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A GUIDE TO EREV PESACH THAT OCCURS ON SHABBOS

By: Rabbi Dovid Heber

Note: This article was originally written for Kashrus Kurrents 2001 and revised for the 2021 Passover Guide. The halachos apply whenever Erev Pesach falls on Shabbos. The next occurrences will take place in 2025 and then not again until 2045.

Many of us are quite familiar with the regular Erev Pesach routine: The bechorim go to a siyum, the chometz is burned, and we prepare for the Seder. However, every so often,¹ Erev Pesach occurs on Shabbos and we must modify our routine. Let us review the halachos of Shabbos Erev Pesach.

Thursday – Taanis Bechorim/Bedikas Chometz

On a regular Erev Pesach the first-born males (bechorim) are obligated to fast. This year the fast is pushed back to Thursday. Those bechorim who do not wish to fast should attend a siyum. Thursday night after tzeis hakochavim (when it gets dark), one should immediately perform bedikas chometz. A bracha and Kol Chamira (same as usual) are recited.

Friday – Erev Shabbos

Chometz which is necessary for Friday night and Shabbos morning meals should be placed in a disposable container away from all Pesach food. Although chometz may be purchased and eaten all day Friday, the custom is to sell and burn the chometz before the sof zman biur chometz (i.e., end of the 5th halachic hour of the day) corresponding to when that time occurs on the actual day of Erev Pesach. Burning it later could lead to confusion in subsequent years. Kol Chamira is not recited at the time of burning. All keilim should l'chatchila be kashered by this time. Bedi'eved one could kasher keilim until candle lighting on Friday.

The following preparations for the Seder should be made on Erev Shabbos:

Roast the egg and z'roa, check and clean lettuce leaves, chop the nuts for the charoses, and grate the horseradish. Food cooked for Shabbos and Yom Tov should be kosher l'Pesach and cooked in Pesach pots.

After chatzos (midday) on a regular Erev Pesach, one may not perform various melachos (e.g., shaving, doing laundry).² These halachos do not apply this year since Erev Shabbos is not actually Erev Pesach.

Friday Evening And Shabbos Day

Except for Hamotzi, all meals should be eaten on Pesachdig utensils. These utensils should not be brought to the table until after all crumbs have been cleared away. Alternatively, one may use disposable utensils.

The procedure for Hamotzi for all Shabbos meals is as follows:

Place the lechem mishneh on tissues or paper napkins on the table. No Kosher l'Pesach utensils should be on the table with the rolls.

Eat the rolls carefully over tissues/napkins, so that any remaining crumbs can be wrapped in the tissues and flushed or shaken out of the napkins and flushed.

It is advisable to use small fresh rolls for lechem mishneh (fresh rolls make fewer crumbs).

Clear the table of all chometz.

Discard all disposable items (e.g., plastic tablecloth, plates) used with chometz into a trash can.

Serve the rest of the Kosher l'Pesach meal on Pesachdig or disposable dishes.

For children who may leave crumbs, egg matzah may be substituted. Because the bracha on egg matzah is a matter of dispute, adults should use rolls for lechem mishneh.

After making Hamotzi and eating more than a kebei'a (i.e., more than two kezeisim) of the roll, adults may eat egg matzah until the sof zman achilas chometz.

On Shabbos Erev Pesach, regular matzah may not be eaten by anyone except children under six.

If one is concerned with eating any bread indoors, one may eat outdoors on the porch or in the backyard (if it is permissible to carry – i.e., within a reshush hayachid). Recite Hamotzi, eat the rolls, then sweep the crumbs off the table and off the porch. One may not sweep the crumbs into the wind or out of an eruv. Alternatively, eat over tissues or napkins and flush as above. One may finish the meal inside. Birchas Hamazon should l'chatchila be recited where the bread was eaten.

Shabbos Morning Meal

Shacharis on Shabbos morning should be scheduled earlier than usual because one must recite Hamotzi on lechem mishneh and finish all bread before the sof zman achilas chometz (i.e., end of the 4th halachic hour of the day).

After disposing of all chometz, one must recite the same Kol Chamira that is usually said when burning the chometz. This must be done before the sof zman biur chometz (end of the 5th halachic hour). It is recited even if it was already recited by mistake on Friday at the time of biur chometz.

One may continue his Kosher l'Pesach meal and recite Birchas Hamazon after these times.

Shabbos Afternoon Meal

During seuda shlishis on an ordinary Shabbos, one must have lechem mishneh and l'chatchila eat more than a kebei'a (i.e., more than two kezeisim) of bread after the time of Mincha Gedola (1/2 halachic hour after chatzos/midday). On this Shabbos, one may not eat bread or matzah at this time. What is the solution?

One should eat "other foods" during the afternoon meal, such as fish, fruits or Shehakol cakes (cakes made only from potato starch) any time between Mincha Gedola and sunset. However, if one eats these foods after the beginning of the tenth hour, one should be especially careful not eat too much thereby diminishing his appetite for the Seder.

For those who follow the custom of eating gebrochts on Pesach, cooked

products containing matzah meal (e.g., kneidlach) may be eaten if they are consumed before the 10th hour of the day. Baked matzah meal products, including cakes, may not be eaten anytime during the day.³

Splitting The Morning Meal

If time permits, it is preferable to “split the morning meal” by doing the following:

Recite Hamotzi and eat more than a kebei’a from the rolls.

Recite Birchas Hamazon and take a walk outside.

Then, wash for seuda shlishis and recite Hamotzi.

Be careful to finish the bread and dispose of the crumbs by the times indicated above.

If one “splits” the morning meal in this way, one must still eat something after Mincha Gedola as described above to fulfill the mitzvah of seuda shlishis in the prescribed time according to most opinions.

Motzei Shabbos And The Seder

All preparation for Yom Tov and the seder may not begin until Shabbos is over (tzeis hakochavim). As previously indicated, some preparations should be done before Shabbos. One may also wish to set the Seder table before Shabbos and eat in the kitchen on Shabbos to allow the Seder to begin as early as possible after Shabbos.

Kiddush and Havdalah (yaknahaz)⁴ are recited together at the Seder as printed in the Haggadah. One should recite Borei Me’orei Ha’aish using the Yom Tov candles, putting them together side by side while upright. They should not be tilted to touch each other. Alternatively, one may recite the bracha using a non-frosted incandescent light bulb which was turned on before Shabbos (or was turned on by a timer that was set before Shabbos).

At the Seder there is one change to the Haggadah: In the bracha of Asher G’alanu prior to the second cup of wine, we reverse the order and say min hapesachim u’min hazevachim (instead of the opposite order). This is due to the change in the order of korbanos when Pesach occurs on Motzei Shabbos.

Final Thoughts

When Erev Pesach occurs on Shabbos, it affords a rare opportunity to rest on Erev Pesach.

When I was a student in yeshiva, I once commented to Mr. Hyman Flaksz⁵, the Executive Director of the Vaad Hoeir of St. Louis, that when Erev Pesach occurs on Shabbos, preparations are so difficult. He answered, “This type of year is my favorite year. My work in the field of kashrus is so hectic before Pesach. With a Shabbos to rest, I can come to the Seder feeling like a mentch!”

Today, I understand exactly what he meant. As we all prepare for Pesach, amidst the hectic frenzy, we can look forward to the rare⁵ Erev Pesach which affords us an extra special Yom Menucha.

1. This occurs on average once every nine years, as frequently as every three years (e.g., 2005 and 2008), and as infrequently as every 20 years. For example, it did not occur between 1954 and 1974.

2. For a complete discussion, see “The Busiest Day of the Year: The Laws of Erev Pesach” at www.star-k.org.

3. Whether or not one eats gebroks, baked (and certainly cooked) matzah meal products may be eaten on Friday night.

4. Yaknahaz is a well-known acronym for Kiddush and Havdala on Motzei Shabbos. It stands for Yayin, Kiddush, Ner, Havdala and Zman (i.e., Shehecheyanu).

5. All the following events are unique to the rare year when Erev Pesach is Shabbos:

Purim and Lag Ba’omer are on Friday

Fast of B’HB falls on Pesach Sheini

We recite the Slichos before Rosh Hashana for eight days, the most days

possible.

During the following Tishrei we read the Torah for 11 days in a row – from Monday, Erev Sukkos, through Thursday, Isru Chag, more than is done at any other time.

fw from Hamelaket@gmail.com

From:<shul@yimidwood.org>

Date: April, 2008

Subject: [yimidwood] erev pesach on shabbos

Some Practical Guidelines for Erev Pesach:

Rabbi Eli Baruch Shulman

Option 1

One should make hamotzi on bread on a plastic table-cloth (use pita bread to avoid crumbs).

At least a kebeitzah of bread should be eaten by each person (1); say, somewhat less than one small pita per person.

The bread should be eaten at the same table as the rest of the meal (2).

Pre-school age children can be given matzoh instead of bread.

After having finished eating the bread, carefully remove any crumbs and flush them down the toilet, and continue with the remainder of the meal.

Kol chamira should now be said.

Bread should not be eaten after 10:16 AM; the house should be rid of chametz by 11:35 AM.

