בס״ד

THE KOL HATORAH KULAH HAGGADAH

SHORT VORTS FOR THE PESACH SEDER

FROM VARIOUS
RABBANIM AND MECHANCHOT



About Us

We are happy to bring you this Haggadah companion booklet that was put together by Kol Hatorah Kulah.

Kol Hatorah Kulah set out to provide inspirational Torah content daily through recordings that are 5 minutes or less. Over the course of its existence it has broadened to reach thousands across the world. After recently launching its website, Kol Hatorah Kulah began to brainstorm ways to reach even more people in order to bring them meaningful Divrei Torah.

We are glad to be able to bring you this booklet of uplifting vorts for the Pesach Seder.

The goal of this booklet, through the aforementioned vision, is to bring you meaningful Divrei Torah for the Seder in a “short vort” format. As each Dvar Torah is sorted by its order in the Seder, it will be easy to follow along with your Haggadah.

The booklet is filled with ideas from Rabbanim and Mechanchot from all over the world, and we thank them for taking the time to share their ideas with us.

We hope that The Kol Hatorah Kulah Haggadah will add value and inspiration to your Seder. If you have any comments or questions to share, please feel free to reach out to us via email at PesachDivreiTorah@gmail.com

For more information about Kol Hatorah Kulah, please visit kolhatorahkulah.com

Thank you and have a wonderful Pesach.

קול התורה כולה
KOL HATORAH KULAH
5 Minutes or Less

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לשנה הבא בירושלים!

בדיקת חמץ

Burn the Candle

- Rabbi Michael Hoenig

During bedikat chametz, the custom is to burn the candle, feather, and spoon upon the completion of the search. The Belzer Rabbi asks: I can understand burning the spoon and feather; they came into contact with the chametz. But why are we burning the candle? He explains that chametz represents chisaron and pegam. It represents what is lacking, the flaws, and the negative. The candle was used as a vehicle to search out the negative. It searched all the cracks and crevices. Therefore, we burn the candle, as we want to eradicate the negative attitude and mindset from our midst. We should all have the strength and fortitude to burn our personal candles that search for negativity and view the world in a much more positive and wholesome light.

קדש

Break Free

- Rabbi Ashie Schreier

While every שבת and טוב יום we make קידוש, on the סדר night it is a little bit different. The Rabbis teach us that the 4 cups we drink at the סדר correspond to the 4 languages of redemption which are mentioned in the תורה regarding our exodus from מצרים. קידוש, which is the first cup, relates to the phrase in the תורה of "והוצאתי אותם מתחת סבלות מצרים" (And I will take them out from the suffering of מצרים). What is this referring to? What exactly are we remembering here?

Hashem was ready to take us out of מצרים, but there was something which needed to be dealt with before any of that can take place. We were still סובל, tolerant. We accepted where we were, and that we were slaves, and we were fine with it. Before anything else could happen, we needed to be taken out מתחת סבלות מצרים. We needed to be reminded that we are the chosen people! We are a ממלכת כהנים וגוי קדוש. We deserve better and we can be better! That is what we are remembering. Each year we are required to feel as though we are leaving מצרים. Our relationship with יציאת מצרים is one where we break away from being 'slaves' to our יצר הרע, desires and temptations. The first step in breaking free is believing that we can do it. As we say קידוש, and begin the sanctity of the night, let's keep this message in mind and be זוכה to our very own יציאת מצרים.

Unconditional Giving

- Rabbi Rafi Rosenblum

The Avnei Nezer writes that at the time of yetzias Mitzrayim the Jews were not on a very high spiritual level, as we know that they were on the 49th level of tumah when Hashem said we have to get them out. So what ended up happening? Hashem said that even though they didn't

deserve it, I am going to take them out anyway even without the zechuyos that they needed, as the pasuk says, “they were naked of mitzvos.”

This is something that we can tap into every year- that’s why we say ‘kadeish, urchatz’. Normally to tap into kedusha we need to wash first and then we can become holy. Just like by yetzias Mitzrayim Hashem took them out without being worthy, He was mekadesh them without the rachatz, so too at the seder we have the koach of kadeish and then urchatz. We get the koach to become sanctified before we even wash our hands.

The Kedushas Levi says that this is also pshat in the pasuk “pasach Hashem al hapesach” that Hashem passed over the door during makkas b’choros. Normally we say that in order for us to get siyata dishmaya we need to start the opening. The medrish in Shir Hashirim says that if you open up an opening the size of a needle then Hashem will open it up to a huge opening. We need to do a little and then Hashem will do the rest. However, when it comes to Pesach, Hashem passes over the opening and we don’t even need to do anything in order for Hashem to help us.

ורחץ

Washing Our Hands for Geula

- Rabbi Ashie Schreier

This year in specific, ורחץ takes on a whole new level of importance. People are saying because of fear of the virus, ורחץ should be after every step in the סדר! We should always be washing our hands! However, we know that this washing of our hands is not for sanitary purposes, rather the הלכה is that any time we have a dipping we have a נטילת ידים. Yet, during the rest of the year, most do not have the practice to wash at every dipping. The ט"ז and many others ask, why on סדר night are we suddenly מקפיד on this הלכה? What are we trying to accomplish? The נצי"ב explains that this נטילת ידים is really for times when we are strict on the laws of purity, which is only when we have the בית המקדש. While we still don’t have the בית המקדש, the סדר night is different. We are trying to relive the ultimate סדר experience, which is when the בית המקדש was around. We are striving to connect to ה׳ in the ultimate way, so we act as if we have the laws of purity and make sure to wash at ורחץ for the dipping. At this סדר, during this difficult time, our relationship with גאולה is unique. We can feel it so much more than ever before. The whole world has turned upside down, and having a full גאולה is not as distant as we may have once thought. As we go through the steps of the סדר, we should keep this goal in mind and hopefully truly be able to live out the words of לשנה הבאה בירושלים.

כרפס

The Taste that We Should Make Last

- Rabbi Yisrael Feld

The reason we eat מָרוֹר is to remind us of the afflictions that our forefathers endured while they were in Egypt. In Rabbi Nebenzhal’s Haggadah, on page קה, he asks if that is the case, why did the generation who was leaving Egypt have to eat מָרוֹר? They certainly already

knew what happened - as they went through it themselves! The gemara in Rosh Hashana daf 11 says that the Jews in Egypt stopped doing their slave work on ראש השנה, and now, at the time of Pesach, over half a year passed without them doing work. Rabbi Nebenzhal explains that while this time period may seem short and insignificant, the Jews almost forgot the pain that they suffered, and had to remind themselves again with the מָרוֹר. This is such a powerful lesson- not just in regards to moments of hardship, but also when we have inspirational or motivational moments in our lives that can and should change us, that unfortunately, over time, fizzle out. As time passes, we lose that feeling and begin to forget what we went through- for good and for bad. We need to act on these moments immediately and place reminders in our lives, just like the Jews who left Egypt did with the מָרוֹר. This idea can clearly be seen in Maggid. The topic of Marror is followed by בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיָּב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יָצָא מִמִּצְרַיִם - "in each generation, everyone needs to see himself as he was in מִצְרַיִם." The רמב"ם in his haggadah changes the word לִרְאוֹת - "to see," to להראות - "to show," meaning every generation needs to act, or show, that they were in מִצְרַיִם. Not simply *see* themselves as if they were there, but rather *show* that they were! This is the key to keeping inspiration, or in the case of the מרור, the bitter feeling going. When the feeling turns into a memory, you lose the inspiration, but if you can keep it in action, you can maintain that feeling forever.

Making Everything We Do Significant

- Rabbi David Schlusselberg

The Hagadah Asaprah Kivodcha notes that it's strange, of course, that we begin our meal by having a piece of potato or parsley. He explains that typically, we go right to bread, the most important food in halacha. However, specifically on the night of the seder, we take a simple mundane food to eat. The reason for this is to show that every small thing has significance, and even on the night of the year where you would think we should focus only on the big things, we take a simple food and uplift it.

The Answer for Karpas

- Rabbi Yoseph Silverman

The Mishna in Pesachim instructs us to eat a vegetable even before eating the matzah and maror on the seder night. The Gemara explains that the eating (or dipping) of this vegetable is meant to elicit a reaction and question from the children. In fact, this is expressed in the 3rd question of the Ma Nishtana; why on this night do we dip two times? What is the answer to this question? Why did Chazal choose to challenge the children specifically by way of dipping and eating a vegetable before the main meal? Various answers are given. One profound answer, that of the Pri Chadash, is cited by Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Rimon in his Haggadah. The Pri Chadash first quotes various Acharonim who offer specific symbolisms of karpas. The Pri Chadash himself, however, assigns no inherent reason as to why this specific action is done. Rather, he explains that the sole motivation is to do something peculiar that will puzzle the children. This will lead them to ask not only about this unique action but will bring about further questions as well.

This amazing lesson in pedagogy shows the necessity to create an atmosphere where children feel comfortable asking questions, and one where their curiosity can be a mechanism for teaching them the ikrei hadas.

יחץ

Feeling Another's Pain

- Rabbi Moshe Don Kestenbaum

We break the middle matzah and immediately follow with the "הא לחמא עניא". According to one explanation, the three matzos correspond to Kohen, Levi, and Yisroel. It is peculiar, then, to break the middle matzah, as the tribe of Levi was not even enslaved in Egypt. The leader of the Jewish people, Moshe Rabbeinu from Shevet Levi, was chosen, because despite growing up in the comfort of the palace, he went out and felt the pain of his brethren. Perhaps we purposely break the middle matzah to show that even though the members of Levi did not physically suffer, they too endured the pain of Klal Yisroel and felt broken.

This idea lends itself to being a most appropriate introduction to הא לחמא עניא. Just like Moshe Rabbeinu and Shevet Levi felt the pain of their brothers, we too do the same today as we proclaim, כל דכפין ייתי וייכל, כל דצריך ייתי ויפסח, anyone that is hungry should come and join. Yes, it is too late now to actually call in the guests, but it is not too late to feel the pain of those suffering and commit ourselves to do more for others!

Symbolism of the Matza

- Rabbi Joshua Eisenberg

R' Shimon Schwab depicts the broken Matzah pieces as a Mashal (parable) for the two worlds- the small piece representing the finite Olam HaZeh (This World), and the hidden, larger piece, or the Afikoman, representing the eternal Olam HaBa (the World to Come). The common tradition is for children to grab the Afikoman and hide it away until rewarded, but what does any of this mean to us?

The symbolism of the Afikoman in combination with this tradition may come to teach us a lesson as to how one must long for and actively toil for our respective portions in the World to Come. Like a stubborn and tenacious child who is focused on what he wants and will stop at nothing until he gets it, we must understand the need for our spiritual redemption and just snag it away as our spiritual life depends on it. Whether grabbing hold of that Geulah means putting in extra hours of Torah learning, Chessed for the community, or Davening for oneself and Klal Yisrael, one must find that youthful energy of wanting inside oneself and just seize the golden opportunities which will generate that Geulah!

The Broken Matzah: The Key to the Seder

- Rabbi Ari Zahtz

Why do we break the matzah in half instead of simply starting with a broken piece? The Spinker Rebbe shares a mashal about Yachatz: There were two lifelong friends who had to separate after a lifetime together. Before parting from each other, they met up, each shared a

picture of themselves together with the other, and tore each picture in half. Each of them then took half of their picture and half of the other's to remember that even when they are far apart they are still connected.

This is what Yachatz is all about- even though we are telling over the story of Geulas Mitzrayim, we are still in Galus and we don't always see Hashem clearly or feel His presence in our lives. We break the matzah in half and hide the other half away for the afikomen. Right now we don't see the hand of Hashem clearly, we don't understand how Hashem runs the world while He hides himself, but we do know that His hand is there, hidden away like that piece of afikomen. And we can walk through the challenges of this world a little easier knowing that we are on the path to redemption with Him guiding us from His hidden abode as we march with full emunah to the time of Geulah, when the matzah will be whole again and we will see His Glory clearly.

מגיד

A Nation is Born

- Rabbi Yoni Levin

There is a fascinating idea discussed by the חתם סופר. Why is there no bracha for the mitzvah of סיפור יציאת מצרים? Some give the answer that the bracha of אשר גאלנו at the end of מגיד serves as the bracha for this mitzvah. But if this is the case, then why do we recite the bracha at the end of מגיד? Don't we always say the bracha before we perform the mitzvah? The חתם סופר explains that in the הגדה we are מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח, we start with the negative and end off with praise. The הגדה says that a person has an obligation to view himself as if he has gone through שיעבוד מצרים and יציאת מצרים. At the beginning of the Seder he is still in מצרים, he is an עובד עבודה זרה. This is the גנות. As he makes his way through the Seder, he is going through some form of גירות. When someone is becoming a גר, he has to go to the מקוה, but he cannot make the bracha before טבילה because he is not a Jew yet. It is only after he immerses in the מקוה that he says the bracha. The same is true for us at our own Pesach Seder. Throughout the Seder we are going through the process of גירות and becoming עובדי ה׳ and we can only recite the bracha on the מצוה of סיפור יציאת מצרים after we have left מצרים. This is the שבח. As we are living in these difficult times of גלות we are anticipating the מסיים בשבח and we hope and pray that the גאולה comes soon with the ביאת גואל צדק במהרה בימינו אמן ואמן!

הא לחמא עניא

Freedom of the Mind

- Rabbi Dani Abell

Maggid is the central part of the Pesach Seder- we retell the story and highlight the miracles. One would think that Maggid would begin with something thrilling, a story that would catch everyone's attention, but the haggadah takes a different approach. The first paragraph of maggid seems bizarre. We speak about the "bread of affliction" that our forefathers ate in

mitzrayim and end with a prayer asking that next year we should be in the land of Israel. Why did the haggadah begin with this strange introduction? What lessons is it trying to convey?

The Rambam tells us that the purpose of the seder is not only to tell over what happened as we left mitzrayim, but to feel as if, on this night, we ourselves are leaving mitzrayim, like we are free men and no longer slaves. For some this was a daunting task. How were the Jews of the inquisition, crusades, and holocaust able to feel free on this night while they were being persecuted? How were the generations of the churban able to feel like the chosen nation as they saw our holy Bais Hamikdash burning? Rabbi Menachem Genack brings a beautiful parable about a man who was in jail serving a life sentence. This man was told that tomorrow he was going to be set free and be reunited with his family. Although this man was still behind bars and wearing his prison clothing, in his mind he was already a free man because he knew that in a few hours all his misery was going to end. He then introduces us to another man who is living the life of freedom and riches. This man lives in a mansion and has every luxury in the world. One day this man gets a knock on his door and is told by the police that tomorrow you are going to jail for the rest of your life. Although this man is currently in the safety of his house and surrounded by all his riches, in his mind he is in jail because he knows that in a few hours all his misery will begin.

We see that freedom is not dependent on your current situation, rather it is all about where your mind is. As we enter into the night of freedom, the haggadah demands from us to get into the proper mindset. The haggadah realized that so many Jews would be crippled by the pains of exile and would not be able to see themselves as free men. Maggid therefore begins with a proclamation of: you may have bread of affliction before you, you may be drowning in the hardships of exile, but just realize you are still a free man because next year you will be in Yerushalayim.

