma'amar Arubot Hashamayim*, ch.12)



We read: "Pharaoh's heart became strong and he did not send out *Bnei Yisrael* . . ." (*Shmot* 9:35)

Why is Pharaoh's refusal to listen to *Hashem* referred to as having a strong heart? Does this imply that one who does listen to *Hashem* is weak? R' Baruch Ezechiel *shlita* (*Rosh Yeshiva* of *Yeshivat Ateret Yisrael* in Yerushalayim) explains as follows:

Many commentaries asked: Was it fair to bring the plagues on Pharaoh if his heart was hardened and he could do nothing to avoid the plagues? *Ramban* answers that the hardening of Pharaoh's heart did not destroy his free will; to the contrary, it restored his ability to choose. Had Pharaoh released *Bnei Yisrael* as a result of one of the plagues, he would not have been doing so of his own free will. Rather, he would have done so because the plagues coerced him to act.

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

כמה מעלות טובות למקום עלינו:

R' Ephraim of Luntschitz z"l (17th century; author of *Kli Yakar*) observes that the number 15 recurs in many aspects of Jewish history and practice. For example, *Pesach* comes on the 15th of the month, as did the Exodus; the song "*Dayenu*" has 15 stanzas; the greatest glory of the Jewish kingdom occurred in the 15th generation from Avraham (i.e., under King Shlomo); the destruction of the Temple

took place 15 generations later; there were 15 steps up to the *Bet Hamikdash* and there are 15 psalms which begin, “*Shir ha’maalot*” / “A song of ascents.”

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

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

The Torah (*Shmot* 13:18) states that *Bnei Yisrael* left Egypt “*chamushim*” / “with fives.” We also read (14:7) that Pharaoh chased *Bnei Yisrael* “with threes.” R’ Ephraim explains that these verses refer to three groups of five gifts each which *Hashem* gave to *Bnei Yisrael*. The first group consists of the five ways in which the Egyptians were punished. The second group consists of the five basic necessities which *Hashem* provided our ancestors in the desert. The third group consists of the five special gifts which *Hashem* has given us as His people. All 15 of these are listed in the 15 lines of *Dayenu*. (*Olelot Ephraim*, II, Pillar 5)

אֱלוֹ הוֹצִיאָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם,	לֹא עָשָׂה בָּהֶם שְׁפָטִים,	דִּינֵנוּ :
אֱלוֹ עָשָׂה בָּהֶם שְׁפָטִים,	וְלֹא עָשָׂה בְּאֱלֹהֵיהֶם,	דִּינֵנוּ :
אֱלוֹ עָשָׂה בְּאֱלֹהֵיהֶם,	וְלֹא הָרַג אֶת בְּכוֹרֵיהֶם,	דִּינֵנוּ :
אֱלוֹ הָרַג אֶת בְּכוֹרֵיהֶם,	וְלֹא נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת מְמוֹנָם,	דִּינֵנוּ :

Before *Bnei Yisrael* left Egypt, *Hashem* told Moshe, “Please speak to the nation and let them borrow from their fellows silver vessels and gold vessels” (11:2). *Chazal* say that *Hashem* said “Please” in order that “that *tzaddik*” (i.e., Avraham in *Gan Eden*) should not accuse *Hashem* of keeping His promise to enslave the Jews and not keeping His promise of a great reward for them. We must understand, asks R’ Meshulam Roth z”l: Does *Hashem* keep His promise only so that Avraham will not complain? And why is Avraham called “that *tzaddik*”?

R’ Roth explains that the title “that *tzaddik*” alludes to a specific incident, i.e., when Avraham refused to take a share of the booty so that no one would say that the King of Sdom made Avraham wealthy. This was a great act of righteousness because it demonstrated Avraham’s desire to have no master other than G-d himself.

Just as Avraham did not wish to be beholden to the King of Sdom, he would not want his descendants to be beholden to the Egyptians. He would not want *Bnei Yisrael* to receive *gifts* from their enslavers. Therefore, *Hashem* said, “Please speak to the nation and let them borrow from their fellows,” rather than taking gifts. The borrowed items would later become the Jews’ possessions (as ownerless property) when the Egyptians drowned in the Red Sea. “Please do not let Avraham say that I kept My promise in a way that displeases him,” *Hashem* said. (*Raglei Mevaser*)



There are three verses which address the wealth which the Jews took from Egypt: (1) “Each woman will request from her neighbor silver vessels, golden vessels, and garments.” (*Shmot* 3:22)

(2) “Please speak to the nation and let them borrow from their fellows silver vessels and gold vessels.” (11:2)

(3) “*Bnei Yisrael* carried out the word of Moshe; they requested from the Egyptians silver vessels, gold vessels, and garments.” (12:34)

Why does the second of these verses not mention garments? asks R’ Yosef Meir Weiss (the *Spinka Rebbe*). He explains that of these three verses, only the second is *Hashem*’s command. The first is *Hashem*’s statement of fact, i.e., that is what will happen. The third verse is the Torah’s statement of what did happen—exactly as *Hashem* had said. But the second verse is a command, and *Hashem* had no reason to command *Bnei Yisrael* to ask for clothes. The clothes which they wore in the desert grew with their wearers; as for newborns, since *Bnei Yisrael* should have entered *Eretz Yisrael* almost immediately (if not for their sins), there would have been no children born in the desert. (*Imrei Yosef*)

אֱלֹהֵינוּ נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת מְמוֹנָם,	וְלֹא קָרַע לָנוּ אֶת הַיָּם,	דִּינֵנוּ :
אֱלֹהֵינוּ קָרַע לָנוּ אֶת הַיָּם,	וְלֹא הֶעֱבִירָנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ בְּחַרְבָּהּ,	דִּינֵנוּ :
אֱלֹהֵינוּ הֶעֱבִירָנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ בְּחַרְבָּהּ,	וְלֹא שָׁקַע צַרְיָנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ,	דִּינֵנוּ :
אֱלֹהֵינוּ שָׁקַע צַרְיָנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ,	וְלֹא סִפֵּק צַרְיָנוּ בַּמַּדְבָּר אַרְבַּעִים שָׁנָה,	דִּינֵנוּ :

We say in the *Haggadah*: “If He had drowned our oppressors in [the Sea], but had not provided for our needs in the wilderness for 40 years, it would have sufficed for us.” Nevertheless, says R’ Abdallah Somech *z”l* (1813-1889; Baghdad; teacher of the “*Ben Ish Chai*”), the fact that *Hashem* did provide for our needs in the wilderness for 40 years demonstrates His intentions in redeeming us from Egypt. He explains:

Once a nobleman’s son was kidnapped by a duke and held hostage in the dungeon of the latter’s manor. The king sent the duke a warning to release the boy, but the duke refused. Moreover, the duke sent a belligerent message back to the king.

The king was incensed and he sent a battalion of troops to destroy the duke’s home and free the nobleman’s son. And so it was. People wondered, however, “Did the king do this because he was concerned about his friend’s son or because he was angry at the duke?” How could they tell? If the king’s troops destroyed the duke’s house and left the former prisoner on his own, then it would be apparent that the king’s primary concern was the duke’s disrespect. On the other hand, if the king’s soldiers carried the boy home triumphantly and also brought him to the king’s palace, then all would know that the king was interested in the boy’s welfare.

When *Hashem* first sent Moshe to Pharaoh, Pharaoh responded, “Who is *Hashem* that I should heed His voice?” As *Chazal* understand it, Pharaoh was asking, “Why hasn’t *Hashem* sent me gifts like other foreign kings do?”

Later, when *Hashem* brought about the ten plagues, one could legitimately wonder whether *Hashem*’s true motivation was Pharaoh’s disrespect or the welfare of the Jewish people. However, the fact that *Hashem* did provide for our needs in the wilderness for 40 years demonstrates that His real interest was *Bnei Yisrael*. (Quoted in *Haggadah Shel Pesach Sha’arei Armon* p. 129)

אֱלֹהֵינוּ הֶאֱכִילָנוּ אֶת הַמֶּן,	וְלֹא הֶאֱכִילָנוּ אֶת הַמֶּן,	דִּינֵנוּ :
אֱלֹהֵינוּ קָרַבְנוּ לְפָנֵי הַר סִינַי,	וְלֹא קָרַבְנוּ לְפָנֵי הַר סִינַי,	דִּינֵנוּ :
אֱלֹהֵינוּ נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת הַשֶּׁבֶת,	וְלֹא נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת הַשֶּׁבֶת,	דִּינֵנוּ :
אֱלֹהֵינוּ קָרַבְנוּ לְפָנֵי הַר סִינַי,	וְלֹא קָרַבְנוּ לְפָנֵי הַר סִינַי,	דִּינֵנוּ :

“If He had brought us before Mount Sinai and not given the Torah to us, that would have been sufficient.”

What does this mean? What would have been the purpose of coming to *Har Sinai* if we were not to receive the Torah?

R' Yechiel Michel Epstein *z"l* (author of *Aruch Hashulchan*) explains as follows: There is a principle of *halachic* decision-making which says, "The Torah is not in the Heavens." This means that *halachic* disputes must be resolved by men, applying Torah logic and majority vote, not by heavenly signs. If a sage were to say, as we read in the Talmud, "If I am correct, let the wall of the *bet midrash* lean to the side," we would not listen.

This exclusive right to decide *halachic* matters is a gift separate from the gift of the Torah itself. *Hashem* might have decided to give us the laws but not to place the Torah in our exclusive dominion. Thus we say, "If He had brought us before Mount Sinai and not given the Torah *to us*," that itself would have been a reason to be grateful to *Hashem*. (Quoted and elaborated upon in *Gift of Torah* by R' Yitzchak Sender)

אלו נתנו לנו את התורה,
ולא הכניסנו לארץ ישראל,
אלו הכניסנו לארץ ישראל,
ולא בנה לנו את בית הבחירה,
דינו :
דינו :

Perhaps one of the most perplexing parts of the *Haggadah* is the song known as "*Dayenu*," in which we say that if G-d had taken us out of Egypt but had not judged the Egyptians, that would have been enough for us. Or, if He had judged the Egyptians, but had not destroyed their idols, that, too, would have been enough for us. Or, if He had destroyed their idols, but had not killed their firstborns, that, too, would have been enough. Or . . . What does this song mean?

R' Eliyahu Hakohen Ha'itamari *z"l* of Izmir (commonly known as the "*Ba'al Shevet Hamussar*") explains that for each of the Divine gifts or miracles listed in this song, one could make an argument that G-d should have acted otherwise. Our praise of G-d is that He considered all these arguments and acted in the way that was best for us and for the glory of His Name.

For example, one could argue that if G-d had taken us out of Egypt but had not judged the Egyptians so harshly as to practically destroy them, His name would have been magnified even more because the Egyptians would live to remember, and to tell others, how He had humbled them. On the other hand, one could argue that they would not feel humbled in that event. Rather, they would say, "He won this battle, and we will win the next battle."

That is why G-d judged the Egyptians harshly. However, one could argue that if G-d had judged the Egyptians harshly but had not destroyed their idols, those idols would have served as constant reminders of G-d's power to anyone who saw them. On the other hand, some people would say that G-d was not strong enough to destroy the Egyptians' idols.

That is why G-d destroyed the Egyptians' idols. However, one could argue that if G-d had destroyed their idols, but had not killed their firstborns, then those firstborns would have had a special reason to tell others of G-d's greatness. It was customary at that time to devote one's firstborn to the service of the idol; with all the idols destroyed, the Egyptian firstborn, who were no longer performing that service, would be a testament to G-d's power. On the other hand, Pharaoh was a firstborn; if the firstborns had not been smitten, people would say that it was Pharaoh's merit or power which saved him and those like him.

That is why G-d killed the firstborn. . . (*Minchat Eliyahu* ch.32)

עַל אַחַת כַּמָּה וְכַמָּה טוֹבָה כְּפוּלָה וּמְכַפֵּלַת לְמָקוֹם
עֲלֵינוּ :

שְׁהוּצִיאָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, וְעָשָׂה בָּהֶם שְׁפָטִים, וְעָשָׂה בְּאֱלֹהֵיהֶם, וְהָרַג אֶת בְּכוֹרֵיהֶם, וְנָתַן
לָנוּ אֶת מַמּוֹנָם, וְקָרַע לָנוּ אֶת הַיָּם, וְהֶעֱבִירָנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ בְּחֶרֶבָה, וְשָׁקַע צְרִינוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ,

וְסִפֵּק צְרִכֵנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה, וְהֶאֱכִילֵנוּ אֶת הַמֶּן, וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת, וְקָרְבָנוּ לְפָנֵי ה' סִינִי, וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת הַתּוֹרָה, וְהִכְנִיסֵנוּ לְאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבָנָה לָנוּ אֶת בֵּית הַבְּחִירָה, לְכַפֵּר עַל כָּל עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ.

