ונודה לך שיר חדש על
גאלתנו ועל פדות נפשנו

Devorah Korsinsky, 10th Grade

– תשפ"ו –

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Front Cover
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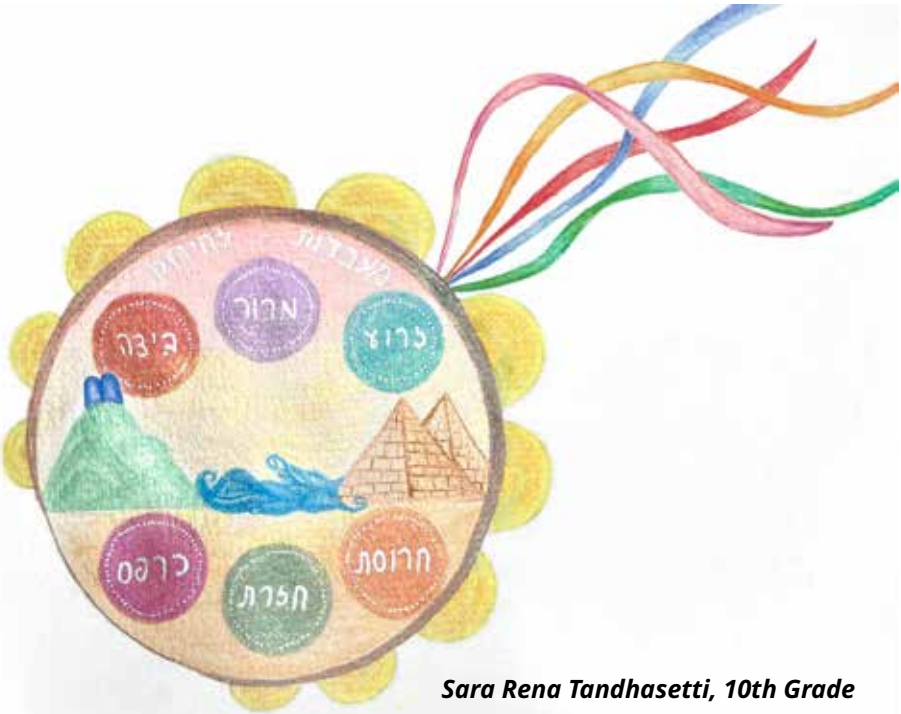
Foreward

"At the Exodus we went מאפלה לאורה, from darkness to light. It is for this reason that the Haggadah was designed in question-answer format. When one has a question he is in darkness, and when he knows the answer he has 'seen the light.'"

n Harav Yitchak Hutner, zt"l

The words of Rav Hutner are particularly resonant as we welcome the *Chag Hageulah* this year. We find ourselves, on the one hand, beset by the darkness of war and the threat of terror, yet on the other, the recipients of truly inexplicable and undeniable Divine Presence and light. It feels as if Redemption is in the air, but every Jew wonders how much longer it will take, and how we can hasten its arrival. We approach *Leil Haseder* 5786 yearning for the answers to these questions, and a glorious emergence *mei'afeilah l'or gadol*, from darkness to a great light. It is our hope that the *divrei* Torah and artwork which fill the pages of this *Hagaddah* will add fervor to that longing.



Sara Rena Tandhasetti, 10th Grade

קדש

Atara Lipshitz, 11th Grade

Q What is the significance of starting the Seder with Kadeish?

A The first step of the Seder is *Kadeish*. We make *kiddush* and begin the night with holiness. It's easy to think that it is just a *bracha* over wine, but it is really much deeper than that. Before we tell the story, before we eat, and before we sing, we pause and declare that this night is different because we choose to make it holy.

The *mitzvah* of Kiddush comes from the *pasuk* in Sefer Shemos, "זכור את יום השבת לקדשו". The Talmud Bavli explains that "זכור" means to sanctify the day of Shabbos verbally through speech over wine. We create *kedusha* with intention and words.

The **Sefer HaChinuch** writes that the *mitzvah* of Kiddush is meant to arouse our appreciation for the greatness and grandeur of the day of Shabbos. Therefore, we do this action with wine, which stimulates a person's emotions of joy and feelings of satisfaction.

Similarly, on *Leil haSeder*, only after *Kadeish*, do we continue with the Haggadah to tell the story of *Yetziyas Mitzrayim*. In a world that moves so fast, *Kadeish* reminds us to stop and mark the moment. Freedom is not only about leaving Mitzrayim; it is about choosing to live with purpose. As we lift the cup, we are not just remembering the past—we are dedicating this night, and ourselves, to something elevated and special.

Aliza Eisenstadt

ורחץ

Gneshy Itkin, 11th Grade

Q *What can we learn from doing Urchatz - washing our hands without saying a bracha?*

A Usually, when we wash our hands for a mitzvah, we say a *bracha*. However, for *Urchatz* we do not. This is because this washing is not just about cleanliness—it is about preparation.

Urchatz takes place before we even begin telling the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. Before asking the questions or eating anything significant, we pause to wash our hands. This teaches us that freedom does not begin with dramatic moments. Instead, it starts with small, simple steps.

Washing our hands can remind us to "wash away" bad habits or thoughts that hold us back. *Urchatz* comes right before *Karpas*, a small vegetable, showing that even small actions have meaning. The fact that we do not say a *bracha* reminds us that not every important step is loud or bold. Sometimes the most meaningful preparation is quiet and simple.

Urchatz teaches us that real freedom begins when we take small steps to prepare ourselves for change.

Adina Sigelman
Source: Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

Batsheva Malavsky, 11th Grade

Peri Rosenholtz, 11th Grade

Q *Why do we have a third matzah at the Seder?*

A *Yachatz* is the fourth step of the Pesach Seder. During this step, the middle *matzah* in a stack of three *matzos* is broken into two pieces. The smaller piece remains with the *matzos* for *Motzi Matzah*, while the larger piece is wrapped, hidden, and later eaten as the *afikoman* at the end of the Seder. At first glance, this third *matzah* seems unnecessary for the *bracha* of *Hamotzi*, since the other two *matzos* can serve as the required *lechem mishnah*. So why do we have a third *matzah* at the Seder?

On Pesach, we celebrate our redemption from slavery to freedom. *Matzah* is called *lechem oni*, the bread of poverty. When we break the middle *matzah*, we symbolize the reality of poverty, where a person divides their bread and saves part for later because they do not know when their next meal will come. The broken *matzah* reflects the uncertainty and hardship that defined the experience of slavery.

But the Seder does not end with brokenness.

The larger half of the *matzah* is hidden and later eaten as the *afikoman* at the end of the meal. This mirrors the *korban Pesach* that was eaten during the time of the *Beis Hamikdash*. *Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook* explains in *Olas Re'iyah* that the *korban Pesach* was eaten at the end of the meal so that the final experience of the night would not simply be physical satisfaction, but something deeper and more spiritual.

In this way, the broken *matzah* tells a story. At the beginning of the Seder it represents poverty, struggle, and incompleteness. But the larger piece is saved for the end, reminding us that the story of the Jewish people does not remain one of brokenness. What begins with hardship ends with redemption and spiritual purpose.

