

The
Torah
Spring

המאעין

הגדה של פסח
ליקוטי שעה ברכה (ח"ב)

*The Hamaayan
Haggadah*

Volume II

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Introduction

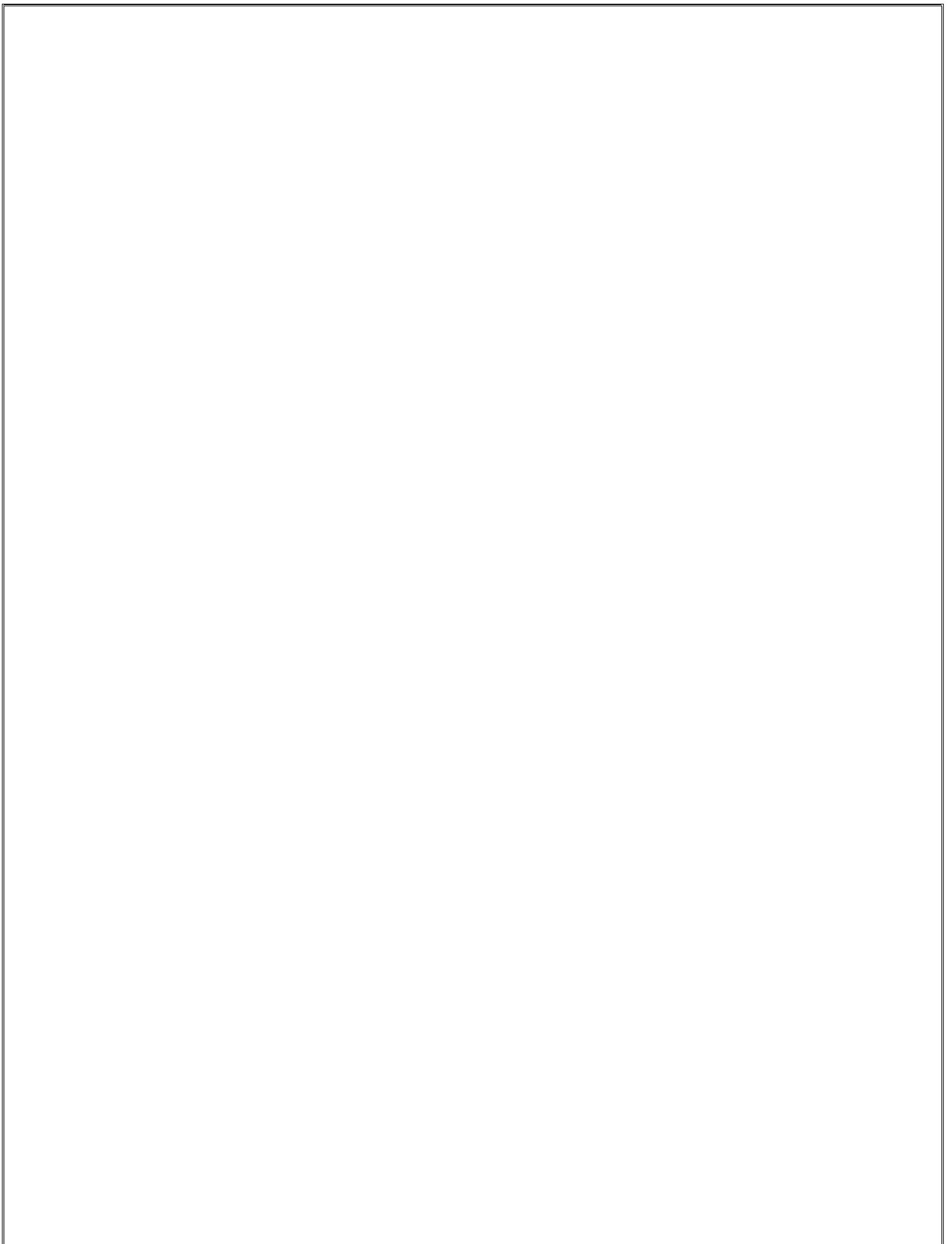
With immense gratitude to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, we are proud to present our readers with a **second** collection of *Divrei Torah* relating to the *Pesach Haggadah*, the Egyptian exile, and *Yetzi'at Mitzrayim* that have appeared in our weekly publication, *Hamaayan / The Torah Spring*, over the 14 years since our first *Haggadah*. Each “piece” appears almost exactly as it was published originally. For the most part, only obvious typographical errors were corrected; also, a modest effort was made render consistent some of the stylistic differences that exist between transliterations in earlier and later issues of *Hamaayan*. (In addition, some references to Torah scholars who were living when their words originally appeared have unfortunately had to be changed to reflect the fact of their passing.)

There is a bittersweet aspect to the publication of this *Haggadah*, however. As we sit quarantined in our homes, we pray that the few days remaining before the *Chag* will bring the fulfillment of the prophecy regarding the future redemption (*Michah* 7:15), “As in the days when you left the land of Egypt I will show wonders.” Who knows whether, in witnessing the world’s greatest economic and military powers brought to a standstill as Egypt was in the days of the Plagues, we are not already seeing those wonders! But, barring an openly miraculous end to our ordeal, Jews worldwide soon will be observing the “Coronavirus *Pesach*” – a *Pesach* very different from what nearly all of us are used to. Last year, my wife and I merited to have four generations at our *Seder* table; this year, we will share the *Seder* with our two single children and no one else. That’s the “bitter.” As for the “sweet” - It was the realization that this year would be the first in decades when I had not purchased a new *Haggadah* that impelled me to write my own – the work that is before you now. I pray that the Torah study that results, as well as any enhancement that is brought to the *Sedarim* of others, will serve as a merit for me, my family, and all of *Klal Yisrael*.

Once again, I would like to thank the readers, sponsors and other supporters of *Hamaayan* who give me a reason to continue my work. I am grateful to my wife and family who still live with the fact that I am always under pressure to put out the next issue. As his 10th *Yahrzeit* approaches, I cannot omit mention of *Moreinu Harav Gedaliah Anemer* ר"ג, who took great pride in his role in encouraging *Hamaayan*’s continued publication. I thank as well the many *Rabbonim* and *Chaveirim* who have likewise encouraged my writing and teaching. Finally, my continued thanks to Alan and Fran Broder, who invented Torah on the Internet when they first suggested publishing *Hamaayan* on that new medium, and to Rabbi Yaakov Menken and his team at Torah.org for their continued distribution of *Hamaayan*.

Like my previous works, I have given this *Haggadah* the Hebrew title *שעה ברכה* (*She’aih Berachah*). Please see the introduction to Volume 1 for the origin of that name.

Shlomo Katz
חי ניסן ה'תש"פ



Pesach At Home

The following is a letter written by R' Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler z"l (1892-1953; Rosh Kollel in Gateshead, England, and Mashgiach Ruchani in the Ponovezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak) to an unidentified recipient. It is printed in Michtav M'Eliyahu: Kovetz Igrot, p.129.

I received your precious letter with your invitation to come visit you and to participate in the *Pesach Seder* with you. Thank you very much for your invitation. However, I am unable to accept it. With G-d's help, I will celebrate the holy festival and arrange the *Seder* where I live.

It would seem that, just as it is impossible to invite a *ben Torah* [loosely translated: "one whose values are derived from the Torah"] to visit a friend for the *Ne'ilah* prayer on *Yom Kippur*, so, it seems to me, it is impossible to make a "visit" out of the holy *Seder*. [The *Seder* is an occasion to internalize, not a time to be outward-looking.] Fortunate is one who focuses and arranges the *Seder* within his heart. The Exodus is the source of the Jewishness within us. The *Seder* must make a convert of our inner selves, which have left their original domain and become animal-like, grossly material. More than that, our inner selves have ceased being Jewish. Woe to our hearts that are lost within our inner selves.

A related thought:

R' Shalom Noach Berezovsky z"l (1911-2000; *Slonimer Rebbe* in Yerushalayim) writes: As applied to some people, the title "Jew" is no more than an accident of birth. Such a person's Jewishness is not part of his essence; though he fulfills all of the *Mitzvot*, he is doing nothing more than "acting" Jewish. To really be a Jew means that one's Jewishness is embedded in the essence of his being, in his innards, his mind, his heart, and all his limbs. We read in *Megilat Esther* [about Mordechai], "There was a Jewish man . . ." [instead of, "There was a Jew"]. His whole personality was Jewish--his beliefs and his outlooks were Jewish, his feelings and aspirations were Jewish; even his physical desires were Jewish, *i.e.*, they were under his control. We read (*Vayikra* 18:3), "Like the deed of the land of Egypt in which you dwelled--you shall not do, and like the deed of the land of Canaan to which I bring you--you shall not do, and do not follow their traditions." This means that those things which you are permitted to do, you should not do the way an Egyptian or Canaanite would do them.

A true expression of these feelings can be found in the journal entry that the *Piaseczna Rebbe Hy"d* [R' Klonimus Kalman Shapira z"l; 1889-1943] wrote upon turning 40: "What can I accept upon myself? To study more? I believe that I don't waste any time currently. To distance myself from physical desires? Thank G-d, I'm not subjugated to them, G-d forbid. What is lacking in me? Simply to be Jewish. I appear to myself to be a perfectly painted picture of a human being, which lacks only a soul." [The *Slonimer Rebbe* continues:] *Tzaddikim* say that when one recites the blessing, "He did not make me a gentile," he must examine himself to see whether any part of himself is in fact gentile-like. (*Netivot Shalom*, Vol. I p.18)



R' Shmuel Eliezer Eidels z"l (*Maharsha*; Poland; 1555–1631) writes that the dates of all of the festivals are connected to the letters *aleph, heh, vav* and *yud--i.e.*, the letters found in two of the holiest names of *Hashem*: Y-K-V-K and A-K-Y-K (see *Shemot* 3:14). [We have substituted “K” for “*heh*,” as is customary.] He elaborates:

- ***Aleph*** has a *Gematria* of one, representing the first day of *Tishrei* (*Rosh Hashanah*) and the first day of *Nissan* (the first *Rosh Chodesh* in history; also, the day on which the *Mishkan* was erected).
- ***Yud*** has a *Gematria* of ten, representing the tenth day of *Tishrei* (*Yom Kippur*) and the tenth of *Nissan* (the first *Shabbat Ha'gadol* in history, when lambs were set aside for the first-ever *Korban Pesach*).
- ***Heh*** has a *Gematria* of five, representing *Sukkot* (the fifth day from *Yom Kippur*) and *Pesach* (the fifth day from the first *Shabbat Ha'gadol*).
- ***Vav*** has a *Gematria* of six, representing *Hoshanah Rabbah* (six days after the beginning of *Sukkot*) and the last day of *Pesach* (which, in *Eretz Yisrael*, is six days after the first day of *Pesach*). Also, six represents *Shavuot*, which falls on the sixth of the month of *Sivan*.
- Finally, the sum of these numbers (1+5+6+10) equals 22, the day in *Tishrei* on which *Shemini Atzeret* falls. (*Chiddushei Aggadot: Yoma* 2a)

R' Michel Zilber *shlita* (*Rosh Yeshiva* of the *Zvhill Yeshiva* in *Yerushalayim*) observes that, despite the above parallels between the holidays of *Tishrei* and those of *Nissan*, there is a fundamental difference between them.

The holidays of *Tishrei* reflect the aspiration in the verse (*Tehilim* 27:4, recited on the *Tishrei* holidays), “Would that I could dwell in the house of *Hashem* all the days of my life.” On *Rosh Hashanah*, we congregate in shul to hear the *shofar*. On *Yom Kippur*, we spend almost the entire day in shul. On *Sukkot*, we again leave our homes, this time to move into the *sukkah*.

On *Pesach*, the opposite is true: the *Mitzvot* focus on our homes. Make sure there is no *Chametz* in your home. Eat the *Korban Pesach* only with a pre-arranged group, and only in one home. Do not take any part of the *Korban Pesach* out-of-doors once the *Seder* has begun. Our task on *Pesach* is to sanctify our homes until they (figuratively) have the same sanctity as the Temple courtyard. If we do that, commentaries say, eating *Matzah* will be equivalent to offering a *Korban Minchah* / flour-offering in the *Bet Hamikdash*.

How is this possible? R' Zilber explains that, if not for Adam's sin, there would have been no need for a *Mishkan*, for *Hashem* would have “dwelled” with man. By sanctifying ourselves to the degree that we repair the damage from Adam's sin, we once again make our homes into a dwelling place for the *Shechinah*. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach B'yam Derech* p.10)



“He and his neighbor who is close to his house shall take. . .” (*Shmot 12:4*)

The *Tosefta* (*Pesachim* 8:6) teaches: There are a number of differences between the way the *Korban Pesach* was offered in Egypt and the way it was brought in later generations. One of those differences was this requirement that the *Pesach* in Egypt be eaten with a neighbor [if one’s only family was too small to eat an entire lamb]. In *Eretz Yisrael*, there was no requirement that the lamb be shared specifically with a neighbor. However, the sage Rabbi Shimon says, “I maintain that this requirement applies in all generations, so that a person not abandon his neighbor in favor of a distant friend. This is in accordance with the verse (*Mishlei* 27:10), “A close-by neighbor is better than a distant brother.”

R’ Chaim Zaichyk z”l (1906-1989; *Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshivat Bet Yosef-Novardok in Buchach, Poland; later in Israel) writes: This teaches us that even if one would enjoy the holiday more somewhere else, he must forego that pleasure in order not to risk offending his neighbor. [Ed. note: Although Rabbi Shimon’s opinion is not the *Halachah*, that does not detract from the validity of the ethical lesson he is teaching, in accordance with the principle (*Eruvin* 13b), “These and these are both the word of the Living *Elokim*.” (See *Maharal z”l, Be’er Ha’golah* I p.20)]

R’ Zaichyk continues: We read (*Bereishit* 13:3), “He proceeded on his journeys from the south to Bet El--to the place where his tent had been at first.” *Rashi z”l* quotes our Sages’ view about the importance of returning to the same hotel where one stayed previously. The *Gemara* (*Arachin* 16b) teaches that this obligation goes so far that a person should return to the same inn unless the innkeeper hits him or throws his belongings into the street. Sometimes, R’ Zaichyk observes, a person may be more comfortable in a different hotel than the one he stayed in before. Nevertheless, one’s personal comfort must be secondary to the feelings of one’s former host. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach R’ Chaim Zaichyk*)

Preparing for Pesach

“We ask and expound upon the laws of Pesach 30 days before Pesach.” (Pesachim 6a)

Commentaries ask: The *Gemara* states elsewhere (*Megilah* 32a), “Moshe enacted that we ask about and expound on the laws of Pesach on Pesach, the laws of *Shavuot* on *Shavuot*, and the laws of *Sukkot* on *Sukkot*.” How can this be reconciled with the ruling that we ask and expound upon the laws of Pesach 30 days before Pesach?

R' Yosef Karo z"l (1488-1575; Greece and Eretz Yisrael; author of the *Shulchan Aruch* and other works) explains: The ruling that we ask and expound upon the laws of Pesach 30 days before Pesach does not mean that we are obligated to study and teach that subject during that time period. Rather, the *Gemara* relates to the rule that, when two people each ask a rabbi a question, he should answer the timely question first. During the 30 days before Pesach, the *Gemara* is teaching, a question about Pesach is considered timely.

Alternatively, writes R' Karo, the *Gemara* means the laws of preparing for Pesach should be studied and taught 30 days before Pesach. This is necessary because those laws are so numerous and complex, and there are many preparations to make before the festival. In comparison, building a *Sukkah* is relatively easy and can be done even on the day before *Sukkot*. Even the laws of *Lulav* and *Etrog* are not so complicated, as most *Lulavim* and *Etrogim* are kosher, observes R' Karo. On the other hand, when the *Gemara* obligates us to study the laws of each festival on that festival, it refers to studying the reasons for, and messages contained within, the laws of the holidays, in addition to studying the “do’s and don’t’s” associated with each holiday.

Another possibility, concludes R' Karo, is that the original enactment to study the laws of Pesach 30 days in advance referred to the laws of the *Korban Pesach*. (*Bet Yosef* 429:1)



R' Chaim Friedlander z"l (*Mashgiach Ruchani* of the Ponovezh Yeshiva; died 1984) writes: As Pesach approaches, we make many preparations--cleaning, shopping, etc. But the *Mitzvah* of *Sippur Yetzi'at Mitzrayim* / relating the story of the Exodus requires no less preparation, and this we do not do by-and-large. In particular, we tend to make two mistakes which stem from not understanding either the “*Geder*” / definition or “*Shiur*” / required amount of this *Mitzvah*, R' Friedlander states.

First, our *Divrei Torah* at the *Seder* tend to focus on the text of the *Haggadah* rather than on the content, for example, expounding on whether we should say, “*Ha lachma anya*” or “*K'ha lachma anya*.”

Second, many people recite so many *Divrei Torah* on the first part of the *Haggadah*, which is only the introduction (including “*Mah nishtanah*” and the Four Sons), that they have to rush through the later part, which actually tells the story of the slavery, persecution and, finally, redemption. Yet, according to *Rambam* z"l, the portion of the *Haggadah* about which it is said, “Whoever speaks more about the story of the Exodus is praiseworthy,” is only the latter part of *Maggid*, from “*Arami oveid*” and onward.

R' Friedlander continues: We find two hints in the *Haggadah* to what the real *Mitzvah* is. One teaches us the *Geder* of the *Mitzvah*: "Even if we are all wise, etc., it is incumbent upon us to relate the story of the Exodus, and whoever speaks more about the story of the Exodus is praiseworthy." The second teaches us the *shiur* of the *Mitzvah*: "In every single generation, a person is obligated to see himself as if he had participated in the Exodus from Egypt." One must tell the story until he can see himself in it.

Why, in fact, is a person who already knows the detailed story of the Exodus obligated to retell it? R' Friedlander explains: When a person relates a moving experience that happened to him, it can be so real to him that he reacts as if he is reliving the fear or the joy that he experienced during the actual event. So, too, the *Mitzvah* of *Sippur Yetzi'at Mitzrayim* is fulfilled when we can picture ourselves in the story, not merely when we know the story. This requires even a learned person to actively retell the story so that he can first experience the bitterness of the slavery and oppression, then the gradual process of the Exodus, and finally the joy of being drawn close by *Hashem*.

This is not an easy task by any means. To help, we have tangible items on the *Seder* plate to aid us: *Matzah*, *Maror*, *Charoset*, etc. When we eat these items, or when we point to them during the course of reciting the *Haggadah*, it should not be a mechanical act but rather one that causes us to reflect.

For example, when we eat the *Maror*, we should reflect on the bitterness of the exile. When we eat the *Matzah*, we should think about the miraculous, sudden departure from Egypt after hundreds of years of exile.

The *Gemara* relates that the sage R' Nachman had a slave named Daru. R' Nachman asked him, "If a master freed his slave, what would be the slave's obligation?" Daru answered, "He would have to give thanks." R' Friedlander explains that R' Nachman wanted to concretize for himself the abstract ideas discussed in the *Haggadah*. It should be noted that the *Gemara* describes Daru as a good-for-nothing who did not even work enough to pay his own upkeep. If even such a slave must be grateful for his freedom, how much more so must *Bnei Yisrael*, who performed back-breaking labor in Egypt, be grateful!

R' David Avudraham z"l (14th century) writes that feeling as if one participated in the Exodus leads to "*Hoda'ah*," which means both acknowledgment and thanks, and to "*Shevach*" / praise. R' Friedlander explains: *Hoda'ah* means "acknowledging" the truth that *Hashem* performed many miracles for us and "thanking" Him for them. This leads to *Shevach*, which involves speaking His "praises." Ultimately, both of these--*Hoda'ah* and *Shevach*--are meant to lead to *Kabbalat Ohl Malchut Shamayim* / accepting the yoke of Heaven, which then leads to doing the *Mitzvot* willingly and with joy. This is why, after we say, "In every single generation, a person is obligated to see himself as if he had participated in the Exodus from Egypt," we immediately say, "Therefore, we are obligated to give *Hoda'ah* and *Shevach*." (*Siftei Chaim: Mo'adim* II p.355)



From the same work:

The *Gemara* (*Ta'anit* 29a) states: "When *Adar* enters, joy increases." *Rashi* z"l explains: "They were days of miracles for the Jewish People -- *Purim* and *Pesach*."

R' Friedlander observes: Apparently, *Purim* and *Pesach* have something in common, and that commonality is a source of joy. What is it? Also, asks R' Friedlander, we read in the Torah sections describing the Ten Plagues that *Hashem* wanted Pharaoh to acknowledge Him. Why was that important to Him?

R' Friedlander explains: One of the most foundational "Ways of *Hashem*" is that His Honor will be revealed in this world no matter what man does. Indeed, at times, His Honor is revealed as a result of the actions of the wicked -- not merely despite their actions. This occurred, for example, when Haman was hanged on the very same gallows that he had made for Mordechai. This teaches that, not only can the wicked not foil *Hashem's* plans, they themselves are tools in His hands.

The very same lesson is demonstrated by the story of the Exodus. Pharaoh hoped to prevent *Bnei Yisrael's* savior from growing to adulthood by decreeing that all newborn boys be drowned. As it turned out, that very decree resulted in the savior, Moshe, growing up in Pharaoh's own palace. Moreover, continues R' Friedlander, classical commentaries say that it was in Pharaoh's palace that Moshe learned leadership skills.

Hashem was not trying to make a religious man out of Pharaoh, R' Friedlander explains. But, if Pharaoh would acknowledge *Hashem*, it would teach us that *Hashem* always "gets His way," no matter how much the wicked try to resist. That is the shared message of *Purim* and *Pesach*. And, the more clarity we have about this point, the more joy it will bring us. (*Ibid.* p.249)



R' Shimshon David Pinkus z"l (died 2001) writes: There are two ways to pass *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov* – one can live the day, or one can be a bystander. By way of a parable: Two people go to the airport – one goes to watch the airplanes take off for distant and exotic lands, while the other buys a ticket and actually flies to one of those wonderful places. Obviously, airplanes were not built to give pleasure to those who watch them; they were built to carry those who board them and want to be lofted skyward.

So it is with the holy days. One can stand by and admire the beauty of the day – the sparkle of the house newly-cleaned for *Pesach*, the beautifully set table, the many songs that are sung as the night progresses. However, the holidays were not given to us so that we can watch them pass by as a tourist watches a parade go by. Rather, the holidays, like the airplane, were given to us to elevate us.

How do we accomplish this? How do we enable the spirit of the holiday to penetrate deep within us and affect our being? It is only by attempting to understand the essence of the holiday. This, in turn, requires us to study books about the holiday – both its laws and its philosophical aspects.

R' Pinkus continues: The title "*Yom Tov*" alludes to the first thing that was ever referred to as "*Tov*" / "Good," i.e., the first light that G-d created (*Bereishit* 1:4). [*Rashi* writes that that verse does not refer to the light that we are familiar with, but to a Divine light that was put away for the righteous to enjoy in the future.] The holidays, however, can shine this Divine light on us, and the mechanism to achieve that is through the Torah, which is called (*Mishlei* 4:2), "*Lekach Tov*" / "A good teaching." This is why each *Yom Tov* (except for *Shavuot*) has its own tractate of the *Talmud*; the essence of each holiday's light is contained within its tractate. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Tiferet Shimshon*)

Ma'ot Chittim

The leaders of the town of Radin complained to R' Yisrael Meir Hakohen (1839-1933; the *Chafetz Chaim*) that donations to the town's *Ma'ot Chittim / Pesach* charity fund were inadequate to feed the town's poor. The *Chafetz Chaim* acceded to the leaders' request that he address the townsfolk.

"I am an old man," the *Chafetz Chaim* said in his speech. "Soon I will be called to give an accounting in the World-to-Come, and, since I am an influential person in this town, I will be asked whether the people of my town of Radin gave generously to charity. I will then be faced with a dilemma. If I say that they did, I will be telling a lie, something I have never done. On the other hand, if I say that the people of Radin did not give generously, I will be speaking *lashon hara*, which I also have never done.

"There is only one solution to my dilemma — for each of you to give generously to the *Ma'ot Chittim* campaign." (*A Word of Wisdom, A Word of Wit*)

Shabbat Ha'gadol

R' Avraham z"l (an otherwise unknown sage in 12th or 13th century France) teaches: The people are accustomed to call the *Shabbat* before *Pesach*: "*Shabbat Ha'gadol*" / "The Great *Shabbat*." But, they don't know why. After all, it is no greater than any other *Shabbat*!

He explains: The reason for this name is that the Exodus from Egypt took place on a Thursday, as stated in *Midrash Seder Olam*. Therefore, the 10th of *Nissan*, when *Bnei Yisrael* set aside lambs for the *Korban Pesach*, was *Shabbat*. When *Bnei Yisrael* were given this commandment, they asked, "If we slaughter the deity of Egypt in their sight, will they not stone us?" *Hashem* answered, "You will see the wonder that I will do!" Sure enough, when the Egyptians saw *Bnei Yisrael* gathering sheep that they planned to slaughter on the 14th of *Nissan*, their insides boiled with anger, but they were helpless to harm the Jewish People. Because of the miracle that happened on that *Shabbat*, we call it "*Shabbat Ha'gadol*." (*Siddur Rashi*, paragraph 352)



Why did the Torah command that the *Korban Pesach* [in Egypt] be set aside four days before it was slaughtered? Rabbi Matia ben Charash used to say: The verse says (*Yechezkel* 16:8), "I passed by you, and saw you, and behold the time was a time of love." The time had come for *Hashem* to fulfill His oath to Avraham to redeem his children, but they had no merit in which to be redeemed, as it is written (*ibid.* verse 7), "You were naked and bare" -- *i.e.*, naked of *Mitzvot*. Therefore, *Hashem* gave them two *Mitzvot*--the blood of the *Korban Pesach* [to spread on their doorposts] and the blood of *Brit Milah* [which had been neglected during the years in Egypt], as it is written (*ibid.* verse 6), "Then I passed you and saw you wallowing in your blood, and I said to you, 'In your blood you shall live'; I said to you, 'In your blood you shall live'." That is why *Hashem* commanded that they set aside the animal for the offering four days in advance. (*Midrash Mechilta D'Rabbi Yishmael: Parashat Bo*)

R' Eliezer Ashkenazi z"l (1513-1585; rabbi in Egypt, Italy and Poland) asks: Why four days--not three or five? And, why do we commemorate the day of the week when this miracle occurred (*Shabbat*), rather than its date (10 *Nissan*)?

He explains: The entire purpose of *Bnei Yisrael's* exile and of the Exodus, with all of the associated miracles, was to reveal that *Hashem* is the Creator. Only the One who created all of nature can manipulate it at will to the extent that *Hashem* did in the course of the Plagues! Paralleling this, *Hashem* wanted the lamb for the *Korban Pesach* to be set aside four days beforehand--not because there is anything special about the number four, but because that day was *Shabbat*, the day that testifies to Creation. This explains, as well, why we remember that miracle on *Shabbat*, not on the calendar date when it occurred. (*Ma'asei Mitzrayim* ch.15)



Many ask: Why do we commemorate the day of the week when the above event occurred (*Shabbat*) rather than the calendar date of the event (10 *Nissan*)?

R' Yaakov Moshe Charlap z"l (1882-1951; rabbi of Yerushalayim's Sha'arei Chesed neighborhood and *Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshivat Merkaz Harav) explains:

Our Sages teach that *Hashem* did not redeem *Bnei Yisrael* until they were on the brink of falling into the lowest level of impurity. Why did He wait? Because He wished to highlight the fact that there is permanent holiness within a Jew. No matter how low he falls, there is an "inner point" which cannot be eliminated. That "inner point" is hidden within all Jews, including many who seem to be lost, but all that is necessary for it to be revealed is for some of the layers that conceal it to be stripped away. This is what our Sages mean when they say: "Anyone who rejects idolatry is called a 'Yehudi'." When our ancestors separated a lamb – an Egyptian deity – as an offering, that is what they did: they stripped away that which concealed the "inner point" of holiness that cannot be eliminated.

The day that represents this characteristic of a Jew is *Shabbat*. Calendar dates and the dates of the festivals are determined by mankind, through the power of the *Bet Din* to say what day is *Rosh Chodesh*. In contrast, *Shabbat* is fixed, built in to creation.

This explains, as well, why *Pesach* is a holiday that revolves around the family. The Egyptians set out to destroy Jewish families and, as punishment, their families were destroyed. On *Pesach*, we celebrate the family, recognizing that "inner point" that is passed by heredity from generation to generation. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Mei Marom*)



Many reasons have been offered for why the *Shabbat* before *Pesach* is called "*Shabbat Ha'gadol*" / the Great *Shabbat*. R' Pinchas Menachem Alter z"l (1926-1996; long-time *Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshivat Sfas Emes in Yerushalayim, and later the *Gerrer Rebbe*) teaches:

The Torah cites two reasons for observing *Shabbat*. First, *Shabbat* commemorates Creation (see *Bereishit* 2:3). In addition, it commemorates the Exodus (see *Devarim* 5:15). [See below.]

Before the Exodus, only the first of these reasons existed. However, as we prepare to commemorate the Exodus, we realize that *Shabbat* is now greater.

He adds: Notably, the *Gematria* of the phrase from *Kiddush*, "*Ve'Shabbat kodsho*" / "*Shabbat, His holy [day]*" (1118) is the same as the *Gematria* of "*Zecher Yetzi'at Mitzrayim*" / "a remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt" and of "*Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokenu Hashem Echad*," the basic declaration of our faith. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Pnei Menachem* p.9)

How does *Shabbat* commemorate the Exodus?

R' Avraham ibn Ezra z"l (1089-1164; Spain, France and England) explains that just as we rested from our slavery after the Exodus, so we should permit our slaves to rest on *Shabbat*.

R' Moshe ben Nachman z"l (*Ramban*; 1194-1270; Spain and *Eretz Yisrael*) writes: R' Avraham ibn Ezra's explanation is not correct. *Ramban* also disagrees with the explanation of *Rambam* z"l ("Maimonides"), who writes that, when we were slaves in Egypt, we had no time to rest. Now, when we rest, we should remember the Exodus and be grateful for *Hashem's* kindness.

Rather, *Ramban* writes, the miracles of the Exodus demonstrate G-d's ability to do with nature as He wishes, which is proof that He is the Creator. Thus, both reasons for *Shabbat*--Creation and the Exodus--testify to the same thing.



“Behold! I send you Eliya Hanavi, before the great and awesome day of Hashem. He will restore the heart of fathers to children and the heart of children to their fathers . . .” (Malachi 3:23-24 – Haftarah for Shabbat Ha’gadol).

In an essay entitled “The Fathers and the Sons,” R’ Yaakov Moshe Charlap z”l (see above) writes:

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

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

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



“Behold! I am sending you Eliyahu the prophet, before the great and awesome day of Hashem.” (Malachi 3:23 – Haftarah for Shabbat Ha’gadol)

R’ Avraham Yoffen z”l (1887-1970; *Rosh Yeshiva* of the Novardok Yeshiva in Bialystok, Poland; New York and Yerushalayim) writes: This verse reminds us of Moshe Rabbeinu's announcement to *Bnei Yisrael* in Egypt that they would be redeemed. The fact that our Sages enacted reading this on the *Shabbat* before *Pesach* teaches us that, in this month of redemption, we not only must remind ourselves anew of the Exodus from Egypt, we also must prepare ourselves for the future redemption. The roots of the future redemption are found within the Exodus, as the *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 91b) observes in connection with the verse (*Shmot* 15:1), “Then Moshe and *Bnei Yisrael* will sing.” The *Gemara* notes: The verse does not say, “sang,” as would have been appropriate for an event that occurred long ago at the *Yam Suf*, but rather, “will sing.” This is an allusion in the Torah to the future *Techiyat Ha'meitim* / Resurrection of the Dead. [Until here from the *Gemara*]

Therefore, continues R’ Yoffen, it is incumbent upon us, as we busy ourselves with remembering the Exodus, to also examine our present state and determine whether we are

preparing ourselves for the Redemption. We must ask ourselves whether we have fulfilled (*Shmot* 12:21), “Draw forth and buy for yourselves one of the flock for your families, and slaughter the *Pesach*-offering,” according to the interpretation of the *Midrash Mechilta*: “Draw yourselves away from false gods and cling to *Mitzvot*.”

R' Yoffen continues: The *Haftarah* speaks of a general malaise in the Jewish People's service of G-d; for example (3:13), “You said, ‘Serving *Elokim* is useless, and what did we gain from keeping His charge or from walking submissively before *Hashem*, Master of Legions?’” The prophet speaks of a world where it appears that dishonesty does pay, where successful people take advantage of widows and orphans without consequences to themselves; a world that advances in all areas of science, leading it to deny the existence of higher values.

In such an age, one might think that the quality of our *Mitzvot* does not matter; as long as we are going through the motions of performing *Mitzvot*, G-d is pleased. To counter this view, writes R' Yoffen, the prophet says (3:18), “Then you will return and see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves *Elokim* and one who does not serve Him. The *Gemara* (*Chagigah* 9b) teaches that “one who serves *Elokim*” refers to a person who reviews his learning 101 times, while “one who does not serve Him” refers to a person who reviews his learning “only” 100 times. Each additional bit of effort that is put into a *Mitzvah* is noticed by *Hashem* and makes a difference. *Hashem* values every single good deed, even a single good word, and, on the other hand, the depth of G-d's judgment for any laxity in serving him is great. No detail is ignored! (*Ha'mussar Ve'ha'da'at: Shmot/Vayikra* p.143)

The Big Picture

“Rabbi Eliezer says, ‘The world was created in *Tishrei*.’ Rabbi Yehoshua says, ‘The world was created in *Nissan*.’” (Rosh Hashanah 10b)

R' Yisrael Hofstein *z"l* (1737-1815; *Chassidic Rebbe*, known as the *Maggid* of Kozhnitz) writes that there is no dispute about when the physical creation of the world took place. Rabbi Yehoshua, who says that the world was created in *Nissan*, is merely observing that, like a fetus concealed within its mother, *Hashem's* dominion over the world was not recognizable until the Exodus, which occurred in *Nissan*.

R' Michel Zilber *shlita* (*Rosh Yeshiva* of the Zvhil yeshiva in Yerushalayim) explains: In fact, the world was not created in *Tishrei* or in *Nissan*, but rather on the 25th of *Elul*. What occurred on the first day of *Tishrei* was the creation of man. Why, then, does Rabbi Eliezer say the world was created in *Tishrei*? Because, until there was a being (man) capable of recognizing the Creator, the purpose of the world's creation was unrealized.

Given that the purpose of Creation was not fulfilled--in a sense, Creation had not yet occurred--as long as *Hashem* was not recognized, Rabbi Yehoshua says that Creation cannot be said to have been until *Nissan*. Before the Exodus, *Hashem* was hidden. Man could, and did, erroneously attribute divine powers to heavenly bodies and forces of nature. Only the miracles of the Exodus changed that so that *Hashem* was known and the purpose of Creation was realized. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Ba'yam Derech* p. 9)



Rabbeinu Asher *z"l* (1250-1327; Germany and Spain; one of the three pillars of *Halachah* on whose works the *Shulchan Aruch* is based) writes: Trust in *Hashem* with all your heart and believe in His *Hashgachah Peratit* / Divine Providence [explained *below*]. In this way, you will fulfill in your heart the complete *Yichud* / Oneness [also explained *below*], *i.e.*, when you believe that His Eyes roam the entire world, watching all the ways of man and examining man's heart and man's thoughts. On the other hand, one who does not believe (*Shmot* 20:2), “He is the One who has taken you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery,” also does not believe (*ibid.*), “I am Hashem, your *Elokim*.” That person has not made a complete *Yichud*. This is the uniqueness of *Yisrael* over all other nations, and this is the foundation of the entire Torah. (*Orchot Chaim* No. 26)

R' David Cohen *shlita* (*Rosh Yeshiva* of the Chevron Yeshiva in Yerushalayim) explains: Rabbeinu Asher is teaching that the *Mitzvah* of believing in the *Yichud* / Oneness of *Hashem*, the *Mitzvah* found in the first verse of the *Aseret Ha'dibrot*, has two parts: believing in *Hashem's* existence and believing in His *Hashgachah Peratit* / Divine Providence. *Hashgachah Peratit* means that *Hashem's* Eyes roam the entire world, watching all the ways of man and examining man's heart and man's thoughts, and that He conducts the world in accordance with man's actions, giving each person positive or negative consequences as appropriate. [The latter follows logically from the fact that He is watching, since He must be doing so for a reason.] One's *Emunah* / faith is incomplete unless it includes both matters. If one believes that *Hashem* exists but does not believe in *Hashgachah Peratit*, his *Emunah* is incomplete. From where do we learn that *Hashem* watches man's actions and reacts accordingly? From the events of the Exodus. (*Mizmor Le'David* I p.153)



R' Nosson Yehuda Leib (Leibel) Mintzberg z"l (1943-2018; rabbi and Rosh Yeshiva in Yerushalayim and Bet Shemesh, Israel) writes: When we carefully examine the relevant verses of the Torah and Prophets, we discover that Exodus is important for two reasons. Most importantly, the Exodus is when *Hashem* became our *Elokim* and King and we became His nation. This is reflected in the verse (*Shmot* 6:7), "I shall take you to Me for a people and I shall be an *Elokim* to you; and you shall know that I am *Hashem* your *Elokim*, Who takes you out from under the burdens of Egypt." Secondly, through the wonders of the Exodus, it was revealed to all that *Hashem* runs the world and there is none like Him.

