



Cover Design: Ahuva Lisker

הגדה תשע"ז

Manhattan High School for Girls
מכון יעקב לבנות

Letter From the Editors

One may think that *Pesach* is a commemoration of the justice Hashem enacted on the *Mitzryim*. However, the *Torah* tells us that we are celebrating “*Ki hotz'i Hashem es Bnei Yisrael mimitzrayim.*” On *Pesach*, we celebrate Hashem liberating us from our *tzaros* and rendering us a free nation. The *Meshech Chochma* explains that the אומות העולם celebrate their military victories over nations, and they take pride in the downfall of their enemies. This is not so with *Klal Yisrael*, as the *mishna* states, “*binfol oyvecha al tismach.*” The *Medrash* says that this is why the *Torah* doesn't use the word *simcha* when referring to *Pesach* and we do not recite full *hallel* during the seven days of *Pesach*. We do not rejoice in the downfall of our enemy. That is not the essence of our *Yom Ton*. *Pesach* is about our relationship with *Hashem* and our ever deepening love that began when we emerged as a nation, forged in the crucible of *Mitzrayim*. *Pesach* is an opportunity for us to come closer to *Hashem*, and to strengthen our bond with Him. It is our hope that through the *Divrei Torah* MHS students contributed, we can indeed tap into the *kedusha* of *Pesach*, and grow closer to *Hashem*.

We would like to take this opportunity to extend a sincere thank you to our esteemed teachers Rebbitzen Neuberger and Rebbitzen Fink, who invested enormous effort in editing this *Haggadah*. Also, special thanks to our friend, Nechama Weiner, for her dedication and assistance in organizing this work.

Chag kasher v'sameach,

Moadim Crew

ילכו מחיל אל חיל

We are grateful for the exceptional efforts of

**Devorah Amsel, Daniella Cohen,
Esther Mehlman, & Leah Rothman**

**A special thank you to our
beloved Mechanchos:**

Rebbetzin Eisenberger
12th Grade Mechaneches

Mrs. Tova Szenberg
11th Grade Mechaneches

Mrs. M. Cohen
10th Grade Mechaneches

Mrs. E. Cohen
9th Grade Mechaneches

9th
Grade

הרי זה משובח...

By: Adina Bell

If the *mitzvah* is only to retell the story of **יציאת מצרים**, then why is it that the more you recount it, the more praiseworthy you are?

The *Avudraham* teaches that in order to fulfill this mitzvah, you only need to say one word. But everyone goes beyond what is required. The haggadah assures us that this is a praiseworthy action. The *Yalkut Shmoni* takes a different approach. He suggests that by speaking more about the *galus*, you are not only performing the *mitzvah* of *sipur yetzias Mitzrayim* in a better way, but, you are also showing your commitment to *avodas Hashem* by celebrating our freedom from *Mitzrayim*. By describing the story we develop our own perception of the *nissim* that *Hashem* did for us.

.....

מה נשתנה

By: Ahuva Mermelstein

Why do we place the **מה נשתנה** at the beginning of **מגיד** rather than proceeding immediately to the narrative of the redemption from *Mitzrayim*?

The Malbim explains that if we began with the story, then we wouldn't feel the great debt of gratitude that we owe to Hashem. We would only feel this gratitude when reaching the end of **מגיד**, where we discuss **יציאת מצרים** in great detail.

The four questions of the **מה נשתנה** are indirect references to the entire event of **יציאת מצרים**. By asking these questions, we put ourselves in the correct frame of mind for the rest of the Seder. The first two questions recall slavery. We first mention **מצה** to remind us of when we were slaves. Then we mention the **מרור**, which evokes memories of the bitterness of that slavery. The last two questions briefly summarize the story of the redemption. We mention the dipping of **מרור** into **חרסת**, which reminds us that Hashem turned the bitterness of slavery into the sweetness of redemption. Ultimately, we mention reclining, which is symbolic of freedom, the complete opposite of the bondage symbolized by **מצה**.

Asking these four questions at the beginning of the Seder fills us with gratitude to Hashem in the initial moments of the evening so that we need not wait until the end of מגיד to feel that wave of הודאה, rather than experiencing these feelings only at the end.

Source: The Yetzias Mitzrayim Haggadah published by Artsroll

.....

חכם מה הוא אומר

By: Tamar Spoerri

When the *Chacham* asks, מה העדות והחוקים והשפטים אשר צוה ה' אלוקינו אתכם, we respond אין מפטירין אחר הפסח אפיקומן. Why does the Hagaddah focus on the מצה that cannot be eaten after the אפיקומן, instead of responding to the question of the *Chacham* by explaining, תודע, חקים, and משפטים applicable to פסח?

The מצה of הפסח אפיקומן is a single example, out of many, which contains aspects of all three types of *Mitzvot*. Refraining from eating after the *Afikomen* reminds us that the Jews in *Mitzrayim* could not leave their homes after eating the *Karban Pesach*. This restriction caused them to realize that the same G-d who was currently protecting them was at the same time killing the *Bichorai Mitzrayim*. He is One. Hence, by observing this *Mitzvah* we testify to the Unity of Hashem.

This Mitzvah also emphasizes the importance of *Bein Adam L'chavaro* relationships which are the foundation of *Mishpatim*. Distinct groups had to come together for their *Karban Pesach*, and each person can only be a member of a single gathering. After eating the *Karban* one was not permitted to go and join another group to eat with them as well. This concern for maintaining peace within the community is commemorated by this Mitzva which thereby becomes a *mishpat*.

The last idea is one that doesn't seem obvious or rational - a חוק. The קרבן פסח must be eaten when we are full, at the end of the meal, even though the מצות are eaten when we are hungry, at the beginning of the meal.

From this one מצה, we learn the rationale behind all three categories of מצוות, answering the question of the חכם, who asked, "מה העדות והחקים והמשפטים אשר צוה ה' אלוקינו אתכם."

Source: מעשה נסים

.....

לא תתעב מצרי...

By: Ettie Guelfguat

In ספר דברים כג, ה it says "לא תתעב מצרי כי גר היית בארצו" - don't hate the Egyptians because you temporarily stayed in their land.

Rashi asks the expected question: Why are we commanded not to hate the Mitzrim if they inflicted terrible pain on us?

Despite the difficult years in Mitzraim we can't deny that we lived in their land and ate their produce. Therefore, the harm they caused us must not obstruct our recognition or gratitude that we stayed in their land. The Torah is trying to teach us that we must show appreciation even when we are in a time of oppression.

Source: Bondage to Freedom By Rabbi Avraham J. Twerski

.....

עבדים היינו

By: Mia Lubetski

"If Hashem had not taken our ancestors out of Egypt..."

How can the Hagadda say that if Hashem had not taken us out of Mitzrayim we would still be enslaved to Pharaoh, when Hashem promised Avraham that his descendants would be freed after four hundred years?!

The Torah teaches us that even when a slave is freed, he may choose not to leave his master. Having become accustomed to the 'conveniences' of enslavement - freedom from financial responsibility, and the provision for all basic needs etc, the slave is reluctant to regain autonomy and independence.

The Jewish people would have most probably have chosen to return to Mitzrayim, especially after facing the difficulties in the desert. It is only because Hashem actively took us out of Mitzrayim and illuminated our neshamos with a desire to serve Him, that we managed to stay out of the Egyptian servitude. The promise to Avraham would have freed us from physical slavery, but we needed Hashem's help to rid us of the slave mentality. It is only

because “Hashem took us out from there” that we stand here as a free nation today.

.....

Hidden Acts of Kindness

By: Noa Klein

The haggadah cites the Torah’s proclamation that Bnei Yisroel were destined to stay in Egypt for 430 years, counting from the birth of Menasha and Ephraim. However, in actuality Bnei Yisroel were there for only half that time- from the time that Yaakov arrived to Mitzrayim until the time the Jews left was 210 years, but five years before that, Yosef had Menashe and Efrayim, thereby bringing the tally to 215 years. This was exactly half of the decreed amount of time. So, the question arises- why cut their slavery in half? The Midrash explains that the Egyptians forced the Jews to work both day and night. Had the Jews only worked during the day, they would have had to stay in Mitzrayim for the full 430 years; by working both day and night, they fulfilled their requirement in just 215 years.

In a sense, the misery experienced by the Jews working day and night was really a small act of kindness from Hashem. Because the Egyptians force the Jews to work both day and night, Hashem allowed them to be redeemed from Mitzrayim more than 200 years early! Who can imagine how much more back-breaking and harsh work the Jews might have gone through? How many more would have died? Even when things look like they are just cruel and merciless punishment, there is a silver lining to be discerned.

Source: Adapted from The Yetzias Mitzriam Haggadah

.....

רשע מה הוא אומר...

By: Rachel Fogel

The rasha asks *ma haavodah hazot lachem*- what is this work for you? He says I understand that during the time of the Beit Hamikdash we celebrated Pesach as a celebration of freedom of the slavery of Mitzrayim and the Jewish control of Israel. However, nowadays we are under the rule of the secular government and are not a free governing nation; so why are you doing this seder(avodah) now? We answer the rasha saying-if he would have been in Mitzrayim he would never have been freed.

Rav Moshe zt”l explains that even had he merited leaving Mitzrayim and got his own land in Eretz Yisrael he still wouldn’t have been free. As a Rasha he would have been a slave to his vineyards and his trees. He would work endlessly to gather more and more money but never be satisfied. He would be a slave, but to a different master. Instead of working for Pharaoh he is a slave to his **יצר**, his desires.

There were indeed people who left Mitzrayim but were not freed. Datan and Aviram left, but were always prone to complaining. They were captives of their physical needs and desires. On the contrary we are free. We left Mitzrayim to get the Torah which teaches us not to be slaves to our desires but to Hashem. We have real freedom. The ‘avoda’ we are doing tonight is a true sign of our freedom. “**אין בן חורן אלא מי שעוסק בתורה**” - “There is no free person like one who is involved in Torah”. Through the Rasha we learn how easy it is to become a slave to work and power. Rav Moshe teaches us that the only way we can all be truly free today is through being attached not to our desires but to our Torah.

Source: Rav Moshe Feinstein

ברוך המקום

By: Rena Kessler

Baruch Hamakom is translated intp, Blessed is G-d. Blessed is He. Blessed is the One Who gave the Torah to His people Israel. Blessed is He.

Why are we thanking Hashem now for giving us the Torah, when we are supposed to be fully focused on Hashem taking us out of Egypt?

The Torah is called *Torat Chaim*, which means instruction for living. The Torah is the instruction manual for how we should live our lives. If we would have been saved but didn’t receive the Torah, then we would have no purpose. Therefore, it is important to also remember Hashem giving us the Torah; without it our life would have no meaning and we wouldn’t have the instructions of how to live our lives the proper way.