No Jew Will Be Left Behind

- Rabbi Yisrael Feld

Rav Bengus points out in his haggadah that there's a beautiful message in the words of Ha Lachma Anya. The Jews were being taken out of Mitzrayim, but it wasn't that one Jew was ready and the other ones weren't. They waited for everyone to be ready on their own level to be taken out. Although Hashem saved us when we were at such a low level of tumah, those Jews who were ready earlier still had to wait for everyone else. We were one nation and we weren't leaving without anybody. If you look at the words of Ha Lachma Anya, this is why we say the words, "כָּל דִכְפִין יֵיתֵי וְיֵיכֹל, כָּל דִצְרִיךְ יֵיתֵי וְיִפְסַח." Anyone who needs financial help, come in and join us, and all those who need spiritual help, come in. Any Jew, whether they need financial, physical or spiritual help, we are all waiting for you. There is no differentiation between us on seder night, we are one nation. At Har Sinai, we camped there "K'ish echad B'lev echad," we had unity. The whole idea that started our geula process and eventually ended with us receiving the Torah was the idea of unity. Ha Lachma Anya is an invitation to all Jews. We invite everyone on seder night to our meal no matter what. If you are a Jew, you are invited. Just like every Jew left Mitzrayim together, so too we will all enter the next geulah together as well.

The Meaning of הא לחמא עניא

- Rabbi Shimon Isaacson

In the beginning of "Maggid" we recite the very enigmatic paragraph of הא לחמא עניא. Why is this paragraph in Aramaic whereas the rest of the Haggadah is in Hebrew? Why are we inviting people to come and eat with us when we are already sitting at the Seder table? What is the significance of the statement השתא הכא, לשנה הבאה בארעא דישראל – now we are here, next year we should be privileged to be in the land of Israel?

We are about to start Maggid and celebrate the Geula. But wait! We still find ourselves in galut. Even though we are here to celebrate and commemorate the Geula, there is something fundamentally off. We should be in the Beit HaMikdash bringing the Korban Pesach, yet we are not. Now at the beginning of the Seder we need to understand that things are not (yet) perfect. Therefore, this paragraph is recited in Aramaic, the Babylonian tongue to remind us of our exile. If we had the Korban Pesach we could not be inviting guests now at the Seder – you need to be assigned to the Korban in advance. So we are reminded that we are in galut and this is not the pristine Seder with a Korban Pesach. And we end this paragraph with a prayer that – השתא הכא, לשנה הבאה בארעא דישראל. May we merit that this Nissan will once again be a chodesh of true Geula for the Jewish people and the world.

Your Home is Really Your Shul

- Rabbi Shlomo Landau

השתא הכא לשנה בארעא דישראל now we are "here" next year in Eretz Yisroel. There is an almost prophetic explanation from the Chasam Sofer on this line in הא לחמא עניא. He writes that the Gemara in Maseches Megillah states that when Mashiach comes, the Shuls and Batei Midrash in Chutz La'aretz will be transplanted to Eretz Yisrael. He adds that any Jewish home that is saturated with teachings and behaviors of Emunah, Torah and tefillah will also join the ranks of Shuls and yeshivos and be firmly transplanted in Eretz Yisrael. With this novel idea, he explains the words השתא הכא לשנה בארעא דישראל Now we are "here", next year in Eretz Yisroel quite literally. Now, we are here in our homes, transmitting profound lessons of Emunah and bitachon at our personal seder, therefore, next year we will merit to have our home transplanted to Eretz Yisrael! This remarkable chiddush is so uplifting in light of the circumstances in which our homes have become our shuls and batei midrash. Adding our heartfelt tefillos and rigorous schedule of Torah study to our seder experience of conveying Emunah and bitachon will almost certainly ensure that our homes will be firmly established in Eretz Yisrael as Mashiach quickly arrives.

מה נשתנה

How Will You Be Different After This Night?

- Rabbi Efrem Goldberg

Every child knows the most exciting part of Leil Haseder is when we go around the table in age order and sing the Ma Nishtana- why is this night different from all other nights? Rav Avrohom Schorr in his Haggadah (Halekach V'halibuv) says that in fact we are supposed to sing a different question - not מה נשתנה הלילה הזה- what makes this night different from all other

nights, but מה נשתנה על ידי הלילה הזה- what will be different because of tonight? How will this special night transform me and leave me changed? How will it elevate me and instill a sense of kedusha and holiness in me? It's a night of miracles, revelation, and faith and therefore the Sfas Emes says that we need to become different through the night, not state that the night is simply different than all other nights.

The Light for the Rest of the Year

- Rabbi Eli Belizon

The Vilna Gaon points out that during מה נשתנה we ask ״מה נשתנה הלילה **הזה**״ when really the correct grammar should have been ״הלילה **הזאת**״ - because ״זה״ is in לשון זכר, but is referring to ״הלילה״ which is לשון נקבה. Why, then, do we say ״זה״ instead of correctly saying ״זאת?״

He explains that the seder night is really like a יום. Although we partake in the סדר at night, we don't treat it like night because it is filled with so much light and sparks of קדושה that the night כביוכל transforms into a יום for us! On all other ימים טובים we perform the main מצוות during the day, but on פסח we are able to perform them at night. The ליל הסדר gives us the ability to turn the לילה into יום. That is why the children ask ״מה נשתנה הלילה **הזה**״ - because ״הזה״ is really going on the hidden ״יום״ in the לילה, which is לשון זכר. It is that light of day that we are supposed to experience during the ליל הסדר that can carry us throughout the rest of the year, even if we ושלום on find ourselves in dark times.

מעשה ברבי אליעזר

Be the R' Akiva at your Seder

- Rabbi Shalom Baum

What were all of these chachomim doing in Bnei Brak? The Rav (Rav Yosef Dov HaLevi Soloveitchik) discusses this in the haggadah put together by his grandson שיח הגרי״ד. He says that the only one who actually lived in Bnei Brak from the entire group was Rebbe Akiva. There are many explanations given as to the relevance of this. The Rav says that this is a fulfillment of "kulanu chachamim u'nevonim" that even people who are learned need to make sure that they can find people that they can speak to and relate to at the seder. It isn't just a night of "v'higadita l'bincha" all of us have to be stimulated, so they went to Rebbe Akiva to be stimulated.

But there is a beautiful teaching in the Leil Shimurim Haggadah based on the teachings of the Aruch Hashulchan. We know from so many different places that Rebbe Akiva was what we call today an "eternal optimist". He had so many challenges in his life and yet was able to overcome them to become a leader of Klal Yisrael. He was the leading talmid chacham and teacher, and even when he was walking to his death he was able to find something positive. Therefore, at a precarious time in Jewish History they went to be with the most positive person. They understood that at times of challenge we don't need more negativity, rather we need to be around positive people.

Each of us has that opportunity this year at the seder. We can be on our own level the Rebbe Akiva of our seder. When people start talking about negativity of any sort, we can

respectfully try to pivot and talk about the beauty of the world, the kedusha of the night and the yom tov as a whole, and the beauty of family coming together.

Hashem is With Us at Our Seder

- Rabbi Eli Belizon

Maggid starts with a story about a few rabbis who came together to have seder until one of their talmidim abruptly came in to tell them that it was time for קריאת שמע של שחרית. Wouldn't this be a little embarrassing to the Rabbeim? Did the Rabbis not realize what time it was? Sometimes you could have such a holy night that you don't even realize that it's dark outside. You have brought in so much light by connecting to Hashem that it transforms you to enter into a different reality. This new reality is not bound by time. In Judaism we aren't bound by time, we don't follow the regular rules, to the point that our "day" starts at nightfall. When you get into a world of kedusha you can see light even in the darkest of times.

The ultimate way for us to accomplish seeing that light is by being able to "meet" Hakadosh Baruch Hu. The Tiferes Shlomo (Radomsker Rebbe זצ״ל) writes that if you look in the perek of Arvei Psachim where it discusses the order of things that go on at the seder. The mishnayos speak about bringing the cup before the ba'al habayis and then they fill it up for him. But the Radomsker points out that there is a switch in the wording - you pour for the ba'al habayis, but Hashem is sitting at each of our sedarim, it's not the cup that is brought to our seder, but rather what really is happening is that Hashem is brought to our seder. It's not easy to bring Hashem to our seder, it sounds like something that would be hard to connect to. How could Hashem really be sitting at my seder? This gives us an unbelievable opportunity to connect with hashem in the most genuine way. When we realize that this night has the ability for us to meet Hashem and build a connection with Him we can achieve greatness.

Being the Light Within the Darkness

- Rabbi Netanel Lebowitz

We know that Pesach is a holiday that is family-oriented. The point of leil haseder is for parents to pass a mesorah of emunah in Hashem to their children. If that is the main mitzvah of the night, why were all of these Rabbanim in Bnei Brak and not with their families? It is possible that their families were in Bnei Brak as well, but we can't say that for sure. It is unclear when this paragraph was written, but because they are all Tanaim, perhaps we can suggest that this story took place during the first Pesach after the churban Beis Hamikdash. Can we imagine what it must have been like for them to have to feel as if they left Mitzrayim after such destruction? How could they feel Hashem was the redeemer after years of suffering when last year they were probably in the Beis Hamikdash bringing the korban Pesach and being Oleh Regel? The Gemara at the end of Makos tells us that many of these same Rebbeim were walking on Har Hatzofim and looked towards the desolate makom hamikdash and saw a fox running on the place where the kodesh hakodashim used to stand and began to cry over this painful sight. Rebbe Akiva started to laugh and said "now that I see that Uriyah's nevuah describing the destruction of the mikdash and foxes running around on that place came true, I know that Zechariah's nevuah which speaks about the geulah and elderly people sitting in the streets of Yerushalayim and listening and watching the joyful playing of the children there, is coming true

as well." Rav Dovid Miller points out that Rebbe Akiva's statement wasn't that Zechariah's nevuah will come true, rather that it is happening now in the present. The strength of Rebbe Akiva was that even amidst the destruction he could see geulah.

Maybe this is why the Rabbanim were in Bnei Brak. After churban Beis Hamikdash, on a night when it seemed it would be impossible to see Hashem as the redeemer, this was when they needed to be with Rebbe Akiva who would show them how to do this in the proper way. This is why the students came to tell them it was time for Kriyas Shema of Shacharis. Shacharis represents the new day, a new time, the time of redemption. They were saying now after being with Rebbe Akiva and being taught how to see Hashem even within the destruction we can be ready for the dawn of geulah and commit to Hashem by reciting Shema wholeheartedly. In this time of many challenges, we hope that Hashem will help us see how He is really in control and that there is redemption and salvation that is already in the process of happening.

The Clarity of the Day

- Rabbi Aryeh Leibowitz

The mitzvah of סיפור יציאת מצרים is designed to increase a person's knowledge of Hashem and strengthen his faith in Him (Chinuch 21). When a person delves into the details of the Exodus, he internalizes that Hashem is not only the Creator, but that He continues to interact with the world to this very day. Through retelling the overt miracles that happened in Egypt and at the Sea, a person recognizes the daily hidden miracles that touch his life on a daily basis (Ramban, Bo).

In Jewish thought, the darkness of night represents doubt and a lack of clarity. At those times, a Jew must rely on his faith. For this reason, the declaration of קבלת עול מלכות שמים encapsulated in the nighttime Shema is followed with the words אמת ואמונה. However, the light of morning represents absolute firm clarity and conviction, and hence the morning declaration of קבלת עול מלכות שמים is followed with the words אמת ויציב.

At the Bnei Brak seder hosted by R' Akiva, the great Tana'aim spent all night strengthening their knowledge of Hashem and faith in Him. This was done through the meticulous fulfillment of the mitzvah of סיפור יציאת מצרים. By the end of the Seder, their level of knowledge and faith reached unfathomable heights. Perhaps this is the intention of the Haggadah that tells how their students declared – "It is time for the morning Shema." The Tana'aim had successfully reached the absolute clarity of אמת ויציב that is represented by the morning Shema.

The Spirit of Rabbi Akiva's Seder

- Rabbi Gershon Turetsky

The Haggadah recounts the famous Seder night in B'nei Brak with the five great Rabbanim: Rebbe Akiva, Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rebbe Tarphon, and Rebbe Elazar ben Azariah. Rebbe Akiva was not the most senior Rabbi in this group – Rebbe Eliezer and Rebbe Yehoshuah were his Rabbeim! Why, then, did all of these Rabbanim travel to Rebbe Akiva's town of B'nei Brak to celebrate Leil Haseder with him? The Aruch HaShulchan answers beautifully based on the Gemara in Masechet Makkot which describes Rebbe Akiva's reaction to the sound of marching Roman troops. Upon hearing the sound of the troops, Rabbanim

began to cry while Rebbe Akiva laughed. The asked Rebbe Akiva why he is laughing and he answered that if this is the reward for those who go against the will of HaShem, how much greater will our reward be for following the will of HaShem! Rebbe Akiva was the consummate optimist, able to see a silver lining even in the direst of circumstances. This, explains the Aruch HaShulchan, was the reason these Rabbanim traveled to B'nei Brak; they wanted to be in the presence of the optimism of Rebbe Akiva, especially so soon after the Churban Beis Hamikdash. When faced with difficult circumstances we should strive to create environments of positivity for our own sake and for the sake of others, for we believe with Emunah Sheleima that better times lay ahead.

Appreciate the Process

- Rabbi Yosef Weinberger

Why does ר' אלעזר בן עזריה insist on commemorating יציאת מצרים at night (as opposed to חכמים who think we should only remember it during the day)? Perhaps the idea is that there were really two parts of the גאולה. One at night and one during the day. At night, פרעה demanded that בני ישראל leave immediately. This began the process. However, a few פסוקים later we are told that בני ישראל left "בעצם היום הזה"- in broad daylight. Meaning, the actual exodus occurred during the day. This is why the חכמים only hold of זכירת יציאת מצרים during the day. Whatever took place at night was not the complete גאולה! And yet, ר' אלעזר requires us to remember יציאת מצרים during the night, to tell us that we are supposed to cherish each stage of our redemption, not just the finish line.

This is consistent with ר' אלעזר's personal philosophy. When the חכמים offered him the position of נשיא at the age of 18, he went to consult with his wife. She suggested that he shouldn't take it because they might remove him after some time. He responded, let me have an expensive goblet today, even if it breaks tomorrow. In other words, it's worthwhile for me to take this position now, even if it doesn't work out in the end. ר' אלעזר's mindset was to appreciate each step of the process, reminiscent of his perspective on יציאת מצרים. We too should take ר' אלעזר's lesson to heart. Don't wait to celebrate at the finish line; enjoy each step for what it is and let Hashem take care of the rest.

ארבעה בנים

We Are The World

- Rabbi Aharon Ciment

The haggadah tells us "בָּרוּךְ הַמָּקוֹם, בָּרוּךְ הוּא, בָּרוּךְ שֶׁנָּתַן תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל, בָּרוּךְ הוּא." The obvious question that one could ask is that the stanza is not congruent, there should be another full "בָּרוּךְ הַמָּקוֹם, בָּרוּךְ הוּא" at the end and not just "בָּרוּךְ הוּא" just like in the beginning? The haggadah is teaching us such a valuable lesson. "בָּרוּךְ הַמָּקוֹם" represents that this is Hashem's world, He controls and runs it. But then something changed- "בָּרוּךְ שֶׁנָּתַן תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל" Hashem gave us the Torah. When Hashem gave us the Torah, everything changed - it was like Hashem gave us the keys to the world, that this was now our world, no longer Hashem's world.

We recite 26 verses of "כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ" on Shabbos and Yom Tov each representing the 26 generations of chessed that Hashem sustained the world with until Klal Yisrael accepted the Torah. Once we accepted the Torah, there was no longer a need for Hashem to sustain the world with kindness, rather we now sustain the world through maasim tovim, through limud hatorah, through mitzvos, through tefillah. It is no longer Hashem's world once Klal Yisrael took upon themselves the עול התורה. Therefore, "בָּרוּךְ הַמָּקוֹם, בָּרוּךְ הוּא" is before the Torah is given, that Hashem is blessed for sustaining the world. But once we say "בָּרוּךְ שֶׁנָּתַן תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל" it is no longer Hashem's world but rather it is our world and we say only "בָּרוּךְ הוּא״" for giving it to us.