Dessert should be served after bentching. (3)

Option 2

If option 1 is not practical, then another legitimate approach is to use “matzoh ashirah”, e.g. egg matzoh or grape juice matzoh. Grape juice matzoh is preferable to egg matzoh (4). Kol chamira should be said.

Each person should eat a substantial amount of matzoh – at least a whole matzoh. (5)

One should not eat matzoh ashirah after 10:40 AM. (6)

If the meal continues after 10:40 AM, then dessert should be served after bentching. (7)

Matzoh ashirah should not be eaten on pesachdige utensils. Paper and plastic utensils should be used. (8)

Seudah Shelishis

According to most poskim seudah shelishis must be eaten in the afternoon. By this time one may not eat chametz, matzoh, or even egg matzoh. (9)

Therefore, seudah shelishis must be fulfilled with meat, fish, eggs or the like. (10) Although there are views that seudah shelishis requires mezonos, or even bread, in this case where it is not possible we rely on the views that it can be fulfilled with other foods.

Those who eat gebrokt can eat cooked – but not baked - foods made from matzoh meal; e.g. kneidlach. However, mezonos foods may not be eaten in the last quarter of the day, so as to leave an appetite for the seder. Therefore, kneidlach and the like should not be eaten after 4:00 PM.

If one eats the morning seudah early enough, it is possible to finish the seudah, take a short break to learn, take a walk etc., and then wash again. In this way, one will have fulfilled the requirement of seudah shelishis even according to those poskim who require that it be eaten with bread – at least according to the view that seudah shelishis can be eaten before noon.

NOTES:

1. Because the berachah of al netilas yadayim requires that a kebeitzah (=2 kezaisim) of bread be eaten

2. See Biur Halacha to 177:2, from which the following conclusions emerge:

If the bread portion of the meal, and the remainder of the meal, are eaten on the same table (even if on a different tablecloth) – then it is all considered one meal and the beracha of hamotzi continues to exempt all the other foods that make up the meal – until dessert. Regarding dessert itself, however, see below.

If, however, the bread portion of the meal, and the remainder of the meal,

are eaten on two different tables – then it is a matter of dispute between Rishonim whether or not the beracha of hamotzi can extend to the non-bread part of the meal. It is better, therefore, to avoid this situation. (If one does find oneself in this situation, we apply the rule that we are lenient in doubtful cases regarding berachos, and no further berachos are required – until dessert.)

3. Since it is a matter of dispute whether the berachos of hamotzi and of birkas hamazon can apply to the dessert in a case such as this where all the bread has been cleared off the table before dessert was eaten; see *ibid*.

4. Since according to the Rambam only the former is matzoh ashirah.

Obviously, from a practical standpoint, option 2 is more convenient. There is, however, a certain halachic trade-off, since there are views (that of the Vilna Gaon, for one) that maintain that the prohibition to eat matzoh on erev Pesach extends even to matzoh ashirah. However, the prohibition involved is rabbinic in any case, and one can rely on Rabbeinu Tam and the authorities who follow him who do allow matzoh ashira to be eaten on the morning of Erev Pesach.

5. Firstly, because the beracha of al netilas yadayim requires a kebeitzah of bread/matzoh to be eaten and, secondly, because egg matzoh and grape juice matzoh are pas habaah bekisnin on which the proper berachah would be mezonos unless they are eaten in sufficient quantity to be considered the basis of a meal.

6. Although we gave the z'man for stopping to eat chametz as 10:16, in regard to matzoh ashirah one can certainly follow the Vilna Gaon's view that hours should be reckoned from sunrise to sunset, rather than the Magen Avraham's view that they be reckoned from dawn to tzeis hakochavim. Hence, the z'man extends to 10:40.

7. Since one can no longer eat the matzoh, the situation is one of siluk yadayim min hapas which forms the subject of the dispute mentioned in note 3.

8. R' Shlomo Zalman Aurbach ז"ל, cited by sefer erev pesach shechal beshabos.

9. Ashekanzic custom is not to eat egg matzoh (or other forms of matzoh ashirah) after the z'man when chametz is prohibited has arrived, out of concern that the admixture of other substances to the dough may cause it to become chametz very quickly, before it finishes baking.

10. This is preferable to merely eating fruit, which is less substantial; see Orach Chaim 291: 5.

From: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** <ryfrand@torah.org>
3:39 PM (4 hours ago)

Rav Frand

Dedicated to the speedy recovery of Mordechai ben Chaya

Pesach: Reaching the Level of Ahavas Chinam

This dvar Torah was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: CD #1026 – Salt on the Table. Good Shabbos & Chag Kosher V'somayach!

I recently read a story which is not related to the parsha, but certainly falls into the category of inyanei d'yoma (contemporary events).

Rav Avraham Yitzchok HaKohen Kook (1865-1935), the first Chief Rabbi of Eretz Yisrael in modern times, was an outstanding genius, but he was a controversial figure. Certain rabbinic personalities of the "old yishuv" took issue with many of his ideas and positions. Rav Kook was speaking somewhere, and a zealot started yelling at him in the middle of his drasha. The outburst did not faze Rav Kook — he continued with his drasha — but it was certainly a bizayon (embarrassment) for this Torah giant.

Later that same year, Pesach time rolled around. Rav Kook distributed maos chittim [kimcha d'Pischa – i.e., charity funds for the Passover holiday] to those with financial needs for the upcoming holiday. He presented his gabbai [secretary] with a list of the poor people to whom the charity funds should be distributed. Lo and behold, this very zealot who had so inappropriately

embarrassed the Chief Rabbi earlier that year, was on the list to receive maos chittim.

The secretary told Rav Kook, "I refuse to give him the money! How could you give such a person money after what he did to you?" Rav Kook told his gabbai, "If you do not deliver the money to him, I will!" The Chief Rabbi explained his rationale for giving him the money: Chazal say that the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of sinas chinam (unjustified hatred of one Jew for another). There is a famous maxim that if the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of sinas chinam, the only way it will be rebuilt is with ahavas chinam (unjustified love of one Jew for another).

Rav Kook explained: Ahavas chinam means that you like the person for no reason, just like sinas chinam means that you hate the person for no reason. But Rav Kook analyzed as follows: When one Jew loves another Jew for "no reason," that is not really ahavas chinam, because there is a mitzvah of vahavta l'reyacha ka'mocha (love your fellow Jew like yourself). I need to love every Jew according to Biblical law. Thus, the fact that I love another Jew cannot be called ahavas chinam — that is an ahava for which we are bound by oath from the time of Har Sinai! What then is ahavas chinam, asked Rav Kook? It is when a person insults you and embarrasses you, and you have every justification in the world to put him on your 'enemies' list and to totally ignore him, and nevertheless you show him love and compassion, and give him money when he is in need. That is ahavas chinam. Pesach is approaching. During Nisan, the Jews were redeemed, and in Nisan we are destined to be redeemed. This is the time to practice "ahavas chinam." This is conjecture on my part, but perhaps this is why Rav Kook waited until before Pesach to give him money. He specifically wanted to do an act of ahavas chinam for which we will merit the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash — during the month in which we are destined to be redeemed.

The Ben Ish Chai cites an insight on the following question from the Mah Nishtana: "On all other nights we do not dip even once; tonight, we dip two times." The Ben Ish Chai explains that one dipping commemorates "And they dipped the tunic in blood" (Bereishis 37:31), and the other one commemorates "You shall take a bundle of hyssop and dip it into the blood..." (Shemos 12:22). At the Seder, we dip one time to commemorate the brothers taking Yosef's coat and dipping it in blood and we dip a second time to commemorate the bundle of hyssop (agudas eizov) that we dipped in blood in Egypt on the night prior to the Exodus. The Ben Ish Chai comments: If we want to atone for the sin of hatred between brothers, the way to do it is to take an "agudas eizov," i.e., to come together as an agudah achas (a unified group) to do Hashem's will with total dedication.

Tisha B'Av is normally the time that we talk about ahavas chinam. However, as we all know, the truth of the matter is that there is a tremendous connection between Tisha B'Av and Pesach. The first day of Pesach always falls on the same day of the week as the coming Tisha B'Av. We know, likewise, that we eat an egg by the Seder, to remind us of the Destruction of the Bais Hamikdash, to remind us of Tisha B'Av. There is thus a thematic connection between Pesach and Tisha B'Av.

This is the connection, says the Ben Ish Chai: If we want to achieve atonement for the sin of dipping Yosef's tunic in blood, if we want to merit the promised redemption in Nisan, the way to achieve that is "and you will take a bundle of hyssop" – to forget some of our petty differences, and to in fact come together b'agudah achas, so that, Please G-d, "we will eat there from the sacrifices and the Paschal offerings" speedily in our days, Amen.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem DavidATwersky@gmail.com
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This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion. ...A complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information.

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from: Team **TorahAnytime** <info@torahanytime.com>
date: Mar 25, 2021, 6:32 PM
subject: Inspiration For Your Pesach

Rabbi YY Jacobson

4 Lessons for the 4 Sons

בְּנֵי אֲרֻבָּעָה בְּנֵי דִבְרָה תוֹרָה

Concerning four sons did the Torah speak

These few words contain volumes of lessons about education and pedagogy. Among many, there are four messages our Sages mean to convey with this brief statement:

1) אֲרֻבָּעָה בְּנֵי – There are four sons. There is no one child because everyone is different. Never make the mistake that one cookie-cutter model encompasses all children.

