

THE
QuaranTeen
HAGGADAH

A UNIFIED VOICE OF FREEDOM
FROM TEENS IN AN ISOLATED WORLD



Inspiring the Jewish Future



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With gratitude to the following people who made this project a reality:

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QuaranTeen

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A MESSAGE FROM ***THE INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR***

Dear Reader,

It is a unique and unusual sort of privilege to share words of introduction to a Haggadah that was produced during the pre-Pesach season of the COVID-19 pandemic. This Haggadah is remarkable in that it was produced collaboratively by the students at two dozen yeshiva high schools across North America – yet entirely from an environment of quarantine and social isolation. The incredible creative vision of NCSY’s educator par excellence Rabbi Josh Grajower to bring these fantastic students together during such challenging times is on full display in this volume, and I believe it will enhance your seder immensely. I am deeply appreciative to him, as well as Rabbi Aryeh Wielgus and Mrs. Rina Emerson, for their initiative in bringing this project to bear.

The Rambam (Hil. Chometz U’Matzah 7:1) compares the imperative to **remember** the exodus from Egypt to the mitzvah to **remember** the Sabbath day and keep it holy. One application of this concept is the form our remembrance must take. Just as our remembrance of Shabbat is not fulfilled simply through keeping Shabbat on our minds, but rather is fulfilled through the action of reciting Kiddush each Friday night, so too the remembrance of the miracles God performed in redeeming our ancestors from slavery in Egypt require action – not just cognition.

The Haggadah you hold now is an incredible manifestation of the same principle. To make an experience meaningful, it is not sufficient to ponder it or reflect on it; action is necessary. The extraordinary contributions of yeshiva high school students from across the country in producing this work is a reflection of their commitment to bring thoughts and feelings in physical action. By so doing, they – along with their mentors on the faculties of these great schools – truly sanctify Hashem’s name through their efforts.

May you all be blessed with happy and memorable Pesach, and may we merit to see the true redemption speedily in our days.

Sincerely,
Rabbi Micah Greenland



International Director, NCSY



INTRODUCTION

As we know, the night of the seder is designed to be different. Our children are trained to ask, “Mah Nishtanah?” – “Why is this night so different from all other nights?” It’s ironic, then, that some of the things which people find most comforting and enjoyable about the seder are the same components that remain constant from year to year. In fact, for many of us, the seder is more or less defined by its consistency—the same guests in attendance, the same songs are sung, the same jokes are made, etc. Equally puzzling, though, is that the very name of the evening, leil ha’seder (the night of order), underscores the emphasis on routine.

In addition to its more tragic effects, the unbridled spread of COVID-19 has put all of our individual and communal routines on hold. The acclimation has been uncomfortable, disconcerting, and extremely challenging. Schools have done a tremendous job of utilizing technology to preserve the structure and normalcy in our children’s lives. We at NCSY have tried to complement that effort by both maintaining our weekly schedule of programming and launching several relevant and interactive new initiatives aimed at helping our kids navigate this crisis.

One such program, titled, Bringing Seder to Chaos: Freedom in Quarantine, centers around daily social media posts which each contain ideas connecting the seder to the COVID-19 pandemic and end with a prompt for engagement. For example, one recent submission concluded by asking the reader: “What have you done to keep your life normal during this period of social distancing?” Many of the replies were practical and widely applicable—things like waking up at the same time as always or sticking to existing exercise

habits. One of our respondents offered an entirely different perspective, though, writing, “Who says what was, is the baseline of normalcy? Perhaps we need to realign ourselves to the new normal.”

Eventually, life will (G-d willing) return to “normal.” In the meantime, however, this new reality is presenting a myriad of unexpected opportunities for empowerment and growth. Spending all day learning virtually over Zoom is far from ideal, but the uniqueness of the experience has already begun to produce new techniques and policies that can be incorporated into the regular school system. While being cooped up with our families may cause certain stresses, it also offers valuable lessons regarding the importance of designating time to be together on a consistent basis. Communal religious service is a powerful and fundamental part of Judaism. But hopefully this experience provided each of us with chance to reflect on our personal relationship with Hashem. Perhaps there are elements of life under quarantine that we may want to upgrade from temporary measures and integrate into our ‘new normal.’

Since its inception, one of NCSY’s hallmarks has been its continuing ability to expand our participants’ horizons in terms of both their Jewish identities and social interactions, whether it be through uniting Yeshiva and public school students on shabbatons, bringing together teens from across the country on inspiring summer programs, creating innovative educational programs that extend beyond the walls of our classrooms, or one of many other examples. While social distancing and quarantine pose many challenges to NCSY’s regular functioning, they also present an incredible opportunity to build connections between demographics of

teens who might otherwise be precluded from doing so by geography or scheduling. While nothing can replace an in-person connection, one of the ironic benefits of social isolation is the ability to connect and collaborate with others who we, under normal circumstances, consider to be inaccessible.

To that end, in preparation for Pesach we partnered with 23 different day schools and three JSU clubs from around the country to create the first (and hopefully last) ever Quaranteen Haggadah. Each of the ideas that follow is a product of our teens’ current reality and an expression of their own feelings regarding the current situation examined through the lens of the Pesach story and our redemption from Egypt. As you read, you’ll notice the absence of any uniform design theme; each page reflects the varying perspectives of the respective authors. It’s a symbol of their ownership over the newly imparted meaning of freedom and a testament to the evolving possibilities of connectivity. It’s an attempt to redefine the seder—the routine—of this year’s Pesach.

We would like to express our heartfelt hakarat hatov to the schools and faculty advisors for their partnership, and even more so to the teens whose thoughtful contributions made this Haggadah a reality. We hope you enjoy!

Rabbi Josh Grajower
*Director of Day School Engagement,
New York and New Jersey NCSY*

Mrs. Rina Emerson
CEO, New York NCSY

Rabbi Aryeh Wielgus
Regional Director, New Jersey NCSY

Bedikat Chametz and Biur Chametz

As a young child, every Pesach was marked by my school's distribution of a peculiar little package consisting of a wooden spoon, a feather, a candlestick, and a paper bag. A few nights later, my brothers and I would cover our eyes while my parents hid pieces of bread throughout the house. Our family policy was that whichever one of us found the most pieces would win some money so naturally, the second they said 'go,' chaos ensued. Pillows flew across the living room, the contents of entire drawers were spilled onto the floor, and chairs were left wobbling in our wake. The next morning, we would gather in the backyard, light a fire beneath a massive black porcelain pot, and burn our findings. Now that I am older, though, I am taking the time to learn the proper way to do both Bedikat and Biur Chametz. The morning before Passover, one is permitted to eat chametz until the fourth hour of the day—matzah, however, is forbidden until the seder itself. Additionally, one should take extra care in brushing their teeth to avoid the possibility that any chametz remains lodged therein after the holiday begins. And, once we have securely stored any chametz (including utensils) that we plan to sell for the duration of Passover, any remaining chametz found thereafter must be burned during the fifth hour of the day. Finally, given all the extra onus pertaining to cleanliness this particular Pesach, it is worth noting that fire is perhaps the most ancient and longstanding means of sterilization. As such, it's essential role in the removing the impurity of chametz in preparation for Pesach should come as no surprise.

By: Jeremy Zoller
and Kayla Turnof



Source:
Chabad.org



Chag Sameach NCSY!



Passover is a time where we all come together to celebrate our journey from slavery to freedom. It takes place in the time of spring, a time of birth and rebirth. It also serves as a reminder for each of us to take responsibility for our own lives, our communities, and the world. -Paula Polishuk, JSU

The seder plate is a very important part of the Passover seder. Each item on the seder plate has its own significance to the retelling of the story Passover.



On the top of the seder plate is the karpas, which represents hope and renewal. To the right of the karpas is the roasted egg (beitzah). The egg reminds us of the festival sacrifice that was offered in the Temple. Under the egg is the charoset, a sweet brown mixture. It represents the mortar and brick used by the Hebrew slaves to build the storehouses or pyramids of Egypt. On the bottom of this seder plate is the maror and chazeret, two bitter herbs that symbolize the harshness the Jews went through as slaves in Egypt. Finally there is the shankbone (zeroah), which is meant to symbolize the Paschal lamb that was sacrificed in the times of the Temple.

Chatam High JSU, New Jersey

סימני הסדר



On the first page of our Haggadot, before reading anything else, we find the *Simanai Haseder*—the fourteen symbols that provide the guidelines and structure which dictate how the seder is conducted—our marching orders for the night.

This new world, turned upside down by the chaotic impact of the Coronavirus world, has left many of us feeling off balance in our lives; the restrictions of life under quarantine and social distancing have stripped away any sense of order, which, under normal circumstances, can provide us with a sense of tranquility. For the first few days, a lack of order can feel like a vacation in comparison to the toils of our regular lives. But before long, the void can become a mental burden, as we experience boredom, a lack of productivity, and lessened sense of meaning. Sure enough, many of us already find ourselves craving the same chores, responsibilities, and social framework that felt so menial only a few weeks ago.

As Pesach approaches, it is important that we work towards establishing the proper mindset with which to engage the holiday by filling our extra time with Torah—and in doing so, satisfy that itch for accomplishment and regiment. This pandemic, while deeply tragic, has freed us to come together (in many cases virtually, of course) and use our time to study Torah and draw closer to Hashem through learning.

As the Rambam explains, learning Torah is a necessity for every Jew, “whether you are poor or rich, whether healthy or suffering pain, whether a young man or one who has grown weak; even if he is a poor man who makes his living collecting charity by going from door to door, even if he is a husband and has young children, he must set for himself times for learning Torah during the day and night.”

Similarly, in the *Mishnah Berurah*, the Chafetz Chaim explains that Torah study is the single most important aspect of a person’s daily life. He suggests that every Jewish person should designate a certain time each day to study Torah. And, if they miss that time, they must make time to study that same day, lest they end up having a “Torah-less” day. For those of us who are yet to make this type of commitment, this is our chance. As long as we are living in a way which limits our ‘routine productivity,’ we can start to fill that void with something even better—a structured commitment to Torah study.

Dvar Torah: Jesse Price

*Design: Leetal Elias, Alara Seff,
Noam Czobel*



WESTCHESTER
HEBREW
HIGH SCHOOL

לב נבון יבקש דעת

קִדּוּשׁ

בשבת מתחילין

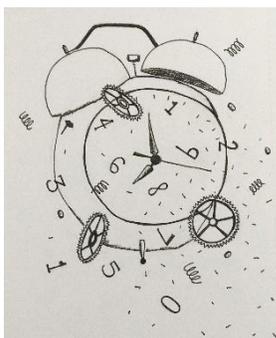
וְיֵהִי עָרֵב נִיְהִי בִקְרַי יוֹם הַשַּׁשִּׁי. וַיְכַלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל־צָבָאָם. וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְכַל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה. וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשׁ אוֹתוֹ כִּי בּו שָׁבַת מְכַל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת.

בחול מתחילין:

סִבְרֵי מְרַגְּנוּ וְרַבְּנֵנוּ וְרַבּוֹתֵינוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרָא פְרִי הַגֶּפֶן. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בְּנוּ מְכַל־עַם וְרוֹמְמָנוּ מְכַל־לְשׁוֹן וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו. וְנִתְּתָן לָנוּ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה (לשבת: שבתות לְמַנוּחָה ו) מוֹעֲדִים לְשִׁמְחָה, חַגִּים וְזִמְנִים לְשִׁשׁוֹן, (לשבת: אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַזֶּה ו) אֶת יוֹם חַג הַמִּצּוֹת הַזֶּה זְמַן חֲרוּתֵנוּ, (לשבת: בְּאַהֲבָה) מִקְרָא קִדְּשׁ זֶכֶר לִיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם. כִּי בְנוּ בְּחֶרֶת וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ מְכַל הָעַמִּים, (לשבת: וְשָׁבַת) וּמוֹעֲדֵי קִדְּשָׁה (לשבת: בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרַצוֹן) בְּשִׁמְחָה וּבְשִׁשׁוֹן הַנְּחֻלָּתָנוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', מְקַדְּשׁ (לשבת: הַשְּׁבִיעִי ו) יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַזְּמַנִּים.

במוצאי שבת מוסיפים:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרָא מְאוּרֵי הָאֵשׁ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמְּבַדֵּיל בֵּין קִדְּשׁ לְחָל, בֵּין אוֹר לְחֹשֶׁךְ, בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַמִּים, בֵּין יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי לְשִׁשִּׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה. בֵּין קִדְּשַׁת שְׁבַת לְקִדְּשַׁת יוֹם טוֹב הַבְּדֻלָּה, וְאֶת־יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְשִׁשִּׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה קִדְּשַׁת. הַבְּדֻלָּה וְקִדְּשַׁת אֶת־עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִדְּשַׁתְּךָ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', הַמְּבַדֵּיל בֵּין קִדְּשׁ לְחָל.



בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיִּינּוּ וְקִיָּמָנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזְמַן הַזֶּה.

On a holiday, the concluding phrase of Kiddush is: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', מְקַדְּשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַזְּמַנִּים. While the line itself is surely familiar, the word “וְהַזְּמַנִּים” can seem a bit vague without additional context.

One definition of the word translates to “the sanctified times,” a reference to the holiday. However, another possible interpretation of “וְהַזְּמַנִּים” suggests that the word is actually referring to the concept of time itself. Time is an important theme in the story of *Yetziat Mitzrayim*, in that it is one of many key factors that differentiate between a free man and a slave—control over their own time. Someone in slavery cannot control what type of work they do, nor where or for how long they do it. Their schedule is controlled by someone else, who in turn only makes those decisions in their own best interest. Thus, people with a ‘slave mentality’ have no need to even track the date or time.

The first *mitzvah* that Hashem gave to the Jewish people after leaving *Mitzrayim* was the *mitzvah* of *Rosh Chodesh* (see Shemot 12:2). Hashem provided *Bnei Yisrael* with this *mitzvah* as an opportunity to—for the first time in their lives—control the course of their own lives. This gesture served as testament to the nations transition from a mentality of slavery to that of a people abiding by their own divinely guided free will.

As Jewish people in the modern world, we’re able to take control of our lives and live by the calendar that Hashem provided for us, but even in today's day and age, when we’re technically ‘free,’ we still don’t have full control of our lives—and it’s a scary feeling. At the start of the *seder* we say, “Bless us in the time in which we’re living”- וְהַזְּמַנִּים.

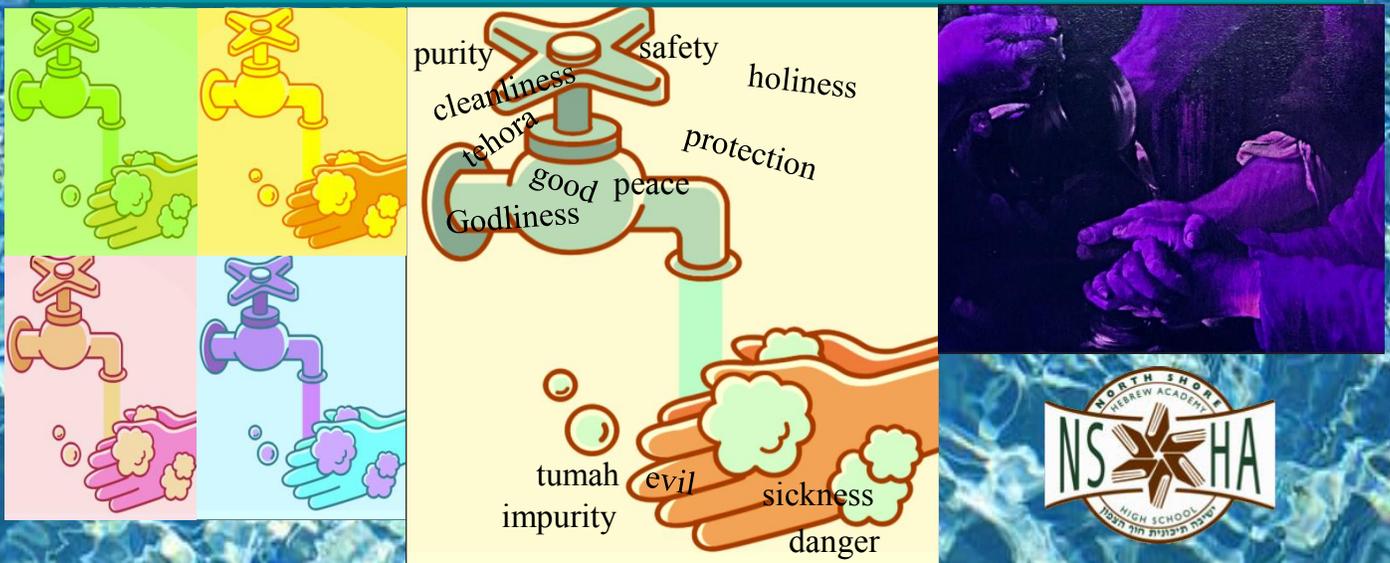
The Physical and Spiritual Cleanliness of Urchatz Justin Mirharoon

Despite the fact that Urchatz rarely receives much attention in discussions regarding our favorite parts of the seder, it does in fact contain a great deal of meaning. In the Maarechet Heidenheim Haggadah, by Rabbi Tevele Bondi, the author suggests that Urchatz serves as something of a necessary, perfunctory step that is required as part of our preparation to recount the stories of Yetziat Mitzrayim. In the same way that someone who is about to meet with a king or president would first want to cleanse themselves and wash their hands, so too we—on the brink of one of our most sacred interactions with Hashem—should be even more inclined to do so. This, of course, includes the retelling of the lofty miracles that Hashem, King of kings, performed for the Jews in Egypt.

Notably though, there is a second intriguing answer as to why we wash our hands before dipping the karpas. As we read in the Talmud, “Any food that is dipped into a liquid requires washing of the hands before it is eaten” (Pesachim 115a). The basis for this custom dates back to the existence of the Temple, when the Jewish people were obligated to adhere to the laws of spiritual impurity (tumah) and purity (taharah). And because—as explained in the Talmud—liquid can easily contract spiritual impurity and, in turn, transmit it to any vegetables it come in contact with, it was obligatory for one to wash their hands before consuming any foods that were dipped in a liquid to prevent the contraction of spiritual impurity. Although this halacha no longer applies on a regular basis, it is nonetheless observed on seder night as one of many means of recognizing the higher level of purity demanded by such a sacred experience.

Throughout this time of crisis, some of the most frequently cited pieces of advice revolve around the importance of practicing an elevated level of personal hygiene—particularly with regard to washing our hands. While we are constantly reminded to practice these safety precautions, do we really understand their true importance?

Urchatz reminds us that, in special situations, we must be extra cautious in managing our physical and spiritual hygiene. We are told that the Seder night is special, and that extra precaution should be taken to ensure that we do not encounter even the slightest level of tumah. Thus, although we don’t normally wash our hands before eating vegetables, we do so tonight. And perhaps even more so, in the face of the Coronavirus, we must maintain proper physical hygiene. So, while we may not have thought much about the values of washing our hands in previous years, maybe its increased relevancy in today’s world will finally earn Urchatz some of the attention it deserves.



כַּרְפָּס

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה

As we know from the Four Questions, one of the more puzzling parts of the *seder* is the tradition of dipping *karpas* not once, but twice into saltwater (or *charoset*) before eating it. Solomon Zeitlin, a Jewish Historian writes in “The Liturgy of the First Night of Passover” that for many years during the time of the *Beit Hamikdash*, it was believed that the first part of the ritual *karpas* was intended to represent the dipping of the *Korban Pesach*.

Following the destruction of the Temple, however, a single, more timely explanation arose—one which instead relates back to the story of strife between Yosef and his brothers. The dipping of the *karpas* is intended to represent the brothers’ jealous plot to fool Yaakov into thinking his beloved son had died by dipping his *ketonet* into animal blood. This more modern interpretation is buoyed by the inextricable link between Yosef and the story of *Pesach*—after all, the entire history of the Jews in Egypt stems from his brothers’ fateful decision to sell him into slavery.

In some respects, however, the two main reasons given as the basis for dipping *karpas* seem to contradict each other. How could *karpas* have transitioned from being a symbol of freedom—specifically, the freedom to practice Judaism through *mitzvot*, like the *Korban Pesach* and circumcisions—to a reminder of the very moment in which our fate of enslavement was sealed?

Rabbi Jay Kelman, founder of the website Torah in Motion, attempts to reconcile that apparent incongruity by explaining that, in many ways, *karpas* is a microcosm of the entire *seder*. As we read in the *Haggadah*, “**בְּכָל דּוֹד וְדוֹר חַיִּיב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ כְּאִילוֹ יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם**”—In every generation, one must regard themselves as if they themselves had left *mitzrayim*,” and according to Rabbi Kelman, one cannot fulfill this crucial *mitzvah* entirely without ‘experiencing’ both the highs and lows of our redemption. Celebrating our freedom is far less meaningful if we do not first reflect on what life would be like without it.

As many of us are preparing to spend *Pesach* in the restrictions of quarantine (or at least in much smaller groups) it may be hard to truly feel the freedom and unity that form the heart of the holiday, and we may instead be tempted to wallow in loneliness and confinement. Therefore, it’s more important than ever to remember that the point of the *Pesach seder* is to both reflect on our slavery and to celebrate our rebirth as a nation of G-d, no matter how separated we may feel.

40 years

YULA BOYS
HIGH SCHOOL

יחמ

The middle matzah is broken in half, and the large piece is put away to be eaten later as the Afikomen.

Commentaries suggest that the three Matzot eaten at the Seder correspond to three categories of Jews: the Kohen, Levi and Yisroel.

The middle Matzah, representing the Levi, is broken in half at this point in the Seder.

Why do we specifically break the Matza representing Levi?

The tribe of Levi was actually the only tribe that was not enslaved by the Egyptians. While the other Jews were suffering from the hard work, the Leviim were allowed to live freely.

Perhaps this is why we break the Levi. The message is that while they were not physically involved in the hard work, they still felt "broken" over the pain of their bretheren. A Jew has to feel the pain of other Jews.

During this challenging time, we all must feel the pain of our brothers and sisters who are experiencing hard time, even if we are not ourselves.



We start Maggid, the main part of our Pesach seder with the declaration of **הָא לַחֲמַא עֲנִיא**. In this passage we offer, **“כָּל דַּכְפִּין יִתִּי וְיִכַּל, כָּל דְּצָרִיד יִתִּי וְיִפְסַח”**, “Anyone who is famished should come and eat, anyone who is in need should come and partake of the Pesach sacrifice”. This statement seems out of place here. **Charity and hospitality are mitzvot that we are involved in all year long.**

Why are we specifically offering help to those in need now, at the beginning of Pesach? To strengthen this question we must recall the Talmudic custom of maot chitim, collecting money before Pesach to ensure every Jew has the means to fulfill the obligations of the night. Of all the holidays, then, Pesach is the least likely to find those in need when Yom Tov begins. This makes the recitation of this passage at this time even more difficult to understand.

The Beis HaLevi explains that our redemption from Egypt was, in fact, a preview of the final Messianic redemption.

As the prophet Michah (7:15) says **“כִּימֵי צֵאתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֶרְאֶנּוּ נִפְלְאוֹת”**, “As in the days of your Exodus from the land of Egypt I will show your wonders.”

Therefore, on this night of the seder, we not only reminisce over our redemption from Egypt, but we also express our yearning for the final redemption of Messiah. The Gemara tells us (Bava Basra 19a)

that it is through charity that we can bring the age of the future Redemption, as it says (Yeshayahu 56:1) **“כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה שְׁמְרוּ מִשְׁפַּט וּנְשׂוּ צְדָקָה בִּידְקוּבָה יִשׁוּעַתִּי לְבוֹא וְצַדִּיקִי לְהַגְלוֹת:”**, “Thus said Hashem: Observe justice and perform charity, for My salvation is soon to come and My kindness is revealed.” Thus, in addition to the phrase of **הַשְׁתָּא הֲכָא, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה** “Now we are here, next year we will be in the land of Israel”, we declare our dedication to charity, which might serve as a vehicle through which we merit the redemption. Clearly, the situation we are in for Pesach this year is very different from all other years. However, along with the challenges this difficult time has brought, the amount of kindness and hospitality being done is truly inspiring. Food being provided to those confined to their homes, tzedakah donated to those out of job, and countless other similar acts. Even in our time of suffering, the Jewish community has found a way to continue to provide for those in need. Hopefully this will serve as a merit for the Messiah to come speedily in our days!