R' Mintzberg continues: We must understand the concept, "*Elokim of Yisrael*," which is one of the fundamentals of Judaism. This means that, in addition to being the G-d of the entire world, He wishes to have a "private" kingdom, and that is the nation of Yisrael. Just as a human emperor has numerous subjects, but he has a family and inner circle with whom he has a different type of relationship, so it is with *Hashem*.

From *Hashem's* perspective, this means that He directs our affairs with special attention (*Hashgachah Peratit*). Thus we say in the blessing after *Shema* ("*Emet V'emunah*"), all of which, writes R' Mintzberg, is devoted to our special relationship with *Hashem*: "He redeems us from the power of kings, our King who delivers us from the hand of all the cruel tyrants . . . Who led us upon the heights of our enemies and raised our pride above all who hate us." From our perspective, because He is our *Elokim*, we have a special obligation to serve Him and honor Him differently than all other nations. We accepted upon ourselves to carry the banner of *Hashem*, to serve Him loyally, and to occupy ourselves with His affairs in this world.

R' Mintzberg concludes: From the Torah and Prophets we learn that the fact that *Hashem* redeemed us so that we will be His nation is the source of our special assignment: to be devoted to the service of *Hashem* and to the performance of *Mitzvot*. All this follows from the fact that He is our *Elokim*, and that came about through the Exodus. (*Ben Melech: Pesach ma'mar* 1)



The Torah teaches that the purpose of the Plagues in Egypt was not only to punish the Egyptians, but also to teach both the Egyptians and *Bnei Yisrael* about *Hashem's* existence and His power. R' Moshe Chagiz z"l (1671-1750; Yerushalayim and Amsterdam) notes that many articles of faith can be learned from the *Parashot* dealing with our slavery in Egypt and the Exodus. These include:

- *Hashem* exists, as is written (6:2), "I am *Hashem*."
- *Hashem* is *Echad* / unique, as is written (9:14), "So that you shall know that there is none like Me in all the world."
- *Hashgachah*, i.e., that *Hashem* pays attention to individual beings, as is written (8:18), "I am *Hashem* in the midst of the land."
- *Hashem* rewards and punishes [as each person deserves], as is written (11:7), "So that you shall know that *Hashem* will have differentiated between Egypt and *Yisrael*."

- *Hashem* speaks to mankind through prophets that He sends as His messengers, as is written (3:10), “Now, go and I shall dispatch you to Pharaoh.”
- The prophecy of Moshe Rabbeinu was on a higher level than that of other prophets, as is written (7:1), “Aharon your brother shall be your spokesman,” *i.e.*, not on the same level as you (Moshe).
- *Hashem* brings about miracles and wonders as He pleases, which is absolute proof that He created the world. All of the plagues demonstrate this, for He changed every aspect of nature – land and sea and everything in them -- at His Will. From this it follows, as well, that He preceded everything, which means He always existed.
- *Hashem* knows the future and what is in people’s hearts, as is written (3:19), “I know that the king of Egypt will not allow you to go.” (As an aside, R’ Chagiz writes that this verse addresses the much-discussed apparent paradox between “*Yedi’ah*” / *Hashem’s* knowledge of the future and “*Bechirah*” / man’s free will. The verse states, “I know that the king of Egypt will not allow you to go, *v’lo* [usually translated, ‘except through’] a strong hand,” *i.e.*, *Hashem’s* “strong arm.” However, the verse may be translated, “I know that the king of Egypt will not allow you to go, but there is no strong hand,” *i.e.*, even though I know what choice Pharaoh will make, that does not compel his choice.)
- Every person has the free will to be righteous like Moshe or wicked like Pharaoh, as is written (7:13), “The heart of Pharaoh was strong.” Even though Pharaoh saw clear evidence that *Hashem* had sent Moshe, he still was able to choose wickedness.
- *Hashem* hears the cries of the poor and oppressed, as is written (6:5), “Also, I have heard the groan of *Bnei Yisrael*.”
- *Hashem* will redeem us in the future at the hand of a prophet as He did in Egypt, as is written (3:14), “I Shall Be As I Shall Be.” [As I am with them in this exile and will redeem them, so I will be with them in future exiles and will redeem them.] In addition, the entire account of the Exodus gives us hope and confidence.
- A person should not attribute events to chance; rather, when things happen to him, he should repent, as even Pharaoh eventually did, confessing (9:27), “*Hashem* is the Righteous One, and I and my people are the wicked ones.”
- All creations do *Hashem’s* bidding, and He can use even the smallest of them as His agent, as is evident from the Plagues.
- One must give his life in *Hashem’s* service [as the frogs did].
- *Hashem* does not desire the death of the wicked, but rather that they repent, as is evident from the repeated warnings Pharaoh was given.
- *Hashem* takes away life and gives it back, as happened to the snake which turned into a stick and back into a snake.
- The Torah is of Divine origin, as is written (3:12), “You will serve Elokim on this mountain,” *i.e.*, Har Sinai.
- *Hashem* despises evil, as is written (3:7), “I have indeed seen the affliction of My people that is in Egypt, and I have heard its outcry because of its taskmasters.”

R' Chagiz concludes: Because of all of these lessons, it is Hashem's desire that we remember all of the wonders that He did in Egypt, and it is our duty to do so every day. (*Eileh Ha'mitzvot* No.21)



R' Ben Zion Gossenbauer z"l (Komarno, Galicia; early 20th century) lists a number of lessons and benefits that one can take away from different parts of the *Pesach Haggadah*, including some parts that seem to be tangential:

(1) We learn from the *Haggadah* that even when a situation seems hopeless, it is not, for Hashem is capable of saving a person from any predicament. This is why we recite, "*Ha lachma anya . . .*," for it alludes to the very difficult straits that *Bnei Yisrael* were in before the Exodus.

(2) Relating the story of the Exodus instills in a person faith in the Creator and the belief that no one can move a muscle absent His Will. We should not think that our ancestors could not save themselves from Pharaoh only because they were poor or not wise. No one could have saved himself without Hashem's intervention! Therefore, the *Haggadah* relates, even wise men like Rabbi Akiva and rich men like Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah must relate the story of the Exodus.

(3) The *Haggadah* teaches that when G-d decrees that a person should suffer, that suffering will not last a moment longer than was decreed, but it could end earlier as a result of a person's prayer. This is why we tell the wise son the laws of *afikoman*, which alludes to the "*chipazon*" / the hurried exit of *Bnei Yisrael* from Egypt.

(4) The word "*Sippur*" / "telling a story" alludes to the gem called "*sapir*" / "sapphire." This is because by telling the story of the Exodus, we cause great spiritual lights to shine from the Upper Worlds. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Shulchan Ha'tahor* p.54)



R' Yehuda Loewe z"l (the *Maharal* of Prague; died 1609) writes: The Exodus is the foundation of our faith on which everything else rests. This refers, not to the miracles that occurred in connection with that event, but to the mere fact that there was an Exodus, as will be explained below. Anyone who believes that there was ever in Jewish history a greater miracle than the Exodus is simply unaware of the Torah's viewpoint on the matter, writes *Maharal*.

The *Midrash* analogizes Hashem's role in the Exodus to a goldsmith who reaches into the fire to remove the gold and also to a shepherd who reaches into an animal's womb to birth the offspring. Why does the *Midrash* offer two analogies? *Maharal* explains that the Exodus must be seen from two perspectives.

First, like a goldsmith who reaches into the fire to remove the gold, Hashem reached into the most powerful nation on earth and freed its slaves. Second, like a shepherd who reaches into an animal's womb to birth the offspring, who is connected to the mother by an umbilical cord, Hashem separated *Bnei Yisrael* from their attachment to Egypt and freed them.

Maharal continues: *Bnei Yisrael's* existence in Egypt was deficient in two respects. First, they were slaves, not a free nation. That was a physical deficiency. Second, the descendants of Avraham Avinu were subjugated to the most debased and immoral nation on earth. That was a spiritual deficiency.

The Exodus cured both of these deficiencies.

(Why was a lofty nation--Yisrael--enslaved specifically by the lowliest nation? *Maharal* explains that the inherent uniqueness of the Jewish People is an all-or-nothing proposition. Either we maintain our level or we fall to the lowest possible depths.) (*Gevurot Hashem*, chapters 3-4)

Why does *Maharal* mention in the explanation above that *Bnei Yisrael* are descendants of Avraham, as if that fact made their oppression at the hands of the Egyptians worse?

Perhaps it is because Avraham was the pillar of *chessed* / kindness, whereas the Egyptians, by oppressing *Bnei Yisrael*, turned their backs on the kindness that a Jew (Yosef) had done for them. Had *Bnei Yisrael* been a people with a callous nature, not a kind people, perhaps they would have suffered less from the ingratitude of the Egyptians. In fact, however, the Jewish People have inherited the trait of *chessed* from their ancestor Avraham.



Our Sages teach that the purpose of the exile in Egypt was so that we would develop *emunah* / faith in *Hashem*. One might ask, however: why did the enslavement have to be so harsh? R' Alexander Aryeh Mandelbaum *shlita* (Yerushalayim) offers several explanations:

(1) "*Emunah*," by definition, means believing in something that one cannot see. If life is going well and all signs point to the existence of a loving G-d, there is no room for *emunah*. Therefore, the Jewish People could attain the pinnacle of *emunah* only by going through the darkest of times.

(2) One of the fundamentals of our belief is that *Hashem's* "*Yichud*" (Uniqueness and Oneness) will ultimately be revealed--indeed, this is one of the reasons why *Hashem* created the world. R' Moshe Chaim Luzzato *z"l* (*Ramchal*; 1707-1746) writes that *Hashem's* *Yichud* is apparent only when He reveals that He is more powerful than any other force on earth. This, in turn, requires that evil be given free rein for a time, after which *Hashem* will vanquish it and be revealed--exactly what happened in Egypt.

(3) The Egyptians were a very arrogant people, as demonstrated by Pharaoh's question to Moshe (*Shmot* 5:2): "Who is *Hashem* that I should listen to His voice?" Living in Egypt, *Bnei Yisrael* acquired this trait of arrogance, a characteristic that would have precluded their attaining the unity necessary to receive the Torah. The only solution was to subdue them to the point of hopelessness, and then to redeem them and have them submit humbly to *Hashem's* dominion. (*Ha'lulah Ha'zeh* p.52)

בְּדִיקַת חֶמֶץ

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוּנוּ עַל בְּעוֹר חֶמֶץ.

כָּל חֲמִירָא וְחֲמִיעָה דְאַכָּא בְּרִשׁוּתֵי דְלָא חֲמִתָּהּ וְדְלָא בְּעִרְתָּהּ וְדְלָא יִדְעָנָא לֵיהּ לְבִטֵּל וְלִהְיוּ הַפְּקֵר כְּעַפְרָא דְאַרְעָא.

Why is *Bedikat Chametz* / the search for *Chametz* carried out at night? Commentaries explain that *Chametz* is a metaphor for the *Yetzer Ha'ra*. Since the *Yetzer Ha'ra* takes advantage of darkness, as explained below, it is in the darkness that we must seek it out.

Darkness causes two undesirable consequences. Firstly, it causes people to trip over unexpected obstacles. The *Yetzer Ha'ra* also places unexpected obstacles in people's way. Thus we read in *Mishlei* (4:19), "The way of the wicked is like darkness, they do not know upon what they stumble."

Secondly, it causes even familiar territory to become confusing. In the dark, one may think that a door is a wall or a wall is a door, or that gold is iron or iron is gold. So, too, under the influence of the *Yetzer Ha'ra*, one may think that a sin is a *Mitzvah* or that a *Mitzvah* is a sin.

There is a story popular among Yemenite Jews about a widow named Sadah who was very punctilious in her observance of *Mitzvot*. When she heard that the prophets promise that the miracles of the future redemption will be equal to those of the Exodus, she concluded that *Mashiach* will come on the *Seder* night. Throughout the *Seder*, which she observed at a neighbor's house, she watched the door carefully, waiting for *Mashiach* to enter and redeem all those assembled. Alas, he did not come by the time the *Seder* had ended.

In the meantime, Sadah drank four cups of wine, the hour grew late, and her eyelids began to grow heavy. She desperately wanted to sleep, but just as desperately, she wanted to stay awake to greet *Mashiach*. Warily, she made her way home and, fighting off sleep for a short while, she hit upon an idea:

Our Sages say that *Mashiach* will arrive riding a donkey. Surely, if *Mashiach* arrived while Sadah was sleeping, her donkey would prance and bray to greet its cousin bearing the redeemer. Realizing this, Sadah took a rope and joined her leg to her donkey's leg. That way, when her donkey saw *Mashiach's* donkey, its movement would awaken her.

However, Sadah was not aware of another teaching of our Sages which says (*Berachot* 3a) that donkeys commonly prance and bray in the first third of the night. Sure enough, Sadah's donkey took off running through town, all the while dragging the unfortunate widow behind it. This was painful indeed for Sadah, but in her heart she rejoiced, for surely *Mashiach* had arrived!

All of the neighbors were awakened by Sadah's screams of pain mixed with cries of joy. Quickly they reined in her donkey and helped her to her feet. Only then did she learn, to her dismay, that *Mashiach* had not arrived.

What does this parable teach? It illustrates that sometimes we are seduced to perform what we believe to be a *Mitzvah*, when in fact it is the *Yetzer Ha'ra* that is motivating us. For a young *yeshiva* student, there might be a *Yetzer Ha'ra* to learn Torah all night, forgetting that this causes one to sleep through the next morning's prayers. For others, it is the *Yetzer Ha'ra* to speak *lashon hara* about a neighbor who, we tell ourselves, is so evil it is a *Mitzvah* to speak about him. About this the prophet says (*Yishayahu* 5:20): "Woe to those who speak of evil as good and as good of evil; who make darkness into light and light into darkness . . ."

The first step in eliminating this darkness is to light the candle of *Bedikat Chametz*. With it, one should search every nook and every corner until the trickery of the *Yetzer Ha'ra* is rooted out. (Quoted in *Haggadah Shel Pesach Avoteinu Sipru Lanu* p.11)



While discussing the laws of *Bedikat Chametz* / searching for *Chametz*, the *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 8b) states: "If there is a hole in the wall between a Jew's home and an Aramean's home, one should examine [for *Chametz*] as far [into the hole] as his hand reaches, and the remainder, he should nullify in his heart. The sage Plaimo says: He should not search there at all, because it is dangerous. [The *Gemara* asks:] What is the danger? If you are concerned that the neighbor will think the Jew is practicing witchcraft against his neighbor, then how did the *Chametz* get there in the first place? [In other words, one is required to search for *Chametz* only in places where he might have put *Chametz*. If you argue that a person should not use the holes in the walls because his neighbor might suspect him of practicing witchcraft, then how could there be *Chametz* there and why should the place be searched at all? The *Gemara* answers:] Perhaps he placed *Chametz* there in daylight, whereas the neighbor will not suspect the Jew of witchcraft until he sees the candle light [from *Bedikat Chametz*] coming through the hole."

Obviously, on a most basic level, the above passage is a legal discussion. However, R' Yitzchak Dadon *shlita* (a senior *Kollel* member at Yeshivat Merkaz Harav in Yerushalayim) finds another message there as well. He writes:

The *Gemara's* discussion obviously involves the Jewish People in a state of exile, where gentiles have the upper hand. In such a state, a Jew cannot fully differentiate himself from his neighbors in order to realize the level described in our *Yom Tov* prayers: "*Atah vechartanu mi'kol ha'amim . . .*" / "You have chosen us from among the nations . . ." Nevertheless, one must examine as far as his hand reaches, *i.e.*, a Jew must differentiate his thoughts and behavior to the extent that he can. To the extent that he cannot, he must at least nullify in his heart the *Chametz*, *i.e.*, those negative elements of the surrounding culture that deserve to be nullified.

The sage Plaimo argues that even that is too much to ask of a Jew in exile. Only in the daytime, *i.e.*, when the Jewish People are secure and tranquil in their homeland, is it safe for the Jew to hold himself out as a light onto the nations. In the darkness of the exile, the "candle" that the Jew holds out may itself cause antagonism from his neighbors. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Ayelet Ha'shachar* p.10)



R' Yekutiel Yehuda Halberstam z"l (1905-1994; *Klausenberger Rebbe*) writes: It is customary to put out ten pieces of bread before *Bedikat Chametz* so that the person conducting the search will find them. These ten pieces of bread are then left to be burned the next morning. The *Klausenberger Rebbe* suggest that these ten pieces of bread allude to the ten sons of Haman. As we prepare to celebrate our redemption on *Pesach*, we recall the trait that the ten sons of Haman shared with many of our enemies: their inability to see the handwriting on the wall, cut their losses, and save themselves. Haman's wife predicted his downfall, but Haman's sons did not run away to save themselves. Even after Haman was hanged--which happened on *Pesach*, eleven months before the appointed day for the Jewish People and their enemies to do battle--Haman's sons didn't react. The same trait, writes the *Klausenberger Rebbe*, a concentration camp survivor, was evident in the Germans. Long after it was clear that they would lose the war, concentration camp guards refused to run away and save themselves; they waited to be captured. To recall this aspect of our salvation, which repeats itself throughout history, the ten pieces of bread are left to wait to meet their end. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Halichot Chaim* p.11)

בְּעוֹר חָמֵץ

כָּל חֲמִירָא וְחֲמִיעָה דְאִכָּא בְרִשׁוּתֵי דְחֻזְתָּהּ וְדִלָּא חֻזְתָּהּ, דְחֲמִתָּהּ וְדִלָּא חֲמִתָּהּ,
 דְבַעֲרָתָהּ וְדִלָּא בַעֲרָתָהּ, לְבִטֵּל וְלִהְיוּ הַפְּקָר כְּעַפְרָא דְאַרְעָא.

Our Sages use "*Chametz*" as a metaphor for the *Yetzer Ha'ra*, and they teach that, along with searching for and destroying leavened bread, one should search his soul and eliminate the evil inclination from within himself. This idea is expressed in the prayers printed in many *haggadot* and which some people recite in conjunction with *Bedikat* and *Bi'ur Chametz*.

How, in fact, is the *Yetzer Ha'ra* like *Chametz*? R' Chaim Stein z"l (1912-2011; *Rosh Yeshiva* of the Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland) explains: We read (*Shmot* 12:17), "You shall safeguard the *matzot*." Literally, this verse is the source of the *Mitzvah* to eat *Shemurah Matzah*, i.e., *Matzah* that was prepared with special safeguards. However, because there are no vowels in the Torah, our Sages read this verse to also say, "You shall safeguard the *Mitzvot* / commandments." Based on this reading, our Sages teach: "When a *Mitzvah* comes your way, do not let it become *Chametz*," i.e., do not miss your chance to perform the *Mitzvah*.

R' Stein continues: We are used to thinking that a *Mitzvah* performed with *zerizut* (loosely translated, "energy and promptness") gets extra credit, while a *Mitzvah* performed lackadaisically is also a *Mitzvah*. That is true in a technical sense [for example, a person who *davened* at the latest possible *minyán* did, in fact, *daven* with a *minyán*], but the above verse gives us a different perspective. If one delays while baking *Matzah* and his dough becomes *Chametz*, he does not have "*Chametz Matzah*"; in the eyes of *Halachah*, he has no *Matzah* at all. Similarly, a *Mitzvah* performed without *zerizut* is not merely worse than a *Mitzvah* performed with *zerizut*--it is an entirely different creature.

It follows, that the *Yetzer Ha'ra* doesn't need to stop us from performing *Mitzvot* in order to defeat us; the *Yetzer Ha'ra* wins when we procrastinate and perform *Mitzvot* without *zerizut*. That, explains R' Stein, is why *Chametz* is a metaphor for the *Yetzer Ha'ra*.

R' Stein says further: This metaphor is not merely a “nice thought,” it is part of the essence of the *Mitzvah* of searching for *Chametz*. *Pesach* is the “Time of our Freedom,” not only because it is the time when the Exodus took place, but also because it is a propitious time for a person to be freed from his *Yetzer Ha'ra*. Of course, the “idea” is no substitute for the “action.” One who eradicates his *Yetzer Ha'ra* but leaves *Chametz* in his house has not performed the *Mitzvah*. At the same time, the complete fulfillment of the *Mitzvah* of *Bedikat Chametz* requires one to search for the *Yetzer Ha'ra* within himself.

R' Stein illustrates this idea using another *Mitzvah*: *Halachic* authorities from the *Rambam* to the *Mishnah Berurah* remind us that withholding food from oneself on a fast day is not the main point of fasting; rather, the primary *avodah* / Divine service on a fast day is prayer and repentance. If one goes through the physical exercise of fasting but doesn't engage in the day's spiritual activity, he may have fulfilled the technical *Mitzvah*, but he has missed the point.

Similarly, if one searches for bread in his house and then burns it, he has fulfilled the technical *Mitzvah*. But, if doesn't also search for his *Yetzer Ha'ra*, he has missed an important part of the *Mitzvah*. (*Emunat Chaim* ch.1)



עֲרוֹב תְּבִשִׁילִין

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל מִצְוֹת עֲרוֹב.

בְּהִדִּין עֲרוֹבָא יְהֵא שָׂרָא לָנָא לְאַפּוּיִי וּלְבִשׁוּלִי וּלְאַטְמוּנִי וּלְאַדְלוּקִי שְׂרָגָא וּלְתַקְנָא וּלְמַעְבַּד כָּל צְרִכְנָא, מִיּוֹמָא טְבָא לְשִׁבְתָּא [לָנוּ וּלְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל הַדְרִים בְּעִיר הַזֹּאת].

קִדְּשׁ.

וּרְחַץ.

כְּרִפֹּס.

יַחַץ.

מִגִּיד.

רְחֻצָּה.

מוֹצִיא מִצָּה.

מָרוֹר.

כוֹרֵךְ.

שֶׁלַחַן עוֹרֵךְ.

צָפוֹן.

בְּרֵךְ.

הֵלֵל.

נִרְצָה.

קִדְשׁ

הַנְּגִי מוֹכֵן וּמְזוּמָן לְקִצֵּים מְצוֹת כּוֹס רֵאשׁוֹנָה מְאַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת לְשֵׁם יְחִוּד קוֹדֶשׁא בְּרִידָה הוּא וְשִׁכְיִנְתִּיהָ עַל יְדֵי הַהוּא טָמִיר וְנִעְלָם בְּשֵׁם כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל.

(לשבת וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר

יוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי, וַיְכַלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל-צַבָּאִים: וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי, מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי, מִכָּל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה: וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי, וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ, כִּי בּו שַׁבַּת מִכָּל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ, אֲשֶׁר-בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:)

סְבִירֵי מְרָנוּ וּרְבָנוּ וּרְבוֹתֵי:

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

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל-עַם, וְרוּמְמָנוּ מִכָּל-לְשׁוֹן, וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וַתִּתֵּן-לָנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה (לשבת שַׁבָּתוֹת לְמִנוּחָה וּמוֹעֲדִים לְשִׂמְחָה, חַגִּים וְזִמְנִים לְשִׂשׁוֹן אֶת-יוֹם (לשבת הַשַּׁבָּת הַזֶּה וְאֶת-יוֹם) חַג הַמִּצּוֹת הַזֶּה. זְמַן חֲרוּתָנוּ, (לשבת בְּאַהֲבָה), מִקְרָא קִדְּשׁ, זְכָר לִיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם. כִּי בָנוּ בְּחִרְתָּ וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים. (לשבת וְשַׁבָּת) וּמוֹעֲדֵי קִדְּשָׁתָּ (לשבת בְּאַהֲבָה וַיְבָרְצוֹן) בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְשִׂשׁוֹן הִנְחַלְתָּנוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם (לשבת הַשַּׁבָּת וּיִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַזִּמְנִים:

(כשחל יו"ט במוצאי שבת מוסיפים כאן ברכות הבדלה.

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

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

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחֲיָנוּ וְקִיָּמָנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזְמַן הַזֶּה:

“Who has chosen us from every people . . .”

We read in *Yirmiyah* (9:11-12) that *Eretz Yisrael* was destroyed because the Jewish People had “abandoned the Torah.” The *Gemara* (*Nedarim* 81a) explains that the Torah was being actively studied; however, *Birchot Ha’Torah* / the blessings before Torah study were not being recited.

R’ Zvi Yehuda Kook z”l (*Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshivat Merkaz Harav; died 1982) would regularly comment: One of the *Birchot Ha’Torah* is “*Asher bachar banu mikol ha’amim*” / “He has chosen us from among all the nations and given us His Torah.” Even if one studies Torah, if he does not recognize his chosenness, he is bringing about destruction. Such Torah study is referred to as “abandoning the Torah.”

In order to avoid this result, R’ Kook recommended, traditional Talmud study must be combined, or even preceded, by the study of works of *emunah*, in particular, the *Kuzari*, which the *Vilna Gaon* said is “holy and pure, and upon which the foundations of *emunah* and Torah hang.” (Quoted in *Haggadah Shel Pesach Ayelet Ha’shachar* p.24)



The Four Cups

“I am Hashem, and I shall take you out from under the burdens of Egypt; I shall rescue you from their service; I shall redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I shall take you to Me for a nation and I shall be an Elokim to you.” (*Shmot* 6:6-7)

R’ Yitzchak Yerucham Borodiansky *shlita* (Yeshivat Kol Torah in Yerushalayim) writes: Our Sages instruct that the *Pesach Haggadah* should “begin with degradation and end with praise.” This reflects two different reasons why a person might praise G-d for his situation--either because the person’s situation is good in an absolute sense, or because it is relatively good compared to his prior situation. In the *Haggadah*, we first mention our degradation--we were slaves--and praise G-d for redeeming us. The mere fact that there was a redemption was a relative good compared to the slavery that preceded it. Afterward, we mention the absolute good--He gave us the Torah, took us into *Eretz Yisrael*, and built the *Bet Hamikdash*.

R’ Borodiansky continues: Our Sages refer to the above verses as the “Four Expressions of Redemption,” and one of the reasons we drink four cups of wine at the *Seder* is to represent these four expressions. Note that the first two expressions--“I shall take you out from under the burdens of Egypt; I shall rescue you from their service”--describe relative good (freedom from slavery), while the second two--“I shall redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I shall take you to Me for a nation”-- describe absolute good, i.e., He didn’t just free us from slavery; He made us His special nation. [“Redemption” implies an elevation of status, not merely attaining freedom.] (*Siach Yitzchak: Geulat Mitzrayim* p.16)



The expressions in the above verses are usually understood as relating to different aspects of the redemption from Egypt. In contrast, R’ Yaakov Sakly z”l (Spain; 14th century) sees them as a prophecy regarding a broader range of events in Jewish history. He explains:

- “I shall take you out from under the burdens of Egypt” -- this means exactly what it says.
- “I shall rescue you from their service” -- this refers to the splitting of the sea. Note that the verse says “their service” (plural). Prior to the Exodus, *Bnei Yisrael* were slaves to Pharaoh alone. However, in order to encourage his people to accompany him in chasing the escaped slaves, Pharaoh promised them that *Bnei Yisrael* would serve all of the Egyptian people.
- “I shall redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments” -- this refers to the battle with Amalek at Refidim, which was won when Moshe climbed to the top of a hill and stretched-out his arms. (Of course, R’ Sakly adds, you must understand that it was really the hand of *Hashem* that saved *Bnei Yisrael*.)
- “I shall take you to Me for a people” -- this refers to the events following the sin of the Golden Calf. *Hashem* decreed destruction upon *Bnei Yisrael*, but Moshe spoke on their behalf and *Hashem* took them as His nation again.

Finally, “I shall bring you to the land about which I raised My hand” -- this refers to the sin of the spies. Once again, *Hashem* decreed destruction upon *Bnei Yisrael*, but Moshe spoke on their behalf and the younger generation was spared. Nevertheless, Moshe did not ask *Hashem* to reverse the decree entirely and let the older generation live because *Hashem* had hinted to him with the words “about which I raised My hand” that He had taken an irreversible oath. (*Torat Ha’minchah*)



R’ Zelig Reuven Bengis z”l (1864-1953; rabbi in Lithuania; later rabbi of the *Eidah Ha’chareidis* of Yerushalayim) explains that each of the four expressions of redemption represents a different aspect of the subjugation, as well:

- the back-breaking work (paralleled by “I shall rescue”);
- the fact that the work was involuntary, which made it seem even harsher (paralleled by “I shall take you out from under the burdens of Egypt”);
- the spiritual harm that resulted from the Egyptian influence (paralleled by “I shall take you to Me as a people,” a reference to the giving of the Torah); and
- the damage to Jewish national pride (paralleled by “I shall redeem”).

R’ Bengis writes: In contrast to the last aspect, *Hashem* restored our national pride and our image in the eyes of the nations through the Exodus, as is written (after the splitting of the Yam Suf--*Shmot* 15:14), “Nations heard--they were agitated; terror gripped the dwellers of Philistia.” But it is noteworthy, continues R’ Bengis, that the phrase that alludes to the giving of the Torah is mentioned last, for that was the ultimate purpose of the Exodus. (*L’flagot Reuven: Haggadah Shel Pesach* p.38)



The *Talmud Yerushalmi* (*Pesachim* 10:1) states that the four cups of wine at the *Seder* parallel the four mentions of a “cup” in *Parashat Vayeishev* (*Bereishit* 40:11 and 13).

What is the significance of this parallel? Furthermore, asks R' Yitzchak Arieli z"l (*Mashgiach Ruchani* of Yeshivat Merkaz Harav and author of the Talmud commentary *Enayim La'mishpat*), is there not a fifth mention of a cup in *Parashat Vayeishev* (*Bereishit* 40:21)?

He explains: The first four mentions of a cup in that *Parashah* are in a dream, while the fifth is “for real.” We read in *Tehilim* (126:1), “*Shir ha'maalot* / A song of ascents, when *Hashem* will return the captivity of Zion, we will have been like dreamers.” When the redemption comes, the joy will be so great and so palpable that all of the suffering of the four oppressions in our history (at the hands of Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome, respectively, the last of which continues to the present) will recede into the background as if it was only a bad dream. This is what the four cups in the butler's dream allude to. The fifth cup, the one that was “for real,” is the cup of Eliyahu Hanavi, the cup of the ultimate redemption. (Quoted in *Haggadah Shel Pesach Gedolei Yerushalayim* p. 56)



R' David Ha'naggid z"l (1224-1300; grandson of *Rambam* z"l) offers the following additional reasons for drinking four or five cups of wine at the *Seder*:

There are four verses in *Tanach* where a “cup” alludes to the reward awaiting the righteous. They are: “You anointed my head with oil, my cup overflows” (*Tehilim* 23:5); “*Hashem* is my allotted portion and my cup” (*Tehilim* 16:5); “I will raise the cup of salvations” (*Tehilim* 116:13); and “So that you may nurse and be sated from the cup of her consolations” (*Yeshayah* 66:11, as interpreted by the *Talmud Yerushalmi*).

In addition, there are four verses in which a cup alludes to the punishment awaiting the wicked. They are: “Take this cup of the wine of wrath” (*Yirmiyah* 25:15); “A golden cup was Babylon in the hand of *Hashem*” (*Yirmiyah* 51:7); “For there is a cup of punishment in *Hashem's* hand” (*Tehilim* 75:9); and “He will rain down coals upon the wicked; fire and brimstone and a burning blast is their allotted cup” (*Tehilim* 11:6).

In short, the Four Cups were established to remind us of the consequences of good and bad deeds so that we will destroy the *Yetzer Ha'ra*, which is compared to *Chametz*, from our hearts, our ideas, our thoughts, and our speech—a total of four “parts” of our beings.

In addition, the Four Cups remind us that *Hashem* saved us from four aspects of the Egyptian exile: laying bricks, applying mortar, having children drowned in the Nile, and not receiving straw to make bricks.

Also, the Four Cups allude to the Four Exiles: Bavel (Babylon), Persia, Greece, and Rome. For those who have a fifth cup, it alludes to the partial exile under the reign of the Ishmaelites; partial, because at least they permit us to live in Yerushalayim, R' David writes.

Also, for those who drink five cups, they allude to the ten (2 x 5) recitations that are recited over them: *Kiddush* and *Borei Pri Ha'gafen*; the *Haggadah* and *Borei Pri Ha'gafen*; *Birkat Ha'mazon* and *Borei Pri Ha'gafen*; *Hallel* and *Borei Pri Ha'gafen*; and *Hallel Ha'gadol* (*Tehilim* ch.136) and

Borei Pri Ha'gafen. Together, these ten recitations allude to the Ten Commandments, which were arranged in two columns of five.

Finally, the Four Cups allude to the four *Mitzvot* that *Bnei Yisrael* performed prior to leaving Egypt--*Brit Milah, Korban Pesach, Matzah* and *Maror*, and the four meritorious practices because of which they deserved to be redeemed--not changing their language, not changing their names, not changing their alphabet, and not revealing each others' secrets. (*Midrash Rabbi David Hanaggid al Haggadah Shel Pesach* p.30-33)



R' Yitzchak Nissenbaum z"l (1869-1942; rabbi in Warsaw and early leader of the *Mizrachi* movement) writes: The *Zohar* notes that these verses appear to be backwards, for taking *Bnei Yisrael* out of Egypt would seem to be the end of the redemption, not the first step. However, the correct understanding, based on the *Zohar*, is as follows:

First, says *Hashem*, I shall take you out of Egypt. Lest you fear that Pharaoh will chase you (as he did, in fact) and enslave you again, I shall rescue you such that you will never be enslaved by Pharaoh again. Still, you might worry that you will feel indebted to Pharaoh for releasing you, such that you will always have an emotional tie to him. No! says *Hashem*. I shall redeem you with an outstretched arm, i.e., with such a show of power that there will be no doubt that Pharaoh deserves no gratitude. Lastly, the redemption will not be complete if it is only a physical redemption. Therefore, I shall take you to Me as a people and give you the Torah.

These, continues R' Nissenbaum, are the elements of a complete redemption. However, the full realization of this redemption is not possible without *Eretz Yisrael*. Thus, states the next verse, "I shall bring you to the Land about which I raised My hand [i.e., 'I swore'] to give it to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, and I shall give it to you as a heritage."

Alternatively, R' Nissenbaum writes, each of the four expressions of redemption in our verses addresses the needs of a different segment of *Bnei Yisrael*, as follows:

"I shall take you out from under the burdens of Egypt," refers to a type of oppression that imposed a special burden--forcing men to do women's work and vice versa. This also includes forcing people to perform tasks for which they were overqualified, for there is nothing more frustrating for a highly-skilled person than to have to perform menial tasks that do not utilize his skills and training.

"I shall rescue you from their service" refers to the frustration of having to use one's skills solely for the benefit of another nation ("their service") and not in the service of one's own people.

"I shall redeem you" is addressed to those of *Bnei Yisrael* who were bothered more by the attempts to subjugate their spirits rather than by physical oppression. For them, it was irrelevant whether the servitude was back-breaking or not, since any form of subjugation to a foreign power was unacceptable.

Lastly, "I shall take you to Me as a nation" refers to those who thought that they didn't need to be redeemed, so long as they could to serve G-d right there in the diaspora. They needed to be taught: No! There is no future for the nation without being "taken" from our present circumstances. (*Kinyanei Kedem*)



Why are four expressions of redemption necessary? Why isn't one enough?