2) בְּנֵי – They are all your children. Never look at any of these children and write them off or reject them. They may be from one extreme to another, but they are all your children.

3) דִבְרָה תוֹרָה – Torah has something to say to each one of these children. No child is ever too far for Torah to inspire and uplift them and provide them with joy and wholesomeness in life. The Torah speaks to every child's needs.

4) אֲרֻבָּעָה בְּנֵי דִבְרָה תוֹרָה – The conversation the Torah has with each of them is a different one. The Torah offers a unique message for every individual in every circumstance of life.

Rabbi Fischel Schachter

Cry, Cry and Cry

וְנִצְעַק אֵל ד'

And we cried out to Hashem

I have often been asked what my Pesach seder looks like in my home. While we certainly have our fair share of noise and ups and downs throughout, there is one part during which all of my family joins together.

It is before the words in the Haggadah which describe how the Jews cried out to Hashem amid their pain. Every year without fail, I tell my family the same story.

It was the Shabbos before Pesach, and to the chagrin of many families in the town, the landowner made his way over. “No rent?” he yelled. “Out!” “But, it is Passover...” “Out!” the landowner yelled again.

The homeowner was very dejected. Where would he and his family go for Pesach? He didn't have the means to pay the rent at the moment, but he didn't want to be evicted either. But upon the encouragement of his wife, he gathered himself together and traveled to hear the Apter Rav deliver his widely attended Shabbos HaGadol speech he gave every year before Pesach.

As he soon discovered, though, the shul was packed with people from wall to wall. There was no way to get in, let alone to find a place to stand. And so, with no other resort, the man put his head to the window just enough that he could hear something to repeat to his wife.

“There are two blessings that we say: Go'el Yisrael and Ga'al Yisrael. The former is said every day, and refers to Hashem being our Redeemer on an ongoing basis. The latter, in contrast, refers to unique times during the year when Hashem opens certain doors of redemption, which we can grab hold of and slowly work our way in. We take the opportunity to look at the larger picture, the bigger door of geulah, and from there practically make our way inside on a daily basis.”

The poor Jew was now even more despondent. “I'm going to tell this idea to my wife and the landowner as he throws me out? Hebrew grammar is the last thing he is interested in ...”

But then, just as the poor yid began walking away, he heard the Apter Rav loudly proclaim, “Suppose there's a yid named Yankel who lives in a distant village, and suppose the landowner told him, ‘No rent? Out!’ The yid wants to give up on everything he has. But he is forgetting one simple thing. You can cry out to Hashem. Cry and cry. The Jews cried in Egypt, and roused the

merits of all previous generations all the way back to our Avos. When we cry, we do the same. We invoke the merits of our fathers, grandfathers and so on, all the way to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov.”

The Ohr HaChaim further says that the words, “Hashem saw the Children of Israel, and G-d knew” (Shemos 2:25), refers to the greatest degree of connection between Hashem and the Jewish people. “And Hashem knew” speaks to the most intimate relationship possible. A person can cry a thousand times, until he cries one cry which is so sincere and pristine that, all of a sudden, Hashem turns to him in a way He never turned to him before in his life. When Hashem simply sees you screaming out to Him amid your pain, that itself helps to remove the agony.

A number of years ago, I was asked to speak to a group of people undergoing very difficult situations. I stood up and just read these words of the Ohr HaChaim again and again and again until there was an ocean of tears. There is no magic wand to relieve pain, but there is a cry to Hashem which He sees and hears. And once He sees your genuine cry, whether you can explain it or not, the pain is lifted.

As the yid heard these words and explanation of the Apter Rav, he told his family, “During the night of the seder this year, we are going to cry and scream.” Sure enough, it was the night of the seder, and as they reached the words, “And the Jews cried out,” the entire family began screaming and yelling. The landlord came rushing in, flustered to see an entire family in what appeared to be a frenzied state. And as the story goes, he pitied the man and his family and gave the yid a new lease on life.

If you scream, Hashem listens. And so, as is the custom in my home, as we reach the words of Va'nitzak during the seder, all of my children and grandchildren await their turn to tell us someone we should cry for. This one needs a child, this one needs a shidduch, someone needs better health ... and we daven for each and every one of them. We cry about a certain neighbor, about an elderly gentleman down the block, and someone sick in shul. We cry for the full gamut of people needing Hashem's help.

Well before Pesach, my family begins preparing names we will daven for. We write down everyone's names and create lists of people we can cry our hearts out for.

You may be surprised to know how many people have told us that that they've started doing this in their homes during the seder, and how many prayers have been answered. May Hashem help that we all find it within our hearts to cry out on this night, because all we need is to get His attention, and the refuah and yeshuah are around the corner.

Rabbi Dovid Orlofsky

My Brother

לֹא לְנוּ ד' לֹא לְנוּ

Not for our sake, Hashem, not for our sake...

Years ago, as a young man enjoyed the smooth ride in his new car, he pulled up to the local supermarket to buy some groceries. While looking for a place to park, he caught sight of his friend's younger brother gazing at his car. Rolling down his window, the young man called out to the boy, “Do you like the car?” “I really do. Where did you get it?” “My brother bought it for me,” the man replied.

Still entranced by the sight of the car, the boy stood there. The man figured that he would respond as any other typical boy would, “Oh, I wish I had a brother like that!” But this boy was different; he had a different look on the matter. “Wow!” he said, “I wish I could be a brother like that.”

Caught off guard by such a comment, the man said to the boy, “Would you like to go for a ride?” With his face breaking out in a smile, the little boy excitedly nodded his head. “Can we drive to my house?” asked the boy. The man figured that the boy wished to show off the elegant car to his friends, to which he happily complied.

When the man finally pulled into the driveway of the house, the boy turned to the man and shyly asked, “Could you wait just a moment?” Running inside, the little boy soon came out carrying his younger brother who could

not walk. He had polio. As he brought him close to the car, he clenched his brother tightly and said, “Can you see that? His brother bought him that car. One day I will buy you a car like that so it will be easier for you to get around. Right now it’s a bit hard for you to do so, but that will one day all change.”

Just listen to the beautiful message of this little boy: “Everybody wishes they had a brother like that; but how many people wish they could be a brother like that.” We would live as much happier, thoughtful and selfless people if we would only adopt such an attitude.

Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein
The Strange Stick

ואתה חוטרת והכה לכלבא

And the stick came and hit the dog

I was once about to write out a check for a tzedakah collector who came to my office when he asked if I could wait a minute. “Before you give me a check, would you mind if I ask you a question on the Haggadah? It is the easiest question you have ever heard. If you can answer it, I don’t want the check; but if you cannot answer it, please double the amount.”

Presented with this challenge, I liked what I heard. “Are you sure it’s an easy question?” I asked. “It’s the simplest question you ever heard on the Haggadah!” “Okay,” I said, “go ahead.”

“In Chad Gadya, we read how a man purchased a goat for two zuzim. Along came a cat and ate the goat; along came a dog and ate the cat; along came a stick and hit the dog; fire then burnt up the stick; water then extinguished the fire; the cow then drank the water; the slaughterer then slaughtered the cow; the angel of death then killed the slaughterer; and then Hashem smote the angel of death.

“Everything naturally makes sense in the sequence of events. Cats eat goats, dogs eat cats, water extinguishes fire, cows drink water and so on. But I have one question. How did the stick hit the dog? Sticks don’t walk. It should have said that a person came with a stick and hit the dog. But it doesn’t say that.”

Thinking to myself how I have been reading the Haggadah for decades and never even considered this question, I sat there silently. “Double the check please,” he said. And I did.

“Let me tell you the answer,” he continued. “The Haggadah was written in this way for a reason. When you read the story of Chad Gadya, everything appears to occur naturally. But there is something the author of the Haggadah put into the middle of the story that doesn’t make sense at all. A stick appears on its own and hits the dog. When you read this, you immediately raise your eyebrows and say, ‘Wait a second! How did the stick get there?’ And then you realize that it must be Hashem holding the stick. And if that is so, the same is true of all the other ‘natural’ events. Even the cat eating the goat and the water extinguishing the fire is the hand of Hashem. Nothing is natural and happens by itself.”

After the man finished explaining this, I said, “I will triple your check.” I was taken aback by this answer.

Throughout all the hardships in our lives, we can never think it is natural. At the end of the Haggadah when we read about the events of Chad Gadya, we are meant to think of all the incidents in our own personal lives. And then we are to realize that even the stick that hits and the hardships that confront us are from Hashem. He is behind our lives every step of the way.

Rabbi Avraham Schorr
What’s on your Mind?

אָהד מִי יודע אָהד אָני יודע...

Who Knows One? I Know One...

As we conclude the Haggadah and reach the crescendo of the seder, one of the last recited refrains is that of Echad Mi Yodei’a. On the surface, this song seems to be relatively simple and straightforward. We all know that there is

one G-d, two Luchos, three Avos, four Imahos and so on. It cannot be that the Haggadah is merely reminding us of these common knowledge facts. What place then does such a song have as we reach the highpoint and climax of the seder?