The Fifth Son

- Rabbi Dovid Bashevkin

In 1970 families around the world were going to leave a chair empty at their seder to mark those in Soviet Jewry as a reminder of the oppression. When the idea was presented to the Lubavitcher Rebbe he agreed that their situation needed attention, but said that "the chair shouldn't be empty- it should be filled" because the greatest testament to Jewish Unity is having everyone at the table. The Rebbe's response was not surprising because he had sent a letter out years earlier about the Four Sons at the seder. In the letter he wrote: "the four sons of the seder all have something in common- they're at the seder. But there is another type of child: the one who is not at the seder at all."

The presence of all four types of children at the table is a reason for comfort. That no matter what the background, there is room for everyone at the seder. But sadly not everyone joins and it is important that we remember that fifth child. This year especially, when there will be an absence at our seder, whether it is a grandparent or a child, we need to remember that we shouldn't only celebrate who we are with, but recognize who is absent as well.

Why? Because Hashem Said So!

- Rabbi Dovid Einhorn

At first glance when we look at the questions of the Chachom and the Rasha they appear to be very similar, if not the same. "What is this service that you are involved in?" And yet the answers are so different. To the Chacham we explain the laws of Pesach, and to the Rasha we blunt his teeth and tell him if he was there he would not have been redeemed.

The Chasam Sofer explains that the difference between the two is in the attitude of the question. The Chachom legitimately wants to understand the laws. He knows it comes from Hashem and he wants the reason to enhance his service. The Rasha wants to understand in order to see if it fits with his intentions. How do we approach our Avodas Hashem and the performance of His Mitzvos? We must be like the Chacham! Why do we do the Mitzvos? Because Hashem said so, and the reasons are simply there to help enhance our performance.

Speaking to Our Children: A Parents' Guide

- Rabbi Joshua Eisenberg

The "Four Sons" of the Haggadah refer to the four "children" which the Torah expects us to encounter and address in the process of recounting the Exodus [Shemos 12:25-27, 13:7-8,

13-15, and Devarim 6:20-24]. But if, indeed, the Haggadah's "Four Sons" correspond to the Torah's "Four Sons," then there is an obvious inconsistency if one were to look closely at the two texts side by side. That is because, although the questions of the Haggadah's "Four Sons" are taken straight out of the Torah text, the answers found in the Haggadah do not exactly line up with the Torah's responses to them. Why, in fact, would the Tannaic and Amoraic Haggadah veer from the Torah's preferred response to our children?

Perhaps, they were not suggesting alternative answers to those of the Torah's, but rather, they were suggesting a route towards the answers which the Torah wants us to teach our children. Indeed, the Haggadah itself is not just a history book, but a means of communication and a starter of guided conversation. Thus, if the Torah is the divine "textbook" of the holiest subject matter, the Haggadah is the manual or the "parent and teacher's edition" which guides the communication of that subject matter. That means that, of course, the answers we ultimately want our children to arrive at can be found only in the Torah; however, as parents and teachers, the Haggadah reminds us that we have to learn to listen to our differing children, speak to each individual child's heart according to his or her needs, and in so doing, we will be able to impart to them, and help them eventually arrive at, the holy, timeless lessons of our Holy Torah tradition.

Remembering That We Are Hashem's Beloved Son

- Rabbi Ari Mirzoeff

When we are dealing with the רשע or the evil son, we are told to "הקהה את שניו" or to knock out the teeth of the evil one. The Alshich Hakadosh questions why in the world would we knock out the teeth of the evil and wicked son?! It would seem that we should spread the most love and care to this son?!! He explains beautifully that we are actually bringing him closer and showing him who he truly is. He explains that by knocking out the "שניו " from רשע, you are left with צדיק. The gematria of the word רשע is 570. The gematria of the word שניו is 366. If you take 570 and subtract 366, you are left with 204 which is the gematria of צדיק.

The goal is to show him that even though he might have made some terrible mistakes and messed up, down to his core he is still truly a צדיק and someone special in Hashem's eyes. How many times do we hear of people who say and think - "after everything I have done, Hashem wants nothing to do with me". This explains the Alshich, is the exact opposite approach to how we must view our own past mistakes and missteps. We must tell our friends and family members to view those errors as something outside of us, as an evil spirit that got us to do something wrong, but not Chas V'Shalom as who we are. We are the princes and princesses, the kings and queens of Hashem's Beloved Nation and we must never ever forget that.

The Uniqueness of Every Child

- Rabbi Yoni Pollock

The ארבע בנים is certainly a hot topic for everyone's סדר. Many people analyze the questions and answers. However, not many stop and recognize the unique title given to each one of the sons. Why not simply write "אחד חכם, רשע, תם, ושאינו יודע לשאול" instead of giving the title of 'אחד' to each child?

Rav Zalman Sorotzkin explains that perhaps the בעלי הגדה wanted to teach a lesson to all parents, teachers and role models in the world - don't show favoritism. A person has to view each one of their children and students as if they are an אחד. Even if one seems like a רשע and one is more of a חכם, the child can never feel like they are inadequate or not important in your eyes. Every child, despite their current actions, looks up to you and is eager for your attention and desires your admiration. When we give one child more attention, or express our pride in one child over the other, it can leave a painful and damaging mark on the rest.

מתחילה עובדי עבודה זרה

The Beauty of 'Shelo Asani Goy'

- Radziner Rebbe - Rabbi Nosson Englard

According to some of Chazal it is in this passage that we do Maschil Be'gnus - begin with the shameful part of our history. Our fathers were idol worshippers, and then Hashem brought us close to Him. We know that we are not allowed to remind a Ba'al Teshuva of his sinful past. Why then would we mention our sinful past?

It is here that we bring to light the beauty of being a Yid. We acknowledge that our fathers too were no different than everyone else, yet they chose another path. That moment of clarity and truth that Avraham Avinu had, was what made us into a nation of priests that exudes holiness. Had he not acted on his moment of revelation, we would all still be in the abyss. We too must always grab those moments of clarity and revelation and make a difference in our lives which will impact the lives of our future generations.

Striving for Greatness

- Rabbi Moshe Tzvi Weinberg

At the seder, we follow the idea of starting off with the dark times and then moving to more positive times. "מִתְּחִלָּה עוֹבְדֵי עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה הָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ- originally our ancestors were idol worshippers." But did our Avos really worship idols?! The Rambam said that Avraham as a young person worshipped idols. The Zohar Hakadosh says that Avraham lived a perfect life. Well then, the Lubavitcher rebbe asks, did he worship idols or was he a perfect tzadik?

There is an idea that at the time of yetzias Mitzrayim, Hashem also commanded Bnei Yisrael to wear tefillin. If they weren't going to be practicing this commandment yet, why give it now? Hashem understands the context of our lives. We want to do things, but sometimes we just can't. Hashem won't hold us accountable for things we can't control. Rather, Hashem wants to show us that He has higher hopes for us in the future.

So Avraham did both- when he was young, he worshipped idols, because that was his reality. Then when he got older, he made the right choices to follow in Hashem's ways. While we may not have been ready to take on the commandment of tefillin at the time, not yet being on the spiritual level, Hashem was showing us that just like Avraham could strive for greatness after a life of idol worship, so too we can achieve greatness as well.

והיא שעמדה

Always a Step Ahead

- Rabbi Aharon Ciment

The baal haggadah tells us "שֶׁבְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ" that in every generation there are those that are yearning to destroy us "וְהַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא מַצִּילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם" and Hashem saves us from their destructive ways. Rav Aharon Kotler זצ״ל asks- where is that the case? In our generation are there really people that have been trying to annihilate us? The Nazi's were in the last generation, but we don't seem to have anyone today? What does it mean that in every generation there will be someone who is trying to destroy us and Hashem saves us? It is true for every generation and we know this from "צֵא וּלְמַד מַה בִּקֵּשׁ לָבָן הָאֲרַמִּי לַעֲשׂוֹת לְיַעֲקֹב אָבִינוּ"- we have to go learn what Lavan tried to do to Yaakov Avinu. The first time Lavan encountered Yaakov he gave him a hug, he presented himself to be a friend. Later on Lavan turned and sought to destroy us, but he first started as a friend. And this is present in every generation- we don't know what our enemies are planning. How many times did Hashem thwart the devious plans of our enemies and we didn't even know it. Hashem annihilates the plan before it even reaches the public eye. There are always people plotting, but Hashem comes and saves us, whether we know it or not. We need to remember this and in order to do so we learn about Lavan who was the first human example of this kind of behavior.

The One Thing That Stands to Destroy Us

- Rabbi Josh Grajower

Every year we sing at the seder the powerful tune of V'hi She'amda. We sing about how in every generation a nation stands up to destroy us, but Hashem miraculously saves us from their hands. We recite the powerful line, שלא אחד בלבד עמד עלינו לכלותינו, it was not just one time (in Mitzrayim) that a nation stood up to destroy us, but rather in every generation someone tries to destroy the Jews.

However the Sfas Emes offers a different read of this line, which in many ways is even more powerful. He reads it as follows: שלא אחד בלבד - The idea of the Jews not being "אחד" - unified - is "עמד עלינו לכלותינו" what stands to destroy us. Yes, we will always have enemies, but the only thing that can really destroy the Jewish people is not our external enemies, rather our internal enemies. If we are not unified, standing together, that is the only thing that can tear apart the Jewish people.

צא ולמד

What was Lavan's Evil?

- Rabbi Yamin Goldsmith

Why is Lavan the paradigmatic example of evil enemies bent on our destruction? Aren't there better examples of people in history who have tried to destroy us? In addition, the Haggadah seems to minimize another person who, centuries later, tried to kill us as well: Paroh!

Why isn't Paroh the paradigm example of terrible רשעים who have tried to destroy us? And why does the Haggadah try to minimize Paroh's evil intentions more than Lavan's - "פרעה לא גזר אלא על הזכרים ולבן בקש לעקור את הכל"?

Many, many mefarshim have addressed these questions. A beautiful explanation is offered by Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Rimon shlit"a, Rabbi of the community in Alon Shvut in Israel, in his peirush to the Haggadah: The answer can be found in what Lavan said to Yaakov when they met up after Yaakov left Lavan's home. Lavan said (בראשית לא:מג), "Yaakov, your daughters are mine, your sons are mine!..." Lavan wanted to control the destiny of Yaakov's family. He wanted to direct the family spiritually, to infiltrate the family and change the entire direction of Klal Yisrael! That would be disastrous. Of course, Pharaoh is evil but he "only" wanted to kill us. That's terrible, but unfortunately, we have had to deal with that a lot in our painful history. But those enemies are relatively "easy" because Klal Yisrael bands together in times of physical crisis. Lavan was not presenting a physical challenge; he wanted לעקור את הכל! Spiritual destruction is in many ways even worse than physical destruction.

Achieving True Greatness

- Rabbi Eli Wagner

What does greatness look like? While recounting the events of yetzias mitzrayim, the Torah records the exponential growth of bnei yisrael. Commenting on the word "רב" the midrash quoted by the haggadah explains that this is referring to the physical greatness attained by the Jewish people in Egypt. However, it was clear that their spirituality was lacking. To rectify this deficiency, Hashem provided mitzvos for bnei yisrael to perform. Quoting from Yechezkel, the Jewish people are told that they will only achieve life through blood: וָאֹמַר לָךְ בְּדָמַיִךְ חְיִי וָאֹמַר לָךְ בְּדָמַיִךְ חְיִי. The commentators explain that this is a reference to the mitzvos of Bris Milah and Korban Pesach, both containing aspects of blood (דם פסח ודם מילה). Only through the performance of these mitzvos were the Jewish people worthy of freedom.

Why these mitzvos? Both Bris Milah and Korban Pesach share the common denominator of mesiras nefesh. Milah is the quintessential expression of individual self-sacrifice. Avraham Avinu, the first to perform Milah, did so despite his advanced age and the ridicule he surely received from the surrounding nations. The Korban Pesach is the paradigm of national self-sacrifice. Bnei Yisrael's courageous act of sacrificing the god of their oppressors was nothing short of heroic. It is due to these extraordinary acts of mesiras nefesh that Bnei Yisrael became worthy of becoming the chosen nation. This is the definition of true greatness: sacrificing everything for the sake of Hashem.

ויוציאנו ה׳ ממצרים

Tatty My King!

- Rabbi Jacob Bernstein

The last of the four פסוקים from our "spark notes" version of the story of יציאת מצרים describes the role ה׳ played in orchestrating our freedom. ה׳ saved us after 210 years of slavery and oppression: הקדוש ברוך הוא בכבודו ובעצמו. The נתיבות שלום describes this experience by way

of a משל: A king sent his son away, and, in the process, the son gets into trouble at the bottom of a dirty pit. Instead of sending a messenger, the king arrives in his royal garb and climbs into the pit, dirtying himself along the way, to save his son. ה׳ acted in the same way on our behalf and it is worthwhile to note that we did not deserve this incredible kindness; we were on the 49th level of טומאה! A messenger could have gotten the job done, but there was more to יציאת מצרים than just saving us. ה׳ arrived to usher us out of מצרים Himself by hand (ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה), displaying His tremendous love for us, His children.

If you compare 'ויוציאנו' to the פסוק of 'והגדת לבנך', you might notice that Hashem's role is presented differently. While in 'והגדת' the פסוק makes reference only to יד חזקה, in 'ויוציאנו,' both the יד חזקה and זרוע נטויה are on display! Why the difference? According to Rav Soloveitchik, the זרוע נטויה provides safety for the long term, and the יד חזקה focuses on the immediate challenge at hand. At the seder, we focus not only on יציאת מצרים, but also on Hashem's long term relationship protecting us throughout time.

Hashem as Our Hands-On Parent

- Rabbi Shai Kaminetzky

Not through an angel, not through a seraph (different kind of angel), and not through a messenger "לא על ידי מלאך, לא על ידי שרף, ולא על ידי שליח". The author of the Haggadah stresses time and time again that Hashem Himself (הקב״ה בכבודו ובעצמו) carried out the countless miracles and set us free. What is gained by Hashem specifically carrying it all out? If Hakadosh Baruch Hu was able to get angels or messengers to do the deed, it proves just the same Hashem's absolute control and leadership over the entire world! In fact, one can argue that having "servants" fulfill His demands is even more awe-inspiring!

The mishna in Pesachim (116a) teaches that the format for sippur yetzias Mitzrayim is maschil b'genus u'mesayeim b'shvach - one begins by recounting our disgrace and concluding with our glory. Shmuel's opinion is that genus refers to the fact that avadim hayinu, we were slaves. The gemara does not explicitly state what the contrasting, corresponding shvach (praise/glory) is. Seemingly it is obvious: The contrasting, corresponding shvach is that we are now free. And, in fact, the Maharal Mi'Prague (Gevuros Hashem) explicates Shmuel's view in this way. The Rambam (Hilchos Chametz U'Matzah 7:4), however, says that the counterpoint to avadim hayinu is the "miracles and wonders that were performed for us, and in our freedom." The "exodus" itself is not the highlight of the night, but rather it's that Hashem felt so close to us that He did miracles for us Himself! We went from idolatrous slaves who could not be more distant from serving Him, to the dear children of Hashem, and recipients of His unrelenting kindness and awesomeness. Our relationship suddenly was so strong that Hashem Himself wanted to save us in such a lavish and overwhelming way!

We should all be zoche this year to appreciate and internalize that no matter what is going on, Hashem loves and cares for each and every one of us as His very own Children, and we should iyH live up to that honor!

Both Night and Day

- Rabbi Benjamin Yudin

We read in the above paragraph that Hashem himself passed over the homes of the Jewish people or the homes of the jewish slaves and killed the first born that night. It is interesting to note that in Devarim (16:1) the pasuk states that Hashem took us out of Egypt at night. Two pesukim later, the Torah tells us we are to remember the day that He took us out of Egypt. Which one is it- did we leave by night or by day? The meshech chachma resolves the above by saying they are both right. We left Egypt spiritually-culturally by night, and left Egypt physically by day.