**הָא לַחֲמַא עֲנִיא דִּי
אָכְלוּ אַבְהֵתְנָא
בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם.**

**כָּל דַּכְפִּין יִתִּי
וְיִכַּל, כָּל דְּצָרִיד
יִתִּי וְיִפְסַח.**

**הַשְׁתָּא הֲכָא, לְשָׁנָה
הַבָּאָה בְּאַרְעָא
דְּיִשְׂרָאֵל.**

**הַשְׁתָּא עַבְדִּי, לְשָׁנָה
הַבָּאָה בְּנֵי חוּרִין.**

Written by: Tali Finkelstein

9

rated by: Kayla Goldstein





מה נִשְׁתַּנָּה הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַלַּיְלוֹת? שֶׁבֶּכֶל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֶמֶץ וּמִצֵּה, הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה – כָּלוּ מִצֵּה. שֶׁבֶּכֶל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שָׂאֵר יִרְקוֹת – הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה (כָּלוּ) מָרוֹר. שֶׁבֶּכֶל הַלַּיְלוֹת אֵין אָנוּ מִטְבִּילִין אֶפְיִלוּ פַּעַם אַחַת – הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה שְׁתֵּי פַּעַמִּים. שֶׁבֶּכֶל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבֵין וּבֵין מְסֻבִּין – הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כָּלָנוּ מְסֻבִּין.

Ma Nishtana: Why is This Night Different?

“Ma Nishtana, otherwise known as the Four Questions, is the second paragraph of Maggid. It opens with the title question: “Ma nishtanah, ha-laylah ha-zeh, mi-kol ha-leylot?” --“Why is this night different from all others?”

This is followed by an additional four questions that focus on some of the specific rituals we perform on at the seder—essentially asking why we undertake these unusual behaviors for the night. The four rituals mentioned are: eating matzah, eating bitter herbs, dipping our food twice, and reclining.” (Aleph Beta)

The original version of *Mah Nishtana* included a question about the *Korban Pesach*. That one was edited out after the destruction of the *Beit Hamikdash*, and replaced with the 4th question we have - about reclining. In a sense, the *Mah Nishtana* always had a sense of wistfulness for the glorious times of the *Beit Hamikdash* - alongside a determination to keep a positive attitude for the future. What might we take away from that for today?

This year’s *Pesach* feels particularly hectic due to the COVID-19 pandemic spreading around the world. As a result, many of us have had to cancel vacations or plans to see family. Needless to say, this *Pesach* will be different from all the rest. The words “*Mah Nishtana*” will resonate more this year than ever and we are hoping for a *Pesach* next year when things won’t be so “different.”



עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם, וַיּוֹצִיאֵנוּ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִשָּׁם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזֶרַע נְטוּיָה. וְאֵלּוּ לֹא
הוֹצִיא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, הֲרִי אֲנוּ וּבְנֵינוּ וּבְנֵי בְנֵינוּ מִשְׁעַבְדֵי הָיִינוּ
לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם

Unfortunately, for many of us, it is not uncommon to get caught up focusing on our own lives, often to the exclusion of the people around us, including our own families. Let's take a step back as we begin to read the story of the Jews being slaves in Egypt and look at the story of Yaakov and Lavan. We know that, for his part, Yaakov never felt 'at home' in his uncle's land. And imagine being Lavan: a nephew you've never met suddenly appears at your house, and ends up moving in for the next twenty years. You might, understandably, be less than thrilled. Still, Yaakov was family - Lavan could have treated him much better. Lavan never truly 'knew' him, and thus opted to act only in his own interests, giving little thought to those of his daughters, nephew, and ultimately his own grandchildren! It's fair to say that Lavan's attitude affected the self-centered decisions that came to be made in Yaakov's family in the ensuing years - and may have indirectly led, or at least been connected, to some of the missteps that led to *Am Yisrael* being lost and enslaved in Egypt.

Sadly, many of the people in our own lives face similar difficulties in their own homes and families. It is so hard to not be self-centered and inward-focused. Yet, it is in times like these that we need to reach out—even virtually—to friends and families in need. With sufficient energy and commitment, we can use this quarantine to formulate bonds that will last well beyond this pandemic.

Throughout the countless hardships that have befallen us, *Am Yisrael* has always persisted and survived by standing together. The holidays can be stressful under any circumstances, but now more than ever, it is important that we focus on one another instead of ourselves. We can choose to pick fights with our families, or we can put aside our differences and stand together.



וְאִפְלוּ כָּלֵנוּ יִבְיָחֵם כָּלֵנוּ יִבְיָחֵם כָּלֵנוּ יִבְיָחֵם כָּלֵנוּ יִבְיָחֵם כָּלֵנוּ יִבְיָחֵם
 "יִבְיָחֵם עַל הַתְּחִיבָהּ מִצְוֵה עֲלֵינוּ אֵיךְ בִּיבְיָחֵם מִצְוֵהֵם"

"And even if we were all wise, all men of understanding, all old and learned in the Torah, it is a positive commandment upon us to tell of the story of the Exodus from Egypt."

Among the many questions one could (and should) ask about this intriguing excerpt from *Avadim Hayinu*, one of the most nagging is: Why are such wise, learned men obligated to retell a story that many of us know by heart by the time we reach first grade? Doesn't that seem unnecessary, or worse, condescending?

Rabbi Berel Wein offers a simple, yet profound answer to this question. As he explains, any righteous and wise person understands that, when it comes to Jewish texts and tradition, there's no such thing as mastery or reviewing 'too much.' As many of us know all too well, it's entirely possible to forget any number of the nuances germane to the halachot and history of Pesach, even within the relatively modest span of a year. And of course, even if one were somehow able to retain all of the details from one year to the next, there is always more to learn!

There is a famous story about the *Gadol HaDor*, Rav Moshe Feinstein that demonstrates this notion particularly well. Upon his 100th completion of Shas (the entire Talmud), a

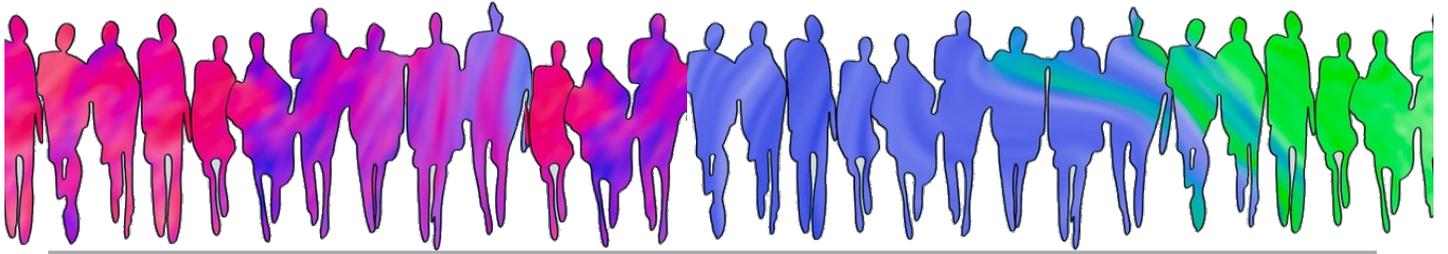
student worked up the courage to ask why his rebbe had taken it upon himself to study the same thing so many times. And, without hesitation, Rav Feinstein explained in earnest that, "Even if I learned it 101 times I would learn something new."

For our part, it's safe to say that if the *Gadol HaDor*, one of the most brilliant and learned rabbis of all time, can learn something new from his 101st reading of shas, we can do the same with the story of *Yetziat Mitzrayim*. If at some parts it seems repetitive, we should push ourselves to seek out new, deeper levels of understanding. If the wisest and most righteous among us still meticulously review the Pesach story, then so too should we, who have so much to learn.

So, this year, let's all try to make an extra effort to review whatever part of the Haggadah we might be less familiar with, and strive to go one step deeper in our retelling of the Pesach story than we did last year. More so than ever, during these trying times it is crucial that we learn, pray, and truly connect to HaShem with the same passion and fervor as Rav Moshe Feinstein. We must have faith in our Savior, and G-d willing, we'll see an end to this awful and scary tribulation.

Chag sameach and stay safe! 🌸

Meira Goldstein, Sophomore



מעשה ברבי אליעזר

מעשה ברבי אליעזר ורבי יהושע ורבי אלעזר בן עזריה ורבי עקיבא ורבי טרפון שהיו מסבין בבני ברק והיו מספרים ביציאת מצרים כל־אותו הלילה, עד שבאו תלמידיהם ואמרו להם רבותינו הגיע זמן קריאת שמע של שחרית.

Value of Togetherness

As it is written in the Haggadah, in ancient times, five rabbis sat all night learning about *yetziat mitzrayim*. How, though? How could they sustain the energy to learn all night, without any sleep, especially a subject that scholars of their stature must have studied countless times prior? It goes without saying that they loved the Torah and its many nuances, but there must have been something unique about this particular learning experience that made Rabbi Eliezer and his colleagues unable to tear themselves away from it for even a few moments of sleep.

Perhaps the differentiating factor lies in the nature of a collaborative environment. Simply learning by oneself is undoubtedly spiritual, but there must be something so special and holy about learning in a group for it to have been worth mentioning in the *Haggadah*. This should be a lesson for us, especially during this time leading up to Pesach and even more so this year, when we find ourselves unable to learn Torah collectively. We should miss benefitting from different people's points of view.

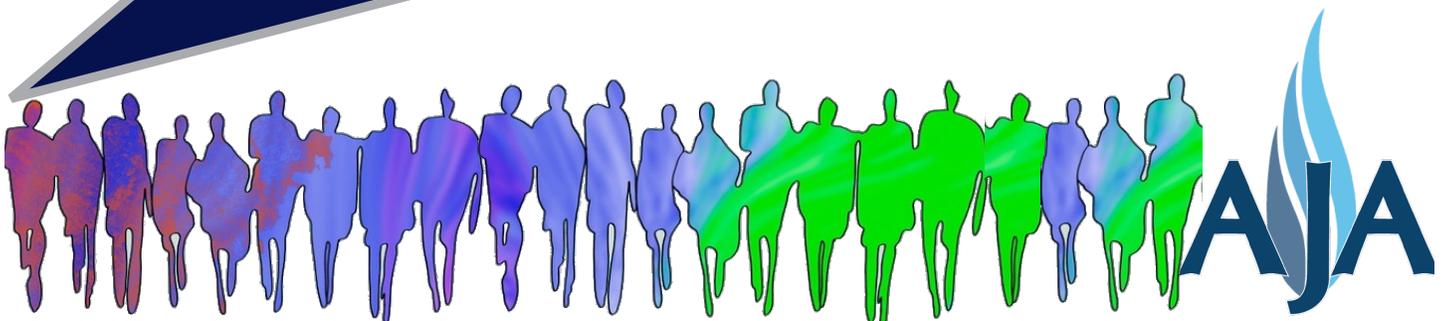
Allow me to share a story about my grandfather, Rabbi Michael Kramer, who—fortunately—was in America during World War II. At the end of the war, however, his father, Rabbi Simon G. Kramer moved the

family to Europe where he was stationed to serve as Jewish Liaison Representative to the American Military Government in Occupied Germany, and in that capacity, he worked to help displaced persons resettle and rebuild their lives. And although my grandfather was young at the time, he still maintains that those were some of the most formative experiences of his life. Hearing both the heartbreaking stories of desperation and the uplifting stories of resilience influenced his perspective and eventually put him on the path to community leadership. He learned from those people and has kept their lessons with him throughout his life.

Pirkei Avot (4:1) teaches us that Ben Zoma famously said, “אִי־הוּא חָכָם, הַלּוֹמֵד מִכָּל אָדָם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (תהלים קיט), “מִכָּל מְלַמְדֵי הַשֶּׁכֶלְתִּי כִּי עֲדֹתֶיךָ שִׂיחָה לִּי” -- “Who is wise? One who learns from everyone; as it says, ‘from all who taught me I have gained understanding because their witness is a lesson for me.’” Maybe our time in quarantine can offer us a better appreciation of our regular *chavrutot* with whom we usually sit, study Torah, and gain new perspectives daily. We should look forward to the day when we, *b'ezrat Hashem*, can sit at a table together again and continue to learn from each other's wisdom, knowledge, and experience.

Chag Sameach!

Dvar Torah: Jemima Schoen, Layout: Gavriella Jutan, Art: Hannah Solomon





EST. 1916

אמר רבי אלעזר בן־עזריה הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה ולא נכיתי שתאמר יציאת מצרים
בלילות עד שדרשה בן זומא, שנאמר, למען תזכר את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי
חיך. ימי חיך הימים. כל ימי חיך הלילות. ונתקמים אומרים ימי חיך העולם הזה. כל
ימי חיך להביא לימות המשיח:

Among the 613 mitzvot, one of the most prevalent themes is that of remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt. In fact, the commandment to remember Yetzias Mitzrayim (The Exodus from Egypt) twice daily, is only one of many mitzvot aimed at the commemoration of the Exodus – Zeicher L'Tzias Mitzrayim. Of course, this level of attention is no coincidence or mistake. Rather, the frequency with which we are commanded to both recall and recount the story of our salvation from slavery serves two significant purposes.

The first is perhaps somewhat obvious—constantly reminding ourselves of the scale and quantity of miracles performed on our behalf as a nation, ensures that we remain aware and appreciative of the love and commitment we share with HaShem. The second purpose is related, albeit slightly more nuanced. The retelling does more for us than maintain our confidence in believing ourselves to be ‘chosen’—familiarity with the sheer magnitude and potency of the plagues and miracles from which we benefited also help to keep us grounded and humble in the shadow of G-d’s awe-inspiring might. And in a complementary manner, the two functions combine to help preserve our communal focus on Godliness and Torah. In turn, this enables us to more fully appreciate and savor our lives—for without the recognition and understanding that HaShem has command over everything and everyone—and is therefore the source of all our gifts and fortunes—it would be impossible to do so.

At this time in history, when it often seems like the world is falling apart around us, it is more important than ever to remember that everything is caused by HaShem, and that He has a plan and a purpose for everything and everyone. In the eponymous Michtav Me’elياهو, amidst his discussion on Chevlie Mashiach, Rav Eliyahu Dessler explains that, before Mashiach’s arrival, the physical world will descend into complete turmoil, and at that time, it will be our Avodah (service) to maintain faith in HaShem’s foresight and omniscience. May we all have the strength and privilege to do so!

Based on the ideas of the Alter of Kelm.

-Moshe Loew ('20), Avraham Posy ('24), and Yeshurin Sorscher ('21)

By: Tali Finkelstein

In examining the two, seemingly unrelated halves of this paragraph, one might wonder: What is the connection between praising G-d for giving us the Torah, and four rough descriptions of the different types of people that participate in the Pesach Seder?

Rav Chaim Soleveitchik explains the connection using the following analogy. In all fields of knowledge, there are varying degrees of expertise: beginner, intermediate, advanced and many more in between. Each distinct level uses their own set of texts to study the subject, unique to their own relative fluency with the information at hand. For example, it would be illogical for an eleventh-grade biology student to be learning from the same textbook as a PhD candidate studying to receive their doctorate. The exception to this rule, however, is Torah. Beginners and

gauge in the same ex- same Pesukim that first-grade classroom ing reviewed by the scholars in each difference, of course, breadth and depth of person attains from says Rav Solove- wonders of Torah— can provide endless insights to each per- the different familiari- bring with them. this lesson to the graph, we can now the connection—that Hashem, not only for but for instilling it



scholars alike en- act texts. The are learned in a are constantly be- leading Torah generation. The lies in both the insight that each their studies. That, itchik, is one of the that the same text knowledge and son, regardless of ty or outlook they Thus, in applying theme of the para- better understand we are praising giving the Torah, with infinite in-

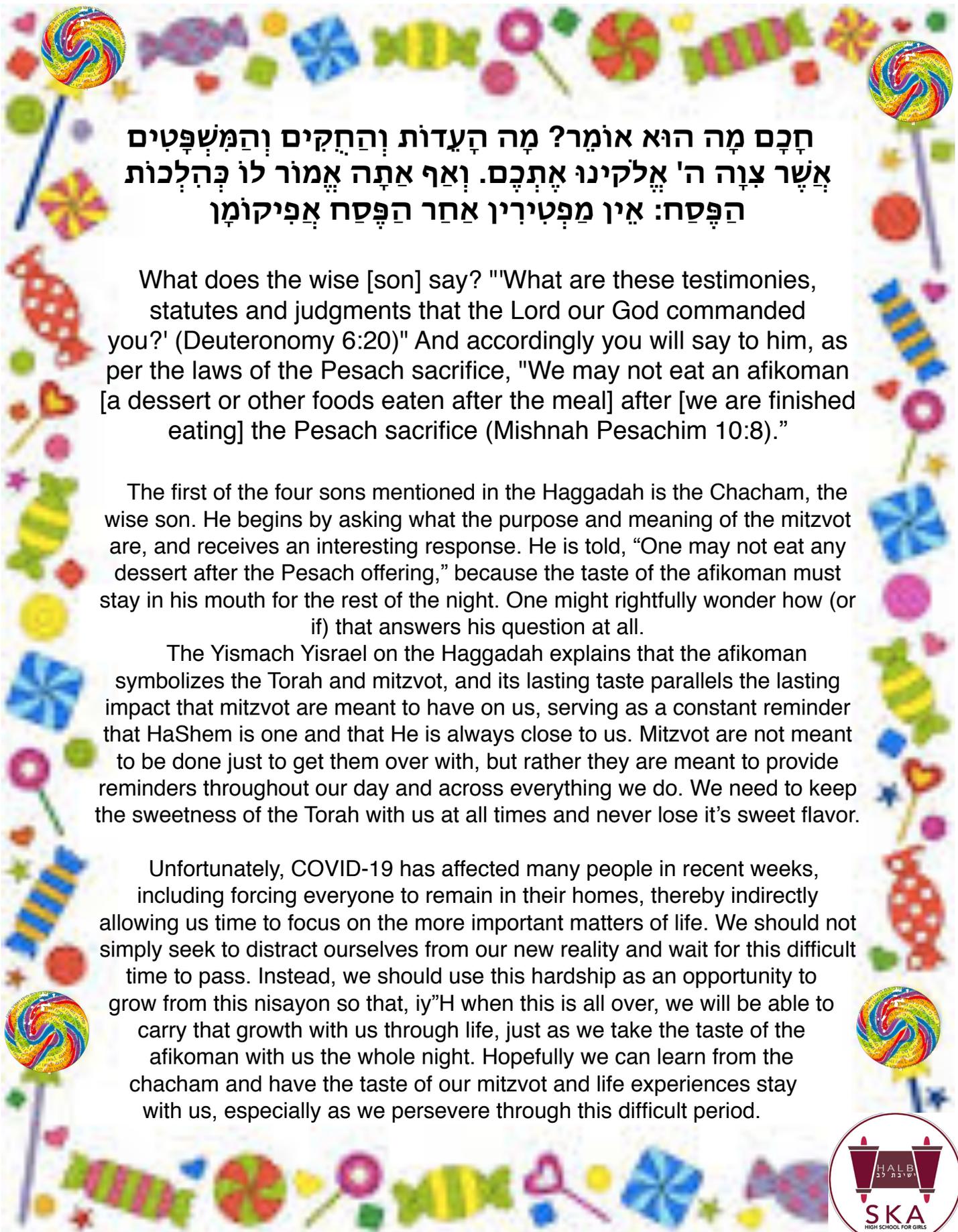
sights that can apply to different people in different ways, as well.

There is another crucial takeaway for those of us living in 2020. Around the world today, there are countless different ‘stripes’ of Judaism, each attaining slightly different insights from the Torah. As such, we must strive to remember and act in accordance with the notion that, as long as the goal is to serve Hashem in the best way possible, it is okay for different people from different backgrounds to learn varying lessons from the same text. Just as the four sons understand the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim through the distinct lens of their own respective personalities, we too will understand parts of the Torah in ways that differ from one another, and that’s not a bad thing. Quite the opposite—it is a gift from Hashem. As different as we may be or feel, the Torah unites us.

Despite it’s tragic nature, the Coronavirus has brought a tremendous amount of unity to the Jewish community—in someways emulating the Torah, itself. Yes, we are all suffering—but we are all suffering together. Hopefully, the power that has been generated through this tremendous unity will serve as a merit for this disease to end, and ultimately for the coming of Moshiach, speedily in our days.



Illustrated by: Dena Sheer



חָכָם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה הָעֵדוֹת וְהַחֲקִים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים
אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ אֲתֶכֶם. וְאִם אַתָּה אָמֹר לוֹ כְּהַלְכוֹת
הַפֶּסַח: אֵין מִפְטִירִין אַחַר הַפֶּסַח אֶפִיקוֹמֹן

What does the wise [son] say? "What are these testimonies, statutes and judgments that the Lord our God commanded you?" (Deuteronomy 6:20)" And accordingly you will say to him, as per the laws of the Pesach sacrifice, "We may not eat an afikoman [a dessert or other foods eaten after the meal] after [we are finished eating] the Pesach sacrifice (Mishnah Pesachim 10:8)."

The first of the four sons mentioned in the Haggadah is the Chacham, the wise son. He begins by asking what the purpose and meaning of the mitzvot are, and receives an interesting response. He is told, "One may not eat any dessert after the Pesach offering," because the taste of the afikoman must stay in his mouth for the rest of the night. One might rightfully wonder how (or if) that answers his question at all.

The Yismach Yisrael on the Haggadah explains that the afikoman symbolizes the Torah and mitzvot, and its lasting taste parallels the lasting impact that mitzvot are meant to have on us, serving as a constant reminder that HaShem is one and that He is always close to us. Mitzvot are not meant to be done just to get them over with, but rather they are meant to provide reminders throughout our day and across everything we do. We need to keep the sweetness of the Torah with us at all times and never lose its sweet flavor.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 has affected many people in recent weeks, including forcing everyone to remain in their homes, thereby indirectly allowing us time to focus on the more important matters of life. We should not simply seek to distract ourselves from our new reality and wait for this difficult time to pass. Instead, we should use this hardship as an opportunity to grow from this nisayon so that, iy"H when this is all over, we will be able to carry that growth with us through life, just as we take the taste of the afikoman with us the whole night. Hopefully we can learn from the chacham and have the taste of our mitzvot and life experiences stay with us, especially as we persevere through this difficult period.



רָשַׁע מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה הָעֲבוּדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם. לָכֶם - וְלֹא לוֹ. וּלְפִי שְׁהוֹצִיא אֶת עַצְמוֹ מִן הַכֶּלֶל כְּפָר בְּעֵקֶר. וְאִם אַתָּה הִקְהֵה אֶת שְׁנֵי וְאָמַר לוֹ: "בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם". לִי וְלֹא-לוֹ. אֱלוֹ הִיָּה שָׁם, לֹא הִיָּה נִגְאָל

“What is this service to you?” By phrasing his question in the third-person, thereby implying an underlying skepticism regarding the existence of Hashem and the truth of his Torah, the Rasha inherently depicts himself as an outsider and a rebel—a notion which we rarely, if ever, have reason to doubt or try to dispel. On the other hand, doesn’t the fact that the Rasha attends the seder in the first place—not to mention his staying sufficiently engaged to formulate and ask a question—suggest that he does, in fact, have some measure of goodness deep inside of him?

In Bamidbar (35:34) it says, “וְלֹא תִטְמֵא אֶת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם יוֹשְׁבֵיהֶּ בָּהּ אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי שׁוֹכֵן בְּתוֹכָהּ כִּי אֲנִי ה' שׁוֹכֵן בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל” “You shouldn’t defile the land in which you live, in which I myself abide, for I, the Lord, abide among the Jewish people.” Rashi suggests that the repetition in this pasuk reflects Hashem’s desire for Bnei Yisrael to understand that, even when they are in a state of impurity, He still dwells amongst them. In other words, Hashem wanted to reassure His chosen people that His love for them existed independent of their Godliness, and thus would neither grow nor diminish in accordance with their ever-fluctuating spirituality. And, in the same way that Hashem elects to focus on the goodness within Bnei Yisrael, even in our times of sin, so too must we make a concerted effort to recognize and celebrate the positive aspects of the Rasha. Although he has many flaws, we must remember that he is still a member of the Jewish people, and that alone entitles him to some level of respect and acceptance.

