

Message from the Menaheles

בזכות נשים צדקניות נגאלו אבותינו ממצרים ובזכותן עתידין להגאל

Women played a pivotal role in ציאת מצרים. Indeed, Miriam's prophetic request of her father to reunite with her mother Yocheved resulted in the birth of Moshe, who ultimately delivered the Jewish nation from Egyptian bondage. The midwives, Shifra and Puah, were commanded to commit fratricide, כל הבן הילוד היארה תשליכהו. Paroh's intent was to erase any independent identity of the Jews so that the women could be fully absorbed into מצרים. Yocheved and Miriam had to choose between upholding their sacred values or protecting themselves. They opted for the former, and as a result of their יראת שמים they were blessed with תורה, נהונה, ומלכות, the defining institutions of our national identity.

כתב הרמב"ם- חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים

One must envision himself as having been freed from the bondage of the Egyptian fleshpots. At the same time, we, the Jewish women, must access the fortitude and conviction of our ancestresses in Egypt. It was their inner core of faith that led to our redemption. It was their feminine, yet steely, resolve that prevailed.

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ילכו מחיל אל חיל

We are grateful for the exceptional efforts of our Haggadah Editors

Chana Tannenbaum, Ariella Kornbluth, Hodaya Zerbib Ariella Gold. Mikaella Inzlicht Now, in the final stages of גלות, we, too, must summon up the resources to achieve the ultimate גאולה. The world drama is unfolding with כלל ostensibly at its center, and the נשים of today are being silently beseeched by generations of women past. The heroines שבכל דור ודור whisper to us. Pass on the torch.

This haggadah is an expression of חס פה, the mouth that speaks of Hashem's endless glory. Our beloved students are the newest link in the golden chain of נשים, and we look to them, strong, confident young women with אהבת תורה ויראת שמים, as we gaze forward to our glorious future.

May they usher in the era of משיח.

Thank you to Mrs. Dena Szpilzinger, IT Manager and Graphic Designer, Mrs. Sara Tendler, Faculty Advisor, Mrs. Avigail Finkelstein, Editor and our student editors, **Chana Tannenbaum**, **Ariella Kornbluth**, **Hodaya Zerbib**, **Ariella Gold**, **and Mikaella Inzlicht**, for their exceptional efforts.

We are very proud of our talented and creative student body, whose *divrei Torah* and artwork grace the pages of this prestigious publication. May this *haggadah* deepen our students' Pesach Seder experience and add a special dimension to their Yom Tov.

ברכת חג כשר ושמח,

Mrs. Tsivia Yanofsky

~ קדש ורחץ ~

Why are these first two simanim written in יאין ציוי, a directive or instruction? The other simanim are not conjugated this way. We should have called this first siman "קידוש". Furthermore, why are these two simanim connected with a vav, but no other simanim are connected this way?

The Sifrei Chassidus say that the first two simanim here go beyond just the Seder itself. We are being instructed that before one begins any יתבודת ה, he or she has to be מקדש themselves and "wash" themselves of any impurities. We must approach any מצוה with pure intentions and cleanse ourselves before doing so, especially on this important night of ליל הסדר.

Yehudis Ginsberg source: Sifrei Chassidus



Aliza Herzog

Why are we especially makpid on washing our hands before eating wet vegetables on leil haseder?

Washing before eating wet vegetables is not connected to the seder. All year round, there is a halacha that one must wash their hands on "davar shetibulo b'mashkeh," that which has been dipped in liquid. There is a machlokes rishonim whether this applies nowadays, so we wash without a beracha. The Ta``z has a question on this: "Mah nishtana halayla hazeh" — why are we makpid to do so at the seder and not during the rest of the year? He answers that we should, in fact, be washing on wet foods throughout the year. If we don't, it's as if we are stealing. Despite that, there are those who say that the washing doesn't require kavanah, so if one washed his hands earlier and knows that they are clean, he does not need to wash again. In addition, the Magen Avraham holds that bediavad, one does not have to wash nowadays, though it is preferred. The Chok Yaakov provides another explanation. He writes that even if one is not *makpid* throughout the year, he should be on leil haseder so the children will notice a difference. As with everything else we do, it's "so the kids should ask." The Netzi``v offers yet a third reason for this hakpadah. On leil haseder, we behave like they did in the times of the Beis HaMikdash, and then it was required to wash before eating wet vegetables according to all opinions. This explanation helps us understand why we are *makpid* to wash our hands even though we are noheig to eat less than a k'zayis. The Shulchan Aruch holds that we don't even wash on such a small amount of bread! Many of us also eat Karpas with a fork, so we don't even touch the vegetable. Still, if we are imitating the way it was done in the Mikdash, where we were especially stringent with tum'ah v'taharah, we make sure to wash our hands first.

> Tova Berger source: Shiras Miriam Haggadah, HaRav Yosef Zvi Rimon



Considering that the Seder night is filled with mitzvos such as daled kosos, sippur yetzias Mitzraim, matzah, and maror, why do we start the Seder with karpas, which is not even a mitzvah?

The classic answer is that we dip *karpas* in salt water to encourage the children to ask many questions. After *Kiddush*, we would expect a full meal. Instead, we receive a small piece of vegetable dipped in salty water and are then left hungry for a good part of the evening. This should certainly entice the children to ask questions.

The deeper meaning can be found in the Gemara (Pesachim 65b), which provides a description of how the *korban pesach* was brought in the *Beis Hamikdash*. The Gemara mentions that after slaughtering the *korban pesach*, *Bnei Yisroel* would carry it over the shoulder. Rav Ilish says that they carried it home in the manner of Arab merchants.

Rabbi Shlomo Kluger asks why we care about how they carried the *korban* home. Carrying the *korban* home is not a *mitzvah*, so why is it important that they held it like Arab merchants? Rabbi Kluger explains that *Chazal* wanted us to think about Arab merchants prior to *Maggid* because Yosef's brothers sold him to Arab merchants who brought him to Mitzrayim, which ultimately caused the *shevatim* to go to Mitzrayim. Rav Kluger explains that on Pesach we need to remind ourselves that the Egyptians weren't the only ones who hurt us; we also hurt each other.

Karpas similarly reminds us of mechiras Yosef. When the Torah describes Yosef's kesones passim, Rashi comments that the word "passim" is related to the word "karpas." Rabbeinu Manoach states explicitly that we eat karpas to remember Yosef's coat and to remember that the brothers' reaction to it was the beginning of our troubles. Dipping the karpas into the salt water alludes to the brothers who took this "karpas garment" and dipped it into the blood of a goat before they approached their father with the terrible news that Yosef had been killed.