When we eat the *afikoman* as the final taste of the night, we are meant to carry that message with us: even after we have been physically satisfied, our ultimate goal is to continue striving for growth, meaning, and closeness to Hashem.

The broken *matzah* teaches us that while life may begin with struggle, the end of the story can be something whole and elevated.

Simi Hornung

מגיד

Mia Grauman, 11th Grade

הא לחמא עניא די אכלו אבהתנא בארעא דמצרים

Q: By the time we reach Maggid, everyone is excited to begin סיפור יציאת מצרים. But what is the significance of launching Maggid—the "story"—with this declaration about "poor bread"?

A: The phrase "לחמא עניא" can be interpreted as "bread of nothingness." We live in a world of *ga'avah*—arrogance. This puffed-up, ego-driven nature is like the *chometz* that we try to rid ourselves of on Pesach. Why? Because what kept us as slaves, and what continues to keep us in *galus* today, is the idea of "כחי ועוצם ידי"—that our own efforts alone produce our success.

The *pasuk* in Tehillim says: "אשא עיני אל ההרים מאין יבוא עזרי." The word "אין"—similar to "עניא"—can be interpreted as "from nothing" comes my strength. Rather, "עזרי מעם ה'"—Hashem is the ONLY true source of strength and success.

As we speak about how Bnei Yisrael left their *galus* and merited the *ge'ulah*, we begin by stating: "Like this bread, I am nothing. Hashem is the driving force behind all the success in my life." With that mindset, Hashem can step in to ensure our success, because after all, we are relying on Him.

We begin the story of *Maggid* by declaring that we are nothing—just like the *matzah*. When we remove the "puffiness" of the *chometz* within us, we begin to live with the humble spirit of *matzah*. By tapping into that power, we show Hashem that we are relying ONLY on Him, and He will *iy"H* lead us out of *galus* and help us merit the *ge'ulah*.

Because when you leave the credit to Hashem, anything is possible.

Chavie Borenstein
Source: Adapted from a shiur given by R' Charlie Harary

הא לחמא עניא די אכלו אבהתנא בארעא דמצרים

Why do we start Maggid calling the matzah "the bread of our affliction" ? Wouldn't it make more sense to begin with freedom?

The *Gemara* explains that the words הא לחמא עניא do not only mean "poor bread." The word עניא can also be understood as answering and responding. In this light, the matzah becomes "the bread that answers."

What does it answer?

The teachings of **Rav Kook** tell us that suffering and challenges often open the *neshamah* to a connection with Hashem. When life is comfortable and abundant, a person can become self-sufficient and closed off. But when we experience עֳנִי, a sense of lacking, we begin to ask questions. We search for meaning, for redemption, and ultimately for Hashem.

The *matzah* represents a paradox. It is the food of slavery, poverty, and incompleteness. Yet specifically because it symbolizes human vulnerability, it becomes the starting point of *geulah*.

This is why the *Haggadah* begins here. Before speaking about miracles and freedom, we acknowledge that they are born from brokenness. *Geulah* and suffering are not opposites; they are partners.

When we lift the *matzah* and declare הא לחמא עניא, we are saying that our questions, struggles, and limitations are themselves the beginning of the answer.

Batzion Weinberger

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות? שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה, הלילה הזה - כלו מצה

What is the true contrast between matzah and chametz?

Rav Yaakov Naiman z"l explains that the *issur* of *chametz* is different from many other *issurim*. Commonly in *halachah*, we find that a certain ratio can nullify the *issur*. However, on Pesach, the *issur* of *chametz* has no such leeway—you are simply prohibited from eating any *chametz*.

Rav Naiman explains that *chametz* represents the *yetzer hara*. The nature of the *yetzer hara* is that even a small amount can influence a person. Therefore, the Torah does not tolerate *any* amount of chametz being eaten. We must uproot the negative traits we find within ourselves completely.

Furthermore, **Rav Moshe Rosenstein z"l**, one of the great *baalei mussar* and the *Mashgiach* in the Lomza Yeshiva, comments that *chametz* rises quickly, but after a few days it becomes spoiled and moldy. This represents a person who follows *ta'avos* and feels proud and boastful, but as time progresses these desires corrupt the person. In contrast, *matzah* does not rise and remains simple, stable, and low. This symbolizes humility, restraint, modesty, and the *yetzer tov*.

On all other nights we eat chametz and struggle with our negative inclinations. But on Pesach, we work to improve ourselves—to uproot these inclinations and strive to become pure.

Emma Adelstein
Source: הגדה של פסח-ליקוט מרבותינו בעלי המוסר

עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים

Q Why does the Haggadah follow its particular order? And how does becoming servants of Hashem after being slaves to Pharaoh make us truly free?

A Jewish story begins in shame and ends in praise. The *Haggadah* traces our journey from slavery to Pharaoh to becoming *ovdei Hashem*. The *Gemara* presents two ways to understand the "shame" we begin with. According to Shmuel, the shame is physical: "עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפַרְעֹה בְּמִצְרָיִם"—we were slaves in Egypt and Hashem freed us. According to Rav, the shame is spiritual: "מִתְּחִלָּה עוֹבְדֵי עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה הָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ"—our ancestors once served idols, but Hashem brought us close to serve Him.

These two views reflect different dimensions of redemption. Shmuel focuses on physical freedom, the story children first understand. Rav highlights the deeper spiritual transformation: discovering our purpose as Hashem's people.

What was slavery to Pharaoh all about? Pharaoh forced the Jews into meaningless labor—building cities that collapsed and suffering without purpose. Their work seemed pointless.

Judaism teaches the opposite: nothing that happens to a Jew is meaningless. Because of this, the Torah even commands us not to take revenge. The **Rambam** explains that if someone refuses to lend you something, you may not refuse them in return out of revenge. The idea is that events ultimately occur according to Hashem's will. Even when something painful happens, it is part of a larger plan.

This idea helps us understand the suffering of Klal Yisrael in Mitzrayim. Pharaoh forced the Jews into brutal and seemingly pointless labor, even building cities that would later collapse. Their suffering appeared meaningless. Why would Hashem allow this?

Because it was the birth of Klal Yisrael. When something extraordinary enters the world, it rarely comes easily. Yishmael's birth came naturally, but the birth of Yitzchak required years of pain and *tefillah*. What comes through struggle is often far more significant than what comes easily.

In the same way, Egypt was the birthplace of the Jewish nation. Just as

a child is shaped even before birth by what his mother imbibes, the experiences in Mitzrayim shaped the character of Am Yisrael. Each day the Jews rose and rebuilt what had fallen. Through that struggle they developed a defining trait of the Jewish people: the willingness to keep trying, even when success seems impossible.

This idea is central to Jewish life. In the world of work, if someone intends to work but gets stuck in traffic on the way to work or for another reason cannot complete the job, they are not paid. But in Judaism, it is different. When a person intends to perform a *mitzvah* but cannot complete it, they are still rewarded for the effort. A Jew is rewarded for trying. This, in contrast to being *avadim* to Pharoah, is what being an *eved Hashem* is about.