Similarly, עֵשׂוּ is often referred to as עֵשׂוּ הַרְשָׁע. And while there is no doubt that עֵשׂוּ lived a largely evil life, the pasuk still says (Bereishit 25:28), “וַיֵּאָהֵב יִצְחָק אֶת עֵשׂוּ כִּי צִיד” “Yitzchak loved עֵשׂוּ because he had a taste for game.” יִצְחָק understood that עֵשׂוּ wasn’t interested in learning Torah, but chose not to criticize him for it. Instead, he sought out and focused on a positive trait that עֵשׂוּ did possess—his hunting prowess—and praised him for that instead.

Thus, in its discussion of the Rasha, the Haggadah teaches us a major lesson which we should seek to put into practice not only at the seder, but throughout our entire lives—especially given the current state of affairs. During this difficult time, it is extremely easy to lose hope and see only the negatives—after all, there is no shortage. We are sheltered in our homes, unable to see family and friends. We can’t go to school, work, or shul. Many people are personally affected by this virus, and it may even seem like Hashem has flipped the world upside down and disappeared. Therefore, now more than ever, we must try to emulate the ways of Hashem and יִצְחָק אֱבִינוֹ, and do whatever we can to find goodness wherever it resides.

Depicted in the background of this page is a rainbow overpowering the droplets of rain. Similar to the idea of finding the good in the Rasha, even though he seems inherently evil, we must seek the good in our lives, despite the negative times; finding the rainbow in the midst of the storm.



Malkie Derdik, Daniella Feldman, Leora Friedman, Shoshi Greenberg, Riki Posner

תָּם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה זֹאת? וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו "בְּחֻזֵּק יָד
הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים."



As opposed to being considered four distinct entities, the four sons are actually meant to represent the different facets of every human being. Thus writes the *Maharal* in his *Gevurot Hashem*, that each of us possesses a combination of each of the personality characteristics. As such, it follows that each of these components has a chance to either be dominant or weak. Although we all strive to emulate the *chacham* – the wise son – it is important to remember that sometimes we must also work to mirror the charisma of the *tam* – the simple son.

The *tam* is unique, in that they are someone who has the courage to ask a transparent question. They are not asking with evil intentions, nor are they seeking a deep understanding. Rather, they are asking out of genuine curiosity, and is therefore expecting a simple and logical explanation. The *tam* asks, “What is this?” (Exodus 13:14), and the answer given to him is, “With the strength of His hand did the Lord take us out from Egypt, from the house of slaves” (Exodus 13:14). It is explained to him that the reason we are sitting at the seder is to recognize the utter kindness *Hashem* showered upon us through all of the miracles He performed in taking us out of our captive land.

YULA Team: Ava Chernicoff, Noa Davis, Noa Harkham, Gaya Hyman, Meira Ives, Melissa Manesh, Rina Melamed



Right now, we are experiencing a moment of doubt and confusion; truly a unique state of unfamiliarity within our environment. We are so used to the advanced world in which we live and are blessed with the availability of the internet, cell phones, vaccines, factories, utilities, navigation systems, and so much more. Mankind's inventions are extremely powerful and seem to fill all of the voids in our lives, often making us believe that man is capable of accomplishing the impossible. However, the recent spread of the coronavirus is a direct message from Hashem. The Almighty is reminding us that He has a plan, and that no matter how much we believe we can accomplish by ourselves alone, *Hashem* is the only one who controls the world.

We need to remember that we are still in exile and that only *Hashem* holds the reason and the cure. Therefore, like the *tam*, we must turn to God from a place of innocence and ask for His help and His healing, for we have no knowledge regarding this subject; we are simple men. Just as the *tam* modestly asks his straightforward question, so, too we must do the same. Ultimately, not only will *Hashem* save us like He did our ancestors in Egypt, but He will also show us why this too was for a Divine reason and for our own good and benefit.

Dvar Torah by Meira Ives

וְשִׂאֵינוּ יוֹדְעַ לְשֹׂאֵל – אֵת פֶּתַח לוֹ, לְשֹׂאֵמֶר, וְהַגִּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא
לֵאמֹר, בְּעֵבֹר זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם.

Eino Yodeah Lishol

Maya Harbater & Hannah Shedlo

“As for the son who does not know what to ask, you must begin to speak to him, as it is stated: ‘You shall tell your son on that day saying: ‘Because of this, Hashem did for me when I went out from Egypt.’”

If a child does not know how to ask, we must teach it to him—and we should begin his search for truth and knowledge with the story of *Haggadah*. The *Haggadah*'s use of the word “הגדת” implies that the guidance given must be firm. On the other hand, the word “לאמר” is also used, conveying a softer tone, demonstrating that there should be a gentle concern in the manner in which he is instructed, as well.



This shows us that, while knowledge itself is important, the way we are taught things is just as important. During this time of turmoil and chaos, we need to make an even more concerted effort to employ that level of sensitivity. Many of us feel lost right now, and have no idea what is going on, or even which questions to ask to find out, and it is incumbent upon all of us to demonstrate a balance of sensitivity and firmness to help guide each other through this difficult time.

Additionally, in the phrase “אֵת פֶּתַח לוֹ”, the word “פתח”, meaning “open”, is used. Why, though, does the story of Pesach need to be “opened” in the first place? One answer lies in the story of Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk, who once asked his students, “Where does G-d live?” They were confused. “Doesn’t G-d live everywhere? Were we not taught that He is Omnipresent?” The rebbe replied, “You have not understood. G-d lives where we let Him in.” In order to truly embrace the meaning of Pesach and experience God’s presence in our lives, we have to keep our hearts open.

This is especially true for the children among us, including the son who doesn’t know how to ask, who often must be taught how to live a more ‘open’ life. This way, during difficult and complicated times like these, they can take comfort in knowing that G-d resides within them. We should also reflect on this lesson ourselves, though, and remain open for both God and those around us, many of whom need guidance now more than ever. We need to remain open, take them under our wings, and support them in any way we can.





יכול מראש חדש

יכול מראש חדש. תלמוד לומר ביום ההוא. אי ביום ההוא.
יכול מבעוד יום. תלמוד לומר בבעבור זה.
בעבור זה לא אמרתי אלא בשעה שמצה ומרור מנחים לפניך

One of the most common questions to arise when we reach this section of *maggid* is: Why did the compilers of the *Haggadah* place this paragraph here? It seems to have no relation to the text either before or after it, so why at this particular juncture?

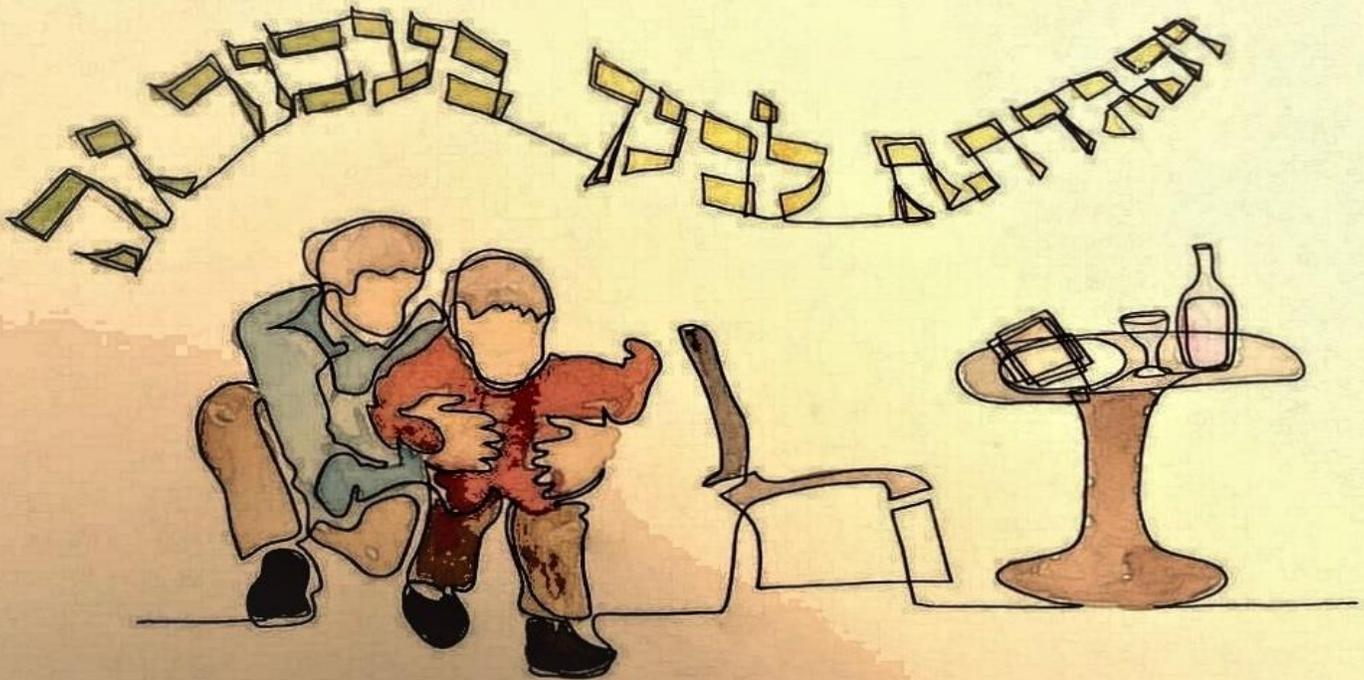
One answer lies in the *pasuk* that provides the framework for *maggid* during the seder, which reads, "והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים." As we see, *maggid* begins with והגדת לבנך, demonstrating the importance of retelling the story of *Yetziat Mitzrayim*, and specifically, teaching the *Haggadah* to children. In turn, this obligation is fulfilled through the first ten paragraphs of *maggid*, highlighted by discussions regarding the four questions and the four sons.

The next phrase in the *pasuk*, ביום ההוא, means 'on that day.' Which day, though? The answer is given in the paragraph of יכול מראש חדש, which tells us that the day in question is the one on which we consume *matzah* and *maror*, the 15th of *Nissan*. The next word of the *pasuk* is לאמר, which literally translates as 'saying,' referring to the actual story of the Exodus, which is what comes next in *maggid*, too. In fact, this pattern holds true through every word of the *pasuk* and section of *maggid*.

However, not only does the sequence of *maggid* follow the wording of the *pasuk*, it also presents its lessons in a very logical way. First, it introduces the obligation to recount the Exodus, then it instructs us when to fulfill this obligation, and then, it actually enables us to fulfill the obligation by relating the story of *Pesach*.

At first glance, the paragraph of יכול מראש חדש appears to be a somewhat random little paragraph, devoid of any deep meaning or exciting stories, and seemingly out of place among the other important parts *maggid*. However, through a closer examination, you will inevitably find that יכול מראש חדש is a critical piece in maintaining the logical progression of the *Haggadah*, as well as in explaining how the *pasuk* of, "והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים!" relates to teaching us the story of the exodus from Egypt.

This teaches us a very important lesson about appreciating the proper, order, detail and guidance of those wiser than us. One can only imagine the level of detail involved in trying to flatten the curve of COVID-19. This involves the work of scientists, healthcare personnel, government officials etc. We must appreciate the detail and involvement of all of these different groups in trying to create a system that will save lives. Even more so, l'havdil, we need to appreciate the detail with which Hashem wrote the Torah in order to give us a life of meaning and purpose.



Art Description: The contour style of art chosen which consists of one continuous line that creates the art form reflects the message of the Mitzvah to pass on the tradition and teach the story of our exodus from Egypt to the next generation. The father teaching his son to walk is analogous to the father teaching their children their history, religion and beliefs - all which guide our walk of life



Yeshiva of Flatbush Joel Braverman High School

מִתְחִלָּה עוֹבְדֵי עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה הָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וְעַכְשָׁיו קִרְבָּנוּ הַמָּקוֹם לְעִבְדוֹתוֹ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיֹּאמֶר
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: בְּעֵבֶר הַנְּהַר יָשְׁבוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם מֵעוֹלָם, תִּרְחַח
אֲבִי אַבְרָהָם וְאֲבִי נָחוֹר, וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים.

“From the Beginning”

Every person has a beginning—an origin of which they may or may not be proud. Importantly, though, whether it consists of righteous deeds or not, one is not restricted by or confined to the path on which they begin their lives. Rather, it is in one’s own power to break the chains of the past and form new links to a future full of deeper meaning. Indeed, even some of our own forefathers—the foundational personalities of our faith—began their lives worshipping other, false gods. How can that be, though? How can we, the Jewish people, have risen from idolaters?

The truth is that the Jewish people don’t define our members by their origins. Instead, we do the opposite—we celebrate the lives they created for themselves, the obstacles they overcame to do so, and often seek to emulate much of their growth within our own lives. As Rabbi Sacks explains, “Both Abraham, the son of a prominent idol worshipper, and Rachel, the daughter of a known idol worshipper, have risen beyond their notorious lineage. They sought the truth; they moved on not only from, but with the past and began to craft a journey of their own— a life of Judaism.”

Man has free will. The world he is born into is beyond his control, but the way he decides to live within that world is his entirely up to him. He has the option to change lanes, roads, or directions altogether. Abraham took an active role in his growth; he realized that his father’s path was not the one upon which he wanted to embark. Similarly, Rachel veered from the path set before her by rooting herself in Judaism. Many of our ancestors’ lives are best studied through a formative lens rather than a deconstructive prism.

During this time of uncertainty and desperation, it is natural to throw in the towel and succumb to our apparent powerlessness. It is easy to feel a sense of helplessness and lack of motivation. Therefore, when we read this passage at the seder table, it is crucial that we internalize its key message: the only things that bind us are the things we allow ourselves to be bound by. So, to whatever extent you can, try to use this time in quarantine to not only reflect upon your past or worry about the present, but to redefine your future.



Vivian Cohen
Kaden Harari

בְּרוּךְ שׁוֹמֵר הַבְּטָחָתוֹ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּרוּךְ הוּא. שֶׁהַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא חָשַׁב
אֶת־הַקֶּץ, לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמַר לְאַבְרָהָם אֲבִינוּ בְּבְרִית בֵּין הַבְּתָרִים,
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיֹּאמֶר לְאַבְרָם, יָדַע תֵּדַע כִּי־גַר יִהְיֶה זְרַעְךָ בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לָהֶם,
וַעֲבָדוּם וְעָנּוּ אֹתָם אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה. וְגַם אֶת־הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲבֹדוּ דָן אֲנִי
וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן יֵצְאוּ בְּרַכְשׁ גָּדוֹל.

Afflictions of Love

In this section of *magid*, we sanctify *Hashem* for fulfilling his promise of redeeming the Jews from their hardships in Egypt. This, however, begs the following difficult, but natural questions: why are we thanking *Hashem* for taking us out of Egypt if He was the One that put us there in the first place? In other words, why does *Hashem* afflict us and then expect us to praise him for later alleviating the suffering?

One possible answer stems from a *pasuk* in Tehillim, in which David HaMelech writes, “Fortunate is the one whom You, G-d, afflict” (Psalms 94:12). What a peculiar statement! What makes troubles and afflictions so wonderful that David HaMelech thought to deem their victims as fortunate? To address this, the Rabbis (Berachos 5a) introduced a new manner with which to regard *Klal Yisroel’s* suffering, called *Yisurin Shel Ahava* - Afflictions of Love. According to the *Gemara*, *Hashem* granted his chosen people a gift that enables us to attain a spiritual level beyond our natural capabilities. The catch is, we do so by overcoming affliction. With this in mind, it is much easier to understand David HaMelech’s assertion—we praise G-d for afflicting us, as his doing so provides a unique channel to enhance our connection with Him.

This may also help explain why the *maror* is in the center of the *Seder* plate. Even a seemingly bitter (*maror*) experience is not truly a negative. Instead, we should strive to reorient ourselves to treat even the most difficult moments as necessary growth spurts—as crucial links in a broader chain of positive events, simply a means to an end. In relation to this idea, Isaiah says: “I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please” (Isaiah 46:10). G-d knows the ending in advance. Further proving this idea, *Hashem* reveals the end of our exile in Egypt to Avraham long before it even commences. Our redemption was always *Hashem’s* top priority, but we had to prove to Him that we were worthy by first enduring the corresponding afflictions.

Finally, as the *Gemara* states, “Anyone in whom the Holy One, Blessed be He, delights, He oppresses him with suffering, as it is stated: ‘Yet in whom the Lord delights, He oppresses him with disease’ (Isaiah 53:10)” (Brachos 5a). In these challenging times, it is critical for us—to whatever degree possible—to endeavor to regard the COVID-19 pandemic as yet another affliction of love, a unique opportunity to persevere and bring ourselves closer to *Hashem*. This attribute, the ability to tackle the difficulties and prevail, is essential to the collective identity of the Jewish people. A people who often begin as, “strangers in a land that is not ours,” and “leave with great wealth.” May we all overcome these difficulties together and become closer to *Hashem*.

Written by: Gabriel Kurlander
Art by: Julia Mullayev

D'var Torah

From the comfort of our homes in the United States, Vehi She'amda ranks among the most difficult portions of the Haggadah with which to relate. We raise our glass joyfully while proclaiming that, time and again, HaShem has saved us from our enemies.

But one peek out the window reveals a starkly different reality than the more dire timelines portrayed by the Haggadah. We have the freedom to exercise and practice our religion which, in turn, also affords us additional rights, identical to those of our non-Jewish peers: the right to citizenship, to earn a livelihood, to cast an equal vote, and many more. Where, then, are our enemies? Where is the danger and the cruel oppression? And, in their absence, how can we possibly find salvation from them? Sometimes, it can feel like Vehi She'amda is somewhat outdated and obsolete.

To counter that idea, the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe argued that even in periods where we cannot yearn for salvation from a clearly identified enemy, every generation nonetheless benefits from countless hidden miracles that save us from oppression. In the same vein, Rav Shimon Schwab calls our attention to the fact that we are often oblivious to many situations which should have put us in grave danger, but instead of experiencing harm, we proceed with life as normal. This, according to Rav Schwab, is the ultimate imperceptible salvation of which we may never be aware.

We refer to these subtle occurrences as *nisecha sheb'chol yom imanu*, the miracles that we experience every day, for which we explicitly thank HaShem in Shemoneh Esrei. And, in the era of the rapidly-spreading coronavirus, many of us may already have been exposed to any number of people carrying the virus, and while some of us may be carrying it ourselves, many others are yet to contract the bug. Furthermore, there are no doubt some people who are asymptomatic carriers, and therefore unaware of the risk they pose to others, yet have infected nobody. If any of these miracles were/are taking place, we would never be any the wiser. Indeed, even today we can experience magnificent salvation without realizing it.

Perhaps the crescendo of Vehi She'amda, in which we sing, "VeHaKadosh Baruch Hu Matzileinu Miyadam," is not just a blind proclamation that HaShem saves us from 'their hands,' a phenomenon many of us have only experienced second- or third-hand. Instead, we can read the word 'matzileinu' not as an action that Hashem does, but as a descriptor of Hashem, as, in Hebrew grammar, a verb can also refer to the individual who performs that particular action. We relate to Hashem as our 'matzil,' the One who saves us, the One who is defined by the continual salvation that He brings to us.

Even when it is not apparent or obvious, we still relate to HaShem as our 'matzil.' We only see the world through our own, quite limited pair of lenses, blissfully unaware of many potential dangers we have narrowly escaped. These undercover miracles demonstrate that HaShem's salvation is not an occasional experience for us. Hashem is always our 'matzil' from the hands of our oppressors and consistently sends us these salvations, as indiscernible as they may be to us, each and every day.

The hidden miracles in life, though we don't often recognize them, keep us safe. This image features two people playing outside enjoying themselves while the angels up above are holding back the rain --a truly hidden miracle.

בס"ד
וְהִיא שְׁעֵמֶדָה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ.
שְׁלֵא אֶחָד בְּלִבָּד, עֵמֵד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ.
אֶלָּא שְׁבִכְל דּוֹר וְדוֹר, עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ
לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ. וְהַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְצִילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם.





זכא יאקב מנה בן יקל לכן רשעני אושם אוקב אבינו:
 שפינה לא גזר אלא ור הניחיו אכן בן יקל אוקב
 אר רבך שפלה: אבינו יאבד אבינו וזר. מרבימה וזר
 א בנתנו יא מלך וזר א ב לזו גזאל וזבא זבד

Go out and learn what Lavan the Aramean sought to do to Ya'akov, our father; since Pharaoh only decreed [the death sentence] on the males but Lavan sought to uproot the whole [people]. As it is stated (Deuteronomy 26:5), "An Aramean was destroying my father and he went down to Egypt, and he resided there with a small number and he became there a nation, great, powerful and numerous."

We now begin the bulk of Maggid, where we discuss the history of how we got down to Egypt. But at the outset we discuss Lavan, and his plan to kill Yaakov. Why do we start talking about Lavan when we are supposed to be talking about our migration to or from Egypt? What does Lavan have to do with this?

In Judaism we have a concept of מושיב אבות סמנים לבנים, that the actions of our forefathers are a sign for us, their children. The Vilna Gaon explains that the entire story of Lavan was a sign for what would later happen through our slavery, and Exodus from Egypt. Just as Yaakov had to work tirelessly for Lavan in order to marry Rachel and Leah, so too the Jewish people had to work tirelessly for Pharaoh. Yaakov eventually left Lavan's house with a vast amount of wealth, just as we left Egypt. So too, right after Yaakov left Lavan's house, Lavan came chasing after him, just how right after leaving Egypt, the Egyptians came chasing after us. Step by step, Lavan's treatment of Yaakov paralleled the Jewish experience in Egypt. This, explains the Vilna Gaon, is the reason why we first have to

read the whole story of Lavan in order to understand the full story of what really happened to our ancestors in Egypt. (https://ohr.edu/holidays/Pesach/Haggadah_and_seder/6804)

We are currently living through unprecedented times, and we look around for answers from others, but we feel very alone. Just as the story of Yaakov and Lavan teaches us מושיב אבות סמנים לבנים, we look to our elders for guidance. In fact, we are being given messages from people who have previously lived under similar circumstances. Natan Sharansky, a Russian Jew who was sentenced to 13 years in Russian jail, just released a video on his tips to get through life in quarantine. A Holocaust survivor gave over a message trying to show us how much we actually have, despite what we might think. She explained that yes, the situation we are living in is hard, but we have food to put on the table, we can go to sleep knowing that our family will not be ripped away from us, and while we can not congregate, we can still serve Hashem in our homes without fear.

We also hold another very powerful tool right now. Our actions will be passed down to our children. However we go through this pandemic, is how our children will one day deal with their own predicaments, no matter how big or small. We can choose what message we want to take out of this and pass on. We have the power to write our own story. How will you write yours? 🌸

Aliza Weizburg, Senior



שָׁנְאָמַר: אֲרַמִּי אֲבָד אָבִי, וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרַיִם וַיִּגְרֶשׁ שָׁם בְּמַתִּי מֵעֵט, וַיְהִי שָׁם לְגוֹי גָדוֹל, עֲצוּם וְרַב. וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרַיִם - אָנוּס עַל פִּי הַדְּבָר.
וַיִּגְרֶשׁ שָׁם - מִלְּמַד שֶׁלֹּא יֵרֵד יַעֲקֹב אֲבִינוֹ לְהַשְׁתַּקֵּעַ בְּמִצְרַיִם אֶלֶּא לְגוֹר שָׁם, שָׁנְאָמַר: וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵל פְּרָעָה, לְגוֹר בְּאַרְץ כְּנָעַן, כִּי אִין מַרְעָה לְצֹאן אֲשֶׁר לְעַבְדֶּיךָ, כִּי כֶבֶד הִרְעִיב בְּאַרְץ כְּנָעַן. וַעֲתָה יֵשְׁבוּ נָא עַבְדֶּיךָ בְּאַרְץ גֹּשֶׁן.
בְּמַתִּי מֵעֵט - כְּמָה שָׁנְאָמַר: בְּשִׁבְעִים נֶפֶשׁ יֵרְדוּ אֲבוֹתֶיךָ מִצְרַיִם, וַעֲתָה שָׁמַךְ !! אֱלֹהֶיךָ כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם לְרַב.
וַיְהִי שָׁם לְגוֹי - מִלְּמַד שֶׁהָיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִצִּיּוֹנִים שָׁם.
גָדוֹל, עֲצוּם - כְּמָה שָׁנְאָמַר: וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל פָּרוּ וַיִּשְׂרְצוּ וַיִּרְבּוּ וַיַּעֲצְמוּ בְּמֵאֵד מְאֹד, וַתִּמְלֵא הָאָרֶץ אֹתָם.
וְרַב - כְּמָה שָׁנְאָמַר: רַבְּבָה כְּצִמְחַ הַשָּׂדֶה נִתְתִּיר, וַתִּרְבֵּי וַתִּגְדְּלֵי וַתִּבְאֵי בְעֵדֵי עַדְיִים, שְׂדֵים נִכְנְוּ וַיִּשְׁעֲרֶךְ צִמְחָה, וְאֵת יַעֲרֹם וַעֲרִיָּה - וַאֲעֵבֵר עָלֶיךָ וְאֶרְאֶךָ מִתְּבוֹסֶסֶת בְּדַמְיֶךָ, וְאֹמֵר לֶךְ בְּדַמְיֶךָ חַיִּי.
וְאֹמֵר לֶךְ בְּדַמְיֶךָ חַיִּי.