“How much more so should we be grateful to the Omnipresent for all the numerous favors that He showered upon us: He brought us out of Egypt . . . and He built us the Temple, to atone for our sins.”

R' Yaakov Kranz *z"l* (1747-1805; the *Dubno Maggid*) asks: Given the implication here that the building of the *Bet Hamikdash* was the completion of the Exodus process, why did the Jewish people agree to be redeemed when the Temple would not yet be built until 480 years later? He answers with a parable:

If a father would say to his daughter, “Let us schedule your wedding now, and we will prepare a wedding gown, *Shabbat* clothes, *Yom Tov* clothes, an apartment, etc. as the need for each arises,” his daughter would likely refuse. She would say, “No! Let us first prepare a trousseau and then arrange the wedding.”

On the other hand, if a girl were a prisoner and someone rescued her and said, “Marry me, and I will provide everything you want as the need arises,” she would certainly agree. *Bnei Yisrael* in Egypt were like that second bride. They were more than happy to be rescued from their situation, even if there permanent marital home would not be completed for hundreds of years to come.

We read in *Shir Hashirim* (4:8), “With Me, from the *Levanon*, o’ bride; with Me, from the *Levanon*, you will come.” The *Midrash* comments on this verse that most brides are decorated and perfumed before they enter the *chupah*, but *Hashem* did not do this for His bride – the Jewish people. Rather, He took His bride directly from the *Levanon* – from the word “*levainah*” / “brick” (i.e., from building Pharaoh’s cities). But He promised her, “You will come with Me to the *Levanon* – a reference to the *Bet Hamikdash*, where the sins of the Jewish people became *lavan* / white. [Note also that the *Bet Hamikdash* was built from cedars of *Levanon* / Lebanon.] (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Sha’arei Armon* p.132)



The *midrash* relates a parable regarding a princess who was rummaging amongst the stalks in the field in search of food until, one day, a king saw her and took her to his palace. Thereafter, the other women said to her in wonder, “Yesterday you were rummaging amongst the stalks, and today you are sitting in a royal carriage?!”

She replied, “Just as you are amazed, so I am amazed.” Similarly, the *midrash* says, the nations of the world said to the *Bnei Yisrael*, “Yesterday you were slaves in Egypt and today you are the chosen people?!”

Bnei Yisrael replied, “Just as you are amazed, so we are amazed.”

R' Yedayah Ha'penini *z"l* (died 1315) explains this *midrash* as follows:

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

To *Bnei Yisrael*, who were aware of *Hashem*’s abilities and who had learned from their ancestors that *Hashem* watches over *Bnei Yisrael*, the source of their amazement was different. *Bnei Yisrael* in Egypt were idolators, and they expected G-d to punish them for it. They were doubly amazed — not only did *Hashem* not punish them, He made them His chosen nation!

What is the answer to that which caused such wonder in *Bnei Yisrael*? R' Yedayah writes that *Bnei Yisrael* failed to realize that the Exodus took place in the merit of the Patriarchs and because of *Hashem*’s promise to the Patriarchs. *Bnei Yisrael* themselves really did not deserve to be redeemed.

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

רָבוּ גַמְלִיאל הָיָה אוֹמֵר : כֹּל שֶׁלֹּא אָמַר שְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים אֵלּוּ בַּפֶּסַח, לֹא יֵצֵא יְדֵי חוּבָתוֹ, וְאֵלּוּ הֵן :

פֶּסַח. מִצְּהָ וּמְרוֹר :

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

The Jews were instructed to bring a lamb as a *Korban Pesach* because the Egyptians of the time worshipped the lamb, and it was necessary for the Jews to show both the Egyptians and themselves that this “god” was powerless. To bring the point home, the animal had to be roasted whole over an open fire.

In addition, the fire represents the burning furnace from which Avraham was saved. The three *matzot* symbolize the loaves that Sarah prepared for the three angels. The *Maror* represents the bitter travails of Yaakov who remained faithful to Hashem despite all his hardships. Through these foods, we hope to remind Hashem that we, too, stuck by Him despite many difficult times. (*Me'am Lo'ez*)

פֶּסַח שְׁהִיּוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אוֹכְלִים, בְּזֶמַן שֶׁבֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הָיָה קַיָּם, עַל שׁוּם מָה? עַל שׁוּם פֶּסַח שֶׁפֶּסַח הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, עַל בְּתֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר : וְאִמְרַתֶּם זָבַח פֶּסַח הוּא לִי, אֲשֶׁר פֶּסַח עַל בְּתֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִצְרַיִם, בְּנִגְפוֹ אֶת מִצְרַיִם וְאֶת בְּתֵינֵנוּ הֲצִיל, וַיִּקַּד הָעָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ.

Rashi explains that the name “*Pesach*” derives from the word “skipping.” He writes: “For *Hashem* skipped over the houses of the Jews which were among the houses of the Egyptians. He jumped from Egyptian to Egyptian, and the Jew was in the middle. As for you, serve Him for the sake of Heaven.”

What does *Rashi*'s last comment mean and how is it related to his explanation of the word “*Pesach*”? R' Nossan David Rabinowitz z"l (grandfather of the present “*Munkatcher Rebbe*”) explains as follows:

Sometimes a person witnesses a powerful event which inspires him to strengthen his service of *Hashem*. However, that is not the ideal. Rather, we should serve *Hashem* because, and only because, that is His will.

Moshe was concerned that the plague of the firstborn would have an undesirable effect on *Bnei Yisrael*. This is why, according to *Rashi*, Moshe instructed them: “As for you, do not serve *Hashem* because you will see Him skipping over your houses. Instead, serve Him for the sake of Heaven.”

In this light, we can understand why the *Korban Pesach* is referred to (in *Shmot* 12:43) as a “*chok*” — a *mitzvah* whose reason is unknown. Although the *Korban Pesach* (whose blood was placed on the doorposts to identify a Jewish house) recalls the great miracle that *Hashem* performed and our gratitude to Him, that should not be our reason for performing the *mitzvah*. Rather, we should observe the *mitzvah* of *Korban Pesach* as if its reason is unknown to us.

The Torah tells us (*Shmot* 12:50), “All of *Bnei Yisrael* did as *Hashem* had commanded Moshe and Aharon, so did they do.” The Torah is informing us that *Bnei Yisrael* took Moshe's message to heart and sacrificed the *Korban Pesach* solely for the sake of the *mitzvah*. (*Ve'eileh Ha'davarim She'ne'emru L'David* p.101)



“If he shall offer it as a *todah* / thanksgiving-offering, he shall offer with the *todah* unleavened loaves . . . With loaves of leavened bread shall he bring his offering.” (7:12-13)

The above verses teach that a *todah* / thanksgiving-offering must be accompanied by loaves of both *chametz* and *matzah*. R’ Don Yitzchak Abarbanel *z”l* (15th century) asks: Since the *Korban Pesach* seems to be, in essence, an offering brought in thanksgiving for the Exodus, why is it not accompanied by both *chametz* and *matzah*?

R’ Avraham Shmuel Binyamin Sofer *z”l* (the “*Ketav Sofer*”; 19th century) answers that the *Korban Pesach* is not a *todah*-offering. Rather, it is more like another set of sacrifices--the inaugural sacrifices brought at the dedication of the *mishkan*. Those sacrifices were accompanied by *matzah*, but not by *chametz*.

He explains further: *Chazal* instructed that when we relate the story of the Exodus at the *Seder*, we should begin with disgrace, with the fact that our ancestors were idolators, and conclude with praise. Why? This may be understood through a parable:

When one gives a garment to a laundry in order to have a stain removed, the laundry applies soaps and chemicals which first make the garment dirtier than it was before. Of course, when the customer pays the laundry, he does not intend to pay for the labor that was expended in dirtying the garment; he intends to pay for the cleaning of the garment.

Similarly, we do not praise *Hashem* at the *Seder* for redeeming us from Egypt. Who asked Him to take us to Egypt in the first place? Rather, we praise *Hashem* because He cleansed the stain of idolatry from our souls. Just as the laundry cleanses the garment with vile chemicals, the process by which *Hashem* cleansed us was our enslavement in Egypt. It follows, that we do not owe *Hashem* a debt of gratitude for the Exodus, and the *Korban Pesach* is not a *todah* offering. Rather, the *Korban Pesach* is a sacrifice brought upon our inauguration into *Hashem*’s service. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Ketav Sofer* p.18a)



“Pharaoh summoned Moshe and said, ‘Go -- serve *Hashem*, only your flock and cattle shall remain behind; even your children may go with you.’

“Moshe said, ‘Even you will place in our hands feast-offerings and elevation-offerings, and we shall offer them to *Hashem Elokeinu*. And our livestock, as well, will go with us -- not a hoof will be left -- for from it shall we take to serve *Hashem Elokeinu*; and we will not know with what we are to serve *Hashem* until our arrival there.’” (*Shmot* 10:24-26)

When Moshe first appeared before Pharaoh, he said to the Egyptian king (5:3), “Let us now go for a three-day journey in the wilderness and we shall bring offerings to *Hashem Elokeinu*.” How then could Pharaoh suggest that *Bnei Yisrael* leave without their animals? How would they bring offerings without animals?

Another question: Why did Pharaoh say, “Go serve *Hashem*,” while Moshe answered by referring to “*Hashem Elokeinu*”? And, after Moshe referred to “*Hashem Elokeinu*,” why did he then revert to saying only “*Hashem*”?

R’ Yitzchak Karo *z”l* (approx. 1458-1535; uncle of R’ Yosef Karo *z”l*) answers these questions as follows:

[When Moshe came to Pharaoh, Pharaoh said (5:2), “Who is *Hashem* that I should heed His voice to send out *Yisrael*? I do not know *Hashem*, nor will I send out Israel.” Moshe then answered (5:3), “The G-d of the Hebrews happened upon us. . .” Commentaries explain that Pharaoh knew that *Bnei Yisrael* had a G-d, but he did not acknowledge the Name *Hashem* which represents G-d’s omnipotence.] Now, therefore, Pharaoh said to Moshe, “You call your G-d by His special Name, ‘*Hashem*’ and you claim that your G-d is the G-d of all beings – not like the gods of the nations that are ‘private’ gods. I could understand that a smaller god might require an animal sacrifice – for example, the constellation taurus

might demand an ox and the constellation aries might require a ram. But your G-d is above that all; He should not require any sacrifices! Therefore, go without your animals.”

Moshe responded: “*Hashem* is *Elokeinu* – He is above everything, but He relates to us as our personal G-d. He allows us to serve Him in a way that is meaningful for us, although He has no need for our sacrifices.” Continuing, however, Moshe acknowledged that there was an element of abstract truth in what Pharaoh said; *Hashem* is above our service. Therefore, “We will not know with what we are to serve *Hashem* until our arrival there.” (*Toldot Yitzchak*)



If *Bnei Yisrael* needed some merit with which to be redeemed from Egypt, why did *Hashem* give them this particular *mitzvah* and not a commandment that somehow encompasses all of the 613 commandments? R’ Meir Yechiel Halevi Halstock *z”l* (1852-1928) answers that the *mitzvah* of *Korban Pesach* does allude to all of the 613 commandments. Specifically, the “full *gematria*” of the word “*Pesach*” / פסח is 613, the number of commandments. (“Full *gematria*” means the *gematria* of a word when each of the letters of the word is spelled out the way that letter is pronounced. Thus, the “full *gematria*” of פסח = פ”ה סמ”ך = 408+120+85.)

This may explain as well why *Hashem* gave *Bnei Yisrael* the *mitzvah* of *matzah* while they were still in Egypt. The “full” *gematria* of the word “*matzot*” / מצות also is 613. (מ”ם צד”י וא”ו תי”ו = מצות) = 416+13+104+80 = 613.)

R’ Halstock observes further: *Hashem* had told Avraham that his descendants would be in a foreign land for 400 years, yet *Bnei Yisrael* were in Egypt for only 210 years. They were redeemed 190 years early in the merit of the *mitzvah* of *matzah*. The “full” *gematria* of the word “*matzah*” / מצה equals 190 (מצה = א”ה = 6+104+80 = 190.) (*Meir Enei Chachamim* Vol. III, p.54)

יגביה המצה ויאמר

מַצָּה זוֹ שְׁאֵנוּ אוֹכְלִים, עַל שׁוֹם מָה? עַל שׁוֹם שְׁלֵא הִסְפִּיק בְּצֶקֶם שֶׁל אֲבוֹתֵינוּ לְהַחֲמִיץ, עַד שֶׁנִּגְלָה עֲלֵיהֶם מִלְּךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים, הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, וּנְאֻלָּם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיֹּאפּוּ אֶת הַבֶּצֶק, אֲשֶׁר הוֹצִיאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, עֲגַת מִצּוֹת, כִּי לֹא חֲמֵץ: כִּי גֵרְשׁוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, וְלֹא יָכְלוּ לְהַתְמַהֵמָה, וְגַם צָדָה לֹא עָשׂוּ לָהֶם.

