

Yeshiva University Center for the Jewish Future
Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary

Pesach To-Go

5768

Featuring Divrei Torah from
Rabbi Elchanan Adler
Rabbi Josh Flug
Rabbi Eli Baruch Shulman
Rabbi Daniel Stein
Rabbi Michael Taubes

An Overview on the Hagadah from
Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik

A fun and exciting packet of divrei Torah
and Pesach Seder activities for families

www.yu.edu/cjf





Dear Friends,

It is my sincere hope that the Torah found in this virtual ספר may serve to enhance your יום טוב (holiday) and your לימוד (study).

We have designed this project not only for the individual, studying alone, but perhaps even more for a חברותא (a pair studying together) that wish to work through the study matter together, or a group engaged in facilitated study.

With this material, we invite you to join our *Beit Midrash*, wherever you may be, להגדיל תורה ולהאדירה (to enjoy the splendor of Torah) and to engage in discussing a matter that touches on a most contemporary matter, and which is rooted in the timeless arguments of our great sages from throughout the generations.

Additionally, in the spirit of “והגדת לבנך”, that we should engage our children on Seder night, there is a special family piece that will enhance the Seder and Pesach experience.

בברכת חג כשר ושמח
Rabbi Kenneth Brander



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Table of Contents

Pesach 2008/5768

Divrei Drush

Bread of Affliction or Bread of Exodus?

Rabbi Elchanan Adler

The Bread of Affliction

Rabbi Eli Baruch Shulman

Rav Soloveitchik on the Pesach Haggadah

Transcribed by Rabbi Aton Holzer

Divrei Halacha

Keeping Your Kids Engaged at the Seder:

The Talmud's Caffeine-Free Method

Rabbi Josh Flug

Is the *Seder* Table a “Round-Table” or a
Lectern?

Rabbi Daniel Stein

An Understanding of Charoses & Karpas

Rabbi Michael Taubes

Dear Readers,

We live in the best of times, and in the worst of times. In the west, we enjoy extraordinary levels of freedom and affluence. Torah study, mitzvah observance, and awe of Hashem can be pursued with minimal hindrance. Diaspora Jews have unprecedented access to Eretz Yisrael. Yet we are under assault by enemies who aim to eradicate us. Subversive ideologies, masquerading under the shining banners of “truth,” “cosmopolitanism,” and “equality,” seek to undermine our traditional values. Year upon year of galut, exile, pile upon us like bricks on a tomb. Ours is an era of opportunity, either to rise to great heights, or to fall to profound depths.

Our writers, distinguished roshei yeshiva and faculty of Yeshiva University or its affiliates, are uniquely sensitive to the volatility of our age. We are poised at the gates of the eschaton, we stand at the brink of redemption. Yet we teeter on the lip of galut, like the proverbial climber whose greatest challenge lies at the lip of the cliff. Hence, our fascination with the dual symbolism of matzah, the bread of redemption, of geulah and sovereignty, but also the bread of affliction, of galut and oppression. The theme of dual symbolism recurs throughout this publication; three writers, Rabbi Soloveitchik among them, articulate three unique perspectives on the symbolic meaning of matzah. This recurrence is no coincidence; matzah represents the potential and the challenge of our times.

While Pesach is a holiday replete with symbolism, it also offers myriad opportunities to perform mitzvot. Consonantly, we present the philosophy of Pesach alongside the halakhot of Pesach. Diverse aspects of the seder are discussed, including: the crucial role of children’s participation, recounting the exodus, and the precise identity of ritual foodstuffs. Moreover, to add pizzazz to the seder, we include “Pesach-to-Go for Families,” which contains ideas, games, and essays for all ages. Sit down at the seder; ponder its meaning; perform its mitzvot; and have a fabulous time!

In conclusion, we would like to thank President Richard M. Joel and Rabbi Kenneth Brander, Dean of the Center for the Jewish Future for their vision and support of the To-Go project. We also would like to thank the authors of the articles in this publication, for giving so generously of their time.

We would also like to thank all the important people who made this publication possible: Rabbi Rabbi Ronald Schwartzberg, Rabbi Mordechai Willig, Rabbi Menachem Genack, Cantor Alan Brava, Ari Pinchot, Shalom Silbermintz, Chaviva Fischer, and Karra Greenberg. A special thanks as well to the Boca Raton Community Kollel, and to the Student Organization of Yeshiva.

Chag Kasher veSameach,

Ephraim Meth

Bread of Affliction or Bread of Exodus?

Rabbi Elchanan Adler

Undoubtedly the most celebrated symbol associated with Pesach is matzah. Throughout the Torah and in our liturgy the Passover holiday is referred to as “chag haMatzos.” Let us explore the deeper meaning and symbolism of the matzah that we eat on Pesach.

There are two sections in the haggadah which deal explicitly with the reason behind the matzah at the table. The first is “ha lachma anya” at the beginning of magid; the second is the section beginning “Raban Gamliel haya omer” toward the end of magid.

This is the bread of affliction that our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. Whoever is hungry, let him come and eat; whoever is in need, let him come and conduct the Seder of Passover. This year [we are] here; next year in the land of Israel. This year [we are] slaves; next year [we will be] free people.

הָא לַחְמָא עֲנִיָא דִּי אֲכָלוּ אַבְהֵתָנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם. כָּל דְּכָפִין יִיבֵי לִי, כָּל דְּצָרִיךְ יִיבֵי וְיִפְסַח. הַשְּׁמָא הָכָא, לְשָׁנָה הַבְּאָה בְּאַרְעָא דִּישְׂרָאֵל. הַשְּׁמָא עַבְדֵי, לְשָׁנָה הַבְּאָה בְּנֵי חוֹרִין.

This Matzah that we eat for what reason? Because the dough of our fathers did not have time to become leavened before the King of the kings of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed Himself to them and redeemed them. Thus it is said: "They baked Matzah-cakes from the dough that they had brought out of Egypt, because it was not leavened; for they had been driven out of Egypt and could not delay, and they had also not prepared any [other] provisions."

מִצָּה זוֹ שֶׁאֵנוֹ אוֹכְלִים, עַל שׁוֹם מָה? עַל שׁוֹם נִשְׁלַח אֶת הַסֶּפִּיק בְּצֻקָם שֶׁל אֲבוֹתֵינוּ לְהַתְמִיץ עַד שֶׁנִּגְלָה עֲלֵיהֶם מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים, הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, וְגֵאָלָם, שֶׁנִּצְאָר: נִי אִפּוֹ אֶת הַבְּצֻק אֲשֶׁר הוֹצִיאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם עַגְת מִצּוֹת, כִּי לֹא הָיָה זְמַן, כִּי גִרְשׁוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם וְלֹא יָכְלוּ לְהַתְמַהֵמָה, וְגַם צִדָּה לֹא עָשׂוּ לָהֶם.