Throughout the entirety of *Tanakh*, one of the most universally reviled and corruptive human qualities is that of greed and avarice. For example, even a heroic, righteous character like King Saul met his demise through his inability to resist overindulging in the spoils of war; and, as punishment for his lack of self-control, G-d took the drastic step of stripping him of his sovereignty and, accordingly, his family's legacy.

In fact, one way to prove the severity with which G-d regards greed in general—as opposed to being specifically angry at Saul—is by examining the similarities between his story and that of Lavan. Just as HaShem decided to rebuke not only Saul himself, but his family and descendants as well, so too did he apply Lavan's penalty to the entirety of his respective household.

Today, the gravity of this topic is more relevant than ever. Despite being stuck in our homes with only our families, we are constantly presented with opportunities to act greedily—to take that last snack from the fridge when you know your brother hasn't had any, to leave dirty dishes around for someone else to clean, or to shove someone out of the way for an extra roll of toilet paper in the supermarket...or to simply lock yourself in your room and try to ignore the people around you and focus exclusively on yourself. In times like these it is important to learn from the *Tanakh* and its flawed characters and go out of our way to be extra generous and compassionate to the people around us—many of whom might be struggling with the restrictions of quarantine in ways we ourselves cannot imagine—and thereby better, not only our own lives, but the lives of our families, friends, and neighbors, too.

וַיִּרְעוּ אֶתְנוּ הַמְצָרִים וַיַּעֲנוּנוּ,

וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה.

וַיִּרְעוּ אֶתְנוּ הַמְצָרִים – כָּמָה

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: הִבָּה נִתְחַכְּמָה לוֹ פֶּן

יִרְבֶּה, וְהָיָה כִּי תִקְרָאנָה מִלְחָמָה

וְנוֹסֵף גַּם הוּא עַל שְׂנְאֵינוּ וְנִלְחַם-

בָּנוּ, וְעָלָה מִן-הָאָרֶץ.

וַיַּעֲנוּנוּ. כָּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיִּשְׁימוּ עָלֵינוּ שְׂרֵי מַסִּים לְמַעַן

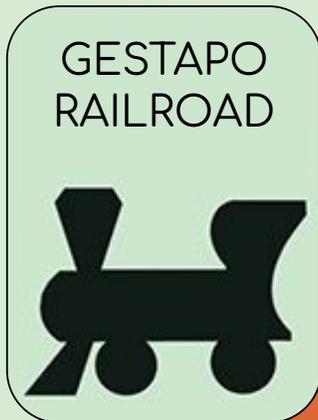
עֲנֹתוֹ בְּסִבְלָתָם. וַיִּבֶן עָרֵי מְסֻכּוֹת לְפָרְעָה. אֶת-

פְּתָם וְאֶת-רַעַמְסֵס.

וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה. כָּמָה

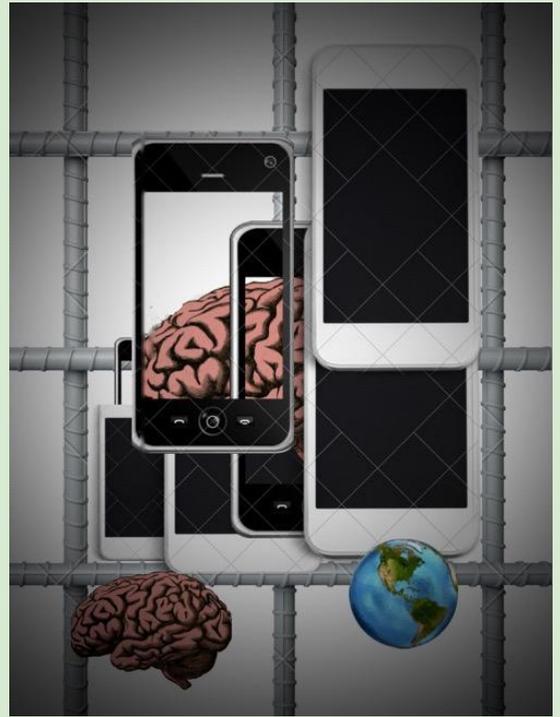
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ מִצְרַיִם אֶת-בְּנֵי

יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּפָרָה.



“ויענונו ויתנו עלינו עבודה קשה”-

As alluded to in the quote above, there are no shortage of instances in Jewish history in which we have been persecuted to the point of being physically unable to worship Hashem. Now, however, as opposed to suffering alone under the control of a foreign power, the Jewish people stand together with the rest of the world, at the mercy of a virus. Having been prohibited from gathering in either school or shul, many of us feel trapped and cut off from our respective communities. Even on Pesach, a holiday typically celebrated by large groups of families and friends in any number of destinations, we are all in our own homes. Needless to say, the isolation is both physically and emotionally draining.



However, like our ancestors in *Mitzrayim*, we can neither afford to give up hope, nor step away from our religious practices. There is a *Midrash* brought down by VaYikra Zatura that says, “Because of these four things Israel was redeemed from Egypt: They did not change their names or their language, they did not speak *Lashon ha-ra*, and none of them were promiscuous.” And another, similar *Midrash* from *Peskita* says “And there they became a nation – this teaches that the Israelites were distinct there, in that their clothing, food, and language was different from the Egyptians’. They were identified and known as a separate nation, apart from the Egyptians.”

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Both of these *Midrashim* emphasize the importance of maintaining a Jewish community, even while something (or, in the case of the Egyptians, someone) is trying to prevent us from doing so. Thus, they also serve as a great example of why it is so important that we seek to use this time in social distancing to build up our communities. Luckily, many of the amazing organizations around us have quickly taken up the task, and are providing countless *shiurim*, *kumzitzes*, and other events to help us stay together under circumstances that could so easily have the opposite effect. They give us the strength to keep moving and pass go once again. May we continue to find the hope and inspiration required to keep fighting this invisible enemy while staying true to our Jewish heritage, and may we come together (in person!) in *Yerushalayim* sometime very soon.

And we cried out to Hashem

Following a thorough retelling of the affliction that Bnei Yisroel endured in Mitzrayim, the Haggadah pivots its focus in the opposite direction, towards the source of our redemption. As the Haggadah explicitly states, quoting the pasuk in Shmot, “the Jews cried out to Hashem and He remembered his promise to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov” (Shmot 2:23). In his commentary on that verse, Rashi points out that immediately after Hashem hears this lament, He calls upon Moshe to serve as the vessel through which He would carry out the redemption of the Jewish people.

This is far from the only instance in which tefillah has saved us, however. There are several examples of this phenomenon throughout Tanach, perhaps none more explicit than the pasuk in Tehillim which states, “צַעֲקוּ וְה' שׁוֹמֵעַ וּמַכֵּל צָרוֹת הַצִּלִּים” -- “Cry out and Hashem hears, and He rescues them from all their troubles,” (Tehillim 34:18). Malbim explains that this pasuk refers to tzaddikim, and that if they cry out in pain, they will be saved not only from their immediate affliction, but from all future afflictions as well. In fact, the more one examines the text of the Tanach, the more obvious it becomes that tefillah is one of our strongest and most powerful tools, and that through proper prayer, Hashem undoubtedly will save us.

In each generation, the Jewish people face a new challenge, unique from any others faced by both previous and future generations. This idea is perhaps more apparent now than ever, as we live in a rapidly changing digital world that would seem foreign to even our great-grandparents. However, this year, we face a truly unique—and hopefully short-lived—challenge. Due to the ongoing pandemic, our entire world has been turned completely upside-down and, given its usual fanfare, Pesach feels particularly eerie. Our *sedarim* consist of only a few people, and most of us are alone in our own homes. Everything is different and the world just doesn't seem right.

However, despite the new realities of this strange world that we now live in, we still have at least one constant that can help get us through this time—tefillah—our not-so-secret weapon, and the pathway to our salvation since the days of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. Through proper, intense tefillah, we can not only get through this trying time and get back to our normal lives, but perhaps even prevent future calamities, as well. As the pasuk says, “Cry out and Hashem hears, and He rescues them from ALL their troubles.”

Written By: Daniel Singer
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Idea: Lea Karasanti

"וַיֹּצֵאנוּ
מִמִּצְרַיִם

חֲזָקָה

בְּטוֹרָה
גְּדֹלָה
וּבְמִפְ



By: Gaya Hyma



הַיָּהוָה

עָלָה עֲלֵינוּ

וּבַמִּדְבָּר
וּבְאֶתְרוֹת
תַּיִם

Hashem Took Us Out Of Egypt



וַיֹּצֵאנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה, וּבְזְרֹעַ נְטוּיָה, וּבְמַרְא גְדֹל, וּבְאִתּוֹת וּבְמִפְתִּיּוֹת. וַיֹּצֵאנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם. לֹא עַל-יַדֵּי מַלְאָה, וְלֹא עַל-יַדֵּי שְׂרָף, וְלֹא עַל-יַדֵּי שְׁלִיחַ, אֲלֵא הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּכַבּוֹדוֹ וּבְעֶצְמוֹ. שִׁנְאָמַר: וְעִבְרַתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּלִילָה הַזֶּה, וְהִפְתִּי כָל-בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מֵאָדָם וְעַד בְּהֵמָה, וּבְכָל אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֶעֱשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים. אֲנִי ה'. וְעִבְרַתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּלִילָה הַזֶּה - אֲנִי וְלֹא מַלְאָה; וְהִפְתִּי כָל בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם. אֲנִי וְלֹא שְׂרָף; וּבְכָל-אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֶעֱשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים. אֲנִי וְלֹא הַשְּׁלִיחַ; אֲנִי ה'. אֲנִי הוּא וְלֹא אַחֵר. בְּיַד חֲזָקָה. זֶה הַדָּבָר, כִּמְהָ שִׁנְאָמַר: הִנֵּה יַד-ה' הוֹיָה בְּמִקְנֶה אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׂדֶה, בְּסוֹסִים, בְּחֹמְרִים, בְּגַמְלִים, בְּבָקָר וּבְצֹאן, דָּבָר כְּבֹד מֵאֹד. וּבְזְרֹעַ נְטוּיָה. זֶה הַחֲרֹב, כִּמְהָ שִׁנְאָמַר: וְחָרְבוּ שְׁלוֹפָה בְּיַדוֹ, נְטוּיָה עַל-רוּשָׁלַיִם. וּבְמוֹרָא גְדֹל. זֶה גְלוֹי שְׁכִינָה. כִּמְהָ שִׁנְאָמַר, אוֹ הִנֵּסָה אֱלֹהִים לְבוֹא לְקַחַת לוֹ גוֹי מִקְרֹב גוֹי בְּמִסֹּת בָּאִתּוֹת וּבְמוֹפְתִים וּבְמִלְחָמָה וּבְיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזְרֹעַ נְטוּיָה וּבְמוֹרָאִים גְּדוֹלִים כָּל אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה לָכֶם ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם בְּמִצְרַיִם לְעֵינֵיךָ. וּבְאִתּוֹת. זֶה הַמְּטָה, כִּמְהָ שִׁנְאָמַר: וְאֵת הַמְּטָה הַזֶּה תִּקַּח בְּיָדְךָ, אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה-בּוֹ אֵת הָאִתּוֹת. וּבְמִפְתִּיּוֹת. זֶה הַדָּם, כִּמְהָ שִׁנְאָמַר: וּנְתַתִּי מוֹפְתִים בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבְאֶרֶץ.

This *pasuk*, taken from *Devarim 26:8*, uses five descriptors to portray the salvation which *Hashem* provided for the Jewish people in bringing them out of Egypt: (a) with a strong Hand, (b) with an outstretched Arm, (c) with great awe, (d) with signs, and (e) with wonders. At first glance, the words וּבְאִתּוֹת וּבְמִפְתִּיּוֹת (signs and wonders) seem to be synonymous. But since the *Gemara* in *Sanhedrin 64b* famously teaches that the *Torah* does not contain any unnecessary words, we are led to reexamine the unique difference between these two words.

A 'sign' is something which is performed to teach an individual a lesson with the expectation that he or she will, in turn, develop a reciprocal feeling of trust in the figure who displayed the sign. On the other hand, a 'wonder' is a miracle which is explicitly executed to show the all-powerful capabilities of its executor. Thus, a pattern emerges throughout the story of *Yetziat Mitzrayim*: whenever *Hashem* provides a 'sign,' His intended audience is *Bnei Yisrael*, but when He performs a 'wonder,' He does so in a manner in which the Egyptians can bear witness. As such, *Hashem* values the opinion of His nation. His goal is to pursue a relationship with *Bnei Yisrael* by encouraging their belief and securing their trust in His endless love and compassion for His children.

During this time of uncertainty, the world has been shocked with the seemingly inexplicable Coronavirus. We are forced to quarantine and to remain in an unfamiliar situation. Our daily schedules have been forgone and we must do our best to maintain the order of our academic and spiritual desires. Perhaps *Hashem* is sending us, *Bnei Yisrael*, a 'sign' through the Coronavirus, seeking to get us to render to Him our continual eagerness to build a relationship with Him, to study His *Torah* and to perform His *mitzvot*. This is *Hashem's* way of showing us that no matter where we are, in a public or private setting, we must never feel overly consumed by the outside world, and instead, must strive to continue cultivating our inner relationship with Him. In addition, through the pandemic of the Coronavirus, *Hashem* is miraculously showing the rest of the world the 'wonder' and extent of His abilities, proving that He is the one truly in charge of all science and medicine, and is the only one who possesses the cure.

As long as we continue to turn to *Hashem* as our only source of salvation, just as our forefathers did in Egypt, He Himself will directly save us from this pandemic with a strong Hand, an outstretched Arm, with great awe, with signs, and with wonders.

Dvar Torah by Meira Ives

THE TEN MAKKOT

By the following Central Sophomores: Talia Hazan, Hannah Goldenberg, Nomi Kaufman, Adella Rivkah Niyazov, Hannah Pianko, Nicole Gavrielov, Shaina Shivamehr, & Aviva Ciment.

אלו עֶשֶׂר מַכּוֹת שֶׁהֵבִיא הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַל-הַמִּצְרִים בְּמִצְרַיִם, וְאֵלוֹ הֵנּוּ:

דָּם
צִפְרֻדֵּעַ
כִּנּוּיִם
עֲרוּב
דָּבָר
שָׁחִין
בָּרָד
אֲרָבָה
חֲשָׁךְ

מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת



In his commentary on the Chumash, Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch shares the following fascinating exploration on the pattern of the ten plagues. He begins with a simple question—why ten? According to Rav Hirsch, 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. Second, 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.

In turn, it was in response to these three reasons that HaShem chose to bring ten plagues—to make the Egyptians feel estranged, enslaved, and afflicted. Blood, wild animals, and hail (the first of each set of ב"ש באח"ב דצ"ך עד"ש באח"ב) were meant to show the Egyptians that HaShem was the one and only entity that truly and entirely controlled their lands and homes. In transforming the deified waters of the Nile into blood, filling the Egyptians homes with animals, before using hail to destroy their roofs, altogether, HaShem succeeded in stripping the slave masters of everything over which they had domain or found familiar. He made them feel like strangers in their own land. Frogs, pestilence, and locusts (the second in each set), 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.

Right now, we are battling a pandemic in our own lives. This ‘plague’ is far beyond our control, and, in many ways, makes us feel estranged, enslaved, and afflicted, even in the comfort of our own homes. Nothing feels normal in the absence of fundamental things like shul, school, and simchas—even less so standing six feet away from family members. Yet, perhaps we can take solace in remembering that everything HaShem does is for a reason!



רְבִי יְהוּדָה הִיָּה נוֹתֵן בָּהֶם סִמְנִים: דְּצִ"ךְ עַד"ש בְּאֲחִ"ב

BY THE FOLLOWING CENTRAL SOPHOMORES: SARIT KATZ, ORAH FISHER, SARAH CHOVEV, CHAVI LISTOWSKY, RIVA GOLDBERG, PERI FEINBERG, KAYLA MOSKOWITZ, KAYLA BRAND, & KAYLA SCHNEIDER.

According to the Abarbanel, the ten makkot are divided into three distinct groups, based on the specific purposes they serve, as outlined in the Torah. Section 1, דם צפרדע וכנים, exemplify Hashem's directive of, "With this you will know that I am Hashem," (Exodus 7:17) by physically demonstrating Hashem's existence. Section 2, ערוב דבר ושחין, are intended to address the verse, "So that you know that I am Hashem in the midst of the earth," (Exodus 8:18), by providing the knowledge that Hashem not only exists in our world, but is involved in our daily lives, as well. Lastly, as is explained by Exodus 9:14 which reads, "So that you know that there is none like Me in the entire earth," section 3, ברד ארבה וחשך, were meant to convey the knowledge that Hashem is unlike any other G-d, that He is above all else, and that he can do anything He wishes. The Abarbanel proceeds to explain that the three different goals or directives serve dual purposes.

On the one hand, they indicate three distinct levels of knowledge of and belief in Hashem; and at the same time, are also designed to counteract three different heretical thoughts. By definition, heretics lack a basic belief in Hashem, so Hashem brought דם צפרדע וכנים, to prove his existence to them. Many heretics also believe that Hashem might have created us, but then abandoned us to our own devices. To counteract this claim, Hashem brought ערוב דבר ושחין, teaching that Hashem is still very much involved in our lives on a continual basis. Lastly, to combat any doubts heretics may have regarding his supremacy over all other gods, Hashem brought them ברד ארבה וחשך proving beyond any doubt that there is no other god equal to our G-d, neither in might nor compassion.

Thus, even though the terrible hardships we're facing now may seem natural, or even inevitable, as Jews, we must constantly remind ourselves of these three fundamental beliefs. Firstly, we cannot allow ourselves to forget that Hashem is in charge, even when it comes to something as seemingly random and uncontrollable as a virus. Secondly, Hashem is intimately involved in every facet of our lives and every function of the universe. He did not and would not leave us here to figure it out alone. Lastly, Hashem is unlike any other G-d, and he will save us all! He has the ultimate ability to change nature. Hashem brought about ten plagues and split the sea for us. So, while Covid-19 may seem inescapable at the moment but, as opposed to Hashem, its reign over us will inevitably end!





No Pain No Gain

By: Yitzy Shaykevich ('21),
Meir Morell ('22), Noah Spear ('23)

In this section of the Haggadah, we read about the disagreement between תנאים regarding the number of makkot brought upon the Egyptians. It's interesting to note, however, that although each source held their own belief as to the exact overall quantity of plagues, all of them agreed that the number that befell Paroah and his army on the banks of the Yam Suf was five times as many as those that were brought in Egypt.

If we delve a little further, we can explain this somewhat unexpected consensus. In his Sefer Beis Yishai, Rabbi Shlomo Fisher expounds upon the concept from Pirkei Avos known as, 'לפום צערא אגרא,' (or 'no pain no gain'), by referencing a pasuk in שיר השירים, which states "האלף לך שלמה." As Rabbi Fisher explains, this idea means that a person who learns Torah whilst undergoing a serious struggle or personal pain will reap five times the amount of reward than someone who learns during a time of peace and complacency. Furthermore, Rabbi Fisher also points out that the gematria of the word צער (struggle) is five times the gematria of the word טוב (kindness).

Indeed, it was the pain of the Jewish servitude that ultimately provided and earned them the ability to cross the Yam Suf. Even amidst historic, life-changing moments like the one in which we find ourselves now, it remains important to take time to breathe, take a step back, and appreciate the significance inherent in every moment we spend on this earth. We need to make the best out of every second and make every moment count. Have faith that G-d realizes that we're suffering, and don't let the hard times get us down—they're often the best opportunities for growth. We can take this struggle and turn it into success for life.

$$\begin{array}{r} 10 \\ \text{In Egypt} \\ \& \\ 50 \\ \text{At Krias Yam Suf} \\ = \\ 60 \\ \text{Total Plagues} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 40 \\ \text{In Egypt} \\ \& \\ 200 \\ \text{At Krias Yam Suf} \\ = \\ 240 \\ \text{Total Plagues} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 50 \\ \text{In Egypt} \\ \& \\ 250 \\ \text{At Krias Yam Suf} \\ = \\ 300 \\ \text{Total Plagues} \end{array}$$

רבי יוסי הגלילי אומר: מנין אתה אומר שלקו המצרים במצרים עשר מכות ועל הים לקו חמשים מכות? במצרים מה הוא אומר? ויאמרו החרטום אל פרעה: אצבע אלהים הוא, ועל הים מה הוא אומר? וירא ישראל את ה'יד הגדלה אשר עשה ה' במצרים, ויראו העם את ה', ויאמינו ב'י ובמשה עבדו. פנה לקו באצבע? עשר מכות. אמור מעתה: במצרים לקו עשר מכות ועל הים לקו חמשים מכות.

רבי אליעזר אומר: מנין שפל-מפה ומפה שהביא הקדוש ברוך הוא על המצרים במצרים היתה של ארבע מכות? שנאמר: ושלח-בם חרון אפו, עברה וזעם וצרה, משלחת מלאכי רעים. עברה – אחת, וזעם – שתיים, וצרה – שלש, משלחת מלאכי רעים – ארבע. אמור מעתה: במצרים לקו ארבעים מכות ועל הים לקו מאתיים מכות.

רבי עקיבא אומר: מנין שפל-מפה ומפה שהביא הקדוש ברוך הוא על המצרים במצרים היתה של חמש מכות? שנאמר: ושלח-בם חרון אפו, עברה וזעם וצרה, משלחת מלאכי רעים. חרון אפו – אחת, עברה – שתיים, וזעם – שלוש, וצרה – ארבע, משלחת מלאכי רעים – חמש. אמור מעתה: במצרים לקו חמשים מכות ועל הים לקו חמשים ומאתים מכות.





כמה מעלות טובות למקום עלינו!

- אלו הוציאנו ממצרים ולא עשה בהם שפטים, ד'ינו.
- אלו עשה בהם שפטים, ולא עשה באלהיהם, ד'ינו.
- אלו עשה באלהיהם, ולא הרג את-בכוריהם, ד'ינו.
- אלו הרג את-בכוריהם ולא נתן לנו את-ממונם, ד'ינו.
- אלו נתן לנו את-ממונם ולא קרע לנו את-הים, ד'ינו.
- אלו קרע לנו את-הים ולא העבירנו בתוכו בחרבה, ד'ינו.
- אלו העבירנו בתוכו בחרבה ולא שקע צרנו בתוכו, ד'ינו.
- אלו שקע צרנו בתוכו ולא ספק צרכנו במדבר ארבעים שנה, ד'ינו.
- אלו ספק צרכנו במדבר ארבעים שנה ולא האכילנו את-המון, ד'ינו.
- אלו האכילנו את-המון ולא נתן לנו את-השבת, ד'ינו.
- אלו נתן לנו את-השבת, ולא קרבנו לפני הר סיני, ד'ינו.
- אלו קרבנו לפני הר סיני, ולא נתן לנו את-התורה, ד'ינו.
- אלו נתן לנו את-התורה ולא הכניסנו לארץ ישראל, ד'ינו.
- אלו הכניסנו לארץ ישראל ולא בנה לנו את-בית הבחירה, ד'ינו.