הא לחמא עניא

By: Sara Gittel Palley

There are a couple of questions we need to consider regarding this paragraph:

1. Why is it in Aramaic?

The answer that is commonly given is that in the times of the Hagaddah, people were more conversant in Aramaic than Hebrew, and therefore in order for all to understand, this section is in Aramaic.

However, for that very reason, it should NOT be in Aramaic now, rather in English, or Hebrew. Additionally, there are sections of the Hagaddah that are far more crucial to the telling of the story of Mitzrayim than this opening paragraph- *they* are the ones that should be written in Aramaic!

2. The three sentences that make up this paragraph seem to move from topic to topic very quickly. We begin by discussing the meaning of the Matzah. From there we move to invite people to our *Seder*, and from there we express hope that next year we will be in Eretz Yisroel. What is the theme that holds these three sentences together?
3. What exactly do we mean by inviting people to our *Seder* at this point? A real invitation would have been issued at Shul, where one is actually likely to find someone who does not have a *Seder*, not once we have returned home.

R' Eliezer Ashkenazi explains: until the final redemption comes, *Seder* night will come with mixed feelings.

On the one hand, we have so much to celebrate. In leaving *Mitzrayim*, we assumed our roles as Hashem's people and received His Torah, which has stayed with us throughout history. At many points, we have found ourselves relatively secure and successful, certainly compared with how we were in *Mitzrayim*.

However, it would be wrong to conduct the *Seder* as if there is nothing missing, for indeed something is missing- the final redemption of the Jewish people and the restoration of the Beit Hamikdash. The Talmud tells us that at the apex of every happy occasion it is imperative to mark the fact that the Beit Hamikdash is not with us. It is for this reason that we break the glass under the Chuppah at a wedding. It is to remember that even the joy of a wedding is not complete while we are in Galut.

Ha lachma ania is the “breaking of the glass” at *Seder* night. The paragraph is said in Aramaic for that is the language that was spoken in Bavel where we experienced our first exile, and thus it represents for us the exiled state. We declare our matzah to be poor bread that our forefathers ate in Mitzrayim, for our *Seder* is actually quite similar to the first *Seder* experienced in Mitzrayim in that we are having it while awaiting redemption.

The centerpiece of the *Seder* during Temple times was, of course, the *Korban Pesach*. It is the absence of this offering that we proceed to mark. One of the special laws surrounding the *Korban Pesach* is that it could only be eaten by the one who was registered for it before the time of its slaughter, which took place on the afternoon before Pesach. This means that if one did not make arrangements to join a *Seder* before the festival, he could not join on the evening itself. In our times, we say “כל דכפין יתי ויכל” - anyone who is hungry or needy *could* join our *Seder* at any time, for we do not have a *Korban Pesach*, and thus, unfortunately, there is no such impediment.

Our Sages tell us that the one who mourns the loss of Yerushalayim merits to see it restored. Thus, we conclude this introductory paragraph by expressing our hope that, having noted the fact that we are still in Galus, next year we will merit being free in Eretz Yisroel.

Source: Rabbi Immanuel Bernstein

הא לחמא עניא

By: Shira Zerbib

The Midrash points out that in *Sefer Tehillim David Hamelech* alternates between referring to himself as a king and as a poor man. What is the meaning behind this?

As we know, a Jewish king has great responsibilities when it comes to guiding the Jews. Thus, he is obligated to carry a *Sefer Torah* with him everywhere he goes, and to have another one settled in his palace. Additionally, he must bend by every benediction during *Amida* and daven for everyone in his nation including himself.

Rav Elazar Kahanow zt"l suggests that *David Hamelech* called himself “king” whenever he saw the righteous descendants, who were destined to come from him, such as *Shlomo Hamelech*. However, when he looked upon his wicked descendants, who would only cause damage to the Jews in the future, he referred to himself as a “poor man”.

This sheds light on why we, too, act differently at various parts of the seder.

We behave like kings during *beseiba* (leaning), and when we drink the *daled kosos*, yet we also eat a poor man's bread. Similar to *David Hamelech's* contradictory sentiments, we feel like kings knowing that we have a wise son, but like poor men when we reflect upon the wicked son.

.....

חכם ורשע מה הם אומרים

By: Tamar Dan

When we look at the questions of the **חכם ורשע**, we see that they both use a **לשון** that shows that they are leaving themselves out. The **חכם** says **מה העדת והחקים והמשפטים אשר צוה אלוקינו אתכם?** - What are the testimonies, decrees and laws which **ה'** our G-d commanded **you?** The **רשע** asks **מה העבודה הזאת לכם?** - what is this work for **you?** Yet, we answer the **חכם** very nicely, while answering the **רשע** harshly. Why are we so harsh towards the **רשע**? How is he so different from the **חכם**? The **דובנא מגיד** answers this question with the following **משל**:

There was once a poor man who had saved up enough money to buy his basic needs for Yom Tov. There was a fair in a neighboring village, so he went and bought himself a beautiful piece of material. When he came home and showed his wife, she became very upset and asked him, "why did you buy a piece of material? We hardly have enough money for our basic needs! Please go back and return this material." The poor man picked up the neatly folded cloth and asked, "what will I tell them? What is the reason I am returning it?" His wife picked up the material and scrutinized it to find some flaw. After a few minutes she said "Aha! Look, I have found something." The man did not notice any flaws, but he agreed to bring the material back anyway. When he arrived at the fair, he returned to the merchant who had sold it to him. He said "your material has a flaw! I'd like my money back." The merchant gave the man his money and the man left.

After he had gone, a bystander asked the merchant, "why were you so quick as to return the man his money? Why didn't you try to sell him a different piece of material?" The merchant answered, "I could tell that he was not interested in pointing out the flaw. He wanted his money back, not a new piece of material. If he would have questioned the material by saying, 'I think this material is defective, could you please sell me something else instead?' I would have then known that he was interested in an explanation."

When the **רשע** asks, "What is this work for **you?**" he only wants to point out what he feels is wrong with the **מצוות**. But when the **חכם** asks "What are the testimonies, decrees and laws which our G-d commanded **you?**" he is simply

inquiring in order to find out more about the מצוות. This is why we answer the רשע harshly, and we answer the חכם with an explanation of the מצוה.

.....

ברוך המקום

By: Mia Lubetski

Does the Torah actually mention four sons?

No. The Torah mentions in four different places that one must tell the story of Yetziyat Mitzrayim to his/her sons. From the context of each reference, the Haggadah derives that we are speaking about four different types of sons.

The four sons represent the four types of people who comprise the Jewish nation. Every Jew is compared to a letter in the Sefer Torah. If one letter is missing, no matter which letter it may be, its absence affects all the other words in the Torah. The fact that the Torah hints to the four sons teaches us that *all four sons* are crucial to the Jewish people as a whole. Additionally, each of the four sons, whether a rasha or a chacham, is equally important to Klal Yisroel. Just as every letter is crucial to the integrity of Torah, regardless of which letter it is.

Our job is to positively influence all four sons, and bring blessings into their life. That is why the word ‘Baruch’ appears four times in this paragraph. The Baal Haggadah understands the importance of ensuring that every son is nurtured with an awareness of Hashem, the source of all brachos.

.....

רשע מה הוא אומר

By: Yael Weinberg

We read in the haggadah that the Rasha asks: “What is this work for that you’re all doing?” We also see read the Chacham who inquires: “What are these laws that Hashem commanded **you**?” Why then is the Rasha only reprimanded? For you and not for himself? By excluding himself from the group, he denies the basis of Judaism. The Brisker Rav answers: When an average person is seen to be doing something that might be wrong, we must always assume it is not as it appears but actually good. On the other hand, when a Rasha is observed doing something that appears to be good, we are obligated to suspect that his action is acceptable. If a Tzaddik though, is seen doing something bad, we are required to presume it is a positive action and he only

has good intentions. This is why the haggadah only points out the “you” by the Rasha. We should assume the Chacham was just speaking the way everyone ordinarily speaks. But we know the Rasha has bad intentions so that is why the haggadah specifies the bad words of the Rasha.

.....

הא לחמא אנה

By: Zahava Giloni

We begin *Maggid* with *Ha Lachma Anya*, which deals with the concept of *Hachnosas Orchim* as we state, “*Kol Dichfin...*” all who need food are invited. Although *Hachnosas Orchim* is a very big mitzvah, what does this have to do with the *Haggadah*, and why would we start *Maggid* with this *Mitzvah* specifically? This *Mitzvah* is not even specifically for the Seder—we can do it anytime in our homes!

Rav Soloveichik answers that a slave cannot have guests. This is because whatever belongs to a slave essentially belongs to his master. Therefore, only a free man can have guests and serve them. This is very much in the mindset of the Seder and very appropriate to begin with. Throughout the Seder we are constantly emphasizing and acting in *Derech Chairus*. Therefore, we start *Maggid* by performing *Hachnasas Orchim*.

A further question arises. One may wonder, what does the end of *Ha Lachma Anya*, “*L’shana Haba B’Ara D’Yisrael...Bnei Chorin*,” have in common with the beginning, offering *Matza* to the needy? Rav Soloveichik answers, that even at this point in the Seder where we are exhibiting *Derech Chairus*, we must remember that we are still in *Galus* and not completely free. We are free men to the extent that we are able to have guests and offer *Matza* to the poor, but we are still subject to the various kingdoms of *Galus*. However, we say “*L’shana Haba*,” a tefila that next year we should be completely free men in *Eretz Yisrael*.

The Rama explains that included in the mitzvah of *Matza* is the *Mitzvah* of *Maos Chitim*, where we provide money to poor people in order that they should be able to eat *Matza*. The Vilna Gaon adds that this concept can really be found in the Pasuk itself from *Parshas Bo*. The Pasuk, “*Matzos Yeiachel Shivas Yamim*,” includes the verb “*Yeiachel*” in *Nifal*, passive tense, meaning that it must be fed to others. We see here that it is also fit to begin *Maggid* with *Ha Lachma Anya* because this is essentially the beginning of our fulfillment of the *Mitzvah* of *Matza*, providing *Matza* to those in need.

It is clearly most appropriate to begin Maggid with Ha Lachma Anya. By inviting those in need to our house, we exhibit Derech Chairus and begin the discussion and the actual act of the Mitzvah of Matza.

Source: Hagadah Shel Pesach

מעשה ברבי אליעזר

By: Chaya Bomrind

.....

והיו מספרים ביציאת מצרים כל אותו הלילה עד שבאו תלמידיהם ואמרו ...
הגיע זמן ק"ש של שחרית

1. What does the word **אותו** add? Wouldn't "כל הלילה" be sufficient?
2. Why must the **תנאים** be reminded about **קריאת שמע** by their **תלמידים** ?