These two references seem to reflect different, perhaps even contradictory, themes. The first refers to matzah as “lachma anya” – the bread of affliction which was eaten by our forefathers in Egypt. In this sense, matzah represents servitude and poverty. On the other hand, the second reference states that the matzah commemorates the circumstances surrounding the hasty manner in which we left Egypt – there was simply no time to bake the dough in the conventional

way by allowing it to rise; therefore, the Jews had no choice but to bake it in haste and hence, the matza end-product.

What, then, is the true reason for matzah? Is it a symbol of slavery or of freedom? Does it commemorate bread of affliction eaten by the Jews while enslaved in Egypt, or the bread of haste baked on their path to liberation?

A Dual Theme

A resolution to this quandary may be found by examining a passuk in Devarim 16:3:

You shall eat no leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, the bread of affliction; for in haste didst thou come forth out of the land of Egypt; so that you may remember the day when you left the land of Egypt all the days of thy life.

לֹא תֹאכַל עִלְיוֹ חֶמֶץ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים
תֹאכַל עִלְיוֹ מַצּוֹת לֶחֶם עֲנִי כִּי בְּחֶפְזוֹן
יִצְאָתָּה מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְמַעַן תִּזְכֹּר אֶת
יוֹם יְצִאתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ:

In this passuk, the Torah mentions both of the aforementioned reasons for matzah. Apparently, matzah contains a dual motif – of servitude as well as redemption. (See the comments of Ramban to this passuk.)

Consistent with the idea of matzah’s dual theme, Rambam’s version of the haggadah adds three words just prior to “ha lachma anya” – “bevehilu yatzanu miMitzrayim” – “in haste we left Egypt.” Thus, Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik notes, both reasons for matzah are explicitly stated at the haggadah’s outset. Our version of the haggadah, however, lacks this additional clause. Why at the outset of magid do we focus on the matzah as commemorative of slavery, and only later shift to its being a symbol of the exodus?

The answer is obvious. The Talmud tells us that recounting the story of the exodus requires that we “begin with disgrace and conclude with praise” (Pesachim 116a). The reason for this dictum can be explained as follows: just as light can only be appreciated through darkness, so can the joy of freedom best be felt by first focusing on the slavery which preceded it. It is therefore logical that the first reference to matzah, which appears just before the story is told, should focus on the slavery dimension. Only after the full story of the exodus has been recreated and brought to its happy conclusion does the matzah become a symbol of liberation.

R. Yitzchak Mirsky, in his sefer Hegyonei Halakhah, notes that the dual symbolism of matzah may also be reflected in the yachatz ritual performed just before declaring “ha lachma anya.” Dividing the middle matzah into two parts is a concrete demonstration of the dual themes of slavery and liberation which matzah symbolizes. The piece remaining on the table is the “bread of affliction” upon which we begin telling the story. The second half reserved for afikoman symbolizes the dimension of redemption.

Metamorphosis: From Sorrow to Joy

On a deeper level, there may be a close association between the matzah of affliction and the matzah of the exodus.

The Seforno, in his commentary to Devarim 16:3, provides just such a linkage. Both the matzah eaten in slavery and the matzah baked just before leaving Egypt were the result of external pressure. Throughout their period of enslavement, the Jews were denied the luxury of the extra few minutes necessary to bake leavened bread. To them, matzah became a daily symbol of their lowly status as slaves. In facilitating their release from slavery, Hashem sought to imbue this same symbol with a positive association. He therefore staged the hasty circumstances associated with the redemption from Egypt. In this way, the exodus transformed the experience of exile along with its main symbol, matzah, into a message of joy and hope¹.

From Servants of Pharaoh to Servants of Hashem

Rav Shimon Schwab (Sefer Mayan Beis Hashoeva) similarly suggests that the matzah of redemption sublimates the symbolism of the matzah of slavery. In Egypt, we were Pharaoh's slaves. Our time and energy was spent fulfilling Pharaoh's whims and desires. After the exodus, we were granted the opportunity to utilize our time and energy in the manner of free people. But this new freedom carried risks of its own, since mundane pursuits could thereafter become taskmasters as surely as Pharaoh was. Dedicating our time and energy to gaining affluence and influence would make us slaves to money and power. The pursuit of pleasure could make us slaves to pleasure. By dedicating ourselves to fulfilling Hashem's will, we express our true inner freedom to become avdei Hashem.

Matzah is the quintessential bread of slavery, for humans are forever enslaved, their time and energy dedicated to some set of pursuits. Freedom is the power to choose our master. Freedom is the ever-present opportunity to affirm our choice of Hashem as Master and to affirm our rejection of all other claims on our time and energy. In Egypt, matzah was the token of our servitude to Pharaoh. Now, matzah is the token of our servitude to Hashem.

The Midrash illustrates this point by drawing a parallel between the mitzvah of matzah and the mitzvah for slave-owners to release Jewish slaves after seven years. Failure to observe these two mitzvos, declares the Midrash, led to our first exile from Israel:

Judah was exiled because of "oni" – because they ate chametz on Pesach, and not matzah, which is called bread of "oni." And because of excessive work – because they forced their Jewish slaves to work, as it is written [that Yirmiyahu had to rebuke the Jews for failure to release their slaves] "after seven years, each man, release your brother who was sold to you..."

גלתה יהודה מעוני – על שאכל חמץ בפסח ולא מצות לחם עוני. ומרב עבודה – על שהיו משתעבדים בעבד עברי כמש"נ מקץ שבע שנים תשלחו איש את אחיו אשר ימכר לך וגו'.

¹ This idea also explains why the Jews were commanded to eat matzah on the evening prior to their departure. As Avudraham explains, this was meant as a harbinger for the next morning's events.

What does matzah share in common with the mitzvah to release Jewish slaves in a timely manner?

Rabbi Matisyahu Solomon (Matnas Chaim, Moadim) explains that both mitzvos symbolize the ideal of total commitment to Hashem. Matzah reminds us that we chose, and constantly choose, to dedicate ourselves to Hashem. As surely as we were Pharaoh's servants in Egypt, we are Hashem's servants at present. Releasing Jewish slaves similarly affirms this ideal. The Jewish slave's efforts must be used to fulfill his owner's will. Yet every Jew ought to be free to devote every fiber of his being to fulfilling Hashem's will. By releasing his Jewish slaves at the appointed time, as by eating matzah, the slave-owner acknowledges this ideal of undivided dedication to Hashem.