In what way is *matzah* connected with freedom? *Matzah* reminds us that the dough of our forefathers did not have time to rise. *Matzah* teaches that spiritual freedom requires mastery over time, as R’ Yehuda Halevi (author of *Kuzari*) wrote: “A slave of time is a slave of a slave; a slave of *Hashem* is a free person.”

Matzah has the same ingredients as ordinary bread; the main difference is the attention to time which making *matzah* requires. [If the *matzah* is not completed in 18 minutes, it is presumed to have become *Chametz*.] *Chazal* often use “*Chametz*” as a metaphor for the evil inclination. Idleness and inattention to time allow spiritual “*Chametz*” to form. Positive spiritual activity, on the other hand, together with the pressure to watch and preserve valuable time, prevents this “fermentation.”

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



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

Hashem told Moshe, “When *Bnei Yisrael* leave Egypt, they should not leave empty-handed. Rather, each woman should borrow items of value from her neighbor, etc.” Isn’t this verse redundant? If each woman is borrowing things from her neighbor, of course they will not leave Egypt empty-handed!

The *Gemara* says that after slaughtering the *Korban Pesach* in the *Bet Hamikdash*, each Jew would carry it home, thrown over his shoulder the way an Arab carries his load. Why is it important for the *Gemara* to tell us that the *Korban* was carried like an Arab's load? To remind us that the reason the Jews ended up in Egypt in the first place was that Yosef's brothers sold him to a caravan of Arabs.

Did the Jews deserve to be paid for the work that they did in Egypt? Only if they were subjugated unfairly. However, since we now know that this exile was a punishment for the sale of Yosef, apparently the Jews did not deserve to be paid. This is why the Jews could only *borrow* items from their Egyptians neighbors. [Ed. note: R' Kluger does explain why the Jews were nevertheless allowed to keep what they "borrowed," but that does not directly relate to our question.] To remind *Bnei Yisrael* of this, *Hashem* told Moshe, "The Jews should not go empty-handed." They should carry these items in their own hands, and not place them on the animals or wagons. More explicitly, they should carry these items on their shoulders the way an Arab carries his load, so that they would be reminded of the reason that they went to Egypt in the first place.

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



"They baked the dough which they had taken out of Egypt into *matzah* cakes, for it did not leaven, for they were thrown out of Egypt and they couldn't wait. . . ." (*Shmot* 12:39)

Is this the reason that *Bnei Yisrael* baked *matzah*? Actually, *Hashem* had commanded them earlier to eat *matzah* on *Pesach*!

Chazal teach that *Hashem* took the Jews out of Egypt early because they were about to assimilate. In fact, however, the Jews had not been enslaved the full 400 years that *Hashem* had told Avraham they would be strangers in a foreign land.

Because of this, *Chazal* say, the Jews had to suffer future exiles, to complete the unfinished work of the Egyptian exile. Because the Jews "were thrown out of Egypt and they couldn't wait," therefore there was still reason to "bake [] the dough which they had taken out of Egypt into *matzah* cakes."

If the first exile had been a closed chapter in Jewish history, there might be no reason for us to eat *matzah*, the bread of suffering. However, when *Hashem* commanded *Bnei Yisrael* to eat *matzah*, He "already" knew that there would be future exiles, and future opportunities to eat the bread of suffering. Thus, there is no inconsistency between the *timing* of the commandment and the *reason* that our verse gives. (Based on R' Chaim Halberstam of Sanz's *Divrei Chaim, Pesach*)



The Torah tells us that the Exodus occurred *be'chipazon* / hurriedly. But why, asks R' Shlomo Kluger *z"l* (1783-1869; rabbi of Brody, Galicia), do we place so much emphasis on this detail of the Exodus? He explains with a parable:

There were once two dear friends – call them Reuven and Shimon – who helped each other in every possible way. One day, Reuven was arrested and charged with a serious crime. As he was being led away, he cried bitterly, "Save me, my friend."

His friend, Shimon, called after him, "Don't worry! I will do everything I can, and I will not rest until I have rescued you."

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

A year passed, and then another, and doubt began to creep into Reuven's mind. Perhaps Shimon had forgotten him? "No! Shimon promised to save me, and he will." As Reuven sat there musing thus, he thought he heard a distant sound of metal banging on rock. For several days, this sound continued, until one day several bricks popped out of the wall and Shimon's head appeared through the hole.

“Hurry,” Shimon whispered. “Let’s get out of here.” Reuven was beside himself with joy, not only because he had been rescued, but also because the sudden manner in which Shimon had appeared showed Reuven that Shimon had never forgotten him. All of these years, Shimon had been planning and preparing Reuven’s rescue.

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

The prophet tells us (*Michah* 7:15), “As in the days when you left Egypt, I will show you wonders [at the time of the Final Redemption].” After two millennia in exile, we might think that *Hashem* has abandoned us. It’s not true, writes R’ Kluger. The Final Redemption will demonstrate also that *Hashem* never forgot us. This is why we take pains to remember the *chipazon* aspect of the Exodus. (Quoted in *Haggadah Shel Pesach Sha’arei Armon*)



The *matzah* is one of only two *mitzvot* of the *seder* which is a Torah obligation even when the *Bet Hamikdash* is not standing. (The other is the recitation of the *Haggadah*.) The three *matzot* represent the two loaves which are taken every *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov*, with an additional *matzah* that can be broken to represent the “*lechem oni*” / “the poor man’s bread.”

The three *matzot* also symbolize the *Avot*, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, whose merit sustained us through the Egyptian enslavement and other exiles.

Finally, the three *matzot* represent the three types of loaves which accompanied a *Korban Todah* (Thanksgiving offering) in the *Bet Hamikdash*. The *Gemara* (*Berachot* Ch.9) says: “Four people must give thanks. One who crossed the sea, one who crossed the desert, one who recovered from an illness, and one who was freed from prison.” Each of these describes *Bnei Yisrael* at the time of the Exodus. (Ed. note: The illness from which *Bnei Yisrael* “recovered” presumably refers to the “Plague of the First-born” which killed many Egyptians. Alternatively, it refers here to a spiritual illness.) (R’ Eliyahu Ki-Tov)

יגביה המרור ויאמר

מְרוֹר זֶה שְׂאֵנוּ אוֹכְלִים, עַל שׁוּם מָה? עַל שׁוּם שְׁמֵרְרוּ הַמִּצְרִים אֶת חַיֵּי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
בְּמִצְרַיִם, שְׁנֵאָמַר: וַיִּמְרְרוּ אֶת חַיֵּיהֶם בְּעַבְדָּה קָשָׁה, בְּחֹמֶר וּבִלְבָנִים, וּבְכָל עַבְדָּה
בְּשָׂדֵה: אֶת כָּל עַבְדֹתֶם, אֲשֶׁר עָבְדוּ בָהֶם בְּפָרֶךְ.

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

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

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

בְּכָל דּוֹר וְדוֹר חֵיב אָדָם לְרֹאוֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ, כְּאִלוּ הוּא יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם, שְׁנֵאָמַר: וְהִגַּדְתָּ
לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: בְּעַבּוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה יְיָ לִי, בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם. לֹא אֶת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
בְּלִבָּד, גָּאֵל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, אֶלֶּא אִף אוֹתֵנוּ גָאֵל עִמָּהֶם, שְׁנֵאָמַר: וְאוֹתֵנוּ הוֹצִיא
מִשָּׁם, לְמַעַן הִבִּיא אֶתֵנוּ, לְתֵת לָנוּ אֶת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם.

R’ Moshe Sternbuch *shlita* writes: If this were taken literally, it would undoubtedly be the most difficult of the *Seder’s mitzvot* to perform. However, Rambam does not understand it so. Rather, he writes, “In each generation, man is obligated to act as if he had participated in the Exodus.”

How is this accomplished? *Chida* writes in his Haggadah that it's not sufficient to recognize in your heart that you have benefited from G-d's taking our ancestors out of Egypt. Each person at the *Seder* must demonstrate to his relatives and guests that he truly and enthusiastically recognizes and appreciates the favor that G-d did for us by taking us from Egypt and giving us the Torah so that He may reward us. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach: Mo'adim U'Zmanim*)



R' Shimon Schwab *z"l* explained this difficult *mitzvah* as follows: If a person breaks his left arm, he may still point to it decades later and say, "I broke this arm." In fact, with the passage of time, there is not a single molecule in that arm which was in the "arm" that broke.

Similarly, the physical content of the Jewish nation is different than it was thousands of years ago, but we must see ourselves as the continuing embodiment of those people. (*Ma'ayan Bet Hashoevah*)



Rabbeinu Asher *z"l* teaches in *Orchot Chaim* that our belief in G-d is specifically as a result of the Exodus. R' Baruch Ber Lebowitz *z"l* elaborates: A Jew who professes to believe in G-d, but not because of the Exodus, is like one who cuts off a tree's roots and hopes the tree will survive.

If it were possible for a person to visit Heaven and see undeniable proof of G-d's existence, that would not be the faith of *Bnei Yisrael*. The uniqueness of the Jewish people is that every event is filtered through the concept which underlies the Exodus, i.e., the concept of reward and punishment. (Quoted in *Orach Yesharim*, an anthology of commentary to Rabbeinu Asher's *Orchot Chaim*)



In all, the Exodus is mentioned 50 times in the Torah. Why? asks R' Aharon Roth ("Reb Ahrele") *z"l*. If a master (i.e., *Hashem*) frees his slave (i.e., the Jewish people), is that something the master should take such pride in?

G-d is not bragging, explains Reb Ahrele. Rather, the 50 references to the Exodus allude to the fact that G-d saved us from the 50 "Gates" or levels of *Tumah* / Defilement that existed in Egypt (and exist in the world). Indeed, the word *Mitzrayim* / Egypt can be read "*metzar yam*" / "the confines of the 50." ("*Metzar*" means "confines" and the word "*yam*" has a numerical value / *gematria* of 50.)

Paralleling these 50 Gates of *Tumah* there are 50 Gates of *Binah* / Understanding. *Bnei Yisrael* attained 49 of these levels when they received the Torah after their first 49 days in the desert. But entrance to the 50th Gate is reserved for the future, after the Exodus is finished, i.e., after all of the exiles have concluded.

The Torah alludes in several places to the fact that the Exodus is not yet finished. For example, when *Hashem* told Avraham of the future enslavement of the Jews, He said (*Bereishit* 15:14), "And also the nation which they will serve, I will judge." The *midrash* explains that the redundant language, "And also," teaches that *Hashem* will judge not only Egypt, but the other nations that subjugated or enslaved us, as well. All of our exiles are part of the same long process, explains Reb Ahrele, a process which will culminate with our attainment of that 50th Gate of Understanding. (*Shomer Emunim, Drush Hageulah*, ch.1)



We have a number of holidays that commemorate victories over our enemies. How do they differ from each other?

The Jewish People has two kinds of enemies. There are those who oppose the existence of the Jewish nation, and there are those who oppose that nation's service of *Hashem*.

R' Yitzchak Hutner *z"l* teaches that *Pesach* represents the defeat of the first kind of enemy, while *Purim* represents the defeat of the other. In each case, the enemy that was defeated was the purveyor *par excellence* of the type of enmity which it represented.

Chazal refer to the “Seven Nations” and the “Four Kingdoms” which have opposed the Jews. The reference to one set of enemies as “Nations” and the other as “Kingdoms” is significant.

To be a servant, R’ Hutner explains, one must meet a two-part definition: (1) he must be acquired by a master, and (2) he must be informed what the master’s will is and be given the means to carry out that will. The Four Kingdoms opposed *Bnei Yisrael* on the first level; the Seven Nations opposed them on the second.

The Four Kingdoms that have oppressed the Jewish people attempt to subjugate and enslave them so that they will be servants of these Kingdoms, and not *Hashem*’s servants. This is an action taken by *kingdoms*, in opposition to *Hashem*’s kingdom. The first nation that did this was Egypt.

The Seven Nations, on the other hand, did not oppose the “nationhood” of the Jewish people. Rather, they attempted to prevent *Bnei Yisrael* from conquering *Eretz Yisrael*. In so doing, they sought to withhold from the Jewish people the means to carry out the will of its Master. Since no subjugation of the Jewish people is involved, no kings are necessary. Even the common man, i.e., the *nation*, can be the enemy. The first nation that did this was *Amalek*, the ancestor of Haman.