The answer is that Echad Mi Yodei’a is far deeper than it seems. It is placed at the very conclusion of the Haggadah because precisely then we have reached the highest of heights, and feel tremendously uplifted and close to Hashem. Imagine then if someone were to ask you, “Who knows one?” What will be the first thing which comes to mind? After an entire Leil Ha’Seder, permeated with sanctity and spirituality, our almost automatic reaction will be “Hashem.” That is the only answer we think of.

The same is with two. “Who knows two?” “Two Luchos,” we say. We do not respond to two or three or four, “I have two swimming pools, three cars and four houses.” We ask and answer such simple questions because we intend to highlight that these most fundamental concepts are so ingrained within us. When we think of “one,” “two” or “three,” all that we think about are these ideas.

Occupying our mind front and center with utmost clarity are these facts – there is one G-d in heaven, two Luchos, five books of the Torah and so on. There is nothing else on our radar after such an exhilarating and inspiring seder.

And now you can answer the ultimate question, “Who knows why we sing Echad Mi Yodei’a?” “I do.”

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subject: Inspiration For Your Pesach

Rabbi YY Jacobson
4 Lessons for the 4 Sons

כָּנְגִד אַרְבָּעָה בָּנִים דְּבָרָה תוֹרָה

Concerning four sons did the Torah speak

These few words contain volumes of lessons about education and pedagogy. Among many, there are four messages our Sages mean to convey with this brief statement:

- 1) אַרְבָּעָה בָּנִים – There are four sons. There is no one child because everyone is different. Never make the mistake that one cookie-cutter model encompasses all children.
- 2) בָּנִים – They are all your children. Never look at any of these children and write them off or reject them. They may be from one extreme to another, but they are all your children.
- 3) דְּבָרָה תוֹרָה – Torah has something to say to each one of these children. No child is ever too far for Torah to inspire and uplift them and provide them with joy and wholesomeness in life. The Torah speaks to every child’s needs.
- 4) אַרְבָּעָה בָּנִים דְּבָרָה תוֹרָה – The conversation the Torah has with each of them is a different one. The Torah offers a unique message for every individual in every circumstance of life.

Rabbi Fischel Schachter
Cry, Cry and Cry

וְנָצַעק אֵל ד'

And we cried out to Hashem

I have often been asked what my Pesach seder looks like in my home. While we certainly have our fair share of noise and ups and downs throughout, there is one part during which all of my family joins together.

It is before the words in the Haggadah which describe how the Jews cried out to Hashem amid their pain. Every year without fail, I tell my family the same story.

It was the Shabbos before Pesach, and to the chagrin of many families in the town, the landowner made his way over. “No rent?” he yelled. “Out!” “But, it is Passover...” “Out!” the landowner yelled again.

The homeowner was very dejected. Where would he and his family go for Pesach? He didn't have the means to pay the rent at the moment, but he didn't want to be evicted either. But upon the encouragement of his wife, he gathered himself together and traveled to hear the Apter Rav deliver his widely attended Shabbos HaGadol speech he gave every year before Pesach.

As he soon discovered, though, the shul was packed with people from wall to wall. There was no way to get in, let alone to find a place to stand. And so, with no other resort, the man put his head to the window just enough that he could hear something to repeat to his wife.

"There are two blessings that we say: Go'el Yisrael and Ga'al Yisrael. The former is said every day, and refers to Hashem being our Redeemer on an ongoing basis. The latter, in contrast, refers to unique times during the year when Hashem opens certain doors of redemption, which we can grab hold of and slowly work our way in. We take the opportunity to look at the larger picture, the bigger door of geulah, and from there practically make our way inside on a daily basis."

The poor Jew was now even more despondent. "I'm going to tell this idea to my wife and the landowner as he throws me out? Hebrew grammar is the last thing he is interested in ..."

But then, just as the poor yid began walking away, he heard the Apter Rav loudly proclaim, "Suppose there's a yid named Yankel who lives in a distant village, and suppose the landowner told him, 'No rent? Out!' The yid wants to give up on everything he has. But he is forgetting one simple thing. You can cry out to Hashem. Cry and cry. The Jews cried in Egypt, and roused the merits of all previous generations all the way back to our Avos. When we cry, we do the same. We invoke the merits of our fathers, grandfathers and so on, all the way to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov."

The Ohr HaChaim further says that the words, "Hashem saw the Children of Israel, and G-d knew" (Shemos 2:25), refers to the greatest degree of connection between Hashem and the Jewish people. "And Hashem knew" speaks to the most intimate relationship possible. A person can cry a thousand times, until he cries one cry which is so sincere and pristine that, all of a sudden, Hashem turns to him in a way He never turned to him before in his life. When Hashem simply sees you screaming out to Him amid your pain, that itself helps to remove the agony.

A number of years ago, I was asked to speak to a group of people undergoing very difficult situations. I stood up and just read these words of the Ohr HaChaim again and again and again until there was an ocean of tears. There is no magic wand to relieve pain, but there is a cry to Hashem which He sees and hears. And once He sees your genuine cry, whether you can explain it or not, the pain is lifted.

As the yid heard these words and explanation of the Apter Rav, he told his family, "During the night of the seder this year, we are going to cry and scream." Sure enough, it was the night of the seder, and as they reached the words, "And the Jews cried out," the entire family began screaming and yelling. The landlord came rushing in, flustered to see an entire family in what appeared to be a frenzied state. And as the story goes, he pitied the man and his family and gave the yid a new lease on life.

If you scream, Hashem listens. And so, as is the custom in my home, as we reach the words of Va'nitzak during the seder, all of my children and grandchildren await their turn to tell us someone we should cry for. This one needs a child, this one needs a shidduch, someone needs better health ... and we daven for each and every one of them. We cry about a certain neighbor, about an elderly gentleman down the block, and someone sick in shul. We cry for the full gamut of people needing Hashem's help.

Well before Pesach, my family begins preparing names we will daven for. We write down everyone's names and create lists of people we can cry our hearts out for.

You may be surprised to know how many people have told us that that they've started doing this in their homes during the seder, and how many prayers have been answered. May Hashem help that we all find it within our

hearts to cry out on this night, because all we need is to get His attention, and the refuah and yeshuah are around the corner.

Rabbi Dovid Orlofsky

My Brother

לא לנו ד' לא לנו

Not for our sake, Hashem, not for our sake...

Years ago, as a young man enjoyed the smooth ride in his new car, he pulled up to the local supermarket to buy some groceries. While looking for a place to park, he caught sight of his friend's younger brother gazing at his car. Rolling down his window, the young man called out to the boy, "Do you like the car?" "I really do. Where did you get it?" "My brother bought it for me," the man replied.

Still entranced by the sight of the car, the boy stood there. The man figured that he would respond as any other typical boy would, "Oh, I wish I had a brother like that!" But this boy was different; he had a different look on the matter. "Wow!" he said, "I wish I could be a brother like that." Caught off guard by such a comment, the man said to the boy, "Would you like to go for a ride?" With his face breaking out in a smile, the little boy excitedly nodded his head. "Can we drive to my house?" asked the boy. The man figured that the boy wished to show off the elegant car to his friends, to which he happily complied.

When the man finally pulled into the driveway of the house, the boy turned to the man and shyly asked, "Could you wait just a moment?" Running inside, the little boy soon came out carrying his younger brother who could not walk. He had polio. As he brought him close to the car, he clenched his brother tightly and said, "Can you see that? His brother bought him that car. One day I will buy you a car like that so it will be easier for you to get around. Right now it's a bit hard for you to do so, but that will one day all change."

Just listen to the beautiful message of this little boy: "Everybody wishes they had a brother like that; but how many people wish they could be a brother like that." We would live as much happier, thoughtful and selfless people if we would only adopt such an attitude.

Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein

The Strange Stick

אֵתָהּ הִזְטִיחַ וְהִכָּהּ לְכִלְבָּא

And the stick came and hit the dog

I was once about to write out a check for a tzedakah collector who came to my office when he asked if I could wait a minute. "Before you give me a check, would you mind if I ask you a question on the Haggadah? It is the easiest question you have ever heard. If you can answer it, I don't want the check; but if you cannot answer it, please double the amount."

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"In Chad Gadya, we read how a man purchased a goat for two zuzim. Along came a cat and ate the goat; along came a dog and ate the cat; along came a stick and hit the dog; fire then burnt up the stick; water then extinguished the fire; the cow then drank the water; the slaughterer then slaughtered the cow; the angel of death then killed the slaughterer; and then Hashem smote the angel of death.

"Everything naturally makes sense in the sequence of events. Cats eat goats, dogs eat cats, water extinguishes fire, cows drink water and so on. But I have one question. How did the stick hit the dog? Sticks don't walk. It should have said that a person came with a stick and hit the dog. But it doesn't say that."