Chida answers: These four expressions allude to four separate stages of the unfolding Exodus: (1) The Plagues began one year before the Exodus, and surely that resulted in some lightening of *Bnei Yisrael's* enslavement. (2) Six months later, in the month of *Tishrei*, the enslavement ended entirely. (3) In *Nissan*, they were redeemed. Nevertheless, they were not entirely free, because another king could have captured them and enslaved them. That is why *Hashem* split the sea, which (4) demonstrated His special relationship with *Bnei Yisrael* and frightened all of the nations of the world. [This highlights the audacity of *Amalek*, the one nation that was not intimidated.]

This, concludes *Chida*, is the meaning of the above verses: "I shall take you out from under the burdens of Egypt" alludes to lightening their enslavement. "I shall rescue you from serving them" refers to ending the slavery. "I shall redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments" hints at the actual Exodus. Lastly, "I shall take you to Me for a people" refers to *Hashem's* demonstrating that we are His people, and no one else's.

The *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 109b) records the following statement by the Sage Ravina: "The Rabbis established four cups of wine, and each is a separate *Mitzvah*." In the light of the above explanation, writes *Chida*, *i.e.*, that each cup represents a separate aspect of the redemption, we understand why each cup is a separate *Mitzvah*. (*Petach Einayim*)



After the verses discussed above, there is a fifth promise (*Shmot* 6:8): "I shall bring you to the land about which I raised My hand to give it to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, and I shall give it to you as a heritage -- I am *Hashem*." Seemingly, this promise was never fulfilled, since the generation of the Exodus died in the desert! R' Moshe Zuriel *shlita* (former *Mashgiach Ruchani* of Yeshivat Sha'alvim) explains:

It is true that the generation of the Exodus did not enter *Eretz Yisrael* in their physical bodies. Nevertheless, they did inherit portions in *Eretz Yisrael*. Specifically, when *Bnei Yisrael* conquered the Land, it was not divided among those who entered the *Eretz Yisrael*. Rather, it was divided among those who had left Egypt--although nearly all of them were now in the grave--and then passed forward to their heirs. Since the body is not the essence of the person, owning a share of *Eretz Yisrael* without being physically present there is also a form of entering the Land.

In any event, R' Zuriel continues, they actually did enter the Land because the Sinai Desert is also part of *Eretz Yisrael*. This is stated in the 11th century work *Kuzari*, in explanation of how Moshe Rabbeinu could be initiated into prophecy at Har Sinai, something that is impossible outside of *Eretz Yisrael*. (*Drishat Tzion*)

וְרַחֵץ

קודם אכילת הכרפס מביאים מים ונוטלים ידים בלי ברכה

כַּרְפֵּס

מטבילים כרפס במי-מלח ומברכים

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

יַחַץ

עורך הסדר פורס את המצה האמצעית שבקערה לשני חלקים

מִגִּיד

מגביהים את הקערה ומתחילים באמירת ההגדה

הָא לַחֲמַא עֲנִיָּא דִּי אֲכָלוּ אַבְהֵתְנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְמִצְרַיִם. כָּל דְכָפִין יִיתִי וְיִכּוֹל, כָּל
דְצָרִיךְ יִיתִי וְיִפְסַח. הַשְׁתָּא הָכָא, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּאַרְעָא דְיִשְׂרָאֵל. הַשְׁתָּא עַבְדִּי,
לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּנִי חוֹרִין :

“Ha lachma anya / This is the bread of affliction that our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. Whoever is hungry--let him come and eat! Whoever is needy--let him come and share Pesach! Now, we are here; next year may we be in Eretz Yisrael! Now, we are slaves; next year may we be free men!”

Commentaries ask many questions about this invitation, among them: (1) Why do we invite guests now, after kiddush? (2) What good is this invitation if we recite it sitting in our dining rooms behind a closed front door? (3) How can we say “Whoever is needy--let him come and share Pesach” when, according to *Halachah*, the *korban Pesach* may be shared only with those who made such arrangements before the lamb was slaughtered?

R’ Eliezer Ashkenazi z”l (1513-1583; rabbi in Egypt, Cyprus, Italy and Poland) offers a novel explanation of “*Ha lachma anya*” which answers these and some of the other commonly asked questions. He writes that this paragraph is not an invitation at all, but rather a lamentation composed on the first *Pesach* night after the destruction of the *Bet Hamikdash*. Sitting at their *Seder* tables, the Jewish People remembered the glory of the *Seder* when the table was graced by the *korban Pesach* and surrounded by family and friends who had joined together in advance as *Halachah* requires. Remembering this, they said, “Our fare at this *Seder* is reminiscent of the *lachma anya* / poor man’s bread which our ancestors ate in Egypt, not the sumptuous feasts that we had when the Temple stood. Now, anyone who is hungry can come and eat, and anyone who needs to can come and remember the *korban Pesach*, unlike last year when advance reservations were required by *Halachah*. This year, we are here, but next year, may we be back in Yerushalayim as we were before the Destruction.” (*Ma’asei Hashem*)

R' Yaakov Lorberbaum z"l (Poland; 1760-1832; the "Nesivos") explains this passage similarly, except for the ending, "Now we are here..." He writes: Given that now, after the Temple's destruction, we are eating the same *lachma anya* that our ancestors ate in Egypt, one might wonder why we are celebrating! Does a prisoner in jail celebrate the anniversary of his release from a prior incarceration?

The answer is that the Exodus was not like any other release from imprisonment. Rather, because of the bond that we formed with *Hashem* through the Exodus and the Giving of the Torah, we are confident that, although "now, we are here; next year" we will "be in *Eretz Yisrael!*" (*Ma'aseh Nissim*)



"This year here; next year, in *Eretz Yisrael.*"

R' Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook z"l (1865-1935; *Ashkenazic* Chief Rabbi of *Eretz Yisrael*) writes: Those things which are not based on what already exists require substantial preparation before they come to fruition. However, that which is innate in nature and is only being held back from being realized by external forces will blossom into existence as soon as those external forces are removed.

Our relationship to *Eretz Yisrael* is not coincidental, but rather natural and of Divine origin. Our entire being is tied to *Eretz Yisrael*, and any distance between us and it is merely the result of our sins. Thus we can realistically believe that by next year we will already be in *Eretz Yisrael.* (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Olat Re'iyah*)



Why does the recitation of "*Mah nishtanah*" follow immediately after the recitation of "*Hah lachma ania*"? R' Yosef Chaim of Baghdad z"l (died 1909) explains:

In *Hah lachma ania* we proclaim: "Whoever is hungry, let him come and eat! Who ever is in need let him come and share the *Pesach* sacrifice!" This confuses our children, so they ask: "Why is this night different from all other nights? On all other nights, you slam the door in beggars' faces or leave them standing in the front hall. Why, tonight, are you are inviting them into the dining room?" (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Orach Chaim* p.85)

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות?

שֶׁבָּכַל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֶמֶץ וּמֶצֶה. הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כֻּלּוֹ מֶצֶה :

שֶׁבָּכַל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שְׂאֵר יְרֻקוֹת הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מְרוּר :

שֶׁבָּכַל הַלַּיְלוֹת אֵין אָנוּ מְטַבְּלִין אֶפְסֵלוֹ פֶּעַם אַחַת. הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה שְׁתֵּי פְעָמִים :

שֶׁבָּכַל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבֵין וּבֵין מְסַבֵּין. הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כֻּלְּנוּ מְסַבֵּין :

R' Ben Zion Neshet *shlita* (one of the senior rabbis in Tel Aviv, Israel) writes: The child says in *Mah Nishtanah*, "On all other nights we eat *Chametz* and *Matzah* . . ." This implies that on all other nights, except for the *Seder* night, we are obligated, or at least accustomed, to eat both *Chametz* and *Matzah*. However, that is not the case!

R' Neshet explains: [One of those who is obligated to bring a *Korban Todah* is someone who was imprisoned and was freed.] The *Korban Pesach* is a form of thanksgiving-offering, expressing our gratitude for the fact that we were freed from Egypt. Therefore, the child asks: On all other nights when we have a *Korban Todah* to eat, we eat both *Chametz* and *Matzah*. (See *Vayikra* 7:12-13: "If he shall offer it for a *Todah* / thanksgiving-offering, he shall offer with the *Todah* - *Matzah* / unleavened loaves mixed with oil, *Matzah* wafers smeared with oil, and loaves of scalded fine flour mixed with oil. With loaves of *Chametz* / leavened bread shall he bring his offering, with his thanksgiving peace-offering.") Why, then, is the *Korban Pesach*--the thanksgiving-offering that we eat on the *Seder* night--accompanied only by *Matzah*, not by *Chametz*?

What is the answer to the child's question? R' Neshet explains: When a person is saved from danger, there is both a physical and a spiritual component, for surely a Jew has no desire for physical life without a spiritual aspect. If not for the fact that the body that was saved has been given another chance to serve *Hashem*, what would be the point of being saved?!

R' Neshet concludes: The physical and spiritual aspects are represented by the heavier *Chametz* loaves and lighter *Matzah* loaves, respectively, that accompany the *Korban Todah*. Both are brought, because both aspects were saved. At the *Seder*, however, we wish to emphasize that we were not saved from bondage in Egypt in order to be free physically. Rather, we were saved in order to serve *Hashem*. Therefore, we eat only *Matzah* with the thanksgiving-offering on Pesach. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Shir Tziyon* p.44)



"*Matzot* shall be eaten throughout the seven-day period; no *Chametz* may be seen in your possession, nor may leaven be seen in your possession in all your borders." (*Shmot* 13:7)

R' Yosef Gikitila *z"l* (1248-1310; Spain; author of the influential work of *kabbalah*, *Sha'arei Orah*) asks: Why is the prohibition against *Chametz* so strict that, not only does it carry a severe punishment, one is prohibited to consume or even possess a minuscule amount of it? In contrast, there are other prohibitions -- for example, the prohibitions against drinking blood or eating certain fats -- which we can seemingly understand; while they certainly have hidden reasons, they also seem to have rational, health-related reasons. Yet, despite the important benefits of these *Mitzvot*, they do not seem to be as strict! Indeed, if the prohibition against *Chametz* is so important, why does it last for only one week?

R' Gikitila explains: The Torah "designed" this *Mitzvah* to cause us to ask "*Mah nishtanah*" / "How, or why, is it different?" Through the reflection that this question engenders [rather than through a direct answer to the question], we are meant to realize the significance of the Exodus, *i.e.*, that it foreshadows all the good that *Hashem* has promised to give to us, for both our bodies and our souls, in all time periods thereafter. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Tzofnat Paneach*)

עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם. וַיּוֹצִיאֵנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִשָּׁם, בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזִרְוֹעַ
נְטוּיָה, וְאֵלּוּ לֹא הוֹצִיא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, הֲרִי אָנוּ וּבְנֵינוּ
וּבְנֵי בְנֵינוּ, מִשְׁעַבְדֵי הָיִינוּ לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם.

“Had not the Holy One, Blessed is He, taken our fathers out from Egypt, then we, our children, and our children’s children would have remained subjugated to Pharaoh in Egypt.”

The question is well known: Why do we assume that we would still be in Egypt thousands of years later when, throughout world history, kingdoms rise and kingdoms fall? Who is to say that we would not have left Egypt in time through natural means? Furthermore, what is the purpose of speculating; didn’t G-d promise Avraham that we would be redeemed?

R’ Yitzchak Yerucham Borodiansky *shlita* (Yeshivat Kol Torah in Yerushalayim) explains: We find that Yaakov was afraid as he prepared to meet Esav, notwithstanding G-d’s promise to protect him. Our Sages explain that his fear of Esav was due to his fear that he might have sinned and lost G-d’s protection. This teaches that no promise can be relied upon to counteract a sin, which is a rebellion against G-d. Similarly, once *Bnei Yisrael* sinned [either the brothers against Yosef, or their descendants by practicing idolatry in Egypt], G-d’s promise was at risk of being voided.

Nevertheless, perhaps we might have been freed as history progressed? To answer this we need to understand that it was not a chance of history that *Bnei Yisrael* were slaves to Pharaoh. It was a manifestation of a Heavenly decree. Commenting on the verse (*Devarim* 4:34), “Has any god ever miraculously come to take for himself a nation from amidst a nation?” our Sages say, “Like a shepherd births a lamb from a ewe.” This indicates how *Bnei Yisrael* were tied to Egypt by the decree of Heaven, and no historical event could have broken that bond if G-d had not brought about the Exodus. (*Siach Yitzchak: Geulat Mitzrayim* p.18)



R’ Yosef Chaver *z”l* (Lithuania; 19th century) notes that the *Haggadah* does not say, “We . . . would have remained enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt,” but rather, “We . . . would have remained subjugated to Pharaoh in Egypt.” He explains: Egypt was a land where a belief in astrology and in the supposed powers of the heavenly bodies reigned supreme. The purpose of the Ten Plagues was to demonstrate that those powers are false, and that *Hashem* is in control of every detail of existence. Not only the Egyptians needed this education; *Bnei Yisrael* needed it too. Thus the *Haggadah* teaches, “Had not the Holy One, Blessed is He, taken our fathers out from Egypt, then we, our children, and our children’s children would have remained subjugated [to the false beliefs of] Pharaoh in Egypt. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Zeroa Netuyah*)



R’ Zevulun Hamburger *shlita* (Yerushalayim) asks: Our Sages state that the world was created conditionally and that the entire universe would have ceased to exist if *Bnei Yisrael* had not received the Torah. How then would we, our children, and our children’s children have remained subjugated to Pharaoh in Egypt if there had been no Exodus? To the contrary, we would not even exist!

He explains: Surely we would have left Egypt and received the Torah at some point. However, the *Arizal* teaches that, had *Bnei Yisrael* remained in Egypt one more instant, they would have sunk to the fiftieth level of impurity from which there is no climbing out. In that case, even after the eventual Exodus and even after receiving the Torah, *Bnei Yisrael* would have remained spiritually subjugated to Pharaoh. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Sha'arei Zevul* p.41)



R' Aharon Lewin z"l Hy"d (1879-1941; rabbi of Rzeszow, Poland) writes: Many have wondered, "Why did G-d do this to *Yisrael*, the offspring of his beloved Avraham--bringing them to Egypt and handing them over to cruel masters?" He suggests the following answers:

Hashem has chosen us from among all the nations to stand before Him, to serve Him, and to carry the banner of the Torah-- to enlighten the dark world, drive away the clouds of ignorance, and spread knowledge of *Hashem* everywhere. To make us fitting bearers of this mission, He wanted to implant in us good *middot*/ character traits, such as empathy, mercy, compassion and pity. How strong such traits are in a person depends on his personal experiences; one who has never experienced suffering cannot feel the pain of a person who is down-trodden. In contrast, one who has been satiated with suffering and then has been relieved of it can understand the feelings of those who are less fortunate. And, he can appreciate his duty to help relieve the burdens of those who are still suffering.

This was the purpose of our slavery in Egypt, writes R' Lewin. And, he writes, this explains why that slavery and the Exodus are mentioned in connection with so many *Mitzvot* that relate to inter-personal relationships, for example: "You shall not taunt or oppress a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (*Shmot* 22:20); "You shall rejoice before *Hashem*, your *Elokim*--you, your son, your daughter, your slave, your maidservant, the *Levi* who is in your cities, the proselyte, the orphan, and the widow who are among you . . . You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall observe and perform these decrees (*Devarim* 16:11-12); and many more. (*Ha'drash Ve'ha'iyun*)



R' Nosson Yehuda Leib (Leibel) Mintzberg z"l (1943-2018; rabbi and *Rosh Yeshiva* in Yerushalayim and Bet Shemesh, Israel) writes: The fact that *Ha'kadosh Baruch Hu* is the "*Elokim of Yisrael*" derives from the fact that *Am Yisrael* / the nation of *Yisrael* is a novel creation. The coming into being of *Am Yisrael* was not like that of any other nation. Rather, it was the result of supernatural miracles and wonders that occurred when *Hashem* rescued *Am Yisrael* with a "strong hand and outstretched arm" from a nation stronger than it. In fact, these miracles and wonders began even earlier, when Avraham and Sarah became parents in their old age. And, the miracles continued with a family of 70 individuals multiplying over a 210-year period into a nation of 600,000 men. Of course, most important were the miracles of the Exodus itself and the splitting of the *Yam Suf*.

R' Mintzberg continues: Since then, *Hashem* directs us with special *Hashgachah* / Providence, including: bringing us to His good Land, protecting us from our enemies, sustaining and supporting us, hearing our prayers, and accepting our service. Even when we sin, His hand still is outstretched to guard us and rescue us from the seventy wolves that arise in every

generation to destroy us. Even in the midst of our exile, the *Shechinah* is with us in our suffering, so-to-speak, and *Hashem* has not ceased to be our *Elokim*. One day, He will yet return to be with us as in the days of old, as He has promised through His servants, the prophets.

The special relationship that *Ha'kadosh Baruch Hu* has with *Am Yisrael* has many levels, some of which we have already experienced--for example, receiving the Torah, *Shabbat* and *Eretz Yisrael*--and some of which are still in the future. The beginning of it all, however, was the Exodus. (*Ben Melech: Pesach ma'amar 1*)



“Today you are leaving, in the month of springtime.” (*Shmot* 13:4)

Rashi z”l asks: Would we otherwise not have known in which month they went out? Rather, Moshe was telling them the following: “Note *Hashem’s* kindness in taking you out of Egypt in a month that is suitable for going out--not hot, nor cold nor rainy.” In the same sense, *Rashi* continues, we read in *Tehilim* (68:7), “He takes out prisoners fittingly,” *i.e.*, in a month that is suitable for going out.

R’ Azriel Lange *z”l* (1915-1996; *rebbe* at Mesivta Torah Vodaath in Brooklyn, N.Y.) asks: Why was the weather important considering that *Bnei Yisrael* were protected by the Clouds of Glory during their travels? Moreover, asks R’ Lange, when someone is being enslaved and tortured, and his children are being murdered, does it make a bit of difference to him whether he is released when the weather is pleasant or unpleasant?

R’ Lange answers: The Torah is teaching us that *Hashem’s chessed* is complete. *Hashem* not only takes care of the “big things” (the actual Exodus), but also the “small stuff” (making sure there was pleasant weather for that event). Moreover, He commanded Moshe to point out to them how pleasant the weather was so that they wouldn’t worry for even a short time before they learned that there would be Clouds of Glory. This teaches us a lesson, since we are called-upon to emulate *Hashem*: When performing even the greatest act of kindness, we must not ignore even the minutest details. (*Ikvei Erev*)

וְאַפִּילוּ כִּלְנֹי חֲכָמִים, כִּלְנֹי נְבוֹנִים, כִּלְנֹי זִקְנִים, כִּלְנֹי יוֹדְעִים אֶת הַתּוֹרָה, מִצָּוָה
עֲלֵינוּ לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם. וְכָל הַמְרַבֵּה לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם, הָרִי זֶה מְשַׁבַּח :

“Even if we all were wise, we all were understanding, we all were experienced, and we all were knowledgeable in Torah, we still would be obligated to tell about the Exodus from Egypt.”

R’ Eran Moshe Margalioth *shlita* (Israel) writes, based on the writings of R’ Yehuda Aryeh Leib Alter *z”l* (1847-1905; the *Gerrer Rebbe*; known as the “*Sefat Emet*”):

Why, indeed, must a wise person who knows the story of *Yetzi’at Mitzrayim* retell it year-after-year? He explains: We learn in *Pirkei Avot* (ch.3), “If one’s *Yir’ah* / fear of sin precedes his wisdom, his wisdom will endure.” Even if one is wise, he needs *Yir’ah*, because *Yir’ah* is the foundation that allows a person to stand before *Hashem* and accept the yoke of Heaven. That, in turn, is a prerequisite for attaining true wisdom.

He continues: Through retelling the story of the Exodus on the *Seder* night, a person can experience a revelation of G-d, which leads, in turn, to increasing one's *Yir'ah* and re-accepting the yoke of Heaven. This comes from the realization that *Hashem* did not simply free us from serving Pharaoh; He did so in order that we would serve Him.

Also, a wise person must retell the story of the Exodus until he understands that all of his wisdom is not his own accomplishment, but from *Hashem*. This is why we conclude the *Seder* with the poem, "*Echad mi yodea?*" / "Who knows one?" We declare: "*Mi yodea?*" / "The fact that anyone knows anything" is the result of the abilities he has been given by the "*Echad Elokeinu*" / "Our One *Elokim* who is in the heavens and the earth." (*Petach Ha'haggadah* p.26)



R' Michel Zilber *shlita* (*Rosh Yeshiva* of the *Zvhil* yeshiva in Yerushalayim) writes: At first glance, it would appear that, because *Bnei Yisrael* were oppressed and subjugated in Egypt and, in order to redeem them, *Hashem* "needed" to exert His power to take them out, including performing open miracles--therefore, we have a *Mitzvah* to relate the story of the Exodus so as to remember the miracles and give thanks for them.

In fact, the opposite is true. The reason *Hashem* performed miracles was so that we will tell our children about them and thereby strengthen our *Emunah* and our knowledge that *Hashem* is directly involved in our lives. This is stated expressly in the Torah (*Shmot* 10:1-2), "I have made his heart and the heart of his servants stubborn so that I can put these signs of Mine in his midst, and so that you may relate in the ears of your son and your son's son that I made a mockery of Egypt, and My signs that I placed among them -- that you may know that I am *Hashem*."

R' Zilber continues: Look how beloved the *Mitzvah* of relating the story of the Exodus is to the Jewish People! In the Book of *Shoftim*, we read that an angel appeared to the (future) leader Gidon ben Yo'ash, and Gidon said to him (6:13, as explained by *Rashi z"l*), "Last night was the *Seder* night, and my father read *Hallel* and said, 'When our forefathers left Egypt.' Where," asked Gidon, "are all the wonders about which my father spoke to me?"

Gidon's father was an idol worshiper, R' Zilber notes. Nevertheless, he held a *Seder* and told his children about the Exodus. You may ask: If even idolaters like Yo'ash have a place at the *Seder*, why is the wicked son in the *Haggadah* told that he has no place? The answer, R' Zilber writes, is that Yo'ash was a sinner, but he did not abandon the Jewish People. The wicked son is worse than a sinner; when he says, "What is this service to you?" he affirmatively separates himself from the Jewish People. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Ba'yam Derech* p.96)

A related thought:

R' Yitzchak Arieli *z"l* (1896-1974; *Mashgiach Ruchani* of Yeshivat Merkaz Harav and author of *Enayim La'mishpat*) taught: When a person relates the story of the Exodus, he can attain lofty levels, especially when he does so on the *Seder* night. Telling the story on that night has the power to light up the darkness of the exile in every generation and, through this story, one can attain pure *Emunah* in the coming *Ge'ulah* / redemption as well as merit the *Ge'ulah* itself.

One can learn how great is the power of *Sippur Yetzi'at Mitzrayim* / relating the story of the Exodus from that which is said about the *Shofeit* / judge Gidon. We read (*Shoftim* 6:13), "Gidon

said to [the angel], 'I beg of you, my master, if *Hashem* is with us, why has all this happened to us? And where are all His wonders of which our forefathers told us, saying, "Behold, *Hashem* brought us up from Egypt?" For now *Hashem* has deserted us, and He has delivered us into the grip of Midian.'" *Rashi z"l* explains that this discussion took place on *Pesach*, and Gidon was saying, "Last night my father led me in the recitation of *Hallel*, and I heard him say, 'When our ancestors left Egypt . . .'" Who was Gidon's father? He was an idolater who was so dedicated to his idolatry that he fattened a bull for seven years in order to prepare it to be an offering to his idol. Even so, when he related the story of the Exodus to his son on *Pesach* night, he instilled in his son the strength to kill that fattened bull and otherwise risk his life for the Jewish People, ultimately bringing about their salvation from Midian. Note that Gidon received this inspiration despite not being a great believer himself; see *Shoftim* 6:17.

R' Arieli continues: Salvation from Above depends on our reawakening below and on our willingness to sacrifice ourselves, both traits that come from *Sippur Yetzi'at Mitzrayim*—the foundation of *Emunah* and the key to the miracles that occurred in every later generation. One who recites the words of the *Haggadah*, "In every generation, one must view himself as if he left Egypt," with innocence and honesty and with pain for the troubles of the Jewish People and the resulting *Chillul Hashem*, as Gidon said, "Where are all His wonders?"—that person will merit what was said to Gidon, "Go with this strength of yours and you shall save Yisrael!" (Quoted in *Haggadah Shel Pesach Mi'shulchanam Shel Gedolei Yerushalayim*)



R' Yitzchak Isaac Chaver z"l (1789-1852; rabbi of Suwalk, Lithuania, and a prolific author in all areas of Torah study) writes:

Retelling the story of the Exodus is the foundation of the Torah and the root of our *Avodah*/service [of *Hashem*], for the story is the source of our faith in the existence of *Hashem* and our faith that He watches over the world; also, that He reigns in the heavens above and the earth below, that He supports all the creations above and below, and that His wondrous supervision does not depart from them for an instant, as we read (*Nechemiah* 9:6), "You give life to all of them." Likewise, the *Pesach* story teaches that the existence of the world depends on Torah and *avodah*; when these are present, they add "light, which is good" [paraphrasing *Bereishit* 1:4]. On the other hand, when *Bnei Yisrael* deviate from the path of Torah and *Mitzvot*, the "light" of the King of Kings leaves them and they are destroyed in a moment. The root of everything is the belief in *Hashgachah Peratit* / that G-d watches over the details of existence. This is evident from the sequence of the exile to Egypt and the Exodus from there--He took a nation that was lowly and despised, persecuted through back-breaking labor, and He overturned the regular functioning of nature on their account and humbled nations' guardian angels in Heaven and kings on earth.

R' Chaver adds: *Hashem* conducts the affairs of His world in two ways. One is analogous to the orderly functioning of a government, where the king issues decrees and delegates their implementation to lower officials [i.e., angels]. The second is the way He brought about the Exodus; disregarding formalities and taking a hands-on approach, so-to-speak. This latter mode is what our Sages refer to when they say the Exodus occurred "*b'chipazon*." (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Yad Mitzrayim*)

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

אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲזַרְיָה. הֲרִי אֲנִי כָּבוֹן שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה, וְלֹא זָכִיתִי, שֶׁתֵּאֱמַר יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם בְּלֵילוֹת. עַד שֶׁדָּרְשָׁה בֶן זֹמָא. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: לְמַעַן תִּזְכֹּר, אֶת יוֹם צֵאתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ. יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ הַיָּמִים. כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ הַלֵּילוֹת. וְחֻכְמַיִם אוֹמְרִים: יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה. כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ לְהַבִּיא לְיַמּוֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ:

בְּרוּךְ הַמְּקוֹם. בְּרוּךְ הוּא. בְּרוּךְ שֶׁנִּתְּנָה תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל. בְּרוּךְ הוּא כְּנֶגֶד אַרְבַּעַה בְּנֵים דְּבִרְהַ תּוֹרָה. אֶחָד חֻכָּם, וְאֶחָד רִשְׁעַ, וְאֶחָד תָּם, וְאֶחָד שְׂאִינוּ יוֹדְעַ לְשִׂאוֹל:

חֻכָּם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה הָעֵדוּת וְהַחֻקִּים וְהַמְּשַׁפְּטִים, אֲשֶׁר צָוָה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתְכֶם? וְאֵף אֶתְּהָ אָמַר לוֹ כְּהִלְכוֹת הַפֶּסַח: אֵין מִפְּטִירִין אַחַר הַפֶּסַח אֶפִּיקוֹמָן:

רִשְׁעַ מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה הָעֵבֶדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם? לָכֶם וְלֹא לוֹ. וְלָפִי שֶׁהוֹצִיא אֶת עַצְמוֹ מִן הַכָּלָל, כִּפָּר בְּעֵקֶר. וְאֵף אֶתְּהָ הַקָּהָה אֶת שְׁנָיו, וְאָמַר לוֹ: בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה, עָשָׂה יְיָ לִי, בְּצִאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם, לִי וְלֹא לוֹ. אֵלוֹ הָיָה שָׁם, לֹא הָיָה נִגָּאֵל:

Why are we so hard on the wicked son? asks R' Pinchas Halevi Horowitz z"l (1730-1805; rabbi of Frankfurt, Germany). The *Halachah* is that a person who denies the validity of just one *Mitzvah* is not deemed an apostate. Why, then, do we treat the wicked son as an apostate?

He answers: The observances connected with *Pesach* are *Mitzvot* that encompass all of the other *Mitzvot*. They represent the foundation of the entire Torah, for they represent *Bnei Yisrael's* rejection of the idolatry of Egypt. This is alluded to in the name "*Pesach*" itself. If the three letters of the Hebrew word are spelled out -- *peh-heh samech-mem-chof chet-tav* -- the resulting *Gematria* equals 613, the number of *Mitzvot* in the Torah. (*Panim Yafot*)



R' Shmuel Zvi Danziger z"l (the *Alexanderer Rebbe*; died 1923) explains the *Rasha's* question as follows: Even you do not understand the deep meaning behind these rituals that you perform; therefore, they will not help you merit the redemption. Why then do you bother? The *Rasha* does not understand that G-d guides those who truly seek Him to deeper and deeper understandings of the Torah and *Mitzvot*.

As for the *Rasha*, had he been in Egypt, he would not have sought-out G-d and would not have merited this Divine assistance. Therefore, he would not have been redeemed. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Tiferet Shmuel*)

A related thought:

R' Shmuel Meltzen z"l (Slutsk, Poland; 19th century; author of *Even Shleimah*) writes that the degree to which a person merits Divine assistance in attaining spiritual goals depends on the degree to which he strengthens himself in the following areas: Love of *Hashem*, fear of *Hashem*, attaching himself to *Hashem*, *bitachon* / trust in *Hashem*, and the trait of *simchah* / joy. Of these, the most important is *bitachon*, R' Meltzen writes. (*Ha'emunah V'ha'hashgachah* p.2b)



“You have spoken harshly against Me, says *Hashem*, yet you say, ‘How have we spoken against You?’

“You said, ‘To serve *Elokim* is useless, and what did we gain from keeping His charge or from walking submissively before *Hashem*, Master of Legions?’” (*Malachi* 3:13-14 -- from the *Haftarah* for *Shabbat Ha'gadol*)

R' Ben Zion Neshet *shlita* (one of the senior rabbis in Tel Aviv, Israel) asks: How could the Jews referred to in this verse not know that they had spoken harshly against *Hashem*? If they actually said, “To serve *Elokim* is useless,” that is outright heresy!

He explains: The Jews referred to in this verse made the same argument that the *Rasha* / wicked son makes in the *Haggadah*, saying: “Of what use is this work to you?” He means: I am a Jew in my heart, and that’s what’s important! What difference does it make whether or not I observe all of these *Mitzvot*? Jews who make this claim do not realize that what they are saying is heresy, that they are speaking harshly against *Hashem*. Thus, even when the prophet rebukes them in G-d’s Name, they respond, “How have we spoken against You?”

R' Neshet continues: Why is the *Rasha* (and anyone else who has this attitude) wrong? We say in response to the *Rasha*, “It is because of this that *Hashem* did so for me when I went out of Egypt.” What is “this”? It is the *Mitzvot*. Specifically, our Sages teach that the Exodus occurred in the merit of the *Mitzvot* of *Brit Milah* and *Korban Pesach*. We say in the *Haggadah* that had the *Rasha* been in Egypt, he would not have been redeemed. He would have refused to perform these *Mitzvot*--claiming instead that his Judaism was in his heart; therefore, he would not have merited to leave Egypt.

R' Neshet adds: We read (*Bemidbar* 15:39--in the section about the *Mitzvah* of *Tzitzit*), “You shall not wander after your hearts . . .” Our Sages say that “wandering after one’s heart” refers to heresy. At first, the connection between the heart and heresy is not apparent, but, in light of the above, it is clear. We now understand, as well, how the next two verses fit in (*Bemidbar* 15:40-41): “So that you may remember and perform all My commandments . . . I am *Hashem*, your *Elokim*, Who has taken you out from the land of Egypt . . .” The Exodus occurred in the merit of *Mitzvah* observance, not because our ancestors felt Jewish in their hearts. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Shir Tziyon* p.53)

תָּם מֶה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מֶה זֹאת? וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו: בְּחֻק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ יְיָ מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים:

“When your son will ask you in the future, ‘What is this?’” (Shmot 13:14)

R' Moshe Feinstein z"l (1895-1986) writes: The question of the “simple son” (“What is this”) appears in the Torah before the question of the “wise son,” because before a person can ask the reasons for the *Mitzvot*, he must know them thoroughly. This will give provide him with a solid foundation for his faith. (*Darash Moshe*)

וְשִׂיאֵינוּ יוֹדֵעַ לְשֵׂאוֹל, אֶת פְּתַח לוֹ. שְׂנַאֲמַר: וְהַגִּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ, בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: בְּעִבּוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה יְיָ לִי, בְּצִאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם:

As for the one who does not know what to ask, you must begin to speak to him, as it is stated (Shemot 13:8), “And you shall tell your son on that day, saying, ‘It is because of this that Hashem acted on my behalf when I left Egypt’.”

Why is this the answer we give to the child who does not know what to ask? R' Yaakov Perlow *shlita* (*Novominsker Rebbe* in Brooklyn, N.Y.) explains:

Rashi z"l comments on the quoted verse: “Because of this’ -- in order that I will fulfill His commandments.” According to *Rashi*, writes R' Perlow, the purpose of the Exodus was so that we would receive the Torah and fulfill *Hashem's Mitzvot*, for only in that way can *Hashem's* Honor be revealed in this world.

The *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 68b) teaches that a person first beginning to serve *Hashem* may legitimately do so for selfish motives--for example, for the sake of his own soul. Therefore we tell the young child or the beginner, “*Hashem* acted on my behalf,” for my own good. How so? “Because of this’--in order that I will fulfill His commandments,” which will elevate me and make me great. (*Adat Yaakov: Pesach* p.137)

יְכוּל מִרְאֵשׁ חֲדָשׁ, תִּלְמוּד לוֹמֵר בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא. אִי בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא. יְכוּל מִבְּעוֹד יוֹם. תִּלְמוּד לוֹמֵר. בְּעִבּוֹר זֶה. בְּעִבּוֹר זֶה לֹא אָמַרְתִּי, אֶלָּא בְּשַׁעַה שֵׁישׁ מִצָּה וּמְרוֹר מְנַחִים לְפָנֶיךָ:

Why is the *Mitzvah* to sanctify the new moon part of the story of the Exodus (see *Shmot* 12:1-2)? R' Ben Zion Neshet *shlita* (one of the senior rabbis in Tel Aviv, Israel) explains:

People in general are not aware of how strong an influence the calendar has over them. A nation's calendar commemorates that society's significant days, both happy occasions and the opposite. This is why the *Gemara* (*Avodah Zarah* 8a) states: “Jews in the diaspora serve idols in purity.” The life of a Jew in the diaspora is very heavily influenced by the calendar of the culture in which he lives. Their days off are our days off, their national holidays are our national holidays. This is not necessarily objectionable from a *Halachic* viewpoint; thus, it is “in purity.” Nevertheless, it introduces a bit of “idolatry” into our lives.

Our ancestors in Egypt were, no doubt, under the influence of their host nation's calendar. Therefore, the first step in the redemption was to get a new calendar, the Jewish People's very own calendar. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Shir Tziyon* p.58)



Why was the *Mitzvah* of sanctifying the new moon given to Moshe and Aharon together, rather than to Moshe alone, as were most of the *Mitzvot*?