Humility Within Freedom: Getting Back to Basics

We might suggest an additional explanation for the link between the dual aspects of matzah by examining the difference between the symbols of chametz and matzah. Chametz suggests haughtiness; matzah symbolizes humility. Chametz shows itself for what it is not – it is just fluff! Matzah is what it appears to be, without any pretensions.

It is easy to see why matzah is associated with slavery. A slave is naturally humble. He has nothing to boast of. He has little sense of self. However, once liberated and given a chance to express his potential in the world, it is easy for the slave to become arrogant, self-centered and status-conscious. Therefore, the Jews needed to preserve the symbol of matzah even after their liberation, so that they could retain an appropriate measure of humility even after their liberation.

Hence, matzah remains a symbol of destitution specifically on the festival commemorating our freedom. The kitel is a similar symbol. The kitel is a white garment, traditionally used as a burial shroud. The kitel is also traditionally worn by the head-of-family at each seder. The kitel is present as a symbol of our mortality at the ceremony that emphasizes our transcendent freedom. The matzah and the kitel both remind us to maintain our humility in the face of our newly acquired freedom.

Matzah as the Paradigm of Jewish Experience

Jewish history is cyclical, replete with ups and downs. For example, Yaakov and his family were invited to Egypt as honored guests, but ultimately they were downtrodden and enslaved. Similarly, Ashkenazic Jews were invited to Western Europe in the 11th and 12th centuries, where they enjoyed comfortable and protected lives. Gradually, the surrounding culture and government grew hostile, until these Jews were oppressed or expelled. Fleeing from France and Rhineland, the Ashkenazim settled in Poland and Ukraine, whose rulers offered them generous benefits. Within a few centuries, these countries too had cultivated a tradition of oppression, climaxing in the devastating Chmielnicki massacres of 1648-1649. Migrating from the hostility

of Eastern Europe, the Jews experienced a similar cycle of invitation and oppression that culminated in the Holocaust. Even with the emergence of the modern state of Israel, we as a people continue to experience our collective ups and downs.

Whenever and wherever we live, we belong to a community which defies traditional historical hallmarks. Even if we live in comfort or luxury for a time, malice and oppression may lurk just around the corner. When we suffer persecution, salvation can come in the blink of an eye. Ours is a cyclical destiny which spans past, present, and future.

Matzah, too, transcends specific contexts, eras, and locales. In Egypt, the matzah we ate as bread of affliction recalled our past and foreshadowed the future. In the second Beis haMikdash, the matzah we ate as bread of redemption recalled and foreshadowed past and future oppression. Through matzah, we commemorate and connect to the totality of Jewish experience, to the highs and lows of our communal story. Ultimately with the speedy coming of mashiach we will rest in Hashem's protective wings and shall dwell in eternal bliss. Nonetheless Matzah will continue to remind us of the darkness which preceded the light.

The Bread of Affliction

Rabbi Eli Baruch Shulman

Each Pesach we begin our Seder with the familiar words:

This year we are here, next year in the land of Israel; this year we are slaves, next year, free men.

השתא הכא לשנה הבאה בארעא דישראל,
השתא עבדי לשנה הבאה בני חורין

The formula is ancient, preserved in its original Aramaic from a time when Aramaic was the vernacular. How many centuries has it been since Jews spoke Aramaic? And yet we continue to say the same words, the same prayer.

Actually, it doesn't sound like a prayer. A prayer would begin יהי רצון, or the Aramaic equivalent: יהא רעוא, let it be Your will – to bring us by next year to Jerusalem, to make us free men.

That is not what we say. We don't begin the Seder with a prayer. We begin with a confident statement of fact: This year we are here; but next year *we will be* in Jerusalem. This year we are slaves, but next year *we will be* free men.

And the years roll by, and the decades, and the centuries, and each year we are disappointed, each year our confident expectation fails to materialize. Last year we were here, and here we are still; last year we were slaves, and slaves we remain.

How is it then that we continue to make this confident prediction, year after year? Shouldn't we at least tone it down, allow for a little uncertainty? This year we are here, *perhaps* next year we will be in *Eretz Yisroel*; this year we are slaves, *let us hope* that next year we will be free men.

Why do we go on year after year, setting ourselves up for disappointment?

Another strange feature of this declaration is its opening: הוא לחמא עניא, *this is the bread of affliction*. After all, the Torah describes the matzoh as the bread of redemption, the bread that the Jews baked on their way out of Egypt because they were hurried out of Egypt so quickly that there was no time for their bread to leaven. And later on in the Seder, too, we say: מצה זו שאנו על שלא הספיקו להחמיץ עד, *what does this matzoh signify?* And we answer: משנגלה עליהם מלך מלכי המלכים, because as they left Egypt there was no time for their bread to leaven, until the King of Kings revealed Himself to them.

Why do we begin the Seder by describing the *matzo*, that symbol of our redemption, as לחמא עניא?

A commonly given answer is that the matzo had two historical roles. It was, as the Torah says, and as we say later in the Haggadah, the bread of redemption that we baked on our way out of Egypt. But it was also, for centuries, the bread of affliction, the bread that we were fed as slaves in Egypt

when we were not allowed the luxury even of waiting for our bread to leaven before being hurried back to our labors. And so the matzo is both the bread of *geulah* and the bread of affliction.

But this answer, at first glance, seems unsatisfactory. Even if it is true, as a matter of historical fact, that the Jews ate matzo as slaves in Egypt, that is not the *reason* that we eat matzo at the Seder! The Torah makes clear that the reason we are commanded to eat matzo this first night of Pesach is to commemorate the bread that we ate when we were redeemed. So why do we begin the Seder by emphasizing matzo's other, more melancholy and less important, aspect?

Matzo is, indeed, the bread of *geulah*. That is how the Torah characterizes it, that is the reason we eat it at the Seder, that is its essential nature. And therefore when the Jews in Egypt during their long years of slavery, under the lash, ate matzo, they were eating the bread of *geulah*. With every bite of matzo that they ate, they were celebrating their *geulah*. Every meal that they ate in Egypt, where they were fed nothing but matzo, was a Seder.

Only they didn't know it yet.

Because the beginning of the process of *geulah* from Egypt was not the moment when Moshe arrived back from Midian. Nor did it begin when he smote the Egyptian overseer. It did not begin, even, when Moshe was born.