Chazal teach us an important lesson on Seder night; before we blame others for our challenges, we must first realize that sometimes we need to fix things within ourselves to solve our problems, and that is the first step on our journey towards *geulah*.



What is the symbolism behind breaking the matzah into two pieces?

The word "yachatz" appears in only one context in Chumash, when Yaakov Avinu prepares to meet Eisav. Bereishis 32:8 says: "וַיִּירָא יִעֲלְב מְאָל הָשְׁבְּ מְחָבוֹח" אֶת הָעָם אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ וְאֶת הַבּּקְר וְהַגְּמַלִּים לְשְׁבֵי מַחֲבוֹח" Yaakov was very afraid and he was pained and he divided the people with him and the sheep and cattle and camels into two camps." Yaakov Avinu planned to split his family up so that if one group was attacked, the other would have a chance to escape to safety. In this way, Bnei Yisroel as a whole would continue to exist.

Yaakov Avinu's plan was not a one time strategy only for his meeting with Eisav; rather, it had implications for generations to come. We have relived this *yachatz* throughout history. In *galus*, we are scattered around the world; often there is one group of Jews being persecuted while another group lives in peace. For example, while millions of Jews were being killed in the Holocaust and suffering under the Communist regime, the Jews in America were largely unharmed, fulfilling Hashem's promise that we would always survive.

Now, as we break the *matzah* in two, let us remember Yaakov Avinu's message and Hashem's promise that we will always survive, no matter what dangers we face in *galus*.

○ Chana Guelfguat source: Rabbi Berel Wein on the Pesach Haggadah

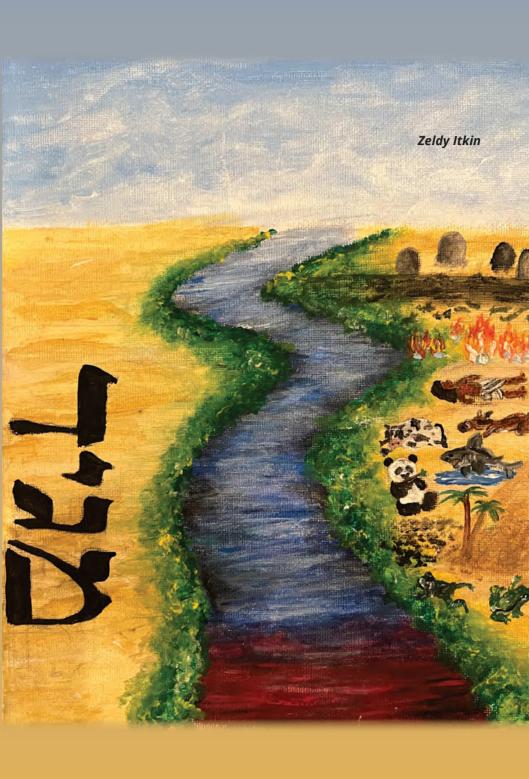


ָהָא לַּחִמָּא עַנִיָא דִי אֲכָלוּ אַבְהָתָנָא בְאַרְעָא דְמִצְרְיִם

What is the true meaning of the word "עניי?

Every Pesach, we all say, "ha lachma anya"— "this is the poor man's bread." The Vilna Gaon examines the meaning of the word "ani"—a poor person. The Vilna Gaon discusses four types of ani'im and how each is represented in ha lachma anya. The first type of ani is so poor that he does not have enough to eat. This is the quintessential ani we think of when we recite "ha lachma anya." This ani is represented in the words "kol dichfin"—all who are hungry. Our response should be "yetei v'yechol"—they should come and eat. The second ani might not be in danger of starving to death but still needs money to meet basic societal needs, such as a safe home or medical care. This ani is represented by the words "kol dizrich"—all who need. Our response to this should be "yetzei v'yifsach"—they should come and celebrate Passover. We give them what they need to celebrate Pesach comfortably. The third type of ani is oppressed on a journey. In modern terms, we call such people refugees. They are represented by the words "hashata hacha"—today we are here. Our response should be to help them find wherever their home might be. The last type of *ani'im* are those who are oppressed in their workplace. They might be working in unsafe conditions or be underpaid. These ani'im is represented by "hashata avdei"—today we are slaves. Our goal is that next year they will be "bnei chorin"—free people. The Vilna Gaon teaches us a valuable lesson in his interpretation of the four different types of ani'im. Chessed is not a one-size-fits-all recipe. The most important thing we must do when we try to help people is to first completely understand their situation, then decide on an appropriate course of action that will truly help them.

Danielle Mandelbaum source: Vilna Gaon



ָהְשַׁתָּא הָכָא, לְּשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּאַרְעָא דְיִשְׂרָאֵלּ. הָשַׁתָּא עַבִּדֵי, לְּשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּנֵי חוֹרִין

Why is the opening paragraph of Maggid written in Aramaic, and how do all the lines in Ha Lachma Anya connect to one another?

Ha lachma anya is actually not the only paragraph in the Haggadah written in Aramaic. The very last thing we say at the seder is also in Aramaic: chad gadya. We open and close with Aramaic because it was the common language that everyone spoke during the era of bayit shaini. Most ordinary people did not speak Hebrew, so this was aimed directly at the masses, especially at children. Not all of them would have understood what the seder was about, and not all of them would have stayed awake until the very end. For some, perhaps this was their only connection to Yiddishkeit all year.

Perhaps this paragraph is really about distilling the essence of Judaism into one succinct paragraph — like an overture to a symphony, we want to introduce all of the important themes upfront. Ha lachma anya summarizes in three cardinal statements why, in fact, we are here at the seder tonight. First, we should know that Hashem took us out of מצרים and we eat matzah on this night to remember that. Second, we are ba'alei chessed; if someone needs something, we should give it to them, no questions asked. Third, our home is not here in galus; our true home is in Israel where we can be truly free.

By reciting *ha lachma anya*, we are making sure everyone extracts the important themes of this night.

Devorah Ginsberg

Why do we start off the Haggadah mentioning our lowest point, only to end off with praise—why do we even mention the negative? Shouldn't we solely focus on the positives of this special night?