R' Kalman Winter z"l (rabbi of Southeast Hebrew Congregation-Knesset Yehoshua in Silver Spring, Maryland; passed away 8 *Marcheshvan* of this year) explained: The moon was the first creation to act jealously, i.e., when it [or its guardian angel] challenged G-d's decision to create two luminaries in the heavens (see *Chullin* 60b; *Rashi* to *Bereishit* 1:16). In contrast, though Aharon was older than Moshe and experienced prophecy before Moshe did, he greeted Moshe with truly heartfelt happiness upon learning that the latter had been chosen to lead *Bnei Yisrael* out of Egypt (see *Shmot* 4:14). Because of this contrast, it was fitting that the commandment to sanctify the new moon be taught to Aharon along with Moshe. (Heard from R' Winter z"l)

מִתְחַלָּה עוֹבְדֵי עֲבוֹדַת זָרָה הָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ. וְעָכְשָׁו קָרַבְנוּ הַמָּקוֹם לְעֲבוֹדָתוֹ. שְׁנֵאמַר :
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵל כָּל הָעָם. כֹּה אָמַר יי אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעֵבֶר הַנְּהַר יֵשְׁבוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם
מֵעוֹלָם, תִּרְחַ אֲבִי אֲבָרְהָם וְאֲבִי נָחוֹר. וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים : וְאָקַח אֶת אֲבִיכֶם
אֶת אֲבָרְהָם מֵעֵבֶר הַנְּהַר, וְאוֹלַךְ אוֹתוֹ בְּכָל אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן. וְאַרְבָּה אֶת זֶרְעוֹ, וְאָתְּנוּ לוֹ
אֶת יִצְחָק : וְאָתְּנוּ לְיִצְחָק אֶת יַעֲקֹב וְאֶת עֵשָׂו. וְאָתְּנוּ לְעֵשָׂו אֶת הַר שְׁעִיר, לְרֶשֶׁת
אוֹתוֹ. וַיַּעֲקֹב וּבָנָיו יָרְדוּ מִצְרָיִם :

“At first, our ancestors were idol worshipers, but now the Omnipresent has brought us near to His service.”

R' Avraham Aharon Friedman z"l Hy"d (Hungary; killed in the Holocaust) explains: One might ask, “Why make a big fuss over the Exodus? If G-d had not put us in Egypt, He would not have had to take us out!” To answer this we say, “At first, our ancestors were idol worshipers, but now the Omnipresent has brought us near to His service.” Through the experience in Egypt, especially the Ten Plagues, we learned to reject idolatry and to believe in *Hashem*. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Dvar Aharon*)

בְּרוּךְ שׁוֹמֵר הַבְּטָחָתוֹ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל. בְּרוּךְ הוּא. שֶׁהִקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא חָשַׁב אֶת הַקָּץ,
לְעֲשׂוֹת כְּמָה שְׁאָמַר לְאַבְרָהָם אֲבִינוּ בְּבְרִית בֵּין הַבְּתָרִים, שְׁנֵאמַר : וַיֹּאמֶר לְאַבְרָם
יָדַע תִּדְעֶה, כִּי גֵר יִהְיֶה זֶרְעֲךָ, בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לָהֶם, וְעֲבָדוּם וְעָנּוּ אֹתָם אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה :
וְגַם אֶת הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲבֹדוּ דָן אֲנִכִּי. וְאַחֲרַי כֹּן יֵצְאוּ, בְּרַכְשׁ גָּדוֹל :

Rashi z"l writes that 400 years passed from the birth of Yitzchak until the Exodus, and Yitzchak's birth was 30 years after *Hashem* spoke the above words to Avraham. That explains the 430 years mentioned in the second verse quoted above.

R' Chaim Zaichyk z"l (1906-1989; *Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshivat Bet Yosef-Novardok in Buchach, Poland; later in Israel) elaborates: *Midrash Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer* teaches that *Bnei Yisrael* were in

Egypt for only 210 years. Although *Hashem* had told Avraham the exile would last 400 years, He shortened the time in the merit of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs.

What “merit” is referred to? R’ Zaichyk explains: The *Gemara* (*Makkot* 11b) teaches that a person who commits accidental manslaughter must flee to one of the cities of refuge and remain there until the *Kohen Gadol* dies. If the *Kohen Gadol* is disqualified from office after the murderer is sentenced to exile, but before he begins his exile, then, according to one opinion, it is as if the *Kohen Gadol* died and the murderer goes free. R’ Yom Tov Asevilli *z”l* (“*Ritva*”; Spain; 1260s-1320s) asks: The reason an accidental murderer goes free when the *Kohen Gadol* dies is that the latter’s death provides atonement for the Jewish People’s sins. But, if the *Kohen Gadol* was merely disqualified, what provides that atonement? He answers: The anguish that the *Kohen Gadol* feels at being disqualified provides atonement. Another commentator, R’ Menachem Meiri *z”l* (Spain; 1249-1306) explains, on the other hand, that the anguish that the murderer himself feels when his sentence sinks in and he pictures himself in exile subdues his heart and thereby provides atonement.

In light of this, R’ Zaichyk continues, we can understand the above *Midrash* as follows: When the Patriarchs and Matriarchs envisioned the suffering that their descendants would undergo in Egypt, they were so shaken and pained that it was as if they were in Egypt. *Hashem* placed that anguish of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs on the “merits” side of His “scales” and used it to shorten the exile in Egypt. (*Ohr Chadash: Pesach* p.78)



“*V’gam* / Also the nation that they shall serve, I shall judge, and afterwards they shall leave with great wealth.”

What is added by the word “*v’gam*” / “also”? R’ Aharon Teitelbaum *shlita* (*Satmar Rebbe*) explains: *Rashi z”l* (to *Shmot* 11:2) writes that there were other nationalities in Egypt besides the Egyptians, who helped the latter oppress *Bnei Yisrael*. Regarding them, *Hashem* promised Avraham Avinu, “Also the nation that they shall serve, I shall judge . . .” (Quoted in *Haggadah Shel Pesach Oztrotaihem Shel Tzaddikim*)



R’ Eliezer Dan Ralbag *z”l* (1832-1895; *Rosh Yeshiva* of the Etz Chaim Yeshiva in Yerushalayim) writes: *Hashem* told Avraham (*Bereishit* 15:13), “Know with certainty that your offspring will be aliens in a land not their own, *Va’avadum*/ and they will serve them, *V’inu* / and they will oppress them four hundred years.” Our Sages say that the 400 years began when Yitzchak was born, for he, also, was an alien in a land not his own--the land of the Canaanites and Plishtim. This counted toward fulfillment of the prophecy because, in the Torah, the letter “*Vav*” before a word can mean “or” as well as “and”; thus, the prophecy can mean: “Your offspring will be aliens in a land not their own, or they will serve them, or they will oppress them.” Any of those three situations -- alien status, slavery, or oppression -- could count toward completing the 400 years.

R’ Ralbag continues: In this light, we can understand why the tribe of Levi did not need to be enslaved. It was sufficient that they were aliens. Indeed, for this reason, Moshe (a Levi) named his oldest son “Gershom” -- “for he said, ‘I was a *Ger* / alien in a foreign land’.” (*Shemot* 18:3)

In this light, as well, we can better understand Yosef's story. Yaakov hoped to fulfill Avraham's prophecy by being an alien, as Yitzchak had. Thus we read (*Bereishit* 37:1), "Yaakov settled in the land where his father was a *Ger*, in the Land of Canaan." However, Yaakov's growing and powerful family could not be considered aliens in Canaan, so "the troubles with Yosef began" (see *Rashi* there). Notably, Yosef was sold into slavery but soon was elevated to a position of authority, because he was, at least, an alien. But, when Yosef became too comfortable in Egypt and began preening himself (see *Rashi* to *Bereishit* 39:6), he was no longer an alien, so he was again imprisoned and enslaved. (*Damesek Eliezer*)



R' Eliezer Ashkenazi z"l (1513-1585; rabbi in Egypt, Italy and Poland) asks: How could the benevolent G-d enslave an entire people (the Jewish People in Egypt) for no fault of theirs? Indeed, writes R' Ashkenazi, it seems that our Sages themselves asked this question in the *Gemara* (*Nedarim* 32a): "Why was Avraham Avinu punished and his descendants were enslaved in Egypt for 210 years?"

In response to this question, three Sages in the *Gemara* each suggests a sin that Avraham committed. Notwithstanding, writes R' Ashkenazi, it is impossible to say that the enslavement in Egypt was decreed because of a sin committed by Avraham. After all, Rabbi Yochanan, one of the three Sages who says that Avraham sinned, also says that the Splitting of the Sea after the Exodus was built into Creation at the time that water was created. This implies that *Bnei Yisrael's* enslavement in Egypt and the Exodus were part of the grand plan for the world, not merely a reaction to some sin of Avraham's.

Moreover, at the *Brit Bein Ha'betarim*, the vision in which *Hashem* informed Avraham of the coming enslavement, *Hashem* began by speaking lovingly to Avraham (*Bereishit* 15:1), "Fear not, Avram, I am a shield for you; your reward is very great." These do not sound like words spoken by One who is about to inform Avraham of a forthcoming punishment for a sin!

Rather, explains R' Ashkenazi, the *Gemara* is not suggesting that the enslavement in Egypt was punishment for a sin. Indeed, it was good news to Avraham that his descendants would be enslaved. Avraham devoted his entire life to proclaiming the truth of *Hashem's* existence, and the only reason he wanted children was so that *Hashem* could continue to be proclaimed through them. And, just as the spiritual soul can attain perfection only by descending for a time to the physical body, so the Jewish People could not attain its perfection--which is attained when *Hashem* is revealed through it--except by descending into a land of impurity and black magic, *i.e.*, Egypt. This is the purpose, as well, of our current dispersion throughout the world--so that every nation will hear of the G-d of the Jews.

And what of the *Gemara* quoted above? That *Gemara* is asking a different question. *Hashem* told Avraham (*Bereishit* 15:13), "Know with certainty that your offspring shall be aliens in a land not their own, they will serve them, and they will oppress them four hundred years." This implies that *Bnei Yisrael* would be aliens in a land not their own for 200 years and they will serve their hosts and be oppressed by them for 200 years. Thus, asks the *Gemara*, "Why was Avraham Avinu punished and his descendants were enslaved in Egypt for 210 years?" To that question, the *Gemara* answers that Avraham sinned. (*Ma'asei Hashem*)



“Moshe was frightened and he thought, ‘Indeed, the matter is known!’” (Shmot 2:14)

Rashi comments: “Now I know that which I have been puzzled about, *i.e.*, I what way has Yisrael sinned more than all the 70 nations, that they should be oppressed by this crushing servitude? But now I see that they deserve this.”

R’ Yisrael Isserlin *z”l* (1390-1460; Austria; author of *Terumat Ha’deshen*) asks: Didn’t Moshe know that exile had been decreed upon Avraham’s descendants? He explains:

The Torah says that children will not be killed for their fathers’ sins. How, then, was this exile possible? When Moshe saw that *Bnei Yisrael* spoke *lashon hara*, the same sin that Yaakov’s sons committed, he understood, for our Sages teach that children who emulate their fathers’ sins will be punished for their fathers’ sins as well. (*Beurei Maharai*)

מכסים את המצות ומגביהים את הכוס

וְהָיָא שְׁעַמְדָּה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ. שְׁלֵא אֶחָד בְּלִבָּד, עֶמֶד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ. אֶלָּא שְׁבִכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר, עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ. וְהִקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְצִילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם:

What is “this” that stood by our fathers? It refers to the previous sentence in the *Haggadah*, which states (quoting *Bereishit* 15:13-14): “He said to Avram, ‘Know with certainty that your offspring will be aliens in a land not their own, they will serve them, and they will oppress them four hundred years. But also the nation that they will serve, I will judge, and afterwards they will leave with great wealth.’” *Hashem*’s promise to Avraham stood by our fathers when other nations tried to annihilate us.

R’ Menachem Mendel Stern *z”l* (rabbi of Sighet, Hungary; died 1834) asks: This seems counter-intuitive! How did *Hashem*’s promise that He will exile and enslave Avraham’s descendants protect our ancestors? He answers:

If a king promises a gift to one of his subjects at a future date, he presumably intends to keep his promise when the time comes. However, the king’s promise does not obligate him to protect that subject from enemies and natural disasters to ensure that he lives to see the day when the king’s promise will be kept. Likewise, it does not obligate the king to punish those who harm that subject, nor to forgive that subject if he rebels against the king.

Hashem created the world because He wants to share His goodness. Therefore, unlike a human king, He certainly will protect His subjects so that they can enjoy His goodness. We allude to this when we say (in the previous paragraph of the *Haggadah*): “Blessed is He Who keeps His promise to *Yisrael*.” He even protects us from enemies who would destroy us, as proof of which we cite His promise to Avraham that the Egyptians would succeed only in enslaving and oppressing our fathers, implying that they would be unable to annihilate us. Ultimately, *Hashem* promised, He will shower goodness on *Bnei Yisrael* by giving us the Torah and material wealth. Moreover, He will take revenge upon those who oppress the Jewish People even though our own sins are partly to blame. (*Derech Emunah*)

צא ולמד, מה בקש לבן הארמי לעשות ליעקב אבינו. שפרעה לא גזר אלא על הזכרים, ולבן בקש לעקר את הכל, שנאמר: ארמי אבד אבי, וירד מצרימה, ויגר שם במתי מעט. ויהי שם לגוי גדול, עצום ורב:

“Go and learn what Lavan the Aramean sought to do to our father Yaakov! For Pharaoh decreed only against the males, while Lavan sought *La’akor* / to uproot *Ha’kol* / everything.”

Why do we mention Lavan and his plot in the *Haggadah*?

R’ Aharon Teomim z”l (rabbi in Worms, Germany, and Krakow, Poland; died 1690) explains: *Hashem* told Avraham (*Bereishit* 15:13), “Know with certainty that your offspring will be aliens in a land not their own, they will serve them; and they will oppress them [for] four hundred years.” Yet, the exile in Egypt lasted only 210 years! One answer is that the 400 years are counted from the birth of Yitzchak, for he and his son Yaakov also lived in a “land not their own.”

One might ask, however, continues R’ Teomim: If the decree applied to Yitzchak and Yaakov as well, why did the later generations suffer so harshly while the earlier generations seem to have had an easier time? Indeed, since our Sages say that the entire decree was a punishment for Avraham for questioning *Hashem*, one would expect the generations closer to Avraham to bear the brunt of the decree!

It is to answer this question that we mention that Lavan sought to uproot everything. Indeed, Yaakov did have it harder than his descendants in Egypt. (*Haggadah Chalukah D’Rabban: Mateh Aharon*)



R’ Levi Yitzchak Horowitz z”l (1921-2009; *Bostoner Rebbe*) asks: Why do we say, “Lavan sought to uproot *Ha’kol*,” rather than, “Lavan sought to uproot the females as well”?

He writes: The answer came to me in a dream. The term “*Ha’kol*” alludes to women. For example, the *Gemara* (*Yevamot* 62a) teaches: A man who has no wife lives without joy, without blessing, without goodness, without Torah . . .” In short, such a person lacks *Ha’kol* / everything!

We read (*Bereishit* 24:1), “Hashem had blessed Avraham *Ba’kol* / with everything.” The *Gemara* (*Bava Batra* 16b) states that Avraham had a daughter and her name was “*Ba’kol*.” In light of the above *Gemara*, we can understand why that name was appropriate.

The *Bostoner Rebbe* continues: One of the terms for a wife is “*Akeret Bayit*,” for she is the “*Ikkar*” / essence of the house. [Notably, the verb used in the above quote from *Haggadah*, “*La’akor*,” shares a root (עקר) with “*Ikkar*.”] Especially on *Pesach* night, concludes the *Bostoner Rebbe*, women are “*Ha’kol*.” After all, our Sages teach that the Exodus occurred in the merit of the women. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Ezrat Avoteinu* p.116)

וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרַיִם, אָנוּס עַל פִּי הַדְּבוּר. וַיִּגַּר שָׁם. מִלְמַד שֶׁלֹּא יֵרֵד יַעֲקֹב אֲבֵינוּ
לְהִשְׁתַּקֵּעַ בְּמִצְרַיִם, אֲלֵא לְגוֹר שָׁם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל פְּרַעֲה, לְגוֹר בְּאַרְץ בְּאֵנוּ,
כִּי אֵין מְרַעָה לְצֹאן אֲשֶׁר לְעַבְדֶּיךָ, כִּי כְבֵד הָרַעַב בְּאַרְץ כְּנָעַן. וְעַתָּה, יֵשְׁבוּ נָא
עַבְדֶּיךָ בְּאַרְץ גִּשׁוֹן:

בְּמַתִּי מֵעַט. כִּמָּה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: בְּשִׁבְעִים נֶפֶשׁ, יֵרְדוּ אֲבֹתֶיךָ מִצְרַיִם. וְעַתָּה, שְׂמַד יֵי
אֱלֹהֶיךָ, כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם לְרַב.

וַיְהִי שָׁם לְגוֹי. מִלְמַד שֶׁהָיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מְצִינִים שָׁם:

“They became a nation’ (Devarim 26:5)--This teaches that the Israelites were distinctive there.”

R’ Yosef Zvi Duschinsky z”l (1865-1948; chief rabbi of the *Eidah Ha’chareidis* of Yerushalayim) explains this passage in light of the verse (*Shmot* 1:9), “[Pharaoh] said to his people, ‘Behold! the *am* / nation, *Bnei Yisrael*, is *rav* / greater and stronger than we.” Pharaoh expressed this concern at the beginning of *Bnei Yisrael’s* stay in Egypt. Is it possible, asks R’ Duschinsky, that at that time, before they began multiplying miraculously, Pharaoh could imagine that they would outnumber the Egyptians? Surely *Bnei Yisrael* were an extremely small minority in Egypt, which was one of richest and most secure world powers of that period!

R’ Duschinsky explains: What concerned Pharaoh was the unity of *Bnei Yisrael*, a trait not shared by the Egyptians. That is what Pharaoh meant when he exclaimed that “the *am* / nation, *Bnei Yisrael*, is *rav*.” “*Am*” and “*rav*” are singular, alluding to the unity that Pharaoh saw among *Bnei Yisrael*. This is what we allude to also when we say in the *Haggadah*, “They became a nation [a unit]’--This teaches that the Israelites were distinctive there.” They were united by their distinctive language, style of dress and feelings toward each other.

In addition, R’ Duschinsky continues, this passage in the *Haggadah* alludes to the promise that *Hashem* made to Yaakov when he descended to Egypt. *Hashem* said to him (*Bereishit* 46:3), “Have no fear of descending to Egypt, for I shall establish you as a *goy gadol* / great nation there.” Yaakov was afraid that his descendants would assimilate in Egypt, so *Hashem* assured him that they would remain a *goy gadol* [again, a unit]--recognizable by the fact that they were united in their distinctiveness.

R’ Duschinsky concludes: If it was important for the Jewish People to preserve their distinctiveness in a country where they were, in any case, the lowest rung of society, how much more so is it important when we have the ability to assimilate. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Maharitz* p.74)

גְּדוֹלַת עַצוּם, כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר : וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, פָּרוּ וַיִּשְׂרְצוּ, וַיִּרְבוּ וַיַּעֲצְמוּ, בְּמֵאֵד מְאֹד,
וַתִּמְלֵא הָאָרֶץ אֹתָם :

“Bnei Yisrael were fruitful, teemed, increased, and became strong . . .”

R' Yosef ben Moshe Tirani *z"l* (*Maharit*; 1568-1639) writes: No one, not even Pharaoh, could deny that the growth rate of *Bnei Yisrael* was miraculous. Therefore, perhaps the verse (1:9), “He said to his people, ‘Behold! the people, *Bnei Yisrael*, are more numerous and stronger *mimenu*” [usually translated “more numerous and stronger than we”] should be translated, “more numerous and stronger from Him.” If this is the correct translation, *Maharit* continues, then the next verse, “Let us outsmart *lo*” [usually translated “it,” referring to *Bnei Yisrael*] perhaps should be translated, “Let us outsmart Him,” again referring to G-d. Indeed, our Sages say that Pharaoh said, “Let us outsmart the Redeemer of *Bnei Yisrael*.” That, of course, is none other than G-d. (*Tzofnat Panei'ach*)



The *Midrash Rabbah* states that the Jewish women in Egypt gave birth to sextuplets. Another opinion says they gave birth to sixty children at a time.

R' Yehuda Loewe *z"l* (the *Maharal of Prague*; died 1609) writes: The *Midrash* does not literally mean that women gave birth to 60 children at a one time. Indeed, he observes, if it were possible for one woman to carry that many children, each one would be so small as to not be viable. Rather, the *Midrash* means that women who gave birth, rather than suffering the weakness that normally follows birth, felt so strong that they could have delivered 60 babies if such a thing were possible.

As for the opinion that they gave birth to sextuplets, *Maharal* suggests that this was G-d's response to the fact that *Bnei Yisrael* were enslaved six days a week. (*Gevurot Hashem* ch.12)



“The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, the first of whom was called ‘Shifrah’ and the second of whom was called was ‘Puah.’” (*Shmot* 1:15)

Rashi z"l writes: “Shifrah was Yocheved [the mother of Moshe] . . . Puah was Miriam [the sister of Moshe].”

R' Ovadia of Bartenura *z"l* (1445-1515; Italy and Yerushalayim; *Mishnah* commentator) asks: How did *Rashi* know this? He answers:

“Shifrah” connotes goodness and beauty, and befits someone with the name “Yocheved,” which connotes “honor.” “Puah” implies crying, which parallels “Miriam,” from the root meaning to raise one's voice. (*Amar Nakeh*)

What forced *Rashi* to abandon the *peshat* / straightforward meaning of the verse, *i.e.*, that Shifrah and Puah were the midwives real names?

R' Eliyahu Mizrachi *z"l* (1450-1526) writes that *Rashi* must have had a tradition to this effect. (*Mizrachi*)

R' Yehuda Loewe z"l (*Maharal* of Prague; died 1609) writes that the Torah is intended to teach, not to create mystery. Since we don't find any other information in the Torah about Shifrah and Puah [for example, their fathers' names or their tribe], they must have been people who are already known to us. (*Gur Aryeh*)

R' Menachem Mendel Schneerson z"l (1902-1994; *Lubavitcher Rebbe*) answers: The verse is difficult to understand literally. Were there only two midwives for a nation of hundreds of thousands?

He explains: The reality was, as Shifrah and Puah say later (verse 19), that the Jewish women did not need midwives. Why then were two midwives appointed? To calm pregnant women with the knowledge that there would be midwives available if necessary.

If the mere knowledge that two midwives existed was sufficient to bring comfort to tens of thousands of women (or more), it follows that those two midwives must have been known for their righteous and good standing in the community. That is why *Rashi* concluded that they were Yocheved and Miriam. (*Beurei Ha'chumash*)

וְרַב. כָּמָה שָׁנָאִמְרָ: רַבְּבָה כְּצִמַח הַשָּׂדֶה נִתְתִּיךָ, וְתַרְבִּי, וְתַגְדְּלִי, וְתַבְּאִי בְעַדִּי
עַדִּים: שְׂדֵים נִכְנוּ, וְשָׁעֲרָךְ צִמַח, וְאַתָּה עֵרָם וְעָרִיהָ:

R' Joseph B. Soloveitchik z"l (1903-1993) observes: The most amazing thing about the Exodus, far greater than the signs and the wonders, is the transformation that occurred to a nation of slaves. Slaves do not understand the idea of obeying laws when no taskmaster threatens them. But why would one obey the commands such as *Matzah*, such as *Korban Pesach*, such as "You shall not break a bone of it," or such as "You may not leave over any of it until morning" if no taskmaster is threatening?

The *Haggadah* applied to the generation of the Exodus the verse (*Yechezkel* 16:7), "You have increased and grown great . . . yet you are naked and bare." The *Midrash* explains: The generation was naked of commandments. [R' Soloveitchik continues:] Their life was a naked one, controlled by lusts and desires. And then there occurred the greatest miracle of all: "*Bnei Yisrael* went and did as *Hashem* commanded Moshe and Aharon, so did they do." The slaves suddenly felt the duty of commandments, the power of a life devoted to higher ideas and goals. They understood what it means to possess spiritual ideals and what it means to enter into a covenant with the Almighty. Suddenly, they stood "hedged with roses" [a term used by the Sages to refer to the laws of family purity, which are kept in private and which no authority could possibly enforce. These laws are in contrast to the lust-filled life of a person who recognizes no laws]. No one threatened them with batons, no taskmasters ran around shouting at them. They could have trampled everything, the roses and the glorious flower bed. But, suddenly, they beheld the power and beauty of the roses. This transformation was a hidden miracle of great import. The Jews were able to distinguish between sacred and profane. (*Festival of Freedom* p. 72-73)

וְאָעֶבֶר עָלֶיךָ וְאָרְאֶךָ מִתְבוֹסֶסֶת בְּדַמְיֶךָ וְאִמֵּר לָךְ בְּדַמְיֶךָ חַיִּי וְאִמֵּר לָךְ בְּדַמְיֶךָ חַיִּי.

R' Klonimus Kalman Shapira *z"l Hy"d* (1889–1943; the *Piaseczner Rebbe*; killed in the Holocaust) posed the following question in a *derashah* he delivered in the Warsaw Ghetto on the *Shabbat* in 5701 / 1941 on which *Parashat Ha'chodesh* was read:

Rashi z"l writes that *Bnei Yisrael* had no merit in which to be redeemed, so *Hashem* gave them the *Mitzvah* of *Korban Pesach* and the *Mitzvah* of *brit milah* [which had been commanded to Avraham Avinu but had fallen into neglect]. This, said R' Shapira, seems to contradict an earlier *Rashi* (to *Shmot* 3:12) which says the redemption occurred in anticipation of *Bnei Yisrael's* later accepting the Torah!

R' Shapira explains: When *Bnei Yisrael* later came to the *Yam Suf* and Moshe prayed for salvation from the pursuing Egyptians, *Hashem* responded (*Shmot* 14:15, "Why do you cry out to Me? Speak to *Bnei Yisrael* and let them journey forth." What does this mean? Is one not supposed to pray in his time of need? Rather, *Hashem* was saying, "Why do you cry out to Me?"—i.e., for Me. The salvation will not happen for My sake, but for the sake of *Bnei Yisrael*.

Perhaps, R' Shapiro continued, this is what our Sages mean when they say that the angel Micha-el offers the souls of *Yisrael* on the altar above. Micha-el is the angel charged with always defending and promoting the Jewish People. Perhaps he does this by bringing the suffering of the Jewish People before *Hashem*. He says, "You, G-d, are always concerned with the honor of Your people. Look at them now!"

In our present circumstances [in the Warsaw Ghetto], R' Shapira said, we also can understand Moshe's complaint (*Shmot* 5:23), "From the time I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your Name he did evil to this people, but You did not rescue Your people," and *Hashem's* reply (in the next verse), "Now you will see what I shall do to Pharaoh." Moshe said: You told me to speak to Pharaoh about traveling to the desert to observe a festival for *Hashem*. But, my speaking to him "in Your Name"—for Your honor—seems to have delayed the redemption. *Hashem* replied: "Now you will see." Since you have awakened My mercy by speaking of the honor of *Bnei Yisrael* (by saying that Pharaoh "did evil to this people"), the redemption will begin immediately.

With this, R' Shapira answered his original question. When *Hashem* told Moshe that the redemption would occur in anticipation of *Bnei Yisrael's* later accepting the Torah, He did not specify when that redemption would take place. Although *Hashem* was willing to give *Bnei Yisrael* "credit" for a merit that would occur in the future (receiving the Torah), that merit was not the result of any sacrifice on the part of *Bnei Yisrael* (yet). Therefore, it could not awaken sufficient merit to bring the redemption by a definite date. In our verse, however, He said, "This month shall be for you the beginning of the months, it shall be for you . . ." In the merit of the dual sacrifice of circumcision and placing the blood of the *Korban Pesach* on the doorpost, *Hashem* promised that the redemption would occur immediately—"This month is for you." (*Eish Kodesh*)

וַיִּרְעוּ אֶת־נֹוֹ הַמִּצְוֹת וַיַּעֲוֹנוּ. וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה : וַיִּרְעוּ אֶת־נוֹ הַמִּצְוֹת. כָּמָה
שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: הִבֵּה נִתְחַכְמָה לוֹ. פֶּן יִרְבֶּה, וְהָיָה כִּי תִקְרָאנָה מִלְחָמָה, וְנוֹסֵף גַּם הוּא עַל
שְׁנֵאֵינוּ, וְנִלְחַם בָּנוּ וְעָלָה מִן הָאָרֶץ :

“Come, let us outsmart it [the Jewish People] . . .”

R' David Ha'naggid z"l (1224-1300; grandson of *Rambam z"l*) notes that the *Mitzvot* and customs of the *Pesach Seder* parallel Pharaoh's plot to “outsmart” *Bnei Yisrael*:

- נ - “nun” for “*nisuch ha'yayin*” / pouring wine;
- ת - “tav” for “*tavshilin*” / the two cooked items on the *Seder* plate;
- ח - “chet” for *charoset*;
- כ - “kaf” for *karpas*;
- מ - “mem” for *Matzah*; and
- ה - “heh” for Hallel. (*Midrash Rabbi David Ha'naggid Al Haggadah Shel Pesach* p.37)



R' Shlomo Amar *shlita* (former *Sephardic* Chief Rabbi of Israel) writes: By using the word “outsmart,” the Torah is telling us that all of the know-how of the mighty Egyptian nation was devoted to over-powering *Bnei Yisrael*. Imagine! Since Pharaoh decreed that “every boy” that is born should be drowned, he must have believed he had the ability to carry out that decree. Even today, when births are recorded in a computerized official registry--when hospitals, birthing centers and midwives are regulated by the government--the government still cannot know about every child that is born. Yet, Moshe Rabbeinu's mother Yocheved was able to hide Moshe at first only because he was born prematurely. Once his due date arrived, she felt unable to hide her baby son any longer. Certainly, this righteous woman--indeed, any normal mother--would not have left her son in a basket on the river if she had any other choice.

R' Amar concludes: King Shlomo teaches (*Mishlei* 21:30), “There is neither wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against *Hashem*.” By reflecting on the planning that went into Pharaoh's plot and recognizing that it was not a half-baked scheme but rather a comprehensive plan to destroy *Bnei Yisrael*, we can better appreciate that even so, it was no match for *Hashem's* wisdom. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Mi'yamim Yamimah* p.104)

וַיַּעֲוֹנוּ. כָּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: וַיִּשְׁימוּ עָלָיו שָׂרֵי מִסִּים, לְמַעַן עֲנֹתוֹ בְּסִבְלָתָם: וַיִּבְנוּ עָרֵי
מִסְכָּנוֹת לְפָרְעֹה, אֶת פִּתּוֹם וְאֶת רַעַמְסֵס :

“They appointed taskmasters over it [the nation of *Bnei Yisrael*] *l'ma'an* / in order to afflict it with their [the Egyptians'] burdens; it built storage cities for Pharaoh--Pitom and Ra'amses.”

What is added by the word “*l'ma'an*” / in order? Moreover, why didn't the verse say more simply, “They appointed taskmasters over it who afflicted it with their burdens.” R' Tuvia Halevi z"l (Tzefat, *Eretz Yisrael*; 16th century) explains:

A *Midrash* relates that Pitom and Ra'amses were built on quicksand or very soft soil so that, no sooner had they been built, they had to be built again. The Egyptians received no benefit from *Bnei Yisrael's* work. Thus, the Torah emphasizes that the sole purpose of this work was "in order to afflict" *Bnei Yisrael*. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Haggadat Chachmei Tzefat*)

וַיִּתְּנוּ עֲלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה. כָּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ מִצְרַיִם אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָרָד׃

"The Egyptians enslaved *Bnei Yisrael* בְּכָרָד / with crushing harshness."

The *Gemara* (*Sotah* 11a-b) cites the opinion of Rabbi Elazar that "בְּכָרָד" ("*b'ferach*") is a contraction of "בפה רך" ("*b'feh rach*") / "soft-spoken." *Rashi z"l* explains that the Egyptians enticed *Bnei Yisrael* with words and with rewards to begin their work; then they enslaved them.

R' Yehuda Loewe z"l (*Maharal* of Prague; died 1609) comments: Rabbi Elazar does not mean to negate the *psbat* / plain meaning of the verse, *i.e.*, that the Egyptians enslaved *Bnei Yisrael* with crushing harshness. Rather, Rabbi Elazar is adding that the oppression felt so much harsher because *Bnei Yisrael* had, so-to-speak, been stabbed in the back after believing in Pharaoh's soft-spoken words. (*Gevurot Hashem*, ch.15)

וַנִּצְעַק אֶל יי אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וַיִּשְׁמַע יי אֶת קִלְנוּ, וַיִּרְא אֶת עֲנִינוּ, וְאֶת עֲמִלְנוּ, וְאֶת לַחֲצֵנוּ: וַנִּצְעַק אֶל יי אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, כָּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הָרַבִּים הֵהֵם, וַיָּמַת מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם, וַיֵּאָנְחוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן הָעֲבֹדָה וַיִּזְעֻקוּ. וַתַּעַל שׁוֹעֲתָם אֶל הָאֱלֹהִים מִן הָעֲבֹדָה:

Why did they cry out after Pharaoh died? R' Meir ibn Gabbai z"l (15th - 16th centuries) explains that it is common for a newly crowned king to grant a general amnesty to political prisoners. In this case, however, Pharaoh died and the new king did not grant amnesty to *Bnei Yisrael*.

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



"*Bnei Yisrael* groaned because of the work and they cried out."

R' Shimson David Pinkus z"l (rabbi of Ofakim, Israel; died 2001) quotes the *Zohar* (*Shmot* 20a) which teaches that *Tze'akah* / crying out is a form of prayer that is very dear to G-d and never goes completely unanswered. What is *Tze'akah*? It is prayer without words, as the verse says (*Eichah* 2:18), "Their hearts cried out to *Hashem*."

R' Pinkus continues: *Tze'akah* is "hysteria." However, it does not involve screaming or waving one's arms like a lunatic. Rather, when a person stands silently in prayer with a recognition that he is surrounded by challenges that he cannot overcome without G-d's help, or an appreciation of the fact that the *Yetzer Ha'ra* is holding a knife to his throat and is about to overcome him, and he then pleads, "Help me!" – that is *Tze'akah*. In particular, *Tze'akah* is found when a person feels himself unworthy of approaching G-d and cannot find the words to pray.

R' Pinkus adds: Although the *Zohar* says that *Tze'akah* is a wordless cry, any prayer that a person utters when he cannot articulate his thoughts, even if it involves words such as "Help!" is also *Tze'akah*. We see this, for example, in *Melachim I* (18:37), where Eliyahu Hanavi prayed, "Answer me, *Hashem*! Answer me!" It is as if a person is being attacked by robbers, and he calls out to a friend who stands nearby, "Help me!" (*She'arim Ba'tefilah* pp.41-43)

R' Itamar Schwartz *shlita* observes that *Tze'akah* that involves a raised voice is an undesirable form of prayer. While a person who is being held up screams "Help!" to a friend who is standing some distance away, he does not need to cry out if he knows his friend is standing right next to him. Thus, a raised voice indicates that the supplicant feels there is distance between himself and *Hashem*, as *Bnei Yisrael* felt that *Hashem* had abandoned them in Egypt. When a person stands in prayer and feels that *Hashem* is right there with him, he does not cry out. (*B'levavi Mishkan Evneh* Vol.II p.125)

Based on the foregoing, we must understand why (in *Shmot* 8:8) Moshe Rabbeinu "cried out" to *Hashem* to remove the plague of *tzefardea* / frogs. Surely Moshe Rabbeinu did not feel that *Hashem* was distanced from him. Indeed, commentaries offer a number of reasons for Moshe's *Tze'akah*:

Sforno – Moshe was asking *Hashem* to remove the frogs only from the Egyptians' homes, but to leave them in the Nile. Ordinarily, one may not pray to *Hashem* to perform "half a job." Because Moshe Rabbeinu was violating this rule of prayer, he had to cry out.

Abarbanel – All of the other plagues lasted one week, but Moshe asked that this one end early. Since Moshe Rabbeinu did not know if such was *Hashem's* Will, he cried out.

Siftei Chachamim – A person must hear himself pray. Since the frogs were so noisy, Moshe Rabbeinu had to cry out.

וַיִּשְׁמַע יי אֶת קִלְנוֹ. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶת נַאֲקָתָם, וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת בְּרִיתוֹ, אֶת אַבְרָהָם, אֶת יִצְחָק, וְאֶת יַעֲקֹב:

וַיִּרְא אֶת עֲנִינּוֹ: זֶה פְּרִישׁוֹת דָּרָדְךָ אֶרֶץ. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. וַיַּדַּע אֱלֹהִים:

וְאֶת עַמְלֵנוּ. אֵלֹהֵי הַבְּנִים. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: כָּל-הַבֶּן הַיְלֹוֹד הַיִּאֲרָה תִשְׁלִיכֶהוּ, וְכָל-הַבַּת תִּחְיוֹן:

Rashi z"l writes that this decree was not against *Bnei Yisrael* alone. Pharaoh's astrologers had told him that the savior of *Bnei Yisrael* would be born on a certain day, and he might be Jewish or he might be Egyptian. (They were confused because the savior, Moshe, actually was a Jew who would grow up in Pharaoh's palace.) Therefore, Pharaoh's decree was also against Egyptian boys.