This is the deeper meaning of the words:

מעשה ברבי אליעזר ורבי יהושע ורבי אלעזר בן־עזריה ורבי עקיבא ורבי טרפון שהיו מסבין

Q ***The Haggadah famously begins with the story, מעשה ברבי אליעזר. Why was Rabbi Eliezer's story chosen as the opening paragraph of the Haggadah?***

A **Rav Yechiel of Ostrovtza** unfolds the depth and reasoning behind this choice. He first explains the two separate forms of emunah one can attain. According to the **Ba'al Shem Tov**, there is "אלוקינו"—believing in Hashem as a result of our own conclusions—and "אלוקי אבותינו"—believing in Hashem due to the heritage we received from our forefathers.

The *Gemara* opens with the verse by R' Eliezer that discusses קריאת שמע של ערבית וקריאת שמע של שחרית. *Shacharis* resembles a person's ability to perceive Hashem through his own eyes and senses, and thus to believe in Hashem from an אלוקינו standpoint. *Arvit*, in contrast, resembles the inability to see Hashem—the darkness and fogginess of nighttime—and thus represents אלוקי אבותינו.

"עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים ויוציאנו ה' אלוקינו **משם**." The word "משם" does not only mean that Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim geographically. He took us out from a reality where our lives had no control and no purpose. In serving Hashem we may still not control the outcome, but our actions now have meaning. Our effort itself becomes valuable.

That is why the *Haggadah* begins with shame and ends with praise. At first children hear the simple story: we were slaves and Hashem took us out. But with time we understand the deeper message. The suffering in Mitzrayim shaped us into Am Yisrael—a people whose freedom comes from serving Hashem with purpose.

Chaya Schwartz

Sources: Adapted from divrei Torah given by Rabbi Sacks and Rabbi Farhi

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The question then becomes: which form of *emunah* should one start with? Should one believe in Hashem because one was taught it is right and then explore on one's own, or should one attain *emunah* only after digging deeply into the sources?

The answer lies in R' Eliezer's name: Eliezer ben Moshe. This *tanna* carries the namesake of Moshe Rabbeinu's son, who, as the *pasuk* "אלוקי אבי בעזרי" indicates, was named after the concept of *emunah* that teaches us we must first believe in Hashem with an inherent *emunah peshutah*, a simple, foundational faith, rather than an *emunah* founded in logic. Only after establishing a firm belief, rooted in generations past and unshakeable, can one begin to investigate further.

This explains the seemingly enigmatic opening of the *Haggadah*. The *Haggadah* is read and discussed to strengthen our *emunah* and devotion to Hashem. The entire night is structured with sons asking their fathers, creating the strongest root on which one can base their *emunah*. Only afterward should one commit to the obligation of "וידעת היום והשבות אל לבבך"—researching and exploring in order to entrench *emunah* deeply in our hearts.

May we all be *zoche* to establish strong, deeply founded values and enjoy an uplifting and spiritual Pesach.

Yehudit Pinto

חכם מה הוא אומר
רשע מה הוא אומר?
תם מה הוא אומר?
ושאינו יודע לשאול - את פתח לו

Why does it say "מה הוא אומר" before quoting the sons' questions? What does each "מה - what" mean?

In the **Marbeh LiSaper Haggadah** (1791), there is explanation for the seemingly superfluous word "*הוא*- hu." It indicates another way to read the *pasuk*—that the *chacham* is actually saying "what." The *arba banim* all ask "what" questions. The wise child asks, "What are these mitzvos Hashem gave you?" The wicked child asks, "What is this service to you?" And the simple child asks, "What is this?" Each one carries a different connotation.

The wise child's "what" is one of awe and love, the way someone might say, "What a beautiful Seder!" The wicked child's "what" is one of ridicule and belittlement, the way someone might say, "What's the big deal?" And the simple child's "what" is simply one of confusion, as if he is saying, "What are my two brothers arguing about?"

The way a person asks a question reveals their true motivations. We should hope that all of our questions come from the right place. We should ask with genuine curiosity and reverence for the subject matter and the person we are asking—never, *chas v'shalom*, with scorn or disdain. It is the correct kind of "asking" that differentiates the *rasha* from the *chacham* that we all aspire to be.

Noa Harris

כנגד ארבעה בנים דברה תורה: אחד חכם, ואחד רשע...

We're often told that the Chacham and the Rasha are opposites because of the questions they ask—but when looked at carefully, their questions don't actually seem that different.

The Chacham asks: "מָה הָעֵדֹת וְהַחֻקִּים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ אֶתְכֶם" — "What are these rules and laws that Hashem gave you?"

The Rasha asks: "מָה הָעֲבֹדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם?" — "What is this service of yours?"

On the surface, these two questions don't seem so different, so it's surprising that they elicit such contrasting reactions. Both appear to show curiosity about Pesach. How can this make sense?

The Mefarshim teach us an important lesson from this. Although the questions seem similar, the tone and intention behind each one are subtle but significant. How a person asks a question is just as important—sometimes even more important—than the actual content of the words.

The *Chacham* seems to be sincerely asking, wanting to learn and educate himself about the *mitzvos* of Pesach. The *Rasha*, on the other hand, distances himself and questions the *mitzvos* in a mocking or dismissive tone.

The lesson of the Haggadah is clear: a person must be careful not only about what they ask but also how they present it. Your tone can completely change how your question is received and how others perceive you.

Chani Frisch

יכול מראש חדש? תלמוד לומר ביום ההוא. אי ביום ההוא יכול מבעוד יום? תלמוד לומר בעבור זה - בעבור זה לא אמרתי, אלא בשעה שיש מצה ומרור מנחים לפניך

Question: Why is it important for us to go through all the possible dates of when the mitzvah of telling the story of Pesach begins?

After the tale of the four sons, the *Haggadah* elaborates: We already know *how* and *to whom* the story must be told, and now the Haggadah teaches us *when*. But why does the *Haggadah* go through all the possible dates it could be—telling us that it might be on Rosh Chodesh, or on the fourteenth of Nissan during the day—before finally telling us that the *mitzvah* actually applies on the night of the Seder, the fourteenth of Nissan?

One simple answer is that the *Haggadah* is trying to keep us engaged; "so the children should ask" is a common explanation. But "a theory in Torah is still Torah," and there is an important message in these extra lines that the *Haggadah* includes.

Perhaps the *Haggadah* is teaching us that even though those days are not the day on which we celebrate Pesach, they still contain the spirit of Pesach. Each of those days leading up to the Seder brings us closer to the "spirit of redemption," until it is finally revealed on Seder night.

The *Haggadah* is giving us an important message to remember when we begin the long preparation for Pesach: preparation counts. It matters. Every day can be something special.

Gneshy Itkin

Source: Adapted from the Kehat Pesach Haggada by Rabbi Yehuda Marcus

מתחלה עובדי עבודה זרה היו אבותינו

***Q** There are two points in the Haggadah where we reference our state before the geulah: "עבדים היינו" at the beginning of Maggid, and "מתחילה עובדי עבודה זרה" after the ארבעה בנים. What is the purpose of these references, and why do we need both?*

A One of the rules of the *Haggadah* is that we begin by describing our low point and then move on to describe our triumph. The *Gemara* in *Pesachim* brings a *machlokes* between Rav and Shmuel over what qualifies as our low point, or גנות.

Shmuel says "עבדים היינו," while Rav says "מתחילה עובדי עבודה זרה."

How do we understand this debate?