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"Let me tell you the answer," he continued. "The Haggadah was written in this way for a reason. When you read the story of Chad Gadya, everything

appears to occur naturally. But there is something the author of the Haggadah put into the middle of the story that doesn't make sense at all. A stick appears on its own and hits the dog. When you read this, you immediately raise your eyebrows and say, 'Wait a second! How did the stick get there?' And then you realize that it must be Hashem holding the stick. And if that is so, the same is true of all the other 'natural' events. Even the cat eating the goat and the water extinguishing the fire is the hand of Hashem. Nothing is natural and happens by itself." After the man finished explaining this, I said, "I will triple your check." I was taken aback by this answer. Throughout all the hardships in our lives, we can never think it is natural. At the end of the Haggadah when we read about the events of Chad Gadya, we are meant to think of all the incidents in our own personal lives. And then we are to realize that even the stick that hits and the hardships that confront us are from Hashem. He is behind our lives every step of the way.

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What's on your Mind?

עֲדָה מִי יוֹדֵעַ מִי יוֹדֵעַ אֶתְּךָ יְהוָה...

Who Knows One? I Know One...

As we conclude the Haggadah and reach the crescendo of the seder, one of the last recited refrains is that of Echad Mi Yodei'a. On the surface, this song seems to be relatively simple and straightforward. We all know that there is one G-d, two Luchos, three Avos, four Imahos and so on. It cannot be that the Haggadah is merely reminding us of these common knowledge facts.

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Home » Jewish Holidays » Passover » The Haggadah
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Matzah, Leaven, and Attaining Freedom, by Rabbi Shaul Rosenblatt
Leaven and matzah share the same ingredients – grain and water. Only leaven has had time (18 minutes to be precise) to rise and matzah has not. Leaven is essentially matzah that has been puffed up by air. And yet, leaven – in particular bread – is so much more attractive and enticing than matzah. Bread is simply matzah that looks and tastes better. We become enslaved to life's luxuries, not its necessities. Before Passover, we spend time searching our homes for this leaven. The evening before Passover, we get it all out into the open and then the next day we burn it. And for seven days we don't eat or even possess leaven. Leaven represents personal slavery and matzah represents personal freedom. We become enslaved to life's luxuries, not its necessities. I have yet to meet someone addicted to eating broccoli or drinking water, addicted to spending time with their children. As the Beatles said, "The best things in life are free, but you can save them for the birds and bees." We become addicted to the leaven, those things which look good, appeal to our desires, urge us to engage in them – but ultimately offer nothing more (and often much less) than the "best things in life." I have met plenty of people addicted to chocolate. Chocolate provides less nutrition than broccoli – and yet we desire them in inverse proportion to their value.

A few days before Passover, we search our hearts for "leaven" as well. We look inside of ourselves to see where we are enslaved. Let me give a very relevant example: smartphones. I wake up in the morning and my beloved is next to my bed; it's my alarm after all. My first thought is not how can I thank God for the gift of life today, rather let's see the life changing messages on Whatsapp. No, not "let's see", rather "I need to see, I MUST see". The news might be next. What's happened overnight? My world has surely changed in cataclysmic ways. I absolutely, positively HAVE to know...

So, without any possible option otherwise, I check Whatsapp and the news, as well as my emails; one person has Whatsapp me a very unfunny meme and I have emails from Amazon, Google and LinkedIn and, lo and behold, the news tells me that the world is exactly the way I left it the previous evening. The addiction offered me something so exciting and glamorous – and delivered only disappointment.

Passover is a time when freedom is in the air. A time not to just think about freedom but to embrace freedom and, indeed, be free. So, on the eve of Passover, we have searched our homes for leaven and have it all on the table. We have journeyed inside and found our areas of spiritual enslavement. And now we burn it all.

For me, burning my leaven means making a decision that for seven days I am not interested slavery. For seven days I am going to look in a different direction. For seven days, I am going to be free of this way of life that enslaves me. On other days of the year it would be madness to think this possible. To make a decision to change habits of a lifetime and for the decision to last forever. But Judaism believes that the spiritual season of Passover is propitious for such overnight changes in direction.

Try suddenly stopping smoking for seven days, with an eye on it lasting forever, at another time of year. Or being completely disinterested in your desire for sugar. Or try to decide you are not going to follow the thoughts of anger when they come. Will it happen? The coming week of Passover, there is a guarantee that it will. Our willpower is magnified and we can be different and then live with those changes as long as we decide to do so. If we genuinely burn our leaven, it will be gone.

This Passover, my smartphone is going in my drawer for seven days. And I can't tell you how exciting that sounds to me! Wow – seven days of freedom from my taskmaster.

So, spend some time during the next few days making a list of your slaveries, your addictions. I suggest you write them all down (password protected!) and then pick two or three to break free from on Passover. I usually print a piece of paper with them on and burn that paper with my leaven. On the eve

of Passover, make your decision. You are going to be free for the next seven days. Stick to your guns and watch Passover work its beautiful magic.

Why Tonight Is Called a Seder, By Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider

The Hebrew word "Seder" means order. It hints to the idea that everything that happens to us is not coincidence or happenstance. What we experience in our lives, in truth, has seder, order, even when it may not seem apparent to us. Our lives are overseen by the Master of the Universe. And it's this awareness we are aiming to discover on Seder night. – Based on the Maharal of Prague

Karpas: Dipping the Vegetable in Salt Water, by Rabbi Shimon Apisdorf
In the Hebrew language, every letter also represents a number, a word, and a concept.

For example, the letter aleph, the first letter of the alphabet, has the numerical value of one. Aleph is also a word which means to champion, or to lead.

The second letter of the alphabet, bet, has the numerical value of two and also means house – bayit in Hebrew.

Hebrew letters are actually linguistic repositories for numerous concepts and ideas. Words, too, become not only an amalgam of random sounds, but precise constructs of the conceptual components of the object with which the word is associated.

When we analyze the word Karpas and break it down to its four component parts – its four letters of kaf, reish, peh and samech, – we discover an encoded message of four words which teaches a basic lesson about how to develop our capacity for giving.

Ka

Kaf

Palm of hand

R

Reish

One who is impoverished

Pa

Peh

Mouth

S

Samech

To support

The first letter of Karpas means the palm of the hand. The second letter means a poor person. When taken together these two letter/words speak of a benevolent hand opened for the needy.

But what if you are a person of limited means, with precious little to give?

Look at the second half of the word Karpas. The letter peh means mouth, while the final letter samech means to support. True, you may not be capable of giving in the material sense, but you can always give with your words. Words of kindness and concern. Words of empathy and understanding. Words that can lift an impoverished soul and provide a means of support where nothing else will do.

We dip the Karpas in saltwater. Saltwater recalls the bitter tears shed in Egypt. But there is more. The Jewish people, though awash in the tears of bondage, were able to preserve their ability to give. Rather than succumb to the morass of self-pity, they were able to maintain their dignity through giving.

Charoses: Never Give Up Hope, By Slovie Jungreis Wolff

Charoses, a sweet mixture made of apples, walnuts, wine and cinnamon, symbolizes the mortar used by the Jewish nation to make bricks while enslaved.

But there is also a deeper and most beautiful meaning to the apples on our Seder plate.

Charoses symbolizes the apple trees under which the Jewish women gave birth. They concealed their pain so that they would not be detected by the

Egyptians. The slavery and suffering had stripped the men of hope. They separated from their wives and thought that bringing children into such a dark world was pointless. It was the women who never gave up. They chose to give birth beneath the apple trees which first produce fruit and then protective leaves. They declared with perfect faith that they would do the same. First they would give birth to their fruit and undoubtedly they would be sheltered from Above.

The women sweetened the bitterness of harsh slavery. When tasting the maror, the bitter herb, we dip it into some charoses to remember this courageous message. Life is both bitter and sweet. The bitter is tempered through hope. Faith keeps us going.

Yachatz: Why Break the Matzah? By Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider

Why do we break the matzah in half at the start of the Seder, the ritual known as Yachatz? Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik zt"l (1903-1993) offered a unique answer. When the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt there were those slaves who found themselves in better conditions than others. Some had the privilege to work for more merciful masters and lived under better conditions; others found themselves in much worse circumstances. Those who were fortunate to have more would break their bread and share it with those who had less.

On the night of the Seder, we emulate the ways of our predecessors and we do the same. We are teaching that this is the way of loving kindness to share with others, even in the most dire of conditions.

We find ourselves in an unprecedented time. These are days of crisis. Often the common response in such scenarios is to behave selfishly. Our natural instincts tell us that we need to take care of ourselves and our own family members. We have all seen footage and reports of people hoarding food and toilet paper etc. in the panic and stress of this situation.

We are challenged during these days to be people of loving-kindness and maintain a deep sense of solidarity toward one another even under harsh conditions. During the pandemic we have witnessed endless examples of heroic kindness. This has always been our path, symbolized by breaking the matzah in half.

Food for the Body, Food for the Soul, by Rabbi Benjamin Blech

The Seder begins with an invitation. We cannot truly rejoice with our family while we forsake those who are not as fortunate. "All who are hungry, let them come and eat with us; all who are needy, let them come and observe the Passover with us."

"All who are hungry" and "All who are needy" – what is the difference between them? Aren't the needy those who have no food, the very same ones already described as the hungry?