The principle of "מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח" seems like an unnecessarily negative way to start the *seder* night. It is further puzzling that we mention Eretz Yisrael during הא לחמא עניא, at the start of Maggid; at this point in the Haggadah we are still in galus and firmly entrenched in the portion of the evening!

The *Gan Shoshanim* explains this with the following *mashal:* Imagine that someone is locked up in jail, but tomorrow he knows that he will be set free. Even though he is currently incarcerated, he acts as though he is a free man since he knows that he will be set free within 24 hours. However, someone who is currently a free man, but knows that he is going to jail tomorrow, will act as if he is already in jail, even though he is currently a free person.

We see the same principle on Yom Kippur. During the Yom Kippur davening, we all say, "baruch shem" out loud together. However, as soon as Yom Kippur ends, we don't say "baruch shem" out loud anymore. What changed? Yom Kippur ended only a few minutes previously; we couldn't have sinned already!

The answer is that we are being defined not by our current position, but on what our goals are. When we *daven* on Yom Kippur, our goal is to atone for our sins and to elevate ourselves. We wish to reach a lofty position and to be forgiven for all our wrongdoings. However, the moment Yom Kippur is over, our goals shift. Yes, we are still in *shul* and still wearing our *kittels*, but our focus has shifted to what we are going to eat when we get home. We see that our goals and desires are more important than our current situation and position.

Rabbi Goldberg explains that we mention our negative traits so that the *Haggadah* can teach us a lifelong lesson. We aren't perfect; we have ups and downs in life. However, no matter how far down we are, no matter how imperfect we may be, we can still achieve amazing heights. We should never say that there is no purpose in trying! B'nei Yisrael were on the 49th level of *tum'ah*, as low as low can get, yet in a few short weeks they received the Torah from the mouth of Hashem! Life is about always trying to achieve more, and even if we fall a few steps back, we shouldn't give up hope.

The *Haggadah* instructs us to start with a remembrance of our negative qualities, as a lesson to never think we aren't good enough. As long as we keep trying and applying ourselves, we can achieve amazing accomplishments in life!

Once we know that we can and should strive for more, we realize that it doesn't depend on where we are right now, but on what our goals and mindsets are. Even though we are currently in *galus* and not truly free, we yearn for *Eretz Yisrael* and to truly be free to serve Hashem!

Ruki Schwartz source: Gan Shoshanim and Rabbi Goldberg

מַה נִשְׁתַּנָה הַלַּיְלָּה הַזֶּה מִכְּלֹ הַלֵּילוֹת?

If we want to encourage kids to ask their own questions on seder night, why do we give them a specific script of questions and answers in Mah Nishtana?

Throughout the *seder*, children will ask many different questions, but the *Mah Nishtana* gives specific questions that outline the two main themes of the *seder*. The first two questions that it raises, which are about *matzah* and *maror*, refer to the theme of slavery and what Bnei Yisrael went through in Mitzrayim. The next two questions, which are about dipping the *karpas* and reclining, correspond to freedom. The Abarbanel explains that by doing these actions so soon after each other, we display the two main themes of Pesach: first, the slavery in *Mitzrayim*, and then, how Hashem saved us, leading us to freedom.

Doing these actions one after the other helps us gain an appreciation of Hashem for leading us from bitter slavery to freedom. However, this raises another question: How is it that in one night we act in two ways that are so contradictory to each other? The answer to this is that when we left Mitzrayim, in that one night Bnei Yisrael went from slavery to freedom. Because of this rare event, where in one night we were both slaves and free, we commemorate it through actions that remind us of both the slavery and freedom on the same night.

► Eve Rechtschaffen source: Rabbi Yehudah Prero

וַאֲפִילּוּ כַּלְּנוּ חֲכָמִים כַּלְּנוּ נְבוֹנִים כַּלְּנוּ זְקֵנִים כַּלְּנוּ יוֹדְעִים אֶת הַתּוֹרָה מִצְוָה עְלֵּינוּ לְּסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרִים.

Why do Chachamim and Zekeinim still have to do the mitzvah of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim every year if they already know the story?

One of the goals of recounting the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* during Pesach is to evoke a personal sense of having left Egypt in each person. The past is transformed into present memory, and we focus on the ongoing impact of the past. Without the Exodus, subsequent events in Jewish history would not have occurred; our current situation is a direct result of what transpired then.

Knowing and telling the story of the Exodus are fundamentally different from each other. We do not retell the narrative to gain knowledge of the past, but rather to engrave the event deeply in our memories and to gain new insights and interpretations with each telling. Judaism is an ongoing dialogue between past and present, and as the present changes, so does our interpretation of the past. Chazal said, "There is no house of study without *chiddush*," without some new interpretation, (Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 3a). The story of Pesach remains ever relevant because the struggle for freedom is ongoing. Each generation adds its own commentary to the old-new story.

In the zechus of retelling the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim, may we all merit to personally witness our own geulah b'miheirah b'yameinu.

► Lily Notkin adapted from the Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks Haggadah





בָּרוּךְ הַמְּקוֹם, בָּרוּךְ הוּא, בָּרוּךְ שֶׁנָתַן תוֹרָה לָּעֵמוֹ יִשִּרְאֵלֿ, בָּרוּךְ הוּא.

Why is the word baruch, "blessed," repeated four times in this passage?

The Gemara (Brachos 54b) says that four types of people are obligated to give thanks to Hashem: a prisoner who has been freed, a sick person who has been healed, a person who crossed a sea, and a person who traveled through a desert. Bnei Yisrael went through all these experiences. They were prisoners in Mitzrayim, they crossed the Yam Suf, and they traveled through the *midbar* for forty years. Therefore, they are required to give thanks to Hashem. The four repetitions of "baruch"—blessed— correspond to these four categories of miracles. An additional answer is suggested by the Maggid of Plotzk, who says that we are thanking Hashem for the miracles that happened during the four exiles that Bnei Yisrael experienced.

Hodaya Zerbib sources: Maggid of Plotzk

ָרְשָׁע מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה הָעֲבוֹדָה הַזֹּאֹת לְּכֶם.

Why do we bother answering the Rasha's insolent question? Why would we accept such rude and offensive behavior?

The Ramban explains that every Jew truly desires to do good and serve Hashem, but his *yetzer hara* sometimes overcomes him. Thus, the *Rasha's* true desire is to do good, but his *yetzer hara* represses this. He questions Judaism because deep down, he wants to understand it. Therefore, it is vital that we give him an answer. Furthermore, the only way to help a *Rasha* overcome the bad inside him is through reason. As the Seforno explains, a person must use reason and rationality in order to overcome the desires of his *yetzer hara*. By answering the question of the *Rasha*, we are giving him the insight to move beyond his negative impulses. We are helping him find the good that is within him, and overcome his *yetzer hara*.