Rav Dovid Feinstein z"l, quoted in the **הגדה אשר חנן**, explains that these two opinions are actually addressing two different audiences.

Rav speaks to people who are spiritually sensitive. For them, the importance of the *geulah* was the spiritual redemption—being brought into the service of Hashem. Their low point, therefore, would be "מתחילה עובדי עבודה זרה," describing our past as idol worshippers.

Shmuel, on the other hand, addresses the common person. For them, servitude and freedom are understood in the most literal sense: physical servitude followed by emancipation. According to this view, the proper place to start is "עבדים היינו."

The *Ba'al Haggadah* includes both approaches, with Shmuel's opinion first. This follows the principle brought in Pirkei Avos: "אם אין קמח אין תורה"—"If there is no flour, there is no Torah." It is very difficult to experience spiritual freedom when the body is still enslaved. Therefore, we first acknowledge our physical liberation from slavery, and only afterward move on to the deeper idea of spiritual redemption with "מתחילה עובדי עבודה זרה."

We can also note that while Rav and Shmuel were each speaking to particular audiences within the community, while the *Ba'al Haggadah* creates a *Haggadah* that speaks to all participants of the Seder.

This may also explain why "מתחילה עובדי עבודה זרה" comes after the ארבעה בנים. At that point, we have already acknowledged all types of participants at the table—the חכם, רשע, תם, and שאינו יודע לשאול. Having included everyone in the conversation, we complete the circle by expanding our *Haggadah* to address not just the basic level of freedom, but the higher levels as well.

May we merit the experience of both levels of freedom with the coming of Moshiach, speedily in our days.

Chaya Steinman

Naomi Azizov, 11th Grade

Eliana Moskowitz, 9th Grade

Tziri Rosenholtz, 11th Grade

רבן גמליאל היה אומר כל שלא אמר שלושה דברים אלו פסח מצה ומרור פסח מצה ומרור

Question: What is the significance of maror being part of the three סימנים? It seems out of place: Korban Pesach and matzah represent freedom, while maror represents slavery.

The **Chidushei HaRim** explains that the bitterness of Bnei Yisroel's experience in Mitzrayim actually marked the beginning of the redemption. These *pesukim* demonstrate this idea:

וַיָּ֣מָת ׀ מֶ֣לֶךְ מִצְרַ֗יִם וַיֵּאָנְח֤וּ בְנֵֽי־יִשְׂרָאֵל֙ מִן־הָעֲבֹדָ֔ה — The king of Mitzrayim died, and Bnei Yisroel groaned from the labor (שמות ב:כג).

And then, a few *perakim* later:

אֲנִ֣י ה' וְהוֹצֵאתִ֞י אֶתְכֶ֗ם מִתַּ֛חַת ׀ סִבְלֹ֥ת מִצְרַ֖יִם — I am Hashem, and I will take you out from beneath the burdens of Egypt (שמות ו:ו).

At first, Bnei Yisroel accepted slavery as their natural reality and therefore did not protest. Only after the king of Mitzrayim died did they begin to recognize the injustice of their situation, and that is when they cried out to Hashem. The very fact that they could no longer bear the suffering was itself the beginning of the *geulah*.

R' Nachman of Breslov told a story of a Jew and a German who were traveling together. After a long journey of fasting all day, the German expected a fine meal. That evening was the *Leil Seder*, and he eagerly waited for the food to be served. After a long delay, he was finally given *maror*. The bitterness filled his mouth, and he assumed this was the entire meal. Frustrated and hungry, he stormed out, thinking, "Cursed Jews! After all that ceremony, they serve only this bitter food!"

Later, the Jew returned home cheerful and satisfied. The German angrily recounted what had happened. The Jew replied, "Foolish German—if you had waited just a little longer, you would have enjoyed the entire feast, just as I did."

R' Nachman explains that this is how spiritual life works as well. After working hard and striving to connect to Hashem, a person may en-

counter a period of bitterness and struggle. It can feel as though the suffering will last forever and that our *tefillos* go unanswered. But if we remain patient and trust that Hashem has a plan, we will ultimately experience *yeshuah*.

The secret of Bnei Yisroel lies in our ability to see the bitterness—the *maror*—as part of the process, and to wait with patience and *emunah* for the complete *geulah*.

Meira Nakash
Source: הרב נחמיה רענן, תורת הר עציון

Rena Sinnreich, 9th Grade

רבי יהודה היה נותן בהם סמנים: דצ"ך עד"ש באח"ב

Q We all know this famous grouping of the Makkos, but what is its significance?

A Like many questions, this one has several answers. The **Abarbanel** explains that each acronym in דצ"ך עד"ש באח"ב represents a principle in our אמונה בה' that was demonstrated through the makkos.

With the first three makkos, Hashem showed Pharaoh that He exists—that He is the true Creator beyond any doubt. This is why the pasuk says by Makkas Dam, "'בזאת תדע כי אני ה," because these three makkos proved that there is a Hashem.

The letters עד"ש demonstrate the second principle: that Hashem supervises everything that happens and gives each person exactly what they deserve. After creating the world, He did not simply walk away. Instead, He continued to watch over His creations and showed that "אני ה' בקרב הארץ"—that He is fully present in the world and actively governing it.

Finally, the last *makkos* prove that Hashem has the power to change the nature of things—to perform miracles. Hashem demonstrated by *Makkas Barad*, "בעבור תדע כי אין כמוני בכל הארץ," that there is no one like Him, and no one is able to perform miracles as He can.

In the end, this is how we left Mitzrayim—with *emunah* in Hashem. Through the *makkos,* Hashem showed both us and the Mitzriyim that He can do anything.

Ariella Sholem
Source: Abarbanel on Shemos (7:14)

אלו קרבנו לפני הר סיני, ולא נתן לנו את־התורה. דיינו.

Q: One of the primary incidents that we are thankful for in Dayeinu is Kabbalas HaTorah. However, how can we understand that Chazal say we were forced to accept the Torah, and that as a result, the Jews had an ongoing claim that they did not accept the Torah beratzon?

A: We can answer this based on a *Dvar Torah* by **Rav Sheftel Neuberger** z"l, Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivas Ner Yisroel in Baltimore, who explained the connection between Purim and Pesach and the related events of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and *Matan Torah*.

Rav Sheftel asked: Why did Haman choose Adar as the month to attempt to destroy and kill the Yidden? He explained that the month of Adar is the last month of the year when counting from Nissan, the month during which *Yetzias Mitzrayim* occurred. At that point, the Jews were at the furthest point in the year from *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. Similarly, Purim took place shortly after the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*, when Bnei Yisrael felt unconnected to Hashem, or as though Hashem had divorced them.

However, after the miracle of Purim, the Megillah tells us, "קיימו וקיבלו"— the Jews accepted the Torah with *ahavah*. Through this renewed acceptance, the defect of the originally forced acceptance went away. The Jews on Purim were saved through this re-acceptance of the Torah, and their love and connection to Hashem were fully reestablished.

Rav Sheftel explained that in this sense, Purim is an extension of Pesach and *Matan Torah* and carries the strength of the *geulah* of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. With this, we can answer the original question: although Kabbalas HaTorah was originally not fully *beratzon*, today we no longer have that defect. With Purim and Pesach together, we can say *Dayeinu* with a complete acceptance of the Torah with *ahavah*.