Our taking the lamb-sheep which was worshiped by the Egyptians in Egypt and our slaughtering it was a renunciation of their deity. Moreover, the placing of the blood on the doorposts was attributing the status of a mizbeiach, an altar, to our homes. Therefore, the transformation of our homes that night into a miniature beis hamikdash was our leaving Egypt spiritually at night. We literally left the boundaries of the land of Egypt on the morrow, however, and thus both of the pesukim cited above are accurate.

Just as Hashem extricated us from slavery that night, and from so many other difficulties throughout our history, we are sure that He will free us from this plague (the Coronavirus), enabling us to come together as a unified jewish people to celebrate the karban pesach next year in Jerusalem.

מכות

Makkas Barad: The Power of Seven

- Rabbi Chaim Marcus

The makka of barad is different from the rest in that Paroh says that he now feels in his heart that Hashem is a tzadik and he and the Mitzrim are the reshaim. Why is it only now that Paroh sam libo- felt it in his heart? In the third makka, kinim, Paroh recognized that it was all from Hashem, but it wasn't until the seventh makka that he felt it in his heart. The Sanzer Rav זצ״ל (Divrei Chaim of Sanz) says the hardest bridge to build is the bridge between our head and our heart.

Every makka that was brought onto the Mitzrim was meant to teach Bnei Yisrael a lesson. The lesson of makkas barad is the power of 7. The seventh of the lower sefiros is malchus and the power of yiras Hashem. Makkas barad teaches us the power that Hashem has, and we need to feel it in our hearts. Furthermore, Shabbos is the seventh day of the week - when we pull back and take everything to heart. Rav Moshe Wolfson שליט״א takes it one step further discussing the parallel between the Asseres Hadibros and the makkos, working in reverse - the seventh makka matches up with the fourth dibra which is Shabbos.

The lesson of the seventh makka is to sam libo- feel Hashem in your heart. The Brisker Rav זצ״ל says that bitachon isn't a lack of fear, but rather letting the fear lead you to Hashem. When we feel Hashem in our hearts we know He is always by our side.

The Best is Yet to Come

- Rabbi Andi Yudin

Hashem told Avraham in the Bris bein Habesarim that his children would be enslaved for 400 years in a foreign land. The nation that would afflict them would be punished. The Torah uses two words to describe the punishment, "דן אנכי." Those two words translated into ten wondrous makos, which shook up Egypt and ripped it apart to its core.

Rav Sa'adya Gaon derives from here an amazing and inspiring lesson. If two words of punishment translated into ten wondrous plagues, how unbelievable will the ultimate redemption be! The Nevi'im are replete with clear and lengthy descriptions of how awesome the geula will be. Every word in the Nev'im is true and Divine. The final Geula is absolutely indescribable! The best is yet to come!

דינו

How to Praise Hashem at the Seder Night

- Radziner Rebbe - Rabbi Nosson Englard

Chazal in Berachos state that any praise of Hashem is insufficient because it would seem that we're constricting what Hashem really is and the good he truly bestows upon the entire world. We can only praise based on our nusach of tefilla. On the night of the seder, though, we seem to praise Hashem on every little event that transpired. How?

The idea of our praising Hashem tonight is not to give him praise, but rather for us to deeply understand and truly appreciate the enormity of what He did for us. It is for this reason that we break down all of the events, to truly appreciate every little aspect. In order for us to really understand what Hashem did for us, we have to spoon-feed ourselves every single step of the incredible miracles Hashem performed for us.

Thanking in Detail

- Rabbi Andrew Israeli

There are many themes that run throughout the entire night of the seder, which we, as a people, try to internalize. Throughout the night, the idea of recognizing the good that Hashem has done for us repeats itself numerous times. The Gra points out that the four cups of wine we drink throughout the seder represent the four people required to bentch hagomel, in that we, as the Jewish people leaving mitzrayim, represented all four of them. The seafarer, the desert wanderer, the healed, and the released from prison, which are roles we take on throughout seder night. This theme again appears in Dayenu, when we go through specifically, all of the steps of geulah that the Jewish people took, in extreme detail, and Rabbi Gifter in his haggadah points out that the goal of hakaras hatov is to see everything, specifically as a gift from Hashem, and specifically recognize the little piece, as part of a much larger picture. There is a story told about Rabbi Dessler that he went to a coffee shop to have some coffee and when he asked for the bill it turned out to be a very expensive trip. Rabbi Dessler asked the waiter why the cost was so much, and the waiter responded by saying that the fee was not just for the coffee; the fee was also for the use of the cup, chair, table, labor that was put into making the coffee, and

benefit from the music that was playing. Each of those elements was enough for the coffee shop to charge for. Rabbi Dessler thanked the waiter for teaching him this lesson in hakaros hatov.

If Only… We Would Still be Enslaved to Paroh

- Rabbi Yoni Levin

One of the stanzas of dayeinu is 'had Hashem not freed us from Mitzrayim we would still be slaves to Pharaoh.' Asks the Maaseh Hashem - had Hashem not taken us out then there may have been another way to freedom. Would we really still be slaves in Egypt for the last 2000 years? There could have been another way.

Had Hashem not taken us out of Mitzrayim against the will of Pharaoh, and had Pharaoh freed us through inspiration then we would have always been slaves to him by having to give appreciation to him for letting us go free. An eved who is freed by his master is forever indebted to his master. So too, had Hashem orchestrated that Pharaoh let us go out we would have still been enslaved. Perhaps not enslaved physically but mentally and emotionally we would still be enslaved to Paroh. Hashem didn't want us to live in such a way, to be indebted to Paroh and Mitzrayim in any way. So Hashem let us go free and we are indebted to Him instead. In life there are so many things to be grateful for and we have to show the proper gratitude to anyone who does things for us. But the real hakaros hatov needs to be given to Hashem because even when He seems hidden we need to realize that Hashem can take us out of any tough situation.

פסח, מצה, ומרור

Quick Pain

- Rabbi Gav Friedman

A beautiful idea from the Vilna Gaon: Bnai Yisrael were in Mitzrayim for 210 years- weren't they supposed to be there for 400 years? If you look at the pasuk about when Bnai Yisrael were given hard work it says "וַיְמָרְרוּ אֶת־חַיֵּיהֶם בַּעֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה בְּחֹמֶר וּבִלְבֵנִים" "and they imbittered their lives" and the work was so hard during the 210 years that it was like they were working for 400 years. Why did they get up early? If you look at the trup of how the words are read we can see the hints. On top of וַיְמָרְרוּ אֶת־חַיֵּיהֶם there is a kadma v'azlah, and this trup means something in words too. Kadma like kadima meaning get up and v'azlah meaning and go, together meaning 'get up and go.' But what is significant about 210? If you take the gematria of kadma v'azlah it is 190, the exact amount of years they had left of the 400 years.

Three Steps to Personal Freedom

- Rabbi Eitiel Goldwicht

Do you ever feel stuck or shackled by life's pressures? How many times have we felt inspired to make a change in our lives? And yet we find ourselves back in the same spot. How can we actually break free? That's what Pesach is about- the word 'Mitzrayim' comes from the word 'meitzarim,' meaning confinement. Pesach is the time when we can break free from whatever is holding us back in life.

There are three essential words that we say at the seder that help with this: pesach, matzah and marror. These are the three steps to personal freedom. 1- Pesach means that Hashem passed over our homes and saved us. But the Kabbalists teach us that Pesach comes from the word 'peh sach' meaning a talking mouth. We were enslaved in the hands of Pharaoh, which respelled is 'peh rah' meaning evil speech. We enslave ourselves with negative speech and the way to fix this is with positive speech. 2- Matzah only has one difference with bread and that is time. Matzah must be made in a hurry and when we want to create a change in our lives we need to do it in a hurry, seize the moment. 3- Marror that we eat to remember the bitter years of slavery. Why dwell on the pain of the past? People sometimes think that if we had no challenges than we would be happier people. It is the challenges that we face in our lives that bring out the greatness within us. Pesach is your chance to break free if we just follow these three simple steps.

The Impact of a Question

- Rabbi Isaac Rice

In the הקדמה to the ברכת הפסח they cite the שיף מהר"ם who asks why the question is in this backward form of מַצָּה זו שאנו אוכְלִים עַל שוּם מה . Why doesn't it write in the more normal fashion of על שום מה אנו אוכלים מצה זו? He answered that we want to show our אמונה in that we eat the מצה because of our אמונה פשוטה. We eat the מצה without reason or without questioning. Only later do we ask why we are eating the מצה. This is similar to a comment in the הקדמה to the חובת התלמידים. He explains that the תורה always orders the מצות as חוקים and only then משפטים. Classically, a חק is a מצוה without a reason and a משפט is a מצוה with a logical reason. The reason is that we should fulfill the מצות because of our love for הקב"ה and not for any reason. Our desire to do the מצות should be no different than that of a child who wants to kiss his parent. The child can't explain why or what the reason is, but this is simply his innate desire. He doesn't need to give a reason as to why he wants to kiss his parents. So too we should want to fulfill the מצות because we love Hashem. Only after expressing our love can we then go back and explain why we feel the way we do and act the way we do.

Why do I Need to Imagine as if I am Leaving

- Rabbi Judah Goldshmidt

There is something very striking about the words of Chazal that we are obligated to see ourselves as if we actually left מצרים. Why is it so important to imagine as if we are leaving? We do not find a similar requirement by any other holiday etc. Additionally, why is this statement made toward the end of magid right before beginning the words of hallel as opposed to the beginning of the seder which would clarify our obligation during the seder?

Rabbi Yeruchom Levovitz ZT"L in his sefer דעת חכמה ומוסר - חלק א' עמ' קכ"ד writes that it is a mistake to think that the purpose of יציאת מצרים was merely to prove that Hashem exists and is Almighty. He proves this from the above powerful words. If the entire point of recounting the story of יציאת מצרים was to prove the existence of Hashem why are we obligated to imagine we are leaving מצרים. Feelings of personal freedom are feelings within one's heart. Belief in Hashem is more intellectual. Why are we required to have this feeling?

The purpose of יציאת מצרים was to bring about our קבלת עול מלכות שמים. After living

through the great miracles and redemption from מצרים, בני ישראל responded by accepting upon themselves the privilege to be עבדים to ה'. We, too are obligated to "live through" יציאת מצרים and subsequently enhance our dedication to serve Hashem. At the conclusion of סיפור יציאת מצרים we must remind ourselves that the Pesach seder is only a vehicle for us to use enhance our own personal service of Hashem. This can only be accomplished if we truly feel as if we are personally being freed from bondage by Hashem.

הלל

Can You Feel It?

- Rabbi Moshe Tzvi Weinberg

We are commanded in the Haggadah to feel as though we are actually leaving Mitzrayim, something that is not so easy to do. There have been those that are known to dress the part in order to bring themselves to this point in their minds. But this year we have the unique opportunity to feel this like never before.

On the first Leil HaPesach, Hashem commanded Bnai Yisrael to spend the night indoors. He told them to lock their doors and not leave their house, being with family only to eat the Korban Pesach. On that night Bnai Yisrael was anxiously waiting for Hashem to free them, for Moshe to announce that their time in Galus Mitzrayim had finally come to an end. In the psukim we are told that the events of Yetzias Mitzrayim are something for us to hold on to for generations and in our generation we can finally tap into the aspect of staying in our homes with our families.

The Torah tells us about Leil Shimurim, the night Hashem keeps watch for us, two times. The idea is that the first Leil Shimurim is referring to the first Leil HePesach and the second is referring to the night that Hashem will bring the Geula Shelaima for us. This year on Pesach when we are sitting in our houses with our families, being protected by what is going on by Hashem, anxiously awaiting for His call that will announce the Geula Shelaima, we can tap into the feeling that Bnai Yisrael felt as they did the same thing on the first Pesach in Mitzrayim.

When to Sing

- Rabbi Jesse Horn

Rabbi Soloveitchik is quoted in the Siach HaGrid wondering why Klal Yisrael only sang when they passed through the Yam Suf but not when they left Mitzrayim. Leaving Mitzrayim was obviously a great and important thing, so why do they only sing Az Yashir after Kriyas Yam Suf? Rabbi Soloveitchik Suggests a fascinating answer based upon the medrish. the medrish says that Bnai Yisrael went through the 49 levels of tumah and they only really became tahor when they exited through the other side of the Yam Suf. Therefore they didn't sing to praise Hashem until they had a full-fledged spiritual elevation and geula. Bnai Yisrael was physically taken out at Yetzias Mitzrayim, but only 7 days later at Kriyas Yam Suf did they elevate and spiritually sing to Hakadosh Baruch Hu with Az Yashir. That's what the pasuk "וַיַּאֲמִינוּ בה' וּבְמֹשֶׁה עַבְדּוֹ" means; they only really believed in Moshe and Hashem after the Yam Suf. It is symbolic of the fact that this is when they really bought in and had their spiritual elevation. If this is correct then maybe the goal of going through the Yam Suf is in a certain sense like a mikvah, to spiritually wash

them clean. To go even further, the Ibn Ezra that Bnai Yisrael didn't even pass through the Yam Suf, they went in and then came out on the same side. The purpose wasn't to go from one side to the other but rather to cleanse them. The idea of leaving Mitzrayim and developing into a free nation required was physical but more importantly spiritual. Gelua is about attaining spiritual growth, not losing the shackles. What we are celebrating in Nissan is a sense of spiritual elevation.

רחצה

Acting Purely L'Sheim Shamayim

- Rabbi Jordan Ginsberg

The Rebba of Ishbitz writes that the purpose of washing before we eat, in general, is to remove any personal desires from this eating and rather that this eating should be purely לשם שמים. Rav Avrohom Schorr quotes the סידור היעב"ץ who says that the word לחם comes from the word מלחמה. Every time we sit down to eat bread there is a war between our יצר הטוב and our יצר הרע for what the purpose of this eating is. Perhaps this is why we need to wash again despite having already washed for כרפס. The מצה represents a life without the יצר הרע. We, therefore, want to make sure that we're eating the מצה purely for the sake of הקב"ה and not for any personal reasons in order to gain all that we can from the מצה.

מוציא מצה

Don't Miss Out!

- Rabbi Reuven Berman

We often invest so much time in preparing for Maggid and Divrei Torah, in order to share them at the Seder, that we overlook the incredible mitzvah min Ha'Torah to eat Matzah at the Seder. אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על אכילת מצה - Pesach night is the only time during the year that we make a Bracha on eating! This must be something special. On a deeper level, the Zohar Hakadosh teaches that Matzah is known as both נהמא דמהמנותא, the bread of emunah, as well as נהמא דאסותא, the bread of refuah. Incredible! Of course I don't understand what this really means, but as the Sefer Pele Yo'eitz explains, this is clearly a mitzvah that is awesome with a secret that is elevated on the highest of levels.

So don't miss out on this opportunity. Get excited. It's so easy to complain that the Matzah doesn't taste good, it's hard to chew, or that it's hard on my stomach, but don't take that attitude. Instead, think about what a precious mitzvah you have before you! As we know, our actions impact our feelings. Therefore, I recommend that you start acting like you are excited for the Matzos. Kiss the box of Matzos as you take them out to set your table. Kiss them before you make the bracha on them. And most of all, eat the Matzah with a smile on your face, enjoying the opportunity to partake in one of the greatest of mitzvos. Don't miss out!

Matzah with All the Fixins

- Rabbi Josh Schulman

The notion of חפזון on the seder night is quite puzzling. If the Korban Pesach had to be finished by חצות but the Jews weren't leaving until morning, why did they have to rush their meal? The answer may lie in another perplexing biblical episode. Adam HaRishon was never specifically told what type of tree was forbidden in Gan Eden. If so, how was he supposed to protect himself from sin? While Chazal suggest different explanations as to what the species of tree was, if Hashem refrained from revealing the actual species to Adam, how would he have known what he was not allowed to eat?