At the time of the Exodus, the Jews were acquired by *Hashem* as His servants, and they ceased to be the servants of Pharaoh (see *Megillah* 14a). This is *Pesach*. Then, before *Bnei Yisrael* could receive the Torah and be informed of what the master’s will is, Amalek (the ancestor of Haman) attacked them. When he was defeated, the Torah could be given. (Similarly, after Haman was defeated, the Jewish people accepted the Torah anew (*Shabbat* 88a).) (*Pachad Yitzchak*)

יגביה הכוס, יכסה המצות ויאמר

לְפִיכֶם אֲנַחְנוּ חַיִּיבִים לְהוֹדוֹת, לְהַלֵּל, לְשַׁבַּח, לְפָאֵר, לְרוֹמֵם, לְהַדָּר, לְבָרֵךְ, לְעַלֶּה וּלְקַלֵּס, לְמִי שֶׁעָשָׂה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ אֶת כָּל הַנִּסִּים הָאֵלֹהִים. הוֹצִיאָנוּ מֵעַבְדוֹת לְחֵרוֹת, מִיַּגוֹן לְשִׁמְחָה, וּמֵאֵבֶל לְיוֹם טוֹב, וּמֵאֲפֵלָה לְאוֹר גְּדוֹל, וּמִשְׁעָבוֹד לְגֵאֲלָה. וְנֹאמֵר לְפָנָיו שִׁירָה חֲדָשָׁה. הַלְלוּיָהּ :

Why are we grateful to *Hashem* for redeeming us from slavery? asks R’ Chaim Berlin z”l. After all, He made us slaves in the first place! R’ Berlin explains as follows:

Hashem told Avraham that his descendants would be caused to suffer for 400 years; in fact, the Jews were in Egypt for only 210 years. In order to “find” the full 400 years, we must begin counting from the birth of Yitzchak. How did Yitzchak suffer? He was a very wealthy man! So, too, Yaakov was a very honored person in Egypt!

For Yitzchak and Yaakov, living among the gentiles (Avimelech, Lavan, Pharaoh) constituted suffering. Only after Yaakov died did the Jews’ senses become more dulled, and they forgot that they were in exile. In the words of the *midrash* (on *Shmot* 1:7), “‘And the land filled with them’ -- the theaters and circuses filled with them.”

Naturally, says R’ Berlin, this could no longer be considered part of the promised 400-year suffering. Accordingly, the suffering had to intensify, even to the point of slavery. This is the meaning of the *midrash*, “‘If you had merited, you would read (*Shmot* 3:7), ‘I have seen the suffering of My nation in Egypt.’” Had we merited, G-d would have viewed our very presence in Egypt as suffering. As it was, we did not merit. We caused our slavery, and we thank *Hashem* for redeeming us.

The tribe of Levi was not enslaved in Egypt because that tribe maintained its separateness from the Egyptians in Egypt. Its members, for example, continued to circumcise their sons after the others had stopped doing so. (*Kuntres Imrei Chaim Al Haggadah Shel Pesach*)

הַלְלוּהָ. הַלְלוּ עִבְדֵי יְיָ. הַלְלוּ אֶת שֵׁם יְיָ. יְהִי שֵׁם יְיָ מְבָרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם: מִמְזָרְחַ שְׁמֶשׁ עַד מְבוֹאוֹ. מְהֵלֵל שֵׁם יְיָ. רָם עַל כָּל גּוֹיִם יְיָ. עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ: מִי כִּי אֱלֹהֵינוּ. הַמְגַבִּיהִי לְשֹׁבֵת: הַמְשַׁפִּילִי לְרְאוֹת בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבְאָרֶץ: מְקִימֵי מַעְפָּר דָּל. מַאֲשֵׁפֵת יָרִים אֶבְיוֹן: לְהוֹשִׁיבֵי עִם נְדִיבִים. עִם נְדִיבֵי עַמוֹ: מוֹשִׁיבֵי עֶקְרֵת הַבַּיִת אִם הַבָּנִים שְׂמִיחָה. הַלְלוּהָ:

בְּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרָיִם, בַּיַּת יַעֲקֹב מֵעַם לֵעָז: הֵיטָה יְהוּדָה לְקַדְשׁוֹ. יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמְשֻׁלוֹתָיו: הֵיטָה רָאָה וַיִּנָּס, הֵיטָה וַיִּרְדּוּ יוֹסֵב לְאַחֹר: הֵהָרִים רָקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים. גְּבָעוֹת כְּבָנֵי צֶאֱן: מַה לָּךְ הֵיטָה כִּי תִנּוֹס. הֵיטָה תִסָּב לְאַחֹר: הֵהָרִים תִּרְקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים. גְּבָעוֹת כְּבָנֵי צֶאֱן: מִלִּפְנֵי אֲדוֹן חוֹלֵי אֶרֶץ. מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב: הַהִפְכֵי הַצּוֹר אֲגַם מֵיִם. חֲלַמִּישׁ לְמַעַיְנו מֵיִם.

כל אחד יקח כוסו בידו

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר גָּאֲלָנוּ וְגָאֵל אֶת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, וְהִגִּיעֵנוּ לְלִילָה הַזֶּה, לְאָכֵל בּוֹ מִצֶּה וּמְרוֹר. כֵּן, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, נִגִּיעֵנוּ לְמוֹעֲדִים וְלִרְגָלִים אַחֲרִים, הַבָּאִים לְקִרְבָּנוּ לְשָׁלוֹם. שְׂמִיחִים בְּבִנְיַן עִירָךְ, וְשֹׁשֵׁיִם בְּעִבּוֹדְךָ, וְנֹאכְלֵי שֵׁם מִן הַזְּבָחִים וּמִן הַפְּסָחִים (בְּמוֹצָאֵי שַׁבַּת אוֹמְרִים מִן הַפְּסָחִים וּמִן הַזְּבָחִים), אֲשֶׁר נִגִּיעַ דָּמָם, עַל קִיר מִזְבֵּיחֶךָ לְרִצּוֹן, וְנוֹדָה לָּךְ שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ עַל גְּאֻלָּתֵנוּ, וְעַל פְּדוּת נַפְשֵׁנוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, גָּאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל:

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

R’ Yaakov Kranz *z”l* (the “*Dubno Maggid*”; died 1804) answered this question with a parable: A merchant once hired a wagon and wagon-driver to take him home from the market with the goods he had purchased. On the way, they stopped at an inn to eat.

When they came out, a shock awaited them, for the unattended wagon had been robbed of all of its contents. The merchant turned white, but said nothing. In contrast, the wagon-driver fell on the ground in bitter tears, screaming, “Woe is me! My raincoat is gone! My umbrella is gone! What will be with me?”

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

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

So, too, said the *Dubno Maggid*, eating the sacrifices may seem like a small, even insignificant, part of the Temple service, but it is the only part that is really lost. Are we not taught that when one studies the laws of the sacrifices, it is as if he had brought those sacrifices to the *Bet Hamikdash*? If so, *Hashem* is receiving our offerings even though there is no Temple. We, however, are missing our share of the sacrifices — the part that we would be eating if real sacrifices could be brought in the Temple — and it is for this that we pray. (Quoted in *Sha’arei Armon* p. 161)

כוס שני

At the *Pesach Seder*, we drink four cups of wine, each one paralleling one of these four expressions.

R' Yitzchak ben Shlomo Al-chadab *z"l* (Spain; early 15th century) observes that there is more to this parallelism than just the number four. Rather, each of the cups is drunk at a point in the *Seder* that relates to one of the four expressions of *geulah* / redemption.

The first cup is drunk at *kiddush*. This parallels “I shall take you out” in that there is a *mitzvah* at every *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov* night *kiddush* to mention the basic fact that *Hashem* took us out of Egypt.

The second cup is drunk at the blessing “*Ga'al Yisrael*” in which we thank *Hashem* for rescuing us from Egypt. The verb “I shall rescue” is used a number of times in the Torah to refer specifically to the redemption from Egypt. (See, for example, *Shmot* ch.18.)

The third cup is drunk at *Birkat Hamazon*. The *halachah* is that one does not fulfill the *mitzvah* of *Birkat Hamazon* if he does not mention three things: *Eretz Yisrael*, *Brit Milah* and Torah. These parallel “I shall redeem you,” for the redemption is not complete until our bodies and souls are saved – *Eretz Yisrael* for our bodies and the Torah and *Brit Milah* for our souls.

Finally, the fourth cup is drunk at *Hallel*, for we have a particular obligation to acknowledge the special gift of “I shall take you to Me for a people.” (*Haggadah Shel Pesach: Pesach Dorot*)



R' Eliezer Nachman Foa *z"l* (Italy; 17th century) observes that the Exodus from Egypt did not put an end to the Jewish people's troubles. Immediately following the Exodus, *Bnei Yisrael* wandered in the desert for 40 years and suffered through various trials. In the millennia since then, Jews have suffered innumerable periods of oppression. Why wasn't the Exodus the final redemption?

He explains: It is well-known that fruits which fall off of the tree before they are ripe will not taste as good as those which ripen on the tree. Similarly, *Hashem* redeemed *Bnei Yisrael* from Egypt before the time was ripe (because they were about to be overwhelmed by the impurity of that land). Therefore, the redemption could not be a complete one.

In this light, we can understand why *Chazal* warned us not to rush the final redemption. If the redemption comes prematurely, it will not be complete.

R' Foa adds: When we speak of the “strong arm” which *Hashem* used to redeem the Jewish people, we do not mean that He had to struggle to defeat the Egyptians. Rather, we mean that He, so-to-speak, used force to subdue *Din* / Justice, for Justice claimed, correctly, that *Bnei Yisrael* did not deserve to be redeemed.

This explains why it was necessary for Pharaoh to say the word, “Go!” *Hashem* could have redeemed *Bnei Yisrael* in any case, but the attribute of Justice required that Pharaoh acquiesce. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Midrash Be'chidush*)

הִנְנִי מוֹכֵן וּמְצַמֵּן לְקַיֵּם מִצְוֹת כּוֹס שְׁנִיָּה מְאַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת לְשֵׁם יְחִוּד קוּדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא
וְשִׁכְיִתִּיָּה עַל יְדֵי הַהוּא טְמִיר וְנִעְלָם בְּשֵׁם כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלְּךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן :

רְחֻצָּה

נוטלים ידים ומברכים :

Although the “Kadeish U’Rechatz” poem is, in its most simple meaning, the order of service that we follow at the *Seder*, numerous commentaries see it also as a complete plan for a Torah way of life. One of its messages is: “First ‘Kadeish U’Rechatz’ - ‘Sanctify and wash (purify) yourself’ - and only later, ‘Maggid Rachtzah’ - ‘Tell others to wash themselves’.” (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Zichron Niflaot* and others)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶכֶד הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם :

מוֹצֵיא

R’ Moshe Sternbuch *shlita* writes: Feeling joy when performing *mitzvot* is always considered one of the highest forms of service of G-d. We should feel especially joyous when eating *matzah*, for *Chazal* teach that this *mitzvah*, properly fulfilled, can save one from judgment on Rosh Hashanah. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Moadim U’Zmanim*)

מִצָּה

Chazal teach that *chametz* represents the evil influence of the *yetzer hara* and that our task on *Pesach* is to eradicate this *chametz*. The word “*matzah*” can be translated “battle” and *matzah* is therefore an appropriate food to eat when we battle the *yetzer hara*. Eating *matzah* is mandatory on the first night of *Pesach* only, for after that the “battle” is (hopefully) over, However, we remain forbidden to eat *chametz* for several more days (i.e. the rest of *Pesach*), for we must keep the *yetzer hara* from returning. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Shem MiShmuel*)



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

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

In contrast, we are not commanded to eat *matzah* for seven days. One’s obligation to eat *matzah* is only on the first night [the first two nights in the Diaspora], and only one *kezayit* [a very small volume]. Why is there this difference between the prohibition on eating *chametz* and the commandment to eat *matzah*? Because the Torah takes into account the fact that too much *matzah* can make a person ill. (*Migdal David: mitzvah 151*)

נוטל את המצות שעל הקערה ומברך

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶכֶד הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצֵיא לָחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ :

מניח את המצה התחתונה ובעודו אווז את העליונה ואת הפרוסה מברך

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶכֶד הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מִצָּה :

אוכלים כשיעור שני זיתים מצה וטובלים במלח

מָרוֹר

R' Yitzchak Meir of Ger z"l said: The bitterness of the exile actually contributed to our redemption, for it made our situation unbearable and inspired us to pray. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach* Kohelet Moshe)



The *Talmud Yerushalmi* (*Pesachim* Ch. 2) states that the ideal *maror* is the vegetable known as “*chazeret*.” Just as the *chazeret* starts out sweet but becomes bitter as it grows, so it was for our ancestors in Egypt. First it says (*Bereishit* 47:6), “In the best part of Egypt settle your father and your brothers.” Later it says (*Shmot* 1:14), “They embittered their lives . . .”

Why is it important to recall this aspect of our stay in Egypt? asks R' Eliyahu Hakohen z"l (the “*Shevet Mussar*”; Izmir, Turkey; died 1729). He answers that one’s gratitude at being rescued from suffering is significantly greater if he once knew wealth and happiness than if he had suffered all his life. To remind ourselves of what we once had, we use *chazeret* for *maror*.