Sari Schwartz

Devorah Korsinsky, 10th Grade

לפיכך אנחנו חייבים להודות להלל לשבח

How and why is the Hallel of the Pesach Seder different from the Hallel we usually read during davening?

On Pesach, we have the mitzvah to envision ourselves as if we personally left Mitzrayim: "בכל דור ודור חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים..."

Because of this command, we must also praise the One who performed all these *nissim*, both for our forefathers and for us! This is the *mitzvah* of Hallel during the Seder: "לפיכך אנחנו חייבים להודות להלל... למי שעשה לאבותינו ולנו את כל הנסים האלו."

The Geonim explain that the Hallel at the Seder is a *shir*, a song, that we sing at the actual time of a miracle, whereas the ordinary Hallel we recite during davening praises Hashem for past historical events. Because of this, we are excused from the usual halachic requirements.

Firstly, we do not make the *brachah* of "*Likroh es HaHallel*" (the brachah for reading Hallel), because we are not just formally reading. We sing and rejoice as we actively experience *Yetzias Mitzrayim*.

Secondly, while we usually stand to recite Hallel, at the Seder we sit and sing. This is because the ordinary Hallel serves as a testimony to past miracles, but tonight's Hallel is authentic praise for the miracles occurring as we sing.

So, *Ma Nishatnah HaHallel Hazeh*? We sing and praise Hashem as the subjects of His miracles, not merely as witnesses.

Pearela Flaishman

Tehila Simai, 12th Grade

אלו קרע לנו
את־הים...דיינו

Noa Harris, 12th Grade

Questions: Why is matzah, which is called "לחם עוני"—poor man's bread—the centerpiece of the night during which we celebrate redemption?

The Gemara in Pesachim (115b) says that לחם עוני means "שעונים עליו דברים הרבה"—that we say many things over it. *Matzah* is more than just something we eat; rather, it is the focal point of telling over *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. I saw in the Haggadah of the **Sfas Emes** that this idea points to something deeper about *geulah*. A person is truly free when they can genuinely express their beliefs. When Bnei Yisrael were in Mitzrayim, they were under the shackles of slavery and could not declare their *emunah* or speak about Hashem's greatness. Only after *Yetzias Mitzrayim* were they able to do so.

Therefore, the same bread that symbolizes suffering becomes the focal point of the Seder, because it is specifically over the *matzah* that we speak and retell the story of redemption.

Shifra Kutner

Menucha Glatzer,
12th Grade

Q *What does splitting the matzah represent?*

A My grandfather zt"l was *niftar* on Erev Pesach during the Covid-19 pandemic, so when I think of Pesach, the first thing that comes to mind is that year when my father sat on the curb outside, on Erev Pesach 5780, for thirty seconds—and that was his *shiva* for his father. Shortly afterward, my father put on his *kittel* and told over the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, as we all know: "והגדת לבנך..."

Now, what does this have to do with *matzah*?

R' Joey Haber, in the name of the **Shem MiShmuel**, shares a beautiful idea about why we split the *matzah*. When we split the *matzah*, we are symbolically saying that we, as Yidden, are split in half. We have an outer half and an inner half. The world can attack our outer half—through events like the Crusades, the Cossacks, or the Holocaust; these are just a few examples in our history.

But our other half, our inner half, remains holy, powerful, and strong. That inner half is our *neshama*. This is the lesson my father shared with us that Pesach. Yes, he was in pain, and yes, it was difficult that his father had passed away, but his inner half remained connected and strong. His inner half allowed him to sit through the Seder and teach his children this profound lesson of the *matzah*.

We are split in half: the nations, viruses, and the outside world can hurt our outer half, but our inner half is always connected to Hashem. It is always holy, strong, and fulfilling the *ratzon Hashem*.

Yael Schwartz

מרור

Perel Shapiro, 11th Grade

If the principle of the Pesach Seder is to be "מתחיל בגנות ומסים בשבח"—start with disgrace and end with glory—why is maror, the bitter herbs, the final symbol of Rabban Gamliel's three main points of the Seder?

If we are supposed to end the Seder with glory, one might think we should start with the *maror*, symbolizing slavery, and end with the *matzah* and *korban Pesach*, which show our redemption—not the other way around.

The **Haggadah Marbeh Lesaper**, quoting the **Shelah**, offers an explanation. The whole point of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* was to receive the Torah. Kabbalistically, 600,000 Jews—corresponding to the 600,000 letters of the Torah—were needed to receive the Torah. The bitter work, symbolized by the *maror*, is what brought about the growth and increase of the Jewish people. Without the *maror*, the nation would not have grown into a people capable of receiving the Torah.

The **Midrash BeChidush** explains that the *maror* we use at the Seder is called *"chazeres."* Chazeres is also called *"chasa"* (lettuce) to show that Hashem *"chasa"*—that is, "had mercy"—on Bnei Yisrael and took us out of Egypt. Therefore, the *maror* really represents the *geulah*.

Maror does not contradict redemption; it is the key to it. Throughout the Seder, we take the disgrace and transform it into praise. The suffering multiplied the nation, making us worthy of receiving the Torah. Hashem is always "*chasa*" on us, no matter how humiliating our situation may seem.

The act of making a *bracha* on *maror*, and dipping it into *charoses* to make it sweet, captures the essence of Jewish survival. Rabban Gamliel is not culminating in disgrace; he is showing us that the bitterness is part of Hashem's plan for *geulah*. By finding morsels of sweetness hidden within what is bitter, we continue the Jewish path toward salvation.

Maror teaches us that even in adverse times, what appears to be wrong is exactly what leads us toward redemption. It is our job to keep believing and follow in His ways, even when we cannot see the sweetness. When we do so, we will celebrate the ultimate *yeshua*, *bimhera biyameinu.*

Malka Schiffman

Chaya Rosenthal, 12th Grade

***Q** At first glance, Korech seems contradictory—we take matzah, which symbolizes חירות, and eat it with maror, which symbolizes slavery. It makes sense that the Seder has separate components of slavery and freedom, but why do we eat them together?*

A The **Tiferes Shlomo** explains that during *Korech*, the two contrasting elements—*matzah*, representing freedom, and *maror*, representing the harshness and bitterness of slavery—become one entity. At the root, both slavery and freedom stem from the same Source, emanating from Hashem, who is כולו טוב and only does good.

Matzah represents *emunah*. When a Jew takes the *maror*, which represents the bitter and difficult times, and eats it together with *matzah*, he is proclaiming that he has *emunah* that the *maror*, too, is all for the best.

By combining the two—faith with hardship—a person can then lean back and taste freedom even in the *maror*. A bit of *emunah* changes everything: the *maror* is no longer bitter!

The custom of *Korech*, says **R' Shlomo Kluger**, was specifically instituted by Hillel, the *tanna* who embodied this mindset—the awareness that even hard times, just like good times, are precious gifts, and all come from Hashem.

Yakira Klein
Source: Excerpted from HaRav Elimelech Biderman on the Haggadah

שולחן עורך

Shira Soffer, 10th Grade

Q There are 15 steps to the Pesach Seder, and at each step we are told exactly what to do: kiddush for Kadesh, washing our hands at Urchatz, dipping the Karpas, and so on. Shulchan Orech, however, stands out. Why did the Ba'al Haggadah use two words to instruct us in what seems like the simplest step of the Seder?