The Meor V'Shemesh suggests that perhaps Adam was never commanded that he could not partake in the fruit of one specific tree. Rather, he was instructed that the manner through which he eats was supposed to be "eating to live" as opposed to "living to eat". This edict of eating with the correct intention is applied to all of the trees as the pasuk says "מכל עץ הגן אכל תאכל". That which was forbidden, involved the act of distinguishing the good from the bad, as the pasuk says "ומעץ הדעת טוב ורע לא תאכל". All eating was supposed to be permissible as long as it was done in order to be healthy and gain the necessary energy so that he could properly serve Hashem. Adam erred by veering from that headspace and by being lured by the superficial and enticing "forbidden fruit." This sin is what caused Bnei Yisrael to need Galus Mitzrayim. The Galus and servitude was a necessary process in order to purify their physical selves from all the spiritual impediments created in Gan Eden.

This can provide us with insight into the mitzvah of achilas matzah. The reason we partake in Lechem Oni composed of such simple ingredients and unadorned flavor is that if Galus Mitzrayim was supposed to be a tikun for the sin of Adam HaRishon on a national level, then the manner through which we eat at the seder is supposed to be a tikun on a more personal level. On Pesach, we eat the bread of a poor man like a poor man; a poor person eats to live, he doesn't live to eat. This too is the significance of why the members of Bnei Yisrael rushed their eating of the Korban Pesach. Eating בחפזון highlighted the notion that they were eating because there was a mitzvah to eat, ensuring they were eating l'shem shamayim. Over the course of Pesach, we too must focus on that tikun and strive to eliminate some of our spiritual occlusions.

מרור

Not as Sweet as it Looks

- Rabbi Moshe Don Kestenbaum

The Gemara in Pesachim (39a) tells us that Mitzrayim is comparable to Marror, just like Marror starts out soft and later hardens, so too Mitzrayim started out "soft" (paying us for our work {Rashi}), and then were harsh to us. The Yerushalmi (2:5) relates this idea with a slight variation, "Just like chazeres (lettuce) starts out with a sweet taste and later develops a bitter one, so too Mitzrayim set out "sweet" and then became "bitter."

In the Hagadah *Eish Das*, Rabbi Moshe Yechiel Halevi Epstein suggests that this idea is not limited to the physical slavery. The Jewish People were redeemed spiritually as well, freed

from the “Marror” of impurity. The Yeitzer Hora is described in Yerushalmi Shabbos (14:3) the same way as the Marror; it starts out sweet and then turns bitter. The Yeitzer Hora tries to lure us into sin for immediate pleasure. We just need to remember the “end” of such conduct. It brings us deep sadness in this world and punishment in the Next. The path of Torah, while at times requires sacrifice in the beginning, is the only path that will lead us to eternal sweetness, both in this world and the Next.

Bitter, Not Bad

- Rabbi Andi Yudin

Did you ever wonder why we eat maror on Pesach? Matza makes sense, as we relive the experience of leaving Mitzrayim and we eat the "bread of faith," which is central to redemption. But why maror? Why do we want to remember the bad times we experienced in Mitzrayim? Why focus at all on the back breaking labor that was our difficult lot for 210 years in Mitzrayim?

The Chofetz Chaim zt"l, once commented that a Jew is allowed to say that something is bitter, but a Jew can not say that it is bad. The pain and suffering that was endured in Mitzrayim seemed bad at the time; but it was only at that time of golus that it seemed bad. In reality, while it may have been bitter, it wasn't bad. In fact, it was really for our good, as everything that happens to us in life is really good. Perhaps that's why maror is called "maror" - it may be bitter, but certainly not bad. As we eat our maror this year, may we remind and strengthen ourselves that everything Hashem does is for the best, both in the 'good' times and in the ones that seem 'bitter.'

כורך

Tasting the Bitterness

- Rabbi Asher Becker

These last few months have been challenging not only for the Jewish people, but for the world at large. The גמרא in פסחים mentions the fact that there’s a requirement of tasting the טעם of מצה and מרור, specifically, the גמרא raises the question as to how combining מצה and מרור in the form of a כורך sandwich is viable, won’t the מרור which is דרבנן בזמן הזה, nullify the מצה which we assume is דאורייתא? In order to satisfy both the opinions of הלל and the חכמים, we eat מצה and מרור separately, and then combined as a כורך sandwich.

The גמרא further notes that one cannot fulfill the obligation of eating מרור by swallowing the entire leaf of מרור at once, or by eating מרור which is pickled since you’re not tasting the actual flavor of the מרור.

The notion of tasting the מרור underscores the idea we mention at the beginning of the הגדה that מתחלה עובדי עבודה זרה היו אבותינו. We must remember our past, our bitter history, and that we are descendants of idol-worshipers. However, we must always look ahead, ועכשיו קרבנו לפני המקום, and realize our new reality, that we have progressed from our previous state, and have now drawn closer to ה'.

May we all merit to remember the lessons from these times and to use this פסח as an opportunity to fortify our connection with ה'.

All For One

- Rabbi Mayer Simcha Stromer

There are many unique details that relate to how we cook and eat the Korban Pesach. It must be roasted, not cooked. You have to be an invited party, i.e. part of the unique group for that specific korban.

Additionally, a person cannot go from one group to another, but rather must stay with the group that they were invited to join initially. It is also prohibited to break any of the bones. Why all of these restrictions? Is there a common theme or message?

The Maharal explains that all of the different halachos relate to one unifying theme; Hashem's Oneness. It must be roasted because when one cooks meat in a pot with water it becomes loose and can fall apart.

However, when meat is roasted it tightens and contracts in size, i.e. securing its oneness. We eat the korban as part of a group, and we can't abandon our group for another because we strengthen bonds and limit dissolution. We don't break the bones because it must be eaten whole. Pesach is the time to strengthen our emunah in Hashem. He was behind every detail in Galus Mitzrayim and He orchestrates everything that happens in our lives. Understanding the halachos of Korban Pesach can help us appreciate Hashem’s Oneness.

With this Maharal in mind, it becomes clear why the korban must be eaten with Matzah and Maror together. The Matzah symbolizes the redemption, while the Maror symbolizes the servitude. When we eat them together, we acknowledge that everything in the world comes from Hashem.

שולחן עורך

Which Came First - The Chicken or the Egg

- Rabbi Ari Zahtz

Many have the minhag to begin the meal on the leil haseder with eating an egg in salt water, Why? Why an egg? Why in saltwater?

The Rama offers two reasons which are connected. An egg is a sign of mourning and on the night of Pesach when we did not bring the korban pesach earlier, we mourn not having the beis hamikdash. The Rama adds that it’s felt even more acutely because Tisha b'av will fall on the same night as the first night of Pesach.

The Imrei emes explains that we are not expressing mourning per se, but a similar symbolic use of the egg. The reason the egg is designed for aveilus is to emphasize its round shape which lacks an opening or mouth. So too by us, we have no mouth nor anything to say to justify ourselves, rather, we merely accept the will of G-d. Similarly, the gesture of the egg is not to express aveilus, but to remind us of our requirement to sing praises to G-d for all He has done for us and as much as we’ve done thus far on the leil haseder, our mouths are inadequate (as we say in nishmas אין אנחנו מספיקים).

Perhaps there is one other symbolism as well. An egg is a unique food- almost all other foods when you cook them get softer, but an egg gets harder, and the message here is that as hard as the Egyptians pushed us כן ירבה וכן יפרוץ, we became stronger. Similarly we dip it in salt water because salt is a unique food in that it doesn't spoil. Complementing each other, these two reflect the nitzchiyus and eternal quality of Bnei Yisrael. We are Hashem's chosen people and He took us out of Mitzrayim and we wait knowing we have an eternal bond with Him, for the ultimate geulah!

צפון

The Hidden Potential Within You

- Rabbi Jordan Ginsberg

Rabbi Kook is bothered why the אפיקומין, one of the most important parts of the סדר, is only eaten after the meal when we are already full. He suggests that the goal of the אפיקומין, and perhaps this explains the name (צפון), is to dig deep into the recesses of one's heart and emotions and bring out all of the hidden כוחות that one has waiting inside. Due to the קדושה and potential of this night we don't want to let any כח remain inside. We want to squeeze out every last drop. Although we've been discussing all night about the events of the יציאת מצרים and certainly we've been influenced, in some way, by these grand displays of הקב"ה's greatness, there is still a huge distinction between knowing something and living by that which you know. With the אפיקומין, we are hoping to translate our knowledge into an experience.

The Prize We Must Realize

- Rabbi Mayer Simcha Stromer

The minhag to steal the afikoman and return it for a prize is very troubling. Are we trying to teach our children to steal on Seder night? Rabbi Schwab explains that the idea is not to teach them about stealing, rather, to teach them that the smaller piece of matzah, the "לחמא עניא " is placed on the Seder plate with the maror and charoses. It represents the ups and downs of this world. From the times of difficulty and sweetness to the time of struggle and triumph. However, the larger and primary piece of the matzah is hidden until the end of the Seder when we are already full. It represents the World to Come which can only be tasted after a life full of Torah and mitzvos. It's bigger because it is the goal of our existence. The parent gives the child a prize to represent the infinite reward of the World to Come that we will one day receive. On Seder night, we teach our children, those at our Seder, and ourselves, that we hide the larger piece to remind ourselves that for the faithful Jew the best is yet to come.

ברך

Thank You Hashem of Leil Haseder

- Rabbi Aryeh Cohen

The Sefer Yisod Hashoresh V'avoda explains that the simanim at the seder, that we start off the seder singing 'Kadeish, Urchatz', are not just telling us the parts of the seder that we are

going to be partaking in. Rather, they are literally deep sodos of the night and there are tremendous kochos in each and every one. The question is why is Bareich one of the simanim? Obviously we have to bench, like anytime we have bread or matzah, but it's nothing special to seder night and Pesach. So why is it a crucial element of seder night? When we analyze the entire seder we see that it is all about hakaras hatov, recognition that Hashem does everything in the world for us, and takes care of us always. It is the ultimate hakaras hatov that we learn from Leah when she names her fourth son Yehuda. She didn't thank Hashem for the first three because she thought she deserved them if each of the wives had three sons totaling in twelve shvatim. But when Yehuda is born Rashi points out that Leah observed that she received more than her share.

When we truly thank someone and show true hoda'ah it is when we realize that we have more than we deserve. When we were in Mitzrayim we were on the 49th level of tumah, on the lowest of low. We deserved nothing from Hashem, in fact we were treating him terribly, we were serving idols just like the Mitzrim were. Yet Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim because he loves us, even though it was undeserving. That is why we have to give him the ultimate hakaras hatov and leil haseder is all about recognizing all that Hashem did for us and continues to do for us. He does for us above and beyond what we deserve and we need to take this lesson with us into the year. The bracha dioraysa of hakaras hatov to Hashem is benching and therefore it is prominent in the seder, to act as a central theme for the entire night so that we realize to never stop saying 'thank you Hashem.'

Like Dreamers

- Rabbi Jesse Horn

In שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת we say "בְּשׁוּב ה' אֶת שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן הָיִינוּ כְּחֹלְמִים" and the simple pshat is that we are dreamers because we are coming back to ארץ ישראל, that this is our national dream and we have been dreaming about this for 2000 years and now we are returning back after גלות בית שני. However, the Brisker Rav says an alternative pshat that when Mashiach comes and it is time for גאולה שלימה, we will be dreamers in so far as that we just woke up and it will feel like all of גלות would have been a dream. It will feel so good and with Mashiach we will be so happy and satisfied that all of the pain and challenges that existed during the times of גלות will be like a dream, like we are so far passed it since we woke up and moved on. He says this is pshat in the Rambam in מגילה י״ח, where it says that we will no longer remember any of the pain either as our dream has come true or that our nightmares are over.

הלל

Uvmakhalos Rivivos Amcha Bais Yisroel – Going Beyond ourselves

- Rabbi Dani Abell

After speaking about the great miracles that Hashem performed for us on the night of Pesach, we conclude by giving thanks to Hashem by reciting the Hallel Hagadol. As we approach the climax of this Hallel by saying "Yishtabach Shimcha L'ad Malkeinu – May Your Name be praised forever, our King", we precede it with the paragraph of "Uvmakhalos Rivivos

Amcha Bais Yisroel – in the assemblies of the myriads of Your people." What lessons are we to take from this introductory paragraph to Yishtabach?

After going through an entire seder where we recognize Hashem's kindness and all he has done for us, the haggadah is now telling us what our new job is. The haggadah is telling us don't just feel inspired by everything Hashem does for us, rather do something with it. Show this kindness and reveal Hashem onto the entire world. This applies to every Jew, in every generation, in every situation. The haggadah ends off by telling us to take the message of the seder into your everyday life and use it to bring yourself and others closer to Hashem. Make Hashem part of everything you do and make it clear that he is the center of your existence.

Hallel at Leil HaSeder

- Rabbi Shimon Isaacson

The Hallel that we say at the Leil HaSeder is anomalous in a lot of different ways. A series of questions can be asked: 1. Why is there no bracha at this Hallel, when normally Hallel is always introduced by a birchat HaMitzva (see the Ramban and other Rishonim to Pescahim 118a)? 2. Why do we recite this Hallel sitting down when normally Hallel is recited standing (Taz, Orach Chaim 422(4))? 3. Why do we recite this Hallel at night when the norm is for Hallel to be recited during the day (Chatam Sofer, Orach Chaim 51)? 4. Normally women are peturot in Hallel because it is a time-bound mitzvah. However, women are obligated in Hallel at the Leil HaSeder (Tosfot Sukkah 38a). Why? 5. Why do we bifurcate the Hallel that we recite at the Leil HaSeder with Shulchan Orech? Isn't this a hefsek? There are a number of approaches but perhaps one can argue that although the recitation looks a lot like Hallel, it is not Hallel at all. How could it be if we are interrupting it with Shulchan Orech? The Rambam (Sefer haMitzvot, Aseh #157), Chinuch (Mitzva #21) and the Ramban (Shemot 13:16) all make crystal clear that part of the mitzvah of Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim is not merely to tell over the story, but to give praise and thanks to Hashem for the good that He did for us and that He continues to do for us every single moment of our lives. Hallel at the Seder is not an independent mitzvah of its own – rather, it is part of mitzvat Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim. Inherent in Sippur is the obligation of Hakarat Hatov – to thank Hashem for everything that He does. As such, because it is not an independent mitzvah, it does not have a bracha. It is said at night, and seated because that is the time and manner in which we do Sippur. Women are obligated in Sippur and, therefore, are equally required to sing the paragraphs of Hallel. Finally, because our Shulchan Oreich is really in lieu of the Korban Pesach, and as such, the time in which we would be saying Hallel, the Seudah is in no sense a hefsek in the Hallel – it is all part of the Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim experience and mitzvah (but that means that our Shulchan Oreich should be endowed with the proper sense of Hallel veHoda'ah). The overarching mitzvah of the Seder is Hakarat Hatov. Not an easy midda to achieve but one that is absolutely transformative.

נרצה

In the End All is Revealed

- Rabbi Mordechai Burg

When Rabbi Akiva was being tortured by the Romans, the malachim asked Hashem "this is Torah and its reward?" Hashem said "if you want the answer I'll have to destroy the world" What does this mean? The malachim asked a fair question, why do bad things happen to good people? Rabbi Kluger explains this idea with a mashal. There was a king who wanted a suit made of pure gold. He found the best tailor to do it. After several months the suit was finally completed. The king tried on the suit and was thrilled. Only one thing bothered the king, the fabric he gave the tailor seemed to be much larger than the suit he was wearing. Did the tailor steal the extra? This made the king angry. He called the tailor and accused him of stealing. The tailor calmly explained that he could show him how every piece of fabric was used but he would have to destroy the suit in the process. "You see, the suit has shoulder pads, lining, pockets, cuffs... some fabric is hidden. I can show you but it would destroy the suit." This is Hashem's response to the malachim. I can explain why Rabbi Akiva was tortured but I would have to undo everything in the world.