With this in mind, we can understand a perplexing verse in *Eichah* (1:11): “Look, *Hashem*, and behold what a glutton I was.” Is this a reason why *Hashem* should redeem us? Yes, answers R' Eliyahu, for it makes our suffering in exile that much more painful. (*Aggadot Eliyahu: Pesachim*)

לוחק כזית מרור, טובלו בחרוסת ומברך ואוכלו

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מָרוֹר :

כּוֹרֵךְ

Hillel used to make a sandwich of the *Pesach*, *matzah*, and *Maror*, in opposition to the *halachic* view that the taste of each *mitzvah*, canceled out the others. This is consistent with Hillel’s custom of giving every meal the sanctity due the Shabbat meals. Since we do not know the relative importance of different *mitzvot*, we must treat them all equally, and none can cancel out another. (*Divrei Shaul*)



There is a view in the Talmud that two *mitzvot* may not be done at the same time because the concentration required for one may disturb the concentration required for the other. R' Yosef Shaul Nathanson notes that the sage, Hillel, was nevertheless able to eat *matzah* and *Maror* at the same time because he was always concentrating on fulfilling G-d’s will, and nothing could distract him from this. As an example of Hillel’s constant devotion, the Talmud tells us that he considered the weekday meals to be *mitzvot* equal to the Shabbat meal; all of them fulfilled the purpose of strengthening him to serve G-d. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Migdal Eder HaChadash*)

פורס כזית מהמצה השלישית וכזית מרור, טובלו בחרוסת, כורכים יחד ואוכלם בהסיבה ואומר

זֶכַר לְמִקְדָּשׁ כְּהֵלֵל : כֵּן עָשָׂה הֵלֵל בְּזִמְנוֹ שֶׁבֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הָיָה קָיָם. הָיָה כּוֹרֵךְ פֶּסַח מִצָּה וּמָרוֹר וְאוֹכֵל בְּיַחַד. לְקַיֵּם מָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר : עַל מִצּוֹת וּמְרוֹרִים יֵאָכְלוּ :

שֶׁלַחן עוֹרֵךְ

This expression literally means “He is setting the table” (in the present tense), and it alludes to G-d. The story is told of a beggar who “worked” the homes of his neighborhood for only two hours a day, yet collected more than any of the beggars who struggled from door to door all afternoon long. When he was asked the secret of his success, the beggar said, “I knock on doors only at mealtimes. Since the table is already set, no one minds feeding me as well. You, however, arrive at the houses when people are busy with other things, and they cannot be bothered to open the kitchen just for you.”

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

צפון

אוכלים את האפיקומן

R' Eliyahu Ki Tov writes that in Aramaic, "Afikoman" means "Bring out ('Afiku') dessert ('Man')." It, therefore, symbolizes our freedom, for the poor and oppressed cannot afford the luxury of a leisurely conclusion to their meal. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Yalkut Tov*)

ברך

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

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

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

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת בְּשׁוֹב יְיָ אֶת שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן הֵינּוּ כְּחֻלְמִים : אִזּוּ יִמְלֵא שְׁחוֹק פִּינוּ וּלְשׁוֹנֵנוּ
רְנָה אִזּוּ יֵאמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם הַגְּדִיל יְיָ לַעֲשׂוֹת עִם אֱלֹהֵי : הַגְּדִיל יְיָ לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּנוּ הֵינּוּ
שְׂמֵחִים : שׁוֹבָה יְיָ אֶת שְׁבִיתֵנוּ כְּאֲפִיקִים בְּנֶגֶב : הַזְרְעִים בְּדַמְעָה בְּרָנָה יִקְצְרוּ : הַלֹּדֶז
יִלְךְ וּבִכָּה נִשְׂא מִשָּׁד הַזָּרַע בֹּא יְבֹא בְרָנָה נִשְׂא אֶלְמָתָיו :

המזמן : רבותי נברך!

המסובין : יהי שם יי מברך מעתה ועד עולם.

המזמן : יהי שם יי מברך מעתה ועד עולם. ברשות מרן ורנן ורבותי, נברך
(אלהינו) שאכלנו משלו.

המסובין : ברוך (אלהינו) שאכלנו משלו ובטובו חיינו.

המזמן : ברוך (אלהינו) שאכלנו משלו ובטובו חיינו.

ברוך הוא וברוך שמו :

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, הן את העולם כולו בטובו בהן בחסד וברחמים
הוא נותן לחם לכל בשר כי לעולם חסדו. ובטובו הגדול תמיד לא חסר לנו, ואל
יחסר לנו מזון לעולם ועד. בעבור שמו הגדול, כי הוא אל זן ומפרינס לכל ומטיב
לכל, ומכין מזון לכל בריותיו אשר ברא. ברוך אתה יי, הן את הכל :

נודה לך יי אלהינו על שהנחלת לאבותינו, ארץ חמדה טובה ורחבה, ועל שהוצאתנו
יי אלהינו מארץ מצרים, ופדיתנו, מבית עבדים, ועל בריתך שחתמת בבשרנו, ועל
תורתך שלמדנו, ועל חקיקה שהודעתנו ועל חיים חן וחסד שחוננתנו, ועל אכילת
מזון שאתה זן ומפרינס אותנו תמיד, בכל יום ובכל עת ובכל שעה :

ועל הכל יי אלהינו אנחנו מודים לך, ומברכים אותך, ותברך שמך בפי כל חי תמיד לעולם ועד. ככתוב, ואכלת ושבעת, וברכת את יי אלהיך על הארץ הטבה אשר נתן לך. ברוך אתה יי, על הארץ ועל המזון:

רחם נא יי אלהינו, על ישראל עמך, ועל ירושלים עירך, ועל ציון משכן כבודך, ועל מלכות בית דוד משיחך, ועל הבית הגדול והקדוש שנקרא שמך עליו. אלהינו, אבינו, רענו, זוננו, פרנסנו, וככלכלנו, והרויחנו, והרווח לנו יי אלהינו מהרה מכל צרותינו, ונא, אל תצריכנו יי אלהינו, לא לידי מתנת בשר ודם, ולא לידי הלואתם. כי אם לידך המלאה, הפתוחה, הקדושה והרחבה, שלא נבוש ולא נפלים לעולם ועד:

לשבת רצה והחליצנו יי אלהינו במצותיך ובמצות יום השביעי השבת הגדול והקדוש הזה. כי יום זה גדול וקדוש הוא לפניך, לשבת בו ולנוח בו באהבה כמצות רצונך וברצונך הניח לנו יי אלהינו, שלא תהא צרה ונגון ונאנחה ביום מנוחתנו. והראנו יי אלהינו בנחמת ציון עירך, ובבגנו ירושלים עיר קדשך, כי אתה הוא בעל הישועות ובעל הנחמות:

אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, יעלה ויבא ויגיע, ויראה, וירצה, וישמע, ויפקד, ויזכר זכרוננו ופקדוננו, וזכרון אבותינו, וזכרון משיח בן דוד עבדך, וזכרון ירושלים עיר קדשך, וזכרון כל עמך בית ישראל לפניך, לפליטה לטובה לחן ולחסד ולרחמים, לחיים ולשלום ביום חג המצות הזה. זכרנו יי אלהינו בו לטובה. ופקדנו בו לברכה. והושיענו בו לחיים, ובדבר ישועה ורחמים, חוס וחסנו, ורחם עלינו והושיענו, כי אליך עינינו, כי אל מלך חנון ורחום אתה:

ובנה ירושלים עיר הקדש במהרה בימינו. ברוך אתה יי, בונה ברחמי ירושלים. אמן

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, האל אבינו, מלכנו, אדירנו בוראנו, גואלנו, יוצרנו, קדושו קדוש יעקב, רוענו רועה ישראל. המלך הטוב, והמטיב לכל, שבכל יום ויום הוא הטוב, הוא מטיב, הוא ייטיב לנו. הוא גמלנו, הוא גומלנו, הוא יגמלנו לעד לחן ולחסד ולרחמים ולרחוץ הצלה והצלחה ברכה וישועה, נחמה, פרנסה וככלכלה, ורחמים, וחיים ושלום, וכל טוב, ומכל טוב לעולם אל יחסרנו:

הרחמן, הוא ימלוך עלינו לעולם ועד.

הרחמן, הוא יתברך בשמים ובארץ.

הרחמן, הוא ישתבח לדור דורים, ויתפאר בנו לעד ולנצח נצחים, ויתהדר בנו לעד ולעולמי עולמים.

הרחמן, הוא יפרנסנו בכבוד.

הרחמן, הוא ישבור עגלנו מעל צוארנו והוא יולייכנו קוממיות לארצנו.

הרחמן, הוא ישלח לנו ברכה מרבה בבית הזה, ועל שלחן זה שאכלנו עליו.

הרחמן, הוא ישלח לנו את אליהו הנביא זכור לטוב, ויבשר לנו בשורות טובות ישועות ונחמות.

הַרְחַמְנוּ, הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת (אָבִי מוֹרִי) בַּעַל הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה, וְאֶת (אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי) בַּעֲלַת הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה,

הַרְחַמְנוּ, הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אוֹתִי (וְאָבִי וְאִמִּי וְאֲשֶׁתִּי וְזַרְעִי וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לִי)

הַרְחַמְנוּ, הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת בַּעַל הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה, וְאֶת אֲשֶׁתּוֹ בַּעֲלַת הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה.

אוֹתָם וְאֶת בֵּיתָם וְאֶת זַרְעָם וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם אוֹתָנוּ וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לָנוּ, כְּמוֹ שְׁנַתְּבָרְכוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, אֲבָרְהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב: בְּכֹל, מְכֹל, כָּל. כֵּן יְבָרֵךְ אוֹתָנוּ כְּלָנוּ יַחַד. בְּבִרְכָה שְׁלֵמָה, וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן:

בְּמָרוֹם יִלְמְדוּ עֲלֵיהֶם וְעַלֵּינוּ זְכוֹת, שֶׁתְּהֵא לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת שְׁלוֹם, וְנִשְׂא בְּרָכָה מֵאֵת יְיָ וְיִצְדָּקָה מֵאֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְנִמְצָא חַן וְשִׁכָּל טוֹב בְּעֵינֵי אֱלֹהִים וְאָדָם:

לשבת הַרְחַמְנוּ, הוּא יְנַחֵלְנוּ יוֹם שְׁכָלוֹ שֶׁבֶת וּמְנוּחָה לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָמִים.

הַרְחַמְנוּ, הוּא יְנַחֵלְנוּ יוֹם שְׁכָלוֹ טוֹב.

הַרְחַמְנוּ, הוּא יְזַכֵּנוּ לְיָמֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ וְלְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא.

מְגִדוֹל יְשׁוּעוֹת מְלָכּוֹ, וְעֵשָׂה חֶסֶד לְמִשְׁיחוֹ לְדוֹד וּלְזָרְעוֹ עַד עוֹלָם: עֵשָׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמָרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם, עַלֵּינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְנֹאמְרוּ אָמֵן:

יִרְאוּ אֶת יְיָ קְדוֹשֵׁנוּ, כִּי אֵין מַחְסוֹר לִירְאָיו: כְּפִירִים רָשׁוּ וְרַעֲבוּ, וְדוֹרְשֵׁי יְיָ לֹא יַחְסְרוּ כָּל טוֹב: הוֹדוּ לְיְיָ כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: פּוֹתַח אֶת יְדָדְךָ, וּמִשְׁבִּיעַ לְכָל חַי רָצוֹן: בְּרוּךְ הַגֹּבֵר אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בְּיְיָ, וְהִזָּה יְיָ מִבְּטָחוֹ: גַּעַר הַיִּיתִי גַם זִקְנָתִי וְלֹא רָאִיתִי צָדִיק נִעְזֵב, וְזָרְעוֹ מִבְּקֶשׁ לָחֵם: יְיָ עֹז לְעַמּוֹ יִתֵּן, יְיָ יְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ בְּשְׁלוֹם:

כוס שלישי

הַנְּנִי מוֹכֵן וּמְזַמֵּן לְקִיָּם מְצוֹת כּוֹס שְׁלִישִׁית מֵאַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת לְשֵׁם יַחֲוֹד קוֹדֶשׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא וְשְׁכִינְתֵיהָ עַל יְדֵי הַהוּא טְמִיר וְנִגְעֵלָם בְּשֵׁם כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן:

מוזגים כוס מיוחדת לאלהינו הנביא, ופוחים את הדלת ואומרים

שִׁפְךָ חֲמַתְךָ אֶל הַגּוֹיִם, אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִדְעוּךָ וְעַל מַמְלְכוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּשִׁמְךָ לֹא קָרְאוּ: כִּי אֶכֶל אֶת יַעֲקֹב. וְאֶת גְּוֵהוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם: שִׁפְךָ עֲלֵיהֶם זַעֲמָךְ, וְחַרוֹן אַפְּךָ יִשְׁיָגָם: תִּרְדֹּף בְּאֵף וְתִשְׁמִידָם, מִתַּחַת שָׁמַיִם יְיָ:

“...I am G-d, and I will take you out from doing the work of the Egyptians, and I will save you from their service, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with strong judgements. And I will take you as my nation...” (Shmot 6:6-7)

[The four italicized phrases are called the “Four Expressions of Redemption,” each one represented by one of the four cups of wine which we drink at the *Seder*. There also is a fifth such expression: “And I will bring you to the land...” (Shmot 6:8). This parallels the fifth cup--the cup of Eliyahu--the subject of our discussion.]