A I heard a beautiful explanation from **Rabbi Yaakov Mizrahi**. He explains that what happens to us during the week is really *b'zechus* of the previous Shabbos. Shabbos is the *mekor habracha*. Already in Mitzrayim, the Yidden were keeping Shabbos, and they were worthy to be redeemed through the *zechus* of Shabbos.

If you look at the shoresh of the word "*bracha*"—*bais, reish, chaf*—we notice something remarkable. *Bais* doubles the number before it (*alef*, 1), *reish* doubles the previous number (*kuf*, 100 → 200), and *chaf* doubles 10 → 20. This doubling demonstrates abundance and *shefa*. Not all letters behave this way, showing that the word *bracha* itself embodies blessing!

On Shabbos, many things come in twos as well: *shamor v'zachor, lechem mishnah*, saying *kiddush* twice, and lighting two candles. Many aspects of Shabbos reflect this theme of duality.

Why is *Shulchan Orech* two words?

Again, we see the significance of 15 in the seder. In *Dayenu*, number 11 of the 15 stanzas thanks Hashem for giving us Shabbos: "אִלּוּ נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת." Remarkably, step number 11 of the Pesach Seder is *Shulchan Orech*, corresponding to the gift of Shabbos. *Shulchan Orech* is two words because it is connected to *Shabbos Kodesh*, the *mekor habracha* for everything we have, and the doubling reflects its true abundance.

The *Haggadah* hints that when we keep Shabbos, we are *zoche* to have a *Shulchan Orech*—the table set throughout the week and throughout our lives. Just as the Yidden were able to leave Mitzrayim because of their observance of Shabbos, so too, if Klal Yisroel would keep one more Shabbos, we would merit the final *geulah*.

May we all be *zoche* to leave this *galus b'zechus* keeping *Shabbos Kodesh*.

Batsheva Rogosnitzky

Source: Based on a shiur given by R' Yaakov Mizrahi

צפון

Amira Zirkind, 9th Grade

זכר לקרבן פסח הנאכל על השובע

What Part of Yourself Remains Hidden, and How Do You Reach It?

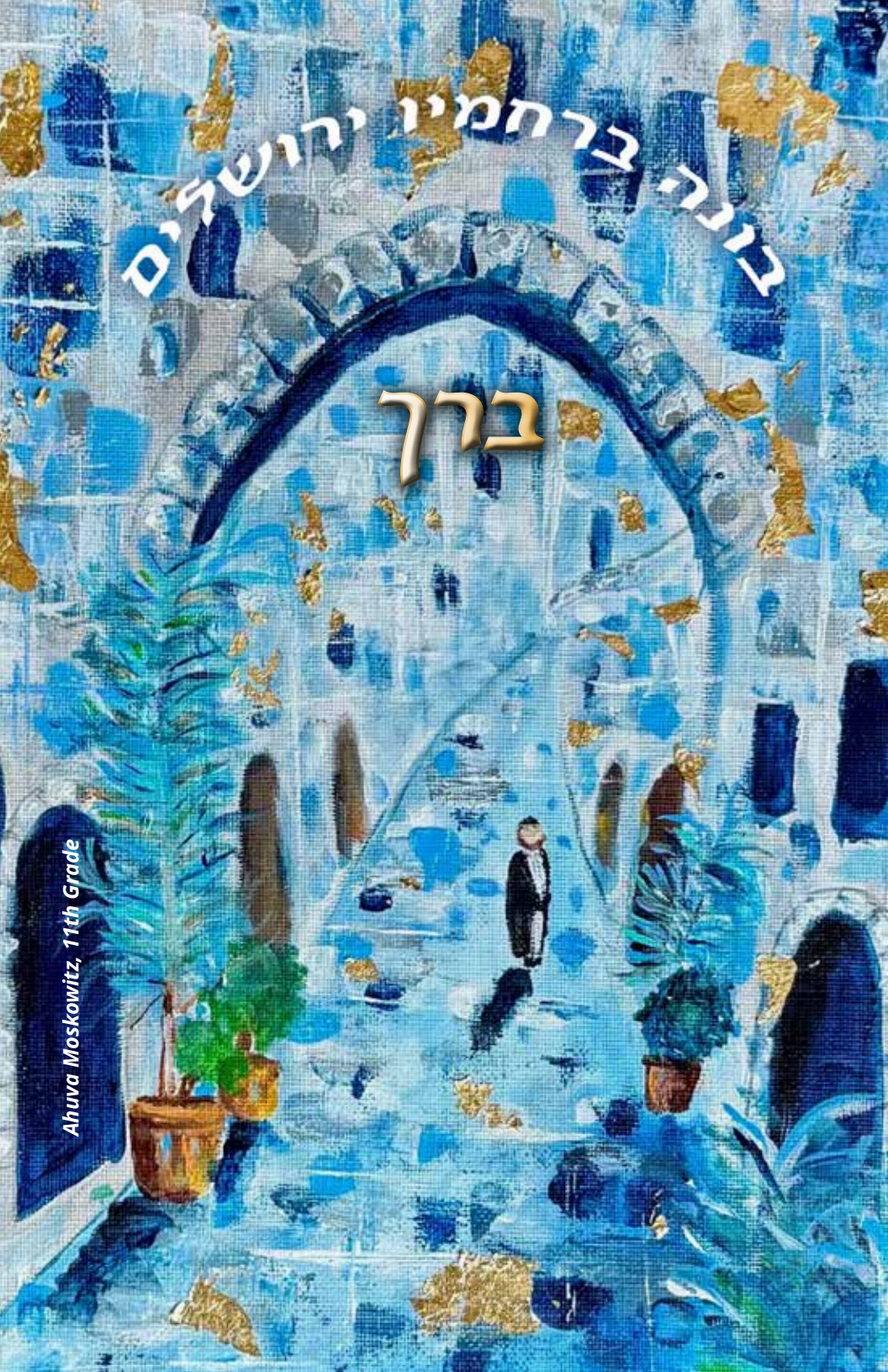
As the Seder slowly comes to a close, we reach *Tzafun*. Before one eats the *afikoman*, they pause and ask: Did I eat everything I needed? Am I still hungry? Once the *afikoman* is eaten, there's no turning back. The kitchen is closed—except for the last two cups of wine. Once this internal argument is over, you lean to your left and eat the *afikoman*.

While the first *matzah* of the night was about fulfilling a requirement, this one represents the *korban Pesach*. In *Kabbalah*, there is said to be a part of oneself deeper than personality, thoughts, or even the soul. If the soul is compared to light, this secret part is like the sun itself. This essence is called *Tzafun*—"Hidden"—because it lies deeper than the surface, buried and locked away, out of reach.

Throughout life, we orbit around this core, rarely discovering it or even realizing it exists. But after preparing ourselves—destroying our personal *chametz*, thoroughly cleaning and readying our homes, and going through the ten steps of the Seder—we finally have the power and holiness to access this crucial part of ourselves. The *matzah* we eat at *Tzafun* is our key to reaching that inner core.