→ Adina Coan and Alyssa Rosner source: Majesty of Man by Rabbi A. Henach Leibowitz

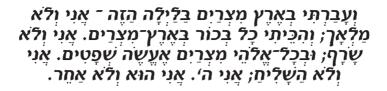
ָמְתְחִלָּה עוֹבְדֵי עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה הָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וִעַכִּשָיו קֵרְבָנוּ הַמְּקוֹם לַּעֲבדָתוּ

What is the machlokes between the two ways to describe the g'nus and the shevach in the Pesach story?

The Gemara in Pesachim (116a) explains that the whole *mitzvah* of *sip-pur yetzias Mitzrayim* has to start with *g'nus*—the negative part of the story—and conclude with *shevach*—the positive part of the story. There are two opinions about what constitutes the *g'nus* and the *shevah*. According to Rav, the *g'nus* can be found at the start of the passage of *m'techilah ovdei avodah zarah*, when we talk about the idol worship practiced by our ancestors, and the *shevach* is found in the rest of the paragraph, when we talk about how Hashem brought us close to Him. However, Shmuel explains that the fact that we were slaves (*Avadim hayinu*) is the *g'nus*, and the fact that we were freed is the *shevach*.

Rav Pam explains that there were two kinds of enslavement in Mitzrayim, the physical and the spiritual. People on a higher level were primarily concerned with spiritual freedom, freedom from idol worship. For them, the symbol of enslavement is *m'techilah ovdei avodah zarah hayu avoseinu*. However, there were also people on a lower level, for whom the primary redemption was physical, and only after physical redemption could they be ready for spiritual redemption. For them, the symbol of enslavement is *avadim hayinu*.

Rachel Diamond source: Ray Pam



Why does it matter if Hashem or an angel redeemed us from Egypt?

Why did Hashem so adamantly clarify that He took us out alone, with no messenger? In order to answer this question, we need to first understand why Hashem needs *malachim* at all. He is not constrained to human capability. As humans, we need to delegate in order to get things done, but Hashem can do everything at once. What purpose do *malachim* serve?

Since G-d is eternal, all Divine actions are also eternal. Therefore, if Hashem wants to carry something out that will be limited in duration, He sends an angel to do it, because what He does is inseparable from Him. Therefore, His own hand in the matter of our redemption is important. It means that our liberation is eternal. It continues, to this very day.

How do we see this? If anything, we clearly see how we have been repeatedly hunted and oppressed. Has our redemption lasted throughout all that?

Hashem removed us from *Mitzrayim* and equipped us with the Torah to ensure our timeless spiritual redemption. Hashem granted us a spiritual sovereignty that no nation could overthrow.

The Torah is how we have lasted through the persecution of countless outsiders. Torah kept us from being wiped out, unlike other nations that were strong for a time, but now are only remembered through history books and museum exhibits. Our spirituality is our oxygen, and is maintained only because Hashem carried out this responsibility on His own, offering us the wherewithal to hold ourselves up throughout time. Hashem gave us eternal *geulah*.

Yehudis Kundin and Nechama Friedman source: Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski, "From Bondage to Freedom"

וּבִזָרעַ נְטוּיָה. זוֹ הַחֱרֶב

During Maggid, we say "ובזרע נטויה־ זו החרב" — "an outstretched arm" refers to the sword. When were the Egyptians punished with a sword?

The simple explanation of this is that it refers to *makas bechoros*, when the *Mitzrim* were struck dead. However, Rav Chaim Kanievsky says that this phrase refers to different events. The *Mechilta* (*Shemos* 14:27) explains that during *kriyas Yam Suf*, when the Egyptians ran towards the *Yam Suf* to attack Bnei Yisroel, *malachim* threw down arrows and stones at the Egyptians, killing many of them as if by sword. Another explanation is that during *kriyas Yam Suf*, many Egyptians drowned in the water. But the *Mitzrim* that remained alive got struck by the water with such force that they died by those blows, and that was equivalent to getting killed by the sword.

Hashem always punishes *middah k'neged middah*. The medrash details how each plague was a different response to a specific way that the Egyptians treated the Jews. Why, then, did the Egyptians deserve killing by sword? How is it connected to their treatment of the Jews? When did they afflict us in that way? When Pharaoh contracted *tzara'as*, he was told to slaughter Jewish babies and bathe in their blood as a remedy. In return for that cruelty, the Egyptians were punished with death by sword at *kriyas Yam Suf*.

Shirel Rosenblum source: Rav Chaim Kanievsky

אֶלּוּ עֶשֶׁר מַכּוֹת שֶׁהֵבִיא הַקְּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא עַלֹּ־הַמְּצִרִים בִּמִצְרַיִם

What did Yisro mean when he said, "עַתָּה יָדַעְתָּה מָלַלְ הְּאֱלֹקִים כִּי בַדְבָר אֲשֶׁר זְדוּ עֲלֵיהֶם"
— פִּי גָדוֹל ה' מִכל הָאֱלֹקִים כִּי בַדְבָר אֲשֶׁר זְדוּ עֲלֵיהֶם"

Now I know that HaShem is greater than all the other gods, for with that which they plotted against them"? (Shemos 18:11)

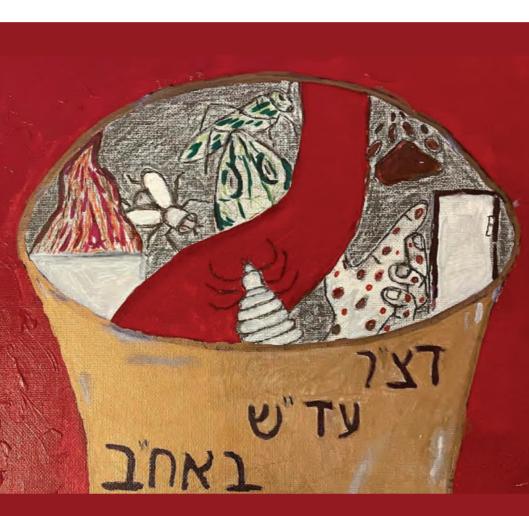
The Midrash says that all the *makos* in Mitzrayim were *middah k'neged middah*. For example, Rabbeinu Bachya explains that since Klal Yisroel were forced to be water carriers for the *Mitzrim* and were not allowed to wash themselves with water, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* therefore punished the *Mitzrim* and turned their water into blood. Since the *Mitzrim* hit Klal Yisroel with loud noises and did not allow them to sleep day or night, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* punished them with the plague of frogs, which made loud noises at day and night. Since they forced Klal Yisroel to sweep the dirt in the marketplaces and the streets, they were punished with the earth turning into lice. And so it was with all the *makos*; they were *middah k'neged middah*.