The process of *geulah* began the minute the Jews arrived in Egypt.

We see this in the beautiful Midrash which relates that Yocheved, Moshe's mother, was born בֵּין הַחֲזוּמוֹת, between the gates of the walls of the city when Yaakov and his children first arrived in Egypt. At that moment – the very moment of our entry into Egypt – the *geulah* began to unfold.

That *geulah* was a long, drawn out process, and for two centuries it was invisible to human eyes. No one realized the significance of Yocheved's birth. No one knew, for that matter, the significance of Moshe's birth and adoption by Pharaoh's daughter. The beginning of the slavery, its intensification, Pharaoh's decrees, were public knowledge that filled our hearts with dismay. But beneath the surface – far beneath – the *geulah* had already begun.

The great R' Yaakov of Lisa, the author of the *Nesivos haMishpat*, in his commentary on the Haggadah, records a beautiful insight. The Haggadah says:

Blessed is He who keeps His promise to Israel; for the Holy One, blessed be He, calculated the end, in order to do what He had promised to Avraham.

ברוך שומר הבטחתו לישראל, שהקב"ה חישב את הקץ לעשות כמה שאמר לאברהם

This is a difficult passage. What does the Haggadah mean by saying that He "calculated the end"? Why does He need to calculate?

R' Yaakov explains that all those years in Egypt the עולם של רבונו was busy bringing the *geulah* about. All those years, when all we saw was misery, He was directing the strands of history towards that end. And the slavery itself, with all its horrors, was a necessary part of that *geulah*, even if we could not – even if we cannot – understand it. All those year when we were calculating

how long we had been slaves, He was calculating how long until we would be free, how much longer the process of redemption would require.

And therefore every bite of לחם עוני, the bitter bread of slavery, was a bite of לחם גאולים, the bread of redemption. The same matzo that we experienced as the bread of affliction, was really the bread of freedom – but only He knew it.

And that is the lesson that the matzo teaches us, and the lesson with which we begin the Seder. As we sit down to the Seder we take the matzo, that symbol of our freedom which is the centerpiece of our Seder table, over which we will soon recount the story of our miraculous deliverance, and we say: *היא לחמא עניא*; this matzo was for many years the bread of our affliction. We ate it in abject despair, not knowing what it was. And all that time – it was really the symbol of our redemption. All that time – we were being redeemed. The mills of *geulah* ground slowly but relentlessly on and on.

Only the process was hidden, until that final moment when – עד שנגלה עליהם מלך מלכי המלכים – He revealed Himself to us. Until that time when He showed us that He had been there all the time – being *מחשב את הקץ*, calculating and counting down and bringing the redemption into being. The *גאולה* was there all the time, what we waited for was its revelation.

היא לחמא עניא, today, too, we eat the bread of affliction. When we read of bombs and mortars, of the shattered lives and bloodthirsty threats that have become our daily fare – then we eat לחם עוני, the bread of affliction. *היתה לי דמעתי לחם יומם ולילה*, our tears are our bread, by day and night.

השתא הכא, this year we are here, still eating the bread of affliction – and there is so much affliction for our people today.

And yet we know that *הקב"ה* is here too with us, being *מחשב את הקץ*, bringing the redemption closer and closer, and this bread, this matzo, is for us today, too – not only לחם עוני but also לחם גאולה, the bread of our redemption, which advances inexorably. And sometimes we are even vouchsafed a glimpse of that advance.

And so with that same faith that our ancestors showed when they first made this declaration, with the same words that they used then, with the same undiminished confidence, we declare: *לשנה הבאה בארעא דישראל*, next year in the land of Israel; *לשנה הבאה בני חורין*, next year indeed we will be free.

Rav Soloveitchik on the Pesach Haggadah

Transcribed by Rabbi Aton Holzer²

Ha Lachma Anya

This is the bread of affliction that our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. Whoever is hungry, let him come and eat; whoever is in need, let him come and conduct the Seder of Passover. This year [we are] here; next year in the land of Israel. This year [we are] slaves; next year [we will be] free people.

הָא לַחְמָא עֲנִיא דִּי אֲכָלוּ אַבְהֹתָנָא בְּאַרְעָא
דְּמִצְרַיִם. כָּל דְּכָפִין יִיתִי וְיִיכַל, כָּל דְּצָרִיךְ
יִיתִי וְיִפְסַח. הַשְּׁתָּא הֵכָּא, לְשָׁנָה הַבְּאֵה
בְּאַרְעָא דִּישְׂרָאֵל. הַשְּׁתָּא עַבְדֵּי, לְשָׁנָה הַבְּאֵה
בְּנֵי חוֹרֵין.

Why does *Ha Lachma Anya* appear at the beginning of the Haggadah?

It is important to establish that Matzah, the מהיב of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim, is a symbol not merely of חירות, our redemption, but of עבדות as well; it is important that both elements - עבדות and חירות - be included in Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim.

There are many questions to be asked about עניא עניא.

- First, why do we answer a question that is not posed until a moment later, in נשתנה? what is the meaning of Matzah?
- Second, in עניא עניא, we recite: "כל דצריך ייתי ויכיל, כל דצריך ייתי ויפסח" - 'All those who are hungry, come and eat, all those who are in need come and join us for the Pesach meal.' Why do we employ this double verbiage?
- Third, why is this declaration immediately followed by the proclamation "השתא הכא", - 'now we are here, next year we will be in Eretz Yisrael'?

² Editor's Introduction: The following comments were transcribed from lectures delivered by Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik in Yeshiva University and Moriah Synagogue. To preserve the original flavor of the lectures we retained Rabbi Soloveitchik's proximately meandering yet ultimately focused style. Moreover, to preserve the wealth of meaningful insight evoked by Rabbi Soloveitchik's biblical and Talmudic allusions, we refrained from substituting translations and transliterations for most original Hebrew terms and sentences. Hence, this commentary on the haggadah lends itself more to studious exploration than superficial skimming. Yet, with investiture of proper time and effort, it will yield great and amazing dividends. We would like to thank Rabbi Menachem Genack for reviewing this article.

According to the Gemara, every time Rav Huna sat down to eat, he would say כל דכפין באו. Rav Matityahu Gaon explained that in ancient times, it was customary throughout כלל ישראל that all of כלל ישראל would announce and send out messengers inviting the עניים to eat with them days before Pesach - כל דכפין - for them was a reality, not just a ceremony. This fits beautifully with the concept of מעות חיטים.

Yet, why of all holidays in the year was Pesach singled out? The term שמה is used by all holidays, and the Rambam writes that true שמה is to share the Yom Tov with עניים. Why was Pesach singled out?