על אחת, כמה נכמה, טובה רפולה ומכפלת למקום עלינו: שהוציאנו ממצרים, ועשה בהם שפטים, ועשה באלהיהם, והרג את-בכוריהם, ונתן לנו את-ממונם, וקרע לנו את-הים, והעבירנו בתוכו בחרבה, ושקע צרנו בתוכו, וספק צרכנו במדבר ארבעים שנה, והאכילנו את-המון, ונתן לנו את-השבת, וקרבנו לפני הר סיני, ונתן לנו את-התורה, והכניסנו לארץ ישראל, ובנה לנו את-בית הבחירה לכפר על-כל-עונותינו.

Pirkei Avot tells us “איזהו עשיר השמח בחלקו” - meaning that true wealth comes from being satisfied with what we have. It’s complicated to think about this in the context of *Dayenu*. Would we truly be satisfied with being taken out of Egypt but not being saved from the Egyptians at the *Yam Suf*?

R’ Josh Ratner offers an approach in his *Dvar Torah* at MyJewishLearning.com:

“Dayenu, however, reminds us that there is a... simpler path. In fact, all of Judaism offers an outlook on wealth, consumption, and sufficiency (sova) that might be considered highly counter-cultural... The Talmud tells us: “An individual who can eat barley bread but eats wheat bread is guilty of transgressing the law of baal tashchit (unlawful waste). Rabbi Papa states: one who can drink beer but drinks wine instead is guilty of transgressing the law of baal tashchit.” (Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 140b). Judaism is not, to be sure, a religion of abstinence. We are both permitted and encouraged to carve out occasions for excess and enjoying the finer things in life—on Shabbat, holidays, and other joyous occasions. But one of the central tenants of Judaic wisdom is that, if we want to experience joy on these special occasions, we also need to endure moments of restraint. It is the juxtaposition of restraint and largess that endows a life with purpose.”

In our current moment, we are worried about some truly important struggles - our health, the health of our families and friends, and the long-term viability of our community institutions. Still, we are thankful to be here right now. We are able to learn and share Torah, to connect to our friends and extended families, and to afford and procure the basic necessities of life. *Dayenu* is different this year; we are thankful for what we have right now, but we’re also hoping for a future with good health, prosperity, and a return to our cherished spaces and celebrations. In this sense, we truly feel connected to the voices of the Jews leaving Egypt.

By: Gabriel Sklar, AZ Rosensaft, Aviv Hen, Micah Gazal and Andy Samuels

רָבֵן גַּמְלִיאֵל הִזָּה אוֹמֵר: כָּל שְׁלֵא אָמַר שְׁלֵשָׁה דְבָרִים אֵלוֹ בְּפֶסַח, לֹא יֵצֵא יְדֵי חוֹבָתוֹ, וְאֵלוֹ הֵן: פֶּסַח, מַצָּה, וּמְרֹר

Pesach, Matzah, Maror

According to Raban Gamliel, the fulfillment of the fundamental obligation of the *Pesach* holiday is centered around three essential, and edible components: *Pesach*, *Matzah*, and *Maror*. Given the vast subject matter of *Yetziat Mitzrayim* and the litany of *halachot* and symbols associated with *Pesach*, one cannot help but wonder--why are these three foods so important?

Perhaps the answer lies in the distinct ideas represented by each of the foods. '*Pesach*,' of course, refers to the *korban Pesach*, which, according to the *Divrei Negidim*, is intended to serve as a sign of unity. Rebbetzin Yemimma Mizrachi explains the basis for this idea by connecting it to the fact that, in the times of the *Beit HaMikdash*, all Jews were required to ask their neighbors if they wanted to join in consuming the *korban Pesach*. Therefore, we can conclude that the *Korban Pesach* is meant to both teach and remind us that, as Jews, it is incumbent upon us to be mindful of any and every opportunity to help out our fellow neighbor--even amidst the chaos of the holiday. Of course, as all of our communities grapple with the burden of COVID-19, this message is perhaps more relevant than ever.

After '*Pesach*' comes '*Matzah*,' which the *Divrei Negidim* describes as being the physical manifestation of timeless freedom. Often, in recounting the origins of *matzah*, we frame the outcome as a result of *Bnei Yisrael's* frantic scramble to escape bondage as quickly as possible. While this is no doubt true, the *Maharal* offers a more sentimental, but parallel explanation: the harried and 'half-baked' nature of *matzot* represents how excited *HaShem* was to bring his children out of *Mitzrayim*.

Finally, there is '*Maror*'. As we know, the reason we subject ourselves to the discomfort of eating maror is to remind ourselves, through a relatively negligible act of suffering, of the bitterness of slavery. One might wonder, though: why should we seek to remember such an unpleasant sensation? Perhaps the reason we need to endure the pain of *maror* is to enable ourselves to experience relief--without struggle there can be no salvation. It may well be that the concurrence of this epidemic and Pesach is nothing more than coincidence. Even so, we should not hesitate to extrapolate the lessons of our history onto our current predicament; and one way to do so is to use the *maror* on our *seder* plates to remind ourselves that, even in our darkest, most helpless moments--the merciful relief of *HaShem's* redemption awaits, and what we endure now will only help us appreciate it all the more when it comes.



Pesach: The Significance of Words

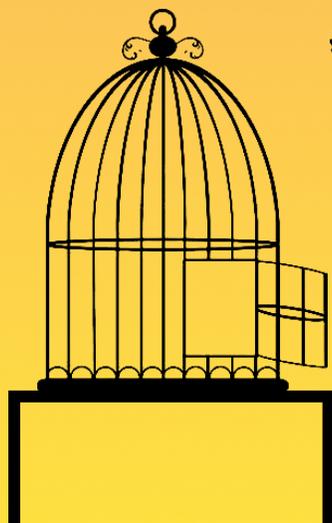
פסח שהיו אבותינו אוכלים בזמן שבית המקדש היה קים, על שום מה? על שום שפסח הקדוש ברוך הוא על בתי אבותינו במצרים, שנאמר: ואמרתם זבח פסח הוא ליי, אשר פסח על בתי בני ישראל במצרים בנגפו את־מצרים, ואת־בתינו הציל ויקד העם וישתחוו



We know that Pesach means ‘Passover’, right? As in, Hashem ‘passed over’ our houses during that fateful night. While this is certainly true and simple enough, I want to offer a different understanding, one which I hope will provide us all with a whole new perspective. In שמות יב:כג, as part of Moshe’s description of what will happen on the night of the 15th of Nissan, the pasuk says - ופסח ה’ על הפתח ולא יתן המשחית לבא אל בתיכם לנגף - Rashi on the word פסח gives two explanations—only the second of which mentions ‘skipping over’. The first translation offered, however, is ‘to protect.’ This indicates that Hashem not only passed over the Jewish houses, but hovered, staying for long enough to be certain the Jewish firstborn children went unharmed.

Though nuanced, the distinction gives the name of this Yom Tov a whole new meaning. Chazal teach us that the Seder night is the night of emunah—it is the night that we recount the awe-inspiring story of Yetziat Mitzraim to the next generation. It is the night on which we reinforce all of the emunah that stemmed from those miracles and try to pass it on to our children. It is also a time when we remember everything Hashem has done to help us survive the toughest of times. והקב"ה מצילינו מידם—so too, in difficult moments in which we find ourselves this Pesach, let us focus on our new understanding of

the word itself—the reassurance that Hashem is, even now, hovering above and protecting us. Perhaps that will give us the strength to make it through.



Abby Rosenthal
Andrew Galitzer

Matzah: The Power Of Time

Given that it was born of affliction and necessity, it should come as no surprise that, in the year 2020, eating matzah is one of the most dreaded parts of the Pesach season. Although many people are content to compare matzah to cardboard and give it no further thought, it's crucial that we remember and acknowledge its even humbler origin—the poor man's bread.

In his commentary on the Torah, Rav Hirsch links פסח, מצה, and מרור to the three categories foretold to Avraham at the Bris Bein Habesarim: גרות, עבדות, and ועינוי. Rav Hirsch accounts for his assignment of matzah to the category of avdut, slavery, by explaining that when bnei yisrael left mitzrayim, the mitzrim did not allow them enough time for their dough to rise, therefore resulting in the flat, unleavened matzot. This moment, however, was only the culmination of a prolonged reality—as slaves whose time was, by default, not their own, Bnei Yisrael never had enough time to let their dough rise properly, and were thus forced to eat matzah throughout their entire enslavement. Thus, matzah is the bread of slavery, or poor man's bread, thereby symbolizing avdut, slavery.

This idea is particularly important now, in the midst of an extended and unfamiliar period of isolation—a lifestyle far less comfortable than that to which many of us have grown accustomed. Bnei Yisrael suffered through 210 years of slavery without having so much as an extra few minutes to prepare their already scarce food properly. These last few weeks have, Baruch HaShem, provided us with a simple blessing in disguise—a massive amount of free time. Instead of complaining about being stuck indoors, we should appreciate that Hakadosh Baruch Hu has given us the unique opportunity to serve him in different ways than we normally would have. Although this is a difficult moment, we should try to appreciate that our time is still our own and we have so many ways to utilize it productively, even in the confines of our own homes. HaShem took us out of slavery to serve him and this free time provides us the means to do so. We should also seek to utilize this time to have hakarat hatov for how many brachos we receive, even the ones that are so simple that we might not ordinarily see them as brachos at all. We truly do have everything we need and more.

May the matzah that Klal Yisrael eats this Pesach serve to remind us of how precious this new free time is, and that we should endeavor to use it to bring ourselves closer to HaShem. Chag kasher v'sameach!



מצה זו שאנו אוכלים על שום מה? על שום שלא הספיק בצקם של אבותינו להחמיץ עד שנגלה עליהם מלך מלכי המלכים הקדוש ברוך הוא וגאלם שנאמר: ויאפו את הבצק אשר הוציאו ממצרים עגת מצות חמץ כי גרשו ממצרים ולא יכלו להתמהמה וגם צדה לא עשו להם.

Naomi Reichenberg
Andrew Galitzer

Maror: The Light at the End of the Tunnel

On Pesach, we all eat a piece of Maror at the Seder, and one of the most common explanations given for this practice is that it serves to commemorate the bitterness that the Jews faced in Egypt. We read “וַיִּמְרְרוּ אֶת חַיֵּיהֶם בְּעֵבֶדָה קָשָׁה” - “and they embittered our lives with hard work.” In Egypt, the Jews were heavily taxed and required to do backbreaking work, like constructing cities and making bricks. If anything, ‘embitter’ is a vast understatement. However, once Makat Bechorot (the death of the first born) began, the Jews were free to leave Egypt. And, after they left, Bnei Yisrael were protected by the Ananei HaKavod, and fed with Mann that, according to the Midrash, tasted like any food the people desired.

So, why then do we ruminate on the bitterness of the Maror, when HaShem eventually provided us with so much freedom and luxury? Why temper our festive meal with reminders of sadness? The Maharal answers these questions by explaining that, as hard as it may sometimes be, we are equally obligated to thank Hashem for both the good and the bad, and that without knowing darkness, it is impossible to appreciate the light.

This teaching is a key indicator of the true importance of ‘seeing the light at the end of the tunnel.’ That cliché is often thrown around and used for comfort during times of suffering as an attempt to cajole one another to look towards the future for happier times. However, in the case of our enslavement in Egypt, the phrase is anything but a platitude. The Jews were being abused, both physically and mentally by the Egyptians, and were eventually saved by HaShem and provided with a comfortable life both in the desert and in Israel. Perhaps the greatest lesson of the Pesach story is the importance of maintaining hope, and keeping an eye out for that light at the end of the tunnel.

And now, amidst a spreading pandemic and a seemingly endless period of quarantine, it’s more important than ever to emulate the defiantly buoyant spirit of our ancestors, and seek out the light at the end of this tunnel. We need to keep in mind that this, too, shall pass, and better times are coming. While some of us may not be able to spend Pesach with family members or celebrate as we normally do, we must maintain our faith in HaShem and trust His plan. So, as you recite the bracha on maror, be sure to remember that we’re almost at the end of the tunnel.

מִרּוֹר זֶה שְׁאֵנוּ אוֹכְלִים עַל
שׁוֹם מָה? עַל שׁוֹם שְׁמִרְרוּ
הַמִּצְרִים אֶת־חַיֵּי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
בַּמִּצְרִים, שְׁנֵאֲמַר: וַיִּמְרְרוּ
אֶת חַיֵּיהֶם. בְּעֵבֶדָה קָשָׁה
בְּחֹמֶר וּבִלְבָנִים וּבְכָל
עֵבֶדָה בְּשָׂדֵה אֶת כָּל
עֵבֶדְתֶּם אֲשֶׁר עֲבַדוּ בָהֶם
בְּפֶרֶךְ



Alex Lurie
Andrew Galitzer

בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר

חַיֵּב אָדָם לְרֵאוֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ כְּאִלוֹ הוּא יֵצֵא
מִמִּצְרַיִם, שְׁנֹאמֵר: וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר,
בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה יי' לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם.
לֹא אֶת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בִלְבַד גָּאֵל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, אֲלָא
אִף אוֹתֵנוּ גָאֵל עִמָּהֶם, שְׁנֹאמֵר: וְאוֹתֵנוּ הוֹצִיא
מִשָּׁם, לְמַעַן הִבִּיא אֹתֵנוּ, לְתֵת לָנוּ אֶת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר
נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם.

In Every Generation

Chana Aspir and Aleza Schreiber

Every individual has an impact on the world around them and has the potential to contribute in positive and meaningful ways. And, when you contribute to Am Yisrael, you are contributing to a vast and intricate legacy. You are putting yourself into history.

According to Rav Kook, this contribution is the precise obligation implied in the words B'chol Dor VaDor. Each member of Klal Yisrael does not need to feel as though he has literally left Mitzrayim himself. Rather, he should feel compelled to contribute something valuable to Bnei Yisrael, and realize that it is incumbent upon each of us to continue the legacy and impact that originated with the first generation that left Mitzrayim.

As Jewish teenagers, we should ask ourselves: what can we do to fulfill this obligation? How do we make the type of contribution to which Rav Kook alluded? In fact, there are opportunities to do so every day. A contribution can be small or big. One can give tzedakah, do chessed, daven for chayalim, or volunteer. Even helping out with chores around the house can count as making a contribution to Am Yisrael. If, through this broadened understanding of contribution, we come to see a new type of opportunity to fulfill the mitzvah, we should seize it--especially now, in the month of Nissan.

It may seem difficult to believe, but each and every one of us can make a difference. Sometimes it can feel like nothing we say or do will truly affect the world around us, but we must remember that every kind word or act of generosity we say or do has the potential to be a deeply impactful gift to others.

The Maaseh Nisim explains that we are not, in fact, obligated to see ourselves as if we had left Egypt. It's not possible. We are in Exile now; so how can we possibly feel free? Rather, one is supposed to work towards their own personal spiritual redemption. Every year that journey begins fresh. It's a new chance to begin again and to free oneself from the bonds of our materialistic surroundings. Now is the time to break free, and to do so by making our own individual contributions to the Jewish community.

This idea is important at all times, but it is particularly crucial now. The past couple of months have been unlike any others, making everyone afraid and confused about when this epidemic will end. There could be no better time to separate ourselves from the stressful world around us, and focus on spiritual needs. Ask yourself: when I look back on the chaos, how will I have contributed to those around me in their time of need? How did I do my part in these historic times?



Background art: Chana Aspir
Foreground art: Leah Goldfischer



THEN:
Therefore we are obligated to thank, praise, laud, glorify, exalt, lavish, bless, raise high, and acclaim He who made all these miracles for our ancestors and for us: He brought us out from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to joy, from mourning to [celebration of] a festival, from darkness to great light, and from servitude to redemption. And let us say a new song before Him, Halleluyah!



12:16 **Zoom** 613-613-5780 End
Password: Emunah

לְפִיכָךְ אֲנַחְנוּ חַיִּיבִים
לְהוֹדוֹת, לְהַלֵּל, לְשַׁבַּח,
לְפָאֵר, לְרוֹמֵם, לְהַדְרָה,
לְבָרֵךְ, לְעַלָּה וּלְקַלֵּס לַמִּי
שֶׁעָשָׂה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ
אֶת־כָּל־הַנְּסִיּוֹת הָאֵלֹהִים:
הוֹצִיאָנוּ מֵעֲבָדוֹת לְחֵרֹת
מִגִּזְיוֹן לְשִׁמְחָה, וּמֵאֲבֵל
לְיוֹם טוֹב, וּמֵאֲפֵלָה לְאוֹר
גָּדוֹל, וּמִשְׁעָבוֹד לְגִאֲלָה.
וְנֹאמֵר לְפָנָיו שִׁירָה
חֲדָשָׁה: הַלְלוּיָהּ.

From friends to family.
From action to reflection.
From following others to following yourself.
From Galus to Geulah.

LEFICHACH IS A PRAYER OF THANKS. ITS WHOLE PURPOSE IS TO PROVIDE US WITH REASONS AND EXAMPLES OF WHY WE SHOULD BE THANKFUL TO HASHEM. ESPECIALLY NOW, IN A TIME WHERE THINGS LOOK SO DARK ON THE SURFACE, WE ARE OBLIGATED TO THANK HASHEM FOR ALL THE BLESSINGS THAT WE MAY HAVE OTHERWISE TAKEN FOR GRANTED. THE MAHARAL IN HIS COMMENTARY DIVREI NEGIDIM WRITES THAT WHEN THE JEWS WERE IN EGYPT, THEY WERE UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE EGYPTIANS, AND IT WAS AS IF THEY WERE BLOCKED FROM THE SUN. BUT WHEN HASHEM BROUGHT THE JEWS OUT OF EGYPT, HE OPENED THE SKIES FOR LIGHT TO SHINE DOWN, "FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT." AND NOW, EVEN THOUGH WE ARE STUCK IN OUR HOMES AND FEEL LIKE WE ARE IN THE DARK, WE STILL NEED TO LEAVE OUR OWN PERSONAL MIZTRAYIM- OR MEY-TZAR-IM (NARROW MINDEDNESS) AND WIDEN OUR PERCEPTION TO SEE ALL OF THE LIGHT THAT HASHEM LETS IN. LET'S NOT WALLOW IN DARKNESS, LET'S FIND ALL THE LIGHT!

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NOW:
Therefore we are obligated to thank, praise, laud, glorify, exalt, lavish, bless, raise high, and acclaim He who will make all these miracles for us: He will bring us out of quarantine to freedom, from boredom to excitement, from isolation to gathering, from dark times to delight, and from galus to our final geulah. And let us say a new song before Him, Halleluyah!



הַלְלוּהָ הַלְלוּ עַבְדֵי יְהוָה, הַלְלוּ אֶת־שֵׁם יְהוָה:
יְהִי שֵׁם יְהוָה מְבֹרָךְ, מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם: מִמְזֶרֶח
שֶׁמֶשׁ עַד מְבֹאוֹ מִהֶלֶל שֵׁם יְהוָה: רַם עַל־כָּל־גּוֹיִם
יְהוָה, עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ: מִי כִיְהוּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
הַמְגִבִּיהָ לְשֶׁבֶת: הַמְשַׁפִּילִי לְרֹאוֹת בְּשָׁמַיִם
וּבָאָרֶץ: מְקִימֵי מַעֲפָר דָּל, מֵאֲשַׁפֵּת יָרִים אֲבִיוֹן:
לְהוֹשִׁיבֵי עַם־נְדִיבִים, עִם נְדִיבֵי עַמּוֹ: מוֹשִׁיבֵי
עֲקָרַת הַבַּיִת, אִם הַבָּנִים שְׂמֵחָה. הַלְלוּהָ:

The text of הַלְלוּהָ in קיג תהילים states that we only have one God, and in recognition of all the ways He supports us, it is important for us to both thank and praise Him. In many ways, ה' is defined by the fact that — despite His infinite capacity — He uses His powers exclusively for good, including helping those who need it; and the text provides several key examples of the countless people who benefit from His kindness, among them: מְקִימֵי מַעֲפָר דָּל, מֵאֲשַׁפֵּת יָרִים אֲבִיוֹן - He extricates the poor from living in the dirt, and מוֹשִׁיבֵי עֲקָרַת הַבַּיִת, אִם הַבָּנִים שְׂמֵחָה - He grants a barren woman the opportunity to have a child. Why, though, does the text choose to include these specific groups of people when there are so many others who share equally from ה'’s benevolence?

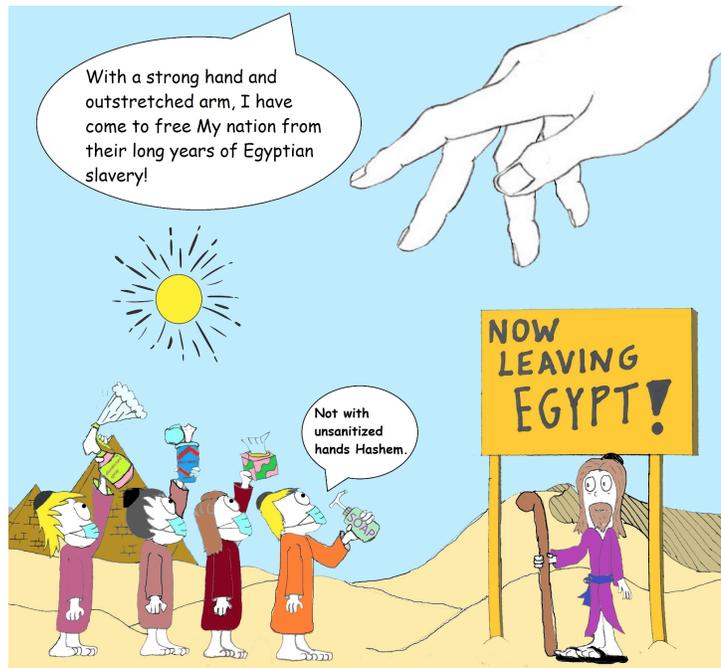
Perhaps one answer lies in the nature of the commonalities between both groups’ respective journeys from suffering to salvation. The text states that we praise ה' - מִמְזֶרֶח שֶׁמֶשׁ עַד מְבֹאוֹ - an allusion to the image of the rising and setting sun and the contrast of light and dark. Sometimes it takes some time in the darkness to fully appreciate the light. And who better to exemplify this transition than the poor, the destitute, or the woman struggling to have children? These people — those who truly suffer prior to being rescued by ה' — will have a far greater appreciation for receiving the same exact blessings as those who never knew what it meant to live without them. This powerful message allows us to see just a few of the countless ways that ה' helps us and provides us with the opportunity to gather perspective and gratitude regarding how far we’ve come as a nation.

At this year’s סדרים, we will — as usual — commemorate ה'’s saving us from slavery in Egypt, and we are still so grateful thousands of years later. However, as we continue to adapt to isolation and the absence of our routines and comforts, we are coming to be thankful for the more ordinary things, like going to school or the supermarket, or spending time with our families. Being confined during this time of darkness allows us to appreciate the things most important to us - because we are finally experiencing life without them. This is an opportunity for us to praise ה' for what is most critical and important in our lives, and hopefully we will continue to see things in this new light.

RAMAZ
ישיבת רמז

בְּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל

When, after more than 200 years of bondage, the Jews finally left Egypt, a chain of enslavement and prison was broken. Bnei Yisrael were freed and were therefore able to perform all sorts of mitzvot to honor HaShem. Right now, however, we are trapped once again, quarantined in our homes and distancing ourselves from our routines, friends, and family. There is often not much to do. Perhaps this time, in an ironic twist, HaShem has decided to confine us in order to give us time to escape from the world and focus on performing mitzvot. Despite whatever temptations or obstacles lie before us, the chaos of the current crisis around us should not be an excuse to distance ourselves from learning Torah. Thank G-d, we



all own some type of electronic device and there are millions of different online classes and shiurim available for free online every day. The entire Torah, written and oral, can be found on websites such as Chabad.org, Sefaria.org and many more.