When Klal Yisroel witnessed the *makos* in Mitzrayim, they were able to understand the nature of many of the plagues which the *Mitzrim* were afflicted with; they were able to see the *hashgacha* from HaShem and to understand that the punishments were *middah k'neged middah*. However they didn't understand everything. There were many bad deeds that the *Mitzrim* plotted and planned against Bnei Yisrael in Pharaoh's palace, but they didn't all come to fruition. The *Mitzrim* were also punished for those bad deeds that they plotted but were unable to carry out. (It is only in connection with the actions of Klal Yisroel that Hashem is merciful and does not punish one for bad intentions that do not come to fruition.) Since these bad deeds were never carried out, Bnei Yisroel did not understand what the *Mitzrim* were being punished for.

However, when Yisro came to the *midbar* and he heard about the *makos* from Moshe, he understood everything. The Gemara (Sotah 11a) states that Yisro was one of Pharaoh's advisors, but he ran away as he did not want to be part of the plot against Klal Yisroel. As an advisor to the king, Yisro not only knew about the plots that actually came to fruition, but also all the things that the *Mitzrim* unsuccessfully plotted against Klal Yisroel. Hence, Yisro said that he saw Hashem's greatness "ki va'davar asher zadu aleihem"— for that which they plotted against

them. Targum interprets this phrase to mean that the *Mitzrim* were punished with the very things that the *Mitzrim* plotted against Klal Yisroel. Only Yisro was able to say this, since only he knew what Pharaoh plotted to do, and therefore only he could see the full picture of *middah k'neged middah*. Therefore, Shemos 18:9 states that Yisro rejoiced over *all* the good that HaShem did for Klal Yisroel; Yisro was aware of all the bad things that Bnei Yisrael didn't even know about, and he was therefore uniquely positioned to appreciate the fullness of HaShem's salvation.

Batsheva Rogosnitzky source: the Brisker Rav







מַצָה זוֹ שֶׁאָנוֹ אוֹכְלִּים, עַלֹּ שׁוּם מַה? עַלֹּ שׁוּם שָׁלֹּא הִסְפִּיק בְּצֵקָם שֶׁלֹּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ לְּהַחֲמִיץ

Why do we say that we eat matzah on Pesach because our dough didn't have time to rise, if Hashem commanded us to eat matzah two weeks before Yetzias Mitzrayim?

At the *seder*, we read in the *Haggadah* that *matzah* is eaten because we ate unleavened bread when we left Egypt, since we rushed out and the bread had no time to rise. However, we see in the *pesukim* (Shemos 12:8) that already two weeks before *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, Hashem commanded us to eat *matzah* on the 15th of Nisan at night. Which is the real reason that we eat *matzah* on Pesach?

According to Rav Kook, there are two types of *matzah* we eat on Pesach. On the first night of Pesach, eating *matzah* is an obligation, and we do it to fulfill Hashem's commandment, given before *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. The second type of *matzah* is the *matzah* we eat the rest of Pesach, which is optional. When we voluntarily eat *matzah* for the rest of Pesach, we do so to remember the *matzah* that was baked while leaving Egypt.

Rav Kook goes one step further with this idea, saying that the *matzah* that is eaten out of obligation on the first night is a lower level of *mitzvah*, because it is done out of *yirah*, a sense of fear and obligation. However, the *matzah* that is eaten voluntarily for the rest of Pesach is a higher level of *mitzvah* because it is done out of *ahavah*, out of a sense of love.

Just as Hashem brought us out of Egypt, may He bring the final *geulah b'mhaira b'yameinu*.

Ariella Gold source: Rav Kook





Zeldy Itkin

בְּכָל־דוֹר וְדוֹר חַיָב אָדָם לְּרְאוֹת אֶת־ עַצְמוֹ כָּאָלוֹ הוּא יָצָא מִמִּצְרַיִם עַצְמוֹ כָּאָלוֹ הוּא יָצָא מִמִּצְרַיִם

The Haggadah says that Hashem took us out of Egypt, implying that we were personally taken out of Egypt. However, the Haggadah also says that in every generation, we are obligated to view ourselves as if we left Egypt. Did we, in fact, personally leave Egypt, or do we simply imagine ourselves "as if" we left?

The Sfas Emes answers that both are true. One begins the Seder as a person living in this day and age, someone who did not personally experience yetzias Mitzrayim. We merely picture ourselves "as if" we left Mitzrayim. However, through one's emunah, and through the experience of the Seder, a Jew becomes connected to the history of Klal Yisrael as a whole. Since Klal Yisrael was collectively redeemed from Mitzrayim, it becomes revealed to us that we ourselves actually experienced the original geulah. During yetzias Mitzrayim, we experienced geulah for the nekudah hayisraelis, the pintele yid, the most pure spark of the soul that exists in every lew. If a person believes and knows that the illumination of his neshama would not exist without yetzias Mitzrayim, he sees how he is experiencing the effects of the geulah right now, in this generation. The more a person believes this and senses the *yetzias Mitzrayim* of the present, the more he is able to escape from his personal "mitzravim." the constriction he feels in his own life. May we all be zocheh to experience the original yetzias Mitzrayim, even in the present day.

Shifra Kutner source: Sfas Emes

ונאמר לפניו שירה חדשה: הַלְּלוּיָה.

Why do we refer to Hallel as a "shirah chadashah" toward the end of Maggid—hasn't it been around since the days of Yetzias Mitzrayim?

Before we begin Hallel at the end of Maggid, we say, "v'nomar l'fanav shirah chadashah"— "and we will recite before Him a new song." The Netziv asks why Hallel is referred to as a shirah chadashah—a new shirah. Has this song not been used since the days of Yetzias Mitzrayim? One opinion in the Gemara (Pesachim 117a) says that Moshe Rabbeinu and B'nei Yisrael said Hallel as they exited the Yam Suf, and the other opinion says that Dovid Hamelech said it. How can it be a new shirah today?