One reason is that the concept of sharing is particularly important on Pesach, for the Korban Pesach is brought only by a חבורה, a group.

The second reason is that when the Jews came to Mitzrayim, they were only a clan - איש וביתו באו. However, when the time of the Ge'ulah approached, when Hashem addressed Himself to Moshe, He referred to the B'nei Yisrael as an עם. The term עם (Am) is from that of עם (Im), with - denoting togetherness and solidarity. In Egypt, it was true that B'nei Yisrael spiritually were not much greater than their oppressor, but they were charitable people who helped each other and shared with each other. Their co - existence based upon their solidarity was responsible for their גאולה. On the Pasuk of "ראה ראיתי את עמי אשר במצרים ואת צעקתם שמעתי מפני נגשיו כי ידעתי את מכאוביו" - 'I have seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt and I have heard **their** cry because of **its** taskmasters, for I know **its** pains', the Beis HaLevi asked: Why does the Pasuk begin speaking of B'nei Yisrael in plural and end in singular? For, though all 600,000 Jews were oppressed, they felt the pain of one person.

Thus, Pesach is a time of Tzedakah and Chesed - a Jew feels a sense of responsibility for his fellow Jew and extends aid to him. This has always been a beautiful character trait of the Jew, even if he is nearly assimilated. We have always retained the trait of עמי; no foe has ever succeeded in splitting the people.

In the 1940's, when the Jewish community practically tolerated the murder of 6 million Jews in the holocaust, I thought that the Jewish community was falling apart, for it appeared to have lost the trait of עם. However, they responded to the creation of מדינת ישראל without cowardice; the sense of solidarity was still there. Each member of B'nei Yisrael felt the pain of his friend and shared his Matzah with him.

What is the difference between דכפין and דצריך? Though דכפין means pauper, דצריך means not one who is in need of bread, but one who has food but is lonely, and wants to share a meal with another. We invite the lonely, as well, to celebrate with us.

Still, why does הא להמא עניא address a question before it is actually asked?

I believe that there is another concept involved. The first Mishna in פרק השוכר discusses the Halacha that if one does not stipulate what he will feed his Jewish day - laborers, he must give them of the most delicious delicacies. If he does, then he can give them a simple meal of beans

and bread. If the food was not designated, the laborers can demand the most expensive delicacies for all Jews are בני מלכים, princes.

As the laborer, anyone who is a guest at his friend's house for a meal can demand, "I expect a better meal." Thus, on Pesach, it is stipulated beforehand that we can only invite he who is satisfied with a meager meal of poor bread - **הא לחמא עניא**.

With this approach, we can understand the transition between **השתא הכא** and **דכפין** - Here, in Galus, we can't afford to serve better. However, next year, in Eretz Yisrael, we will be able to dine as **בני חורין**, and the invitation will be extended from one free man to another.

Thus, **הא לחמא עניא** is a renewal of our pledge of solidarity. What is the meaning of **גוי גדול**? Numerically, the people are not great, but they are a great people, who commit themselves to each other. Slavery and oppression taught the Jew how to commit himself to his fellow Jew. No other nation knew of **והסד** and **צדקה**; the Greeks knew of courage and truth, but they did not understand **צדקה** and **הסד**. The Goyim were impressed by our courage in the 1967 war. The welfare state is a Jewish institution.

What taught us solidarity? Oppression, persecution and exile. **הא לחמא עניא** is a renewal of our solidarity, a declaration that we are ready to share - Pesach is the night of sharing. If there is no manifestation of solidarity and unity, then the Seder is meaningless - as the Rambam said, "שמחת 'joy of his stomach'." So as not to deceive or arouse the hopes of the guests as of what to expect at the meal, we make this declaration.

הא לחמא עניא announces that whoever wants to share our meager bread is welcome to; when we are redeemed, we promise to serve a better meal. This is the meaning of **הא לחמא עניא**.

Mah Nishtanah

What makes this night different from all [other] nights? On all nights we eat chametz or matzah, and on this night only matzah. On all nights we eat any kind of vegetables, and on this night maror! On all nights we need not dip even once, on this night we do so twice! On all nights we eat sitting upright or reclining, and on this night we all recline!

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות?
שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה, הלילה הזה - כולו מצה. שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות, - הלילה הזה מרור. שבכל הלילות אין אנו מטבילין אפילו פעם אחת, - הלילה הזה שתי פעמים. שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין בין יושבין ובין מסבין, - הלילה הזה פלגו מסבין.

When does the Haggadah answer the questions asked in Mah Nishtanah?

The four questions of Mah Nishtanah are related to the four Mitzvos of the night of the Seder. The first question is about matzah, the second deals with maror, the third inquiry asks of roasted meat of the Korban Pesach (in the original question in the time of the Beis HaMikdash) and the fourth asks about *heseibah*, leaning, which is a קיום of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim.

The first three questions are resolved by the explanations in רבן גמליאל היה אומר, in which the Haggadah provides the reasons for *pesach*, *matzah* and *maror*. The fourth question is resolved immediately after that by מצרים הוא יצא ממצרים, "In each generation, it is incumbent upon man to see himself as if he personally had left Egypt." עבדים היינו is but a general answer to the four questions; the detailed answers follow later.

What is the purpose of the question "Why is this night different than all other nights?"

In truth, the four questions really are not questions. On Pesach night, it is essential not merely to retell the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim, but to establish the fact that the night differs from other nights, for the Rambam learns that מצרים הזו אשר יצאתם ממצרים means the same as זכור את יום השבת - there must be קידוש. Kiddush on Shabbos is a declaration that the day is different than all other days of the week, for only Shabbos has a prohibition of *melachah*.

On the night of Pesach, we must establish not simply that the night is different than ordinary nights, but that it is different than all other טובים ימים. What makes Pesach different than all Yamim Tovim? Pesach has certain unique Mitzvos that apply only to the Seder night. The first three, *Pesach*, *matzah* and *maror*, are elaborated upon in רבן גמליאל. Dipping represents the Mitzvah of כבד את הוריה - we dip twice so that the child asks questions, and הסיבה represents the חיוב of כבד את הוריה. This is the uniqueness of the night of Pesach; thus, the declaration of מלילת היום הזו מכל הלילות, "How different is this night from all other nights," is a קיום of the requirement that the Rambam has for זכירה on the night of Pesach.

Whenever we refer to מצה נשתנה, we call it "the four קושיות," but we always use the term קשיא, and not שאלה, which seems to mean the same thing. What is the semantic difference between שאלה and קשיא, and why was the term קשיא used here?