The answer is that the **תנאים** were conversing about *Yetzias Mitzrayim* with such intensity and in such length, that they truly fulfilled the commandment to feel as if they themselves had left *Mitzrayim*.

The *Zohar* tells us that on the night of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, Hashem sends down a light that is as bright as daylight. These sages had reached the *madriaga* of actually seeing themselves as if they had left *Mitzrayim*, so they were able to experience that holy light. As a result, they were unaware of the arrival of morning, because for them it had been light all night. On the other hand, their **תלמידים** were not on that elevated level, and experienced the dawn of day as usual. The word **אותו** refers to that specific night of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* when the five great sages experienced that holy light.

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה

By: Sara Nordlicht

.....

If one focuses on the words **חמץ** and **מצה**, one will find that the two words are nearly identical in their lettering. Both of them contain a **מ** and a **צ**; they only differ in the **ח** of **חמץ** and the **ה** of **מצה**. The *Sadigora* *קדושת אהרן* points out that while the **ח** is closed on three sides and is only open on the bottom, the **ה** also has a small opening on the side. This opening points upwards and thereby allows us to connect with **הקב"ה**. The **ח** represents the **חטאים** we do, which can only lead to our downfall, as is portrayed through its open bottom. The **ה**, however, represents **תשובה** from our **חטאים**, as we see

in the open space on the side of the ה, pointing upwards. Tonight is different from all other nights because we are choosing the ה of מצה over the ה of חמץ. In other words, we are deciding to do תשובה from our חטאים so that we can become closer to the רבש"ע.

Source: הגדה של פסח-גדולי ישראל

.....

אחד מי יודע

By: Essie Abittan

The *Chidushe HaRim* poses a question regarding *Echad Me Yodeyah*. Why do we repeat each step every time we add a number? Would it not be more logical and efficient to start from thirteen and work our way down?

He explains that our spiritual growth starts out at the bottom and works its way up. We must start at the bottom to reach the top. If we would begin at the top then we would end up declining, which is worse than moving up slowly. This is like a ladder: we must start climbing a ladder from the bottom rung; not from the top rung. Similarly, we need to slowly build up our spirituality and start from the bottom. If we started from the top we would be missing fundamentals and we would quickly fall to the bottom.

Source: The Sephardic Heritage Haggadah

.....

הלילה הזה כולו מצה

By: Shira Safrin

In the Haggadah, one of the four questions asked is – שבכל הלילות, אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה, הלילה הזה כולו מצה – Why on other nights do we eat *chametz* and *matzah*, whereas tonight we only eat *matzah*?

The Abarbanel understands the substance of this question in another way. The *Korban Pesach* is essentially a *Korban Todah*, a thank you for being saved. With an ordinary *korban todah*, the *korban* is brought with *chametz* loaves as well as *matzah* as part of the offering. The question therefore becomes; why is the *korban todah* offering on *Pesach* only brought with *matzah*?

The Chasam Sofer explains that chametz is a symbol of negativity. It represents the inflation of the ego, among other things. *Matzah* is associated with

the positive and pure. It represents the way things are supposed to be, in their simple, natural state.

When we offer a regular *korban todah*, we are thanking Hashem for the good He has done, but equally, for the bad from which we learn to appreciate the good.

But on *Pesach* there is no such thing as bad; even being enslaved served a “good” purpose. It certainly wasn’t a punishment for anything the slaves had done! If the Jews could have achieved perfection without going through Egypt, they wouldn’t have had to. In fact, it served a constructive purpose: To prepare the Jewish people for the Torah they would later be offered. The *av-dus* assured that they would be able to understand and accept the concept of service. They had been pushed to the limit and beyond in Egypt; they could do the same for Hashem. We express in the *ma nisbtana* that *Pesach* is a night where כולו מצה – there is no such thing as bad, there is only good.

.....

ברוך המקום

By: Shira Zelefsky

The Haggada introduces the passage of the ארבעה בנים, with the words ברוך המקום הוא. Interestingly, it uses the term “המקום” to refer to Hashem. Why does the Haggada use the term “המקום” to refer to Hashem?

In his sefer אהלי יעקבי on the Haggadah, Rav Yaakov Unsdorfer explains that the name “המקום” is used in situations where we may question how Hashem runs the world. At a shiva house, for example, we comfort the mourners by saying the phrase “המקום ינחם אתכם.” We use the name המקום to remind us that Hashem is found in all places and situations, good and bad. Although we may not understand how God runs the world, we know that everything that is done is Hashem’s will. It is therefore in the best interest of the person who died and the family members mourning the loss. It is also brought down that when someone loses a large sum of money we say “המקום ימלא חסרונוך.” Here again we are reminded that Hashem is present in difficult times, that He does everything in our best interests and we shouldn’t worry.

Rav Unsdorfer explains that this is why the Haggada mentions ברוך המקום prior to discussing the ארבעה בנים. When we see a רשע who is so negative about the Torah and Hashem, we may question how it can be that Hashem made evil people like this exist. Therefore we say ברוך המקום to remind us that this is Hashem’s will. The רבונו של עולם is present in all situations, good

.....

and bad. Hashem gives us all the בחירה to become a צדיק or a רשע. It is up to us to follow in the path of the חכם and not the רשע.

.....

רשע מה הוא אומר

By: Yael Mehlman

The hagada says regarding the rasha “*l’fi sheboitz’e atzmoi min haklal koifer b’ikar*”- since he removes himself from the klal he rejects the main principles. R’ Isser Zalman Meltzer asks that it would make more sense to say that since the rasha rejects the principles of Judiasm he removes himself, as opposed to vice versa.

He answers with the following story. A maskil came to R’Chaim Brisker to ask him questions about torah and mitzvot. R’ Chaim refused to answer him. He said to him, you don’t have questions- you have answers. If you came to me with questions, I would be able to answer you. You aren’t looking for that. You came with answers!

So too, says R’ Isser Zalman, the rasha already decided that he wants no part of the torah with all it’s accompanying mitzvos and structures. He therefore rejects Hashem.

.....

10th
Grade

צא ולמד

By: Chayie Safrin

What is the connection between Yaakov and Lavan and the lessons learnt from them, to the Haggadah, and why is it an important part of our retelling the story *Yetziat Mitzrayim*?

Lavan wasn't just after money; he sought as well, to strip us of the truth of religion and faith in Hashem. *Yaakov* had to deal with *Lavan* and stoop down to his untruthful level in order to overcome them. If *Yaakov* would have failed in his battle with *Lavan* and his immoral ideas, and given to the lie of denying *Hashem*, *Yaakov* would have jeopardized the transmission of authentic *Emunah* for generations to come. *Lavan* brought *Yaakov* down to his level but *Yaakov* didn't falter; he believed in the truth of *Hashem*. Because of *Yaakov's* unwavering connection to his Creator, he was still able to maintain the promise of the *nevuah* that he would be saved when he was down. Now we can understand the connection between *Yetziat Mitzrayim* and *Yaakov* and *Lavan*. *Bnei Yisroel* are compared to *Yaakov* and assured that even when they are down in the depths of *Mitzrayim* on a low level, like *Lavan*, and *Hashem* comes to fulfill his *nevuah* to redeem them from their troubles. He will take them out and bring them to a higher level. Jews, as the children of *Yaakov*, always have the security that even throughout the toughest times, Hashem will take us out and elevate us because of his promises to *Yaakov Avinu*.

.....

חג המצות

By: Dina Deutsch

The *Torah* calls *Pesach*, "Chag Hamatzot." But we call it *Pesach*. Why is this? Rav Chaim Volozhin tells us as follows: The words *Matzos* and *Mitzvos* are spelled the same exact way in Hebrew. Therefore "Chag hamatzot" can be read as "Chag HaMitzvos," showing that by leaving Egypt and getting the *Torah*, the Jews now have the opportunity to get *Sechar* by doing mitzvos.

Pesach on the other hand, means *Hashem* "passed over" the houses of the Jewish people. When we call it *Pesach* it is emphasizing all the good that *Hashem* has done for us.

Our *chachamim* teach us to serve *Hashem* with love and gratitude, not because of the reward. By calling it *Pesach* we de-emphasize the reward that the mitzvos bring, and instead focus on all the kindness and good that *Hashem* has done for us.

.....

The Opening to the Hagadah

By: Gitty Boshnack

At first our fathers worshipped Idols..

Why do we start the Hagadah from this point? Why not from when *Bnei Yisroel* go down to *Mitzrayim*?

Look where we come from. We come from people who spent their days bowing to rocks until we reach Avraham. Avraham Avinu did not use any excuse that we may use nowadays... "Society doesn't allow ..." or "If society was more open I could ..." Society did not let him either; they threw him into a fiery furnace! But *Avraham* didn't let that stop him. *Avraham's* fathers and forefathers were *ovdai Kochavim Umazalat* but he found *Hashem*. He was so young, only a child, and wasn't taught by anybody. If a little boy with no leader can find *Hashem*, how much more so can we.

The opening reference of the Hagadah reminds us that if we really want to connect to Hashem, we are always able to do so. What Avraham did can be accomplished by each of us, no matter what generation we live in. It doesn't matter how far we are from *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* - we can always come back. In our days Jewish alienation has spread far and wide; the rates of assimilation are staggering. But "*m'tchila ovdei avodah zarah bayu avoseinu*" - we can still come back. Even though we may not be able to change our pasts, we can change our futures. This is the power of *bechira chafshit*; the ability of man to alter his stature and make him a better person.

Source: Adapted from the manuscript Hagadah with comments from R' Joseph B. Solevtchik by R' David Holtzer

מתחילה...ועכשיו

By: Lele Book

A famous question is posed by Rav Chaim Soloveitchik, which we can look at as one of the most important questions of the entire Haggadah: What is the significance of the mitzvah of *sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim* on Seder night? Aren't we commanded to remember or mention it every single day? If so, what is the difference between the mitzvah of *sippur*, telling, and *zechira*, remembering or mentioning?

Rav Chaim suggests three different ways to explain the difference. The first is

that while the mitzvah of *zechira* has no explicit details, one can merely mention *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, there is a more specific way to observe the mitzvah of *sippur*, namely, through *Sh'eilos v'teshuvos*: questions and answers.

The second distinction between *sippur* and *zechira*, is that when we recount the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, we must retell it from beginning to end. We must begin with the description of the backbreaking labor in *Mitzrayim* and continue until we have captured the experience of the unforgettable redemption. As *Chazal* instruct us, we must be “*maschil bignus u'mesayeim b'shevach*”; start from the shameful beginning and conclude with the wondrous praise. There is no requirement to do this when it comes to *zechira*.

The third difference between the two mitzvos is that unlike *zechira*, when performing the mitzvah of *sippur*, one must include the *ta'amei hamitzvot*—the reason behind each mitzvah we do on Seder night.