R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld *z"l* (1848-1932; rabbi of the *Edah Ha'chareidit* in Yerushalayim) observes that this illustrates how *Hashem* pulls all the strings behind the scenes and uses every person to bring about the result that His Will has ordained. How so? The *Gemara* (*Chagigah* 15a) teaches that everything in the world has an opposite. In the physical world, for example, there are

mountains and valleys, etc. In the spiritual world, there are *tzaddikim* and *resha'im*, *Gan Eden* and *Gehinnom*, etc. In the same vein, we are taught that the opposing forces of good and evil must be balanced in the world in order to preserve man's ability to exercise his free will. According to *Hashem's* own design, if a soul enters the world that has the ability to become a great *tzaddik* like Moshe Rabbeinu, another soul must come into the world that has the potential to counter-balance that holiness by spreading unspeakable evil and impurity.

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



R' Yekutiel Yehuda Halberstam z"l (1905-1994; Klausenberger Rebbe) asks: Why does the Torah report the last part of Pharaoh's decree, "And every daughter you shall keep alive"? Is the Torah coming to praise his humanitarianism?

R' Halberstam answers: The Torah reports that Pharaoh planned to keep the girls alive because that was part of his evil plot. Pharaoh didn't know that a child born of a Jewish mother and a non-Jewish father is *halachically* Jewish. He thought that keeping the girls alive to marry Egyptians would increase the Egyptian population.

In the *Pesach Haggadah*, we quote this verse and exclaim, "This is our burden." Understandably, the decree to kill Jewish boys was a burden, but why was the decree to keep alive the daughters a "burden"? In light of the above, R' Halberstam notes, it is clear. The intent of the decree was to take away our daughters and marry them to Egyptians. The *Haggadah* is teaching that the searing pain that *Bnei Yisrael* felt at the prospect of this intermarriage served as a merit that hastened their redemption. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Halichot Chaim* p.221)

וְאֵת לְחֵצֵינוּ. זֶה הַדְּחֵק. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְגַם רָאִיתִי אֶת הַלְּחָץ, אֲשֶׁר מִצְרַיִם לְחָצִים
: אֲתָם

וַיּוֹצֵאֵנוּ יְיָ מִמִּצְרַיִם, בְּיַד חֲזָקָה, וּבְזֶרַע נְטוּיָה, וּבְמָרָא גְדוֹל וּבְאֲתוֹת וּבְמוֹפְתִים:

The *Midrash Rabbah* states that our ancestors were redeemed from Egypt in the merit of four things: They did not change their names or their language, they did not speak *lashon hara*, and they took precautions against immorality. R' Shlomo Ephraim of Lunschitz z"l (1545-1619; author of the Torah commentary *Kli Yakar* and other works) writes that these four traits contrast with the four groups of people who, say our Sages, will not merit to greet the *Shechinah*. They are: *leitzim* (interpreted by R' Shlomo Ephraim as "exceedingly haughty people"), *chaneifim* (interpreted by R' Shlomo Ephraim as "hypocrites"), liars (in financial dealings, according to R' Shlomo Ephraim), and those who habitually speak *lashon hara*.

R' Shlomo Ephraim elaborates: Exceedingly haughty people are concerned with making a name for themselves. Throughout history, many such people have asserted, or even believed, that

they were gods. *Bnei Yisrael* did not change their “names” in Egypt. They never abandoned that fundamental trait of a descendant of Avraham Avinu--humility.

R' Shlomo Ephraim continues: Avraham referred to himself (*Bereishit* 18:27) as “dust and ash,” but Moshe was even more humble, saying (*Shmot* 16:7), “What are we?” (literally, “We are *mah* / what?”). The Hebrew word “*mah*” has the same *Gematria* (45) as “*me'od*” / “very much,” as in the *Mishnah* (*Avot* ch. 4), “*Me'od, me'od, you should be humble.*” Notably, three times 45 (one for “*mah*” and two for “*me'od*”) equals 135, the *Gematria* of “*Matzah*”—thus demonstrating the connection between the humility of our ancestors and the redemption. (*Orach L'Chaim: Drush L'Pesach ma'amarim* 14-16)

וּיּוֹצֵאֵנוּ יְיָ מִמִּצְרַיִם. לֹא עַל יְדֵי מַלְאָךְ, וְלֹא עַל יְדֵי שָׂרָף. וְלֹא עַל יְדֵי שְׂלִיחַ. אֲלֵא
הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּכַבּוּדוֹ וּבְעֶצְמוֹ. שְׁנַאֲמַר: וְעִבְרַתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּלֵילָה הַזֶּה,
וְהִכִּיתִי כָל בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, מֵאָדָם וְעַד בְּהֵמָה, וּבְכָל אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֲעֹשֶׂה
שְׁפָטִים אֲנִי יְיָ:

וְעִבְרַתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּלֵילָה הַזֶּה, אֲנִי וְלֹא מַלְאָךְ. וְהִכִּיתִי כָל בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם. אֲנִי וְלֹא שָׂרָף. וּבְכָל אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֲעֹשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים, אֲנִי וְלֹא הַשְּׂלִיחַ. אֲנִי
יְיָ. אֲנִי הוּא וְלֹא אֲחֵר:

“I shall go through Egypt on this night”--I [Hashem], and not a *malach* / angel. “I shall strike every firstborn in the land of Egypt”--I, and not a *saraf* (another type of angel). “Against all the gods of Egypt I shall mete out punishment”--I, and not a messenger. “I am Hashem”--I am He, and no other.

R' Aharon Teomim *z"l Hy"d* (rabbi and *darshan* in Prague, Worms and Krakow; martyred in 1690) explains: Our Sages teach that once *Hashem* permits a plague to begin, the Angel of Death does not distinguish between the innocent and the guilty. Thus, *Hashem* Himself had to carry out the Plague of the Firstborn to ensure that no firstborn of *Bnei Yisrael* would be killed. Nevertheless, one might have thought that *Hashem's* power of discernment was only needed in those cases where Egyptians and *Bnei Yisrael* were in the same house. The general plague, however, could have been carried out by the Angel of Death. Therefore, the *pasuk* tells us, “I shall go through Egypt on this night”--I, and not a *malach*. Even though an angel could have performed part of the mission, *Hashem* chose to do it Himself.

“I shall strike every firstborn in the land of Egypt”--I, and not a *saraf*. This refers to striking those Egyptian firstborn who took refuge in a Jewish home. These firstborn had to be stricken by *Hashem* Himself, for the reason explained above.

“Against all the gods of Egypt I shall mete out punishment”--I, and not a messenger. The Egyptians' idols could have been destroyed by an angel, as there was no issue of discerning between the innocent and guilty. Nevertheless, *Hashem* chose to do it Himself.

Finally, lest one think that angels did assist, and the verse merely reflects the *halachic* principle of, “A person's agent is like himself,” therefore the *pasuk* concludes: “I am *Hashem*”--I am He, and no other. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Bigdei Aharon*)

בִּיד חֲזָקָה. זֹה הַדָּבָר. כִּמָּה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר : הִנֵּה יָד יְיָ הוֹיָה, בְּמִקְנֵךְ אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׂדֶה, בַּסּוּסִים
בְּחֲמַרִים בְּגַמְלִים, בְּבִקֵּר וּבִצְאוֹ, דָּבָר כְּבִד מְאֹד :

“I shall sing to Hashem for He is extremely exalted, having hurled horse with its rider into the sea.” (Shmot 15:1)

Rashi writes: *Hashem* did something that no human warrior can do. A human warrior knocks the rider off the horse and then vanquishes him. Only *Hashem* could hurl a horse and its rider into the sea together.

R' Yitzchak Yerucham Borodiansky *shlita* (Yeshivat Kol Torah in Yerushalayim) writes: This is the attribute of *Hashem* which the Torah refers to as the “*Yad Chazakah*” / “Strong Hand,” and we eat *Matzah* on *Pesach* to recognize this attribute. *Matzah* is a mixture of flour and water. Naturally, flour and water that are mixed rise to a make a bread dough, but the “strong hand” of the baker can overpower the natural tendency of the dough in order to make unleavened bread.

In the *Pesach Haggadah*, we say, “The ‘*Yad Chazakah*’ is [the plague of] *devver* / an animal disease.” R' Borodiansky asks: The general theme of the *haggadah* is elaborating on the greatness of the miracles. Why does the author of the *haggadah* here limit the definition of the “*Yad Chazakah*”?

He answers: The *haggadah* is not referring here to the specific plague of *devver*. Rather, all of the plagues can be classified either as *devver* or *cherrev* / a sword, as in the verse (*Shmot* 5:3), “Lest He strike us dead with the *devver* or with the *cherrev*.” “*Devver*” refers to those plagues which involved a change to the nature of a physical object or phenomenon--e.g., blood, animal disease, and darkness--while “*cherrev*” refers to the plagues that involved an attack from the outside--e.g., frogs, wild beasts, and hail. Based on this understanding, the *Yad Chazakah* and *devver* indeed are synonymous, for they both refer to *Hashem*'s mastery over nature, such as when He tossed horse and rider into the sea together. (*Siach Yitzchak: Geulat Mitzrayim* p.43)

וּבְזָרַע נְטוּיָה. זֹה הַחֶרֶב. כִּמָּה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר : וַחֲרָבוֹ שְׁלוּפָה בְּיָדוֹ, נְטוּיָה עַל יְרוּשָׁלָּיִם :
וּבְמוֹרָא גָדוֹל, זֶה גְלוּי שְׂכִינָה. כִּמָּה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר : אוֹ הִנֵּסָה אֱלֹהִים, לָבוֹא לְקַחַת לוֹ גּוֹי
מִקְרָב גּוֹי, בְּמִסַּת בְּאֵתֶת וּבְמוֹפְתִים וּבְמִלְחָמָה, וּבִיד חֲזָקָה וּבְזָרֹעַ נְטוּיָה,
וּבְמוֹרָאִים גְּדֹלִים. כֹּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לָכֶם יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם בְּמִצְרָיִם, לְעֵינֵיכֶם :

“Or has any god ever miraculously come to take for himself a nation from amidst a nation, with challenges, with signs, and with wonders, and with war, and with a strong hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with greatly awesome deeds, such as everything that *Hashem*, your *Elokim*, did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

R' Yisrael Belsky *z"l* (*Rosh Yeshiva* of Torah Voda'ath in Brooklyn, N.Y. and a major contemporary *posek*, particularly in the area of *kashruth*) writes: This *pasuk* is one of only two verses in the whole Torah that contains every letter of the *aleph-bet*. The message is that when G-d reveals Himself, it touches every aspect of the universe which, say *Chazal*, was created using all the letters of the *aleph-bet*. Likewise, it teaches that *Hashem* “personally” supervises every aspect of the universe. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach B'tzeit Yisrael*)

וּבִּאֲתוֹת. זֶה הַמַּטָּה, כָּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: וְאֵת הַמַּטָּה הַזֶּה תִּקַּח בְּיָדְךָ. אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה בּוֹ
אֵת הָאֲתוֹת:

What was the staff's role in creating the wonders and plagues? asks R' Zalman Sorotzkin z"l (1881-1966; rabbi in Lutzk, Poland; later in Israel). Why couldn't Moshe and Aharon just wave their hands or utter commands to make the plagues happen? Having the staff gave Moshe credibility as the redeemer because it was a physical manifestation of his status as *Hashem's* messenger. The importance of physical evidence of reality is illustrated in the *Gemara* (*Yevamot* 25a), which states that a person who testified that a man had died is prohibited from marrying the man's widow lest he be lying, whereas a man who delivered a *get* / bill of divorce is permitted in some cases to marry the divorcee. Why? Because the divorce document itself gives the messenger credibility [even though he might have forged it]. So, too, Moshe's staff gave him credibility. Likewise, writes R' Sorotzkin, this explains why *Hashem* gave part of the Torah to Moshe on stone tablets, as opposed to simply dictating the *Aseret Ha'dibrot* to Moshe and having him write them, as Moshe recorded the rest of the Torah. The *Luchot* were physical objects that added credibility to Moshe's teaching of the Torah. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Ha'shir Ve'ha'shevach* p.92)

וּבְמוֹפְתִים. זֶה הַדָּם. כָּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: וְנִתְּתִי מוֹפְתִים, בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ

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

דָּם. וְאֵשׁ. וְתִמְרוֹת עֶשֶׂן:

We say that Moshe's staff performed "*otot*" / "signs." Also, we refer to the plagues as "*moftim*" / "wonders." What do these terms mean? R' Yitzchak Isaac Chaver z"l (1789-1852; rabbi of Suvalk, Lithuania) explains:

The miracles that *Hashem* has performed for *Yisrael* fall into two categories. The first is called, "*otot*" / "signs," which describes miracles intended to foretell or even bring about a future event. For example, in *Melachim II* (13:15-19), the prophet Elisha tells King Yo'ash to shoot arrows toward the Kingdom of Aram as a sign that Yo'ash would defeat Aram. When Yo'ash obeys only partially, the prophet tells him that he will weaken, but not destroy, Aram.

Moshe's staff was a "sign" because the names of all of the plagues were carved on it, thus foretelling what would occur. Also, the staff was a sign of *Hashem's* desire to fulfill the will of *tzadikim*, because the staff represented a king's scepter, and its being in Moshe's hand foretold that *Hashem* would turn over a certain amount of control over the world to Moshe and *Bnei Yisrael*, i.e., that the world's future would depend on the quality of *Bnei Yisrael's* deeds.

"*Moftim*," on the other hand, are miracles that *Hashem* performs directly without a "sign" preceding them and without any participation by *tzaddikim* on earth. These are not meant to prove anything, but serve other purposes.

The plagues in Egypt, concludes R' Chaver, were both *otot* and *moftim*. They were "signs" because they were meant to prove a point, namely that G-d gives control of the world to deserving *tzaddikim*--information that would encourage *Bnei Yisrael* to receive and observe the Torah. They also were *moftim*, miracles that were designed to punish the Egyptians. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Yad Mitzrayim*)

דָּבַר אַחֵר. בְּיַד חֲזָקָה שְׁתִּימִים. וּבִזְרָע נְטוּיָה שְׁתִּימִים. וּבְמוֹרָא גְדוֹל שְׁתִּימִים. וּבְאֵתוֹת
שְׁתִּימִים. וּבְמִפְתֵּי שְׁתִּימִים: אֵלּוּ עָשָׂר מִכּוֹת שֶׁהֵבִיא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַל הַמִּצְרִים
בְּמִצְרַיִם,

“These are the ten plagues which Hashem brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt.”

R' Chaim Palagi z"l (1788-1868; rabbi of Izmir, Turkey) asks: What is the purpose of the seeming redundancy, “upon the Egyptians in Egypt”? He explains: The phrase “in Egypt” refers to Egyptians of prior generations who had oppressed *Bnei Yisrael*, but had since died and been buried. They, too, experienced the plagues.

Conversely, the *Bnei Yisrael* of prior generations, including the twelve sons of Yaakov and their children, who had since died, shared in the Exodus, for their remains were taken out of Egypt. This is why we find the juxtaposition of the verses (*Shmot* 6:13-14), “Hashem spoke to Moshe and Aharon and commanded them regarding *Bnei Yisrael* and regarding Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to take *Bnei Yisrael* out of the land of Egypt. These were the heads of their fathers’ houses: the sons of Reuven . . .” (*Peninei Rabbeinu Chaim Palagi Al Haggadah Shel Pesach* p.250)

וְאֵלּוּ הֵן:

דָּם. צְפַרְדֵּי. כְּנִיִּם. עָרוֹב. דָּבָר. שְׁחִין. בָּרָד. אֲרָבָה. חֲשָׁךְ. מַכַּת
בְּכוֹרוֹת:

“Go to Pharaoh in the morning--behold! he goes out to the water-- and you shall stand opposite him at the Nile’s bank.” (*Shmot* 7:15)

Rashi z"l explains: “[Pharaoh] went to relieve himself. Pharaoh claimed to be a deity and asserted that, because of his divine power, he did not need to relieve himself; therefore, he used to rise early and go to the Nile, where he relieved himself in secret.”

R' Mordechai Krause *shlita* (rabbi in Yerucham, Israel) asks: Earlier (6:13) we read, “Hashem spoke to Moshe and Aharon and commanded them . . . regarding Pharaoh,” which *Rashi* explains as a commandment to show respect to Pharaoh. Why then did Hashem now command Moshe and Aharon to humiliate Pharaoh by intruding on his most private activity?

R' Krause answers: Pharaoh refused to subjugate himself to Hashem’s command that he let *Bnei Yisrael* go because Pharaoh suffered from *ga'avah* / haughtiness. Deep down, the essence of haughtiness is the feeling: “I am unique; there is no one above me, and it is unimaginable that I would need to humble myself before anyone.” In this vein, Pharaoh claimed (*Yechezkel* 29:3), “My Nile is mine, and I made myself.” In order for Hashem to be revealed in the world, Pharaoh had to be humbled, to be shown that Hashem is far more powerful than he. A necessary first step was to humiliate Pharaoh by reminding him that he could not even control his own body. (*Netiv B'mayim Azim* p.416)



“The fish that is in the water shall die . . .” (Shmot 7:18)

R' Eliezer David Gruenwald z"l (1867-1928; Hungarian rabbi and *Rosh Yeshiva*) asks: Why was this included in Moshe's warning to Pharaoh? Obviously, if the Nile turns to blood, all of the fish will die!

He explains: Pharaoh's magicians ostensibly mimicked the plague and turned water to blood. However, what they actually did was an illusion; the water did not turn to blood but just looked like blood. Anticipating that, Moshe warned Pharaoh, "When I turn the Nile to blood, it will be the real thing and the fish will die." (*Keren L'David*)



“Egypt could not drink water from the River, and the blood was throughout the land of Egypt.” (Shmot 7:21)

Midrash Rabbah relates that even if an Egyptian and one of *Bnei Yisrael* drank from the same cup, the Egyptian would find the liquid to be blood, while the Jew would have water.

R' Yaakov Aryeh Guterman z"l (1792-1874; *Chassidic Rebbe* in Radzymin, Poland) notes that this miracle involving water foreshadowed the splitting of the *Yam Suf*. He writes: The *Gematria* of "Mayim" / "water" equals 91 (40+10+40, plus 1 to represent the whole word). This is equal to the combined *Gematria* of the Divine Name "Y-K-V-K" (a Name that denotes Divine mercy) plus the Divine Name spelled "Aleph-Dalet-Nun-Yud" (a Name that denotes Divine justice). Both in the case of the Plague of Blood and in the case of the Splitting of the Sea, the water was an instrument of mercy to *Bnei Yisrael* and an instrument of justice to the Egyptians. (*Bikkurei Aviv*)



“Behold, I shall strike your entire boundary with frogs.” (Shmot 7:27)

Rabbeinu Bachya ben Asher z"l (Spain; 1255-1340) writes: This plague settled border disputes between Egypt and its neighbors. Wherever the frogs went was Egypt, and where they didn't go was not Egypt.

R' Moshe Leib Shachor z"l (Yerushalayim; 1894-1964) asks: We read later (10:4), "If you refuse to send forth My people, behold, tomorrow I shall bring a locust-swarm into your border," on which *Midrash Rabbah* comments that the plague of locust settled border disputes. Wherever the locust went was Egypt, and where they didn't go was not Egypt. What border disputes were there if the plague of frogs had already resolved them?

He explains: One way of marking boundaries is by planting trees. Perhaps, after the frogs settled Egypt's border disputes, Egypt planted trees to mark its borders. But, we read (9:25), "The hail struck in the entire land of Egypt, everything that was in the field from man to animal; all the grass of the field the hail struck and every tree of the field it smashed." Thus, after the plague of hail, there again were boundary disputes, until the locust swarm settled them once again.

R' Shachor notes that establishing Egypt's borders serves the needs of the Jewish People, for there is a *Mitzvah* (*Devarim* 17:16), "[The king] shall not have too many horses for himself, so that he will not return the people to Egypt in order to increase horses, for *Hashem* has said to you, 'You shall no longer return on this road again.'" In order to know where not to go, we need to know the boundaries of Egypt. (*Avnei Shoham*)



“The River shall swarm with frogs, and they shall ascend and come into your palace and your bedroom and your bed, and into the house of your servants and of your people, and into your ovens and into your kneading bowls.” (Shmot 7:28)

The *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 53b) teaches: “Why did Chananyah, Mishael and Azaryah allow themselves to be thrown into the furnace rather than bowing down to Nevuchadnezar’s statue (in the book of *Daniel*)? They reasoned: ‘If the frogs, who are not commanded to sanctify G-d’s Name, entered the ovens (as told in our verse), certainly we, who are commanded to sanctify G-d’s Name, should enter the oven.’” *Rashi* explains the *Gemara*’s question to be: Why didn’t Chananyah, Mishael and Azaryah feel that the commandment to preserve one’s life (in *Vayikra* 18:5) superseded the *Mitzvah* of sanctifying G-d’s Name?

(As an aside, the *Tosafot* note that Nevuchadnezar’s statue must not have been an idol; rather, it was only a monument to his own honor. Had it been an idol, Chananyah, Mishael and Azaryah would not have needed to learn anything from the frogs; they would have been required to give their lives no matter what other considerations existed.)

Commentaries ask: Frogs have no *Mitzvah* to preserve their own lives. Therefore, of course, they sanctified G-d’s Name even if it meant losing their own lives. But, how could Chananyah, Mishael and Azaryah learn from the frogs the importance of sanctifying G-d’s Name, since Chananyah, Mishael and Azaryah did have a *Mitzvah* to preserve their own lives?

R’ Moshe Leib Shachor z”l (see above) explains: It is true that frogs are not commanded by the Torah to preserve their own lives. However, they are “commanded” by G-d’s words at the time of Creation. G-d’s utterances when He created the world implanted a natural survival instinct in frogs. When *Hashem* said (*Bereishit* 1:20), “Let the waters teem with teeming living creatures,” He made known His Will that frogs exist just as His words (*Vayikra* 18:5), “You shall observe My decrees and My laws, which man shall carry out and by which he shall live,” make known His Will that man live by the *Mitzvot* and not die because of them.

In this light, we can understand Chananyah, Mishael and Azaryah’s reasoning as follows: “If the frogs, who are commanded to live but who are not commanded to sanctify G-d’s Name, entered the ovens, certainly we, who, despite being commanded to live, also are commanded to sanctify G-d’s Name, should enter the oven.” (*Avnei Shoham*)



“For if you refuse to send out, and you continue to grip them – behold! The hand of *Hashem* is on your livestock that are in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the cattle, and on the flock -- a very severe epidemic. *Hashem* shall distinguish between the livestock of *Yisrael* and the livestock of Egypt, and not a thing that belongs to *Bnei Yisrael* will die.’ . . . Pharaoh sent and behold, of the livestock of *Yisrael* not even one had died -- yet Pharaoh’s heart became stubborn and he did not send out the people.” (*Shmot* 9:2-4, 7)

R’ Eliezer David Gruenwald z”l (1867-1928; Hungarian rabbi and *Rosh Yeshiva*) asks: Why is so much emphasis placed on the fact that the flocks of *Bnei Yisrael* were not struck by the plague? We already know that the plagues struck Egyptians, not Jews. Indeed, it appears from the

last verse quoted above that the fact that the animals of the Jews were not struck was a compelling argument for releasing *Bnei Yisrael* from slavery, “yet Pharaoh’s heart became stubborn and he did not send out the people.” What was so compelling about the fact that the animals of *Bnei Yisrael* were not struck?

R’ Gruenwald explains: Pharaoh argued that Moshe and Aharon could not be the emissaries of G-d to save *Bnei Yisrael* because it was not yet time for the Exodus. *Hashem* had told Avraham that his descendants would be in a foreign land for 400 years, and so far *Bnei Yisrael* had been in Egypt only (just under) 210 years. Therefore, Pharaoh argued, he was legally entitled to hold *Bnei Yisrael* as his slaves. [Commentaries offer many explanations for why the Exodus did, in fact, take place early.]

Moshe responded to Pharaoh: If you are correct – “if you refuse to send out, and you continue to grip them,” *i.e.*, you claim that you are entitled to hold on to them – then the *halachic* principle that “Whatever a slave acquires belongs to his master” should be applicable. Slaves cannot own property, and any flocks in the possession of *Bnei Yisrael* would be yours. The test of ownership will be whether the flocks of *Bnei Yisrael* die in the plague as well.

When Pharaoh saw that not even one of the sheep of *Bnei Yisrael* died, his argument that he was legally entitled to hold *Bnei Yisrael* as his slaves was defeated. Nevertheless, the verse says, “Pharaoh’s heart became stubborn and he did not send out the people.” (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Chasdei David*)



“Behold, the hand of *Hashem* is on your livestock that are in the field . . .” (*Shmot* 9:3)

Why is the plague described as coming from the hand of *Hashem*? Likewise, what is meant by the “hand” in the verses (*Shmot* 14:31), “Yisrael saw the great hand that *Hashem* inflicted upon Egypt,” and (*Devarim* 2:15), “Even the hand of *Hashem* was upon them”?

R’ Shlomo Zalman Ehrenreich *z”l Hy”d* (1863-1944; rabbi of Simleu, Romania) writes: The *Gemara* (*Berachot* 4b) asks, “Why is there no verse beginning with the letter ‘nun’ in *Ashrei*?” Because it alludes to the downfall of the “enemies of *Yisrael*” [a euphemism the *Gemara* uses to avoid saying “the downfall of *Yisrael*”], as we read (*Amos* 5:2), “*Naflah* / She has fallen and will no longer rise – maiden of *Yisrael*.” Thus, writes R’ Ehrenreich, the letter “nun” alludes to downfall. “Nun” is the 14th letter of the *Aleph-Bet*. Fourteen is represented by the letters *yud-dalet*, which also spell the Hebrew word “*Yad*” / “hand,” specifically, the “hand” of *Hashem* which cause the downfall of Egypt. (*Tiyul Ba’pardes: Chelek Ha’remez, ot zayin*)



“Pharaoh sent and summoned Moshe and Aharon and said to them, “This time I have sinned . . .” (*Shmot* 9:27)

Why, after the plague of hail, did Pharaoh admit that he had sinned?

R’ Raphael Emanuel Chai Riki *z”l* (1688-1743; author of *Mishnat Chassidim* and other works) explains: The hail destroyed the crops, which ultimately would cause famine. This reminded Pharaoh of the kindness that Yosef had done for the Egyptians, and that caused him to acknowledge that it was wrong to oppress Yosef’s family. (*Chosheiv Machashavot*)



“Entreat *Hashem* -- there has been an overabundance of G-dly thunder and hail . . .’

“Moshe said to him, “When I leave the city I shall spread out my hands to *Hashem*; the thunder will cease and the hail will no longer be . . .’

“Moshe . . . stretched out his hands to *Hashem*; the thunder and hail ceased and rain did not reach the earth.

“Pharaoh saw that the rain, the hail, and the thunder ceased, and he continued to sin; and he made his heart stubborn, he and his servants.” (*Shmot* 9:28-29, 33-24)

Why, in fact, did Pharaoh continue to sin? R’ Shlomo Kluger z”l (1784-1869; rabbi of Brody, Galicia) explains:

Pharaoh appears to have been more afraid of the thunder than of the hail; thus, he asked Moshe (verse 28) to pray first that the thunder stop and only then the hail. Moshe agreed to Pharaoh’s request (verse 29) and *Hashem* accepted Moshe’s prayer (verse 33).

However, *Hashem* had His own calculations as well. *Midrash Rabbah* teaches that the hail that was in the process of falling when Moshe prayed for the plague to end stopped in mid-air and remained there for future use (see *Yechezkel* ch.13). *Hashem* did stop producing thunder when Moshe prayed for the thunder to end, and hail when Moshe prayed for the hail to end. But, the last hailstones never reached the earth; rather, they gathered in the atmosphere. Thus, from Pharaoh’s vantage point, the hail stopped (*i.e.*, it stopped reaching the ground) while he could still hear the thunder. The hail appeared to end first (verse 34). Thus, Pharaoh believed that Moshe’s prayer was not answered; apparently, the whole incident had been a coincidence, and there was no reason for Pharaoh to change his ways.

Perhaps, concludes R’ Kluger, *Hashem* acted this way so that Pharaoh could continue to rationalize his refusal to let *Bnei Yisrael* go. (*Imrei Shefer*)



“Pharaoh saw that the rain, the hail, and the thunder ceased, and he continued to sin, and he made his heart stubborn, he and his servants. Pharaoh’s heart became hardened . . .” (*Shmot* 9:34-35)

Our Sages teach that Pharaoh hardened his own heart after the first five plagues, whereas *Hashem* hardened Pharaoh’s heart after the next four plagues. If so, why do our verses, which come after the seventh plague, imply that Pharaoh hardened his own heart?

R’ Yosef Duchs z”l (1792-1846; *maggid* in Pressburg, Hungary) explains: R’ Yeshayah Halevi Horowitz z”l (1565-1630; the “*Shelah Ha’kadosh*”) writes that Pharaoh was ready to free *Bnei Yisrael* after each of the fifth through ninth plagues to avoid further suffering, but not because he was ready to repent fully. And, because Pharaoh had not repented fully, he deserved to be punished further. But, if he appeared to have repented and he was punished nevertheless, a *chillul Hashem* / desecration of *Hashem*’s Name would result. Therefore, *Hashem* hardened Pharaoh’s heart so that he would not repent at all.

R’ Duchs continues: The above explanation fits those cases in which Pharaoh did not express any regret. After the hail, however, Pharaoh said (verse 27), “This time I have sinned.

Hashem is the Righteous One, and I and my people are the wicked ones.” If, after this expression of repentance, the Torah would say expressly that *Hashem* hardened Pharaoh’s heart, that would cause a *chillul Hashem*. Therefore, our verse doesn’t say that *Hashem* hardened Pharaoh’s heart (though our oral tradition teaches that He did). (*Bet Yosef Lehavah*)



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

R’ Shlomo Amar *shlita* (former *Sephardic* Chief Rabbi of Israel) asks: Who made a mockery of whom? Seemingly, it was Pharaoh--who kept promising to let *Bnei Yisrael* go as soon as each plague ended, but who never kept his promises--who made a mockery of *Bnei Yisrael* and *Hashem*, not the other way around!

R’ Amar explains: No doubt the Egyptians did think that they were in control and that they were mocking *Bnei Yisrael* and *Bnei Yisrael*’s G-d. The truth, however, was that the Egyptians were merely tools in the hands of *Hashem*, tools that He used to prepare *Bnei Yisrael* to become a nation.

Specifically, the plagues in Egypt taught *Bnei Yisrael* about *Hashem*’s awesome power and His ability to do with His world as He pleases. Thus, Egypt was the classroom *par excellence* for teaching *emunah* / faith to *Bnei Yisrael*. Of course, *Hashem* would not wantonly demonstrate His power against a nation that was not deserving of being dealt with harshly. But, the Egyptians brought this treatment on themselves by forgetting the kindness of Yosef and enslaving Yosef’s family with back-breaking labor, by killing Jewish babies, and by refusing to subjugate themselves to *Hashem* even after they saw His power. Because of these sins, the Egyptians deserved to have their hearts hardened so that *Hashem* could make a mockery of them and thereby teach *Bnei Yisrael* valuable lessons. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Mi’yamim Yamimah* p.100)



“But among all of *Bnei Yisrael*, no dog will move its tongue, against neither man nor beast, so that you shall know that *Hashem* will have differentiated between Egypt and *Yisrael*.” (*Shmot* 11:7)

Why was it significant that no dog would bark during *Makkat Bechorot* / the plague of the firstborn, and why tell Pharaoh about it in advance?

R’ Shimshon Chaim Nachmani *z”l* (Italy; 1706-1779) answers: We read in *Parashat Shmot* (2:14), “Moshe was frightened and he said [to himself], ‘Indeed, the matter is known!’” *Midrash Rabbah* (cited by *Rashi z”l*) explains that Moshe was wondering why *Bnei Yisrael* deserved to be enslaved. When he saw that there were informers among *Bnei Yisrael*, he understood that they were enslaved because of the sin of *Lashon Ha’ra*.

Midrash Rabbah also teaches that our ancestors were redeemed from Egypt only because they repented. The dogs’ silence during *Makkat Bechorot* was evidence of that repentance, explains R’ Nachmani, for the *Gemara* (*Makkot* 23a) teaches that one who speaks *Lashon Ha’ra* deserves to be thrown to dogs. Here, the dogs were silent because they had no role to play, so-to-speak.

Why was it important for Pharaoh to know this? R' Nachmani answers: *Hashem* had foretold to Avraham Avinu that He would harshly judge the nation that enslaved Avraham's descendants. He also told Avraham that Jewish History would include four periods of subjugation to other nations. But, writes R' Nachmani, if Pharaoh could be made to recognize the power of *Teshuvah* and to himself repent, the Attribute of Justice would be unable to demand further punishment of the Egyptians. In turn, the Attribute of Justice would be unable to demand the fulfillment of the rest of the prophecy received by Avraham--*i.e.*, that *Bnei Yisrael* undergo additional periods of subjugation. (*Zera Shimshon*)

R' Chaim Zvi Senter *shlita* (*Rosh Ha'yeshiva* of Yeshiva Aderes Ha'Torah in Yerushalayim) offers another explanation:

The original cause of the exile in Egypt was the sin of *lashon hara*, which is what caused Yosef's brothers to hate him (see *Bereishit* 37:2). This is why, when Moshe Rabbeinu realized that Datan and Aviram were tale-bearers, he said (*Shmot* 2:14), "Indeed, the matter is known!" He meant: Now I understand why our exile persists. Measure-for-measure, *Bnei Yisrael* were enslaved by Pharaoh, whose name is an anagram (in Hebrew) of "Peh-ra" / "bad mouth."

The *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 118a) says that a person who speaks or believes *lashon hara* deserves to be thrown to dogs. At the time of the redemption, no dog barked, for the fact that the redemption was occurring indicates that the sin of *lashon hara* had been corrected.

This also explains, said R' Senter, why, as long as *Bnei Yisrael* were in exile, Moshe had a speech impediment. After the redemption, a *Midrash* relates, Moshe's speech impediment was healed. (Heard from R' Senter, 20 *Tevet* 5769)

רַבִּי יְהוּדָה הָיָה נוֹתֵן בָּהֶם סְמָנִים :

דַּצ"ךְ עַד"שׁ בְּאֲח"ב :

This mnemonic is nothing more than an acronym of the names of the plagues! What does it add to our understanding?

R' Elazar Rokeach *z"l* (Germany; 1160-1238) explains: In the book of *Tehilim* (78:44-51; 105:28-36), the plagues are listed in two different orders. With his mnemonic, Rabbi Yehuda teaches us that the order in which the plagues are listed in the Torah is the historical order in which they occurred [which we would not necessarily have known, as our Sages teach that the Torah is not entirely in chronological order.]

In addition, Rabbi Yehuda is highlighting a pattern within the Ten Plagues. In each set of three, Pharaoh was warned before the first two plagues, but the third occurred without warning. This is consistent with the opinion in the *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 81b) that a person who sinned twice after being warned and received the punishment of *makkot* / lashes each time can be punished for his third offense even without a warning. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach im Peirush Rokeach*)

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

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

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

“Pharaoh approached, and *Bnei Yisrael* raised their eyes and behold! -- Egypt was journeying after them, and they were very frightened; and *Bnei Yisrael* cried out to *Hashem*.” (Shmot 14:10)

The *Midrash Mechilta* records that *Bnei Yisrael* were divided into four groups, and for each of them Moshe had a different message. One group said, “All is lost; let’s throw ourselves into the sea.” To them, Moshe said (14:13), “Stand fast and see the salvation of *Hashem*.” A second wanted to return to Egypt, but Moshe told them: “As you have seen Egypt today, you shall never see them again.” A third wanted to fight, but Moshe said (14:14), “*Hashem* shall do battle for you.” The last group wanted to cry out. To them Moshe said, “You shall remain silent.”