The *Haggadah* commentary *Divrei Negidim*, a work that has been attributed to the *Maharal* of Prague, notes that the kindness which *Hashem* displays in providing our daily sustenance is greater than the kindness that He showed in creating the world. How so?

To be a “creation” (rather than a creator) means to be dependent on another. It therefore means being inherently deficient. Thus, despite *Hashem*’s kindness in creating us, we are necessarily lacking because we are no more than “creations.” However, when *Hashem* gives us food, He gives us the ability, to a certain extent, to stand on our own. Thus, *Hashem*’s kindness in feeding us is the greatest kindness of all.

This explains the structure of Psalm 136 which is known as “*Hallel Hagadol*”--“The Great Hallel.” In this chapter of *Tehillim* we recall *Hashem*’s wonders in creating the world and in redeeming us from Egypt. Each line of the Psalm culminating with the expression, “For His kindness endures forever.” How does this chapter conclude? “He gives bread to all flesh, for His kindness endures forever. Acknowledge the G-d of the Heavens, for His kindness endures forever.” This expresses our recognition that, as noted above, this last kindness, giving us bread, is greater than the earlier ones.

The fifth cup of wine which some have the custom to drink at the *Seder* represents the kindness that *Hashem* does for us when He feeds us. After we retell the story of the Exodus and drink four cups of wine, we recite *Hallel Hagadol* and pour the fifth cup of wine. In many homes, it is the custom that the head of the household alone drinks this cup, because it is that person who has primary responsibility for receiving *Hashem*’s gift of bread. In other households, this cup is left for Eliyahu *Hanavi*--the “Angel of Peace”--for peace is a prerequisite to receiving all of *Hashem*’s blessings, sustenance included. (See Mishnah Uktzin 3:12). (*Haggadah Shel Pesach L’Maharal*, London ed., p. 174)



The four cups of wine which we drink at the *Pesach Seder* parallel the four “Lishonot Ge’ulah” - “expressions of redemption.” These are, “I will take you out from under the suffering of Egypt, and I will save you from their service, and I will redeem you with an outstretched hand... And I will take you as a nation...” (Shmot 6:6-7). But there is actually a fifth expression, the verse immediately following the above: “And I will bring you to the land...” Many commentators wonder why this verse, the promise of *Eretz Yisrael*, is not also represented by a cup of wine.

R’ Shlomo Goren *z”l* (former Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of Israel) explains that there is a fundamental difference between the fulfillment of the first four expressions and that of the fifth. The former were openly miraculous - G-d overturned the laws of nature, brought the ten plagues, and redeemed His people from Egypt. Not so, the latter. Although Yehoshua’s conquest of *Eretz Yisrael* was guided by *Hashem*, it was, for the most part, not overtly miraculous. Because of this difference, we do not commemorate being brought to *Eretz Yisrael* as we do the other miracles.

Chazal teach that *Eretz Yisrael* can be acquired only through suffering. Similarly, says R’ Goren, it can be acquired only through sacrifice. *Hashem* took *Bnei Yisrael* out of Egypt by a route where they would not encounter war; although they did, in fact, have to go into battle, *Hashem* did not want their first taste of war to be on the border of *Eretz Yisrael*. Why? Because one is permitted to fear battle, but only when it is not a “*Milchemet mitzvah*” - a war which is a *mitzvah* (as conquering *Eretz Yisrael* is). That, one is not allowed to fear. (Torat haShabbat v’haMo’ed p.147)

הַלֵּל

The paragraphs of Hallel are divided at the *Seder* into two groups, one of which is recited before the meal and the other after. (To see this division, compare Hallel as found in the *Haggadah* with Hallel as found in the *Siddur*.) Malbim explains that the section recited before the meal contains two paragraphs: one describes G-d’s greatness in general terms, and the other deals specifically with the Exodus. These paragraphs are closely related to the story we tell tonight, and are therefore recited immediately upon concluding the *mitzvah* of “*Maggid*” and just before eating the *matzah*.

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

לא לנו ?? לא לנו כי לשמך תן כבוד, על חסדך על אמתך. למה יאמרו הגוים, אינה נא אלהיהם. ואלהינו בשמים כל אשר חפץ עשה. עצביהם בסוף וזהב, מעשה ידי אדם. פה להם ולא ידברו, עינים להם ולא יראו. אַזְנַיִם לָהֶם וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ, אֵף לָהֶם וְלֹא יִרְיָחוּ. יְדִיָּהֶם וְלֹא יִמְשִׁיחוּ, רַגְלֵיהֶם וְלֹא יִהְיוּ בְּגָרוֹנָם. כְּמוֹתֵם יִהְיוּ עֲשִׂיהֶם, כָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּטַח בָּהֶם: יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּטַח בִּי, עֲזָרְם וּמְגַנָּם הוּא. בֵּית אֶהְרֹן בָּטַחוּ בִּי, עֲזָרְם וּמְגַנָּם הוּא. יִרְאֵי ?? בָּטַחוּ בִּי, עֲזָרְם וּמְגַנָּם הוּא:

?? זכרנו יברך, יברך את בית ישראל, יברך את בית אהרן. יברך יראי ??, הקטנים עם הגדלים. יסוף ?? עליכם, עליכם ועל בניכם. ברוכים אתם לוי, עשה שמים וארץ. השמים שמים לוי, והארץ נתן לבני אדם. לא המתים יהללו יה, ולא כל ירדי דומה. ואנחנו נברך יה, מעתה ועד עולם, הללויה:

אהבתי כי ישמע ??, את קולי תחנוני. כי הטא אָזְנוֹ לי וּבְגָמִי אֶקְרָא: אֶפְפוּנֵי חֲבֵלֵי מוֹת, וּמִצָּרֵי שְׂאוּל מִצְאוּנֵי צָרָה וְיָגוֹן אֶמְצָא. וּבִשְׁם ?? אֶקְרָא, אֲנִי ?? מִלְטָה נִפְשִׁי. חֲנוּן ?? וְצַדִּיק, וְאֱלֹהֵינוּ מְרַחֵם. שְׁמַר פְּתָאִים ?? דְּלוֹתַי וְלִי הוֹשִׁיעַ. שׁוּבֵי נִפְשֵׁי לְמִנוּחֵיכִי, כִּי ?? גָּמַל עָלַיְכִי. כִּי חֲלַצְתָּ נִפְשִׁי מִמָּוֶת אֶת עֵינַי מִן דְּמָעָה, אֶת רַגְלֵי מִדְּחִי. אֶתְהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי ??, בְּאַרְצוֹת הַחַיִּים. הֲאֵמַנְתִּי כִּי אֲדַבֵּר, אֲנִי עֲנִיתִי מֵאֵד. אֲנִי אֶמְרֵתִי בְּחַפְזִי כָּל הָאָדָם כֹּזֵב.

מה אשיב לוי, כל תגמולוהי עלי. כוס ישועות אשא, ובשם ?? אקרא. נדרי לוי אשלים, נגדה נא לכל עמו. יקר בעיני ?? המותה לחסידיו. אנה ?? כי אני עבדך אני עבדך, בן אמתך פתחת למוסרי. לך אֶזְבַּח זָבַח תוֹדָה וּבִשְׁם ?? אֶקְרָא. נְדָרֵי לֵוִי אֲשַׁלֵּם נְגִדָה נָא לְכָל עַמּוֹ. בְּחַפְזוֹת בֵּית ?? בְּתוֹכֵי רִוּשָׁלַיִם הַלְלוּיָהּ.

הללו את ??, כל גוים, שפחוהו כל האמים. כי גבר עלינו חסדו, ואמת ?? לעולם הללויה:

הודו לוי כי טוב, כי לעולם חסדו:

יאמר נא ישראל, כי לעולם חסדו:

יאמרו נא בית אהרן, כי לעולם חסדו:

יאמרו נא יראי ??, כי לעולם חסדו:

מן המצר קראתי יה, ענגי במרחב יה. ?? לי לא אירא, מה יעשה לי אדם. ?? לי בעזרי, ואני אראה בשנאי. טוב לחסות ביי, מבטח באדם. טוב לחסות ביי מבטח בנדיבים. כל גוים סבבוני בשם ?? כי אמילם. סבוני גם סבבוני בשם ?? כי אמילם. סבוני כדברים דעכו כאש קוצים, בשם ?? כי אמילם. דחה דחיתני לנפל, ויי עזרני. עזי וזמרת יה, ויהי לי לישועה. קול רנה וישועה באהלי צדיקים, זמין ?? עשה חיל. זמין ?? רוממה, זמין ?? עשה חיל. לא אמות כי אחיה, ואספר מעשי יה. יסר יסרני יה, ולמות לא נתנני. פתחו לי שערי צדק, אבא בם אוֹדָה יה. זה השער לוי, צדיקים יבאו בו. אוֹדָה כִּי עֲנִיתִנִי, וַתְּהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה. אוֹדָה כִּי עֲנִיתִנִי וַתְּהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה. אֲבָן מֵאֲסוֹ הַבּוֹנִים, הִיתָה לְרֹאשׁ פִּנָּה. אֲבָן מֵאֲסוֹ הַבּוֹנִים, הִיתָה לְרֹאשׁ פִּנָּה. מֵאֵת ?? הִיתָה זֹאת, הִיא נִפְלְאת בְּעֵינֵינוּ: מֵאֵת ?? הִיתָה זֹאת, הִיא נִפְלְאת בְּעֵינֵינוּ. זֶה הַיּוֹם עָשָׂה ??, נְגִילָה וְנִשְׁמָחָה בּוֹ. זֶה הַיּוֹם עָשָׂה ??, נְגִילָה וְנִשְׁמָחָה בּוֹ.

אָנָּה ?? הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא: אָנָּה ?? הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא:

אָנָּה ?? הַצְּלִיחָה נָּא: אָנָּה ?? הַצְּלִיחָה נָּא:

ברוך הַבָּא בְּשֵׁם ??, בְּרַכְנוּכֶם מִבֵּית ?? בְּרוּךְ הַבָּא בְּשֵׁם ??, בְּרַכְנוּכֶם מִבֵּית ?? אֵל ?? וַיֵּאָר לָנוּ, אֶסְרוּ חַג בְּעֵבְתֵיכֶם עַד קַרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ. אֵל ?? וַיֵּאָר לָנוּ, אֶסְרוּ חַג בְּעֵבְתֵיכֶם, עַד קַרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ. אֵלֵי אֶתְהָ וְאוֹדָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ. אֵלֵי אֶתְהָ וְאוֹדָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ: הוֹדוּ לֵוִי כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ: הוֹדוּ לֵוִי כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ.