Based on the ideas presented by Rav Chaim, Rav Velvel Pomeranchik (in his Sefer, *Tosfos Berachah*) suggests an incredible explanation for the order of the Haggadah. *Maggid* begins with the first difference mentioned, the questions and answers. We recite the *Mah Neshtanah*, and describe the four questions of the *Arbah Banim*. We then take note of the second difference by retelling the entire story. We start with the shameful beginning of “*metchilab ovdei avodah zara hayu avoteinu*”, our forefathers served idols. Then we speak about the incredible redemption. Finally, the Baal Haggadah concludes *Maggid* with the statement from Rabbi Gamliel who clarifies the reasons for each of the *Mitzvos* we perform on Seder night.

Source: Touched by the Seder, Rabbi Yechiel Spero

.....

ואת עמלינו אלה הבנים

By: Rosie Katz

According to *Chazal*, in addition to the decree that all the boys be thrown into the river, Pharaoh murdered 300 Jewish children every day in order to bathe in their blood to cure his *tzaraas*. He was thus punished with *dam, midda keneged midda*. What is the significance of Pharaoh bathing in the blood of the Jewish children?

The Chafetz Chaim cites the *medrash (Shemos Raba 1)* in the introduction to his *sefer*, that states when Moshe Rabbeinu said “*Achein noda badavar*”, he implied that he knew the sin that was the reason for Bnei Yisrael’s suffering-- There were informers amongst Bnei Yisrael. The Chofetz Chaim goes on to explain that the *tefilos* of Bnei Yisrael were not accepted for this very same reason. Tefila is performed with the mouth. Because their mouths have been tainted with *lashon hara*, their *tefilos* could not be accepted.

Perhaps, Hashem caused it to be about Pharoh killing the Jewish people in order to heal himself from *tzaraas*, for the sin of lashon hara. Once Bnei Yisrael purified the sin of their mouth, their *tefilos* were now able to be accepted.

Source: Hagaddah Shel Pesach Mishkan Btzalel

ונצעק אל ה'

By: Yehudit Cohen

“ויוזכור אלוקים את בריתו את אברהם את יצחק ואת יעקב”

Why does the Torah list all of the אבות as having a covenant with *Hashem* when we find Him making a treaty only with Avraham at the ברית בן הבתרים? We read: “ביום ההוא כרת ה' את אברם ברית”: but there is no mention of a ברית with Yitzchak and Yaakov!

In fact, though the ברית is mentioned in connection with Yitzchak and Yaakov. In *Sefer Bereishis*, Hashem promises to uphold his pact with Yitzchak: “את בריתי אקים את יצחק”. In Tehilim Dovid Hamelech hints at a ברית with Yaakov. “אשר כרת את אברהם ושבעתו ליצחק ויעמידה ליעקב לחק לישראל ברית עולם” - תהלים קה' ט - י

The אבות had to be mentioned because Bnei Yisrael would not have been able to be saved with their teshuva alone. It was only when the אבות were mentioned that Hashem used their zechuyos to take Bnei Yisrael out of מצרים.

Source: אברבנאל

ברוך שומר הבטחתו

By: Avigail P. Deutsch

The Haggada writes that “*Hashem Chishav es Hakeitz*”. If that is the case, then why were we commanded to eat “B'chipazon” (in a hurry)? If Hashem shortened the end, then why couldn't we have had time to eat slowly, and exit leisurely?

Hashem cutting the galus short is exactly the answer. This is teaching us that Hashem controls and schedules every event precisely, no matter how large or small. Things could look so dreary, but in seconds Hashem can turn the entire situation around. We might be waiting for years, and suddenly Hashem can bring exactly what we need.

May we be zoche to merit Mashiach, the Final Geula quickly, after all these long centuries in Galus.

Source: R' Avigdor Miller

ברוך שומר הבטחתו

By: Esther Guelfguat

From these words of the *Haggadah* we can derive much Chizuk. Bnei Yisroel had sunk to the forty ninth level of Tumah yet still Hashem kept his promise. Another approach is offered by Rabbi Binyomin Yudin שליט"א. He explains that a person can't promise because he doesn't know what the next day will bring. Hashem, on the other hand, can see all of time. If Hashem promises to bring the קץ - the ultimate *Geullah* - he will surely do so. בקרוּב!

Source: The Haggadah of Rav Chaim Kanievsky שליט"א

יכול מראש חדש

By: Odelia Barsky

From a very young age, every Jewish child knows that on the first night of פסח we begin to tell the story of 'יציאת מצרים'. This makes sense, because the first night of פסח is when the miracles happened and we were finally let free. During מגיד, we recite the paragraph of יכול מראש חדש, which discusses this very idea. Loosely translated, the Baal Haggadah remarks that one might think that we ought to begin to discuss the Mitzvah on ראש חדש, but really we start on the first night when we have מצה and מרור laying before us. If you really think about it, though, you might question why one would even think to begin from Rosh Chodesh, or any other day for that matter: In his book, "Festival of Freedom", Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik suggests an intriguing answer, based on the רמב"ם's teachings. Where does the commandment of יציאת מצרים come from? In יד החזקה's רמב"ם he offers two sources- "והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים" as well as "זכור את היום הזה אשר יצאתם ממצרים". The רמב"ם is interested in the word זכור. This word is also used in the commandment of Shabbat, "זכור את יום השבת לקדשו". There must be a significant connection. We know that we have an obligation to remember Shabbat, but how do we do that? By starting at the beginning of the week and counting down to Shabbat every day- (שיר של יום). How does this connect to our commandment of

זכור את-יום השבת Just as we fulfill זכור את היום הזה אשר יצאתם ממצרים by starting from the beginning of the week, one might think that we do the same for זכור את היום הזה אשר יצאתם ממצרים. That is that a person should begin talking about סיפור יציאת מצרים from the beginning of the month. This is why we specify when to start.

.....

יכול מראש חדש

By: Rena Seidemann

We start the year from the month of ניסן because of יציאת מצרים. If the whole month is special because of what happened on Seder night why is it that we do not begin talking about סיפור יציאת מצרים from the beginning of the month? To learn something well, to really understand it, one needs to experience it. It can't just be intellectual. There need to be actual props that you can feel and touch. The reason we do not begin learning and speaking about יציאת מצרים from the beginning of the month is that the best way to really experience the story of יציאת מצרים is to make it come to life, as we do at the seder. At the beginning of month we do not have this experience. There is no Matzah, no Marror and there is no Seder. There is nothing to really inspire and make it real. This is a lesson for life. Whenever learning one needs to make it come to life and literally experience it. That is the only way to connect to a valuable lesson and learn from it.

.....

וכל המרבה לספר ביציאת מצרים

By: Rachel Newhouse

The Haggadah states that one who speaks at length about the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim on Pesach will be praised.

The question is we are still in *Galus*- what is there to celebrate? The *maggid M'dubna* offers a parable. There was once a poor man who won the lottery, and became really wealthy. He decided to invest his money to learn and educate himself. In time, he became very learned. Then came a point where he lost all his money; yet he still celebrated having once won the lottery. Many people were confused as to why he would continue to rejoice if he no longer had a lot of money. The man explained, that he had gained a lot of lasting spirituality when he was wealthy, and for that he will always thank Hashem. So too, even though Bnei Yisroel are in *galut* now, we must continue to thank

Hashem for all the essential and eternal changes that occurred to us because we left *Mitzrayim*.

11th
Grade

מכת צפרדע

By: Aliza Brody

Rashi quoting the *Midrash* tells us that the second plague began with one single frog, but each time the *Mitzrim* struck it, it multiplied until they covered the land of *Mitzrayim*. R' Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky pointed out an invaluable lesson to be gleaned from this occurrence. We would have expected that as soon as the *Mitzrim* learned that striking the frogs was counterproductive, they would have stopped. However, they continued doing so until the land was filled with frogs. What caused them to pursue such a foolish course of action? Anger. When a person is angry and frustrated he does not think in rational terms, and often acts in ways which actually worsen his situation. And the worse his situation becomes, the more frustrated he grows, leading him to act even more irrationally. This is true whenever a person loses control of his temper. For example, a person may hear an insult from someone, and become so angry that he responds with a counter insult to the other party. If he would think things out rationally, he would realize that this course of action will only intensify the confrontation. Thus, a person would do well to remember that the best course of action to take when he feels insulted by someone is to ignore the offensive statement, for this is really the only way that his feeling of frustration and anxiety will recede rather than be aggravated.

.....

מכת כינים

By: Avigail Spira

It is interesting to note that in describing *מכת כינים* the Torah records that the *מכה* ended. Rav Shalom Schwadron explains that, in fact, *מכת כינים* did *not* end before *מכת ארבה* began. He suggests that this was in order to show that good things can only come about through *תפילה*. And since *פרעה* never asked *משה רבינו* to daven for the *מכה* to stop, it continued until the end of the subsequent plague, *מכת ערוב*. At that point, *פרעה* asked *משה רבינו* to beseech Hashem for the *מכה* to stop, and both plagues came to an end.

When Hashem chose *משה רבינו* to lead *בני ישראל*, Moshe argued that he couldn't lead because of his speech impediment. Hashem answered that he had nothing to worry about- Aaron would speak for him. There is an obvious question to be asked: why couldn't Hashem just heal Moshe from his speech impediment? The *Ramban* maintains since Moshe did not daven, Hashem couldn't heal him. Only once we pray for them, can we receive Hashem's blessings. We are so fortunate that we are able to talk Hashem at any point in

the day. The Chazon Ish instructs us that if someone wants to strengthen his *emunah* he should turn to Hashem throughout the day, for all the needs in his life, even seemingly petty ones. A person who constantly speaks to Hashem will surely acquire a deeper and stronger *emunah*.

Rav Pinchas Koritzer, a *talmid* of the Baal Shem Tov, was overheard remarking: “The helper should return.” When his students asked him what that meant, he replied: “the cleaning woman who helps my wife left, and the Reb-betzin truly needs her assistance. I’m davening for the cleaning lady to return to work”. If a Tzaddik of such measure would speak to Hashem about the mundane matters in his life, we surely ought to do the same.

Source: Rabbi Dov Weller

בצאת ישראל ממצרים...

By: Bassy Reissman

Many question the redundancy of this verse. Why does it repeat what seems to be the same message?

The Roke'ach explains, based on the Talmud (Sotah 11B): **בית יעקב** literally means, “the House of Yaakov”, but refers to the righteous Jewish women in whose merit, we are taught, the Jewish people were redeemed.

Rav Yechiel Michel Epstein points out that **בצאת ישראל ממצרים**, when Yisrael went forth from Egypt, refers to the Jewish men; he notes that David Hamelech used the word Yisrael, rather than the usual Bnei Israel. This implies that only a portion of the men were redeemed since those who sinned died in Egypt. The women, on the other hand, were all righteous and all of them merited redemption. Therefore **דוד המלך** refers to them as Yaakov-that is, the entire house of Yaakov-all of whom were worthy of redemption.