The *matzah* may taste dry and bland, but it acts as a gateway to our own *Tzafun* and sparks transformation. Pesach is one of the holiest times of the year. Will you choose to remain in your spiritual slumber, or break through the bounds that hold you back from discovering your true self? Will you go through Pesach, or let Pesach go through you and change you?

Anaelle Inzlicht


בנה ברחמיו ירושלים
ברך
Ahuva Moskowitz, 11th Grade

What does it mean that Hashem should pour His wrath on the nations that do not know Him? If they truly do not know Him, why should they be punished?

The **בתי הנפש** comments on these words and explains the phrase אֲשֶׁר לֹא יְדָעוּךָ. He theorizes that because the Egyptians were exceptionally skilled in magic, they would use their magic to create the form of a dog so that no slave could escape. Therefore, the Egyptians believed that Moshe and Aharon were also using magic to perform the miracles that took place in Mitzrayim. According to this explanation, "those who do not know Hashem" refers to people who rely on magic. The בתי הנפש also points out that שְׁפֹךְ is an anagram for כישוף, sorcery.

Another explanation is given by the **כוס של אליהו**, who says that this passage refers to Nevuchadnezzar, who destroyed the first Beis HaMikdash. Here, the word "knowing" is understood as believing. Nevuchadnezzar simply did not believe in Hashem, and therefore Hashem's wrath should be poured out on him.

The *כוס של אליהו* goes further and draws a parallel to Sefer Shemos, where it states that a new king arose אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדַע אֶת־יוֹסֵף, who "did not know Yosef." Not knowing Yosef does not mean that he literally did not know who Yosef was. Rather, he chose to act as if he did not know him. Similarly, the phrase "do not know" in the Haggadah can refer to nations that choose not to recognize Hashem.

The paragraph of שְׁפֹךְ חֲמָתְךָ can sound harsh and violent. We are a peaceful nation, and at times it may seem as though we are on good terms with other nations of the world. However, even in recent history we have encountered Holocaust deniers and people who have read about October 7th yet believe that the Jews are committing genocide against Palestinians. As we say שְׁפֹךְ חֲמָתְךָ this year, we should keep in mind that this message remains relevant. There are still people who would prefer that Jews not exist. For that, we pray to Hashem and ask Him to bring justice to those who "do not know."

Avigail Kundin

Ariella Yusufova, 11th Grade

Q

"למה יאמרו הגוים איה נא אלקיהם; ואלקינו בשמים כל אשר חפץ עשה"

It seems that the second statement — "Our G-d in Heaven does whatever He pleases" — is an answer to the question posed by the nations in the first statement: "Where is their G-d?" How can we understand this?

A

The **Brisker Rav, Rav Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik**, begins his explanation by quoting a discussion in the Gemara (Yoma 69b). The Gemara states that Moshe Rabbeinu described Hashem as "הָאֵל הַגָּדֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא" — "the great, mighty, and awesome God" (Devarim 10:17). Later, Yirmiyahu and Daniel used the same description, but each omitted an attribute that they felt did not fit the reality they witnessed. Yirmiyahu said "הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר," omitting Hashem's "awesomeness," and Daniel said "הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא," omitting Hashem's "might." These two *nevi'im* felt it was improper to mention traits of Hashem that did not appear to be expressed in the events of the *Churban HaBayis* that they saw.

Years later, the *Anshei Knesses HaGedolah* analyzed the situation and reinstated the entire phrase as it was originally said by Moshe Rabbeinu, and it has remained the opening line of Shemoneh Esrei ever since. Why did the *Anshei Knesses HaGedolah* feel it was appropriate to restore the phrase when Yirmiyahu and Daniel did not?

The *Anshei Knesses HaGedolah* realized that the terrible events witnessed by the two *nevi'im*, which caused them to omit words from the phrase, were actually proof of those very attributes. It is Hashem's greatness, might, and awesomeness that allow Him to restrain His anger and withhold punishment from those who sin. With this understanding, the *Anshei Knesses HaGedolah* concluded that it was both appropriate and necessary to restore the phrase to its original form.

Rav Velvel continues by quoting the *Rambam* in *Hilchos Teshuvah* (5:4). The Rambam echoes this idea of Hashem's restraint and mercy toward those who act wickedly against Him. He explains that this is not an indication that Hashem is powerless over human actions. On the contrary, it is the exact opposite. Hashem granted mankind free choice so that people can choose their own path, allowing the righteous to be rewarded and the wicked to be punished.

The Rambam quotes from Tehillim (135:6): "כֹּל אֲשֶׁר חָפֵץ ה' עָשָׂה בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ" — "Whatever He pleases, He does, in heaven and on earth." Hashem created people with free choice because He wants human beings to have control over their own actions. *Bechirah* is not a contradiction to Hashem's will; rather, it is a manifestation of it.

Returning to the verse in Hallel, the nations ask, "Where is their God?" They ask this because they see the suffering of Klal Yisrael and wonder how the chosen nation could experience such persecution. The answer is found in the words of Tehillim quoted by the Rambam: "כֹּל אֲשֶׁר חָפֵץ ה' עָשָׂה בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ." The suffering of Klal Yisrael is not evidence of Hashem's weakness. Rather, it is part of His master plan, ultimately designed for the good of the chosen nation.

Racheli Guttman

Source: Rav Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik, The Haggadah of the Roshei Yeshivos

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

What is the true theme of Nirtzah? To understand the purpose of Nirtzah in the Haggadah, we must first ask: Why is Hallel split into two?

The **Abarbanel**, in **Zevach Pesach**, explains that the first part, *Hallel-HaMitzri,* focuses on the *galus* of the past, while the second part, *Hallel-HaGeula*, focuses on redemption. This structure mirrors that of the sSder itself: we begin by recounting the past, gradually move closer to the future, and finally reach *Nirtzah*, which directs our attention fully to what lies ahead.

Nirtzah begins with *Chasal Siddur Pesach*, where we declare the Seder complete, and immediately transition to praying for the Beis Hamikdash, for "נִזְכֶּה לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ," and for the return to Eretz Yisrael. It is followed by *Adir Hu*, expressing our ongoing hope to rebuild the Beis Hamikdash.