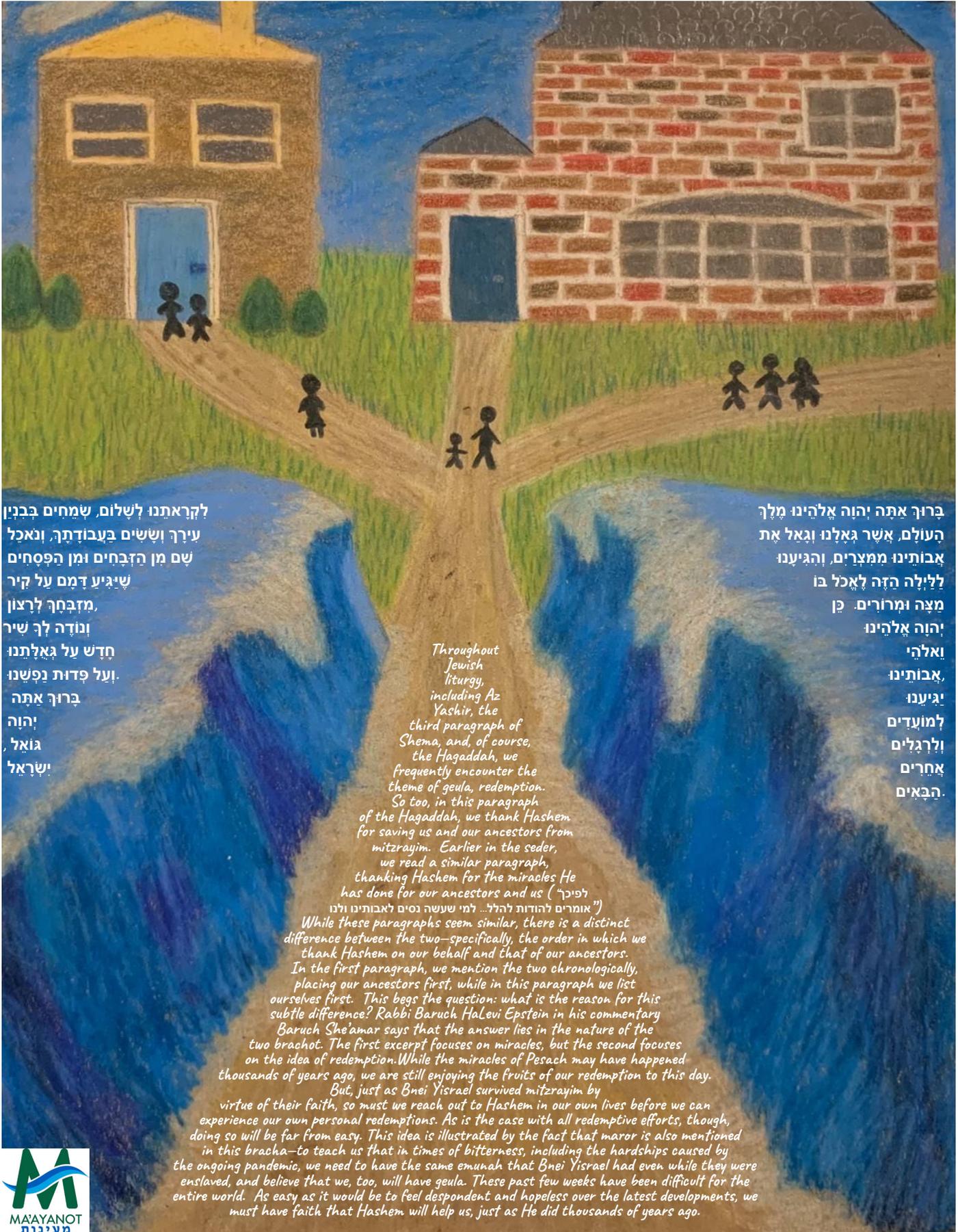


The Zohar teaches us that the Hebrew word for Egypt—mitzrayim—comes from the shresh ‘meitzar’, which means ‘restriction’ or ‘boundary.’ When we left Egypt, we didn’t just leave its physical boundaries, but the spiritual boundaries as well. We were suddenly able to have a better and more meaningful relationship with HaShem. Now, while confined to our homes, we are free of some of our worldly

obligations, and we have a chance to get closer to HaShem. This quarantine, while restrictive on the one hand, can also release us from whatever might be keeping us from getting closer to HaShem and our families. Let’s take advantage of this opportunity!

Dvar Torah: Jacob Aronov, Design: Aaron Bornstein, Atara Seff





לקראתנו לשלום, שמחים בבנין
 עירך וששים בעבודתך, ונאכל
 שם מן הזבחים ומן הפסחים
 שיגיע דמם על קיר
 מזבחך לרצון
 ונודה לך שיר
 חדש על גאלתנו
 ועל פדות נפשונו
 ברוך אתה
 יהוה
 גואל
 ישראל

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך
 העולם, אשר גאלנו וגאל את
 אבותינו ממצרים, והגיענו
 ללילה הזה לאכל בו
 מצה ומרורים. כן
 יהוה אלהינו
 ואלהי
 אבותינו
 יגיענו
 למועדים
 ולרגלים
 אחרים
 הבאים.

Throughout
 Jewish
 liturgy,
 including Az
 Yashir, the
 third paragraph of
 Shema, and, of course,
 the Hagaddah, we
 frequently encounter the
 theme of geula, redemption.
 So too, in this paragraph
 of the Hagaddah, we thank Hashem
 for saving us and our ancestors from
 mitzrayim. Earlier in the seder,
 we read a similar paragraph,
 thanking Hashem for the miracles He
 has done for our ancestors and us ("לפיכך"
 "אומרים להודות להלל... למי שעשה נסים לאבותינו ולנו")
 While these paragraphs seem similar, there is a distinct
 difference between the two—specifically, the order in which we
 thank Hashem on our behalf and that of our ancestors.
 In the first paragraph, we mention the two chronologically,
 placing our ancestors first, while in this paragraph we list
 ourselves first. This begs the question: what is the reason for this
 subtle difference? Rabbi Baruch HaLevi Epstein in his commentary
 Baruch She'amar says that the answer lies in the nature of the
 two brachot. The first excerpt focuses on miracles, but the second focuses
 on the idea of redemption. While the miracles of Pesach may have happened
 thousands of years ago, we are still enjoying the fruits of our redemption to this day.
 But, just as Bnei Yisrael survived mitzrayim by
 virtue of their faith, so must we reach out to Hashem in our own lives before we can
 experience our own personal redemptions. As is the case with all redemptive efforts, though,
 doing so will be far from easy. This idea is illustrated by the fact that maror is also mentioned
 in this bracha—to teach us that in times of bitterness, including the hardships caused by
 the ongoing pandemic, we need to have the same emunah that Bnei Yisrael had even while they were
 enslaved, and believe that we, too, will have geula. These past few weeks have been difficult for the
 entire world. As easy as it would be to feel despondent and hopeless over the latest developments, we
 must have faith that Hashem will help us, just as He did thousands of years ago.



רְחֻצָה, מוֹצִיא, מַצָּה

Washing, Blessing, Eating The Matzah

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ
עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמוֹצִיא לָחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מַצָּה

Questions for discussion:

1. What have you missed most during quarantine?
2. How have you become more grateful ?
3. How will you be more inclusive after quarantine?

How We Are Reliving Yetziat Mitzrayim in Quarantine

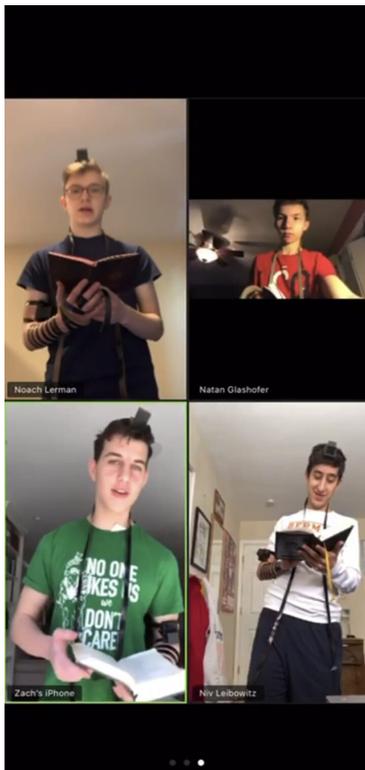
By Niv Leibowitz

What does matzah symbolize in the story of Pesach? The answer is twofold. On the first, and more literal level, it serves as a reminder of the excitement with which we left Egypt to begin life as a free nation.

Therefore, we eat matzah every year to commemorate their struggles and the sacrifices they made for freedom. However, Rabbi Yirachmiel Yisrael Danziger, a 17th century Chassidic Polish Rabbi, offers a more metaphysical interpretation, writing, "All the lessons from matzah relate back to the idea of humility. It is meant to banish arrogance from our lives, and all the superficial layers which take hold of us when we are eating." Essentially, eating matzah during Pesach is intended to humble us, and remind us of those who are less fortunate, and may not even be able to afford food and other basic necessities.

These two distinct functions of matzah are especially relevant in quarantine. We have been forced to give up many of the things that define our normal everyday lives—communal religious practices, social activities, and schools among others. Just as Bnei Yisrael were forced to depart before their dough could rise, so too are we forced to limit our movements and social interactions. Due to circumstances beyond our control, we can't pray together, sing together, laugh together. We can, however, learn the valuable lesson of gratitude.

Having felt the pain and isolation of being quarantined, we are learning to be more welcoming and concerned with the loneliness of others. Now that we are unable to gather physically, we yearn for many things that we have taken for granted—friends, travel, sporting events, etc.—we are becoming more aware of those who we have excluded from those activities long before any of us had heard of the Coronavirus. May we carry the unique lessons of this Pesach with us for years to come!



MAROR

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ

BY SHEYNA SCHUSTERMAN, '20 • **עַל אֲכִילַת מְרוֹר**

In Sefer Shemot (12:18), the Torah explicitly links the mitzvot of matzah and maror with the eating of the Korban Pesach, stating, "וְאָכְלוּ אֶת־הַבָּשָׂר בַּלֵּילָה הַזֶּה" וְצִלִּי־אֵשׁ וּמִצּוֹת עַל־מְרֹרִים יֹאכְלוּהוּ"—"On this night, they shall eat the flesh, roasted over the fire, and unleavened cakes; with bitter herbs they shall eat it. The Rambam further confirms this connection in Hilchot Matzah, explicitly stating that,

אֲכִילַת מְרוֹר אֵינָה מִצְוָה מִן הַתּוֹרָה בְּפָנֵי עֲצֻמָּה אֲלָא תְּלִיזָה הִיא בְּאֲכִילַת הַפֶּסַח. שְׂמִצּוֹת עֲשָׂה אֶסֶת לְאָכֹל בָּשָׂר הַפֶּסַח עַל מִצְוָה וּמְרֹרִים

Thus, despite the fact that Maror is eaten on its own at the seder, Rambam states that the mitzvah of maror exists only as an accompaniment to the Pesach offering.

In fact, according to the Torah, the eating of bitter herbs is not a mitzvah in its own right—rather, its fulfillment is dependent on the consumption of the Korban Pesach, as Rambam states,

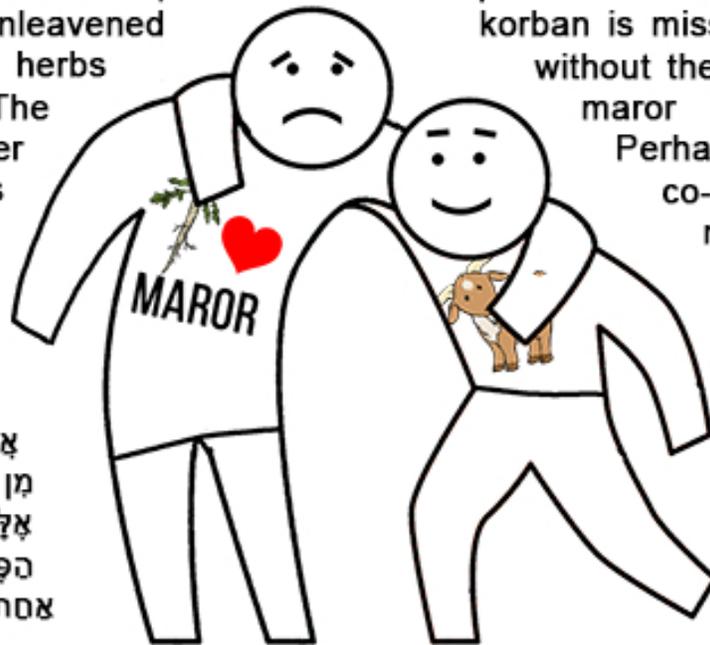
PAGE DESIGN BY ELI WEISS '23

"It is one positive commandment to eat the meat of the Paschal sacrifice together with matzah and bitter herbs."

The relationship, however, is mutually dependent—without maror, the korban is missing something, and without the korban, consuming maror is meaningless.

Perhaps the co-dependency of these mitzvot can teach us something critical about the seder experience. In order to fully appreciate our redemption, we must also immerse ourselves in the bitterness of שעבוד מצרים. To

reap the benefits of our success and celebrate joyous moments, we first need to experience their absence. Just as the maror provides us with the backdrop necessary to fully appreciate our redemption, so too can it help us use this otherwise frustrating and difficult time to better prepare ourselves for a return to normalcy.



Koreich: Only Through Love Can Geulah Come

All present should take a kazayit from the third whole matsa with a kazayit of maror, wrap them together and eat them while reclining and without saying a blessing.
Before he eats it, he should say:

זָכַר לְמִקְדָּשׁ כְּהִלֵּל. כֵּן עָשָׂה הַלֵּל בְּזִמְנֵי שְׁבִית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ
הָיָה קָיָם: הָיָה כּוֹרֵךְ פֶּסַח מִצָּה וּמְרוֹר וְאוֹכֵל בְּיַחַד, לְקַיָּם
מִה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: עַל מִצּוֹת וּמִרְרִים יֹאכְלֵהוּ.

Sandwich of Love
Ruti Frohlich

'Sandwiched' between Maror and Shulchan Orech, the Koreich portion of the Haggadah begins with the words "Zeicher L'mikdash KeHillel"-- "A remembrance of what Hillel used to do in the time of the Beit Hamikdash". In his siddur, titled Olat Raayah, Rav Kook points out that throughout the entirety of the seder, there is only one instance in which something is referred to as "Zeicher L'mikdash"- a remembrance of the Temple: during our commemoration of Hillel.

One could argue that it is no coincidence that—given his reputation for putting love for others above all else (Pirkei Avot 1:12 & Shabbos 31a)—Hillel was the one individual whose unique custom was chosen to be associated with the remembrance of the Beit Hamikdash. Why? Perhaps it stems from the fact that the primary cause of the Temple's destruction was the very antithesis to his central philosophy of love—sinat chinam, senseless hatred between people. And, as we know, it is only through the opposite attribute--ahavat chinam, or unconditional love between people—that the Beit HaMikdash will be rebuilt, allowing us to bring the korban pesach once again.

Of course, this critical polarity relates back to the simple act of koreich—making a single sandwich out of two opposite components—matzah and maror. As we know from various commentaries in and on the Haggadah, matzah is meant to serve as a physical representation of freedom, while the maror symbolizes the bitterness of the oppression under which our ancestors suffered. Thus, clearly, Hillel understood that even if two things are completely conflicting, they can still be brought together.

And perhaps that, in turn, is the key to ahavat chinam: understanding that no matter how different some people may be, they can still unite to overcome obstacles and differences through a mutual love and compassion.

As we persevere through this difficult time, it is more important than ever that we remember that the key to salvation is ahavat chinam, even if it's from afar.



After hours of study, eating, and celebrating, it is during the twelfth step of the seder, Tzafun, that we finally unveil the afikomen. This is part of the matzah broken earlier in the seder, and eat it as dessert. In many families, this is done as part of a larger custom in which children hide the afikomen before “finding” it and returning it to the table (Pesachim 109a). Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the word tzafun means hidden.

While, too often, the entire ordeal is shrugged off as a ploy to keep children interested in the proceedings of the seder, a deeper interpretation of the afikomen is that it represents our liberation from Egypt. But if that’s the case, how does that connect to our playful tradition and the literal translation of tzafun? Why are we being asked to ‘find’ our freedom?

The Maharsha once taught that the reason the afikomen is ‘found’ during tzafun is because finding it grants us the power to eliminate the Yetzer Hara. Our human nature is

such that we sometimes succumb to our Yetzer Hara, delaying and justifying our indiscretions. Interestingly, the afikomen is meant to be eaten by midnight (Shulchan Aruch, OC 477:1), preventing any sort of procrastination.

Let’s take a quick detour. Hashem sent the coronavirus with a purpose in mind. Many intelligent people have different theories as to why this fell upon us. However, instead of focusing on theories of why something happened, we should focus on the now, and see what we can do in the present to change this historic and unfortunate situation.

The afikomen is hidden because it is our job as Klal Yisroel to find our way towards geulah, and to be prepared to be liberated from galus. The afikomen reminds us that we were once removed from Egypt over 2000 years ago when we were saved and liberated. Now, we should feel empowered with our ability to vanquish the Yetzer Hara and to liberate ourselves from this galus to achieve Moshiach faster. 🌸

Basya Vishnepolsky, Junior

שיר המעלות, בשוב ה' את שיבת ציון היינו כחלמים. אז ימלא שחוק פינו ולשוננו רנה. אז יאמרו בגוים: הגדיל ה' לעשות עם אלה. הגדיל ה' לעשות עמנו, היינו שמחים. שובה ה' את שביטנו כאפיקים בנגב. הזרעים בדםעה, ברנה יקצרו. הלוח ילך ובכה נשא משך הזרע, בא יבא ברנה נשא אלמתינו.



שלושה שאכלו כאחד חיבים לזמן והמזמן פותח :

רבותי נברך :

המסבים עונים :

יהי שם ה' מברך מעתה ועד עולם .

המזמן אומר :

ברשות מרגו ורבנו ורבותי, נברך [אלהינו] שאכלנו משלו .

המסבים עונים :

ברוך [אלהינו] שאכלנו משלו ובטובו חיינו

המזמן חוזר ואומר :

ברוך [אלהינו] שאכלנו משלו ובטובו חיינו

כלם אומרים :

ברוך אתה ה', אלהינו מלך העולם, הזן את העולם כלו בטובו בחן בחסד וברחמים, הוא נותן לחם לכל בשר פי לעולם חסדו. ובטובו הגדול תמיד לא חסר לנו, ואל יחסר לנו מזון לעולם ועד. בעבור שמו הגדול, כי הוא אל זן ומפרנס לכל ומטיב לכל, ומכין מזון לכל ברייתיו אשר ברא. ברוך אתה ה', הזן את הכל .

נודה לך ה' אלהינו על שהנחלת לאבותינו ארץ חמדה טובה ורחבה, ועל שהוצאתנו ה' אלהינו מארץ מצרים, ופדיתנו מבית עבדים, ועל ברייתך שחתמת בבריתך, ועל תורתך שלמדתנו, ועל חקיך שהודעתנו, ועל חיים חן וחסד שחוננתנו, ועל אכילת מזון שאתה זן ומפרנס אותנו תמיד, בכל יום ובכל עת ובכל שעה :

ועל הכל ה' אלהינו, אנחנו מודים לך ומברכים אותך, יתברך שמך בפי כל חי תמיד לעולם ועד. פכתוב: ואכלת ושבעת וברכת את ה' אלהיך על הארץ הטובה אשר נתן לך. ברוך אתה ה', על הארץ ועל המזון :

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

בשבת מוסיפין :

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

אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, יעלה ויבא ויגיע ויראה וירצה וישמע ויפקד ויזכר זכרוננו ופקדוננו, וזכרון אבותינו, וזכרון משיח בן דוד עבדך, וזכרון ירושלים עיר קדשך, וזכרון כל עמך בית ישראל לפניך, לפליטה לטובה לחן ולחסד ולרחמים, לחיים ולשלום ביום חג המצות הזה זכרנו ה' אלהינו בו לטובה ופקדנו בו לברכה והושיענו בו לחיים. ובדבר ישועה ורחמים חוסי וסגנו ורחם עלינו והושיענו, כי אליך עינינו, כי אל מלך חנון ורחום אתה. ובנה ירושלים עיר הקדש במהרה בימינו. ברוך אתה ה', בונה ברחמי ירושלים. אמן.



ברוך אתה ה', אלהינו מלך העולם, האל אבינו מלכנו אדירנו בוראנו גואלנו יוצרנו קדוּשְׁנו קדוּשׁ יַעֲקֹב רוענו רועה ישראל המלך הטוב והמטיב לכל שבכל יום ויום הוא הטיב, הוא מטיב, הוא ייטיב לנו. הוא גמלנו הוא גומלנו הוא יגמלנו לעד, לחן ולחסד ולרחמים ולרחן הצלה והצלחה, ברכה וישועה נחמה פרנסה וכלכלה ורחמים וחסים ושלום וכל טוב, ומכל טוב לעולם על יחסרנו.

הרחמן הוא ימלוך עלינו לעולם ועד. הרחמן הוא יתברך בשמים ובארץ. הרחמן הוא ישתבח לדור דורים, ויתפאר בנו לעד ולנצח נצחים, ויתהדר בנו לעד ולעולמי עולמים. הרחמן הוא יפרנסנו בכבוד. הרחמן הוא ישבור עלנו מעל צנארנו, והוא יוליכנו קוממיית לארצנו. הרחמן הוא ישלח לנו ברכה מרבה בבית הזה, ועל שלחן זה שאכלנו עליו. הרחמן הוא ישלח לנו את אליהו הנביא זכור לטוב, ויבשר לנו בשורות טובות ישועות ונחמות. הרחמן הוא יברך את בעלי / אשתי. הרחמן הוא יברך את [אבי מורי] בעל הבית הזה. ואת [אמי מורתי] בעלת הבית הזה, אותם ואת ביתם ואת זרעם ואת כל אשר להם. אותנו ואת כל אשר לנו, כמו שנתברכו אבותינו אברהם יצחק ויעקב בכל מכל כל, כן יברך אותנו כלנו יחד בברכה שלמה, ונאמר, אמן. במרום ילמדו עליהם ועלינו זכות שתהא למשמרת שלום. ונשא ברכה מאת ה', וצדקה מאלהי ישענו, ונמצא חן ושכל טוב בעיני אלהים ואדם. בשבת: הרחמן הוא ינחילנו יום שפלו שבת ומנוחה לחיי העולמים. הרחמן הוא ינחילנו יום שפלו טוב. [יום שפלו ארוך. יום שצדיקים יושבים ועטרותיהם בראשיהם ונהנים מזיו השכינה ויהי חלקינו עמהם]. הרחמן הוא יזכנו לימות המשיח ולחיי העולם הבא. מגדול ישועות מלכו ועשה חסד למשיחו לדוד ולזרעו עד עולם. עשה שלום במרומו, הוא יעשה שלום עלינו ועל כל ישראל ואמרו, אמן. יראו את ה' קדשו, כי אין מחסור ליראיו. כפירים רשו ורעבו, ודרשי ה' לא יחסרו כל טוב. הודו ליי כי טוב כי לעולם חסדו. פותח את ידך, ומשביע לכל חי רצון. ברוך הגבר אשר יבטח ביי, והיה ה' מבטחו. נער הייתי גם זקנתי, ולא ראיתי צדיק נעזב, וזרעו מבקש לחם. ה' עז לעמו יתן, ה' יברך את עמו בשלום.

ברך, כוס שלישית

ברוך אתה ה', אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן.

As many of us know, the four cups of wine we drink at the *seder* represent the four distinct, but congruent promises Hashem made to Bnei Yisrael upon freeing us from Egypt; "I will bring you out," "I will deliver you to the land," "I will redeem you," and "I will take you out." In difficult times, we have to remember that just as HaShem redeemed us in Egypt, he will redeem us yet again by bringing *Mashiach*. As it is stated in *Bamidbar Rabbah* 11:2, "The final redemption will be like the first redemption from Egypt. Just as the *Bnei Yisrael* were saved from pain and distress in Egypt, so will we be at the time of the coming of *Mashiach*."

The Gemara (Berachos 5a) teaches that whenever we are faced with *yesurin* (afflictions) we should introspect and consider which areas of our lives need improvement and how we can do *teshuvah*.