Source: The Eishes Chayil Haggadah

הלל

By: Chana Rivka Herbsman

We say the **ברכה** of **גאל ישראל** in conjunction with drinking the second cup of wine. We are thanking Hashem for redeeming us from **מצרים**. The **ראשונים** discuss whether or not we need a **ברכה** on **הלל** at the Seder. The **רמב"ן** says that it needs a **ברכה** because there is no greater obligation to

say הלל than there is at a time of גאולה, redemption. The idea he wishes to highlight is that a person is obligated to express thanks to *Hashem* when he experiences a personal גאולה. This הלל is *our* experience, not just the experience of our ancestors who physically came out of מצרים. We commemorate what happened then, but each person needs to feel "כאלו הוא יצא ממצרים". Therefore, we must say הלל, as we would for our personal גאולה. On *Seder* night we ought to try and feel the emotions that would lead to joyful song, as this too is part of the mitzvah of *Seder* night.

.....

מרור and מצה

By: Chavi Zelefsky

Two questions are asked regarding the מצה and מרור.

First, is it not true that we experienced all the bitter work, the מרור, before we had freedom, the מצה? If so, why don't we have מרור first?

Second, as mentioned, מרור is eaten to commemorate the *bitterness* that we endured in מצרים. The word מרור, however, actually has 2 meanings: the one that most know, which derives from the word מר, as in bitter, and the second one, *chazeres*, referred to as *chasa* is the *Gemora*, meaning mercy or pity.

How is it that the bitterness of מצרים, the מרור, is also associated with mercy?

The שם משמאל explains that when we encounter a hardship in life, our immediate reaction is often to imagine that we can not manage. We become overwhelmed. While this was true during the שיעבוד - the slavery in מצרים - there was a positive dimension to see servitude as well. The hard labor actually had the effect of preparing us to accept the yoke of תורה and the עול מלכות שמים. Had we not experienced the suffering of מצרים, we would have never been able to develop the humility that we needed to accept the yoke of תורה and מצוות. It was this experience which helped us get to where we needed to go.

This is why we have מצה first and then the מרור, even though it does not follow the chronological order. The order reflects the idea that while we first had to endure slavery and only then did we achieve freedom, it was *because of* the slavery that we could appreciate the freedom. It is written in that order to teach us that the מצה, our freedom, is coming as a result of the מרור, the enslavement. With every act of servitude that we did we brought our freedom closer. In light of that we can understand that מרור, the bitter hardship, was

really *chasa*, mercy, after all.

Now, in גלות, we have suffered long and hard. There are many times that we wonder and struggle to understand the hardships we experience in life. But with this in mind we can be comforted and come to an understanding that Hashem is preparing us and helping us to reach the ultimate goal.

Source: Touched by the Seder, Rabbi Yechiel Spero

מכת חשך

By: Chaya Sara Malek

”לא ראו איש את אחיו ולא קמו איש מתחתיו שלשת ימים ולכל בני ישראל היה אור במשבתם”

The plague of Choshech obscured the line between darkness and light, yet not in the way that most people think. R' Yissocher Eilenberg explains that Hashem brought an extremely bright light onto the Egyptians, it blinded them, and caused their eyes to become dim and dark. The power of the holy illumination also wiped out the sinners among *Bnei Yisrael*, and more than half of the nation was wiped out.

The holy Rizhiner, R' Yisrael of Rizhin, spoke of another aspect of the holy illumination. Needless to say each and every Jew has within him this holy spark of light, but the light manifests itself differently in each person, and in some it is more visible than others. He employed the analogy of a precious jewel. If a diamond is covered in dirt, its shine and value is hidden. When, however, you start cleaning off the dirt, you're left with a glittering gem.

This is what the *pasuk* means; “*For all Bnei Yisrael there was light,*” in every Jew there is a unique light. במשבתם - What makes each Jew unique is where the light is to be found, because there is inherent goodness in each of us. It is up to us to cleanse ourselves so that the light of our holy *neschama* will attain its fullest shine and come through.

צפרדע

By: Elisheva Hoffman

The Gemara in Pesachim poses the following question:

On what basis did Chananyah, Misbael, and Azaryah conclude that they had to sacrifice themselves in a fiery furnace al kiddush Hashem? They derived a kal vachomer concerning themselves from the tzefarde'im. If, regarding the frogs, who were not obligated in the Mitzvah of kiddush Hashem, it is nonetheless stated, "They shall ascend and come into your house...and into your ovens" (Shemos 7:28)-if so, we, who were commanded regarding the obligation, surely we must sacrifice our lives.

The Commentators question this: How is it possible to say that the frogs were not commanded to enter the ovens? Since Hashem stated that "they shall ascend and come into your house...and into your ovens," (Shemos 7:28) is it not as if they were commanded to enter the ovens?

The *Yalkut Gersbuni* cites an explanation from the *Sefer Linyas Chein* based on a well-known *Rambam*. The *Rambam*, in *Hilchos Tesbuvah* (6:5) asks: Why did Hashem punish the *Mitzrim* for enslaving *Bnei Yisroel*? After all, Hashem had decreed that *Bnei Yisroel* would be enslaved in *Mitzrayim*, as He told Avraham, "And the Egyptians will enslave and persecute them." (*Berishes 15:13*) If so, since it was predetermined that the *Mitzrim* would enslave *Bnei Yisroel*, why should they be punished for doing so? The *Rambam* answers that it was predetermined only that the *Mitzrim*, in general, would enslave the Jewish people, but there was no decree obligating any specific *Mitzri* to do so. If any individual *Mitzri* was not willing to hurt a Jew, he had the free will to make that choice.

The same rationale, says the *Linyas Chein*, applies here. There was no command that each and every individual frog had to enter a hot oven. Each frog could have lived by entering one of the safe places in the Egyptian houses. Thus, when the Gemara says that the frogs were in the category of *einom met-zuvin*, it means that they were not individually commanded to enter the ovens.

However, the *kal vachomer* employed by *Chananyah*, *Misbael*, and *Azaryah* requires further explanation. How is it possible to learn anything from a *kal vachomer* involving creatures who have no *bechirah* and whose actions are instinctive? Does it make sense to infer life and death halachos for humans, who do have *bechirah* to do as they wish, from the actions of animals?

It would appear, however, that the dichotomy between humans and animals is precisely what drives the *kal vachomer* argument! It is instinctive for all living things to escape danger and protect themselves. Yet, because of the *Ratzon Hashem*, these frogs seemingly had no choice but to act contrary to their nature. Thus, we learn from *Makas Tzefardayah* that fulfilling the *Ratzon Hashem* is itself a sufficient reason to compel a person to act contrary to his nature

and predisposition. After all, reasoned *Chananyah*, *Misbael*, and *Azaryah*, if a lowly frog can subjugate its nature to the *Ratzon Hashem*, why should we—who are thinking creatures with *bechirah*—do any less?

Source: The Rav Pam Haggadah, Shir Hashirim

.....

מרור and מצה

By: Ruchama Biderman

The Chidushei Harim wonders:

Matzah symbolizes freedom and *maror*, enslavement. Why, then, is *matzah* referred to before *maror*?

R' Simcha Bunim of Pshicha offered the following parable:

A king had a son whom he adored. He granted his son everything he ever wanted. Yet the son was ungrateful and rebelled against his father. Consequently, his father banished him. After many years had passed, the father sent one of his ministers to seek out the rebellious child and bring him back. He found the prince in a distant village, barefoot and dressed in tattered clothing, drinking in the local tavern. The minister approached the prince and asked him how he was doing. “Marvelous,” answered the prince. “If I had a sheepskin jacket and a pair of boots no one could be happier.” The minister wept after hearing the depths the once-pampered prince had fallen to.

It is in this way that we can understand the words *Dovid Hamelech* uses to describe *Hashem* had perceived that *Galus Mitzrayim* had reached rock bottom: “*And he saw in what straits they were — when He heard their song.*” (*Tehilim* 106:44) They were enslaved, and yet they sang of joy. **For the nadir of servitude is the coming to terms with the state of degradation.**

We eat the *matzah* before *maror* because *Bnei Yisroel* were totally unaware of the bitterness of servitude until they were worthy of the light of deliverance, which is alluded to by the *matzah*. They needed to taste redemption before they could realize the bondage they had endured. (Siach Safrei Kodosh I 244)

Source: The Haggadah of the Chassidic Masters

.....

Matzah & Freedom

By: Shira Black

The Torah tells us we should remember *Yetzias Mitzrayim* in every generation. It is interesting to note that the Torah does not say to remember every year, albeit each year we commemorate the miracle Hashem bestowed upon us *Pesach* time.

Rabbi Efraim Stauber explains that we should remember *Mitzrayim* every year as we do on *Pesach*, but our liberation from *Mitzrayim* is meant to be relived in every generation as if we were the very generation that was taken out. We have to know that just as Hashem liberated us from the servitude of *Mitzrayim* to be our *Elokim* then, in today's generation as well, Hashem redeems us from our own personal "*Mitzrayim*", our hardships, and continues to be our *Elokim* - orchestrating every aspect of our lives.

Pesach, Matzah, Maror

By: Aviva Barth

Pesach: The *Karbon Pesach* brought in *Mitzrayim* was like a *Karbon Geirus*, which a *Ger* brings with his conversion to Judaism. The *Karbon Pesach* gave us the identity of being Hashem's nation. In *Mitzrayim* the Jews were commanded to put the blood of the *Karbon* on their doorposts to signify their Jewish identity. *Makas Bechoros* demonstrated the difference between us and the non Jews. Although today we don't have the *Karbon* we eat the *Afikomen* which is supposed to arouse in us our natural relationship with the *Ribono Shel Olam*.

Matzah: *Chametz* symbolizes a person who follows his own interests and desires, because the dough rises and forms into its own shape without conforming to any restrictive mold. *Matzah* symbolizes a person's desire to follow in Hashem's ways, as the dough has no time to rise and is baked the way it is formed. When we eat *Matzah* at the *Seder*, we should all connect to the faith and to our inner desire to do Hashem's will.

Maror: We eat *Maror* to remember the bitterness and deep *Hester* of *Galus Mitzrayim*. At *Yetzias Mitzrayim* Hashem's greatness was revealed to us and we realized everything was from Him. *Galus* was all G-dliness too, only it's G-dliness was concealed from us until the redemption came. Only through the *Galus (Maror)* were we able to reach the redemption.