R’ Yosef Shalom Elyashiv z”l (Yerushalayim; 1910-2012) observes that in every generation, whatever the challenge facing the Jewish People, there are multiple groups of well-meaning people suggesting different approaches to addressing the issues of the day. But, what is usually missing from the discussion, as was the case at the *Yam Suf*, is a Torah perspective. One group says (verse 11), “Are there no graves in Egypt?” That group does not have faith in the eternity of the Jewish People. Another group says, “Let us return to Egypt.” That group mistakenly thinks that there would be no anti-Semitism if we would only integrate with our neighbors. And so on. Moshe Rabbeinu--i.e., the Torah--has an answer for each of them, as the *Midrash* describes. (*Mishnat Ha’Grish: Pesach* p.397)



“And you [Moshe] -- lift up your staff and stretch out your arm over the sea and split it.” (Shmot 14:16)

Our Sages teach that Moshe Rabbeinu did not hit the water to initiate the plagues of Blood and Frogs because he owed the water a debt of gratitude for saving his life when he was an infant. Instead, Aharon brought about those plagues. Why, then, asks R' Nosson Teomim z"l (1913-1983; the *Krystynopoler Rav* in Brooklyn NY), did Moshe not show the same deference to the water at the Red Sea? Indeed, the question is especially strong because our Sages say that the guardian angel of the seas was pained by the splitting of the Red Sea. Shouldn't Moshe have shown consideration for the Sea in this case?

R' Teomim answers: Moshe, in fact, did nothing to initiate the splitting of the Red Sea. Rather, it was all *Hashem's* doing. The only reason Moshe was commanded to lift the staff over the Sea was to allow the Egyptians to think that Moshe was practicing magic. [Had an unambiguous miracle occurred, the Egyptians would never have chased *Bnei Yisrael*.]

We read (*Shmot* 14:31), “*Yisrael* saw the great hand that *Hashem* had inflicted in Egypt.” How did they see at the Sea the great hand that *Hashem* had inflicted in Egypt? R' Teomim explains that when *Bnei Yisrael* saw at the Sea that Moshe played no role in the miracle, they realized that, in Egypt also, it was *Hashem* that caused the miracles, not Moshe.

We say in the *Ma'ariv* prayer: “Your children beheld Your majesty, as you split the Sea before Moshe: ‘This is my G-d,’ they exclaimed; then they said, ‘*Hashem* shall reign for all eternity’.” When *Bnei Yisrael* saw that *Hashem* split the Sea in front of Moshe, but Moshe himself played no part, then they acknowledged G-d. (*Bar Pachtai*)



“On that day, *Hashem* saved *Yisrael* from the hand of Egypt.” (*Shmot* 14:30)

The *Midrash Yalkut Shimoni* relates that there was a great tumult in the Heavenly Court on the seventh night of *Pesach*, the night before the Splitting of the *Yam Suf*. Uza, the guardian angel of the Egyptians, argued that *Bnei Yisrael* were no better than the Egyptians, since even *Bnei Yisrael* had worshiped idols. Also, he asserted that the 400 years of exile that were decreed had not yet passed. *Hashem* was, so-to-speak, forced to answer Uza before He could save *Bnei Yisrael*.

Why now? asks R' Shlomo Eliasoff z"l (1841-1926; leading early 20th century *kabbalist*; grandfather of R' Yosef Shalom Elyashiv zt"l). Why didn't Uza object before the Exodus?

R' Eliasoff explains: On the night of the Exodus, *Bnei Yisrael* were protected by two *Mitzvot* that they had just performed. First, a mass *brit milah* had taken place on *Erev Pesach* (since *Bnei Yisrael* had previously stopped circumcising their children). Second, the *Korban Pesach* had been offered. Likewise, during the ensuing days, *Bnei Yisrael* were protected in the merit of blindly following *Hashem* into the desert (see *Yirmiyah* 2:2--“Thus said *Hashem*, ‘I recall for you the kindness of your youth, the love of your nuptials, your following Me into the wilderness, into an unsown land.”). However, when it came time to split the *Yam Suf*, another accounting was performed, and, since there were no new *Mitzvot* to weigh in the balance, G-d's special intervention to defend *Bnei Yisrael* was required. (Quoted in *Niglot Leshem Shvo V'achlamah*)



“Yisrael saw Egypt mait on the seashore.” (Shmot 14:30)

This verse is commonly translated, “Yisrael saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.” However, R’ Eliezer Nachman Foa z”l (rabbi of Modena, Italy; died 1701) translates it differently: “Yisrael saw the Egyptians dying on the seashore.” As a precedent for this translation, he cites *Bereishit* 35:18, “And it came to pass, as her [Rachel’s] soul was departing—*ki maitah* / for she was dying—that she called his name Ben Oni.” Although some translate “*ki maitah*” as “she died,” this cannot be correct, for how could she give her son a name after she died?

What is the significance of the fact that “Yisrael saw the Egyptians dying on the sea shore”? R’ Foa explains that just as the Jewish People saw the Egyptians dying, the Egyptians saw in their last moments that the Jewish People had survived. This increased even more the sanctification of G-d’s Name that resulted from the miracle. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Midrash B’chiddush* p.110)



“This is my G-d and I will make Him a naveh.” (Shmot 15:2)

Rashi writes: Onkelos translates “*naveh*” in the sense of a dwelling as in (*Yeshayah* 33:20), “a peaceful habitation” and in (*Yeshayah* 65:10) “a dwelling for flocks.” [According to this, *Bnei Yisrael* were referring prophetically to the future *Mishkan* or *Bet Hamikdash*.] *Rashi* continues: Another explanation of it is that it has the sense of “*noy*” / beauty, and the meaning is, “I will relate His splendor and praiseworthiness to the inhabitants of the world.”

Similar to the latter explanation, the *Gemara* (*Shabbat* 133b) cites this verse from *Az Yashir* / the Song at the Sea as a basis for performing *Mitzvot* in the most beautiful way possible. [For example, this is why we decorate the *sukkah*.] What is the connection between this concept and the splitting of the *Yam Suf*?

R’ Shlomo Zalman Auerbach z”l (Yerushalayim; 1910-1995) explains: We read in *Pirkei Avot* that Avraham Avinu was tested ten times, and he passed all his tests. Commentaries write that it was the self-sacrifice that he demonstrated during these tests which caused him to merit many miracles during his lifetime. Similarly, before the Exodus, *Hashem* commanded that *Bnei Yisrael* circumcise themselves and slaughter a *korban Pesach* and put its blood on their doorposts, two *Mitzvot* that required self-sacrifice. [Slaughtering the *korban Pesach* and putting its blood on the doorposts required self-sacrifice because the Egyptians considered the sheep to be a deity.]

Therefore, when *Bnei Yisrael* reflected on the awesome miracles involved in splitting the *Yam Suf*, they were inspired to accept upon themselves a higher level of Divine service, i.e., to not only perform the *Mitzvot*, but to make the necessary sacrifice to perform *Mitzvot* in a more beautiful way. (*Minchat Avot* p.115)



“You will bring them and implant them on the mount of Your heritage, the foundation of Your dwelling-place that You, *Hashem*, have made--the Sanctuary, my Master, that Your hands established. *Hashem* shall reign for all eternity. Because Pharaoh’s cavalry came with his chariots and horse-men into the sea, and *Hashem* turned back the waters of the sea upon them . . .” (*Shmot* 15:17-19)

Rashi z”l to *Sukkah* 41a derives from our verse (“the Sanctuary . . . that Your hands established”) that the future *Bet Hamikdash* will come down from Heaven already built.

In this light, R’ Moshe Alshich z”l (1508-1593; Tzefat, Israel) explains the causal relationship (“Because Pharaoh’s cavalry . . .”) between the above verses as follows: In the first verse above, *Bnei Yisrael* requested that the Temple descend from Heaven immediately. However, a prerequisite to that event is that G-d be known throughout the world. That condition has been met, *Bnei Yisrael* argued, “Because Pharaoh’s cavalry came with his chariots and horsemen into the sea and *Hashem* turned back the waters of the sea upon them.” They all died in the *Yam Suf*, but Pharaoh himself survived to proclaim G-d’s greatness throughout the world! (*Torat Moshe*)

Based on this, writes R’ Shlomo Kluger z”l (1784-1869; rabbi of Brody, Galicia), we can understand the *Midrash Eichah Rabbah* which states, “If you had merited, you would have read (our verse), ‘You will bring them and implant them . . .’ Now that you have not merited, you read (*Eichah* 1:22), ‘Let all their wickedness come before You.’” What is the relationship between these verses?

He explains: As noted, the time right after the Exodus would have been a propitious time for the final *Bet Hamikdash* to descend from Heaven already complete. Why didn’t it? Because, soon after, *Bnei Yisrael* made the Golden Calf.

As a result, based on the above explanation by R’ Alshich, we have to await a new opportunity for G-d to be known throughout the world. How will this come about? Through the fulfillment of the verse from *Eichah* quoted by the *Midrash*: “Let all their wickedness come before You.” This is a plea that *Hashem* take all the hurt done to the Jewish People over the millennia as a personal affront so that, when He takes retribution from our oppressors, it will not be in our honor, but rather a proclamation of His Name. Then, again, we will be ready to see the fulfillment of our verse, “You will bring them [to] the Sanctuary, my Master, that Your hands established. (*Dimat Ha’ashukim* p.2)



A *Midrash* states: “From the day that G-d created man until that day, no one had sung in praise of Him. He created Adam, but Adam did not sing. He saved Avraham from the furnace, but Avraham did not sing, etc.”

Why, in fact, did the Patriarchs not sing in praise of *Hashem* when He performed miracles for them? R’ Yehoshua Segal Deutsch z”l (rabbi of the Katamon neighborhood of Yerushalayim) explains as follows in the name of R’ Yoel Teitelbaum (1888-1979; the *Satmar Rav*): We read, “When the people dedicate themselves [to Him] -- bless *Hashem*.” The *Talmud Yerushalmi* comments on this verse, “The heads of the nation dedicate themselves to bless *Hashem*.” The word used in the verse and in the *Yerushalmi* for “dedicate” comes from the root נָדַב, which means to

make a voluntary offering. In other words, if the heads of the nation, *i.e.*, the righteous, sing to *Hashem*, it is a voluntary offering. They have no obligation to sing to *Hashem* because they have earned whatever good He gives them.

In contrast. *Bnei Yisrael* did not deserve to be saved from the Egyptians. To the contrary, our Sages relate that the angels argued before *Hashem*, "How are these [*Bnei Yisrael*] different from these [the Egyptians]? They are all idolators!" Thus, *Bnei Yisrael* were obligated to sing when they were saved.

The question still remains: Why did the Patriarchs not offer voluntary songs of praise (as the *Yerushalmi* suggests later generations of *tzaddikim* did)? The answer is that one is not permitted to offer a voluntary prayer or song unless he is capable of doing his subject justice. Precisely because the Patriarchs had a greater appreciation of G-d's awesomeness, they were afraid to attempt to offer a voluntary song. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Kol Yeshuah* p. 154)

כַּמָּה מַעֲלוֹת טוֹבוֹת לְמָקוֹם עֲלֵינוּ :

- | | |
|--------|---------------------------------|
| | אלו הוציאנו ממצרים, |
| דינו : | ולא עשה בהם שפטים, |
| | אלו עשה בהם שפטים, |
| דינו : | ולא עשה באלהיהם, |
| | אלו עשה באלהיהם, |
| דינו : | ולא הרג את בכוריהם, |
| | אלו הרג את בכוריהם, |
| דינו : | ולא נתן לנו את ממונם, |
| | אלו נתן לנו את ממונם, |
| דינו : | ולא קרע לנו את היס, |
| | אלו קרע לנו את היס, |
| דינו : | ולא העבירנו בתוכו בתרבה, |
| | אלו העבירנו בתוכו בתרבה, |
| דינו : | ולא שקע צרינו בתוכו, |
| | אלו שקע צרינו בתוכו, |
| דינו : | ולא ספק צרינו במדבר ארבעים שנה, |
| | אלו ספק צרינו במדבר ארבעים שנה, |
| דינו : | ולא האכילנו את הפן, |

אלו האכילנו את הפן,
 ולא נתן לנו את השבת,
 דינו :

אלו נתן לנו את השבת,
 ולא קרבנו לפני הר סיני,
 דינו :

אלו קרבנו לפני הר סיני,
 ולא נתן לנו את התורה,
 דינו :

אלו נתן לנו את התורה,
 ולא הכניסנו לארץ ישראל,
 דינו :

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

R' Aharon Yosef Auerbach *shlita* (Bnei Brak, Israel) asks: The text of the “*Maggid*” portion of the *Haggadah* is derived from *Mishnah*, *Gemara*, and *Midrashim*. In contrast, this poem--while more than 1,000 years old--does not date to the time of the Talmud or *Midrashim*. Why then is it recited or sung in the middle of *Maggid*?

He explains: Much of *Maggid* is an exposition of verses in *Parashat Ki Tavo*--beginning with (*Devarim* 26:5), “An Aramean tried to destroy my forefather,” and continuing with the three following verses. In fact, the *Mishnah* (*Pesachim* 116a) states that we are supposed to expound upon the entire section in which that verse appears, but we don’t do that. Instead, we conclude with verse 8, and we do not expound upon verse 9, “He brought us to this place, and He gave us this Land, a Land flowing with milk and honey” (or the two verses that follow).

Apparently, writes R' Auerbach, when the *Bet Hamikdash* stood and each of the Jewish People held his *Seder* in Yerushalayim, he would expound on verse 9 as well. They could say, “He brought us to this place . . .” Even though entering *Eretz Yisrael* and building the *Bet Hamikdash* did not happen until long after the Exodus, they were the purpose of the Exodus, and they therefore are discussed as part of the *Seder*.

In later generations, when the Jewish People were dispersed throughout the Roman Empire, Europe, and other places of exile, it no longer made sense to say (and expound upon) the verse, “He brought us to this place . . .” Even so, the *Haggadah*’s authors did not want to erase all memory of that part of *Maggid*. Therefore, they introduced this poem that speaks of *Hashem*’s kindness to us, concluding with, “He built for us the *Bet Ha’bechirah*,” *i.e.*, the *Bet Hamikdash*.

R' Auerbach concludes: This explains as well why we begin the *Seder* proclaiming, “This year we are here; next year in *Eretz Yisrael*!” We are telling our children: Know that the story that you are about to hear is incomplete. Next year, in *Eretz Yisrael*, we will tell the whole story.

(Parenthetically, R' Auerbach notes that there is a *Midrash* stating that *Bnei Yisrael* were transported miraculously to Yerushalayim on the night of the Exodus to offer their *Korbanot Pesach* at the future site of the *Bet Hamikdash*. According to that *Midrash*, the verse, “He brought us to this place . . .,” is literally part of the Exodus story.) (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Pitchei Avraham*)

עַל אַחַת כַּמָּה וְכַמָּה טוֹבָה כְּפוּלָה וּמְכַפֵּלַת לַמָּקוֹם עָלֵינוּ :

שְׁהוֹצִיאָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, וְעָשָׂה בָּהֶם שְׁפָטִים, וְעָשָׂה בְּאֱלֹהֵיהֶם, וְהָרַג אֶת בְּכוֹרֵיהֶם, וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת מְמוֹנָם, וְקָרַע לָנוּ אֶת הַיָּם, וְהֶעֱבִירָנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ בְּחַרְבָּה, וְשָׁקַע צָרֵינוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ, וְסִפֵּק צָרֵינוּ בַּמַּדְבָּר אַרְבַּעַיִם שָׁנָה, וְהֶאֱכִילָנוּ אֶת הַפֶּן, וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת הַשֶּׁבֶת, וְקָרְבָנוּ לִפְנֵי הַר סִינַי, וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת הַתּוֹרָה, וְהִכְנִיסָנוּ לְאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבָנָה לָנוּ אֶת בֵּית הַבְּחִירָה, לְכַפֵּר עַל כָּל עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ.

R' Yaakov Halevi Lifschutz z"l (1838-1921) was the long-time secretary to R' Yitzchak Elchanan Spektor z"l (1817-1896; rabbi of Kovno), who was one of the leading halachic authorities of the second half of the 19th century as well as a spokesman and lobbyist for Russian Jewry in the Czar's court. Through his position, R' Lifschutz was a witness to, and a participant in, many important events of that era. His memoirs are entitled "Zichron Yaakov."

[R' Lifschutz begins his memoir by discussing the concept of history. He writes:] The histories of other nations revolve around the development of their states, the stories of their kings, their wars, and their influence on world politics; also, on the activities of their wise men in all areas of wisdom and science.

Jewish history is different from the history of all other nations. Even when the Jewish People lived in their own land under their own rule, the foundation of its existence was its religion and its Torah. When *Yisrael* went straightforwardly in the way of *Hashem* and His Torah, they accomplished great things and succeeded. When they turned away from *Hashem's* path, their power and strength declined wondrously. [A writer] observed in [the Hebrew newspaper] *Ha'tzefirah*, issue 49, 5644 [1884]:

The Jews suffer their oppressors silently, as if they feel nothing. However, when the oppressor touches their holy delights, then they are disturbed from their restfulness and they become strong like lions. Their lives, their lowly condition, and their lack of political standing are light in their eyes, but the desecration of the Torah they cannot tolerate. . . The greatest tragedy that befell them, the loss of their independence and the end of their status as an independent nation at the hand of the Roman legions, is referred to as the "Destruction of the Bet Hamikdash"--that is what serves as a milestone in their history, whereas the loss of political independence is not mentioned.



R' Moshe Chaim Luzzato z"l (1707-1746; prolific author recognized as one of the leading *kabbalists* of all time) writes in *Mesilat Yesharim* (ch.1) that everything in this world, whether good or bad, is a *Nisayon*, usually translated, a "test." If so, many ask, why do we pray every morning, "Do not bring us to a condition of *Nisayon* / being tested"?

R' Itamar Schwartz *shlita* (popular author and speaker in Yerushalayim) explains: The word "*Nisayon*" comes from the word "*Nes*." The common root of these words can have three meanings: to flee (as in *Bereishit* 14:10 and 39:12); to test (as in *Bereishit* 22:1); and to elevate (as in *Bemidbar* 21:8, where it refers to a stick held aloft). These three meanings, writes R' Schwartz, parallel three stages in a person's spiritual development.

Early in a person's development, he should flee from any *Nisayon*. He should avoid situations in which his spiritual mettle will be tested. It is at this stage that we pray, "Make us regular students of your Torah . . . and do not bring us to a condition of *Nisayon*." True, even being a regular student of Torah is a *Nisayon* for most people. However, our prayer means: Do not place before us other challenges that will disturb us from taking the first step in Your service, *i.e.*, being regular students of Torah.

When a person has developed further, he is ready to be tested in a more dramatic fashion. We read in *Mishlei* (24:16), "A *tzaddik* will fall seven times and arises." In *Chassidic* thought, this verse is interpreted, not that a *tzaddik* will arise even though he has fallen seven times, but rather that a *tzaddik* will arise because he has fallen seven times. At this stage, tests are integral to the person's development.

Finally, after one has completed the stage of being tested, he reaches the third level where he has been elevated.

R' Schwartz adds: These three phases parallel three stages of the Exodus and ensuing events. First, *Bnei Yisrael* fled from Egypt (see *Shmot* 14:5). Later, they were prepared to be tested by turning to face the pursuing Egyptians (see *Shmot* 14:5 – "Stand still and see G-d's salvation"). Finally, they were elevated by receiving the Torah. (*B'lvavi Mishkan Evneh* Vol. V, p. 173)



"Hashem said to Moshe, 'Behold! I shall rain down for you food from heaven; let the people go out and pick each day's portion on its day, so that I can test them, whether they will follow My Torah or not.'" (*Shmot* 16:4)

R' Yitzchak Isaac Chaver *z"l* (1789-1852; rabbi of Suvalk, Lithuania) writes: It is well-known that the entire Exodus was meant to repair the sin of Adam. If Adam had not eaten from the *Etz Ha'da'at* and contaminated his soul, he would have lived forever. Man is a combination of a spiritual, supernatural soul and a material, natural body; as long as man did not sin, his existence was not dependent on nature. The fruit of the Tree, though, was purely natural, with no spiritual content; accordingly, G-d directed Adam not to eat it. When Adam disregarded G-d's command, he subjected himself to the forces of nature, one of which is death.

"*Achilah*" / "eating" has several meanings in *Tanach*. Prophecy is called eating, as in the verse (*Shmot* 24:11), "They gazed at God; they ate and drank." In *Mishlei* (9:5), Torah study and *Mitzvah* performance are referred to as "bread." This is because, just as physical food--bread, in particular--sustains the body, so Torah and *Mitzvot* sustain the soul.

The food *Bnei Yisrael* ate in the desert was called "*mahn*" (spelled "*mem-nun*"). "*Mem*" equals 40, the number of days Moshe was on *Har Sinai*, and "*nun*" equals 50, the number of days between the Exodus and Giving of the Torah. This hints that *mahn* nourished the soul, enabling it to receive the Torah, which was the purpose of the Exodus. And, *mahn* had to be eaten fresh every day to teach that the Torah should be accepted anew, with freshness, every day. All of this was to repair Adam's sin of eating "natural" food. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Yad Mitzrayim*)

רָבֵן גַּמְלִיאֵל הָיָה אוֹמֵר: כָּל שְׂלֵא אָמַר שְׁלֶשָׁה דְּבָרִים אֵלּוּ בַּפֶּסַח, לֹא יֵצֵא יְדֵי חוּבְתּוֹ, וְאֵלּוּ הֵן:

פֶּסַח. מִצְּוָה וּמְרוֹר:

פֶּסַח שֶׁהָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אוֹכְלִים, בְּזִמְן שְׁבִית הַמְּקֻדָּשׁ הָיָה קִיָּם, עַל שׁוּם מָה? עַל שׁוּם שֶׁפֶּסַח הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, עַל בְּתֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְאָמַרְתֶּם זָבַח פֶּסַח הוּא לִי, אֲשֶׁר פֶּסַח עַל בְּתֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִצְרַיִם, בְּנִגְפוֹ אֶת מִצְרַיִם וְאֶת בְּתֵינוּ הֲצִיל, וַיִּקַּד הָעָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ.

Rashi (to *Shmot* 12:11) writes: “For *Hashem* skipped over the houses of the Jews which were among the houses of the Egyptians. He jumped from Egyptian to Egyptian, and the Jew was in the middle. As for you, serve Him for the sake of Heaven.”

What does *Rashi*'s last comment mean and how is it related to his explanation of the word “*Pesach*”? R' Nosson David Rabinowitz z”l (early 20th century) explains:

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

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

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

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



One of the laws of the *Korban Pesach* is that we may not break any of its bones while eating it. An anonymous 13th century scholar who identifies himself only as “A *Levi* from Barcelona” (Spain) explains:

One of the “roots” of this *Mitzvah* is to remind us of the Exodus. It is not fitting for princes and those close to the king to break bones as dogs do. Such behavior befits someone suffering from starvation. Therefore, at our inauguration as the Chosen People, a kingdom of priests and holy nation--and, likewise, on the annual anniversary of that event--it is appropriate that we act in a way befitting our majesty. Through such actions, we will establish this feeling of majesty in our hearts forever.

The “Levi from Barcelona” continues: Do not challenge me by asking, “Wouldn’t one remembrance of the Exodus be enough?” That would not be a wise question. Know! “ האדם נפעל לפי פועולתו / Man is inspired by his actions, and his heart and thoughts follow his deeds, whether good or bad. If one occupies himself with Torah and *Mitzvot*, even without the proper intentions, he will turn toward good. His deeds will vanquish the *Yetzer Ha’ra*, because the heart follows one’s deeds. This is what our Sages mean when they say, “*Hashem* wants to bring merit to *Yisrael*; therefore, he gives them many *Mitzvot*.” Once you understand this, you will understand why there are so many *Mitzvot* commemorating the Exodus, which is the pillar of our beliefs. (*Sefer Ha’chinuch* No.16)

R’ Aharon Dovid Goldberg *shlita* (*Rosh Yeshiva* of the Teshe Yeshiva in Cleveland, Ohio) notes that the words of the *Sefer Ha’chinuch* regarding the importance of recognizing one’s majesty are echoed in the work *Pitchei Sha’arei Ha’avodah*, sometimes attributed to Rabbeinu Yonah *z”l* (Spain; died 1263). That work teaches:

“The first step [in serving *Hashem*] is to know one’s own worth, and to recognize one’s own value and the value of his ancestors--their greatness, importance in the eyes of *Hashem* and His love for them.”

R’ Goldberg writes: There are two aspects to this attitude. First, one should be aware of the importance that he has merely because he is a member of the Jewish People. As *kabbalists* explain, the actions of every member of the Jewish People have cosmic effects that we can barely imagine. Second, one should know that he is important as an individual. Every person has unique strengths and abilities, and it is critical for serving *Hashem* that one be aware of his own strengths. As one of the great teachers of *mussar* said: “Woe to a person who does not recognize his faults, for then he does not know what to fix. Even worse off is someone who doesn’t recognize his strengths, for then he does not know how to fix what needs fixing.” (*Oto Ta’avod Al Pitchei Sha’arei Ha’avodah*)



“Moshe called to all the elders of *Yisrael* and said to them, ‘*Mishchu* / Draw forth or *u’kechu* / buy for yourselves one of the flock for your families, and slaughter the *Pesach-offering*.’” (*Shmot* 12:21)

The words “*mishchu u’kechu*” literally mean, “Pull and take.” The *Midrash* records that the Sages offered two explanations for this phrase. Rabbi Yose Ha’Glili says, “Pull yourselves away from idolatry--the lamb being an object of veneration for the Egyptians--and take *Mitzvot*,” while Rabbi Yishmael says, “From here we learn that one can join a partnership for the *Pesach-offering* (‘take’) and withdraw from it (‘pull away’) until the time it is slaughtered.”

R’ Raphael Hamburger *z”l* (1722-1803; rabbi of Altona-Hamburg-Wandsbeck, Germany) writes: It is unusual for two Sages to argue about the meaning of a verse, with one giving it a *halachic* meaning and the other giving it an *aggadic* / moralistic meaning. In reality, though, these two interpretations not only are complementary, they are saying the same thing. He explains:

R’ Yose Ha’Glili agrees with the *Halachah* that one can join a partnership for the *Pesach-offering* and withdraw from it until the time it is slaughtered. However, he was bothered by the wording of the verse; since one cannot withdraw from a partnership unless one has first joined that partnership, the verse should have said the opposite of what it actually says, i.e., “*kechu u’mishchu*” / “Take” first, and only afterward, “pull away.” Therefore, R’ Yose Ha’Glili explains the

verse as incorporating a command to “pull away” from idolatry by setting aside a lamb for slaughter. Indeed, since every one of *Bnei Yisrael* had an obligation to take a lamb in order to distance himself from idolatry, there seemingly could have been no partnerships that first year.

R' Hamburger continues: The above demonstrates the unity of *Halachah* / the legal part of the Torah, on the one hand, and *aggadata*, the non-legal, philosophical and moralistic teachings of the Torah, on the other hand, though each has a separate role. *Halachah* relates to *Yir'ah* / fear of G-d, for one fears that he will not fulfill his legal duty, while *aggadata* relates to *ahavah* / love of G-d, for it teaches man to appreciate G-d and the world. (*Da'at Kedoshim*: Introduction)



The following are selected laws of the *Pesach* offering from *Mishneh Torah: Hilchot Korban Pesach*, chapter 1, by *Rambam z"l*:

(3) The *Pesach* offering is slaughtered only in the *Azarah* / Temple Courtyard like other sacrifices. Even in those historical periods when private altars were permitted by *Halachah*, the *Korban Pesach* could not be offered on a private altar, but only on the central public altar.

(9) The *Pesach* offering is slaughtered in three groups, as we read (above), “The entire congregation of the assembly of *Yisrael* shall slaughter it in the afternoon”--“Congregation” is one group, “Assembly” is a second group, and “*Yisrael*” is a third group. There had to be no fewer than thirty people in a group.

(10) If only fifty people came, in total, thirty would enter the *Azarah* and slaughter their sacrifices, ten would leave and another ten would enter, and, again, ten would leave and ten would enter. If it ever happened that fewer than fifty people came, the *Pesach* should not be slaughtered.

(11) The first group would enter the *Azarah* until it was full; then the doors were locked. As long as the *Shechitah* and offering continued, the recitation of *Hallel* took place as well.

(12) With each repetition of *Hallel*, the *Shofar* was blown.



The *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 64b) records that once, during the Second Temple Era, King Agrippas wanted to know how many Jews there were. He told the *Kohen Gadol*, “Take note of the *Pesach* offerings!” The *Kohen Gadol* then took one kidney from each *Pesach* offering that was brought. When the kidneys were counted, they were found to number 1.2 million. And, every *Korban Pesach* was shared by at least ten people. These figures do not account, notes the *Gemara*, for those who did not participate because they were *Tamei* / ritually impure or far away. That *Pesach*, the *Gemara* concludes, was referred to as the “Thick--i.e., crowded--*Pesach*.”

יגביה המצה ויאמר

מִצָּה זוֹ שְׁאָנוּ אוֹכְלִים, עַל שׁוֹם מָה? עַל שׁוֹם שֶׁלֹּא הִסְפִּיק בְּצִקָּם שֶׁל אֲבוֹתֵינוּ לְהַחֲמִיץ, עַד שֶׁנִּגְלָה עֲלֵיהֶם מִלֶּךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים, הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, וּגְאָלָם, שְׁנֵימָר: וַיֵּאָפוּ אֶת הַבֶּצֶק, אֲשֶׁר הוֹצִיאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, עֲגַת מִצּוֹת, כִּי לֹא חֲמֵץ: כִּי גִרְשׁוֹ מִמִּצְרַיִם, וְלֹא יָכְלוּ לְהַתְמַהֵמָה, וְגַם צָדָה לֹא עָשׂוּ לָהֶם.

“They baked the dough that they took out of Egypt into unleavened cakes, for they could not be leavened, for they were driven from Egypt for they could not delay, nor had they made provisions for themselves.”

This passage in the *Haggadah* implies that *Matzah* recalls the Exodus, especially the aspect of *Chipazon* / the hastiness of our departure from Egypt. But, earlier in the *Haggadah* (in “*Halachma anya*”), we say that *Matzah* is the bread that our ancestors ate in Egypt, implying that *Matzah* recalls the slavery. These two statements seem to contradict each other!

R' Shlomo Zarka z"l (Algeria; died 1876) and R' Yehuda Chermon z"l (Algeria; 1812-1911) explain that these two reasons for eating *Matzah* are complementary. They write: Why was the Exodus *Be'chipazon* / with hastiness, as alluded to in our verse? The answer is that it exactly paralleled the Egyptians' treatment of *Bnei Yisrael* in slavery. When our ancestors were slaves, the Egyptians fed them *Matzah*, which is digested slowly, so they would go longer between meals and work more. And, when *Bnei Yisrael* tried to bake bread at home, the Egyptians came and rushed them off to work, forcing them to eat their bread before it leavened. *Middah K'negged Middah*/ measure-for-measure, when *Hashem* redeemed *Bnei Yisrael*, he rushed them out of Egypt, forcing them, once again, to eat *Matzah*. This time, however, it was eaten with a feeling of great joy because it represented something different--freedom! (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Rinah V'yeshuah* p.101)



R' Chaim Paltiel z"l (13th century; France) asks: Why do we say that they baked *Matzah* because they had to rush out of Egypt? In fact, they already had been commanded (12:15), “For seven days you shall eat *Matzot*”!

Therefore, he answers, our verse should be read as follows: “They baked the dough that they took out of Egypt into unleavened cakes, for they could not be leavened [because of the *Mitzvah* to eat only *Matzah*. And, why did they bake their *Matzah* outside of Egypt?] For they were driven from Egypt and they could not delay, [and they had nothing else to eat] nor had they made provisions for themselves.”

If this is the case, however, how can we say in the *Pesach Haggadah*: “Why do we eat *Matzah*? Because their bread did not have time to rise, as is written (in our verse), “They baked the dough that they took out of Egypt into unleavened cakes . . . for they could not delay””? In fact, we eat it because of the command! Rather, R' Chaim Paltiel concludes, the way to reconcile our verse with the earlier command to eat *Matzah* is to realize that *Hashem* knows the future. When He commanded us to eat *Matzah*, He already knew *Bnei Yisrael* would not have time to leaven their dough at the time of the Exodus. (Quoted in *Haggadah Shel Pesach Torat Ha'Rishonim* p.163)



Rashi z"l comments on the last phrase (“nor had the made provisions for themselves [for the journey]”): “This is stated to tell how praiseworthy *Yisrael* was. They did not say, ‘How can we go forth into the wilderness without provisions?’ Rather, they had faith and set forth. This is what is referred to in the prophets (*Yirmiyahu* 2:2), ‘I remember for you the kindness of your youth, the love of your nuptials, how you went after me in the wilderness in a land that was not sown.’”

R' Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg z"l (1910-2012; *Rosh Ha'yeshiva* of Yeshivat Torah Ohr in New York and later in Yerushalayim) asks: Seemingly, the act of going into the wilderness with no provisions was an expression of *Bnei Yisrael's* faith in *Hashem*. Why does *Rashi* attribute it to kindness and love?

He explains: The ability to have *emunah* / faith is inextricably intertwined with the ability to love and to perform kindness. In human relationships, one is able to love other people when he is able to trust them. In relation to *Hashem*, one is able to love Him when one recognizes His greatness, and this manifests itself in faith as well. Further, only a person who is capable of placing his faith in other people is capable of trusting in *Hashem*.

R' Scheinberg adds: This is the meaning of a passage in the *Midrash Mechilta*, commenting on the verse (*Shmot* 14:31), "They had faith in *Hashem* and in Moshe, His servant." The *Mechilta* asks: If they had faith in Moshe, is it not a given that they had faith in *Hashem*? The *Midrash* answers: This teaches that if one has faith in His trustworthy shepherd, it is as if one has faith in the Creator. On the other hand, the *Midrash* continues, we read (*Bemidbar* 21:5), "The people spoke against G-d and Moshe." If they did not have faith in *Hashem*, is it not a given that they did not have faith in Moshe? This teaches, the *Midrash* concludes, that if one does not have faith in His trustworthy shepherd, one cannot have faith in the Creator. [The ability to have faith in Moshe and the ability to have faith in *Hashem* go hand-in-hand.] (*Derech Emunah U'vitachon* p.60)



R' Yitzchak Al-Achdab z"l (Spain and Sicily; late 14th-early 15th centuries) writes: Many commentaries write that, at this time, *Bnei Yisrael* were not yet commanded not to eat *Chametz* for seven days. Therefore, after eating the *korban Pesach* with *Matzah*, they began to bake bread. However, they were suddenly expelled from Egypt and their bread had no time to rise. In commemoration of this, we eat *Matzah* for seven days.

However, he continues, this is difficult to accept, for if they wanted leavened bread and they were forced to eat *Matzah*, why is that worth commemorating? Furthermore, although it is true that they were not yet commanded not to own *Chametz* for seven days, they certainly were not permitted to bake *Chametz* on the first day of *Pesach*!

Rather, he writes, after *Bnei Yisrael* finished eating their *korban Pesach* and *Matzah*, they began baking *Matzah* for the next day. Suddenly, however, G-d revealed Himself in Egypt and, in the ensuing uproar, which was followed by preparing to leave, *Bnei Yisrael* were unable to bake the dough which they had prepared. That dough should have risen during the night that followed and become *Chametz*, but a miracle happened and it remained unleavened. It is to commemorate that miracle that we eat *Matzah* for seven days. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Pesach Dorot* p.112)



"They could not delay [leaving Egypt]."

Our Sages say that, had *Bnei Yisrael* remained in Egypt a moment longer, they would have sunk to the "50th gate of impurity" from which there is no return. R' Zalman Sorotzkin z"l (rabbi in *Lithuania* and Israel) observes that *Bnei Yisrael* reached that stage after only 210 years in exile. In contrast, the Jewish People apparently have not fallen that low after the nearly 2,000 years in the current exile. Why?

He answers: The key difference between us and our ancestors who were in Egypt is that we have the Torah and they did not. True, our Sages say that they preserved their unique style of dress and they spoke the Hebrew language, but that wasn't enough to preserve their identity. Only the Torah can accomplish that. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Ha'shir Ve'hashevach* p.105)

R' Gedalia Schorr z"l (1911-1979; *Rosh Yeshiva* of Torah Vodaath in Brooklyn) asks: What does it mean that there is no escape from the "50th gate of impurity? *Chazal's* statement implies that even *Hashem* could not have removed them from there, but surely there is nothing that is impossible for *Hashem* to do!