In the third *bracha* of *Birchat HaMazon*, we ask Hashem to "rebuild Jerusalem speedily in our days." Especially during times of distress, it is important to have the proper perspective of yearning for a better future. We have to remember that our job is to look for ways we can better ourselves, individually and as a nation, so we can bring the final redemption and see the third *Beit Hamikdash* rebuilt, speedily, in our days.





שֶׁפֶךְ חֲמַתְךָ אֶל-הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִדְעוּךָ
וְעַל מַמְלָכוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּשִׁמְךָ לֹא קָרְאוּ:
כִּי אָכַל אֶת-יַעֲקֹב וְאֶת-נְוֵהוּ הַשָּׁמוּ:
שֶׁפֶךְ-עֲלֵיהֶם זַעַמְךָ וְחֲרוֹן אַפְּךָ יִשְׁיגֵם:
תִּרְדֹּף בְּאָף וְתִשְׁמִידֵם מִתַּחַת שָׁמַי
יְהוָה:

After bentsching and thanking Hashem for our food, we open the door and say Shfoch Chamascha - verses found in Psalms and Lamentations which ask Hashem to pour his wrath upon all of the Jews' enemies. Why do we open the door to recite this paragraph? Most haggadahs don't explain the reasoning behind it, and it seems a bit out of place.

The Chodesh Ha'aviv, a lesser known commentator on the haggadah, gives a symbolic understanding of us opening the door at this time. He quotes a midrash that contains dialogue between Hashem and the Jewish people. Hashem says to the Jewish people that if you create an opening to connect to Me, even as small as the tip of a needle, then I will help you out and widen that opening so that it will be big enough to fit wagons and carriages.

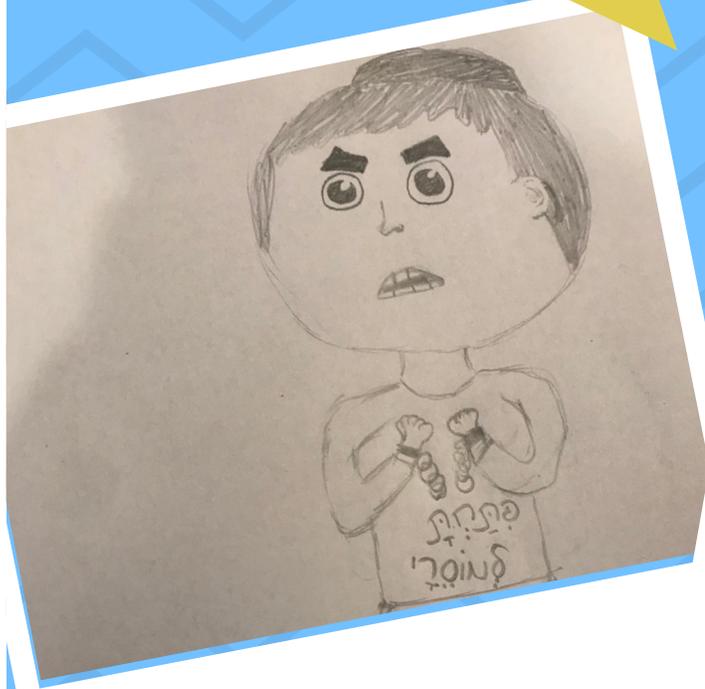
The Chodesh Ha'aviv interprets this as follows: The small opening in the midrash is symbolic of the effort we need to put in to be observant Jews. Just now, during the Seder, we created our opening by performing the commandments of the seder (we recited kiddush, made a blessing on karpas, told the story of the Jewish people leaving Egypt, and ate matzah and maror). Now that we did our part, and the Seder is drawing to a close, we throw the door wide open as a symbol of Hashem assisting us in widening our spiritual connection to Him.

During our lives, it is tempting to take the easy route, and do whatever takes the least effort, or sometimes no effort at all. However, this won't get us very far with our relationship with Hashem. Instead, all we have to do is a little, just a little bit, but be firm with it and value it above all else, and that little bit will enhance our religious experience and bring us all closer to Hashem.

There is a saying in Hebrew, "Kol haschalos kashos," all beginnings are difficult. Overcoming inertia is the hardest thing. Once we begin and do our part, Hashem will help us out and keep the ball rolling.



Fill up the fourth cup of wine



לא לנו, ה', לא לנו, כי לשמך תן כבוד, על חסדך על אמתך. למה יאמרו הגוים איה נא אלהיהם. ואלהינו בשמים, כל אשר חפץ עשה עצביהם כסף וזהב מעשה ידי אדם. פה להם ולא ידברו, עינים להם ולא יראו. אזנים להם ולא ישמעו, אף להם ולא ירחוץ. ידיהם ולא ימישון רגליהם ולא יהלכו, לא יהגו בגרונם. כמוהם יהיו עשיהם, כל אשר בטח בהם. ישראל בטח בה', עזרם ומגנם הוא. בית אהרן בטחו בה', עזרם ומגנם הוא וראי ה' בטחו בה', עזרם ומגנם הוא

ה' זכרנו יברך
יברך את בית ישראל, יברך את בית אהרן
עליכם ועל בניכם. ברוכים אתם לה', עשה שמים
וארץ השמים שמים לה' והארץ נתן לבני אדם. לא
המתים יהללוה ואל כל ירד דומה. ואנחנו נברך יה
מעתה ועד עולם. הללויה



מה אָשיב לה' כל תַּגְמוּלוֹהִי עָלַי. כּוֹס יְשׁוּעוֹת
אֲשָׂא וּבֶשֶׁם ה' אֶקְרָא. נְדַרִי לֵה' אֲשֶׁלֶם נִגְדָה נָא לְכֹל
עַמּוֹ. יִקָּר בְּעֵינַי ה' הַמּוֹתֵה לַחֲסִידָיו. אָנָּה ה' כִּי אֲנִי
עַבְדְּךָ, אֲנִי עַבְדְּךָ בֶּן אִמְתְּךָ, פִּתְחַתְּ לְמוֹסְרֵי לֶךְ.
אֲזַבַּח זִבְח תּוֹדָה וּבֶשֶׁם ה' אֶקְרָא. נְדַרִי לֵה' אֲשֶׁלֶם
נִגְדָה נָא לְכֹל עַמּוֹ. בַּחֲצֵרוֹת בַּיִת ה', בְּתוֹכִי
יְרוּשָׁלַיִם. הַלְלוּיָהּ

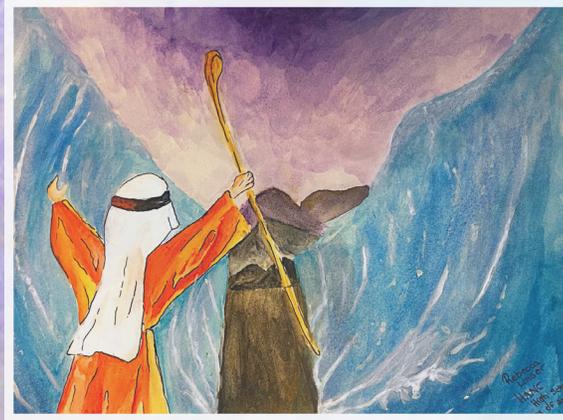
אֶהְבֵּתִי כִּי יִשְׁמַע ה' אֶת קוֹלִי תַּחֲנוּנֵי. כִּי הִטָּה
אֲזִנוֹ לִי וּבִימֵי אֶקְרָא. אֶפְפוּנֵי חֶבְלֵי מוֹת וּמִצָּרֵי
שְׂאוֹל מִצְאוּנֵי, צָרָה וְיָגוֹן אֶמְצֵא. וּבֶשֶׁם ה' אֶקְרָא: אָנָּה
ה' מַלְטָה נַפְשִׁי. חֲנוּן ה' וְצַדִּיק, וְאֱלֹהֵינוּ מֵרַחֵם. שִׁמְר
פְּתָאִים ה', דְּלוֹתַי וְלִי יְהוֹשִׁיעַ. שׁוּבֵי נַפְשִׁי
לְמִנוּחַיִכִי, כִּי ה' גָּמַל עָלַיִכִי. כִּי חִלַּצְתָּ נַפְשִׁי
מִמּוֹת, אֶת עֵינַי מִן דְּמָעָה, אֶת רַגְלֵי מִדְּחִי. אֶתְהַלֵּךְ
לִפְנֵי ה' בְּאַרְצוֹת הַחַיִּים. הֶאֱמַנְתִּי כִּי אֲדַבֵּר, אֲנִי
עָנִיתִי מְאֹד. אֲנִי אִמְרַתִּי בַּחֲפוּזֵי כָּל הָאָדָם כִּזְב



Like many of the paragraphs of Tehilim, Psalm 116 was inspired by a specific event in the life of its author, King David. Throughout his early years, King David suffered greatly by the hands of his predecessor, King Saul. And yet, when he heard the news of King Saul's death, David was nonetheless greatly disturbed by the loss. At the same time, however, King David also experienced a tremendous relief in knowing that he would no longer be subjected to King Saul's harassment. According to Rashi this was also the specific instance that caused King David to write this particular Psalm. Additionally, another verse in this chapter of Tehilim calls attention to an apparent contradiction in King David's life. The pasuk reads, "אני עבדך, אני עבדך בן אמתך פתחת" — "Please Hashem, for I am your servant, son of Your handmaid, You have released my bond."

On one hand, as king of Israel during one of its most prosperous times, David was literal royalty. His ancestry, however, was far less glamorous. David was a descendant from the nation of Moav, whom the Jewish people had been explicitly forbidden from marrying. Given the severity of that restriction, one cannot help but wonder how a descendant from a such taboo background was able to rise to the level of king.

The answer lies in the aforementioned pasuk, where it is written, "You have released my bonds." The Gemara (Yevamos 77a) tells us that Hashem only forbade the men from Moav from joining the Jewish people, and that the women were, in fact, allowed to marry Jewish men. David, of course, comes from Ruth, the Moabite, meaning that in some ways, the very aspect that might have disqualified him (being from Moav) was the one that brought him to royalty (because his mother was permissible). Perhaps that same idea applies to each of us. So often we feel restricted from doing the things that we want, or feel destined to do. In those moments, we need to call out to Hashem, and ask him to release us from those bonds so that we can truly flourish. Once we harness the power to escape from our personal chains, we can succeed beyond our wildest dreams.



Artwork by Rebecca Linder
Junior in HANC High School

הודו לַיִי כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד.
יֹאמֶר נָא יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד.
יֹאמְרוּ נָא בֵּית אֱהֲרֹן כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד.
יֹאמְרוּ נָא יִרְאִי יְיָ כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד.

מִן הַמִּצָּר קָרָאתִי יְהוָה, עָנְנִי בַמִּרְחֵב יְהוָה. יְיָ לִי לֹא אֵיכָא, מִה יַעֲשֶׂה לִי אָדָם. יְיָ לִי בַעֲזָרִי וְאֲנִי אֲרָאָה בְּשֹׁנְאִי. טוֹב לַחֲסוֹת בַּיַּי מִבְּטַח בְּאָדָם. טוֹב לַחֲסוֹת בַּיַּי מִבְּטַח בַּבְּדִיבִים. כָּל גּוֹיִם סָבְבוּנִי, בְּשֵׁם יְיָ כִּי אֲמִילָם. סָבְבוּנִי גַם סָבְבוּנִי, בְּשֵׁם יְיָ כִּי אֲמִילָם. סָבְבוּנִי כַדְבָּרִים, דַּעְכוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר קוֹצִים, בְּשֵׁם יְיָ כִּי אֲמִילָם. דָּחָה דְחִיתֵנִי לַנֶּפֶל, וַיִּי עֲזָרֵנִי. עֲזִי וְזִמְרַת יְהוָה וַיְהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה. קוֹל רִנָּה וִישׁוּעָה בְּאֶהְלִי צְדִיקִים, יְמִין יְיָ עֲשָׂה חֵיל. יְמִין יְיָ רֹמְמָה, יְמִין יְיָ עֲשָׂה חֵיל. לֹא אָמוֹת כִּי אֲחִיָּה, וְאַסְפֹּר מַעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה. יִסֹּר יִסְרֹנִי יְהוָה, וְלִמּוֹת לֹא נִתְּנִי. פִּתְחוּ לִי שַׁעֲרֵי צְדָק, אָבָא בָּם, אוֹדָה יְהוָה. זֶה הַשַּׁעַר לַיְיָ, צְדִיקִים יָבֹאוּ בוֹ. אֲדַבֵּר כִּי עֲנִיתֵנִי וְתַהֲיִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה. אֲדַבֵּר כִּי עֲנִיתֵנִי וְתַהֲיִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה. אָבֹן מֵאֲסוּ הַבּוֹנִים הִיטָה לְרֹאשׁ פְּנֵה. אָבֹן מֵאֲסוּ הַבּוֹנִים הִיטָה לְרֹאשׁ פְּנֵה. מֵאֵת יְיָ הִיטָה זֹאת הַיִּתָּה וְנִשְׁמָחָה בוֹ. זֶה הַיּוֹם עֲשָׂה יְיָ נְגִילָה וְנִשְׁמָחָה בוֹ. זֶה הַיּוֹם עֲשָׂה יְיָ נְגִילָה וְנִשְׁמָחָה בוֹ.

אָנָּה יְיָ, הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא. אָנָּה יְיָ, הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא.
אָנָּה יְיָ, הַצְּלִיחָה נָא. אָנָּה יְיָ, הַצְּלִיחָה נָא.

בְּרוּךְ הִבָּא בְּשֵׁם יְיָ, בְּרַכְנוּכֶם מִבֵּית יְיָ. בְּרוּךְ הִבָּא בְּשֵׁם יְיָ, בְּרַכְנוּכֶם מִבֵּית יְיָ. אֵל יְיָ וַיֵּאָר לָנוּ. אֶסְרוּ חַג בַּעֲבַתִּים עַד קַרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ. אֵל יְיָ וַיֵּאָר לָנוּ. אֶסְרוּ חַג בַּעֲבַתִּים עַד קַרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ. אֵלֵי אַתָּה וְאוֹדֶךָ, אֱלֹהֵי אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ. אֵלֵי אַתָּה וְאוֹדֶךָ, אֱלֹהֵי אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ. הוֹדוּ לַיְיָ כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד. הוֹדוּ לַיְיָ כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד.

נוֹסַח אֲשֶׁכְנֹ: יְהַלְלוּךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיךָ, וְחִסְדֵיךָ צְדִיקִים עוֹשֵׂי רְצוֹנְךָ, וְכָל עֲמֶךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִנָּה יוֹדוּ וַיְבָרְכוּ, וַיִּשְׁבַּחוּ וַיִּפְאַרוּ, וַיִּרְמְמוּ וַיַּעֲרִיצוּ, וַיִּקְדְּשׁוּ וַיִּמְלִיכוּ אֶת שִׁמְךָ, מַלְכֵנוּ. כִּי לְךָ טוֹב לַהּוֹדוֹת וּלְשַׁמֵּךְ נֶאֱמָה לְזִמְרָה, כִּי מֵעוֹלָם וְעַד עוֹלָם אַתָּה אֵל.

א הַלְלוּ יְהוָה הַלְלוּ אֶת שֵׁם יְהוָה הַלְלוּ עַבְדֵי יְהוָה. ב שְׁעֵמֶדִים בְּבֵית יְהוָה בְּחַצְרוֹת בֵּית אֱלֹהֵינוּ. ג הַלְלוּ יְהוָה כִּי טוֹב יְהוָה זָמְרוּ לְשִׁמּוֹ כִּי נְעִים. ד כִּי יַעֲקֹב בָּחַר לוֹ יְהוָה יִשְׂרָאֵל לְסִגְלָתוֹ. ה כִּי אֲנִי יָדַעְתִּי כִּי גָדוֹל יְהוָה וְאֲדַנִּינוּ מִכָּל אֱלֹהִים. ו כָּל אֲשֶׁר חָפֵץ יְהוָה עָשָׂה בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ בַּיָּמִים וְכָל תְּהוֹמוֹת. ז מַעֲלָה נְשָׂאִים מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ בְּרָקִים לְמִטָּר עָשָׂה מוֹצֵא רוּחַ מֵאוֹרֹתָיו. ח שֶׁהִכָּה בְּכוֹרֵי מִצְרַיִם מֵאָדָם עַד בְּהֵמָה. ט שְׁלַח אֶתֹת וּמִפְתִּים בְּתוֹכֵי מִצְרַיִם בְּפָרְעָה וּבְכָל עַבְדָּיו. י שֶׁהִכָּה גוֹיִם רַבִּים וְהָרַג מְלָכִים עֲצוּמִים. יא לְסִיחוֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֲמֹרִי וְלַעֲוֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבְּשָׁן וְלִכְלֵל מַמְלָכוֹת כְּנָעַן. יב וְנָתַן אֲרָצָם נַחֲלָה נַחֲלָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עִמּוֹ. יג יְהוָה שָׁמַךְ לְעוֹלָם יְהוָה זָכְרֶךָ לְדֹר וָדֹר. יד כִּי יָדִין יְהוָה עִמּוֹ וְעַל עַבְדָּיו יִתְנַחֵם. טו עֲצַבֵי הַגּוֹיִם כִּסְף וְזָהָב מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי אָדָם. טז פֶּה לָהֶם וְלֹא יִדְבְּרוּ עֵינַיִם לָהֶם וְלֹא יִרְאוּ. יז אֲזַנְיָם לָהֶם וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אֵף אֵין יֵשׁ רוּחַ בְּפִיהֶם. יח כְּמוֹהֶם יְהִיוּ עֲשִׂיהֶם כָּל אֲשֶׁר בִּטַח בָּהֶם. יט בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרַכּוּ אֶת יְהוָה בֵּית אֱהֲרֹן בְּרַכּוּ אֶת יְהוָה. כ בֵּית הַלְוִי בְּרַכּוּ אֶת יְהוָה יִרְאִי יְהוָה בְּרַכּוּ אֶת יְהוָה. כא בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן שָׁכֵן יְרוּשָׁלַם הַלְלוּ יְהוָה. (תְּהִלִּים קְלָה).



הודו לה' כי טוב כי לעולם חסדו Overcoming Challenges

By: Rena Max, Junior HANC High School

The central theme of Hallel is praise and giving thanks to HaShem, and one of the phrases most commonly repeated throughout its verses is, "הודו לה' כי טוב כי לעולם חסדו" "Give thanks to HaShem, because He is good, because His kindness endures forever." Rav Hirsch offers a slightly more nuanced interpretation of this verse, explaining that the notion that HaShem's loving-kindness is everlasting applies not only in a temporal sense, but in a tangible one as well-HaShem's love for us is constant, unwavering, and with us in times of sorrow no less than in times of joy.

Right now, of course, we are going through a time of great sorrow and anxiety, navigating every day under the threat of a global pandemic. But, as Rav Hirsch teaches us, it is important to remember that, despite the chaos and suffering that permeates our current lives, HaShem's love and affection for us has not dimmed in the slightest.

Hallel also includes the recitation of the following verse, composed by David HaMelech, "מִן הַמִּצַּר, קָרָאתִי יְהוָה." Interestingly the word מצר, meaning narrow place, contains the same root as מצרים, the Hebrew word for Egypt. Perhaps this derivation was an intentional effort to provide us with a simple, helpful reminder that the solution to any situation in which we feel trapped or helpless - whether it be slavery in Egypt, the lifelong struggles of David HaMelech, or being confined to our homes amidst the current crisis - is to cry out to HaShem. Indeed, this verse is immediately followed by, "יְיָ לִי לֹא אֵיֶרָא, מִה יַעֲשֶׂה לִי אֲדָם." HaShem is with me, I will not fear; what can man do to me? By turning to HaShem and both recognizing and reaffirming His presence in our lives, we can find peace in the security of His everlasting love and mercy even in our most chaotic or terrifying moments.

The Yalkut Meam Loez offers yet another intriguing and relevant insight regarding the practical implications of this phrase, explaining that it can also be read to mean, in essence, I will not be afraid of what any person can do to me, but only of what I can do to myself through sin. Quarantine is less than ideal in many ways, but it does offer the opportunity to do some things that our normal, busy lives may otherwise prohibit. Things like giving us a chance to look inwards and ask ourselves how we can improve, or to use the confines of electronic communication to appreciate and reassess how we typically interact with others. An important part of overcoming any challenge is to change our own attitudes and make an effort to see the positive in any given situation.

This idea can be encapsulated nicely by re-examining the crescendo of *Yetziat Mitzrayim; Kriat Yam Suf*, through a new, somewhat atypical point of view. The splitting of the sea is undoubtedly one of the quintessential miracles HaShem performed for the Jewish people, and a prime example of His abundant kindness. But if we imagine being there standing side by side with the rest of *Bnei Yisrael* in the middle of the seabed, with an ocean's worth of water towering menacingly over our head it would be terrifying. Similarly, this version of a מצר in which we find ourselves now may look confining and scary, but if we can just change our perspective slightly, we can find comfort in the knowledge that HaShem continues to show kindness towards us, always and forever.

אָנָּא ה', הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא. אָנָּא ה', הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא.

 אָנָּא ה', הִצְלִיחָה נָּא. אָנָּא ה', הִצְלִיחָה

 נָּא.

When reading *Tehillim*, we often encounter two very distinct tones. Many *pesukim* convey an undeniable sense of contentment and happiness, while others seem to have been written amidst more difficult and trying circumstances. Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Rimon points out that we can find a very similar dichotomy within the text of *Hallel*, writing, “*Hallel* may be describing a person who is simultaneously joyful and in distress, experiencing both situations of success and situations of crisis. The psalmist recognizes that there exists no person without problems in life, just as there is no person whose life is completely devoid of joy.”

For example, in the portion of *Hallel* wherein we relive the miraculous account of *Yitziyat Mitzrayim*, we find phrases like, “ה' יִזְכְּנוּ” -- “Hashem who has been mindful of us,” and, “מִה־אֲשִׁיב לָהּ כָּל-תַּגְּמוּלוֹהִי עָלַי” - -“How can I repay Hashem for all of his kindness to me.” These *pesukim* clearly originate from a place of elation, however, they are followed immediately by a sudden shift, beseeching, “אָנָּא ה' הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא” --“O, Lord please save us!”

Perhaps the implication behind this dramatic juxtaposition is a reminder that we are still in distress and need to be saved. Rav Yosef Tzvi Rimon goes on to explain that, “During both times of crisis and tranquility though, we tend to disproportionately focus on the troubles we are facing and do not allocate the same amount of attention to the good in our lives. We can learn from *Hallel* to try and face our challenges with a healthy amount of optimism and positivity. No matter how dark the times are, we can find even the slightest sliver of light to “Give thanks to Hashem for He is good” and then we can say, “O Lord please save us.” Ultimately, Rav Rimon’s *chiddush* is that the two can exist simultaneously.

This message is especially meaningful during the coronavirus outbreak. The days are filled with constant reminders of the troubling deviations from the norm and our urgent need for yeshuas Hashem. But we should consider this Pesach’s *Hallel* as a challenge and an opportunity to regain perspective on and appreciation for all of the goodness that surrounds us and to ensure that, even amidst the struggle, we praise Hashem ‘B’Lev shalem.’