The Netziv answers by comparing this statement to what we say every day in davening, just before Shemoneh Esrei of Shacharis: "שִׁירָה חֲדָשָׁה שִׁבְּחוּ" שְׁיִרָה חֲדָשָׁה שְׁפָּת הֵים יַחֵד כָּלָם הוֹדוּ וְהְמְלִיכוּ וְאָמְרוּ—ה' יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלְם וְעֶד —after Yetzias Mitzrayim, the newly redeemed B'nei Yisrael used a shirah chadashah to praise Hashem on the banks of the Yam Suf, when they all said together, "Hashem will be king forever."

The Netziv explains this according to the Mechilta in Parshas Beshalach: R' Yosi Haglili says: If B'nei Yisrael had said Hashem IS the king forever (*melech*), then they would never have been ruled over by other nations. Since they said that Hashem WILL be king forever (*yimloch*), they were saying that this will happen eventually, in the future. As it has not yet happened, it is therefore considered *chadashah*, new, until it actually happens with the coming of *mashiach*.

It is therefore very appropriate to call Hallel a *shirah chadashah*. The Gemara in Pesachim (118a) tells us that there are five themes in Hallel, and two of them address the future: *t'chiyas ha'meisim* and *chevlo shel Mashiach*. Since it is forward looking and refers to events that have yet to happen, Hallel is appropriately called a *shirah chadashah*.

Devorah Deutsch source: Netziv



What is the difference between matzah and regular bread?

The basic difference between matzah and bread is that bread contains chomatze and has risen for more than 18 minutes. The deeper and more significant difference is that in order to make bread you need time. Time is something the lews in *Mitzrayim* did not have. A slave has no say how he uses his time or spends his time. His day is completely controlled by his master's demands. Matzah represents not only the lews rushing to finally leave Mitzrayim, but also the horrors of being enslayed in *Mitzravim* and not in control of how they spent their time. When we use our time properly we have the opportunity and potential to grow and accomplish. In Mitzrayim the jews were stripped of their ability to use their time because they were enslaved. Matzah shows both the terribleness of the slavery and also the joy of being free from Mitzrayim. A message for us to take away from the matzah is to be so grateful that we live in America in a time of freedom, where we are able to decide how we use our time. We have to realize how lucky we are to be able to spend our time freely. Although of course we have to always live our lives B'derech HaTorah, we still are in control of how we consume our time.

Malka Aliza Rosenholtz
 Adapted from A Seder Guide by Rabbi Yosef M. Rosenholtz



Tehila Simai

The bitterness of Marror makes it nearly inedible, which is why any time besides for Leil Haseder one would not make a bracha on it. Why, then, do we make a bracha tonight?

By the time we arrive at *Marror*, we have already discussed at length how Hashem saved us from the brutality of *Mitzrayim*. We already shared in the *news* of the *geula* and the *mitzvah* of *Korban Pesach*. Now is the specific time for the *Marror*, the bitterness. Each one of us experiences bitterness in our lives, and it often confuses us and causes us to stumble. *Leil Haseder* is when we recognize that even the bitterness is sweet. We reflect on our personal *Marror*, and recognize Yad *Hashem* in the hardest of times. We reflect on the history of *Klal Yisrael* and acknowledge that when it comes to our nation, it is the painful experiences and difficulties that build us up and make us stronger. We search for the *hashgacha pratis* and appreciate the *refuah lifnei hamakah*. *This* is why we make a *bracha* on the *Marror* tonight, because when we recognize that everything Hashem does is for the good, we can make *bracha* even on the bitter.

ותחלינה סינינו בפובך 36יון ברחאים





Why do we use the pasuk על מצות ומררים "על מצות ומררים" (Bamidbar 9:11), which refers to Pesach Sheini, in connection to Hillel's sandwich, as opposed to pesukim in Shemos which talk about Pesach itself?

In order to answer this question, we first need to understand why the *mitzvah* of Pesach Sheini exists. Usually, the opportunity to do a *mitzvah* is limited to only one time. If a person misses out on a *mitzvah*, they've lost their chance to do it. However, that is not true when it comes to the *mitzvah* of *korban Pesach*. In the *midbar*, a group of people who were *tamei l'meis* on Pesach and therefore unable to fulfill the *mitzvah* came to Moshe and said, "*lamah nigara*?"—why should we lose out? Moshe turned to Hashem, and, amazingly, they were granted a second chance. Hashem recognized their genuine dedication to the *mitzvah* and gave them another opportunity to bring the *korban* a month later.

Hillel himself displayed a similar attitude towards learning Torah. The Gemara (Yoma 35b) states that one cold winter day, Hillel didn't have enough money to pay the entrance fee to enter the *Beis Medrash*. Instead of giving up in the face of such a setback, he persisted and climbed up to the skylight so he could listen in and hear the words of Torah emanating from the building. However, the day was so cold that Hillel began to freeze. Thankfully, the people in the *Beis Medrash* noticed that it was getting dark (since Hillel was blocking the skylight) and saved Hillel from freezing on the roof.

Sometimes, we feel hesitant about doing a *mitzvah*. Either we're not in the mood, or it's out of our way. We should take these excuses out of our heads and instead say "lamah nigara"—why should I be left out of this *mitzvah*? When we start to think like those who were tamei I'meis on Pesach but still wanted an opportunity to bring the korban, and like Hillel Hazakein who didn't want to miss out on studying Torah, we start to see what a true blessing it is to be in a position where we are able to do so many *mitzvos*.

Chana Schwartz source: Touched by the Seder by Rabbi Yechiel Spero

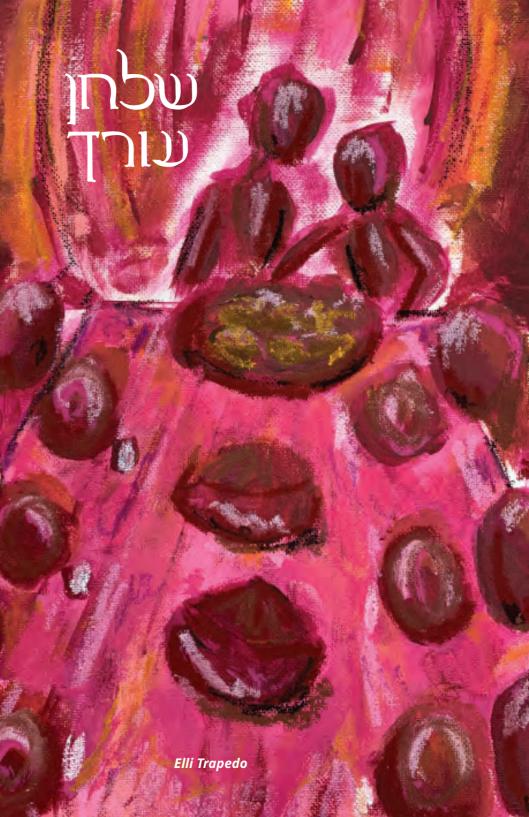


Tamar Eberstark

What are we supposed to learn from Hillel's sandwich?