On *Seder* night we point to *Pesach*, *Matzah*, and *Maror* to thank Hashem for

exile, which lead to redemption, and for the redemption itself. If we can recognize that He is indeed leading every situation in life, even when life may seem hard when Hashem is *Hester*, these challenging times bring us closer to Hashem and closer to our ultimate *Geulah*.

Source: My Sole Desire, Harav Avraham Tzvi Klugar

Matzah

By: Ilana Krausman

Matzah is distinctive because it is required to be made from products that can potentially become chometz. The Chasam Sofer asks the question- why must we be concerned that in the process, matzah can easily and quickly be disqualified. Why not make matzah out of only products that don't contain chometz, like fruits or vegetables? Chometz symbolizes our inherent yetzer hara. Matzah without chometz is like avodas Hashem without a yetzer hara. There is no struggle, no crisis, no challenge and thus no strengthening of our spiritual muscles. In order to reach spiritual heights there must be a low to climb from, a challenge to grow out of. Similarly, Matzah has kedusha, because though easily turned to chometz it resists mightily from becoming chometz.

הללו עבדי ה'...

By: Leah Rothman

This *Perek* of *Tehillim* is the first of the two *perakim* of *Hallel* at the conclusion of *Magid*. It outlines the fundamentals of praising *Hashem*. Specifically, the *Meiam Loaz* explains that this *perek* teaches us about how to praise *Hashem*. Only those who are “עבדי ה'” can praise Him. At first, the Jews were servants of *Pharaoh* and therefore could not praise *Hashem*. After *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, however, the Jews were free to serve and praise *Hashem*. Additionally, once *Bnei Yisroel* witnessed *makat bechorot* they were able to praise *Hashem* מעתה ועד עולם, from now and forever. The *Midrash Shochar Tov* teaches that prior to *Bnei Yisroel* leaving *Mitzrayim*, for 26 generations, no one had said *Hallel* or *shira* in front of *Hashem* until *Makat Bechorot*. This is because at the time of *Makat Bechorot* the pagans of Egypt, who had up until then denied *Hashem* and ignored His power, finally realized *Hashem* as the Almighty. After *Makat Bechorot*, *Hashem* became identified with His name, ק-ו-ק that has the gematria of 26. And finally, we are able to praise *Hashem* ממזרח שמש עד מבוא, from where the sun rises until where it sets, meaning,

in this world. Hashem's impact is felt in this world, not just in the heavens. Hashem has the ability to do or change any situation. If someone is poor, Hashem can make him rich, מאשפות ירים אביון. If someone is downtrodden and weakened, Hashem can lift and strengthen him, מקימי מעפר דל. Even if a woman is barren, Hashem can make her the happy mother of children, מושיבי עקרת הבית אם הבנים שמחה.

.....

I Can't Thank Enough

By: Meital Israel

As Pesach approaches us, with open arms we prepare with intense cleaning and smiling faces. Yet, we also prepare to ask insightful inquires that will yield astute answers. The *עובדיה*, a sefer authored by Harav Yosef Ovadia z"l, comments on the words "פסח, מצה, מרור" and proceeds with the following question: We all know that if one does not recite "פסח, מצה, מרור," he has not fulfilled the mitzvah of Hagaddah. However, why does the Torah refer to Pesach as חג המצות and not as פסח? The *עובדיה* elucidates on the words of רבי לוי יצחק מברדיטשוב and explains that each title, חג המצות and פסח, represents a different aspect of הכרת הטוב and acclamation. We are familiar with the fact that we focus our praise on Hashem for the goodness that He grants us, especially in our mezuzos when it says "שמע ישראל ה' אלוהינו ה' אחד." So too, Hashem participates in a praise directed at בני ישראל as it says, "מי כעמך ישראל גוי אחד בארץ." Similarly, "פסח" symbolizes the thanks we give to Hashem for saving us in מצרים by passing over the houses of בני ישראל, as it says: "חג המצות" (שמות יב:כז) "פסח על בתי בני ישראל... את בתינו הציל" demonstrates the שבח that Hashem grants בני ישראל, as it says (ירמיהו ב':ב) "זכרתי לך חסד נעוריך... לכתך אחרי" due to the fact that they hurriedly left מצרים while their dough was still rising. חג המצות and פסח signifies the mutual praise between Hashem and בני ישראל; this bond shall remain as long as we continue to love and attribute our thanks to Hashem.

.....

לפיכך אנחנו חייבים להודות להלל...

By: Michal Rogosnitzky

This paragraph in the Hagaddah is talking about how we have to thank Hashem for redeeming us from Mitzrayim and for all the great נסים that Bnei Yisrael experienced. From this, we can all learn the Mitzvah of הכרת הטוב.

Chazal are quoted in **מתן פרק מא** 'אבות דר' that one should look at the great deeds he does for his friend as something small. Meanwhile, he should see the little deeds his friend does for him as something great. We learn from here the importance and extent of the Mitzvah of **הכרת הטוב**.

When Hashem told Bnei Yisrael to go to Paroah to tell him to let Bnei Yisrael out of Mitzrayim, the Passuk says, **ויילך משה וישב אל יתר חותנו** in **חז"ל** in **פרק ד'** say that Moshe went to ask his father-in-law, Yitro, for permission to leave Mitzrayim. This is because **"שהפותה פתח להכירו נפשו חייב לו"**. One who makes an opening for his friend, the friend owes his life to the one who "opened the door."

This was a very interesting thing for Moshe Rabeinu to have done. Hashem sent him to take Bnei Yisrael out of Mitzrayim and the Geulah of all of Bnei Yisrael was dependent on it, for afterward they would receive the Torah! Not only was the Geulah dependent on this, but the world's entire existence was. Hashem made a condition by **מעשה בראשית** that if Bnei Yisrael accept the Torah, the world would continue. If not, Hashem would return the world to **תוהו ובוהו**.

We see that the entire world's existence depended on Moshe Rabeinu completing his **שליחות**. Despite this, he went and asked for permission from Yitro first. This is because he owed him for taking him into his home. Had Yitro not agreed, Moshe Rabeinu would not have gone. This is despite the fact that it would have ended the future of Bnei Yisrael as well as the existence of the entire world.

There is a story told about **רבי בן ציון ברוק זצ"ל** who was speaking to a **בחור** who slept in the house of the **חפץ חיים זצ"ל**. While this **בחור** was lying in bed, he heard the **חפץ חיים** thanking Hashem for all the good things He gave him. He recounted all the details of the good that Hashem did for him throughout his life; that Hashem helped him when he was orphaned, that Hashem gave him the ability to learn Torah and author **ספרים**, and he continued on and on.

We can all learn from Moshe Rabeinu and the **חפץ חיים** the extent of **מצות הכרת הטוב**.

Source: **תנועת המוסר חלק ד** and **מכתבי נכדו רבי אברהם הכהן**

דיינן

By: Nechama Weiner

In Dayenu, we praise Hashem for all the Miracles He performed for us. For example we say, 'If Hashem had split the sea for us and had not crossed us through on dry land, it would have sufficed.' The question is, how could this have sufficed? We would not be alive!

The Malbim explains that the purpose of Dayenu is to remind us of all the great events that Hashem did for us. Each event alone is enough to warrant our great thanks and praise. Yes, if Hashem had 'merely' split the sea for us and not brought us through on dry land, Hashem would deserve our thanks. Would it have been enough in terms of our development as a nation? Probably not. However, that is not what Dayenu – it would have sufficed, means. Dayenu means that this act alone would have sufficed to bring upon us the obligation to thank Hashem! How much more so are we to praise Hashem when we are presented with these 15 acts in Dayenu!

.....

דיינן

By: Osnat Cohen

The order of דיינן is chronological; it moves from one event to the next. The 10th מעלה proclaims "אילו האכילנו את המן ולא נתן לנו את השבת דיינו" suggesting that we got the מן before we got Shabbos. But did we not get Shabbos before we got the מן? Did Moshe Rabeinu not teach us about Shabbos when we were in מרה? We only received the מן afterwards, once we reached מדבר סין.

Rabbi Adler cites the פרשת בשלח in רמב"ן as a possible explanation. The רמב"ן, in discussing the מצוות מרה and their nature, teaches that in מרה, Moshe was informing בני" about the מצוות that Hashem would command them in the future. The מצוות were given to them in מרה for two reasons: "היה זה להרגילים במצוות ולדעת אם יקבלו אותם בשמחה ובטוב לב והוא הנסיון" - to get us accustomed to מצוות so that we would have experience with them before Hashem actually commanded us to do them, and to see how we would react to the concept of מצוות and whether we would accept them with joy. Essentially, then, the מצווה of Shabbos was not yet a חובה at Mara, and therefore was not considered officially given to us.

This idea is the basis of the obligation of הינוך. For the first 11 years (12 years for a male) of our lives, the מצוות that we fulfill are to get us accustomed to

them so that once they are actually binding, we will be well-prepared.

(”ספר מצות השבת ממרה עד סיני“ ר’ אדלר)

Pharaoh’s Folly

By: Rachel Berenshteyn

Since kindergarten, we have all been taught that on the night of **מכת בכורות** Pharaoh begged Moshe and Aharon- “**וּבְרַכְתֶּם גַּם אוֹתִי**”-please pray that I should not die, for I am a firstborn son (Rashi, Shemos 12:32). Although it seems like Pharaoh, at the throes of death, recognizes Hashem’s power over the world, we know that he had already come to this realization during **מכת כינים**, as he asks Moshe to get rid of the lice because his magicians could not. And so, a question arises: why did it take Pharaoh such a long time after recognizing Hashem’s existence to send **בני ישראל** free?

During the first few **מכות**, Pharaoh’s refusal to free **בני ישראל** could be understood through the fact that he was unimpressed with them since his own magicians were able to produce blood and frogs as well. Therefore, it could be said that he did not have a basis of proof for Hashem’s existence since it just as well could have been the work of Moshe or Aharon (Eben Ezra, **ויהזק**). Then by **מכת כינים**, although the magicians tell him “**אֲצַבֵּעַ אֱלֹקִים הִיא**” (acknowledging that it came from HaShem), the Eben Ezra (Shemos 8:15) states that this was not a turning point for Pharaoh. He explains this **פסוק** by saying that Pharaoh had never denied the existence of an “**אלוקים**”- a deity who has the ability to participate in matters of this world. Rather, Pharaoh was denying the **י-ק-ו-ק** aspect of Hashem’s name which means that Hashem is clearly present in reality. And so when the magicians told Pharaoh that the **מכה** was “**אֲצַבֵּעַ אֱלֹקִים**,” they weren’t proving that it was Hashem who played a role in this **מכה**. And again by **מכת ערוב** we see that Pharaoh tells Moshe and Aharon to ask Hashem to repeal the **מכה**- at this point it was evident to Pharaoh that Hashem was orchestrating these events- and yet he hardens his heart. He is given multiple chances to correct himself and send **בני ישראל** out of Egypt until finally, after his self-controlled refusal after **מכת דבר**, Hashem begins to harden Pharaoh’s heart. It is evident that he had many chances to correct himself, says the Ramban (**ואני אקשה את לב פרעה**), Shemos 7:3), and therefore any claims that it was not Pharaoh’s choice to act badly do not apply.