It appears the text is suggesting that there are two different kinds of deprivation to which we need to be sensitive. The hungry are those who lack physical nourishment. It is their stomachs which need to be filled. The needy are those who desperately require spiritual sustenance. It is their souls that beg to be sustained so that their lives may have meaning.

There are only two blessings which have their source in the Torah. The first is on food. When we complete a meal we are commanded "and you will eat and you will be sated and you shall bless the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 8:10). The second is for the study of Torah – "For I will proclaim the name of the Lord [the Torah], and you will ascribe greatness unto our God [with a blessing] (Deuteronomy 32:3).] Why precisely these two? Because a human being is a combination of body and soul and both of these components require nourishment in order to survive. Food is what allows us to live; Torah is what gives us a reason for living. Food sustains our bodies; Torah wisdom sustains our souls. Both are essential. That is why both require a blessing.

And that is also why we invite two kinds of disadvantaged. The hungry are those who lack food. For them we provide physical nourishment. The needy are those who seek meaning to their lives and who thirst for the peace of mind that comes from faith and commitment to Torah. Let both be a part of our Seder and become sated.

Bread of Affliction, Bread of Freedom, by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks
At the beginning of the story we call matzah the bread of affliction. Later on in the evening, though, we speak of it as the bread of freedom they ate as they were leaving Egypt in such a hurry that they could not wait for the dough to rise. Which is it: a symbol of oppression or liberty?

Also strange is the invitation to others to join us in eating the bread of affliction. What kind of hospitality is it to ask others to share our suffering? Unexpectedly, I discovered the answer in Primo Levi's great book, *If This is a Man*, the harrowing account of his experiences in Auschwitz during the Holocaust. According to Levi, the worst time was when the Nazis left in January 1945, fearing the Russian advance. All prisoners who could walk were taken on the brutal death marches. The only people left in the camp were those too ill to move.

For ten days they were left alone with only scraps of food and fuel. Levi describes how he worked to light a fire and bring some warmth to his fellow prisoners, many of them dying. He then writes:

"When the broken window was repaired and the stove began to spread its heat, something seemed to relax in everyone, and at that moment Towarowski (a Franco-Pole of twenty-three, with typhus) proposed to the others that each of them offer a slice of bread to us three who had been working. And so it was agreed."

Only a day before, says Levi, this would have been inconceivable. The law of the camp said: "Eat your own bread, and if you can, that of your neighbor." To do otherwise would have been suicidal. The offer of sharing bread "was the first human gesture that occurred among us. I believe that that moment can be dated as the beginning of the change by which we who had not died slowly changed from Haftlinge [prisoners] to men again." Sharing food is the first act through which slaves become free human beings. One who fears tomorrow does not offer his bread to others. But one who is willing to divide his food with a stranger has already shown himself capable of fellowship and faith, the two things from which hope is born. That is why we begin the Seder by inviting others to join us. That is how we turn affliction into freedom.

What Pesach Means, by Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider

What does the word Pesach actually mean? Most commonly it is translated to mean 'pass over', which relates to the episode of God miraculously 'passing over' the homes of the Israelites in Egypt. However the great commentator on the Torah, Rashi (Exodus 12:13), offers another explanation: Pesach means love. Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the first Chief Rabbi of Palestine preferred this explanation.

On the final night the Israelite slaves spent in Egypt, when they sat confined in their homes, the verse says that God 'pasach' over their homes. What does 'pesach' mean? Not passed over. Rather, the Jew felt surrounded by God's love. They felt the Divine's warm embrace.

This is the true meaning of the festival and one we wish to infuse within our souls at the Seder. Even if one sits alone this year, or away from close family and friends, one must know that they are not alone; God is right there at our side.

The Exodus was distinct because of an act of faith by our ancestors. Two million people entered a desolate and barren desert, where there was neither food nor water for such a multitude, clinging only to the belief that God would provide for them.

Early in the Haggadah a new name of God is introduced: 'HaMakom', which translates as 'place' ('Baruch Hamakom Baruch Hu'). Why the change of name? When we speak of God as HaMakom, the Midrash explains it to mean "God is the place of the world." This teaches that God embraces everybody and never deserts anyone.

The Torah attaches a mighty title to this festival: 'Leil Shimurim', a 'Night of Watching' (Exodus 12:42), a term which conveys the essence of the celebration: God is watching over us.

The story of leaving Egypt, the centerpiece of the Seder's celebration symbolizes the absolute, unwavering trust in God that is the foundation of spirituality.

The Four Questions, by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

The Haggadah speaks of four children: one wise, one wicked or rebellious, one simple and "one who does not know how to ask." Reading them together the sages came to the conclusion that 1. children should ask questions, 2. the Pesach narrative must be constructed in response to, and begin with, questions asked by a child, 3. it is the duty of a parent to encourage his or her children to ask questions, and the child who does not yet know how to ask should be taught to ask.

There is nothing natural about this at all. To the contrary, it goes dramatically against the grain of history. Most traditional cultures see it as the task of a parent or teacher to instruct, guide or command. The task of the child is to obey. "Children should be seen, not heard," goes the old English proverb. Socrates, who spent his life teaching people to ask questions, was condemned by the citizens of Athens for corrupting the young. In Judaism the opposite is the case. It is a religious duty to teach our children to ask questions. That is how they grow.

Judaism is the rarest of phenomena: a faith based on asking questions, sometimes deep and difficult ones that seem to shake the very foundations of faith itself. "Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justice?" asked Abraham. "'Why, Lord, why have you brought trouble on this people?" asked Moses. "Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all the faithless live at ease?" asked Jeremiah. The book of Job is largely constructed out of questions, and God's answer consists of four chapters of yet deeper questions: "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? ... Can you catch Leviathan with a hook? ... Will it make an agreement with you and let you take it as your slave for life?"

In yeshiva the highest accolade is to ask a good question: Du fregst a gutte kashe. Isadore Rabi, winner of a Nobel Prize in physics, was once asked why he became a scientist. He replied, "My mother made me a scientist without ever knowing it. Every other child would come back from school and be asked, 'What did you learn today?' But my mother used to ask: 'Izzy, did you ask a good question today?' That made the difference. Asking good questions made me a scientist."

Judaism is not a religion of blind obedience. Indeed, astonishingly in a religion of 613 commandments, there is no Hebrew word that means "to obey." When Hebrew was revived as a living language in the nineteenth century, and there was need for a verb meaning "to obey," it had to be borrowed from the Aramaic: le-tsayet. Instead of a word meaning "to obey," the Torah uses the verb shema, untranslatable into English because it means 1. to listen, 2. to hear, 3. to understand, 4. to internalize, and 5. to respond. Written into the very structure of Hebraic consciousness is the idea that our highest duty is to seek to understand the will of God, not just to obey blindly. Tennyson's verse, "Theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do or die," is as far from a Jewish mindset as it is possible to be.

Why? Because we believe that intelligence is God's greatest gift to humanity. Rashi understands the phrase that God made man "in His image, after His likeness," to mean that God gave us the ability "to understand and discern." The very first of our requests in the weekday Amidah is for "knowledge, understanding and discernment." One of the most breathtakingly bold of the rabbis' institutions was to coin a blessing to be said on seeing a great non-Jewish scholar. Not only did they see wisdom in cultures other than their own. They thanked God for it. How far this is from the narrow-mindedness than has so often demeaned and diminished religions, past and present. The historian Paul Johnson once wrote that rabbinic Judaism was "an ancient and highly efficient social machine for the production of intellectuals." Much of that had, and still has, to do with the absolute priority Jews have always placed on education, schools, the bet midrash, religious study as an act even higher than prayer, learning as a lifelong engagement, and teaching as the highest vocation of the religious life.

But much too has to do with how one studies and how we teach our children. The Torah indicates this at the most powerful and poignant juncture in Jewish history - just as the Israelites are about to leave Egypt and begin their life as a free people under the sovereignty of God. Hand on the memory of this moment to your children, says Moses. But do not do so in an authoritarian way. Encourage your children to ask, question, probe, investigate, analyze, explore. Liberty means freedom of the mind, not just of the body. Those who are confident of their faith need fear no question. It is only those who lack confidence, who have secret and suppressed doubts, who are afraid.

The Wicked Son, by Rabbi Henry Harris

Our sages draw a connection between the words rasha (wicked) and ra'ash (noise or commotion). The prophet likens the rasha to "the driven sea, incapable of quiet" (Isaiah 57:20) - more frenetic than foe. What does that mean?

With inner calm and quiet, we navigate life's waves. We face obstacles and conflicts, but through an uncluttered mind the divine gift of wisdom finds its way to our heart. We fall, and we learn.

When our minds are noisy - filled with stress, anger, fear - divine wisdom is drowned out. We solve difficulties often by creating new ones. We're destructive, not villainous. This is the rasha.

Consider the rasha's question. The Haggadah says, "What is this service to you?" - "to you" but not to him. Because he excludes himself from the community, he denies the essence [of Judaism].

Insecure and prone to despair, the "wicked son", the rasha, isolates himself; he's dismissive. "I feel low. Lofty commandments aren't accessible to me. I'll tear them down." He might even want to come close; he doesn't know how.