At this point in the Haggadah, after we have experienced the redemption of Yetzias Mitzrayim, we are now in a state that resembles Olam Haba. Chad Gadya teaches us that history is not random. It is a tapestry woven together in a particular fashion for a particular purpose. There is a very specific plan in motion and every moment has a particular purpose that cannot be altered. In the end of days all of history will make sense. We will be able to see how each moment in time led to the next moment and how all of those moments together led to the coming of Moshiach. All of the pain and suffering will make sense. We will see how God's plan truly was for the good. In the meantime we hold on to our Emunah that God's plan is unfolding exactly as it should. May we merit to understand that plan and greet Mashiach speedily in our days.

Singing with Simcha

- Rabbi Aryeh Cohen

Rebbe Nachman teaches us "מצוה גדולה להיות בשמחה תמיד" but how can we have simcha even in the dark times? The culmination of Yetzias Mitzrayim was Kiryas Yam Suf, after which Bnai Yisrael began "אז ישיר"- a song has a deep connection to שמחה- happiness. The question is why are the words "then they will sing" rather than "now they sing?" After Kriyas Yam Suf Bnai Yisrael saw the Mitzrim sink to the bottom in a מידה כנגד מידה way- the worst Mitzrim took longer to drown and the better Mitzrim drowned faster in a more painless way. It was then that Bnai Yisrael realized that Hashem was with them the entire time in Mitzrayim, watching how the Mitzrim were acting, and He punished them just so. Once they realized this- then they could sing. But why is the song in the future tense? The Gemara tells us that the reason they were singing in the future tense is because it is an illusion to the song we will sing during the final redemption. If we can have the Emunah that Hashem is always by our side, then even in the

darkest of times we will be able to sing out to Him. Singing is the key to simcha, and simcha is the key to redemption. The gematriyah of השמחה is 358, the same value as משיח. If we can get to a point through our singing that we are always בשמחה then we can bring משיח and live the ultimate and final redemption.

Mechanchot

In keeping with the vision of the Kol Hatorah Kulah broadcast, Kol Hatorah Kulah Mechanchot brings together learning that is done for women - by women.

KHK Mechanchot has also set out to provide inspirational Torah content, twice a week, through recordings that are 5 minutes or less.

Our Mechanchot come from a large range of schools, shuls, seminaries, and communities and who all share the same love of spreading Torah to Klal Yisrael.

For more information about Kol Hatorah Kulah, please visit kolhatorahkulah.com and search for the Mechanchot group information to join.

We hope that these insights into the Haggadah will enhance your seder table.

Thank you and have a wonderful Pesach!



קדש

Time: The Commodity of Freedom

- Tal Attia

The Kiddush of Pesach is different from that of Shabbat. On Shabbat, Kiddush focuses on God's sanctification of Shabbat - "Mekadesh HaShabbat" - while the Kiddush of Yom Tov highlights the sanctification of the Jewish people and 'the times' - "Mekadesh Yisrael Vehazmanim". Chazal (Pesachim 117b) explain: יומא טבא דישראל הוא דקבעי ליה דקמעברי ירחי וקבעי לשני מקדש ישראל והזמנים. Shabbat was set by God. It comes weekly like clockwork. "Zmanim", the months and Yom Tov, are established by us. We begin the Seder with this Kiddush to highlight the partnership between God and Yisrael in sanctifying time. This is central to the freedom of Pesach. R' Soloveitchik beautifully describes the relationship between time and freedom: "The slave has no time consciousness of his own, for he has no time of his own… The basic criterion which distinguishes freeman from slave is the kind of relationship each has with time and its experience…"

As Am Yisrael left slavery, the process prescribed to prepare for Matan Torah was Sefirat Haomer, a counting that requires the luxury of precision and mastery of time. Similarly the first mitzvah given amidst the Exodus was "HaChodesh haZeh lachem" -- the commandment to establish Rosh Chodesh. Agency over time, to leverage and sanctify it, is the essence of freedom. When external forces have slowed our fast-paced lifestyles, or further clogged our schedules, it is essential to seek freedom, claim ownership over how we use our time, and be Mekadesh haZmanim.

ורחץ

Zecher L'Mikdash

- Nina Miller

Rabbi Immanuel Bernstein writes in his Haggadah that we wash our hands for Urchatz in preparation for Karpas, where we will dip a vegetable in saltwater. This is a precautionary measure because wet foods can contract tumah. Although some people are careful about this throughout the year, most feel that this precaution is only necessary during the times of the Beit Hamikdash. Why then, are we more careful about this on Pesach night? The Netziv answers that we do many things on Pesach night as a Zecher l'mikdash, a remembrance for the way things were done in the times of the Beit Hamikdash. For example, the korech sandwich is a remembrance of the way the korban pesach would be eaten in the times of the Beit Hamikdash. As we celebrate the geulah from Mitzrayim, we also anticipate our future geulah when we will once again observe these laws.

כרפס

What Dips?

- Adele Lerner

Why do we dip the Karpas into salt water? Kabbalah explains that dipping, טיבול, is a manifestation of ביטול; the letters are the same, as are the acts. The thing we are dipping gives up some of its "flavor-space" to make room for the dip to contribute. The Lubavitcher Rebbe points out that dipping elevates the food, making it more luxurious. We see in our supermarkets that dips are some of the most expensive shabbos foods, sometimes more expensive per pound than meat. So how can these ideas work together?

On Pesach, we immerse ourselves in the act of ביטול. We tell the story of our nation's birth, where we had to rely solely on Hashem, while we eat unleavened bread, symbolizing humility. In a year like this, where we have been instructed to prepare for the holiday at the bare minimum, and where we have a more acute understanding than ever that we are powerless before Hashem and that we must meet the needs of others before our own, our sense of nullification is all-encompassing. But in that nullification, in that feeling of being small and unable to affect change, we have a beautiful opportunity to let go of everything holding us back and to jump into Hashem's arms. We are accustomed to being in control, but this Pesach more than ever, we can face Hashem with a profound understanding that it's all up to Him. As we dip our Karpas, we are reminded to "let go, and let G-d".

(Based on a Sicha from the Lubavitcher Rebbe, ZY"A, found in the Kol Menachem Haggadah)

יחץ

The Narrow and Wide

- Adele Lerner

Yachatz is a Matzah paradox. When we split the Matzah, each piece assumes a radically different identity, to name a few: one becomes the poor man's bread, the other becomes the afikomen which represents the Korban Pesach; one stays on the table, the other is hidden. How can it be that this piece of Matzah contained these opposing ideas (and more), existing with this internal conflict?

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains this concept with a Pasuk from Tehillim: "Out of the straights I called upon G-d; G-d answered me with expansiveness" (118:5). We are living in a time of constriction, confusion and darkness. But as we lost our illusion of control, there were whispers across the world, yearning and davening for Moshiach to come. We have experienced a profound recognition of this very idea, that redemption comes from the tightest narrowest straights. The Jewish people were born through the unimaginable challenges of Mitzrayim and now, we are experiencing the challenges of the birth pangs of Moshiach. We must keep our faith and believe with full hearts that, no matter what darkness and pain we face, we know Moshiach is coming any second. He is right around the corner.

(Based on a Sicha from the Lubavitcher Rebbe, ZY"A, found in the Kol Menachem Haggadah)

מגיד

The Goal of the Seder

- Robin Tassler

What exactly is the goal of the Seder? Many say that the purpose is to tell over the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim. If we are supposed to be retelling the story, then what grade would you give “hagaddah committee” to? Throughout the entire Maggid, the actual story never seems to get told! The only inkling of the story we have is five pesukim that a farmer says when he brings bikkurim. Not once do we quote anything from Sefer Shmot. Since this is the case, clearly the point of the Seder is not to tell over the story. We know the story, the story is not our mesorah. It is written down in Sefer Shmot and we read it every year a couple of months before Pesach. Seder night therefore is not about telling the story, it’s about using the story for a higher purpose.

If we were to read the story in Shemot, we would have the misconception that Judaism belongs to the Tzadikim. The whole story is given over through the perspectives of Moshe, Aharon, and Miriam. By bringing in the Pesukim of Mikre Bikkurim, we take the perspective of a regular Jew who’s a farmer. His perspective, which is the same as all of ours, is that life get’s hard sometimes, but when we cry out to Hashem, Hashem hears us and takes care of us. The goal of Seder night is to give us that perspective of the average Jew. We were slaves, we cried out, and then Hashem saved us because He loves us. The Seder is about building strong minded Jews who truly understand that the story of the yeztiat mitzrayim is the story of our lives.

הא לחמא עניא

Our Mission Statement

- Mrs. Rikki Ash

We are in a unique quandary this year in understanding the first verse of Maggid, Halachma Anya. Not only are we unable to invite guests while sitting at our seder tables, but we have literally been mandated by our Rabbis not to have any guests at all at our seder table. How can we say, with real emphatic meaning, that anyone who is hungry should come and eat with us?!

I’d like to offer an idea that I saw in the Chinuch Haggadah by Rabbi Yaakov Bender shli”ta. Rabbi Bender explains that this statement of “whoever is hungry should come and eat” is not to be taken literally. Instead, it is to be understood as our mission statement. In other words, the mission statement of the Jewish people is that we are people who welcome guests, and do chesed for others. While we may not have gotten the opportunity to invite guests for this particular chag, the chassadim going on in our communities around the world are tremendous- and truly speak to the mission statement that we are proclaiming loud and clear as we start the seder. With this iteration, we should think about the things we have done for others leading up to the Pesach Seder and with that, remember what we stand for as the Jewish people!

Food for the Body, Food for the Soul

- Mrs. Ashley Cohen

We begin Maggid by saying “whoever is hungry, let him come and eat; whoever is in need, let him come and celebrate the Pesach.” As with all of the Seder, we use this opportunity to teach our children the importance of chesed. How can we rejoice when there are those who are unable to eat and unable to partake of a Pesach Seder? And so we begin with an invitation. And a lesson in chesed.

But the idea goes beyond this. Why is the message repeated? If we have already invited those who are hungry, why must we also invite those in need? Are those in need not the same as those who are hungry? With this invitation we focus on two different types of people - a hungry person and a person in need, spiritually.

There are only two blessings that are sourced in Torah - the blessing after completing a meal, and the blessing we make before learning Torah. Why these two? As human beings we are made up of a body and a soul. Our food sustains our body and our Torah sustains our soul. We need both to live. The Pesach Seder enriches both aspects of our being. We are nourished physically, by partaking of delicious foods. But we are also nourished spiritually as we delight in the depth of Torah awaiting us on Seder night. For a truly meaningful Seder, both should be present. Further, as Jews we care about and account for the lives of all other Jews. So we begin our Pesach Seder with an invitation to all those in need - both physically and spiritually, may they also be welcome at our seder.

All Who are Hungry Don’t Come and Eat

- Rabbanit Pesha Fischer

We start the Magid portion of the seder with the phrase Kol Dichphin Yeiti Veyechol- All who are hungry come and eat. This year the statement feels out of place as we are not having guests that do not live in our houses. Rabbi Soloveitchik, in his haggadah, asks the following related question. While it is true that Hachnasat Orchim is a great mitzvah, it doesn't have any place in the mitzvah of haggadah. In the Gemara in Taanit (Daf 20), it is recorded that Rabbi Huna would say this phrase every day and not just on Seder night. He answers that a slave does not have the ability to invite guests, as the home that he lives in doesn’t belong to him. Therefore, we begin the seder by proclaiming our freedom, by "inviting" guests to the seder which shows that we are bnei chorin. This year without inability to have guests, we show our freedom by not inviting guests. We show our freedom by choosing to follow the mitzvah of Vinishmartem Meod et Nafshoteihim- guarding our lives. This year, by not inviting guests, we show our freedom to protect our health, the health of our friends and family and the rest of the world. May the following of this mitzvah allow us to have many guests in the years to come.

Greater than Angels

- Meira Zakutinsky

We start off the Seder by saying "Ha Lachma Anya" which is in Aramaic. As we know, the Seder is one of the holiest nights (if not the holiest night) of the Jewish calendar. The question is, if the Seder is so holy, why wouldn't we start the Seder with the holiest language; Hebrew? While Many Sefarim ask this question, the Arugas HaBosem says that Aramaic is the

only language that the angels do not understand. On this night, we pass above the level of the angels and Hashem comes down to join us. We start the Seder by reading Aramaic to show that on this night, even the angels are not invited, this is a night set aside for the Jewish people and Hashem. This is also why we end the Seder with "Chad Gadya" (which is also in Aramaic) to show that Hashem did not only join us in the beginning of the Seder but He "sat" with us all the way through until the end. Let us utilize this night with Hashem at the Seder and remind ourselves that all is "Mesudar" in our lives because Hashem is sitting with us.

מה נשתנה

The 'So-What' Factor

- Mrs. Channah Cohen

This introductory paragraph leads off Maggid for good reason. This line is of utmost importance: וַאֲפִילוּ כֻּלָּנוּ חֲכָמִים כֻּלָּנוּ נְבוֹנִים... מִצְוָה עָלֵינוּ לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם. We are instructed here, at the beginning of the haggadah, that our main responsibility is not to engage in highfalutin analysis but instead: to tell a STORY. As we all know, a story isn't very compelling if it doesn't have a point, a "so-what factor". As you read through Maggid, ask yourself: what message is this story trying to tell me?

One answer can be seen from a Midrash on Tehillim that offers a metaphor for the Exodus. The Medrash paints a rather graphic picture: the Exodus was like a man who reaches his hands into a birthing animal, and helps to pull out the baby. This is reflected in our paragraph: וְאִלּוּ לֹא הוֹצִיא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא...הֲרֵי אָנוּ וּבָנֵינוּ וּבְנֵי בָנֵינוּ ...מְשֻׁעְבָּדִים הָיִינוּ לְפַרְעֹה בְּמִצְרָיִם . Without God reaching into history and forcibly pulling us out of Egypt, the Jewish Nation would never have been born. The main point of this story is God's intentional intervention into nature in order to create something new: the Jewish people. But later we are exhorted not to forget: אַף אוֹתָנוּ גָּאַל עִמָּהֶם! This is also the story of God's intervention to create each of us, us individual Jews, living centuries after the Exodus story, and so there is significance and meaning to the way that each of us engages and invests in this Pesach holiday.

Essence vs. Circumstance

- Ayelet Shachar

The lashon of Avadim Hayinu L'Paroh seems curious. Perhaps, it would have been more appropriate to recall our experience of slavery as Avdei Paroh instead. Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik explains two ways to describe someone: circumstance or essence. When describing someone circumstantially, I may say, "She has a nice family" or, "He is in law school". When describing someone in terms of essence, I may say, "She is caring" or, "He is thoughtful". Thus, circumstantially and externally, we were Avadim Hayinu L'Paroh, we were slaves to Paroh. But in our essence, internally, we were Jews; with connected roots as descendants of Avraham,Yitzchok and Yaakov, yearning for the fulfillment of promises made long before, believing freedom would come.

Anytime it refers to Avdei Paroh, it refers to gentiles. The only time Klal Yisroel is described as Avdei anything or anyone, is in calling us Avdei Hashem. We are not Avadim L'Hashem but Avdei Hashem. We are not just circumstantially in a place that we are serving

G-d, we didn't just happen to be here. Internally and in our essence, we are always Avdei Hashem. This is most poignantly displayed when Hashem shows Moshe the burning bush. Externally and circumstantially, the bush is burning, yet at its core and essence, the internal part of the bush remains unextinguished. This lesson remains as true on Seder night and all other nights, as it did on the night so long ago when we gained our freedom and became Avdei Hashem for eternity.