Written by David & Jonathan Lederer
Art by Nechama Hillel





הודו ליהוה כי טוב - כי לעולם חסדו
הודו לאלהי האלהים - כי לעולם חסדו
הודו לאדני האדנים - כי לעולם חסדו
לעשה נפלאות גדלות לבדו - כי לעולם חסדו
לעשה השמים בתבונה - כי לעולם חסדו
לרוקע הארץ על המים - כי לעולם חסדו
לעשה אורים גדלים - כי לעולם חסדו
את השמש לממשלת ביום - כי לעולם חסדו
את הירח ויוכבים לממשלות בלילה - כי לעולם חסדו
למפה מצרים בבכורים - כי לעולם חסדו
ויצא ישראל מתוכם - כי לעולם חסדו
ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה - כי לעולם חסדו
לגזר ים סוף לגזרים - כי לעולם חסדו
והעביר ישראל בתוכו - כי לעולם חסדו
ונער פרעה וחילו בים סוף - כי לעולם חסדו
למולך עמו במדבר - כי לעולם חסדו
למפה מלכים גדלים - כי לעולם חסדו
והרג מלכים אדירים - כי לעולם חסדו
לסיחון מלך האמרי - כי לעולם חסדו
ולעוג מלך הבשן - כי לעולם חסדו
ונתן ארצם לנחלה - כי לעולם חסדו
נהלה לישראל עבדו - כי לעולם חסדו
שבשפלות זכר לנו - כי לעולם חסדו
ויפרקנו מצרינו - כי לעולם חסדו
נתן לחם לכל בשר - כי לעולם חסדו
הודו לאל השמים - כי לעולם חסדו

נשמח כל חי תבדך את שמך :: אלהינו, ורוח כל קשר תפארת ותרומה כדרך מלכנו תמיד. מן העולם ועד העולם אתה אל, ומבלעדך אין לנו מלך גואל ומושיע, פודה ומציל ומפרנס ומרחם בכל עת צרה וצוקה. אין לנו מלך אלא אתה. אלהי הראשונים והאחרונים, אלה כל בריות, אדון כל תולדות, המהלל ברב התשבחות, המנהיג עולמו בחסד וברחמים וברחמים. אין לא יום ולא ישינו, המעורר ישנים והמקיץ נרדמים, והמשיח אלמים והמתיר אסורים, והסומך הופלים והזוקף כפופים, לך לבדך אנוהנו מודים

אלו פינו מלא שירה כיום, ולשוננו רנה כהמון גליו, ושפתותינו שבה כמרחב קריע, ועינינו מאירות לשמש וכיור, וידינו פרושות כנשר שמים, ורגלנו קלות כאילות, אין אנו מספיקים להודות לך, :: אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, ולברך את שמך, על אחת מאלף אלפי אלפים ורבי רבבות פעמים הטובות שעשית עם אבותינו ועמנו. ממצרים גאלתנו, :: אלהינו, ומיבת עבדים פדיתנו, ברעב זנתנו ובשבע כלליתנו, מחרב הצלתנו ומדבר מלשנתנו, ומחלים רעים ורבים ונאמנים דליתנו. עד הנה עזרנו רחמיך ולא עזבונו חסדך, ואל תשנו :: אלהינו לנצח. על כן אברים שפלתנו בגו ורוח ונשמה שנופתת באפינו ונשנו אשר שמת בפינו, הן הם יודו ויברכו וישבחו ויפארו וירוממו ויעריצו ויקדישו וימליכו את שמך מלכנו. כי כל פה לך יודה, וכל לשון לך תשבח, וכל ברך לך תכרע, וכל קומה לפניך תשתחוה, וכל לבבות יראוך, וכל קרב וכליות זמרו לשמך, כדבר שקתוב, כל עצמתי תאמרנה: :: מי כמוך, מציל עני מסוק מקמו ועני ואביו מגדלו, מי ידמה לך ומי ישוה לך ומי יעברך לך, האל הגדול, הגבור והנוכח, אל עליון, קנה שמים וארץ. כהלך ונשבחתך ונפארתך ונברך את שם קדשך, כאמור: לנוד, ברכי נפשי את :: וכל קרבי את שם קדשו

האל בתעצמות עזר, הגדול כגבור שמך, הגבור לנצח והנוכח בגראותך, המלך היושב על כסא רם ונשא

Hodu L'Hashem Ki Tov

Thanking Hashem for Our Countless Blessings Even, and Especially, in Difficult Times

In this portion of the Haggadah, we reiterate 26 times that Hashem's kindness is everlasting, and we give thanks to Him for all of the wonders and miracles He has given us as a nation throughout our history. We thank Him for all of his creations and for supplying all of them with what they need to survive. In [Psalms], we say that every living creature should praise and bless HaShem for His kindness and compassion. However, in times like these, when we are stuck in seclusion and isolation, it can quickly become more difficult to see Hashem's kindness—and, accordingly, to show our gratitude. Instead, it becomes easy to feel as though He has punished and deserted us.

But what we must realize is that everything—both the good and (what seems like) the bad—is a blessing from Hashem. We cannot comprehend HaShem's infinite kindness, nor the amount of love with which He has blessed us for every day throughout the history of the Jewish people. However, what we do know, according to the Radak, is that the reason we repeat that HaShem's kindness is everlasting 26 times is in recognition of the fact that He allowed the world to withstand without the learning of Torah for 26 generations. During that time, the world survived through the kindness of HaShem alone.

Similarly, as bleak as our current circumstances may feel, we must open our eyes to the fact that HaShem has always treated us with incomparable [Psalms], and He will continue to do so. Furthermore, we need to recognize that HaShem is הגדול; He is constantly giving to us in ways we don't even realize—even now, HaShem is giving us a chance to reengage with what might sometimes feel lost, like our connection to our families, or even to our 'selves.' Though it may seem counterintuitive, this is the perfect time to take a minute and acknowledge our countless blessings. Whether we realize it or not, we are incredibly fortunate to be home with our families, with our health, and with time to learn and grow in ways that aren't always possible in the course of our typical lives. As Rabbi Sacks asked rhetorically about his own time in quarantine, "What does this make possible that I couldn't have done before or that I wouldn't have done before?" Although it is a challenging time, there is a blessing in every second of every day—we just have to find them and be sure to thank G-d for when we do.





שׁוֹכֵן עַד מְרוֹם וְקָדוֹשׁ שְׁמוֹ. וְכָתוּב: רִנְנוּ צְדִיקִים בַּי, לַיְשָׁרִים נְאוּה תְהִלָּה. בְּפִי יִשְׂרָאֵל תְּהִלָּל, וּבְדַבְרֵי צְדִיקִים תִּתְבָּרַךְ, וּבְלִשׁוֹן חֲסִידִים תִּתְרוֹמֵם, וּבִקְרֹב קְדוּשִׁים תִּתְקַדֵּשׁ.

וּבְמִקְהֵלוֹת רַבּוֹת עִמָּךְ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִנָּה יִתְפָּאֵר שְׁמֶךָ, מַלְכֵנוּ, בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר, שֶׁכֵּן חוֹבֵת כָּל הַיְצוּרִים לְפָנֶיךָ, ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, לְהוֹדוֹת לְהִלָּל לְשַׁבַּח, לְפָאֵר לְרוֹמֵם לְהַדְר לְבָרֵךְ, לְעֵלָה וּלְקַלֵּס עַל כָּל דְּבָרֵי שִׁירוֹת וְתִשְׁבַּחוֹת דּוֹד בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַבְדְּךָ מְשִׁיחֶךָ.

יִשְׁתַּבַּח שְׁמֶךָ לְעַד מַלְכֵנוּ, הָאֵל הַמֶּלֶךְ הַגָּדוֹל וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּשֵׁמִים וּבְאֶרֶץ, כִּי לָךְ נִאֲוָה, ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שִׁיר וְשַׁבְּחָה, הִלָּל וְזִמְרָה, עֵז וּמִמְשָׁלָה, נֶצַח, גְּדֻלָּה וּגְבוּרָה, תְהִלָּה וְתִפְאָרֶת, קְדוּשָׁה וּמְלֻכוּת, בְּרִכּוֹת וְהוֹדָאוֹת מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֵל מֶלֶךְ גָּדוֹל בְּתִשְׁבַּחוֹת, אֵל הַהוֹדָאוֹת, אֲדוֹן הַנִּפְלְאוֹת, הַבּוֹחֵר בְּשִׁירֵי זִמְרָה, מֶלֶךְ אֵל חֵי הָעוֹלָמִים.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְרִי הַגֶּפֶן.

Congratulations! You've made it to *hallel*! You immersed yourself in *magid*, enjoyed a great meal, and found the *afikomen*, and let's be honest—you're tired. If you're anything like me, you've been eyeing the couch for at least an hour, and you probably feel as though you just don't have the stamina—let alone desire—to get through the closing ceremonies. You might even be wondering: "What's the point of saying *hallel* during the seder anyways? I mean, we're going say it again tomorrow morning, not to mention the next seven mornings, so what's the point of forcing it in here, when we're all way too tired to really get into it?"

One possible explanation, from Rabbi David Silber, states that the reason we recite Hallel at the seder is twofold. On the one hand, *hallel* fits naturally within the larger context of the seder, in that its text reflects our physical journey from *Mitzrayim* to the *Beit Hamikdash*, and our spiritual transition from slavery to servants of *HaShem*. Secondly, our inclusion of *hallel* into the *seder* also acts as an homage to the noble way in which our ancestors celebrated their newfound freedom. Instead of getting caught up in the earthly fanfare and materialistic opportunities brought forth by their liberation, they chose to focus what little energy their beaten bodies could muster into offering a song of gratitude—*Az Yashir*—thanking God and glorifying the miracles he performed on their behalf. According to Rabbi Silber, their rendition of *Az Yashir*—the first official *tefila* offered by the newly created nation—effectively served as a predecessor to our modern application of *hallel*—an expression of supreme gratefulness for *HaShem's* kindness.

Clearly, *tefila* has united our people throughout the generations—most obviously through the abundance of shuls and minyanim scattered around our communities. And now, with many of us feeling trapped in our homes, separated from our loved ones, we need that feeling of unity more than ever. I think sleep can wait. Don't you?



נרצה

חֲסֵל סְדוֹר פֶּסַח כְּהִלְכָתוֹ, כְּכֹל מִשְׁפָּטוֹ וְחֻקָּתוֹ. כְּאֲשֶׁר זָכִינוּ לְסִדֵּר אוֹתוֹ כִּן נִזְכֶּה לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ
זָךְ שׁוֹכֵן מְעוֹנָה, קוֹמִים קֹהֵל עֵדֶת מִי מְנָה. בְּקִרְוֵב נֶהַל נְטֻעֵי כֹנֵה פְּדוּיִם לְצִיּוֹן בְּרִנָּה
לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם הַבְּנוּיָה

This paragraph, written by Rav Yosef Tuv Elem in the 11th century, was originally composed as the final stanza of a *piyut* added to the *musaf* of *Shabbat HaGadol*. Since then, however, it has been inserted into the *Haggadah* as the introduction to the final step of the seder, *Nirtza*. And, in concluding with a proclamation of hope to return to the rebuilt Jerusalem, *Nirtza* serves to channel our attention from our ancient history to the future, ultimate redemption.

And, while—given that it’s only read after some participants may already be asleep—this passage may seem like an afterthought, the truth is that it poignantly encapsulates an essential theme of the seder, and one that is laced subtly throughout the entire evening: the remembrance of the *Korbanot* and the *Beit Hamikdash*. As we can tell from the abundance of physical and rhetorical reminders on and around the seder table (e.g. the shank-bone and the roasted egg representing the *Korban Pesach* and *Korban Chagigah*, the invocation of Hillel’s *Korban Pesach* sandwich through *Korech*, and the culmination of the gratitude expressed in *Dayenu*), clearly one of the primary purposes of the exodus itself was to lead us towards the *Beit HaMikdash*. Therefore, it’s fitting that we close the seder with an explicit expression of the same hope to which we have been alluding throughout the seder: that true freedom is the opportunity to worship G-d in His Temple.



This connection is equally clear in the text of the Torah, as well: during our first moment of our freedom, while still standing on the shores of the Sea of Reeds, we sang the words of *Az Yashir*—a new nation yearning to be brought to G-d’s sanctuary, “*mikdash Hashem*” (*Shmot* 15:17). Similarly, at the very outset of the book of *Shmot*, God told Moshe that, ultimately, the purpose of our redemption was to allow us to worship God “on this mountain” (3:12). In reality, the exodus provided two parallel forms of freedom—not only freedom from slavery, but freedom to worship.

During the seder, our allusions to the *Beit Hamikdash* are exclusively focused on its current absence because we want to focus on the present and celebrate what we do have, instead of worrying about what we are yet to attain. As we close the seder, however, we make a conscious effort to turn our attention forward, to reaching the ultimate redemption through the reconstruction of the *Beit HaMikdash*.

This tension—between living in the moment and looking to the future—truly captures our experience in ‘quarantine.’ We hope and pray for an end to this challenge and for normalcy to return, and much of our energy is spent wondering about when and how that will happen. At the same time, many of us have also heard the recently published advice of Natan Sharansky—that even amidst the harshest of turmoil, we must live in the moment, consider the unique growth opportunities with which this experience presents us, and hope that we will come out of it as better people.

Every Moment Counts

אחד מי יודע, אחד אני יודע.
אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ:
שנים מי יודע, שנים אני יודע.
שני לחות הברית. אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ:
שלושה מי יודע, שלושה אני יודע.
שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ:
ארבע מי יודע, ארבע אני יודע.
ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ:
חמשה מי יודע, חמשה אני יודע.
חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ:
ששה מי יודע, ששה אני יודע.
ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ:
שבעה מי יודע, שבעה אני יודע.
שבעה ימי שבתא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ:
שמונה מי יודע, שמונה אני יודע.
שמונה ימי מילה, שבעה ימי שבתא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ:
תשעה מי יודע, תשעה אני יודע.
תשעה ירחי לדה, שמונה ימי מילה, שבעה ימי שבתא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ:
עשרה מי יודע, עשרה אני יודע.
עשרה דבריא, תשעה ירחי לדה, שמונה ימי מילה, שבעה ימי שבתא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ:
אחד עשר מי יודע, אחד עשר אני יודע.
אחד עשר כוכביא, עשרה דבריא, תשעה ירחי לדה, שמונה ימי מילה, שבעה ימי שבתא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ:
שנים עשר מי יודע, שנים עשר אני יודע.
שנים עשר שבטיא, אחד עשר כוכביא, עשרה דבריא, תשעה ירחי לדה, שמונה ימי מילה, שבעה ימי שבתא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ:
שלושה עשר מי יודע, שלושה עשר אני יודע.
שלושה עשר מדיא, שנים עשר שבטיא, אחד עשר כוכביא, עשרה דבריא, תשעה ירחי לדה, שמונה ימי מילה, שבעה ימי שבתא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ:

Blessings from HaShem

Racheli Wechter

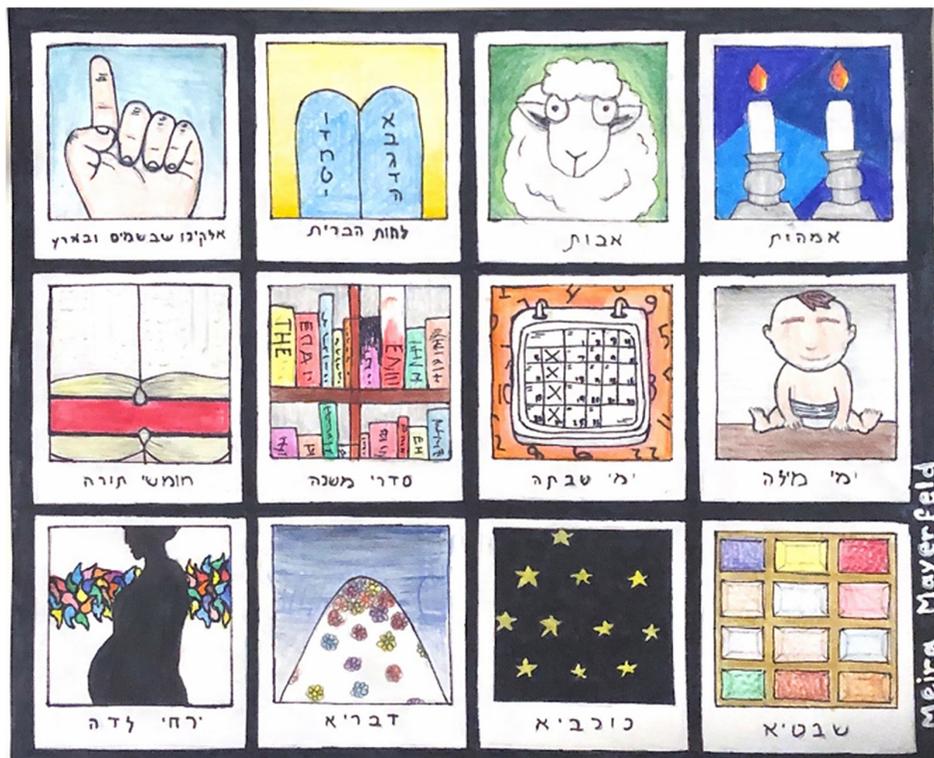
With all of its ceremonial fanfare and nuanced halachot, Pesach is--unfortunately--often reduced to its most trivial elements: the food (or lack thereof, for many favorites), how long our Seders are, or which destination program we're attending. Perhaps this is one reason that we sing "Echad Mi Yodeah" at the end of the Seder. Its playful, childlike construction serves to both remind us of the most basic tenants of Judaism and to highlight the importance of our belief in Hashem.

One might wonder, though--since the ideas in this song have no direct bearing on the story of Pesach--wouldn't it make more sense if we conclude the seder with one last reminder of the tremendous miracles that saved us from Egypt? So why this song? And why now?

Rabbi Eliyahu Safran discusses this question on the OU.org website and recounts an idea from Reb Yissachar Dov of Belz, explaining:

"[Reb Yissachar Dov of Belz] compared the singing of the 'Song of Thirteen' at the Seder to the wealthy man who is generally circumspect about revealing his riches. But on those rare occasions when he's had too much wine to drink, the nobleman is more loquacious than usual and, unable to hold back, publicly proclaims the gold, silver and jewels in his possession. So too the people of Israel, after consuming the four cups of wine, cannot hold back from revealing the wealth they possess – One God, two tablets, three fathers, four mothers..."

This concept is especially relevant at a time like this. We all feel trapped in our houses with nothing to do. But we cannot allow that to hinder our spirits. Instead, as we prepare for Pesach, we must remind ourselves of all that we have been blessed to receive from HaShem and draw whatever motivation we require to live every minute to its fullest. Every gift from HaShem is an opportunity to grow closer to Him. Maybe that's through davening, saying tehillim, learning Torah, or working on any other mitzvah with which you struggle. Whatever we choose to do, it will undoubtedly help to think of this crisis as a chance to use our "wealth" and make every moment (cooped up in our houses) count.



סד גִּדְיָא

Baah

סד גִּדְיָא, סד גִּדְיָא דִּזְבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זִוּי, סד גִּדְיָא, סד גִּדְיָא.

Meooooow

וְאַתָּא שׁוּנְרָא וְאַכְלָה לְגִדְיָא, דִּזְבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זִוּי. סד גִּדְיָא, סד גִּדְיָא.

Woof

וְאַתָּא כְּלָבָא וְנִשְׁף לְשׁוּנְרָא, דְּאַכְלָה לְגִדְיָא, דִּזְבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זִוּי.
סד גִּדְיָא, סד גִּדְיָא.

Crack

וְאַתָּא חוּטְרָא וְהִפָּה לְכְּלָבָא, דְּנִשְׁף לְשׁוּנְרָא, דְּאַכְלָה לְגִדְיָא, דִּזְבִּין אַבָּא
בְּתַרֵּי זִוּי. סד גִּדְיָא, סד גִּדְיָא.

Crackle crackle

וְאַתָּא נוּרָא וְשֵׁרֵף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִפָּה לְכְּלָבָא, דְּנִשְׁף לְשׁוּנְרָא,
דְּאַכְלָה לְגִדְיָא, דִּזְבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זִוּי. סד גִּדְיָא, סד גִּדְיָא.

Shhhhhh

וְאַתָּא מִיָּא וְכָבָה לְנוּרָא, דְּשֵׁרֵף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִפָּה לְכְּלָבָא, דְּנִשְׁף
לְשׁוּנְרָא, דְּאַכְלָה לְגִדְיָא, דִּזְבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זִוּי. סד גִּדְיָא, סד
גִּדְיָא.

Moo

וְאַתָּא תוּרָא וְשָׁמָה לְמִיָּא, דְּכָבָה לְנוּרָא, דְּשֵׁרֵף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִפָּה
לְכְּלָבָא, דְּנִשְׁף לְשׁוּנְרָא, דְּאַכְלָה לְגִדְיָא, דִּזְבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זִוּי. סד גִּדְיָא,
סד גִּדְיָא.

HIYAH

וְאַתָּא שְׁוֹשֵׁט וְשָׁחַט לְתוּרָא, דְּשָׁמָה לְמִיָּא, דְּכָבָה לְנוּרָא, דְּשֵׁרֵף
לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִפָּה לְכְּלָבָא, דְּנִשְׁף לְשׁוּנְרָא, דְּאַכְלָה לְגִדְיָא, דִּזְבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי
זִוּי. סד גִּדְיָא, סד גִּדְיָא.

Booo

וְאַתָּא מְלֵאדָּה הַמְּנֵת וְשָׁחַט לְשׁוֹשֵׁט, דְּשָׁחַט לְתוּרָא, דְּשָׁמָה לְמִיָּא,
דְּכָבָה לְנוּרָא, דְּשֵׁרֵף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִפָּה לְכְּלָבָא, דְּנִשְׁף לְשׁוּנְרָא, דְּאַכְלָה
לְגִדְיָא, דִּזְבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זִוּי. סד גִּדְיָא, סד גִּדְיָא.

Yay!

וְאַתָּא הַקְּדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא וְשָׁחַט לְמְלֵאדָּה הַמְּנֵת, דְּשָׁחַט לְשׁוֹשֵׁט, דְּשָׁחַט
לְתוּרָא, דְּשָׁמָה לְמִיָּא, דְּכָבָה לְנוּרָא, דְּשֵׁרֵף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִפָּה
לְכְּלָבָא, דְּנִשְׁף לְשׁוּנְרָא, דְּאַכְלָה לְגִדְיָא, דִּזְבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זִוּי. סד גִּדְיָא,
סד גִּדְיָא.

Every year, as the *seder* winds down, my family partakes in the fun, somewhat-off-beat ‘tradition’ of adding sound effects to *chad gadya*. Any mention of the goat elicits a bleat; the cat garners a hearty ‘*meeoow*.’ As the tune progresses, however, the progressively powerful characters necessitate more creativity in determining what sound should be used to represent them. After all, what sound does a butcher make? (‘*hiyah!*’ for the record.) Because of this recurring bit of silliness, when I think of *chad gadya*, one of the first things that comes to mind is the ‘*booooo*’ that we’ve designated for the *Malach HaMaves*, the Angel of Death. But while finding a sound effect for the *Malach HaMaves* may have been tricky, combatting its force on a larger, more direct level requires a much deeper and more stern approach.

On the one hand, we can see that the *Malach HaMaves* can be fought with Torah. David HaMelech (*Shabbos* 30b) and Rav Chisda (*Makkos* 10a) both successfully fend off the *Malach HaMaves* for some time through unrelenting Torah study.

The Rabbis of the Talmud in *Bava Kama* (60a-b), however, offer alternative advice for dealing with the Angel of Death, and they do so by referencing the story of *Pesach*. The Torah instructed the Jewish people to stay in their homes during *Makkas Bechoros* (*Shemos* 12:22). Based on this instruction, the Gemara learns that whenever a plague strikes a town, one should stay inside his home. In other words, the *amoraim* essentially recommended self-isolation and quarantining or, as it’s now known: ‘social distancing.’ Similarly, during a 1700’s cholera outbreak, Rabbi Akiva Eiger wrote to his community that, even if one feels the need to *daven* at shul (which he says is inappropriate and unnecessary in a time of such grave danger), one should only do so with decreased numbers.

As such, both the Gemara and Rabbi Akiva Eiger seem to imply that, although *Torah* and *mitzvos* can offer some degree of protection from the *Malach HaMaves*, we must also incorporate practical, medical, or scientific measures. As the beginning of the discussion of *aggadah* from *Bava Kama* 60a explains, “Once permission is granted to the Destroyer [to kill],

it does not distinguish between the righteous and the wicked.” Piety alone guarantees nothing.

Yet, even though we take practical steps, we must also try and counter the *Malach HaMaves* with our ability to learn Torah and do *mitzvos* — even if the practical steps hamper our ability to learn Torah (*Pirkei Avos* 5:14), *daven*, or perform certain acts of *chesed*. We must still find ways to increase our *avodas Hashem*. It is crucial to note that Rabbi Akiva Eiger’s solution was not to stop *davening*, it was to *daven* without (as many) people around.

We are living in trying times. While we certainly must take the practical steps of avoiding illness (including self-quarantining and social distancing), we must also not forget the other way to battle the *Malach HaMaves*: our service of Hashem, learning Torah, and doing *mitzvos*. We cannot forget the message of *Chad Gadya*: Ultimately *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* comes along and saves the day.



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NCSY is the international youth movement of the OU.