הודו לוי כי טוב, כי לעולם חסדו: הודו לאלהי האלהים, כי לעולם חסדו: הודו לאדני האדנים, כי לעולם חסדו: לעשה נפלאות גדלות לבדו, כי לעולם חסדו: לעשה השמים בתבונה, כי לעולם חסדו: לרוקע הארץ על

הַמַּיִם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: לְעֹשֶׂה אוֹרִים גְּדֹלִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: אֶת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לְמַמְשֶׁלֶת בַּיּוֹם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: אֶת הַיָּרֵחַ וְכוֹכָבִים לְמַמְשָׁלוֹת בַּלַּיְלָה, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: לְמַכֵּה מִצְרַיִם בְּבִכּוֹרֵיהֶם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: וַיּוֹצֵא יִשְׂרָאֵל מִתּוֹכָם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזֵרוּעַ נְטוּיָה, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: לְגֹזֵר יַם סוּף לַגִּזְרִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: וְהַעֲבִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתוֹכוֹ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: וְנִעַר פְּרָעָה וְחִילוֹ בַּיָּם סוּף, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: לְמוֹלִיף עַמּוֹ בַּמַּדְבָּר, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: לְמַכֵּה מְלָכִים גְּדֹלִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: וַיַּהֲרֹג מְלָכִים אֲדִירִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: לְסִיחוּן מִלְּךְ

הָאֱמֹרִי, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: וּלְעוֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבָּשָׂן, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: וְנָתַן אֲרָצָם לְנַחֲלָה, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: נַחֲלָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַבְדּוֹ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: שֶׁבִשְׁפָּלְנוּ זָכַר לָנוּ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: וַיִּפְרָקֵנוּ מִצְרַיִם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: נוֹתַן לָחֵם לְכָל בָּשָׂר, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: הוֹדוּ לְאֵל הַשָּׁמַיִם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:

נִשְׁמַת כָּל חַי, תִּבְרָךְ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ. וְרוּחַ כָּל בָּשָׂר, תִּפְאֵר וּתְרוֹמֵם זָכְרֶךָ מְלַכְנוּ תַּמִּיד, מִן הָעוֹלָם וְעַד הָעוֹלָם אֶתְּהַלְּלֵנוּ אֵל. וּמִבְּלַעֲדֶיךָ אֵין לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ גּוֹאֵל וּמוֹשִׁיעַ, פּוֹדֶה וּמַצִּיל וּמַפְרִיֵּס וּמַרְחֵם, בְּכָל עֵת צָרָה וְצוּקָה. אֵין לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ אֶלָּא אַתָּה: אֱלֹהֵי הָרַאשׁוֹנִים וְהָאַחֲרוֹנִים, אֱלֹהֵי כָּל בְּרִיּוֹת, אֲדוֹן כָּל תּוֹלְדוֹת, הַמְהַלֵּל בְּרַב הַתְּשַׁבְּחוֹת, הַמְנַהֵג עוֹלָמוֹ בְּחֲסֵד, וּבְרִיּוֹתָיו בְּרַחֲמִים. וַיִּי לֹא יָנוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן, הַמַּעֲוֵר יְשָׁנִים וְהַמְקִיץ נֹדְמִים, וְהַמְשִׁיחַ אֱלֹמִים, וְהַמְתִּיר אֲסוּרִים, וְהַסּוֹמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים, וְהַזּוֹקֵף כְּפוּפִים, לֵךְ לְבַדֵּךְ אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים. אֱלוֹ פִינוּ מְלֵא שִׁירָה בַּיָּם, וְלִשְׁנוֹנוּ רִנָּה כְּחֵמוֹן גָּלִיו, וְשִׁפְתוֹתֵינוּ שֹׁבַח כְּמַרְחֵבֵי רֶקִיעַ, וְעֵינֵינוּ מְאִירוֹת כְּשֶׁמֶשׁ וְכַיָּרֵחַ, וְיָדֵינוּ פְּרוּשׁוֹת כְּנִשְׂרֵי שָׁמַיִם, וְרַגְלֵינוּ קְלוֹת כְּאַיְלוֹת, אֵין אֲנַחְנוּ מִסְפִּיקִים, לְהוֹדוֹת לָךְ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וּלְבָרֶךְ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ עַל אַחַת מֵאֵלֶּיךָ אֶלְפֵי אֶלְפִים וְרַבֵּי רַבּוֹת פְּעָמִים, הַטּוֹבוֹת שְׁעֵשִׂית עִם אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְעִמָּנוּ. מִמִּצְרַיִם גָּאַלְתָּנוּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וּמִבֵּית עַבְדִּים פְּדִיתָנוּ, בְּרַעַב זָנַתָּנוּ, וּבְשֶׁבַע כְּלָפְלִיתָנוּ, מִחֲרֵב הַצִּלְתָּנוּ, וּמִדְּבַר מַלְטָתָנוּ, וּמִחֲלָים רָעִים וּנְאֻמָּנִים דָּלִיתָנוּ: עַד הִנֵּה עֲזָרוֹנוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ, וְלֹא עֲזָבוֹנוּ חֲסֵדֶיךָ וְאֵל תִּטְשֵׁנוּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְנֶצַח. עַל כֵּן אֲבָרִים שֶׁפִּלְגַת בָּנוּ, וְרוּחַ וְנִשְׁמָה שֶׁנִּפְחַת בְּאַפֵּינוּ, וְלִשׁוֹן אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַת בְּפִינוּ, הֵן הֵם יוֹדוּ וַיִּבְרְכוּ וַיִּשְׁבְּחוּ וַיִּפְאֲרוּ וַיְרוֹמְמוּ וַיַּעֲרִיצוּ וַיִּקְדְּשׁוּ וַיִּמְלִיכוּ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ מְלַכְנוּ, כִּי כָּל פֶּה לֵךְ יוֹדֶה, וְכָל לִשׁוֹן לֵךְ תִּשָּׁבַע, וְכָל בֶּרֶךְ לֵךְ תִּכְרַע, וְכָל קוֹמָה לִפְנֵיךָ תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה, וְכָל לְבָבוֹת יִירָאוּךָ, וְכָל קֶרֶב וְכִלְיוֹת יִזְמְרוּ לְשִׁמְךָ. כַּדְּבַר שְׁכָתוֹב, כָּל עַצְמוֹתַי תֹּאמַרְנָה יי מִי כָמוֹךָ. מִצִּיל עֵנִי מִחֲזֶק מְמַנּוּ, וְעֵנִי וְאֲבִיוֹן מִגְּזֵלוֹ: מִי יִדְמָה לָךְ, וּמִי יִשׁוּהָ לָךְ וּמִי יַעֲרֶךְ לָךְ: הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגְּבוּר וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵל עֲלִיוֹן קִנְהַ שְׁמַיִם וְאֶרֶץ: נִחַלְתָּ וַיִּשְׁבַּחְךָ וַיִּפְאֲרֶךָ וַיִּבְרָךְ אֶת שֵׁם קִדְשֶׁךָ. כְּאֱמֹר, לְדוֹד, בְּרַכֵּי נַפְשִׁי אֶת יי, וְכָל קֶרֶבִי אֶת שֵׁם קִדְשׁוֹ:

הָאֵל בְּתַעֲצֻמוֹת עֲזָךְ, הַגָּדוֹל בְּכְבוֹד שְׁמֶךָ. הַגְּבוּר לְנֶצַח וְהַנּוֹרָא בְּנוֹרְאוֹתֶיךָ. הַמְּלִיךְ הַיּוֹשֵׁב עַל כְּסֵא רִם וְנִשְׂא:

שׁוֹכֵן עַד, מְרוֹם וְקָדוֹשׁ שְׁמוֹ: וְכַתּוּב, רַנְּנוּ צְדִיקִים בַּיְי, לַיְשָׁרִים נְאוּהָ תִּהְלֶה. בְּפִי יְשָׁרִים תִּתְהַלֵּל. וּבְדַבְרֵי צְדִיקִים תִּתְבָּרַךְ. וּבְלִשׁוֹן חֲסִידִים תִּתְרוֹמֵם. וּבְקֶרֶב קְדוֹשִׁים תִּתְקַדָּשׁ:

וּבְמִקְהֵלוֹת רַבּוֹת עֲמַךְ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּרִנָּה יִתְפָּאֵר שְׁמֶךָ מְלַכְנוּ, בְּכָל דּוֹר וְדוֹר, שֶׁכֵּן חוֹבַת כָּל הַיְצִירִים, לְפָנֶיךָ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, לְהוֹדוֹת לְהַלֵּל לְשַׁבַּח לְפָאֵר לְרוֹמֵם לְהַדָּר לְבָרֶךְ לְעֵלָה וּלְקַלְסֵם, עַל כָּל דְּבָרֵי שִׁירוֹת וְתִשְׁבְּחוֹת דָּוִד בֶּן יִשִׁי עַבְדְּךָ מְשִׁיחֶךָ:

יִשְׁתַּבַּח שְׁמֶךָ לְעַד מְלַכְנוּ, הָאֵל הַמְּלִיךְ הַגָּדוֹל וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבְאֶרֶץ. כִּי לֵךְ נֶאֱחָה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ: שִׁיר וְשִׁבְחָה, הֵלֵל וְזִמְרָה, עֹז וּמִמְשָׁלָה, נֶצַח, גְּדֻלָּה וּגְבוּרָה, תִּהְלֶה וְתִפְאֲרֶת, קְדוּשָׁה וּמִלְכוּת. בְּרַכּוֹת וְהוֹדָאוֹת מַעֲתָה וְעַד עוֹלָם.

הַלְלוּךָ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיךָ, וְחֲסִידֶיךָ צְדִיקִים עוֹשֵׂי רְצוֹנְךָ, וְכָל עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִנָּה יוֹדוּ וַיִּבְרְכוּ וַיִּשְׁבְּחוּ וַיִּפְאֲרוּ וַיְרוֹמְמוּ וַיַּעֲרִיצוּ וַיִּקְדְּשׁוּ וַיִּמְלִיכוּ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ מְלַכְנוּ, כִּי לֵךְ טוֹב לְהוֹדוֹת וּלְשַׁבַּח נְאֻהָ לְזִמְרָה, כִּי מַעוֹלָם וְעַד עוֹלָם אֶתְּהַלְּלֵנוּ אֵל. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, מֶלֶךְ מְהֵלֵל בְּתִשְׁבְּחוֹת.

כּוֹס רְבִיעִי

“I shall take you to Me for a people and I shall be a God to you; and you shall know that I am Hashem your God, Who takes you out from under the burdens of Egypt.” (6:7)

This is one of the “Four Expressions of Redemption” for which we drink four cups of wine at the *Seder*. Specifically, the Sages say that this verse alludes to the giving of the Torah.

R’ Yitzchak Arieli z”l (1896-1974) writes: We learn from here that our existence as a people depends on our acceptance of the Torah, and only through the Torah are we called “G-d’s nation.” The Biblical Ruth recognized this when she converted to Judaism. Thus, the *Gemara* (*Yevamot* 47b) teaches that Ruth’s statement (*Ruth* 1:16), “Your people are my people,” was responding to Naomi’s attempt to

dissuade her from converting, saying, “We have 613 commandments.” It is our Torah and *mitzvot* that define us as a people.

Yet, there is a fifth Expression of Redemption, one which is not represented by a cup of wine. This is (*Shmot* 6:8): “והבאתי / I shall bring you to the land about which I raised My hand to give it to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov; and I shall give it to you as a heritage.” Why is this Expression not represented by a cup of wine? Because it is not simply another promise like the other four Expressions; it is the ultimate goal of all of the others, and they are preparatory steps for it. (*Midrash Ariel*)

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן :

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם על הגפן ועל פרי הגפן. ועל תנובת השדה, ועל ארץ חמדה טובה ורחבה, שרצית והנחלת לאבותינו, לאכול מפרגיה ולשבוע מטובה. רחם נא יי אלהינו על ישראל עמך, ועל ירושלים עירך, ועל ציון משכן כבודך, ועל מזבחה ועל היקלך. ובנה ירושלים עיר הקדש במהרה בגמינו, והעלנו לתוכה, ושמחנו בבנינה ונאכל מפרגיה ונשבוע מטובה, ונברך עליה בקדשה ובטהרה (בשבת ורצה והחליצנו ביום השבת הזה). ושמחנו ביום חג המצות הזה. כי אתה יי טוב ומטיב לכל, ונודה לך על הארץ ועל פרי הגפן. ברוך אתה יי, על הארץ ועל פרי הגפן :

נְרָצָה

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

חסל סדור פסח כהלכתו, ככל משפטו וחקתו. פאשר זכינו לסדר אותו, כן נזכה לעשותו. זך שוכן מעונה, קומם קהל עדת מי מנה. בקרוב נהל נטעי כנה, פדוים לציון ברנה.

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם :

ויבן ויחי בנצי הלילה.”

אז רוב נסים הפלאת בלילה, בראש אשמורות זה הלילה, גר צדק נצחתו כנחלק לו לילה, ויחי בנצי הלילה.
דנת מלך גרר בחלום הלילה, הפחדת ארמי באמש לילה, וישר ישראל למלאך ויוכל לו לילה, ויחי בנצי הלילה.
זרע בכורי פתרוס מחצת בנצי הלילה, חילם לא מצאו בקומם בלילה, טיסת נגיד חרשת סלית בכוכבי לילה, ויחי בנצי הלילה.
יעץ מחרף לנופף אווי, הובשת פגרו בלילה, כרע בל ומצבו באישון לילה, לאיש חמודות נגלה רז חזות לילה, ויחי בנצי הלילה.
משתכר בכלי קדש נהרג בו בלילה, נושע מבזר אריות פותר בעתותי לילה. שנאה נטר אגגי וכתב ספרים לילה, ויחי בנצי הלילה.
עוררת נחמד עליו בנדד שנת לילה, פירה תדרוך לשומר מה מלילה, צרח כשמר ושח אתא בקר וגם לילה, ויחי בנצי הלילה.

קרוב יום אשר הוא לא יום ולא לילה, רם הודע פי לך היום אף לך הלילה, שומרים הפקד לעירך כל היום וכל הלילה, תאיר פאור יום חשפת לילה, ויחי בנצי הלילה :

בליל סדר שני

ויבכו "ואמרתם זבח פסח".