R' Schorr explains: *Hashem* promised Avraham that his (Avraham's) descendants would be enslaved in a foreign land for 400 years and then redeemed. But not all of Avraham's descendants were enslaved in Egypt, only those who carried Avraham's physical DNA and were his spiritual heirs. Had *Bnei Yisrael* sunk down to the fiftieth level of ritual impurity, the spiritual link with the Patriarchs would have been severed. Of course *Hashem* still could have saved them, but He would not have been saving the spiritual descendants of Avraham. Rather, it would have been a new people that He was taking out of Egypt. That could not be permitted to happen. (*Ohr Gedalyahu*)



R' Yekutiel Yehuda Halberstam z"l (1905-1994; *Klausenberger Rebbe*) writes: There is a longstanding custom to make the *Matzot* for the *Seder* round, not square. The reason is that square *Matzot* can be placed next to each other so that they look like one; round *Matzot* cannot be joined in this way. This reminds us that the cause of our long exile is our inability to get along. There is jealousy and hatred between us, and what one person considers to be a *Mitzvah*, another considers to be a sin. Additional reminders of this sad situation are the custom to have a *Matzah* cover with three separate compartments so that the *Matzot* are kept separate, and the custom to name the *Matzot*, "*Kohen, Levi and Yisrael*," emphasizing their individuality. Appropriately, the holiday of *Pesach* is known as "*Chag Ha'matzot*" - plural - not "*Chag Ha'matzah*" - singular. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Halichot Chaim* p.21)

יגביה המרור ויאמר

מָרֹר זֶה שְׁאָנּוּ אוֹכְלִים, עַל שׁוּם מָה? עַל שׁוּם שְׁמֵרְרוּ הַמִּצְרִים אֶת חַיֵּי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם, שְׁנֵאָמַר: וַיִּמְרְרוּ אֶת חַיֵּיהֶם בְּעִבְדָּה קָשָׁה, בְּחֶמֶר וּבִלְבָנִים, וּבְכָל עֲבָדָה בְּשָׂדֶה: אֶת כָּל עֲבָדְתָם, אֲשֶׁר עָבְדוּ בָּהֶם בְּפָרֶךְ.

"They embittered their lives with hard work, with mortar and with bricks, and with every labor of the field."

R' Shlomo Zarka z"l (Algeria; died 1876) and R' Yehuda Chermon z"l (Algeria; 1812-1911) ask: Why does the verse begin with construction work ("with mortar and with bricks") and then switch to farm work ("every labor of the field")?

They explain: *Bnei Yisrael* had a quota of bricks they had to produce each day. If they finished early, they could go home for the day. However, on their way home, Egyptians would grab them and force them to do farm work and perform other tasks, *i.e.*, "every labor of the field." (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Rinah V'yeshuah* p.102)

בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיֵּב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ, כְּאִלוּ הוּא יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם, שְׁנֹאמֵר:
וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: בְּעִבּוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה יי לִי, בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם. לֹא אֶת
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּלִבָּד, גָּאֵל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, אֶלֶּא אִף אוֹתֵנוּ גָּאֵל עִמָּהֶם, שְׁנֹאמֵר:
וְאוֹתֵנוּ הוֹצִיא מִשָּׁם, לְמַעַן הִבִּיא אֹתֵנוּ, לְתֵת לָנוּ אֶת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ.

“In every generation, one is obligated to regard himself as if he personally had gone out of Egypt, as it is written (*Shmot* 13:8), “And you shall tell your son on that day, saying, ‘It is because of this that *Hashem* did for me when I left Egypt.’” It is not only our fathers whom the Holy One redeemed [from slavery]; we, too, He redeemed with them, as it is written (*Devarim* 6:23), “He took us out of there in order to bring us, to give us the Land that He swore to our forefathers.”

R' Dr. Norman Lamm *shlita* (Chancellor of Yeshiva University) writes: Most of us, as we attend the *Seder*, tend to think back to the *Sedarim* of our youth. As a child -- beginning as a little boy of age six or seven and through my *bar Mitzvah* -- I, my parents and my siblings attended the *Seder* presided over by my maternal grandfather [R' Yeshoshua Baumol *z"l* (1880-1948; author of *She'eilot U'teshuvot Emek Halachah*)]. Zeyde, of blessed memory, was a man short in stature, but great in rabbinic scholarship and personal warmth. The first part of the *Seder* was most enjoyable: the chanting, the singing, the expectation of rewards for the younger grandchildren for reciting the Four Questions successfully, and the *Divrei Torah* interspersed by the more knowledgeable participants. The memory I most cherish was that of Zeyde, who chanted certain passages of the *Haggadah* in the melodies of his *Chassidic* home before World War I. His face beamed when he had us, his American-born grandchildren, sing along with him.

But then, when it came to the *Haggadah's* description of the torments of *Bnei Yisrael* by the sadistic Egyptian taskmasters, Zeyde's mood changed abruptly. He was totally silent as we continued to read aloud from the *Haggadah*. He said nothing, but tears streamed down his face and onto his beard. I do not recall if anyone else noticed it, but I did.

It took me a few years to begin to understand. He was reciting the suffering of the Israelites -- and he wept for them, but also for himself, for he knew that his elderly mother had been shot by the SS when she resisted climbing aboard a cattle car taking Jews to the death chambers. His tears were shed for her -- and for his brothers and sisters and their large families, and for his teachers and his study partners and his students . . .

Zeyde's change of mood was his personal illustration of the dual mode of the historic Jewish experience as represented in the *Haggadah*. Sadness and singing are both part of the *Seder* / order of life. (*The Royal Table Haggadah* p.13)



R' Yehuda Amichai *shlita* (Director of the Torah Ve'ha'aretz Institute, formerly located in Gush Katif) observes: The language of the *Haggadah* implies that there are two parts to the obligation discussed. The first is taught by the verse, “And you shall tell your son,” while the second is found in the verse, “He took us out.” But what is the difference between these two obligations?

He explains: The first part of the paragraph refers to personal redemption. I must regard myself as if I personally was a slave and I was redeemed. The second part refers to communal redemption. G-d took us, the community of *Yisrael*, out of Egypt in order to give us the Land that He swore to our forefathers.

Significantly, the verse connected with the first part of the obligation is the verse that the *Haggadah* lists as the answer to the wicked son. To him we speak of the personal aspect of the Exodus, for we cannot hope that he will ever appreciate the communal aspect of the redemption. The second verse, on the other hand, is the source of the answer given to the wise son.

R' Amichai adds: *Rambam z"l* appears not to agree that there is a two part obligation here, for *Rambam's* version of the *Haggadah* is different. Instead of, "In every generation, one is obligated to regard himself . . .," *Rambam's* text reads, "In every generation, one is obligated to show himself." According to *Rambam*, it would seem, the entire obligation described in this paragraph is directed outward, referring exclusively to the communal redemption. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Gush Katif* p.30)



What does it mean in practice to see oneself as if he had personally gone out of Egypt? R' Shlomo Wolbe z"l (1914-2005) explains:

In Egypt, *Bnei Yisrael* were enslaved. They were lowly slaves to a corrupt nation. *Bnei Yisrael's* masters controlled both their bodies and their minds, subjecting them to back-breaking labor and to negative spiritual influences. Thus, *Midrash Rabbah* records that *Bnei Yisrael* who left Egypt had been idolaters. Indeed, four-fifths of *Bnei Yisrael* did not even merit to leave Egypt; instead, they died during the plague of Darkness. And, even those who did leave Egypt were, in a sense, stuck in Egypt until *Hashem* "extracted" them, as we read (*Devarim* 4:34), "Or has any god ever miraculously come to take for himself a nation from inside a nation."

And yet, the moment they left Egypt, they turned into new people. We read (*Shmot* 14:8), "*Bnei Yisrael* were going out with an upraised arm." *Rashi z"l* explains: "With elevated and public *Gevurah* / strength." This *Gevurah* was manifested, writes R' Wolbe, by rising above their previous lowly state, breaking free of the dominion of evil and impurity, and entering the dominion of holiness.

We say in *Ma'ariv* that *Hashem* "removed His people *Yisrael* from their midst to eternal freedom." What is this "eternal freedom"? It is more than freedom from physical slavery; it is freedom from the dominion of evil and impurity. To see ourselves as having gone out of Egypt means to free ourselves from whatever evil or impurity holds dominion over us, R' Wolbe writes.

How is this accomplished? R' Wolbe explains: *Pirkei Avot* (ch.5) describes the Ten Plagues as "Ten *Nissim* that were performed for our ancestors." "*Nes*" is often translated "miracle," but it also means "banner." At each of the plagues, *Hashem* elevated our ancestors like a banner held high, and He drew them close to Him. As idolaters, they should have experienced the same fate as the Egyptians, but *Hashem's Hashgachah Peratit* / Divine Providence directed to the individual protected them miraculously.

Every time Hashem demonstrates His Hashgachah Peratit over an individual, He is elevating that person, just as He elevated our ancestors when His Hashgachah Peratit saved them miraculously from the Ten Plagues. To see ourselves as if we had personally gone out of Egypt means recognizing the Hashgachah Peratit in our lives and being inspired by it to break the hold that evil and impurity have over each of us to a greater or lesser degree. (Da'at Shlomo: Ma'amarei Geulah p.10)

יגביה הכוס, יכסה המצות ויאמר

לְפִיכֶם אֲנַחֲנוּ חַיִּים לְהוֹדוֹת, לְהִלֵּל, לְשַׁבַּח, לְפָאֵר, לְרוֹמֵם, לְהַדָּר, לְבָרֵךְ, לְעַלֵּה וּלְקַלֵּס, לְמִי שֶׁעָשָׂה לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ אֶת כָּל הַנִּסִּים הָאֵלֹהִים. הוֹצִיאָנוּ מֵעֲבֹדוֹת לְחַרּוֹת, מִיָּגוֹן לְשִׁמְחָה, וּמֵאֲבֵל לְיוֹם טוֹב, וּמֵאֲפֵלָה לְאוֹר גְּדוֹל, וּמִשְׁעָבוֹד לְגִאֲלָה. וְנֹאמַר לְפָנָיו שִׁירָה חֲדָשָׁה. הַלְלוּיָהּ :

מניחים את הכוס ומגלים את המצות

הַלְלוּיָהּ. הַלְלוּ עַבְדֵי יְיָ. הַלְלוּ אֶת שֵׁם יְיָ. יְהִי שֵׁם יְיָ מְבָרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם : מְמֹזָרַח שְׁמֶשׁ עַד מְבוֹאוֹ. מְהִלֵּל שֵׁם יְיָ. רַם עַל כָּל גּוֹיִם יְיָ. עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ : מִי כִּי אֱלֹהֵינוּ. הַמְּגַבִּיחַ לְשַׁבַּת : הַמְּשַׁפִּילִי לְרֵאוֹת בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ : מְקִימֵי מַעֲפָר דָּל. מַאֲשַׁפֵּת יָרִים אֲבִיוֹן : לְהוֹשִׁיבֵי עִם נְדִיבִים. עִם נְדִיבֵי עַמּוֹ : מוֹשִׁיבֵי עֶקְרַת הַבַּיִת אִם הַבָּנִים שִׁמְחָה. הַלְלוּיָהּ :

בְּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם, בֵּית יַעֲקֹב מֵעַם לֵעָז : הִיְתָה יְהוּדָה לְקַדְשׁוֹ. יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמְּשֻׁלוֹתָיו : הֵיִם רָאָה וַיִּנָּס, הִיְרָדוֹן יֹסֵב לְאַחֹר : הַהָרִים רָקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים. גְּבַעוֹת כְּבָנֵי צֶאֱן : מָה לָּךְ הֵיִם כִּי תִנוּס. הִיְרָדוֹן תִּסָּב לְאַחֹר : הַהָרִים תִּרְקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים. גְּבַעוֹת כְּבָנֵי צֶאֱן : מִלְּפָנֵי אֲדוֹן חוֹלֵי אֶרֶץ. מִלְּפָנֵי אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב : הַהֶפְכִי הַצּוֹר אֶגֶם מִיָּם. חֲלַמִּישׁ לְמַעֲיָנוּ מִיָּם.

כל אחד יקח כוסו בידו

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלְּךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר גָּאֲלָנוּ וְגָאֵל אֶת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְלִילָה הַזֶּה, לְאֶכֶל בּוֹ מִצָּה וּמְרוֹר. כֵּן, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, יִגִּיעָנוּ לְמוֹעֲדִים וְלִרְגָלִים אַחֲרִים, הַבָּאִים לְקִרְאָתָנוּ לְשָׁלוֹם. שְׁמַחִים בְּבִנְיָן עִירָךְ, וְשָׁשִׁים בְּעֲבוֹדָתְךָ, וְנֹאכֵל שֵׁם מִן הַזְּבָחִים וּמִן הַפְּסָחִים (בְּמוֹצָאֵי שַׁבַּת אוֹמְרִים מִן הַפְּסָחִים וּמִן הַזְּבָחִים), אֲשֶׁר יִגִּיעַ דָּמָם, עַל קִיר מִזְבֵּיחֶךָ לְרִצּוֹן, וְנוֹדָה לָּךְ שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ עַל גִּאֲלָתָנוּ, וְעַל פְּדוּת נַפְשָׁנוּ : בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, גָּאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל :

כוס שני

הֲנִי מוֹכֵן וּמְזַמֵּן לְקַיִם מְצוֹת כּוֹס שְׁנִיָּה מֵאַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת לְשֵׁם יְחִוּד קוֹדֶשׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא וְשִׁכְיִנְתִּיָּה עַל יְדֵי הַהוּא טְמִיר וְנִעְלָם בְּשֵׁם כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלְּךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן :

רְחֻצָה

נוטלים ידים ומברכים :

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

מוֹצֵיא. מַצָּה

נוטל את המצות שעל הקערה ומברך

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

מניח את המצה התחתונה ובעודו אוחז את העליונה ואת הפרוסה מברך

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

אוכלים כשיעור שני זיתים מצה וטובלים במלח

מָרוֹר

לוחק כזית מרור, טובלו בחרוסת ומברך ואוכלו

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

כוּרֵךְ

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

זָכַר לְמִקְדָּשׁ כְּהֵלֶל : כֵּן עָשָׂה הֵלֶל בְּזִמְנוֹ שְׁבִית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הָיָה קָיָם. הָיָה כּוּרֵךְ פָּסַח
מַצָּה וּמָרוֹר וְאוֹכַל בְּיַחַד. לְקַיֵּם מֵה שְׁנַאֲמַר : עַל מִצּוֹת וּמָרוֹרִים יֵאָכְלֶהוּ :

שֵׁלַחן עוֹרֵךְ

צָפוֹן

אוכלים את האפיקומן

בְּרִידָה

ברכת המזון

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת בְּשׁוֹב יְיָ אֶת שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן הֵינּוּ כְּחֻלְמִים: אֲזִי יִמְלֵא שְׁחוֹק פִּינוּ וְלִשׁוֹנֵנוּ רִנָּה אֲזִי יֹאמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם הַגְּדִיל יְיָ לַעֲשׂוֹת עִם אֱלֹהֵי: הַגְּדִיל יְיָ לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּנוּ הֵינּוּ שְׂמֵחִים: שׁוֹבָה יְיָ אֶת שְׁבִיתֵנוּ כְּאֶפְיָקִים בְּנֶגֶב: הַזְרְעִים בְּדַמְעָה בְּרִנָּה יִקְצְרוּ: הַלֹּדֶף יִלְדֵּךְ וּבִכְהָ נִשְׂאָ מִשֶּׁדֶךְ הַזֶּרַע בֹּא יְבֵא בְרִנָּה נִשְׂאָ אֱלֻמְתֵינוּ:

המזמן: רבותי נברך!

המסובין: יהי שם יי מברך מעתה ועד עולם.

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

המסובין: ברוך (אלהינו) שאכלנו משלו ובטובו חיינו.

המזמן: ברוך (אלהינו) שאכלנו משלו ובטובו חיינו.

ברוך הוא וברוך שמו:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

הרחמן, הוא ימלוך עלינו לעולם ועד.

הרחמן, הוא יתברך בשמים ובארץ.

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

הרחמן, הוא יפרנסנו בכבוד.

הַרְחֵמוּ, הוּא יִשְׁבֹּר עֲלֵנוּ מֵעַל צָנְאֲרֵנוּ וְהוּא יוֹלִיכֵנוּ קוֹמְמִיּוֹת לְאַרְצֵנוּ.

הַרְחֵמוּ, הוּא יִשְׁלַח לָנוּ בְּרָכָה מְרַבָּה בַּבַּיִת הַזֶּה, וְעַל שְׁלַחַן זֶה שְׂאֲכָלְנוּ עִלְיוֹ.

הַרְחֵמוּ, הוּא יִשְׁלַח לָנוּ אֶת אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַנְּבִיא זְכוֹר לְטוֹב, וַיִּבְשֹׂר לָנוּ בְּשׂוֹרוֹת טוֹבוֹת יְשׁוּעוֹת וְנַחֲמוֹת.

הַרְחֵמוּ, הוּא יִבְרָךְ אֶת (אָבִי מוֹרִי) בְּעַל הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה, וְאֶת (אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי) בְּעַלְת הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה,

הַרְחֵמוּ, הוּא יִבְרָךְ אוֹתִי (וְאָבִי וְאִמִּי וְאִשְׁתִּי וְזֶרְעִי וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לִי)

הַרְחֵמוּ, הוּא יִבְרָךְ אֶת בְּעַל הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה, וְאֶת אִשְׁתּוֹ בְּעַלְת הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה.

אוֹתָם וְאֶת בֵּיתָם וְאֶת זֶרְעָם וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם אוֹתָנוּ וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לָנוּ, כְּמוֹ שְׁנֵתְבָרְכוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, אֲבָרְהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב: בְּכָל, מְכָל, כָּל. כֵּן יִבְרָךְ אוֹתָנוּ כְּלָנוּ יַחַד. בְּבָרְכָה שְׁלֵמָה, וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן:

בְּמָרוֹם יִלְמְדוּ עֲלֵיהֶם וְעֲלֵינוּ זְכוֹת, שֶׁתִּהְיֶה לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת שְׁלוֹם, וְנִשְׂא בְּרָכָה מֵאֵת יְיָ וְיִצְדָּקָה מֵאֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְנִמְצָא חַן וְשִׂכָּל טוֹב בְּעֵינֵי אֱלֹהִים וְאָדָם:

לשבת הַרְחֵמוּ, הוּא יִנְחִילָנוּ יוֹם שְׁכָלוֹ שֶׁבֶת וּמְנוּחָה לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָמִים.

הַרְחֵמוּ, הוּא יִנְחִילָנוּ יוֹם שְׁכָלוֹ טוֹב.

הַרְחֵמוּ, הוּא יִזְכֵּנוּ לִימֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ וְלְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא.

מְגִדוֹל יְשׁוּעוֹת מְלָכוֹ, וְעֵשָׂה חֶסֶד לְמִשְׁיחוֹ לְדוֹד וּלְזֶרְעוֹ עַד עוֹלָם: עֵשָׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמָרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם, עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן:

יִרְאוּ אֶת יְיָ קִדְשׁוֹ, כִּי אֵין מַחְסוֹר לִירְאָיו: כְּפִירִים רָשׁוּ וְרָעִבוּ, וְדוֹרְשֵׁי יְיָ לֹא יִחְסְרוּ כָּל טוֹב: הוֹדוּ לֵי כִי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: פּוֹתַח אֶת יְדָד, וּמִשְׁבִּיעַ לְכָל חַי רָצוֹן: בְּרוּךְ הַגֹּבֵר אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בֵּינֵי, וְהִזִּיהַ יְיָ מִבְּטַחוֹ: גַּעַר הִיִּיתִי גַם זְקִנְתִּי וְלֹא רָאִיתִי צָדִיק נֶעְזֵב, וְזֶרְעוֹ מִבְּקֶשׁ לָחֶם: יְיָ עֹז לְעַמּוֹ יִתֵּן, יְיָ יִבְרָךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ בְּשְׁלוֹם:

כוס שלישית

הִנְנִי מוֹכֵן וּמְזַמֵּן לְקַיִם מְצוֹת כּוֹס שְׁלִישִׁית מֵאַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת לְשֵׁם יְחִוּד קוּדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא וְשְׁכִינְתֵיהָ עַל יְדֵי הַהוּא טְמִיר וְנִעְלָם בְּשֵׁם כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

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

מוזגים כוס מיוחדת לאליהו הנביא, ופותחים את הדלת ואומרים

שָׁפֵד חֲמַתָּד אֶל הַגּוֹיִם, אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִדְעוּדָּ וְעַל מַמְלְכוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּשִׁמָּד לֹא קָרְאוּ: כִּי אָכַל אֶת יַעֲקֹב. וְאֶת נְוָהוּ הַשָּׁמוּ: שָׁפֵד עֲלֵיהֶם זַעֲמָד, וְחָרוֹן אַפָּד יִשְׁיִגִם: תִּרְדָּדָּ בְּאֶרֶץ וְתִשְׁמִידִם, מִתַּחַת שָׁמַי יִי:

R' Aryeh Levin z"l (1885-1969; known as the "Tzaddik of Yerushalayim" and as the "Prisoners' Rabbi") and R' Chaim Shmuelevitz z"l (1902-1979; *Rosh Yeshiva* of the Mir Yeshiva) met at a *brit milah*. There was a long delay in beginning the *brit*, so R' Shmuelevitz turned to R' Levin and asked, "I am supposed to be at the *yeshiva*. What should I do?"

R' Levin replied: "I cannot tell his honor what to do, but I can tell you a story." This is the story he told:

When I [R' Levin] was younger, I met R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld z"l (1848-1932; rabbi of the *Eidah Ha'chareidit* in Yerushalayim) at a *brit milah*. There was a long delay in beginning the *brit*, so I turned to R' Sonnenfeld and asked, "I am supposed to be at the *yeshiva*. [R' Levin was *Mashgiach Ruchani* at Yeshivat Etz Chaim.] What should I do?"

R' Sonnenfeld replied: "It is difficult to pass-up an opportunity to meet Eliyahu Ha'navi. It is a rare occasion."

When R' Levin finished his story, R' Shmuelevitz said, "If so, we must wait." (Quoted in *Brito L'hodi'am* p.92)

From the same work:

R' David Cohen z"l (1887-1972; instructor at Yeshivat Merkaz Ha'Rav; known as the "Nazir") posed the following question at the *brit milah* of his grandson (son of R' Shlomo Goren z"l): Why is Eliyahu Ha'navi such a central figure at a *brit milah*? After all, this is a *Mitzvah* associated with Avraham Avinu, as demonstrated by the blessing we recite--"To bring [the child] into the *brit* /covenant of Avraham Avinu"!

R' Cohen explained: The covenant that is made at the *brit milah* is the joining together of the past, the present and the future of the Jewish people. Avraham Avinu represents our past. Those assembled at the *brit* represent the present. Finally, Eliyahu Ha'navi, the harbinger of the Redemption, represents the future.

הַלֵּל

The *Gemara* (*Megilah* 14a) asks why we recite *Hallel* on *Pesach* but not on *Purim*. After all, argues the *Gemara*, "If we recite *Hallel* on a holiday that commemorates the transition from slavery to freedom [*i.e.*, *Pesach*], how much more so should we recite it on a holiday that commemorates the transition from death to life [*i.e.*, *Purim*]." The *Gemara* answers that we do not say *Hallel* on *Purim* because, even after the *Purim* miracle, "We are still slaves to Achashveirosh," *i.e.*, we are still subjugated by, or subservient to, the nations of the world.

R' Yosef Shalom Elyashiv z"l (1910-2012; Yerushalayim) asks: Why then do we say *Hallel* on *Pesach*? Why don't we say, "We are still slaves to Pharaoh," as long as we are still subjugated by, or subservient to, other nations? Moreover, we say in the *Pesach Haggadah*, "In every generation, one is obligated to see himself as if he had personally gone out of Egypt." Why do we view ourselves as having gone out of Egypt if we are once again subservient to other nations?

R' Elyashiv explains: The *Gemara* (*Berachot* 9a-b) teaches that *Hashem* asked *Bnei Yisrael* to "please" ask the Egyptians for gold and silver (see *Shmot* 11:2) so that Avraham would not accuse *Hashem* of keeping His promise to enslave Avraham's descendants, but not keeping His promise to take them out of Egypt with great wealth (see *Bereishit* 15:13-14). However, writes R' Elyashiv, this is difficult to understand. Is gold and silver what the Torah means when it refers to "great wealth"? Surely "great wealth" is the closeness to *Hashem* that one obtains by performing *Mitzvot* and studying Torah!

He answers: When *Hashem* spoke of "great wealth," He was, indeed, referring to the Torah that *Bnei Yisrael* would receive after the Exodus. However, not everyone appreciates the immense pleasure that can be obtained from studying Torah; not everyone considers that to be "great wealth." Because of such people, *Hashem* had to make sure that *Bnei Yisrael* left Egypt with gold and silver also.

Nevertheless, concludes R' Elyashiv, true wealth is spiritual wealth, which is something that the other nations of the world can never take away from us, no matter how much they subjugate us. Once we left Egypt and received the Torah, that wealth is ours to keep forever. That is why we recite *Hallel* on *Pesach* even though we are still subjugated by, or subservient to, other nations. And, that is why every person is obligated to see himself as if he had left Egypt--so he can appreciate that which we gained and never lost. (*Mishnat Ha'Grish: Pesach* p.412)

לא לנו יי לא לנו כי לשמך תן כבוד, על חסדך על אמתך. למה יאמרו הגוים, איך 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 יריחו. ידיהם ולא ימישו, רגליהם ולא יהלכו, לא יהגו בגרונם. כמוהם יהיו עשיהם, כל אשר בטח בהם: ישראל בטח ביי, עזרם ומגנם הוא. בית אהרן בטחו ביי, עזרם ומגנם הוא. יראי יי בטחו ביי, עזרם ומגנם הוא:

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

אהבתי כי ישמע יי, את קולי תחנוני. כי הטח אזנו לי ובימי אקרא: אפפוני חבלי מות, ומצרי שאול מצאוני צרה ויגון אמצא. ובשם יי אקרא, אנה יי מלטה נפשי. חנון יי וצדיק, ואלהינו מרחם. שמר פתאים יי דלותי ולי יהושיע. שובי נפשי למנוחתי, כי יי גמל עליכי. כי חלצת נפשי ממות את עיני מן דמעה, את

הַגְּלִי מִדְּחִי. אֶתְהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי יְיָ, בְּאַרְצוֹת הַחַיִּים. הָאֱמָנֹתִי כִּי אֲדַבֵּר, אֲנִי עֲנִיתִי מְאֹד.
אֲנִי אֲמַרְתִּי בְּחַפְזִי כֹּל הָאָדָם כֹּזֵב.

We read that, following the splitting of the *Yam Suf* and the drowning of the Egyptians, “*Yisrael* saw the great hand that *Hashem* inflicted upon Egypt; and the people revered *Hashem*, and they had faith in *Hashem* and in Moshe, His servant.” The *Midrash Yalkut Shimoni* comments: In the merit of having faith in *Hashem* and in Moshe, His servant, they merited to inherit the Land.

R’ Chaim Palagi *z”l* (1788-1868; rabbi of Izmir, Turkey) writes: This indicates that the generation that entered the Land had two merits--having faith in *Hashem* and having faith in Moshe. In contrast, Moshe, who did not enter the Land, had only one merit--that of having faith in *Hashem*. In that merit, he was able to die in *Eretz Yisrael*. How so? Although Moshe never crossed the border, *Hashem* miraculously folded the entire Land under the place where he stood, so that he did merit to die in *Eretz Yisrael*.

This, R’ Palagi continues, is alluded to in the verse in *Hallel*, “I shall walk before *Hashem* in the land of the living. I have kept the faith, for I speak . . .” “I have kept the faith,” is what Moshe Rabbeinu said of himself. Also, “I speak”--therefore others believed in You. In that merit, they entered the “the land of the living” (i.e., *Eretz Yisrael*). Seeming, Moshe did not enter the Land. However, the final letters of the four words, “*Lifnei Hashem b’artzot ha’chaim*” / “before *Hashem* in the land of the living” make up the letters of the word “*mitah*” / “death.” This hints that Moshe’s end was in “the land of the living.” (*Artzot Ha’chaim* p.4)

מָה אָשִׁיב לַיְיָ, כָּל תַּגְּמוּלוֹהִי עָלַי. כּוֹס יְשׁוּעוֹת אֲשָׂא, וּבָשָׂם יְיָ אֶקְרָא. נִדְרֵי לַיְיָ
אֲשִׁלֵּם, נִגְדָה נָא לְכָל עַמּוֹ. יִקָּר בְּעֵינַי יְיָ הַמְּוֹתָה לְחִסְדֵּיךָ. אָנָּה יְיָ כִּי אֲנִי עֲבָדְךָ אֲנִי
עֲבָדְךָ, בְּוֹ אֲמַתְךָ פִּתְחַת לְמוֹסְרֵי. לָךְ אֲזַבַּח זֶבַח תּוֹדָה וּבָשָׂם יְיָ אֶקְרָא. נִדְרֵי לַיְיָ
אֲשִׁלֵּם נִגְדָה נָא לְכָל עַמּוֹ. בְּחִצְרוֹת בַּיִת יְיָ בְּתוֹכֵכִי יְרוּשָׁלַיִם הִלְלוּיָהּ.

הִלְלוּ אֶת יְיָ, כָּל גּוֹיִם, שִׁבְחִיהוּ כָּל הָאֲמִים. כִּי גִבֹר עֲלֵינוּ חֶסֶדוֹ, וְאַמַּת יְיָ לְעוֹלָם
הִלְלוּיָהּ:

הוֹדוּ לַיְיָ כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ:

יֹאמֶר נָא יִשְׂרָאֵל, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ:

יֹאמְרוּ נָא בַּיִת אֱהָרֹן, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ:

יֹאמְרוּ נָא יִרְאֵי יְיָ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ:

מן המצור קראתי יְהוָה, עֲנֵנִי בְמִרְחֵב יְהוָה. יְיָ לִי לֹא אִירָא, מִה יַעֲשֶׂה לִי אֱדָם. יְיָ לִי בְעֲזָרִי, וְאֲנִי אֶרְאֶה בְשִׁנְאֵי. טוֹב לַחֲסוֹת בְּיְיָ, מִבְּטֹחַ בְּאֲדָם. טוֹב לַחֲסוֹת בְּיְיָ מִבְּטֹחַ בְּנַדְיָבִים. כָּל גּוֹיִם סִבְּבוֹנֵי בְשֵׁם יְיָ כִּי אֲמִילָם. סִבְּבוֹנֵי גַם סִבְּבוֹנֵי בְשֵׁם יְיָ כִּי אֲמִילָם. סִבְּבוֹנֵי כְדַבְּרִים דַּעְכוּ כְּאֵשׁ קוֹצִים, בְּשֵׁם יְיָ כִּי אֲמִילָם. דָּחָה דְחִיתַנִּי לְנֶפֶל, וַיְיָ עֲזָרָנִי. עֲזֵי וְזִמְרַת יְהוָה, וַיְהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה. קוֹל רְנָה וִישׁוּעָה בְּאֶהְלִי צַדִּיקִים, יְמִין יְיָ עֲשֶׂה חֵיל. יְמִין יְיָ רוֹמְמָה, יְמִין יְיָ עֲשֶׂה חֵיל. לֹא אָמוֹת כִּי אַחֲיָה, וְאֶסְפֵּר מַעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה. יִסֹּר יִסְרָנִי יְהוָה, וְלִמּוֹת לֹא נִתְּנָנִי. פִּתְחוּ לִי שַׁעֲרֵי צֶדֶק, אָבֹא בָם אוֹדָה יְהוָה. זֶה הַשַּׁעַר לִי, צַדִּיקִים יָבֹאוּ בוֹ. אוֹדֶה כִּי עֲנִיתַנִּי, וַתְּהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה. אוֹדֶה כִּי עֲנִיתַנִּי, וַתְּהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה. אָבֹן מֵאֲסוּ הַבּוֹנִים, הִיִּתָּה לְרֹאשׁ פְּנֵה. אָבֹן מֵאֲסוּ הַבּוֹנִים, הִיִּתָּה לְרֹאשׁ פְּנֵה. מֵאֵת יְיָ הִיִּתָּה זֵאת, הִיא נִפְלְאֹת בְּעֵינֵינוּ: מֵאֵת יְיָ הִיִּתָּה זֵאת, הִיא נִפְלְאֹת בְּעֵינֵינוּ. זֶה הַיּוֹם עֲשֶׂה יְיָ, נְגִילָה וְנִשְׂמְחָה בוֹ. זֶה הַיּוֹם עֲשֶׂה יְיָ, נְגִילָה וְנִשְׂמְחָה בוֹ.

“This is the day Hashem has made, let us rejoice and be glad ‘bo’.”

The *Midrash* states: I do not know whether “bo” means “with it” [i.e., the day] or with Him [i.e., Hashem]. Therefore King Shlomo writes (*Shir Ha’shirim* 1:4), “let us rejoice and be glad with You.”

R’ David Dov Meisels z”l (1814-1875; rabbi of Lask, Poland) explains: The *Midrash* is teaching that, when a person experiences any type of salvation, his primary joy should not be over the salvation itself. Rather, it should be because the salvation means that G-d cares enough about the one who was saved to save him. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach: Rei’ach Duda’im* p.94)

אָנָּה יְיָ הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא :

אָנָּה יְיָ הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא :

אָנָּה יְיָ הַצְּלִיחָה נָּא :

אָנָּה יְיָ הַצְּלִיחָה נָּא :

בְּרוּךְ הַבּוֹא בְשֵׁם יְיָ, בְּרַכְנוּכֶם מִבֵּית יְיָ. בְּרוּךְ הַבּוֹא בְשֵׁם יְיָ, בְּרַכְנוּכֶם מִבֵּית יְיָ. אֵל יְיָ וַיֵּאָר לָנוּ, אֶסְרוּ חַג בְּעַבְתֵּים, אֶסְרוּ חַג בְּעַבְתֵּים. אֵל יְיָ וַיֵּאָר לָנוּ, אֶסְרוּ חַג בְּעַבְתֵּים, אֶסְרוּ חַג בְּעַבְתֵּים. אֵלֵי אֶתְהָ וְאוֹדֶה אֱלֹהֵי אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ. אֵלֵי אֶתְהָ וְאוֹדֶה אֱלֹהֵי אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ: הוֹדוּ לִי כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לַעֲוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ.

הוֹדוּ לַיְי כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: הוֹדוּ לֵאלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: הוֹדוּ
לְאֲדֹנָי הָאֲדֹנָיִם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: לַעֲשֵׂה נִפְלְאוֹת גְּדוֹלוֹת לְבָדוֹ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:
לַעֲשֵׂה הַשְּׁמַיִם בְּתַבּוּנָה, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: לְרוֹקַע הָאָרֶץ עַל הַמַּיִם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם
חֲסֵדוֹ: לַעֲשֵׂה אוֹרִים גְּדוֹלִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: אֶת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לְמַמְשַׁלֵּת בַּיּוֹם, כִּי
לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: אֶת הַיָּרֵחַ וְכוֹכָבִים לְמַמְשַׁלוֹת בַּלַּיְלָה, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: לְמַכָּה
מִצְרַיִם בְּבְכוּרֵיהֶם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: וַיּוֹצֵא יִשְׂרָאֵל מִתּוֹכָם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: בְּיַד
חֲזָקָה וּבִזְרוּעַ נְטוּיָה, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: לְגֹזֵר יַם סוּף לְגִזְרִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:
וְהַעֲבִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתוֹכוֹ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: וְנִעַר פְּרַעַה וְחִילוּ בָיָם סוּף, כִּי לְעוֹלָם
חֲסֵדוֹ: לְמוֹלִיד עַמוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: לְמַכָּה מְלָכִים גְּדוֹלִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם
חֲסֵדוֹ: וַיַּהַרְג מְלָכִים אֲדִירִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: לְסִיחוּן מֶלֶךְ הָאֱמֹרִי, כִּי לְעוֹלָם
חֲסֵדוֹ: וּלְעוֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבְּשָׁן, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: וְנָתַן אֶרֶץ לְנַחֲלָה, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:
נִחַלָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עֲבָדוֹ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: שֶׁשֶּׁפְּלָנוּ זָכַר לָנוּ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:
וַיַּפְרְקֵנוּ מִצְרַיִנוּ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: נוֹתַן לָחֶם לְכֹל בֶּשֶׂר, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ: הוֹדוּ
לְאֵל הַשְּׁמַיִם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:

“[Give thanks] to Him Who divided the Yam Suf le’gezarim / in parts.”