Emerging as Brothers

- Rebbetzin Penina Bernstein

We are told in Avadim Hayinu that we were slaves in Egypt, and that HaKadosh Baruch rescued us from Mitzrayim. Throughout this process of slavery to freedom, Klal Yisrael transformed from a family to a nation. And yet, that process took place under the most difficult of circumstances - the experience of being slaves in a land not their own. Ironically, it was the growth that Bnei Yaakov experienced that in many ways prompted the enslavement in Egypt - in that the growth of Klal Yisrael scared the Egyptians, and caused them to enslave the Jews. When thinking about this transformation, one has to wonder as to what allowed the Jews to emerge as a nation even through all of this difficulty.

While there are many answers to this question, Rabbi Hirsch offers a beautiful approach that responds to this question. Rabbi Hirsch explains that the source of the Jews spending time in Mitzrayim was קנאה and שנאת חינם, more specifically the story of the sale of Yosef by his brothers. The fact that the Jews spent time in slavery and oppression in Egypt forced them to develop feelings of brotherhood toward each other, through a common cause of suffering. This “crucible of exile refined and purified” the nation and developed within them a sense of unity and equality, that caused them to emerge as a united nation upon their exodus from Egypt. This message can impact our own experience in Galus right now, which we are told by the Gemara was also cause by קנאה and שנאת חינם. While we might be “socially-distanced” from each other currently, it is our obligation to continue to work on our feelings of unity and אהבת ישראל, so that we too can emerge as a strong and united nation upon our exodus from our current Galus, may it be soon in our time.

מעשה ברבי אליעזר

Messages for Today

- Mrs. Aliza Adler

Maaseh B’Rabbi Eliezer, which details 5 Rabbis who stay up all night telling the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim, comes right after the portion of the Haggadah which states “anyone who spends extra time telling the story of the exodus from Egypt, behold he is praiseworthy.” On a basic level, the placement of these two sections suggests that the story of R’ Eliezer, R’ Yehoshua, R’ Elazar Ben Azaryah, R’ Akiva & R’ Tarfon, is in the Haggadah to illustrate a group of people who are in fact spending extra time telling the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim.

But if we look a little deeper, this story has a message that can resonate with all of us, this year in particular. These five Rabbis are Tanaim who lived in the time of the second Beit

Hamikdash, and the fact that they are having their Seder in Bnei Brak, not Yerushalayim, suggests that this Seder is taking place after the churban of the Beit Hamikdash. These Tanaim are having a very different Pesach experience than they are used to - this Pesach was a much harder experience for these Rabbis than usual. Furthermore, the Gemara in Sanhedrin tells us that R' Akiva was the host of this Seder. The Rabbis went to R' Akiva because he was known for being able to find the good in a bad situation. This year, many of us will be spending Pesach in ways we didn't anticipate, but like R' Akiva and the others, we should strive to find the good in the bad and putting our hearts and souls into telling the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim through the night, be'h.

ארבעה בנים

Two Types of Questions

- Mrs. Bracha Krohn

What is the difference between the Chacham's question and the Rasha's question? They are both asking "why are we doing what we're doing?" Yet somehow we greet the Chacham's question with an answer and explanation, but then we yell at the Rasha. Why is this the case?

If you look at the opening of each pasuk before the question (which are not found in the haggadah), we can understand why Chazal labels one of them as a Chacham and one as a Rasha. With the Chacham in Devarim (6:20-21) it says "כִּי־יִשְׁאָלְךָ בִנְךָ מָחָר לֵאמֹר" and by the Rasha in Shemot (12:26) it says "וְהָיָה כִּי־יֹאמְרוּ אֲלֵיכֶם בְּנֵיכֶם". What's the difference between לשאול and לאמר? If both of them are questions, why do they have different words before their actual questions? The answer could be that the Chacham is really asking while the Rasha is just saying. When you say a question, it comes across as rhetorical and sarcastic. When you ask a question, it comes across as seeking the answer. When the chacham asks, you get a nice response. However, when you merely say all of this, as the Rasha does, you are only looking to put it all down and that is the type of attitude that we dismiss.

When we're asking questions, we should be zoche to ask them in the right manner with proper Derech Eretz and to truly be seeking the right answer. We should be careful that all of our questions are sincere. We should not only be asking to seek knowledge, but rather we should also be seeking a closeness to Hakosh Baruch Hu.

The Basics of the ABC's

- Leora Zomick

When we arrive at the son known as the שאינו יודע לשאול- the one who is unable to ask, we are told that in order to teach him את פתח לו- you (she) must open him (his mouth). At first glance, and based on the translation of most any Haggadah, it appears that "את" is a person, but according to Hashir V'Hashevach "את" is referring to a subject. What should you open for him? א-ת, the Aleph Beis, start at the beginning. The first thing we teach our children is the ABC's so that they can use the letters to form words, words to form sentences, and sentences to form knowledge. For the child who cannot ask, we should go back to the basics of the ABC's.

מתחילה עובדי עבודה זרה

You Can Always Come Back

- Shoshi Rub

Why are we talking about the Avos at the seder? Not only that, but why are we talking about the Avos worshiping avoda zarah? We know that when Bnai Yisrael were leaving Mitzrayim they too were worshiping avoda zarah, so there must be a connection here. The Avodas Yisrael suggests that these lessons are here to teach us that no matter how far off the path of avodas Hashem we fall, we can always come back. Don't think that just because you did something bad in the eyes of Hashem, you cannot come back. As it says 'in the beginning they worshiped idols, but now they are serving Hashem.' As long as we can focus on how we act right now, Hashem will welcome us with open arms.

והיא שעמדה

Strengthening the Derabanan

- Nili Turetsky

As we say ViHee SheAmdo, we cover the Matzos and we elevate our cup of wine. What is the significance of this?

I heard a beautiful answer many years ago from Rabbi Pesach Oratz zt"l. He quoted the Talmidei HaBaal Shem Tov, who explained that the Matzah is a Mitzvah Midoraysa while the four cups of wine is a Mitzvah MiDerabanan. We are essentially covering up the Torah commandments and elevating the Rabbinic commandments. Our adherence to the Mitzvos Miderabanan like stam yenam and other prohibitions have allowed us to continue as a nation and kept us from assimilation despite the many attempts to destroy us throughout the generations.

צא ולמד

A Night of Midrash

- Mrs. Yael Goldfischer

Mishnah Pesachim 10:4 describes how one is to fulfill the obligation of sippur yetziat mitzrayim. The last line of the mishnah prescribes which text should be used for this story retelling. ודורש מארמי אובד אבי עד שיגמור כל הפרשה כולה- we expound upon the verses contained in Devarim chapter 26 which contain the farmer's speech when bringing his first fruits to the Beit Hamikdash.

What is midrash and why do the rabbis feel it is necessary to engage in midrashic study at the seder? Mordechai Breuer in his introduction to Pirkei Moadot writes that midrash is concerned with drawing meaning, encouraging active engagement and drawing out religiously inspiring messages from the text.

Rabbi Soloveitchik writes in his שיעורים לזכר אבא מרי, that the seder is the one time we are instructed to engage in midrash. This perhaps is the reason why Chazal chose the pesukim of mikra bikurim- they are on the one hand, a relatively short text that summarizes the slavery and redemption and yet they are full of repetition. These two components of brevity and redundancy create a most fertile landscape for midrash to plant their teachings. Midrashim love to add in more to the text so a short text is a perfect canvas. In addition, the use of synonymous phrases allows midrash to differentiate each phrase and use omnisigificance to explain these poetic redundancies. It is the relevancy of these interpretations to our lives that attracts us to these timeless comments of the Rabbis.

ויוציאנו ה׳ ממצרים

Ein Od Milvado

- Ms. Chevi Garfinkel

There is a takeaway lesson that we can get from the pesach story and that is ein od milvado - there is no one like Hashem, Hashem runs the world. The question one can then ask is how does Hashem run the world? When interacting with people there are two ways to have a conversation: a monologue or a dialogue. A monologue being when one person is leading the conversation with no other input and a dialogue which allows for feedback and input from others. So how does Hashem run the world - with a monologue or dialogue? The answer is both. In some ways Hashem runs the monologue and in some ways He allows for a dialogue.

In the Bris Bein Habesarim, Hashem promised Avraham that He would protect us and never let us fail completely. This means that when Hashem sees that we were too low, no matter what He wouldn't destroy us and we can always redeem ourselves. Rather than leave us hanging, He promised that no matter what there would be a geula. This fits into our model of how Hashem runs the world. Hashem promised there would be a geula which is Hashem running the world as a monologue; he will ensure that we are redeemed no matter what. However, there is also dialogue, as we are the ones that determine how and when that geula might take place. Why is this important? It tells that even with ein od milvado, our actions really do matter.

The One and Only Hashem

- Leora Zomick

Why does the Hashem go out of his way to emphasize that it was only him that took us out of Mitzrayim and 'not the hands of an angel'? Obviously we know that he is all powerful and that it was him who was there along the way, but why are we highlighting this point so much? The pasuk that we go over at the seder lists all of the ways that Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim- "וַיּוֹצִאֵנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיָד חֲזָקָה, וּבִזְרֹעַ נְטוּיָה, וּבְמֹרָא גָּדֹל, וּבְאֹתוֹת וּבְמֹפְתִים" Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim with a strong hand, an outstretched arm, with great awe, signs and wonders. The Mateh Moshe explains that there was so much involved in Yetzias Mitzrayim. Not only was it all done by Hashem, but it couldn't have even been done by a malach because we know that malachim can each only perform one job. In addition to all of the things that took place when

Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim, there were two underlying goals: 1) to subdue the Mitzrim 2) to free Bnai Yisrael. Nothing was done by the hands of an angel because it was all part of one big puzzle, just with a lot of pieces. It could only have been Hashem who could have accomplished something like this in his great manner.

מכות

Estranged, Enslaved and Afflicted

- Lea Moskovich

Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch shares the following exploration of the pattern of the ten plagues. He begins with a simple question—why 10? The ten plagues came as 'מדה כנגד מדה' in response to three specific things the Egyptians did to us during our slavery. Firstly, the Egyptians made us feel like unwelcome visitors, or strangers in their land. Secondly, of course, is the harshness of the slavery itself. And lastly, the Egyptians were punished for imposing such prolonged and sustained affliction, as opposed to a momentary lapse of societal character.

It was in response to these three reasons that Hashem brought 10 plagues—to make the Egyptians feel estranged, enslaved, and afflicted. Blood, wild animals, and hail were meant to show the Egyptians that Hashem was the only entity that controlled their lands and homes. Hashem succeeded in stripping the slave masters of everything over which they had domain. Frogs, pestilence, and locusts, were intended to give the Egyptians a small taste of slavery. They were no longer able to sleep or relax at their leisure, lost any source of income, and were forced to survive by eating whatever scraps the swarms left behind. Lastly, the lice, boils, and darkness served as direct afflictions to the Egyptians' own bodies, inflicting upon them many of the same pain that they caused the Jews for years. One of the most important things we can learn from this sequence is the meticulousness with which Hashem chooses to deploy his omnipotence.

Hashem's Mighty Hand

- Meira Zakutinsky

We know that Hashem performed the makkos to show His mighty Hand to the entire world and that He will always protect the Jewish people. The Nesivos Shalom says that if one analyzes each of the makkos, she will see that Hashem was showing His control over the world from the smallest to the largest degree of control. The first few makkos involved the water (Dam, Tzefardia). He then showed his reign over all small things which crawl on the ground (Kinim, Arov) to larger animals on the ground (Dever). He then showed His control over the air (Shchin, Barad, Arbeh). He then showed his control over celestial creations such as the sun (Choshech). Finally, He showed that He controlled life itself (Makas Bechoros). Hashem performed the makkos in this order to show the entire world that it is He Who runs the world. Let us internalize this message and trust that Hashem's mighty Hand can and will save us once again.

דינו

Would it Really Have Sufficed?

- Robin Tassler

How does this whole song make sense? Would Hashem splitting the sea for us, but not bringing us through to dry land really have sufficed?! If not for the next part of the story, we wouldn't be alive! What does the term "dayenu" really mean then?

The Malbim explains that Dayenu comes at a very specific point during the seder. It is right after we have finished telling over the story. We know what happened in Egypt and we know how Hashem took us out. At this point in the seder, it is now time to thank Hashem for everything he did for us. The conventional mode of giving thanks to Hashem is by reciting the Hallel, but right before we do that we want to really make sure we show Hashem just how much we appreciate all that He did for us. The way that we show this appreciation is by reciting Dayenu. Dayenu reminds us of each and every step in the Yetziat Mitzrayim process and ensures that our thank you in Hallel isn't just lip service. By enumerating all the miracles Hashem performed for us, we gain a new perspective on what happened when we left Mitzrayim.

If Hashem had only split the sea for us, but not brought us into dry land would we have become a nation? Most likely not, but does that mean that Hashem doesn't deserve our thanks for splitting the sea? Anything Hashem does for us is deserving of a thank you and that is what the term Dayenu teaches us. Dayenu means "it would have sufficed" - each act that Hashem did would have sufficed a thank you from us to Him! If each act alone sufficed a thank you, all the more so we should be praising Hashem for performing all 15 acts! The reason why Dayenu is placed right before we begin Hallel is to ensure that when we do say Hallel, we say it with a truly happy and thankful heart.

פסח, מצה, ומרור

This is Emunah

- Mrs. Esther Wein

The main pasuk that the entire haggadah is based on is in Shmos 13:8- "וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר בַּעֲבוּר זֶה עָשָׂה יְהוָה לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם: The question is, how do you translate that pasuk? "On that night you should tell your child that on account of this Hashem took me out of Mitzrayim." We know from the end of the Haggadah where Raban Gamliel say that a person is not yotzei the mitzvah unless he points to 'pesach, matzah and marror' when he says "בַּעֲבוּר זֶה". The problem is 'pesach, matzah and marror' commemorates the great miracles that happened when we were coming out of Mitzrayim: pesach- Hashem skipped our houses, matzah- the bread didn't rise, marror- everything was bitter. If we are eating these things to remember the nisim, then the pasuk doesn't make sense. It should say that these "בַּעֲבוּר זֶה," that on account of Hashem taking us out we do these things; instead it says "בַּעֲבוּר זֶה," on account of doing these things Hashem took us out.

According to Rabbi Shimon Schwab the answer is that the night of Yetizas Mitzrayim, the Jews ate korban pesach before chatzos, before the miracle of Hashem skipping their houses even happened; then they ate matzah, before the neis that happened the next day when the dough didn't rise; they ate marror before it was a bitter memory. On the night of Pesach, the Jews ate the simanim with the Emunah that the Nissim would happen and that years later we would still use those simanim to commemorate the Nissim. When we say "בַּעֲבוּר זֶ֫ה" we are referring to the Emunah that the Nissim would happen. It is the same זֶ֫ה of the Yam Suf when they said "זֶה אֵלִי וְאַנְוֵהוּ." The mitzvah of the night is to trust that Hashem will perform the miracles of geula.

הלל

Oh We're Halfway There

- Mrs. Esther Grossman

The question is asked why do we only recite Hallel Shalem the first day of Chag? The answer usually given is from the Gemara (cited both in Megillah and Sanhedrin) when HaShem admonishes the Angels מעשה ידי טובעין בים ואתם אומרים שירה "the Mitzrim, (who HaShem fashioned), are drowning in the sea, and you want to sing songs to Me?" This first answer is about sensitivity to Hashem's creatures being killed and it not being appropriate to be singing joyfully while that is happening (or marking the day it happened). The result being if we can't say full Hallel on the seventh day of Pesach, we won't say it during the days of Chol HaMoed which are of a lower level than a Chag day, and what remains is only the first day of Pesach's recitation of full Hallel.