Lost in the noise, he doesn't see how his misunderstanding contradicts the essence of Judaism and holds him back. He believes that a relationship with God is for those who feel exalted. Since he doesn't feel that connection, he mistakenly concludes that he's excluded, shut out.

But the truth about Judaism - and the fundamental lesson of Passover - is that God's love for us is unconditional. Feeling low and unworthy is more a testimony to our noisy mind than God's. No matter how low, how far, how unworthy we might feel, God doesn't waver. He just asks that we consider His view of us and make an effort.

Our job is to see beyond the wicked son's noisy mind; he's more "temporarily unsettled" than villain. The four sons at the Seder are not defined personalities anyway; they're aspects in every child, in every one of us. At times we are full of wisdom, and other times we close down, insecure, trapped by our inner noise.

So we stand up to the wicked son with compassion.

"Blunt his teeth," says the Haggadah, "and tell him, 'It is because of this [service] that God did for me when I left Egypt.'"

"You're mistaken," we say. "It's not a function of how exalted we feel that makes us worthy of leaving Egypt. It's a function of this - the act of sincere service and effort - that enables us to go."

Pharaoh's Hard Heart, by Rabbi Shimon Apisdorf

In the book of Exodus, the Torah reports that the Egyptian court magicians were able to duplicate the first two plagues. For this reason Pharaoh was convinced that he was facing a force with which he could at least contend. However, the great biblical commentator Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra (1089-1164) explains that a close reading of the text reveals that in truth the Egyptian magicians were no match for Moses and his brother Aaron. In fact, the best the Egyptians could do was to turn a small bottle of water into blood. They certainly couldn't transform the mighty Nile into a bloody waterway. Yet despite these feeble attempts to duplicate the plagues, Pharaoh continued to cling to his conviction not to free the Jews - despite Moses' warning of even more dire consequences.

There is a little bit of Pharaoh in us all.

Life is a battle. We all want to do what is right and good. But it's such a struggle. And when locked in this pitched battle, we often give in to our impulse towards rationalization. Rationalization affords us a respite, as it enables us to justify actions which deep down we know are not for us. This remarkable ability, when viewed from a distance, would often be laughable if it weren't so destructive. Like Pharaoh and his magicians, clinging to straws, we seek to excuse some actions and justify others, while hurtling unchecked towards our own self-destruction.

Sometimes the pattern is like this: You consider a course of action, carefully weigh all the options and permutations, and finally arrive at a conclusion. Your decision has been made and you're off and running. At first the going is smooth, but soon you find that you keep stubbing a toe. Then you twist an ankle, injure a knee, throw out your back, and eventually run face-first into a brick wall which everyone saw but you.

Dazed and bruised, you ponder a most ancient riddle: "Where did that come from?" The answer may well lie in the fact that the only thing harder than admitting you've made a mistake is running headlong into the consequences. Such was Pharaoh... and such is life.

To admit that the sum total of all our careful calculations and detailed planning is nothing more than a brilliantly charted course to failure is simply too much to bear. Our egos just won't allow us to hear of such nonsense. So we don a pair of designer blinders sporting the Pharaoh logo and rush off into the grasp of everything we wanted to avoid.

Or, unlike Pharaoh, we can refuse to shut our eyes - and have the courage to sacrifice our egos, before we sacrifice ourselves.

(excerpted from the Passover Survival Kit Haggadah)

Rabbi Akiva in Bnei Brak, By Slovie Jungreis Wolff

Our Haggadah speaks of a famous Seder that took place in Bnei Brak. There were many great rabbis sitting together. One rabbi mentioned is Rabbi Akiva, who was actually the younger scholar hosting the elders. The rabbi spoke about the exodus until their students came in to say, "Rabbis, it is time to recite the morning Shema prayer!"

This Seder invite Rabbi Akiva into your hearts. He will give you strength. He will empower you with courage.

Rabbi Akiva lived in the darkest of times. The holy Temple in Jerusalem had been destroyed. The Romans had conquered the land. The spirit of the Jewish nation had been crushed; their soul trampled upon. Studying Torah and doing mitzvot were met with imprisonment, torture and death. Soon the long and bitter exile would begin. The Jews would be put into chains and sold in the Roman slave market. Who could think about joining a Seder in such darkness? Who could feel inspired and speak about the exodus in Egypt when despair was in the air?

This is exactly why the sages met in the home of Rabbi Akiva.

Rabbi Akiva was the eternal optimist. He refused to surrender to depression. Where others saw the end of the road, he saw the beginning of the journey. His eye was always on the future. His heart was eternally filled with faith. We meet Rabbi Akiva once again when he is walking with his peers up to Jerusalem. When they reached Mount Scopus, they tore their garments from grief at the sight of devastation. As they reached the Temple Mount, a fox emerged from the place that had been the Holy of Holies. The rabbis started to weep. Rabbi Akiva laughed. "Why are you laughing?" they asked. He explained that while they see the destruction of the sacred, he sees the fulfillment of prophecy. Just as the first part of prophecy had been fulfilled, that the Temple would be destroyed, now we must look forward to the second part of the prophecy - the rebuilding of our Temple and return of our people.

We must gather now round the table of Rabbi Akiva. It takes courage to keep a positive spirit. The sages assembled by the spirit who would keep hope and faith alive. As long as we do not get stuck in the blackness of yesterday we can emerge into the brightness of tomorrow. Is it easy? No, it takes all you've got. But if you are able to spend the night recalling the exodus, reinforcing within the understanding that there is a God who watches over

you, cares for you, and takes you out of your personal Egypt, you will make it. We must tap into the eternal optimism of Rabbi Akiva.

When the students came in to say it is time for the morning Shema they were transmitting a message to us, today: Don't give up. Don't fall into despair. The darkest part of the night comes just before dawn.

The morning Shema is a prayer of clear-cut faith. There are no hazy doubts. It is bright and unobscured. We proclaim our unwavering belief with one voice.

We will stand up again. We will feel joy again. We will rebuild.

Plague of Darkness, by Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider

The Torah says that the plague of Darkness was so severe that "one person was unable to see the person right next to them." The spiritual master, the Chidushei Harim says that the worst plague is when we fail to see our fellow human beings who are abandoned or in pain and we fail to reach out to them.

Dayeinu: Who Packed Your Parachute? By Rabbi Efreim Goldberg

Charles Plumb, a U.S. Naval Academy graduate, was a jet fighter pilot in Vietnam. After 75 combat missions, his plane was destroyed by a surface-to-air missile. Plumb ejected and parachuted into enemy hands. He was captured and spent six years in a Communist prison. He survived that ordeal and one day, when Plumb and his wife were sitting in a restaurant, a man at another table came up and said, "You're Plumb! You flew jet fighters in Vietnam and you were shot down!"

"How in the world did you know that?" asked Plumb.

"I packed your parachute," the man replied, "I guess it worked!"

That night, Plumb couldn't sleep. He kept wondering what this man might have looked like in a sailor uniform. He wondered how many times he might have passed him on the ship and never acknowledged him. How many times he never said hello, good morning or how are you. Plumb was a fighter pilot, respected and revered, while this man was just an ordinary sailor. Now it grated on his conscious.

Plumb thought of the many lonely hours the sailor had spent on a long wooden table in the bowels of the ship carefully weaving the fabric together, making sure the parachute was just right and going to great lengths to make it as precise as can be, knowing that somebody's life depended on it. Only now does Plumb have a full appreciation for what this man did. And now Plumb goes around the world as a motivational speaker asking people to recognize who is packing your parachute.

Have we thanked those who contributed to the lives we are blessed to live?

Imagine if our kindergarten teacher got a note from us thanking her for nurturing us with love. Imagine if our high school principal, our childhood pediatrician, our housekeeper growing up who cleaned our room, out of the blue got a gesture of gratitude showing that we cared enough to track them down and say thank you after all of these years. Did we express enough appreciation to the person who set us up with our spouse, gave us our first job, safely delivered our children?

We all have family, friends, mentors and neighbors whose efforts shaped who we are today. Freedom means knowing that we didn't get here on our own. This Passover, let's sing our own personal dayeinu and repair our ingratitude by saying thank you to those who packed our parachutes.

Insights Pesach Edition - Nissan 5781

Yeshiva Beis Moshe Chaim / Talmudic University

Based on the Torah of our Rosh HaYeshiva HaRav Yochanan Zweig

This week's Insights is dedicated in loving memory of Tzipora bas Tzvi.

"May her Neshama have an Aliya!"

Theme of Pesach

Every year, as we gather with our family and loved ones to participate in the Seder, we seek ways to make the Seder meaningful and relevant. Some families buy new Haggadahs each year; some incorporate show-and-tell themes for the children; others painstakingly listen to every Dvar Torah that the children bring home in the Haggadahs they prepared in school (and for

some unknown reason their teachers thought the Dvar Torah to be both meaningful and relevant).

The Seder is, or should be, a deeply meaningful experience; in fact, the Seder is the most widely observed ritual by Jews of all levels of observance. So what is the message that we should take away from this experience? Clearly, we shouldn't make the most memorable part of the Seder the fact that the Ma Nishtana was repeated in eleven different languages.