At the end, we know that one of the main reasons behind Pharaoh’s reluctance to comply with Moshe’s (really Hashem’s) demand was that he was stubborn and unwilling to admit the existence of a higher power than him,

more so to himself than anyone else. From here we learn the importance of working on our stubbornness and acknowledging its power over us so that we may not miss important signals in our lives.

Source: Dvar Torah I had previously heard,
found on the תורה לציון organization's website.

.....

12th
Grade

לשנה הבאה בירושלים

By: Ayelet Huberfeld

In *nirtzah*, we recite the words *Lshana haba biyerushalaim* loudly with singing and dancing. It is one of the highlights of the *seder*, when we pray to *Hashem* to return us to *Eretz Yisrael*.

There is only one other time in the year when we say these words, and that is in the conclusion of *neila* on *Yom Kippur*. The *shofar* is blown, and everyone cries out *Lshana haba biyerushalaim!*

What is the connection between these two special moments?

A possible answer offered in the Eliyahu Kitov Haggada is that at these times we reach the greatest level of *simcha* of the entire year.

After *neila* on *Yom Kippur*, we are so happy, because we know that our *tefilot* were answered, and that *Hashem* has metaphorically freed us from our sins and guilt. On *Pesach* night, we are thankful to *Hashem* for taking us out of *Mitzrayim*, and for physically freeing us from slavery.

We reach this level of *kedusha* and *simcha* in different ways: on *yom kippur*, we abstain from physical pleasures, and on *pesach* we elevate ourselves through those same physical entities.

In both of these times, *Hashem* has redeemed and raised us, and we are overjoyed. It is at that time of overflowing joy that we need to focus on our greatest yearning: to return to *Yerushalayim* and observe both the *avoda* of *Yom Kippur* and the *Pesach seder* in the year to come. Even if we weren't *zoché* this year, *Hashem* has given us another opportunity to prove ourselves deserving, and we must have the confidence and will to make it happen.

.....

הלל

By: Ashira Feld

The Hallel we offer on *Leil Haseder* is very different from the Hallel recited on any other occasion. It is interesting that we recite Hallel on *Pesach*, but not on *Purim*. The Gemara, in commenting on the Pasuk from *tehillim* -

“ה'ללו עבדי ה' הללו את שם ה'” explains that only a person who has complete allegiance to Hashem is considered to be a servant of Hashem. At the completion of the *Purim* story we were still servants to *Achashverosh* (who embodies all future nations who rule over us), whereas after leaving

Mitzrayim we were completely and solely devoted to Hashem. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach asks the obvious question: why are our future oppressors considered to be an extension of Achashverosh and not of Pharaoh?

Rav Shlomo Zalman believes that the answer lies in the unprecedented level of oppression and enslavement that were reached in Mitzrayim. It was unlike anything we had ever known before. We sank to the lowest level of mankind, not only in *tuma*, but in the fact that we were actually content in our slavery status. We even wanted to return to Mitzrayim after being redeemed! And so this is what we celebrate and thank Hashem when we sing on Pesach - that never again will we stoop to such a low level of humanity. This is the eternal freedom we are celebrating, and the reason we don't consider any future oppressions to be comparable to that of Mitzrayim and Pharaoh.

Additionally, our Hallel on Leil Haseder commemorates another unique aspect of Yetzias Mitzrayim. When we left Egypt we became completely and exclusively servants of Hakadosh Baruch Hu as we received the Torah and accepted His commandments. On Pesach, unlike Purim, we truly fit the description of “הללו עבדי ה', הללו את שם ה'” and are worthy of reciting Hallel.

May we be inspired by the story of Mitzrayim and strive to live a life in which we can sing praise to Hashem because He is our sole Master.

Source: Rav Shlomo Zalman Haggadah

בניסן נגאלו ובניסן עתידין להיגאל

By: Devorah Pinczower

The *Sefer Maase Rokeych* brings down that *michiyas amalek* will be on the 14th of *Nisan*, and immediately following will be *Mashiach*. During the times of *Mashiach*, there will no longer be Pesach, and another *yom tov* will take its place. The *gemara* in *brachos* says that in the days of *Mashiach*, *Hashem* will no longer be praised for having taken us out of *Mitzrayim*. Instead, *Hashem* will be praised for saving us from *shiybud malchiyos*, as that will be a much greater act of salvation. “ואז נודה לה שיר חדש על גאולתינו משעבוד מלכויות...” As a result, Pesach will be insignificant in comparison to the new *yom tov* celebrating our salvation. Therefore, we call the last day of pesach “*acharon shel pesach*,” as we hope that this will be the last time we celebrate Pesach, and in the coming year there will be another *yom tov* in its place, celebrating our redemption from this *galus*.

שפוך חמתך

By: Rachele Benedict

Towards the end of the *seder* night as we are about to embark on drinking of the fourth cup of wine we say the *pesukim* of “שפוך חמתך אל הגוים”, meaning Hashem should pour out His wrath on the *goyim*. Throughout the *seder* we recite different parts of the haggadah over different cups of wine. These *pesukim* before the fourth cup of wine come from *Tehillim* and *Megillat Eicha*. The *pesukim* discuss how Hashem should pour out His wrath on the *goyim* and destroy them because they devoured Yaakov, which refers to Bnei Yisroel, and they destroyed the Beis Hamikdash. We said the first part of *Hallel* prior to eating the *matzah* and *maror*, and then we had the *seudah*, and now before the second part of *Hallel* we are saying these *pesukim*. Some *rishonim*, like the Rambam, don't even include these *pesukim* in their haggadah, so what do these *pesukim* come to teach us in their place in the haggadah and *seder*?

Another interesting thing to note about these *pesukim* is that in the first *pasuk* it says “שפוך חמתך אל הגוים” which is in *lashon rabim* and then it continues and says “כי אכל את יעקב,” for they have devoured Yaakov, which is *lashon yachid*. What does this change from plural to singular represent? *Mefarshim* explain, that in general the *goyim* are not together in things and every *goy* has their own ideas. The only exception to this rule is when it comes to one thing and that is to destroy *yiddishkeit*. Then, they join together and become unified and one. So we say to Hashem, pour out your wrath on the *goyim* as plural because the only time they behave as one unit is when it comes to destroying Klal Yisroel.

The Nesivos Rabbeinu Yaakov M'lisah in his haggadah called *Maaseh Nissim* asks, what are these *pesukim* doing here? He explains that the first two cups of the night are primarily about the going out of *mitzrayim* and the *avdus* to *cheiros*. The next two cups of the night deal with the *Geulah* and *Guelah Haatid*, the future redemptions. We break up *Hallel* with the first part being part of *magid* and then we say the second part at the end with *hallel hagadol* with added *perakim*. The first *perakim* as part of *magid* talk about *Yetziat Mitzrayim* and start with “*bzeit yisrael mimitzrayim*.” The next part of *Hallel* talks more about future redemption and the *Geulah* of the future with *Hallel Hagadol*.

There is a definite distinction between this splitting of *Hallel* into two parts. Therefore, as a *hakdama* and preface to this new twist to the *seder* when we start talking about the future redemption and praise it, we first mention that we are in this predicament because of the *goyim*. The *goyim* destroyed the Beis Hamikdash and destroyed Bnei Yisroel so we ask Hashem to pour out His wrath and destroy them so we can sing *Hallel Hagadol* by the *Guelah Hatid*.

The Aruch Hashulchan in his haggadah known as *Leil Shimurim* says that

with these *pesukim* we prepare ourselves to start the next part of *Hallel*. The *goyim* not only destroyed the Beis Hamikdash, what they were supposed to do, but they killed Bnei Yisroel and they weren't supposed to do this as it wasn't part of the *gezeira*. So we preface this part of *Hallel* with these *pesukim* to bring out the idea that the *goyim* went too far and Hashem should punish and destroy them so we can sing *Hallel* by the *Genlah Haatid*.

.....

הלל

By: Kayla Samet

When one learns the story of how we left Mitzrayim, we learn that Moshe Rabeinu is a major role. Since we were little children we know what he did to help get us out of the depths of *tumah* that we were in.

So why isn't he mentioned at least once in the Haggadah? The Sifsei Chaim answers, that it teaches us that Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim without a *shaliach* or a *malach*- it was Hashem Himself. Only once do you see Moshe's name and that is: "וַיֹּאמִינוּ בֹּהַ' וּבִמְשֵׁה עַבְדּוֹ"- this passuk does not in any way take away any *Kavod* from Hashem. It just shows us the humility of Moshe and that he was no more than a servant of Hashem. That was how Moshe was able to be a leader, because he realized that everything that he was doing was because Hashem wanted him to. He did not take any of the honor for himself whatsoever. With the midda of *Anava*, it is easy to recognize that everything comes from Hashem.

We know there is a segula that if we say Ashrei three times a day, we are *zoché* to Olam Habba. However, if we say Hallel every day, we can be punished.

Why is this? The answer is in Ashrei. We thank Hashem and praise Hashem for the small, everyday miracles that He does for us. Hallel is thanking Hashem for the huge things that He does. So if we would say Hallel often, it shows Hashem that we only appreciate Him when He does huge things, like changing the course of nature. However, we say Ashrei often to show Hashem that we appreciate everything!

Saying both Ashrei and Hallel involves a level of *Anava* like Moshe had. We often think that we have all the power in our lives and that we are in control. But when we say Hallel and praise Hashem, and when we skip Moshe's name in the Haggadah, we are telling ourselves that our personal Yeshuos come only from Hashem Himself.

Source: Sifsei Chaim

.....

הלל

By: Esther Butler

Hallel is split into two portions. The first part of *Hallel* is recited at the end of *Maggid* and the remainder is said following *Shefoch Chamoscha*. The Meiri explains that the first portion of *Hallel* that follows *Maggid* appropriately has references to *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. We reference our enslavement and leaving Mitzrayim in the paragraph, “*Betzais Yisrael MiMitzrayim*”. Rav Soloveichik believed that praising Hashem is included in the Mitzvah of *Sipur Yetzias Mitzrayim*.

The Nitziv asks, how can we interrupt and separate the two portions of *Hallel*? He answers following the *Hallel* in *Maggid* that we continue the *seder* with eating matza, which represents the *Korbon Pesach*. And even *Shulchan Aruch* can be viewed as a *seudas bodaah* after we relived *Yetzias Mitzrayim* during *Maggid*.