The chachamim believed that the matzah and maror should be eaten separately, but Hillel thought they should be eaten together. This question is more than a halachic disagreement; it symbolizes two different mindsets. The *maror* represents the bitterness of slavery while the *matzah* represents our speedy salvation. Most of the *chachamim* believed that we should not mix these opposing, intense emotions. However, Hillel believed that we could, so he made a sandwich combining matzah, maror, and korban Pesach. The Sefer HaChinuch explains that the korban Pesach reminds us that we are a mamleches kohanim, a kingdom of priests to Hashem, and that we are on a higher level. The korban Pesach elevated us, raising us to a level where we could have the maror and matzah together, a level where we could understand that everything is part of Hashem's plan: both the bitterness of slavery and the sweetness of salvation. We continue to eat the matzah and maror together in a sandwich, zecher l'mikdash, as a reminder of the perspective we were able to reach when the mikdash was around and we brought the korban Pesach. We may not have that level of clarity today, but Pesach is a time to hope for our redemption so that we can be elevated by the korban Pesach once again.

→ Rina Lifshitz source: A Gift for Yom Tov by Rabbi Yisroel Miller



Why is there a minhag to eat an egg—a symbol of mourning—at the beginning of Shulchan Orech? Shouldn't we be in a festive mood and celebrating our freedom?

It is true that we are celebrating our freedom on the night of Pesach. However, we still need a reminder that although we are celebrating in our respective homes, we must realize that we still don't have a Beis Hamikdash. The night of the seder always falls on the same night as Tisha B'av. Thus, though we are mandated to feel as if we just left Egypt, we must also recognise that we are currently in galus, and we still have much for which to mourn. Eating the egg on Pesach is similar to breaking the glass under the chuppah or leaving a part of your house unfinished. We are always focusing on Yerushalayim, even at the times when we are most joyous.

Rabbi Rosner suggests a second approach, following the explanation of the Mei Hashiloach. The Mei Hashiloach, also known as the Ishbitzer Rebbe, explains the minhag of the egg in a novel manner. Almost all creatures in the world experience one stage of birth. The mother gives birth to a live offspring, and the process of procreation is complete. However, there are some creatures that experience two stages of birth; first they lay an egg, then, later, the egg hatches. The Ishbitzer suggests that the egg we eat during Shulchan Orech symbolizes our second birth as a nation. During Maggid, we spend many hours focusing on Yetziat Mitzrayim, from the lowly humble beginnings of our nation, both physically and spiritually, all the way up to the ultimate moment, that fateful night when Pharaoh begs us to leave. We end Maggid with a bracha that acknowledges and thanks Hashem for redeeming us. Lest we think that this is the end, the final stages of our nation's birth, we quickly eat an egg, symbolizing stage two. Yes, Yetziat Mitzrayim was amazing, but there is another stage. This will occur after forty-nine days, when we receive the Torah. Bnei Yisroel were not completely "born" until they received the Torah and had the blueprint of how to live their lives. Pesach is the beginning, but Shavuos is the true climax.

The Netziv in Shemos comments that a detail in the halachos of the daled kosos reflects this idea as well. The Shulchan Aruch states that one is allowed to drink liquids between every cup except the fourth. The Netziv explains this halachah by citing the Yerushalmi in Pesachim, which says that the four cups are equivalent to the four words of geulah: v'hotzeti, v'hitzalti, v'ga'alti, and v'lakachti. The first three words are related to different stages of Yetziat Mitzrayim, while the fourth cup refers to Matan Torah. The Netziv explains that the space between the third and fourth

cup symbolizes the time between Yetziat Mitzrayim and Matan Torah. One can't drink anything between them and create a hefsek, lest one think that the process was completed after Yetziat Mitzravim. We must remember that Yetziat Mitzrayim was only the first stage of our birth as a nation, which was only completed with *Matan Torah*. This approach explains an anomaly in regards to the *mitzvah* of *Sefiras Ha'omer*, which we start counting on the second night of Pesach. Why don't we say Shehecheyanu when we begin this *mitzvah*? Throughout the year, whenever we come to yearly events such as blowing the shofar, shaking lulay, and making kiddush on a yom tov, we say Shecheyanu, so why not when we count the Omer? Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik explains that this mitzvah is inherently different from all other mitzvos. Shehecheyanu is a brachah recited to thank Hashem for bringing us to a specific moment. During Sefirah, we are counting towards a specific moment, towards Matan Torah and the birth of our nation; we have not yet arrived there. Rabbi Ralbag, the rabbi of my shul, explained that the whole reason we left Mitzrayim was to get the Torah which has 613 mitzvot. The Panim Yafot explains that this is hinted to in the gematria of the letters which spell out Pesach: Peh (85) + Samech (120) + Ches (408) = 613.

► Lizzie Boczko

Why do we hide the matzah for Tzafon?

Rashi, quoting the Midrash Tanchuma (3:9:31), explains that the more hidden something is, the greater its power. On the *pasuk*, "ואיש לא יעלה" (Shemos 34:3) Rashi explains that because the first *luchos* were given amid fanfare and ceremony, the *ayin hara* had power over them and they did not endure. Rashi states, "אין לך יפה מן הצניעות"—there is no finer quality than modesty! Mishlei 11:2 says "ואת צנועים חכמה" with the modest ones is wisdom.

The *mitzvah* of matzah represents the great light of *geulah* that comes into the world on the night of Yetzias Mitzrayim. We want that light to remain and the power of *geulah* to endure. Therefore, according to the Gerrer Rebbe, *shlit"a*, the *chachamim* instructed us to hide that matzah, so that its effect would not be lost. With this matzah, on this night, we tap into the power each year anew and with it, we will bring about the Final Geulah, which itself is shrouded in mystery: even its date is hidden.