The word 'שאלה' denotes a practical question. When one asks a שאלה of his Rav, it is a 'yes or no' question; if the Rabbi will determine that a chicken brought to him is kosher, then it will be eaten. If he concludes that it is not, then the chicken will be discarded.

When the wicked and simple sons ask their שאלות to their father, if the answer will satisfy them, they will join the rest of the Seder community. If the answer of the father appears irrelevant to them, then they will walk away from this community. That is שאלה.

However, the קשיא, unlike the שאלה, has no practical bearing. If the קשיא is not resolved, the questioner will still remain devoted and loyal to the law - he only wanted to know the answer.

When the wise son asks מצה נשתנה, he is not declaring that if the answer is unsatisfactory, he will leave the Seder - he simply wants to comprehend what is going on. If he receives a proper answer, he will be delighted; but if the father is witless and fails to give him a proper answer, to explain the symbolism of *pesach*, *matzah* and *maror*, the son still will be obedient to and comply with the law.

The haggadah is filled with such inquiries and responses, theoretical and practical, as we were commanded to make such inquiries and responses. Bewilderment and explanation is the source of knowledge. When the child is amazed by what he sees, the father must explain it to him. רבן

Haggadah's statement begins with "מראה זה על שום מה" and "מרור זה על שום מה" - the explanation is in a question and answer form. "יכול מראש הדש" - Why do we speculate? The reason is simple. The process of amazement and explanation, of intrigue and elucidation, is the foundation of the Haggadah. This is the source of procurement of knowledge.

Avadim Hayinu

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and G-d took us out from there with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm.

עֲבָדִים הָיינו לְפָרֹעַ הַבְּמִצְרָיִם, וַיּוֹצֵאֵנוּ יי
אֵל הַיְנו מִשָּׁם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזְרוּעַ נְטוּיָה.

In the Gemara in Pesachim (116a) we find a debate between Rav and Shmuel regarding the nature of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim, retelling the account of the exodus. Both agree that we must begin with our shame and end in our praise, מתחיל בגנות ומסיימים בשבח, but they argue as to what the shame and praise is. According to Shmuel, the shame is that of being physically subjugated as slaves, and the praise is that G-d brought us to freedom; thus, the fulfillment of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim, in his view, is עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים. According to Rav, the shame is the spiritual enslavement of our ancestors who worshipped idols, and the praise is that G-d brought us to serve Him.

It is interesting that the opinions of Rav and Shmuel regarding the מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח correspond to their opinions in הלכות עבדים. There are two aspects of עבדות, slavery - one is that the slave is the property of the master, who has a קנין ממון over him, and also, the Canaanite slave has a different status of קדושה than the non-Jew - he must keep all Mitzvos with the exception of מצוות עשה שהזמן גרמא. When he is released, he attains full קדושת ישראל and keeps all the Mitzvos.

In the Gemara (Yevamos 48a) we find that the opinion of Shmuel is that a freed slave does not need a writ of emancipation, a גט שחרור, to release him from the Halachic status of slavery - if he is released from physical slavery, he is released from spiritual slavery, as well. However, according to Rav, a separate גט שחרור is necessary to free the slave from the spiritual status of slavery.

Here, we find the same concept - according to Shmuel, we thank G-d for our physical release from slavery, as the spiritual slavery was removed with that שחרור. However, according to Rav, the Sippur must relate to the spiritual freedom that we obtained, which is completely separate from physical enslavement.

Maaseh B'Rebbe Eliezer

It happened that Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarphon were reclining [at a seder] in B'nei Berak. They were discussing the exodus from Egypt all that night, until their students came and told them: "Our Masters! The time has come for reciting the morning Shema!"

מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרַבֵּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר וְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְרַבִּי
אֵלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲזַרְיָה וְרַבִּי עֲקִיבָא וְרַבִּי טַרְפוֹן
שָׁהוּ מְסֻבִּין בְּבֵנֵי בֵרַק, וְהָיוּ מְסַפְּרִים
בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם כָּל אוֹתוֹ הַלַּיְלָה עַד שֶׁבָּאוּ
תַלְמִידֵיהֶם וְאָמְרוּ לָהֶם: רַבּוֹתֵינוּ, הַגִּיעַ
זְמַן קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע שֶׁל שַׁחֲרִית.

Strangely, there are two grammatical forms of the Hebrew word ספר. There is the normal ablative, as in את... - ויספר משה לחותנו יתרו את... Then, there is another form - as מספרים ביציאת מצרים. The conjunction of ב changes the semantics of the verb מספרים.

In actuality, the phrase סיפור יציאת מצרים is incorrect. It is used for convenience, but the most proper expression would be סיפור ביציאת מצרים. In the Haggadah, we never say לספר את יציאת מצרים, but ביציאת מצרים. What is the difference?

סיפור in general is a detailed story, in which a background and development of events are given; dramatic elements are added as to how the story began and how it culminated. סיפור never means to abbreviate, but to describe and explain completely.

לספר would mean simply to tell the story with all of its details. However, מספרים ביציאת מצרים means much more than just to tell the story - it means to explore, study and do research. In מעשה ברבי אליעזר, the most outstanding scholars in our history did not just repeat a story several times; they were מספרים ביציאת מצרים - they studied, explored and investigated, suggested, responded and exchanged ideas. It would make no sense to tell and retell a story, as the רבנים sat and were מספר all night - if this were the meaning, they would never have done so. מספרים ביציאת מצרים means to analyze and be intellectually and emotionally involved in the sippur.

This is why המרבה לספר ביציאת מצרים הרי זה משובח. It does not mean to re-narrate, but to explore in more depth and derive conclusions relevant to our era and us. If this is done, הרי זה משובח. This is מספרים ביציאת מצרים.

The Four Sons

The Torah speaks of four children: One is wise, one is wicked, one is simple and one does not know how to ask.

כַּנְגֵד אַרְבַּעַה בְּנֵי דְבָרָה תּוֹרָה . אֶחָד חָכָם , וְאֶחָד רָשָׁע , וְאֶחָד פֶּתִי , וְאֶחָד שֹׁאֵל .