The *Midrash Yalkut Shimoni* states that the word “le’gezarim” alludes to the *brit milah*. [The word comes from the root which means “to cut.”] What is the connection between *brit milah* and the splitting of the *Yam Suf*?

R’ Yehonasan Steif z”l explains: The guardian angel of the sea argued, “How can the sea divide? That is against the laws of nature and therefore a violation of G-d’s intent when He created the world!”

In reality, however, that is not a good argument. Our Sages teach that, as far as nature was concerned, Avraham and Sarah were not capable of having children. However, *Hashem* lifted them out of the framework of nature and gave them a son at unnaturally advanced ages. Why? Because the world was created for *Yisrael*. Nature serves *Yisrael*, not the other way around; provided, of course, that we are observing the Torah.

What is the ultimate proof that the Jewish People live outside of nature? It is the fact that a father and mother take their newborn son and subject him to *brit milah*. Indeed, in the blessing following the *brit milah*, that *Mitzvah* is referred to as a *chok* / a commandment which is not understood. There is no natural explanation for the fact that parents not only perform this *Mitzvah*, they do so happily. Therefore, the *Yam Suf* too could change its nature, and split. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Mahari Steif* p. 212)

נְשַׁמַּת כָּל חַי, תִּבְרַךְ אֶת שְׁמֵךְ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. וְרוּחַ כָּל בֶּשֶׂר, תִּפְאֵר וְתִרְוַם זְכָרְךָ
מִלְכָּנוּ תָּמִיד, מִן הָעוֹלָם וְעַד הָעוֹלָם אֲתָה אֵל. וּמִבְּלַעֲדֶיךָ אֵין לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ גּוֹאֵל
וּמוֹשִׁיעַ, פּוֹדֶה וּמַצִּיל וּמַפְרִיֵס וּמַרְחֵם, בְּכֹל עֵת צָרָה וְצוּקָה. אֵין לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ אֵלָּא
אַתָּה: אֱלֹהֵי הָרֵאשׁוֹנִים וְהָאַחֲרוֹנִים, אֵלֹהֵי כָּל בְּרִיּוֹת, אֲדוֹן כָּל תּוֹלְדוֹת, הַמְהַלֵּל
בְּרַב הַתְּשַׁבְּחוֹת, הַמְנַהֵג עוֹלָמוֹ בְּחֶסֶד, וּבְרִיּוֹתָיו בְּרַחֲמִים. וַיְי לֹא יָנוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן,

המעורר ישנים והמקיץ נרדמים, והמשיתח אלמים, והמתיר אסורים, והסומך נופלים, והזוקף כפופים, לה לבדך אגחנו מודים. אלו פינו מלא שירה פים, ולשוננו רנה כהמון גליו, ושפתותינו שבח כמרחבי רקיע, ועינינו מאירות כשמש וכירח, וידינו פרושות כנשרי שמים, ורגלינו קלות כאילות, אין אגחנו מספיקים, להודות לה יי אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, ולברך את שמך על אחת מאלף אלף אלפי אלפים ורבי רבבות פעמים, הטובות שעשית עם אבותינו ועמנו. ממזרים גאלתנו יי אלהינו, ומבית עבדים פדיתנו, ברעב זנתנו, ובשבע כלכלתנו, מחרב הצלתנו, ומדבר מלטתנו, ומחלים רעים ונאמנים דליתנו: עד הנה עזרונו רחמים, ולא עזבונו חסדיך ואל תטשנו יי אלהינו לנצח. על כן אברים שפלתת בנו, ורוח ונשמה שנפחת באפינו, ולשון אשר שמת בפינו, הן הם יודו ויברכו וישבחו ויפארו וירוממו ויעריצו ויקדישו וימליכו את שמך מלכנו, כי כל פה לה יודה, וכל לשון לה תשבע, וכל ברך לה תכרע, וכל קומה לפניה תשתחוה, וכל לבבות יראוה, וכל קרב וכליות יזמרו לשמך. כדבר שכתוב, כל עצמותי תאמנה יי מי כמוך. מציל עני מחזק ממנו, ועני ואביון מגזלו: מי ידמה לה, ומי ישוה לה ומי יערך לה: האל הגדול הגבור והנורא, אל עליון קנה שמים וארץ: נהללה ונשבחה ונפארה ונברך את שם קדשך. כאמור, לדוד, ברכי נפשי את יי, וכל קרבי את שם קדשו:

האל בתעצמות עזך, הגדול בכבוד שמך. הגבור לנצח והנורא בנוראותיך. המלך היושב על כסא רם ונשא:

שוכן עד, מרום וקדוש שמו: וכתוב, רננו צדיקים ביי, לישרים נאווה תהלה. בפי ישרים תתהלל. ובדברי צדיקים תתברך. ובלשון חסידים תתרום. ובקרב קדושים תתקדש:

ובמקהלות רבבות עמך בית ישראל, ברנה ותפאר שמך מלכנו, בכל דור ודור, שכן חובת כל היצורים, לפניה יי אלהינו, ואלהי אבותינו, להודות להלל לשבח לפאר לרומם להדר לברך לעלה ולקלס, על כל דברי שירות ותשבחות דוד בן ישי עבדך משיחך:

ישתבח שמך לעד מלכנו, האל המלך הגדול והקדוש בשמים ובארץ. כי לה נאה, יי אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו: שיר ושבחה, הילל וזמרה, עז וממשלה, נצח, גדלה וגבורה, תהלה ותפארת, קדשה ומלכות. ברכות והודאות מעתה ועד עולם.

R' Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook z"l (1865-1935; Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of Eretz Yisrael) writes: The word "tehilah" refers to "light," as in the verse (Iyov 31:26), "If I ever saw light as yahel / it shone." To give thanks ("hoda'ah") means to recognize that one is surrounded by Hashem's goodness. In contrast, "tehilah" means recognizing that the goodness that one receives is a result of being surrounded at all times by a Divine "light." In effect, it means recognizing that every individual good that is received is due to Hashem's constant presence. That "light," Hashem's presence, writes R' Kook, is a far greater gift than the specific good that was given.

The ability to recognize this, R' Kook adds, is itself a gift from *Hashem*, for how else could mankind see beyond the darkness of this world and notice *Hashem's* light! (*Olat Re'iyah* I pp. 193 & 197; II p.62)

R' Moshe Bleicher *shlita* (*Rosh Ha'yeshiva* of Yeshivat Shavei Chevron) elaborates: Giving thanks ("*hoda'ah*") is not unique to the Jewish People; all the peoples of the world do that. However, our verse teaches, *tehilah* -- recognizing and declaring *Hashem's* constant presence and living a life that reflects that awareness -- is the unique mission for which the Jewish nation was created. (*V'rav Shlom Banayich* p.14)



R' Avigdor Miller *z"l* (prominent *mussar* personality in New York; died 2001) observed that the verse (*Yeshayah* 43:21), "I fashioned this people for Myself that it might declare My praise," teaches that the life's mission of the Jewish People is to praise *Hashem*. This is the primary reason that we ask for the redemption-- to be able to praise *Hashem*, as we read (*Tehilim* 106:47), "Save us, *Hashem*, our G-d, and gather us from among the nations, to thank your Holy Name, and to be glorified through Your praise."

How does one come to a state of being able to praise *Hashem*? R' Miller answers that one is able to praise *Hashem* when one recognizes *Hashem* through one's senses, i.e., when one can see, hear and feel the presence of *Hashem* in his life. Praise is merely the result of careful study, the outward manifestation of true recognition of *Hashem's* presence.

How does one achieve this? The most basic tool is to carefully examine in detail the kindness that *Hashem* does for each of us.

On another occasion, R' Miller gave an example of the type of reflection to which he refers. A common pastime for many people is complaining about the weather. But how often do we stop to reflect on *Hashem's* kindness when we have good weather? The Torah (*Shmot* 13:4) expressly records that the Exodus from Egypt occurred in the spring, when the best weather for traveling occurs. Why is this detail singled out? Does the fact that the weather was nice have any significance when compared to the Ten Plagues and the other awesome miracles of the Exodus, or compared to our ancestors' joy at being freed from slavery?

Yes, answers R' Miller in the name of R' Nosson Zvi Finkel *z"l* (the *Alter* of Slobodka). The Torah is teaching us to appreciate even the "small" acts of kindness that *Hashem* does for us. Amidst your greatest joy -- for example, when our ancestors were freed from slavery -- take a moment to notice how beautiful the weather is. (*Sha'arei Orah* Vol. I, pages 101 & 132)

יְהַלְלוּךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ כָּל מַעֲשֶׂיךָ, וְחִסְדֵיךָ צְדִיקִים עוֹשֵׂי רְצוֹנְךָ, וְכָל עֲמֻךָ בַּיּוֹם
שֶׁרָאֵל בְּרָנָה יוֹדוּ וַיְבָרְכוּ וַיִּשְׂבְּחוּ וַיִּפְאָרוּ וַיְרֹמְמוּ וַיַּעֲרִיצוּ וַיִּקְדְּשׁוּ וַיִּמְלִיכוּ אֶת
שְׁמֶךָ מִלְּפָנָיו, כִּי לָךְ טוֹב לְהוֹדוֹת וּלְשַׁמְּחָה נָאָה לְזַמֵּר, כִּי מֵעוֹלָם וְעַד עוֹלָם אֶתָּה אֵל.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, מֶלֶךְ מְהֻלָּל בְּתַשְׁבָּחוֹת.

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

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם על הגפן ועל פרי הגפן ועל תנובת השדה, ועל ארץ חמדה טובה ורחבה, שרצית והנחלת לאבותינו, לאכול מפריה ולשבוע מטובה. רחם נא יי אלהינו על ישראל עמך, ועל ירושלים עירך, ועל ציון משכן כבודך, ועל מזבחתך ועל היכלך. ובנה ירושלים עיר הקדש במהרה בימינו, והעלנו לתוכה, ושמחנו בבנינה ונאכל מפריה ונשבוע מטובה, ונברך עליה בקדשה ובטהרה

(בשבת ורצה והחליצנו ביום השבת הזה.)

ושמחנו ביום חג המצות הזה. כי אתה יי טוב ומטיב לכל, ונודה לך על הארץ ועל פרי הגפן. ברוך אתה יי, על הארץ ועל פרי הגפן :

נְרָצָה

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

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם :

ובכו "ויחי בחצי הלילה".

אז רוב נסים הפלאת בלילה, בראש אשמורות זה הלילה, גר צדק נצחתו כנחלק לו לילה, ויהי בחצי הלילה.

דנת מלך גרר בחלום הלילה, הפחדת ארמי באמש לילה, וישר ישראל למלאך ויוכל לו לילה, ויהי בחצי הלילה.

זרע בכורי פתרוס מחצת בחצי הלילה, חילם לא מצאו בקומם בלילה, טיסת נגיד חרשת סלית בכוכבי לילה, ויהי בחצי הלילה.

יעץ מחרף לנופף אווי, הובשת פגריו בלילה, כרע בל ומצבו באישון לילה, לאיש חמודות נגלה רז חזות לילה, ויהי בחצי הלילה.

מִשְׁתַּכֵּר בְּכָלִי קֹדֶשׁ נִהְרַג בּוֹ בַּלַּיְלָה, נוֹשָׁע מִבוֹר אַרְיֹת פּוֹתֵר בְּעֵתוֹתַי לַיְלָה. שְׁנֵאָה
נֹטֵר אֲגִי וְכֹתֵב סְפָרִים לַיְלָה, וַיְהִי בַחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה.

עוֹרֶרֶת נִצְחָה עָלָיו בְּנִדְד שְׁנַת לַיְלָה, פּוֹרָה תִּדְרוֹף לְשׁוֹמֵר מֵהַמַּלְיָה, צָרַח כְּשֹׁמֵר
וְשָׁח אֶתְּא בִקְר וְגַם לַיְלָה, וַיְהִי בַחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה.

קָרַב יוֹם אֲשֶׁר הוּא לֹא יוֹם וְלֹא לַיְלָה, רָם הוֹדַע כִּי לֶחֶם הַיּוֹם אֵף לֶחֶם הַלַּיְלָה,
שׁוֹמְרִים הַפְּקִיד לְעִירָה כֹּל הַיּוֹם וְכֹל הַלַּיְלָה, תִּאֵיר כְּאוֹר יוֹם חֲשֵׁפֶת לַיְלָה, וַיְהִי
בַחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה:

בליל סדר שני

וּבְכֹן "וְאִמְרֹתֶם זִבַח פֶּסַח".

אִמְץ גְּבוּרֹתֶיךָ הַפְּלֵאֶת בַּפֶּסַח, בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל מוֹעֲדוֹת נִשְׂאֵת פֶּסַח, גְּלִיתָ לְאֲזַרְחֵי
חֲצוֹת לַיִל פֶּסַח, וְאִמְרֹתֶם זִבַח פֶּסַח.

דָּלְתִיו דְּפַקְתָּ כַּחַם הַיּוֹם בַּפֶּסַח, הִסְעִיד נוֹצְצִים עֲגוֹת מִצּוֹת בַּפֶּסַח, וְאֵל הַבְּקָר רָץ
זָכַר לְשׁוֹר עֶרְךָ פֶּסַח, וְאִמְרֹתֶם זִבַח פֶּסַח.

זַעַמוֹ סְדוּמִים וְלִהְטוּ בְּאֵשׁ בַּפֶּסַח, חֲלַץ לוֹט מֵהֶם, וּמִצּוֹת אָפָה בְּקֶץ פֶּסַח,
טֹאטֹאֶת אֲדַמַּת מֶיךָ וְנָף בְּעִבְרָךָ בַּפֶּסַח, וְאִמְרֹתֶם זִבַח פֶּסַח.

יְהִי, רֹאשׁ כָּל אוֹן מְחַצֶּת בְּלִיל שְׁמוֹר פֶּסַח, כְּפִיר, עַל בֶּן בְּכוֹר פִּסְחָתָּ בְּדָם פֶּסַח,
לְבַלְתִּי תֵת מִשְׁחִית לְבֹא בַּתְּחִי בַּפֶּסַח, וְאִמְרֹתֶם זִבַח פֶּסַח.

מִסְגֵּרֶת סִגְרָה בְּעֵתוֹתַי פֶּסַח, נִשְׁמְדָה מְדוֹן בְּצִלִּיל שְׁעוֹרֵי עֹמֵר פֶּסַח, שִׁרְפוּ מִשְׁמַנֵּי
פּוֹל וְלוֹד בִּיקָד יְקוֹד פֶּסַח, וְאִמְרֹתֶם זִבַח פֶּסַח.

עוֹד הַיּוֹם בְּנֵב לְעֵמוֹד, עַד גָּעָה עוֹנֵת פֶּסַח, פֶּסַח יָד כְּתָבָה לְקַעֲקַע צוֹל בַּפֶּסַח, צָפָה
הַצִּפִּית עֶרוֹךְ הַשְּׁלֶחַן, בַּפֶּסַח, וְאִמְרֹתֶם זִבַח פֶּסַח.

קָהַל כְּנֶסֶה הַדְּסָה צוֹם לְשִׁלֵּשׁ בַּפֶּסַח, רֹאשׁ מִבֵּית רָשַׁע מְחַצֶּת בְּעֵץ חֲמֻשִׁים בַּפֶּסַח,
שְׁתֵּי אֵלֶּה רָגַע, תְּבִיא לְעוֹצִית בַּפֶּסַח, תְּעוֹז יָדָךְ וְתֵרוֹם יְמִינְךָ, כְּלִיל הַתְּקַדֵּשׁ חַג
פֶּסַח, וְאִמְרֹתֶם זִבַח פֶּסַח.

כִּי לֹא נֶאֱמַר, כִּי לֹא יֵאָמֵר.

אֲדִיר בְּמְלוּכָה, בְּחֹר פְּהֻלָּה, גְּדוּדָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ :
לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אֶף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמַּמְלָכָה.

כִּי לֹא נֶאֱמַר, כִּי לֹא יֵאָמֵר.

דָּגוּל בְּמְלוּכָה, הַדּוּר פְּהֻלָּה, וְתִיקִיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ :
לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אֶף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמַּמְלָכָה.

כִּי לֹא נֶאֱמַר, כִּי לֹא יֵאָמֵר.

זַפְּאֵי בְּמְלוּכָה, חֲסִין פְּהֻלָּה, טַפְסָרְיוֹ יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ :
לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אֶף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמַּמְלָכָה.

כִּי לֹא נֶאֱמַר, כִּי לֹא יֵאָמֵר.

יְחִיד בְּמְלוּכָה, כְּבִיר פְּהֻלָּה, לַמּוֹדָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ :
לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אֶף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמַּמְלָכָה.

כִּי לֹא נֶאֱמַר, כִּי לֹא יֵאָמֵר.

מוֹשֵׁל בְּמְלוּכָה, נוֹרָא פְּהֻלָּה, סְבִיבָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ :
לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אֶף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמַּמְלָכָה.

כִּי לֹא נֶאֱמַר, כִּי לֹא יֵאָמֵר.

עֲנֹו בְּמְלוּכָה, פּוֹדֵה פְּהֻלָּה, צְדִיקָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ :
לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אֶף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמַּמְלָכָה.

כִּי לֹא נֶאֱמַר, כִּי לֹא יֵאָמֵר.

קְדוֹשׁ בְּמְלוּכָה, רְחוּם פְּהֻלָּה, שְׂנֵאָנָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ :
לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אֶף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמַּמְלָכָה.

כִּי לֹא נֶאֱמַר, כִּי לֹא יֵאָמֵר.

תִּקְיָו בְּמְלוּכָה, תּוֹמֵם פְּהֻלָּה, תְּמִימָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ :
לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אֶף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמַּמְלָכָה.

כִּי לֹא נֶאֱמַר, כִּי לֹא יֵאָמֵר.

אָדיר הוּא,

יבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקִרְוֹב, בְּמִהְרָה בְּמִהְרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקִרְוֹב. אֵל בְּנֶה, בְּנֶה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקִרְוֹב.

בְּחֹר הוּא, גְּדוֹל הוּא, דָּגוּל הוּא, יבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקִרְוֹב, בְּמִהְרָה בְּמִהְרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקִרְוֹב. אֵל בְּנֶה, אֵל בְּנֶה, בְּנֶה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקִרְוֹב.

הַדּוֹר הוּא, וְתִיק הוּא, זָפֵאי הוּא, חֲסִיד הוּא, יבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקִרְוֹב, בְּמִהְרָה בְּמִהְרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקִרְוֹב. אֵל בְּנֶה, אֵל בְּנֶה, בְּנֶה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקִרְוֹב.

טְהוֹר הוּא, יְחִיד הוּא, כְּבִיר הוּא, לְמוֹד הוּא, מְלָךְ הוּא, נוֹרָא הוּא, סְגִיב הוּא, עֲזוּז הוּא, פּוֹדֶה הוּא, צְדִיק הוּא, יבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקִרְוֹב, בְּמִהְרָה בְּמִהְרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקִרְוֹב. אֵל בְּנֶה, אֵל בְּנֶה, בְּנֶה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקִרְוֹב.

קְדוֹשׁ הוּא, רְחוּם הוּא, שְׂדֵי הוּא, תְּקִיף הוּא, יבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקִרְוֹב, בְּמִהְרָה בְּמִהְרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקִרְוֹב. אֵל בְּנֶה, אֵל בְּנֶה, בְּנֶה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקִרְוֹב.

אָחַד מִי יוֹדֵעַ?

אָחַד אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: אָחַד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאָרֶץ.

שְׁנַיִם מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שְׁנַיִם אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אָחַד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאָרֶץ.

שְׁלֹשָׁה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שְׁלֹשָׁה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אָחַד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאָרֶץ.

אַרְבַּע מִי יוֹדֵעַ? אַרְבַּע אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: אַרְבַּע אִמָּהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אָחַד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאָרֶץ.

חֲמִשָּׁה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? חֲמִשָּׁה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אִמָּהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אָחַד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאָרֶץ.

שֵׁשׁ מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שֵׁשׁ אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: שֵׁשׁ סְדְרֵי מִשְׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אִמָּהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אָחַד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאָרֶץ.

שִׁבְעָה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שִׁבְעָה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: שִׁבְעָה יָמֵי שַׁבָּת, שֵׁשׁ סְדְרֵי מִשְׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אִמָּהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אָחַד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאָרֶץ.

שְׁמוֹנָה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שְׁמוֹנָה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: שְׁמוֹנָה יָמֵי מִילָה, שְׁבַעַה יָמֵי שַׁבָּתָא, שְׁשָׁה סְדְרֵי מְשָׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אִמְהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לַחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֶרֶץ.

תְּשַׁעָה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? תְּשַׁעָה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: תְּשַׁעָה יָרְחֵי לְדָה, שְׁמוֹנָה יָמֵי מִילָה, שְׁבַעַה יָמֵי שַׁבָּתָא, שְׁשָׁה סְדְרֵי מְשָׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אִמְהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לַחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֶרֶץ.

עֶשְׂרָה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? עֶשְׂרָה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: עֶשְׂרָה דְּבָרֵיָא, תְּשַׁעָה יָרְחֵי לְדָה, שְׁמוֹנָה יָמֵי מִילָה, שְׁבַעַה יָמֵי שַׁבָּתָא, שְׁשָׁה סְדְרֵי מְשָׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אִמְהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לַחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֶרֶץ.

אֶחָד עֶשְׂרָה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? אֶחָד עֶשְׂרָה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: אֶחָד עֶשְׂרָה כּוֹכְבֵיָא, עֶשְׂרָה דְּבָרֵיָא, תְּשַׁעָה יָרְחֵי לְדָה, שְׁמוֹנָה יָמֵי מִילָה, שְׁבַעַה יָמֵי שַׁבָּתָא, שְׁשָׁה סְדְרֵי מְשָׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אִמְהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לַחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֶרֶץ.

שְׁנַיִם עֶשְׂרָה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שְׁנַיִם עֶשְׂרָה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: שְׁנַיִם עֶשְׂרָה שְׁבִטֵיָא, אֶחָד עֶשְׂרָה כּוֹכְבֵיָא, עֶשְׂרָה דְּבָרֵיָא, תְּשַׁעָה יָרְחֵי לְדָה, שְׁמוֹנָה יָמֵי מִילָה, שְׁבַעַה יָמֵי שַׁבָּתָא, שְׁשָׁה סְדְרֵי מְשָׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אִמְהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לַחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֶרֶץ.

שְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרָה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרָה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: שְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרָה מְדִיָא, שְׁנַיִם עֶשְׂרָה שְׁבִטֵיָא, אֶחָד עֶשְׂרָה כּוֹכְבֵיָא, עֶשְׂרָה דְּבָרֵיָא, תְּשַׁעָה יָרְחֵי לְדָה, שְׁמוֹנָה יָמֵי מִילָה, שְׁבַעַה יָמֵי שַׁבָּתָא, שְׁשָׁה סְדְרֵי מְשָׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אִמְהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לַחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֶרֶץ.

What is this song meant to teach?

The *Gemara* states that the *techelet* of the *tzitzit* is meant to remind a person of G-d's "throne" in the Heavens. R' Gedaliah Schorr z"l (1911-1979; *Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshiva Torah Vo'daas) was asked: Is this not far-fetched? He answered that it depends where a person's thoughts are. One who regularly thinks of spiritual matters will indeed be reminded of G-d's throne when he sees *techelet*. In a similar vein, the *Gemara* says that one who looks at certain items will think immoral thoughts. This latter *Gemara*, said R' Schorr is referring to a person whose thoughts are regularly occupied with such matters.

Based on this idea, R' Avraham Schorr *shlita* (rabbi in Brooklyn, N.Y.; son of R' Gedaliah Schorr) explains: The *Seder* is meant to elevate us to the point that we occupy our thoughts with spiritual matters. At the end of the *Seder*, we test ourselves by playing a game of "association." "Who knows one?" Hopefully we answer, "One is G-d." "Who knows two?" Hopefully we answer, "Two are the *luchot*." And so on. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Halekach Ve'halibuv* p.212)



R' Avraham Aharon Prag z"l (1870-1921; *Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshivat Shomrei Ha'chomot in Yerushalayim) writes: It is likely that this song and the one after it ("*Chad Gadya*") contain much wisdom as well as *mussar* / ethical guidance, but they were written in the form of riddles and metaphors in order to keep the children awake. A precedent for this is the *Midrash* which relates that Rabbi Akiva saw that his students were dozing off, so he said: "Why was Esther queen of 127 provinces? Because Sarah lived 127 years." [Many commentaries offer lessons that can be learned from that cryptic statement.]

R' Prag continues: This song can serve as a educational tool for a father to use throughout the *Seder*. He can say to his children, "We are now making this *Seder* in honor of the Unique One. Who knows who that One is? We have two cooked items on the *Seder* plate. Do you know something else that the number two represents? We have three *Matzot*. Do you know something else that the number three represents? Also, there are:

- Four cups of wine.
- Five items on the *Seder* plate according to the custom of the *Vilna Gaon z"l*: *Maror*, *Charoset*, *Matzah* and two cooked items.
- Six *Berachot* over the wine: *Ha'gaffen* four times, plus *Kiddush* and *She'he'chyanu*.
- Seven blessings before we reach the *Matzah* [apparently referring to the three blessings of *Kiddush*, plus *Ha'adamah*, *Ga'al Yisrael*, the second *Ha'gaffen* and *Al Netilat Yadayim*]
- Eight sections of *Hallel* recited at the *Seder*: six in "*Hallel Ha'mitzri*" [the same chapters we recite as *Hallel* on every festival], one in *Hallel Ha'gadol* [the poem beginning "*Hodu . . . ki l'olam chasdo*"], and the praise beginning "*Nishmat*."
- Nine expressions of praise in the paragraph beginning "*Le'fichach*" with which we conclude *Maggid* and introduce the first section of *Hallel*.
- Ten *Makkot*.
- Eleven blessings recited over food: *Ha'gaffen* four times, *Ha'adamah*, *Ha'motzi*, four blessings in *Birkat Ha'mazon*, and the blessing after the last cup of wine. [This does not include the blessings of *Al Achilat Matzah* and *Al Achilat Maror*, which are not blessings over food but rather blessings over *Mitzvot*.]
- Twelve *Mitzvot* performed at the *Seder*: four cups of wine, *Charoset*, *Karpas*, two hand-washings, the blessings of *Ha'motzi*, *Al Achilat Matzah* and *Al Achilat Maror*, and *Koraich*.
- Thirteen *Mitzvot* performed at the *Seder* if the *Mitzvah* of telling the story of the Exodus is added to the twelve "tangible" *Mitzvot* listed above.

Upon reaching each of these items during the *Seder*, a father can say: "Now we will do/say something involving the number 'x.' Do you know something else that involves that number?" (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Tavlin L'mitzvah*)

חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא

דְּזַבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זַוּזִי, חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא.

וְאַתָּא שׁוֹנְרָא, וְאַכְלָה לְגְדִיָּא, דְּזַבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זַוּזִי, חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא.

וְאַתָּא כְּלָבָא, וְנִשְׁדָּ לְשׁוֹנְרָא, דְּאַכְלָה לְגְדִיָּא, דְּזַבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זַוּזִי, חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא.

וְאַתָּא חוּטְרָא, וְהִפָּה לְכְלָבָא, דְּנִשְׁדָּ לְשׁוֹנְרָא, דְּאַכְלָה לְגְדִיָּא, דְּזַבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זַוּזִי, חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא.

וְאַתָּא נוּרָא, וְשָׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִפָּה לְכְלָבָא, דְּנִשְׁדָּ לְשׁוֹנְרָא, דְּאַכְלָה לְגְדִיָּא, דְּזַבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זַוּזִי, חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא.

וְאַתָּא מַיָּא, וְכָבָה לְנוּרָא, דְּשָׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִפָּה לְכְלָבָא, דְּנִשְׁדָּ לְשׁוֹנְרָא, דְּאַכְלָה לְגְדִיָּא, דְּזַבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זַוּזִי, חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא.

וְאַתָּא תוּרָא, וְשָׂתָא לְמַיָּא, דְּכָבָה לְנוּרָא, דְּשָׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִפָּה לְכְלָבָא, דְּנִשְׁדָּ לְשׁוֹנְרָא, דְּאַכְלָה לְגְדִיָּא, דְּזַבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זַוּזִי, חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא.

וְאַתָּא הַשׁוּחַט, וְשָׂחַט לְתוּרָא, דְּשָׂתָא לְמַיָּא, דְּכָבָה לְנוּרָא, דְּשָׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִפָּה לְכְלָבָא, דְּנִשְׁדָּ לְשׁוֹנְרָא, דְּאַכְלָה לְגְדִיָּא, דְּזַבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זַוּזִי, חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא.

וְאַתָּא מְלֹאָדַּת הַמּוֹת, וְשָׂחַט לְשׁוּחַט, דְּשָׂחַט לְתוּרָא, דְּשָׂתָא לְמַיָּא, דְּכָבָה לְנוּרָא, דְּשָׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִפָּה לְכְלָבָא, דְּנִשְׁדָּ לְשׁוֹנְרָא, דְּאַכְלָה לְגְדִיָּא, דְּזַבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זַוּזִי, חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא.

וְאַתָּא הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, וְשָׂחַט לְמְלֹאָדַּת הַמּוֹת, דְּשָׂחַט לְשׁוּחַט, דְּשָׂחַט לְתוּרָא, דְּשָׂתָא לְמַיָּא, דְּכָבָה לְנוּרָא, דְּשָׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִפָּה לְכְלָבָא, דְּנִשְׁדָּ לְשׁוֹנְרָא, דְּאַכְלָה לְגְדִיָּא, דְּזַבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זַוּזִי, חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא.

חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא.

R' Yitzchak Isaac Chaver z"l (1789-1852; rabbi of Suvalk, Lithuania, and a prolific author in all areas of Torah study) explains this poem as an allusion to all of Jewish history.

“**One kid goat**” refers to the Jewish People, as is written (*Yechezkel* 34:17), “You are My flock.” The Jewish People is called “one,” as in the verse (*Divrei Ha'yamim I* 17:21), “Who is like

Your nation, *Yisrael*, one nation in the land.” In particular, the Jewish People, a nation that is stubborn and brazen (in Hebrew, “אָז” / “az”), is likened to a goat (in Hebrew, “אִיז”).

“**That father bought for two zuzim**” is an allusion to the sacrificial service, toward which every person contributed half a *shekel*, *i.e.*, two *zuzim*, every year. The sacrificial service atones for the sins that result from our stubbornness and brazenness.

“**Then a cat came and ate the kid goat**” refers to the sale of Yosef by his brothers, after which the brothers slaughtered a kid goat.

“**Then came a dog**” refers to the exile in Egypt, which resulted from the sale of Yosef.

“**Then came a stick**” refers to Moshe’s staff [which assisted in bringing about the Exodus].

“**Then came a fire**” refers to the sin of the Golden Calf, to which one can apply the verse (*Iyov* 31:12), “For it is a fire, it consumes until doom.”

“**Then came water**” refers to Moshe’s prayers, which are likened to water, as in the verse (*Eichah* 2:19), “Pour out your heart like water.”

“**Then came an ox**” refers to the golden calves erected by King Yerovam [in the First Temple period; see *Melachim I* 12:28]. These new calves undid the atonement that Moshe’s prayer had achieved and reawakened the “fire” of the Golden Calf.

“**Then came the shochet**” refers to the *Anshei Ha’knesset Ha’gedolah* / Men of the Great Assembly [at the beginning of the Second Temple period] who prayed successfully that the *Yetzer Ha’ra* for idolatry be “slaughtered,” *i.e.*, eradicated from the Jewish People.

“**Then came the angel of death**” refers to *sin’at chinam* / unjustified hatred that led to the destruction of the Second Temple and our present long exile.

“**Then came Ha’Kadosh Baruch Hu**” alludes to the eventual fulfillment of the verse (*Yeshayah* 11:11), “On that day, *Hashem* will again show His Hand to acquire the remnant of His people.” At that time, [in the words of *Yeshayah* (25:8)], “He will eliminate death forever.” Then, concludes R’ Chaver, He will enlighten our eyes with a clear light - speedily in our days, *Amen!* (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Yad Mitzrayim*)



“On the tenth of this month they shall take for themselves . . . a *seh* / lamb or kid for the household. . . It shall be yours for examination until the fourteenth day of this month. . .” (*Shmot* 12:3, 6)

Rashi z”l notes that setting aside a lamb for the *Korban Pesach* four days before the time for slaughtering was not required in succeeding generations. Why was it required here? The Sage Rabbi Matia ben Charash explains (based on *Yechezkel* 16:7-8): The time had come for *Hashem* to redeem Avraham Avinu’s descendants (*i.e.*, *Bnei Yisrael*), but they lacked any merit in which to be redeemed. Therefore, *Hashem* gave them two *Mitzvot*, one involving the blood of the *Pesach* lamb and one involving the blood of *Brit Milah*. Another answer is that, because they were mired in idolatry, He [*Hashem*] told them (paraphrasing *Shmot* 12:21), “Withdraw your hands from idols [*i.e.*, the lamb, which was an Egyptian deity] and take a lamb to fulfill a Divine command.” [Until here from *Rashi*]

How does Rabbi Matia's teaching answer the question: Why was the first *Pesach* different from every *Pesach* in succeeding generations? R' Tevele Bondi z"l (1796-1885; Germany) explains: In order to bring the *Korban Pesach*, *Bnei Yisrael* had to buy lambs from the Egyptians. Of course, *Bnei Yisrael* could not tell the Egyptians why they were buying the lambs. Therefore, the Egyptians presumed that *Bnei Yisrael* wanted the lambs to worship them as deities, as the Egyptians did, and they happily sold the lambs at bargain prices. Subsequently, however, *Bnei Yisrael* tied the lambs to their bedposts for four days and inspected their fitness to be used for the *Korban Pesach*, an action that angered the Egyptians and endangered *Bnei Yisrael*, thus bringing them great merit. That merit was only necessary that first year, and that is what Rabbi Matia is teaching.

For the same reason, writes R' Bondi, *Hashem* commanded that the bones of the *Korban Pesach* not be broken in the process of eating the sacrifice. Let the bones remain whole so there would be no doubt that *Bnei Yisrael* had eaten the Egyptian deity!

R' Bondi adds: The requirement to roast the *Korban Pesach* whole recalls Avraham Avinu's self-sacrifice, choosing to be thrown into a furnace rather than worship idols. King Nimrod worshiped fire, but Avraham told him (according to a *Midrash*), "Fire cannot be god because water can extinguish it. Water cannot be god, because clouds carry it. Clouds cannot be god, because the wind can disperse them," and so on.

R' Bondi concludes: That conversation between Avraham and Nimrod is recalled through the format of *Chad Gadya*. That song speaks about a goat that was purchased--like the first *Korban Pesach*--for a bargain price, but which cannot be a deity, since it can be eaten by a cat, which can be bitten by a dog, which can be hit by a stick, etc. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Im Peirush M'eit R' Tevele Bondi* p.75)



The 19th century *Chassidic Rebbe*, R' Yechiel Meir of Gostynin z"l, barely slept all of *Pesach*. His family was worried about his health and asked him why he would not sleep. He replied, "If I had won the lottery, would you ask me why I couldn't sleep? Believe me! Every minute of *Pesach* is like winning the lottery."

What did he mean by this? Why did he feel more fortunate on *Pesach* than on any other day? The *Amshinover Rebbe* explained: Our Sages say that *Chametz* represents the *Yetzer Ha'ra*. Thus, *Pesach* is a time that is free of the *Yetzer Ha'ra*. Every minute of such a time is priceless.