The Sefas Emes (Pesach תרל״ז) views this practice differently. He connects it to something else going on at the Seder-the hiding of the Afikomen. Once we do יחץ and break the middle matzah in half, we put the bigger half away for consumption during צפון (literally "that which is hidden"). The miracle of Yetzias Mitzrayim was only the first half of our redemption-it's not complete until ביאת גואל הצדק, and, with every generation, we get closer to that point. So while we recite full Hallel the first day of Pesach, we can't do that the remaining days because we're still in the process of experiencing the complete Geulah. BezH may that time of Hallel Shalem come soon. (והמבין יבין in terms of עניני דיומא)

Concluding Maggid with Gratitude

- Mrs. Michal Horowitz

We conclude Maggid by saying "לְפִיכָךְ אֲנַחְנוּ חַיָּבִים לְהוֹדוֹת, לְהַלֵּל, לְשַׁבֵּחַ…*Therefore we are obligated to thank, praise, laud, glorify*…" Hashem. But was the story that we told in Maggid all good? The experience that the Bnai Yisrael had during the Egyptian enslavement was one filled with suffering and pain. Is it possible to praise G-d even from affliction? What do we learn from the conclusion of Maggid, which is thanks and songs of praise?

We can derive an important and profound life lesson from here: every day may not be good, but there is something good in every day. If we were to make a list of the complaints we had for Hashem, *keviyachol* (as if it were possible), and the things we are thankful for, the latter

would be much longer. Regardless of what is on the first list, we still have much in life to be thankful for.

When it comes to thanking Hashem in the *Amidah* at Modim we must be cognizant of all the good in our lives, despite the pain. During Chazaras Hashatz, the only bracha that the tzibbur says along with the chazan is Modim. According to the Avudraham this is because a shaliach, a messenger, cannot thank someone else on your behalf. Expressing thanks is *a personal experience*; something each of us must do for ourselves.

And so… despite the hardships that Bnai Yisrael endured in Mitzrayim and the struggles that we face every day, *anachnu chayavim - we are obligated*! - to find something every day to be thankful for. And for this, and so much more, we offer thanks and praise to Hashem.

Let's Raise the Roof

- Dr. Rayzel Yaish

This year as we have been saying Tehillim for the many cholim that have flooded our awareness during these mysterious days, Hallel which is a string of Tehillim 113-118, becomes even more important and familiar, the potential for raising our intensity and connection to Hallel even more possible. Some years we can feel sleepy when we hit Hallel in the Haggadah. It starts right after we wash our hands, eat matzoh, maror and the meal, and continues after when we are full and possibly worn out. Rabbi Eliezer Niehaus comments in an amazing article on Hallel, that "the word Hallel is similar to the word "hollelus" which means wildness. In other words, when we say Hallel we do not merely relate the praises of Hashem in a subdued manner – we go all out!" The Gemara in Pesachim 85b writes that when the Jews ate the Korban Pesach, they said Hallel with so much passion it was as if the roofs of their homes were about to burst off! If we take even a surface look, even in English at the words of the Tehillim that compose our Hallel we will find much to relate to. We are calling to Hashem, min hameitzar, from the depths. For some this year those depths are unimaginable. Yet we know, or we are trying to tap into that knowing, that Hashem who has saved us before who loves us will be there for us again. Hallel, says Rabbi Hirsch, is a huge Bitachon boost. It reminds us to praise Hashem and notice the miraculous nature of our lives and our world every day, via the vehicle of acknowledgment that Hallel provides on our holidays. Let us say Hallel with energy, Min Hameitzar Karati Kah- We are calling to you from the depths of our pain Hashem, and yet we are Hodu La'Hashem Ki Tov- we know that you are our Good. May we feel the comfort of Tehillim and the joy of Hallel and the gift of Pesach, and a full Refuah to all of Klal Yisroel and all.

רחצה

From Maggid to Rachtza

- Shoshi Rub

While Leil HaSeder may seem haphazard and all over the place, the name of the night reminds us that there is an order and purpose to everything we do. The placement of Maggid and Rachtza back to back is no coincidence. The Alshich Hakadosh says that the two names of

these parts of the Seder tell us why they are placed this way. Maggid is about telling others about something and Rachtza represents the tahara process. On Leil Haseder it is not enough to simply purify one's self, but we have an extra obligation to bring in others and encourage them to purify themselves as well. Leil HaSeder can be an extremely inspirational and spiritual night and it is our job to tell others about this amazing opportunity so that they too can be inspired.

מוציא מצה

Is That Really Why We Eat Matzah?

- Mrs. Emma Katz

Rabbi Gamliel states that the reason that we eat matzah on Pesach is to remember the dough that the Jewish people prepared as they were leaving Mitzrayim that did not have time to rise. How does this make sense? Bnei Yisrael were commanded to eat matzah before they left Mitzrayim! How could they remember something that had not yet occurred? The Abarbanel answers that although they did eat matzah as slaves in Mitzrayim, and with their first Korban Pesach, Hashem commanded them to eat Matzah for 7 days in commemoration of the geulah which had not yet occurred. Why would Hashem do that, and not just wait until after they had left to give them this mitzvah? Before Bnei Yisrael left Mitzrayim, they were obsessed with fulfilling the commandments Hashem had given them regarding the geulah. The Abarbanel describes Bnei Yisrael as shaking in anticipation of performing these mitzvot. However, as is typical of human nature, once they had left Egypt, they did not feel the same nervous excitement at the thought of performing mitzvot. Therefore, Hashem wanted to give them the important mitzvah of matzah at a time when they were in a frame of mind where their sole focus was fulfilling Ratzon Hashem. We are meant to commemorate the geulah from Mitzrayim not only as a historical event, but as a time when we were bursting with excitement and passion for fulfilling Ratzon Hashem, and strive to bring these feelings into our Avodat Hashem.

מרור

Hindsight is 20:20

- Ayelet Shachar

Most of us have been raised on the notion that we eat Marror to remember the bitterness of slavery. Yet if we were to look closely, the Jews who left Mitzrayim were also commanded to eat Marror. Why would the very people, who themselves suffered years of slavery, and quite literally tasted the bitterness, need to eat bitter food to remember the pain of what they endured? Rabbi Reuven Leuchter explains that it was only after Geulah that the Jews were able to look back and see how the pain and suffering they experienced, bitter as it may have been, played a crucial role in the creation of the Klal Yisroel and their sacred mission. Rabban Gamliel lists Maror (which parallels Galus/Shibbud) after Pesach and Matzah (which parallel Geulah), when it seems the order should have been the reverse. Perhaps, he did such to highlight that it was only in retrospect, ex post facto, that Klal Yisroel was able to understand how Hashem's

revelation emerged precisely from the darkness of slavery.

This is the salient point that Marror highlights within Avodas Hashem as a whole. We may know that our mission is to reveal Hashem in the world, but the seemingly pointless suffering of Galus conceals Hashem and causes us to feel as though any of our efforts to reveal Him are for naught. Thus, we eat Marror to internalize that though we may not understand it now, the ordeals of Galus play a crucial role in ultimately revealing Hashem's absolute sovereignty. The bitter taste reminds us that the bitter Galus we experience, which often seems to contradict our mission of spreading and revealing Hashem, is in fact the essential piece in revealing it.

כורך

What Does it Mean to Be Free?

- Leora Moskowitz

When the Torah was given to Bnei Yisrael at Har Sinai, it says that the laws were engraved in the luchot (Shemot 32:15). The language of *engraved* connotes a sense of rigidness and strictness. The Gemara (Eruvin 54) explains how to read the passuk: "As it is stated: "Engraved"; do not read it engraved [charut] but rather freedom [cheirut]." The Torah should not be viewed as being restrictive, but rather as offering freedom. How so?

The Netivot Shalom (Parshat Mishpatim, Eved Ivri) explains that a person will always be a slave, but he can choose where his servitude lies. You can either be a slave to your *yotzer* or *yetzer*. Yotzer refers to Hashem, and Yetzer refers to your inclinations. Restrictions force man to stay on the right path, even when overcome by other inclinations. The Torah's system of rules gives us freedom to lead a productive and meaningful life.

This concept of freedom is demonstrated in Korech. Korech is comprised of two main elements: Matzah and Maror. Matzah is the expression of our freedom, as Bnei Yisrael hastily left Mitzrayim without even allowing their bread to rise. Maror embodies the bitterness and pain of slavery. In Korech, we combine the two foods to demonstrate their interwovenness- that freedom does not exist without slavery. May we all be zoche to experience the true freedom that the Torah offers, as it is represented by Korech.

שולחן עורך

What Doesn't Kill You Makes You Stronger

- Nili Turetsky

There is a minhag Yisrael to start the meal with a hard boiled egg. What is the symbolism behind this minhag? Rav Shlomo Carlebach explained that most foods, when boiled, become soft. An egg, when boiled, becomes hard. He explained that this is symbolic of the Jewish nation; the more pressure and "heat" that is exerted upon us, the stronger and more permanent we become.

צפון

Is Afikomen Just a Child's Game?

- Mrs. Jaclyn Sova

"To keep the children engaged" is the reason seemingly given for so many aspects of the seder. Truthfully, this answer often left me feeling disappointed because it suggests that many symbols and traditions we incorporate into seder night are stripped of deeper meaning. To me, it drained depth from what otherwise would feel like an enriched experience. Of course there is value to keeping children engaged, especially on a night focused on telling them our Jewish story, but I would like to think the author(s) of the Haggadah deliberately incorporated actions, symbols and phrases that teach us something significant. Afikomen may seem like the classic example of trying to keep children engaged, and in fact, it does! However I would like to share another aspect of the afikomen that may highlight just how meaningful this aspect of the Seder is. Afikomen gets a lot of attention at our Seder and there are various halachos related to it that we need to keep in mind throughout the night. Afikomen is mentioned in our answer to the chacham, we must eat the afikomen by chatzos and ideally be satiated before we eat it. There is also a clear incentive, often by the father leading the seder, for any child who finds the hidden afikomen. What's this really all about? Rav Cohen from Michlalah suggests the following idea based on varying sources. When we divide the matza, the smaller half represents olam hazeh, this world, while the larger half represents olam haba, the world to come. When we are to eat the afikomen we are instructed to be full because this is how we should arrive to olam haba as well, full and saturated with Torah and mitzvos. Additionally, hiding that larger piece is the reminder that we too must be like the children, searching to get olam haba because we too will be rewarded, by our Father in heaven. Lastly, the afikomen provides the other half to the matza we kept. Very often in olam hazeh things are unclear and are hard to understand. When we put it together with the afikomen, olam haba, suddenly things become "whole" and clear, lacking the jagged edges they both had independent of each other. This year, with so many unanswered questions, we hope that connecting the afikomen to its other half will help usher in a time when we'll get answers to our difficult questions with the coming of mashiach iyH.

ברך

The Power of Rachel Imeinu

- Nili Turetsky

There's a Medrash that connects the four cups of wine to the four Imahot. The third cup of wine is drunk as part of the Bracha at the end of Bentching, Barech. The 3rd matriarch of Israel is Rachel Imeinu. What's the connection between Rachel Imeinu and Bentching? If you look at the words of Bentching, they are strong reminders that Hashem always takes care of our needs. Rachel Imeinu's role has been that of a provider and making sure that her children do not go without. רחל מבכה על בניה, Mamma Rachel has cried for us throughout all the גלויות and beseeched Hashem to take care of us and sustain us.

הלל

Thank You for Nothing?!

- Mrs. Dena Block

One of the fundamental themes of Pesach is the transition that the Jewish people as individuals underwent from slavery to freedom. When one considers this idea a bit more deeply though, the definition of freedom here is an unusual one. After our exile from Egypt, the Jewish people were not free to do whatever we pleased. In fact, the Talmud in Tractate Erchin 10b points out that when we say Hallel on Pesach we are thanking G-d and praising him that we are now servants of G-d and no longer servants of Pharoah. How could we be celebrating freedom on Pesach and at the same time celebrate being servants of G-d?

To answer this question, we must redefine what freedom means. Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik points out that the most fundamental criterion that distinguishes a slave from a free person is the relationship that person has with time. Rabbi Soloveitchik writes that "the slave has no time consciousness of his own, for he has no time of his own." Days and nights pass without the slave paying attention to time because his time does not belong to him. Freedom from bondage allowed each former slave to develop time consciousness and awareness of time.

The freedom the Jewish people experienced when they left Egypt, therefore, is not the capacity to do whatever one pleases. Rather, it's the capacity to appreciate time. Once the Jewish people left Egypt and achieved that ability to appreciate time, they were ready to receive the Torah whose obligations demand that we understand the notion of doing things at a certain hour, not earlier and not later. The Torah's obligations demand that we do not relate to time as one homogenous, empty stream of passing hours, rather, as Rabbi Soloveitchik describes, "as a glorious fabric" of complex developments and change.

Hashem is the Source of Blessing

- Rebbetzin Peshi Neuburger

We have the opportunity to praise Hashem with Hallel at the seder with the form of Hallel known as Hallel Hamitzri. The question is though, why doesn't this form of Hallel start with " בְּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם," why is that the second paragraph? To answer this question we need to realize what the first paragraph is about. The paragraph of "הַלְלוּיָ-הּ הַלְלוּ עַבְדֵי ה'" is about proclaiming Hashem's greatness and that He is the source of bracha. The paragraph discusses that it is not enough to realize that Hashem controls the world but we must recognize that He is the source of bracha as well. We use this paragraph to dispel those who claim that Hashem's hand is not active in this world. The best proof of Hashem's active hand in this world is a change in nature- like the ones that occurred during Yetzias Mitzrayim. While בְּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם may seem like an appropriate start to Hallel, especially on a night that our focus is discussing this event, we cannot possibly talk about the wondrous changes in nature that occurred without first proclaiming that Hashem is the source of it all with הַלְלוּיָ-הּ הַלְלוּ עַבְדֵי ה.

נרצה

A Complete Renewal

- Rachel Goldman

Nirtzah is the end, it's the conclusion of the Pesach seder. It's when we say to HaShem we did our best to complete the seder with all the proper laws and intentions. Why is this such a momentous occasion?

Rabbi Pincus explains that just as Tishrei is a new beginning, so too is the night of the Seder. On leil haSeder each one of us is transformed, we are each renewed. Rabbi Pincus compares this to a baby being born. Before a baby is born, the room is prepared, all the tools are cleaned and sterilized. During the birthing process there are many steps that, G-d forbid, can go wrong. Finally, after all the preparing and precautions being taken during the birthing process, the baby is born.

Before Pesach we prepare -- we clean out the chametz in our homes, but we also clean out the chametz in our souls, and then finally, we make it to a beautifully set Pesach seder. We go through every step ever so meticulously, making sure to have the proper measurements of matzah and the right amount of wine, share words of Torah etc. and then we near the end. We conclude the seder and we proclaim that we have gone through all the steps. "Chasal siddur Pesach…" - it is at this moment we are reborn!

Just as we did it this year, we will do it again next year; insinuating that we will keep growing and renewing each and every year. Of course, this moment would not be complete without hoping and praying that our next Seder will be in Yerushalayim haB'nuyah, with the coming of Mashiach speedily in our days.

Pleasing Ourselves and Hashem

- Mrs. Elana Jacobs

What does the word Nirtzah mean? The Shelah Hakadosh says it means pleased. This idea brings two thoughts to me at the end of the seder. First, Mrs. Shira Smiles says that at the end of the seder we should ask ourselves: Now that I had the seder and went through Yetzias Mitzrayim, how can I be a better person? The second idea wraps up the Seder with the song 'l'shana habah.' We have done all of the l'mitzvos of the Seder, sung Hallel, and now we hope Hashem will be pleased with us and therefore we will be zoche to rebuild the Beis Hamikdash, and thus we end by singing 'l'shana habah b'yerushalayim habenuyah".

לשנה הבא בירושלים!