In Parshas Va'Eschanan, when the Torah relates the question of the חכם - חכם כי ישאלך בנך מחר לאמר - חכם, "If your child asks you tomorrow, saying, 'What are the testimonies and the decrees and the ordinances that Hashem, our G-d, commanded you,'" the response of the Torah is "עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים... ויצונו ה' לעשות את..." - "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt... And Hashem commanded us to perform all these decrees, to fear Hashem, our G-d, for our good, all the days...." Yet, the Haggadah's response is "ואף אתה אמר לו כהלכות הפסח אין מפטירין" - "And you shall explain to him the laws of Pesach until 'one may not eat dessert after the final taste of the Korban Pesach.'" The Vilna Ga'on writes that הפסח is to be interpreted as הלכות הפסח, "all the laws of Pesach," until the last one, מפטירין....

The בעל ההגדה's interpretation of the Pasuk teaches us that for the חכם, the wise son, the קיום of the Mitzvah of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim, relating the story of the Exodus, is attained only by teaching him Halachos. From the Tosefta, it is evident that ברבי אליעזר refers to a

discussion of the הלכות הפסח that took place on the night of ניסן ט"ו. Discussing the Halachos of Pesach is a fulfillment of the obligation of סיפור יציאת מצרים.

From the Pasuk in Va'Eschanan, it would appear that the discussion of any Halachos would be a fulfillment of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim; apparently, *Hilchos Pesach* are preferable.

To study Gemara Pesachim on Pesach night is thus a קיום of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim. Our instruction to the חכם - לעשות את כל החקים האלה, לעשות את כל המצוה הזאת must be חכם - the question of the Chacham is 'what,' not 'why,' and we thus answer his question by relating the Halachos of Pesach. This is the mark of identity of the Chacham.

The fact that the Haggadah must be said לפניך מוצה ומרור מונחים לפניך, "when Matzah and Maror are before you," teaches us that the Mitzvos of the night of the Seder are the root of the Mitzvah of יציאת מצרים. Without any of the mitzvos, haggadah is only דרבנן. The Mitzvah of Matzah, the only מצוה דאורייתא that applies here, is the מחייב of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim.

Mitchilah

In the beginning our fathers served idols

מתחלה עובדי עבודה זרה היו אבותינו

In the seventh Perek of Rambam's laws of chametz and matzah, The Rambam writes: אפילו חכמים גדולים חייבים לספר ביציאת מצרים וכל המאריך בדברים שאירעו ושהיו הרי זה משובח - "Even great sages are required to tell of Yetzias Mitzrayim, and all who lengthen their discussion of what happened and took place is praiseworthy."

The Rambam was always extremely careful in his wording. At first glance, שאירעו ושהיו would appear to mean the exact same thing - "that happened." The Rambam was never prone to redundancy, and each word that he uses has meaning.

In Hebrew, if one describes a situation such as his falling from a tree, he uses the word שאירע. If he describes a circumstance as one in which he climbed up a tree, he uses the word שהיה. שאירע means that something happened to an object that was passive; the gravitational pull caused the person to fall from the tree - the force overwhelmed him. שהיה, however, denotes that the object was active, that he executed a conscious decision, that he utilized his energy to accomplish an objective that he had set for himself. By climbing up the tree, the man implemented his decision to climb it.

In Mitzrayim, was the Ge'ulah שאירע, where an outside force imposed itself upon B'nei Yisrael, or שהיה, that we acted as human beings endowed with freedom and consciously implemented our choice?

According to the Rambam, these both were present in Yetzias Mitzrayim. The question whether the Ge'ulah merely 'happened' to the Jew, or whether he was a participant who caused the Ge'ulah, is the debate that we find in the Gemara about the meaning of גנות and שבה. According to Shmuel, the גנות ושבה is עבדים היינו, the physical Ge'ulah, the שאירע - the Jew was merely pulled by force; he was enslaved against his will and redeemed without his participation.

According to Rav, who says that the *מתחילה עובדי עבודה זרה היו אבותינו* is *גנות ושבח* "from the beginning our ancestors were idol worshippers," that our redemption was from being idol worshippers to worshippers of Hashem, how did the Ge'ulah take place? Was Avraham forced to choose G-d? Spiritual redemption from idolatry, paganism and primitive religions and cults can happen only with *בחירה חפשית*, freedom of choice; it does not just "happen" to a Jew. Avraham realized that idolatry was wrong and saw the mistakes of paganism, so he chose G-d. No spirituality is decreed upon man by G-d unless man agrees to commit himself to the idea. *מתחילה* is not *שאיִרעו*; it is *שהיו*.

Certain events in Mitzrayim were *שאיִרעו*. Though Moshe told the Jews far in advance of the Ge'ulah, they still were not prepared. Matzah is the symbol of their unpreparedness, of *שאיִרעו*. However, *שהיו* was *קבלת התורה*; the Torah was not imposed upon the Jew involuntarily. There is no involuntary *גירוּת*; *Matan Torah* was only a possibility once there was *העם יחדו ויאמרו*. *שהיו* is *שהיו*. At *הר סיני*, the Jew was an active participant in events. This is *שהיו*.

V'Eten L'Eisav

And I gave Eisav Har Seir to inherit, and Yaakov and his sons descended to Mitzrayim.

וְאֶתֵּן לְעֵשָׂו אֶת הָר שֵׁעִיר לְרִשְׁתָּהּ אֹתוֹ, וַיֵּצֵק בְּ
וּבְנָיו יָרְדוּ מִצְרָיִם.

If in *Mitchilah*, we discuss our history, why do we read About Eisav? What place does Eisav's mention have in the *Haggadah*?

The pasuk reveals the different destinies of the two sons of Yitzchak. *ואתן ליצחק את יעקב ואת עשו* - Yaakov and Eisav both had the same mother and father, Yitzchak and Rivkah - their historical destinies should have been identical! But this was not so.

Hashem's promise was fulfilled immediately for Eisav; he had no difficulty in getting to Se'ir. *Beraishis 36:6* states: *ויקה עשו את נשיו ואת בניו ואת בנותיו ואת כל נפשות ביתו ואת מקנהו ואת כל קנינו אשר רכש בארץ כנען וילך אל ארץ מפני יעקב אחיו* - Eisav simply took the possessions that he acquired in Canaan and settled on Har Se'ir, without forty years in the Midbar, without the *מן*, and without the *Eigel*. There was no resistance to him! He took over the land due to Hashem's promise, which became a reality in a very short time.

Yaakov and his sons received that same promise, but its consummation was not immediate. Eventually, the promise would be fulfilled, but there would be a long wait. This is the uniqueness of our destiny, the destiny of the *זרע אברהם*; no nation in history could claim such a destiny. This is the source of patience as a character trait of a Jew; *על פי שיתמהמה עם כל זה אחכה לו בכל יום* - We eagerly await the redemption and fulfillment of Hashem's promise each day.