אמץ גבורותיך הפלאה בפסח, בראש כל מועדות נשאת פסח, גלית לאזרחי חצות ליל פסח, ואמרתם זבח פסח. דלתיו דפקת כחם היום בפסח, הסעיד נוצצים עגות מצות בפסח, ואל הבקר רץ זכר לשור ערף פסח, ואמרתם זבח פסח.

זעמו סדומים ולהטו באש בפסח, חלץ לוט מהם, ומצות אפה בקץ פסח, טאטאת אדמת מן ונף בעברך בפסח, ואמרתם זבח פסח.

יה, ראש כל און מחצת בליל שמור פסח, כביר, על בן בכור פסחת בדם פסח, לבלתי תת משחית לבא בפתחי בפסח, ואמרתם זבח פסח.

מסגרת סגרה בעתותי פסח, נשמדה מדון בצליל שעורי עמר פסח, שרפו משמני פול ולוד ביקד יקוד פסח, ואמרתם זבח פסח.

עוד היום בנב לעמוד, עד געה עונת פסח, פס יד פתבה לקעקע ציל בפסח, צפה הצפית ערוף השלחן, בפסח, ואמרתם זבח פסח.

קהל כנסה הדסה צום לשלש בפסח, ראש מבית רשע מחצת בעץ חמשים בפסח, שתי אלה רגע, תביא לעוצית בפסח, תעוז ידך ותרום מינדך, כליל התקדש חג פסח, ואמרתם זבח פסח.

כי לו נאה, כי לו נאה.

אדיר במלוכה, בחור פהלקה, גדוידו יאמרו לו: לך ולך, לך פי לך, לך אף לך, לך יי הממלכה. כי לו נאה, כי לו נאה.

דגול במלוכה, הדור פהלקה, ותיקיו יאמרו לו: לך ולך, לך פי לך, לך אף לך, לך יי הממלכה. כי לו נאה, כי לו נאה.

זכאי במלוכה, חסין פהלקה, טפסריו יאמרו לו: לך ולך, לך פי לך, לך אף לך, לך יי הממלכה. כי לו נאה, כי לו נאה.

יחיד במלוכה, כביר פהלקה, למוידו יאמרו לו: לך ולך, לך פי לך, לך אף לך, לך יי הממלכה. כי לו נאה, כי לו נאה.

מושל במלוכה, נורא פהלקה, סביבו יאמרו לו: לך ולך, לך פי לך, לך אף לך, לך יי הממלכה. כי לו נאה, כי לו נאה.

ענו במלוכה, פודה פהלקה, צדיקיו יאמרו לו: לך ולך, לך פי לך, לך אף לך, לך יי הממלכה. כי לו נאה, כי לו נאה.

קדוש במלוכה, רחום פהלקה, שנאניו יאמרו לו: לך ולך, לך פי לך, לך אף לך, לך יי הממלכה. כי לו נאה, כי לו נאה.

תקיף במלוכה, תומך פהלקה, תמימיו יאמרו לו: לך ולך, לך פי לך, לך אף לך, לך יי הממלכה. כי לו נאה, כי לו נאה.

אדיר הוא,

בנה ביתו בקרוב, במהרה במהרה, בנימנו בקרוב. אל בנה, בנה ביתך בקרוב.

בחור הוא, גדול הוא, דגול הוא, בנה ביתו בקרוב, במהרה במהרה, בנימנו בקרוב. אל בנה, אל בנה, בנה ביתך בקרוב.

הדור הוא, ותיק הוא, זכאי הוא, חסיד הוא, יבנה ביתו בקרוב, במהרה במהרה, בלמינו בקרוב. אל בנה, אל בנה, בנה ביתך בקרוב.

טהור הוא, יחיד הוא, כביר הוא, למוד הוא, מלך הוא, נורא הוא, סגיב הוא, עוזו הוא, פודה הוא, צדיק הוא, יבנה ביתו בקרוב, במהרה במהרה, בלמינו בקרוב. אל בנה, אל בנה, בנה ביתך בקרוב.

קדוש הוא, רחום הוא, שדי הוא, תקיף הוא, יבנה ביתו בקרוב, במהרה במהרה, בלמינו בקרוב. אל בנה, אל בנה, בנה ביתך בקרוב.

אחד מי יודע?

אחד אני יודע: אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

שנים מי יודע? שנים אני יודע: שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

שלושה מי יודע? שלושה אני יודע: שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

ארבע מי יודע? ארבע אני יודע: ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

חמשה מי יודע? חמשה אני יודע: חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

ששה מי יודע? ששה אני יודע: ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

שבעה מי יודע? שבעה אני יודע: שבעה ימי שבתא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

שמונה מי יודע? שמונה אני יודע: שמונה ימי מילה, שבעה ימי שבתא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

תשעה מי יודע? תשעה אני יודע: תשעה ירחי לדה, שמונה ימי מילה, שבעה ימי שבתא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

עשרה מי יודע? עשרה אני יודע: עשרה דבריא, תשעה ירחי לדה, שמונה ימי מילה, שבעה ימי שבתא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

אחד עשר מי יודע? אחד עשר אני יודע: אחד עשר כוכביא, עשרה דבריא, תשעה ירחי לדה, שמונה ימי מילה, שבעה ימי שבתא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

שנים עשר מי יודע? שנים עשר אני יודע: שנים עשר שבטא, אחד עשר כוכביא, עשרה דבריא, תשעה ירחי לדה, שמונה ימי מילה, שבעה ימי שבתא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

שלושה עשר מי יודע? שלושה עשר אני יודע: שלושה עשר מדיא, שנים עשר שבטא, אחד עשר כוכביא, עשרה דבריא, תשעה ירחי לדה, שמונה ימי מילה, שבעה ימי שבתא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

חד גדא, חד גדא

דזבין אבא בתרי זוזי, חד גדא, חד גדא.

ואתא שונרא, ואכלה לגדא, דזבין אבא בתרי זוזי, חד גדא, חד גדא.

ואתא כלבא, ונשך לשונרא, דאכלה לגדא, דזבין אבא בתרי זוזי, חד גדא, חד גדא.

וְאֵתָא חוּטְרָא, וְהֵפֵה לְכַלְבָּא, דְּנִשְׁפֵּי לְשׁוּנְרָא, דְּאֶכְלָה לְגַדְנָא, דְּזַבְיֵן אַבָּא בְּתַרֵי זױזֵי, חַד גְּדַנְא, חַד גְּדַנְא.

וְאֵתָא נוּרָא, וְשָׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהֵפֵה לְכַלְבָּא, דְּנִשְׁפֵּי לְשׁוּנְרָא, דְּאֶכְלָה לְגַדְנָא, דְּזַבְיֵן אַבָּא בְּתַרֵי זױזֵי, חַד גְּדַנְא, חַד גְּדַנְא.

וְאֵתָא מְיָא, וְכַבֵּה לְנוּרָא, דְּשָׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהֵפֵה לְכַלְבָּא, דְּנִשְׁפֵּי לְשׁוּנְרָא, דְּאֶכְלָה לְגַדְנָא, דְּזַבְיֵן אַבָּא בְּתַרֵי זױזֵי, חַד גְּדַנְא, חַד גְּדַנְא.

וְאֵתָא תּוּרָא, וְשִׁתָּא לְמְיָא, דְּכַבֵּה לְנוּרָא, דְּשָׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהֵפֵה לְכַלְבָּא, דְּנִשְׁפֵּי לְשׁוּנְרָא, דְּאֶכְלָה לְגַדְנָא, דְּזַבְיֵן אַבָּא בְּתַרֵי זױזֵי, חַד גְּדַנְא, חַד גְּדַנְא.

וְאֵתָא הַשׁוּחַט, וְשַׁחַט לְתּוּרָא, דְּשִׁתָּא לְמְיָא, דְּכַבֵּה לְנוּרָא, דְּשָׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהֵפֵה לְכַלְבָּא, דְּנִשְׁפֵּי לְשׁוּנְרָא, דְּאֶכְלָה לְגַדְנָא, דְּזַבְיֵן אַבָּא בְּתַרֵי זױזֵי, חַד גְּדַנְא, חַד גְּדַנְא.

וְאֵתָא מְלֵאךְ הַמְּוֹת, וְשַׁחַט לְשׁוּחַט, דְּשַׁחַט לְתּוּרָא, דְּשִׁתָּא לְמְיָא, דְּכַבֵּה לְנוּרָא, דְּשָׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהֵפֵה לְכַלְבָּא, דְּנִשְׁפֵּי לְשׁוּנְרָא, דְּאֶכְלָה לְגַדְנָא, דְּזַבְיֵן אַבָּא בְּתַרֵי זױזֵי, חַד גְּדַנְא, חַד גְּדַנְא.

וְאֵתָא הַקְּדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, וְשַׁחַט לְמְלֵאךְ הַמְּוֹת, דְּשַׁחַט לְשׁוּחַט, דְּשַׁחַט לְתּוּרָא, דְּשִׁתָּא לְמְיָא, דְּכַבֵּה לְנוּרָא, דְּשָׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהֵפֵה לְכַלְבָּא, דְּנִשְׁפֵּי לְשׁוּנְרָא, דְּאֶכְלָה לְגַדְנָא, דְּזַבְיֵן אַבָּא בְּתַרֵי זױזֵי, חַד גְּדַנְא, חַד גְּדַנְא.

חַד גְּדַנְא, חַד גְּדַנְא.

R' Mordechai Twersky, the *Maggid* of Chernobyl *z"l* (died 1838) explained this song as follows:

The word “*gadya*” / “*kid*” is related to “*Haggadah*” / “statement.” “*Chad gadya, chad gadya,*” refers to two statements, specifically, the first two of the Ten Commandments: “I am *Hashem*” and “You shall not have other gods.” These two statements encompass all of the *mitzvot*; “I am *Hashem*” encapsulates all of the positive commandments, and “You shall not have other gods,” all of the negative commandments.

“That father sold” alludes to the Sages’ teaching that the Torah is unlike any other acquisition. Ordinarily, when one sells an object, the seller’s connection to the object ends. Not so, however, when *Hashem* “sold” us the Torah; He, our Father, sold Himself to us with the Torah. In other words, through the Torah, one connects himself to *Hashem*.

However, one who wants to come close to *Hashem* and His Torah must experience yearnings / *kissufim* for that goal. This is alluded to by the “two *zuz*,” as those coins are made of silver / *kesef*.

Moreover, it is not enough to yearn for *Hashem* and His Torah. One must also hate evil, i.e., he must be a “*sonai ra*.” This is alluded to by the cat (or weasel), referred to in the song as a “*shunra*.” Of course, the *yetzer hara* will not stand by idly while a person attains these spiritual accomplishments. Rather, the *yetzer hara*, represented by the *kalba* / dog, will attack the *shunra*.

When the *yetzer hara* threatens to defeat a person, the surest way to prevail is to strengthen one’s *emunah* / faith. This is the *chutra* / the staff on which one can lean and with which one can hit the dog, i.e., the *yetzer hara*. However, the *yetzer hara* is tenacious and does not give up easily. Thus, the *nura* / fire of the *yetzer hara* may burn the staff of *emunah*.

What should one do to protect himself? Study Torah, which is likened throughout rabbinic literature to *maya* / water.

Our sages teach that the Torah can be an elixir of life if one studies it with the proper motivation, but it can be poisonous if one approaches it with the wrong intentions, for example, if one studies Torah so that he can attack Torah scholars on their own ground. The *tora* / ox that drinks the water in the song represents the animal that one can become if he misuses the Torah. [Ed. Note: The Aramaic word “*tora*,” meaning ox, is related to the Hebrew word “*shor*,” but is unrelated to the Hebrew word “Torah.”]

The *shochet* who slaughters the ox represents one’s slaughtering of the *yetzer hara* that caused him to act like an animal. However, the “angel of death” (who is one and the same with the *yetzer hara*)

may slaughter the *shochet*, i.e., it may cause a person to act hypocritically. This is alluded to by the *Gemara's* teaching that one who slaughters an animal on *Shabbat* is liable for the act of painting (i.e., painting the skin of the animal with the animal's blood). The word “*tzavua*” / “painted” also means “hypocrite.”

In the end, however, *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* / The Holy One Himself will destroy the angel of death and the *yetzer hara*. (*Likkutei Torah*)



R' Yitzchak Ze'ev Soloveitchik z"l (the *Brisker Rav*; died 1959) used to say: One must take care to nap on *Erev Pesach* so that he can stay awake all night relating the story of the Exodus. He used to wonder aloud: “Why are so many people meticulous to stay awake on *Shavuot* night, which is merely a custom, while they neglect the *halachah* / law that one should try to stay awake all of *Pesach* night?” (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Mi'Bet Halevi* p. 34)