A good place to start is by examining the mitzvos of the evening. Upon taking a closer look, it should become obvious that the messages of the evening are rather contradictory: The four cups of wine, representing the four types of redemption, are drunk in a manner befitting kings. Pesach is called Zman Cheiruseinu – the time of our freedom. Yet the mitzvah of matzah – Lechem Oni – represents our being slaves and impoverished. The Torah refers to Pesach as "Chag Hamatzohs" – meaning that an overriding theme of the holiday is the servitude.

It isn't even as if we are transitioning from being slaves to being redeemed; the mitzvos are interspersed throughout the Seder – and the last thing we eat is the Afikomen, which is the taste we are supposed to retain. How do we reconcile this inherent contradiction?

There is a fascinating Rashi on the verse, "And remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and that Hashem your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and with a stretched out arm..." (Dvarim 5:15). Rashi explains that the reason we must remember that we were slaves in Egypt is to understand that this is the very reason Hashem took us out of Egypt: "Hashem redeemed you in order for you to be his servant and fulfill his Torah and mitzvos." In other words, being slaves in Egypt both educated and prepared us to be proper servants to Hashem.

While the obvious difference between being servants to Pharaoh and being servants to Hashem is that Hashem has only our interest at heart, in truth, the difference is much, much deeper. Hashem created the world with a mission to be fulfilled. This mission, in essence, is for mankind to perfect itself and seek a relationship with Him. It is only through this relationship that we achieve eternity and an everlasting existence.

Klal Yisroel are therefore Hashem's ambassadors to the world. This is a very lofty position. We are part of Hashem's "management team" to see that His will for us and the world is fulfilled. The Torah is Hashem's manual for the world and the path to its perfection. This is why Hashem, upon our leaving Egypt, marched us straight to Mount Sinai to accept the Torah.

This leads us to a VERY important point, and likely the most significant difference between being servants to Pharaoh and servants of Hashem: At Mount Sinai we were ASKED to accept the Torah and the inherent responsibilities that come along with that commitment. The entire episode is referred to as Kabolas HaTorah. In other words, "our acceptance" is a critical component of this servitude. We are freely choosing this responsibility and that is what gives us a world standing. We represent Hashem and therefore have an elevated status. This is why a tiny country, buried in the Middle East, is a focus of such devotion and enmity. The entire world, at least subconsciously, recognizes the position that the Jewish people hold within the world.

This position is what gives us an elevated status; we are truly part of Hashem's kingdom. Thus, we have to live up to what it means to be both sons of the King and His ambassadors to the world. Therefore, on Pesach, while we celebrate our leaving Egypt, we also reaffirm our servitude to Hashem. This is represented by the matzah. The wine represents the role we have chosen for ourselves as Hashem's ambassadors to the world, which will lead to the ultimate redemption and the entire world's recognition of Hashem's unity and that we are all one.

Ha Lachma Anya

We begin the main body of the Haggadah with the section known as Maggid. This section of the Haggadah begins with the introductory paragraph of Ha Lachma Anya. This section contains a very odd statement: "Let all who is hungry come and eat, anyone that is needy come share in the Korban

Pesach.” This is the fifth section of the Haggadah; does it not seem like a disingenuous invitation? By this time, even the poorest of folk would have had to make some other arrangements. If this is a real invitation why isn't it recited prior to making Kiddush? What does this have to do with Maggid; why is this the introduction?

The main purpose of this section of the Haggadah is to fulfill the mitzvah of telling over the miracles that occurred to us in Egypt and the story of our redemption. This is supposed to be a very interactive experience. We want everyone to participate.

Yet, often, when people are guests in someone's home they are reticent about jumping in and adding their own ideas and thoughts to the conversation, leaving it to the host to direct the conversation.

There is a well know law that “Ain Oreiach Machnis Oreiach” – a guest is not allowed to invite another guest into someone else's home. The prerogative of inviting guests is solely the domain of the host. Yet everyone at the Seder is reciting the section of Ha Lachma Anya with its invitation to others. How can this be?

Clearly, this invitation isn't to find new guests. This invitation is recited by everyone so that they begin to look at themselves as if they too are hosts of the meal. In other words, the sole purpose of the statement is for everyone to feel comfortable at the meal as if it were their very own meal. This encourages everyone to participate in the conversation and add their thoughts and ideas. That's why it appears as an introduction to Maggid – the main section of the Haggadah; that of discussing all of Hashem's wondrous acts on behalf the Jewish people.

Did You Know...

The Vilna Gaon relates the four cups to four different worlds: this world, the world of Messiah, the world of the resurrection of the dead, and the World-to-Come. One who fulfills the mitzvah of the four cups and the other mitzvot of the Seder is assured of all these worlds.

Maharal connects the four cups with Sarah, Rivka, Rachel, and Leah, since it was in their merit the Jewish people were born and redeemed; and also in the merit of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in whose merit the mitzvot of the Passover offering, matzah, and marror were given to the Jewish people. Bnei Yissachar writes that Israel was given the privilege of the mitzvah of the four cups as a reward for the four virtues they displayed in Egypt. They did not adopt non-Jewish names but rather preserved their distinctly Jewish names; they retained their own Jewish language; they maintained their distinctly Jewish mode of dress; and they did not stoop to the immorality prevalent in ancient Egyptian, but rather maintained their particularly high standard of Jewish morality. Despite being enmeshed in the impurities of Egypt, the fact that they preserved these barriers against total assimilation earned for them the title of “distinguished,” in which merit they were redeemed.

The Shulchan Aruch explicitly says that it is possible to add more cups (SA OC 473:3). The one exception is that it is forbidden to add cups of wine between the third and fourth cups (SA OC 479). The Maharal explains that this halacha is connected to the four stages of redemption. It is possible to “interrupt” between the first three stages, but it is forbidden to interrupt between the third and fourth stages. The national independence of the Jewish people, “I will redeem you,” has meaning only in context of our identity as Hashem's nation as the recipients of His Torah: “And I will take you to me as a nation, and I will be to you as God,” when we accept the Torah (Gevurot Hashem Chapter 60). However, although it's allowed, one should be strict not to drink too much wine so as not to get drunk (and not be able to say the whole Haggadah).

The cup of wine must be filled with a revi'is of wine and one must drink a full revi'is or at least majority of a revi'is.

Rabbi Dovid Feinstein writes that based on measuring large eggs, which should be used for the four cups, a revi'is is 3.3 fl oz.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky writes that a revi'is is 5.1 fl oz.

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<https://www.theyeshivaworld.com/news/headlines-breaking-stories/1959947/18-thoughts-to-live-by-from-rav-henoch-leibowitz-ztl-13th-yahrtzeit.html>

By Rabbi Yair Hoffman for 5tjt.com

18 Thoughts to Live By from Rav Henoch Leibowitz zt”l – 13th Yahrtzeit March 23, 2021

As we age, we appreciate even more the thoughts and sayings of our Rebbeim who are no longer here. It has been 13 years since Rav Henoch Leibowitz zt”l passed away. His dedication to Klal Yisroel, his penetrating approach to both mussar and Gemorah learning, and his inculcating his remarkable values within his students continue to serve as a source of constant inspiration to them.

Presented here below are 18 of his thoughts and sayings.

1 Knowing G-d is to walk in His ways. This means to emulate Him in acts of kindness, in seeking just solutions, and in the performance of truly charitable acts.

2 It is important to seek inspiration from the example of others – just so that we can awaken ourselves to perform a difficult task with joy.

3 When trying to impart a lesson, it is much more effective when they figure out the lesson themselves.

4 Sometimes the motivating force to do the right thing when faced with difficulty is the very absence of anyone else present who is willing to do it.

5 When surrounded by those of lower morality, there is a grave responsibility to gird oneself in strength of character.

6 Talking over and reviewing something deeply with a friend often allows for greater examination of an issue and helps one see the truth.

7 There is often a grave responsibility to think and ponder the gravity of our responsibility.

8 Never despair. It's awful power can warp and destroy the power of the mind.

9 Even the greatest of people are susceptible of giving up hope.

10 Always make the effort – even when the chances look slim. And if you need a miracle, the effort will make it easier.

11 Always make the effort to remain calm, cool, and collected – even when you are involved in earth-shattering matters.

12 Losing it – is a sin.

13 What is the definition of a “sucker?” To people who are far removed from the concept of chessed it is often it is a pejorative term for a “baal chessed.”

14 Performing acts of kindness each day, aside from being obligatory, is a means to acquire the character trait of loving others like oneself – step-by-step.

15 Quite often it is improper to join with evil people, even for a worthy goal, because it appears as if you agree with their decisions. The issue is complex and requires consultation with the greatest of Torah leaders.

16 Embedded within the soul of man is a natural tendency toward goodness and fulfilling Hashem's will. Without this, the soul cannot be truly happy, just like a princess who marries a commoner does not find true happiness.

17 Humility is not the negation of the true state of affairs – rather it is the recognition of one's faults and qualities together, with the true and deep realization that all talent comes to him solely by the grace of the Creator.

10 One cannot achieve a state of wholeness merely by focusing on Mitzvos between man and G-d. One must perfect relationships and fulfill all Mitzvos between man and each other as well, in order to achieve the desired shleimus that we must all reach.

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