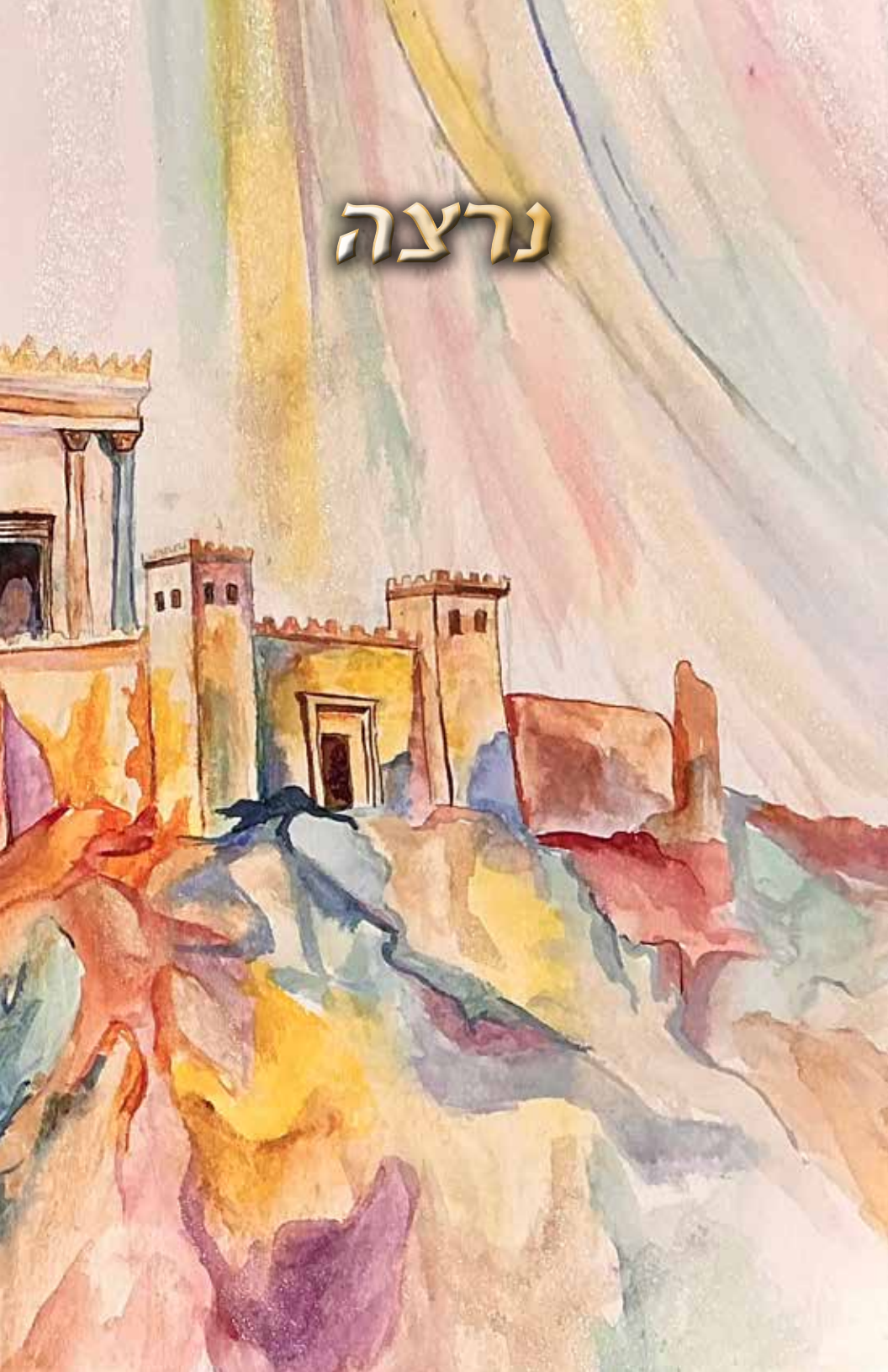
The entire Seder is a journey from *avdus l'cherus*. *Nirtzah* stands apart by teaching us that, despite past and current wars or politics, we cannot remain stuck. *Am Yisrael* must survive, persevere, and move forward. It is essential to remember the past, but ultimately, we must look ahead and strive to build a better future.

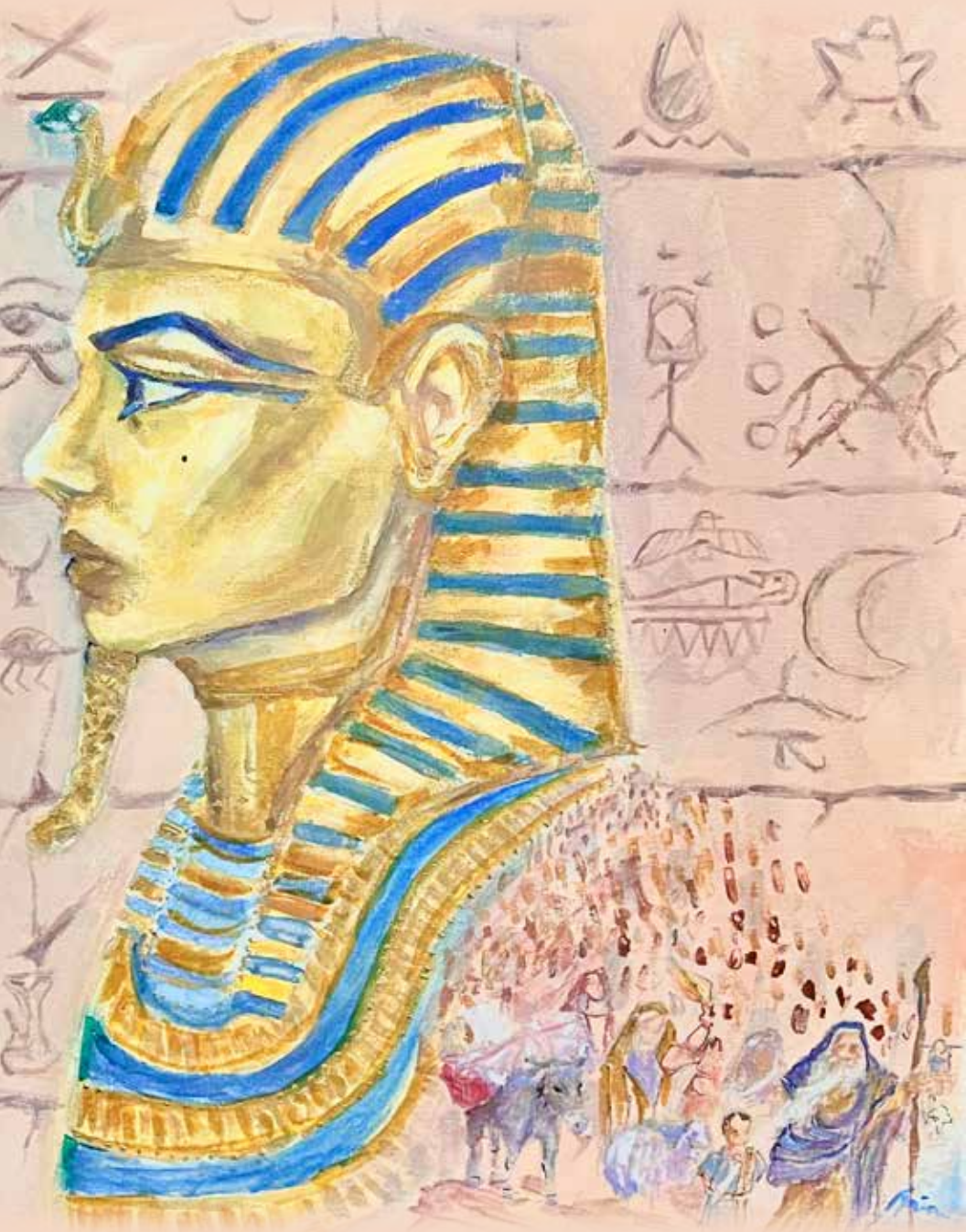
With this mindset, we can fully immerse ourselves in hope and prayer for the ultimate *geula*.

Shevi Sussman
Source: Zevach Pesach – Abarbanel

Mindy Korsinsky, 11th Grade

נרצה





Mia Grauman, 11th Grade