The power of *tznius*, which allows that which is hidden to remain holy and pure, can be seen in a story about Rav Simcha Bunim, where his exemplary character was hidden from the public eye. The Lev Simchah and the Beis Yisrael once visited Rav Simcha Bunim. Through a keyhole, they saw him swaying over an open Gemara, engrossed in his learning. However, when they knocked on the door, Rav Simcha Bunim called out, "Just one moment, please." They heard the sound of shuffling from inside, and when the door to the room opened, the Gemara was hidden away, and an open copy of the Hamodia newspaper rested in its place. Rav Simcha Bunim smiled and commented that he was just catching up on the news of the day.

That which is hidden remains holy and pure.

Chavi Weiner source: The Gerrer Haggadah



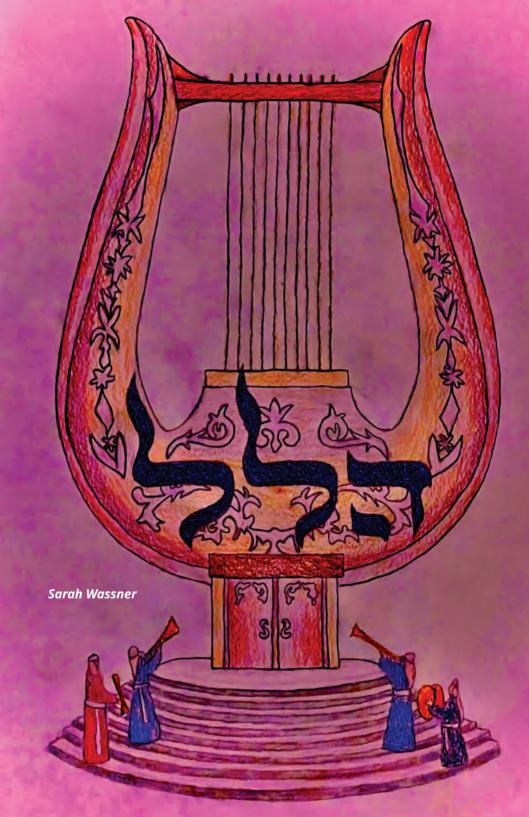




Why does Hallel refer to the dwellings of the righteous as "tents"?

"קוֹל רנה וישועה באהלי, Among the beautiful verses of Hallel, it says "צְדִיקִּים" The sound of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous." The term "ohel," tent, implies a nonpermanent dwelling, as opposed to a "bayis," a house, which is a permanent structure. The commentators explain that the reason there is rejoicing and salvation in the lives of the righteous is because their relationship to this world is like that of a tent—temporary. Man's purpose in this world is not to amass great material wealth, but to climb to exalted spiritual heights in Torah and mitzvos. Only through the realization that our physical surroundings are merely temporary dwellings— tents — will the sounds of joy and contentment emanate from our abode. This perspective is illustrated by a story about the Chofetz Chaim. Mrs. Necha Golding, a Torah philanthropist from America, was once traveling in Europe and stopped off in Radin to visit the saintly Chofetz Chaim. Upon arrival, she noticed the sparse furnishings in the great sage's home, and expressed to the Chofetz Chaim her wonder as to why his home wasn't properly appointed. The Chofetz Chaim, in turn, asked the traveler, "Where is your furniture?" The traveler looked surprised at the guestion and said, "What do you mean, I'm only passing through." The Chofetz Chaim responded, "Yes. I, too, am also only passing through."

⋄ Golda Bamberger







Who wrote the first perek of Hallel?

Hallel is a collection of Psalms that *B'nei Yisrael* recite during times of triumph and gratitude. However, the origin of the Hallel and its opening words, "הַלְלוּקָה הַלְלוּ עַבְרֵי הֹ" has been a topic of discussion among Rabanim. According to some Rabanim, the first time that Hallel was recited was on the night of *Yetziat Mitzrayim*, when Pharaoh urged Moshe and Aharon to leave Egypt immediately. It was then that Pharaoh exclaimed, "הַלְּלוּקָה", which means, "Praise Hashem."

The Midrash suggests that Pharaoh's words were not intended as praise, but rather as an order to *B'nei Yisrael* to praise Hashem. Pharaoh's goal was to convince *B'nei Yisrael* that their only hope for salvation was to turn to Hashem in prayer. This would ultimately lead to their freedom from slavery and to their becoming servants of Hashem.

Despite Pharaoh's intentions, the opening words of the Hallel have become a beloved part of Jewish tradition. The Midrash teaches us that even those who have caused us great pain and suffering can unknowingly contribute to our spiritual growth and praise of Hashem. Just as Balak intended to curse *B'nei Yisrael* but ended up blessing them, so too did Pharaoh's words unintentionally become the introduction to the Hallel that we continue to recite to this day.

Chanala Elishis source: Rabbi Mendel Kaplan





Why do we sing Chad Gadya, such a seemingly mundane song, to conclude the Pesach seder?

Chad Gadya tells the story of a young goat that is purchased by a father, and then subsequently swallowed by a cat, bitten by a dog, beaten by a stick, burned by fire, doused by water, and ultimately killed by the Angel of Death. We don't know the exact origin and meaning of Chad Gadya, but it can be interpreted as a mashal of the lewish people's struggle against persecution and oppression. It serves as a reminder that despite the challenges and difficulties we may face, we ultimately have emunah in Hashem's plan and trust in His protection. This song can allude to our past exiles and the ebb and flow of Jewish history. The cat is the people of Ashur who exiled the 10 tribes. The dog is the Babylonian nation that destroyed the Beis Hamikdash. The stick is Persia of the Purim story, and the fire is Greece of the Chanukah story. The water is Rome who exiled us and destroyed the second Beis Hamikdash, and the ox is the Muslims who are an ever present threat. The shochet is Europe in the time of the Crusades and Holocaust, and the malach hamaves is the Ottoman Empire. When, at the end of the song, Hakadosh Baruch Hu comes and slays the malach hamaves, we are left with a message of hope, similar to the words לשנה הבאה בירושלים. Look at what we survived! And we will continue to prevail. We are on the ekvsa d'mishicha, the heels of moshiach and with continued emunah we will get to the ultimate goal. This is why Chad Gadya, a childish song at first glance, is so fitting to recite as the last song of the seder. May we all be zoche to witnessing the coming of moshiach in our days.

→ Mikaella Inzlicht