The Vilna Gaon asks, why do we recite *Shefoch Chamoscha* immediately before the second portion of *Hallel*? He explains that we recite *Shefoch Chamoscha* to ask Hashem to bring the *geula*, but to spare us from the suffering of the war. This fits with the second portion of *Hallel*, which refers to the days of Mashiach and *milchemes Gog u'Magog*.

All portions of the *Seder* are to remind us of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and to daven for the ultimate *geula*.

Source: Rabbi Yonason Sacks, sefer Chazon L'Yomoms

.....

הודו לה' כי טוב כי לעולם חסדו

By: Baila Schuster

Rav Pam explains the words “כי לעולם חסדו” - “for his kindness is eternal” that kindness performed in this world calls down Hashem’s kindness from Above, not as a reward for good behavior, but as part of a natural process in which chessed here is mirrored by chessed On High.

When a person performs an act of chessed with his fellow man he awakens Hashem’s attribute of chessed in response and is showered with kindness from Above. This is not a ‘reward’ for his good deed; it is an automatic response to an act of kindness. Hashem built into the architecture of the world this mechanical process: kindness below evokes kindness Above. A person’s act of chessed activates Hashem’s middah of chessed which shines down upon the doer like the sun. And he basks in its radiance.

The Mishna (peka 1:1) states that a person eats the fruit of his act of chessed in this world while the principal is preserved for the World to Come.

The notion that one receives reward for chessed in this world might seem to contradict chazal's teaching that one is rewarded for doing mitzvos only in the next world, but not in this one, as it says:

“שכר מצוה בהאי עלמא ליכא” (Kiddushin 39b). In fact, there is no contradiction. When the chachamim teach that no reward is received in this world it refers to only *מצות בין אדם למקום*. *מצות בין אדם לחברו*, however, are not included in this rule. Rather, the fruit of these mitzvos is indeed eaten in this world (Rambam commentary to the Mishna).

The Rambam provides his own reason to distinguish between these two types of mitzvos. However, the differentiation can also be explained in light of the idea presented above, as follows: the fruit of chessed is not a reward; it is a mechanical response to kindness which takes place in this world and is therefore enjoyed here. The actual reward for the mitzvos is received in the world to come.

Source: The Rav Pam Haggadah

הלל

By: Esther Seror

Upon hearing all the miracles that Hashem performed for Bnei Yisrael in Mitzrayim, beginning with the plagues and ending with the Yam Suf, Yitro exclaimed: “*Atah yadati ki gadol Hashem mikol elokim ki bidvar asher zadu aleyhem.*”

“Now that I know that Hashem is greater than any GD, [the Egyptians were punished] in every manner that they conspired against them.” (Shemot 18:11)

According to the Brisker Rav, the Egyptians were conspiring to harm the Jews in more ways than they actually did. Thankfully, though, Hashem did not allow their plans to come to fruition. Yitro, who had originally been one of Pharaoh's advisers and knew exactly what the Egyptians were plotting, was in awe that Hashem punished the Egyptians in the exact manner that they had *thought* to harm the Jews. (The Egyptians were in fact liable because Hashem punishes idolaters for their evil plots even if they are unable to perform them.) Yitro, therefore, was in the greatest position to make this declaration.

This idea is crystalized in the following anecdote:

A Russian minister once asked Rabbi Yitzchak Blazer to explain the verse: “*Hallelu et Hashem kol goyim shabechubu kol haamim ki gavar alenu chasdo.*”

The Russian Minister asked, “Why would we (the nations) praise Hashem because his kindness to you (the Jews) was overwhelming?”

“We do not know all the secret plots you hatch against us ,” Rav Blazer responded, “because Hashem does not allow you to execute many of them. You, however, are aware of the true overwhelming kindness Hashem does with us, so you are in a better position to praise him than we are.”

Similarly, since Yitro had been in close meetings with the Egyptians, he was able to see the true measure-for-measure punishments that Hashem decreed upon the Egyptians.

נרצה

By: Suri Deutsch

In *Nirtzah* we say the words “*Kadosh Hu, Rachum Hu, Shakai Hu, Takif Hu. Yivneh Beiso B’Karov: Bimbeira Bimbeira Biyameinu Bikarov.*” The *Gemara* in *Maseches Brachos (21a)* relates a conversation between the *Malachim* and *Hashem*. The *Malachim* asked *Hashem*: in Your *Torah* it’s written “*Asher Lo Yisab Panim*”, which means that Hashem will not demonstrate favoritism. This means that if a person is deserving, then they will receive a reward, but if they are not deserving, then they won’t. There is no special treatment, and there are no gifts to favorites. Asked the *Malachim* of *Hashem*: If You are so against the showing of favoritism, why is it that You show favoritism to *Bnei Yisroel*? Why do you grant them things even when they are not quite deserving of those things? *Hashem* replied by saying that *Klal Yisroel* had a right to be treated with benevolence beyond the letter of the law, because they perform *mitzvos* beyond the strict interpretation of the law. The *mitzvah* of saying *Birchas Hamazon* after eating is commanded in the *Torah* with the *posuk* “*V’achalta Vsavata Uveirachta*”. This means that we should eat, be satiated, and then say *Birchas Hamazon*. However, *Bnei Yisroel* are satisfied with just eating and benching on a *Kezayis*, even though a *Kezayis* of food is not normally sufficient for satiety. Satiety is generally only achieved after eating an entire, filling meal; however, *Bnei Yisroel* were so *medakdek* in *mitzvos* that they ate a *Kezayis*, just enough to fulfill the *Mitzvah*, and then benched. Since *Bnei Yisroel* fulfill this *Mitzvah* with such stringency, they are deserving of *Hashem’s* favoritism.

The *Tzemaich Menachem* (written by R’ Aharon Menachem Mendel of Nashelsk

in Poland) asks a question on this *Gemara*. Favoritism implies the showing of favor to someone who is not deserving of favor, yet is granted favor anyway. One example of this would be when a person practices a good deed occasionally, but he is granted favor all the time, even when he is not practicing that good deed. However, *Bnei Yisroel* always fulfill the *Mitzvah* of “*V’achalta Vesavata Uveracta*” with stringency. Therefore, the idea of favoritism should not apply to them because they do this *Mitzvah* always, and are therefore always deserving of *Hashem’s* benevolence, as He responded to the *malachim*.

This does not contradict “*Asher Lo Yisa Panim*”, because this is deserved, and therefore the *Gemara* is difficult to understand. R’ *Simcha Bonim M’Parshischa* (1765-1827, Polish Chassidish Rebbe and pharmacist, who included among his *talmidim* the founders of the dynasties of Kotzk, Ger, and Alexander) elaborates on this idea by discussing the perception of significance when receiving a gift. R’ *Simcha* compares the gifts of two types of people. The gift of an *Adam Pachos B’ma’aleh*, an insignificant person, is only special in the eyes of the *Mekabel* if it is a grand, extravagant gift. In contrast, the gift of an *Adam Gadol*, a great man, is special to the *Mekabel* even if it is not worth much. This is because the significance of the gift is dictated not by how great the gift is, but rather by the quality of the person giving it. It is for this reason that *Bnei Yisroel* are satisfied with and make a *Bracha Acharona* on just a *Kezayis* of food, which they receive as a gift from *Hashem*. *Bnei Yisroel* focus on the quality of the Giver, *Hashem*, rather than the quantity of the gift, the food. We also know that “*B’middah She’adam Moded Modidin Lo.*” *Hashem* acts with *Middah K’Neged Middah* to *Bnei Yisroel*, and considers who did the *mitzva* - not just the quality of the *mitzva*. *Hashem* decided to accept all *Mitzvos* from *Bnei Yisroel*, no matter the quantity or quality of the *Mitzvah*, because of who those *mitzvos* come from: *Bnei Yisroel*. *Hashem* notes that *Bnei Yisroel* are *Krutzei Chomer*- human beings made from dirt, and that they have a *yetzer bara*. *Hashem* wants to treat *Bnei Yisroel* the way they treat Him, so He accepts their *Mitzvos*, solely based on who the *Nosien* is. Since the nosein - *Bnei Yisroel* - are so imperfect, whatever they do is acceptable to *Hashem*, and this is the favoritism to *kelal yisroel*.

Seforim Hakedoshim explain that this is implied in *Hashem’s* name *Shakai*, which means that it is enough. The *avoda* that *Bnei Yisroel* do is sufficient in whichever manner it is done, because *Bnei Yisroel* are imperfect, and therefore their *mitzvos* do not have to be perfect. We can see how this idea connects back to the words in the *Haggadah*. In truth, *Hashem* should only reward *mitzvos* that are done with the correct intent and the correct process. *Hashem*, however, gives us mercy beyond the strict letter of the law. Why? *Rachum Hu* - *Hashem* is merciful to *Bnei Yisroel* because *Shakai Hu* meaning that the *Avodah*, the *Mitzvos* that *Bnei Yisroel* do are enough. *Hashem* knows that *Bnei*

Yisroel are human beings - *Krutzei Chomer*, and that every *Mitzvah* is such an effort because they are all counteracted by the efforts of the *Yetzer Hara*. Therefore, *Hashem* has *Rachmanus* on *Bnei Yisroel* and says “*Da!*” to the *Mitzvos* in whichever manner they are done. *Hashem* is satisfied with both the lesser quality and the smaller quantity of *Mitzvos* from *Bnei Yisroel* which is the root of His *Rachmanus*.

‘ישראל בטח בה’... בית אהרן...

By: Kayla Landau

The first passuk in Hallel speaks about the entire **כלל ישראל** and the second singles out **בית אהרן** in its own verse. Why is **בית אהרן** separated from the rest of **כלל ישראל** with regard to *Bitachon*.

R’ Moshe Feinstein explains that the **לויים**, who are the children of **אהרן**, have a higher level of *Bitachon* than the rest of **כלל ישראל**. They don’t receive an inheritance as do most other Jews, because “Hashem’s their inheritance”. How can this be explained? The **לויים** were responsible for mastering Torah and teaching it to **כלל ישראל**. They needed to make Torah the focus of their lives. In order to do this, they could not be busy with cultivation of the land as were their brothers. Instead, their occupation was **לימוד התורה**. The **לויים** needed to have a higher standard of *Bitachon* in Hashem than the rest of **כלל ישראל** because they had to believe that He would provide them with sustenance. For this reason **בית אהרן** is singled out in this section of Hallel.

The third passuk continues with the phrase **‘יראי ה’ בטחו בה’**. R’ Moshe explains that this refers to the rest of **כלל ישראל**. They should see the exalted levels of *Bitachon* that the **לויים** attain and try to emulate them. They should learn from the **לויים** that despite the toil that goes into working the land and earning a livelihood, all sustenance truly originates from Hashem.

.....

Manhattan High School for Girls
מכון יעקב לבנות