Tzay Ulmad

Go and learn what Laban the Aramean wanted to do to our father Jacob. Pharaoh had only issued a decree against the male children, but Laban wanted to uproot everyone

צֵא וְלָמַד מַה בִּקֵּשׁ לְבָן הָאֲרָמִי לַעֲשׂוֹת
לְיַעֲקֹב אֲבִינוֹ. שָׁפַרְעָה לֹא גָזַר אֱלֹהִים עַל
הַזְּכָרִים וְלְבָן בִּקֵּשׁ לַעֲקֹר אֶת הַכָּל.

We begin Tzay Ulmad with the discussion of Lavan's hate for Yaakov. Lavan had every reason to love Yaakov, yet he still didn't like him. In some ways, Lavan could have done worse to Yaakov than Pharaoh, had Hashem not stopped him. Love for one's children and grandchildren is a natural phenomena, and yet, Lavan's hate for Yaakov was so intense that he would have killed his whole family. From this, we understand that hate for the Jew and the stories Goyim concoct about him can be irrational and insane. As Lavan, the Goyim hate Yaakov's spiritual independence and the tenacity with which he stood up for his singularity.

ארמי אובד אבי - Yaakov or Avraham was an ארמי אובד, a straying (Aramean) person, and could never find a place to define as his home, as there was always someone out to destroy him. The Midrash and Targum explain the pasuk of ארמי אובד אבי differently - that the Aramean was Lavan, and he tried to destroy (לאבד) Yaakov.

ירד מצרימה אנוס על פי הדבור - Yaakov left Eretz Yisrael involuntarily, for had he left voluntarily, he would have lost his claim to Eretz Yisrael. The Avos would not have left Eretz Yisrael at any cost, and Yitzchak didn't at all; only because Yaakov left to Mitzrayim did the Galus come. Yosef had to be taken first, for, as when a calf is taken to the slaughterhouse, the cow follows; when Yosef was taken to Mitzrayim, Yaakov had to follow.

If so, then a question arises - Hashem only gave Yaakov permission to leave, but did not command him to leave! Why did Yaakov not stay, and leave Yosef and Binyamin in Mitzrayim?

Yaakov had to leave, for if he gave up Yosef and Binyamin, he would have lost the K'nesses Yisrael, for כנסת ישראל was based upon the twelve character traits that each Shevet represented. Thus, Yaakov was stuck - he had either to give up ארץ ישראל or give up כנסת ישראל, and thus, he left for Egypt.

ויגר שם - Yaakov journeyed temporarily to Egypt - as a transient, not an immigrant. The proof to this is that B'nei Yisrael retained their native language. An immigrant usually gives up the customs of his old country, especially when he comes to a newly developed land. כי אין מרעה - Yaakov told Pharaoh that he came only because of the temporary reason of famine. This proves that his intention was to remain only temporarily.

במתי מעט, במתי מעט ... ככוכבי השמים לרוב - which comes from the word מת, refers to people, in a derogatory sense - (as in עיר מתים, a city and its population, which is בקבר). Thus, they were במתי מעט, both מעט limited in number, and מתי weak, helpless and defenseless.

However, when B'nei Yisrael left Mitzrayim, the opposite was true; they were ככוכבי השמים לרב both ככוכבי השמים many and לרב mighty and powerful.

גוי and עם - as the Vilna Gaon in Mishlei notes, there is a basic difference between גוי and עם. עם is from the word עם, meaning 'together' - a nation or clan that cares about its members; if one suffers, all feel pain. גוי is from the word גויה, countenance - a nationality possessing individual and singular traits, having a unique style and way of life. The Jews became a unique nation.

B'nei Yisrael were many in numbers, i.e., quantitatively great. רב is not superfluous for it does not mean many, but mature. The passuk quoted by the Haggadah illustrates this: רבבה כצמח השדה - 'mature as the sprout of the field' The Jews in Mitzrayim did not believe in themselves. Even Moshe had doubts - אכן נודע הדבר - if Jews deserved to be better than slaves. Only Hashem knew that this nation with ugly habits had tremendous potential. On the exterior, it appeared that the nation of שני אנשים עברים נצים (the two fighting Hebrew men) were not ready to live as a separate nation. However, Hashem told Moshe: "I see another image, the image of a great nation - רבבה כצמח השדה - 'I caused you to thrive as the plant of the field, and you grew and developed and you attained great charm; you were beautiful of figure and your hair amply grown, but you were still naked and bare.'" B'nei Yisrael 'grew up,' and were ready for freedom, commitment and responsibility, but were unaware of their own potential. Chazal (Kiddushin 81b) derive that שתי שערות are necessary for גדלות from this Pasuk.

וירעו לנו has two interpretations, that the Egyptians conspired against us, and that the Egyptians made us appear wicked and accused us of disloyalty, as Haman did later. If "they have done evil to us" was the meaning of the Pasuk, it would have read וירעו לנו.

Rabban Gamliel

Rabban Gamliel used to say: Whoever does not discuss the following three things on Passover has not fulfilled his duty, namely: Pesach, Matzah and Maror.

רַבֵּן גַּמְלִיאֵל הָיָה אוֹמֵר: כָּל אֲשֶׁל אֵא אֲמַר שְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים אֵלוֹ בְּפֶסַח, לֹא יֵצֵא יְדֵי חוֹבָתוֹ, וְאֵלוֹ הֵן: פֶּסַח, מַצָּה, וּמְרֹר.

Why is the order of the three Mitzvos recorded as *Pesach, Matzah* and *Maror*? What is the significance of this sequence? Historically, it would be more accurate that the order be *Maror, Pesach*, and *Matzah*, as the bitter torment preceded the Korban Pesach, and both preceded the baking of the Matzos, which took place on the day of the 15th.

The sequence that the Haggadah provides is that of the importance of the Mitzvos. *Pesach* is the primary Halacha; the Mitzvah of *Matzah* is dependent upon that of *Korban Pesach* - על מצות - ומרורים יאכלוהו. However, there is a second Mitzvah of *Matzah*, that of *תאכלו מצות*, so it still does have a *דאורייתא*. *Maror* has no *דאורייתא* today, for it is completely dependent upon the *Korban Pesach*; *Maror* is only a *דרבנן* when there is no *Korban*, and it thus is last in the sequence. The Rambam writes that *אכילת מרור אינה מצוה מן התורה בפני עצמה אלא תלויה היא באכילת הפסח ... ומדברי סופרים לאכול המרור לבדו בליל זה אפילו אין שם קרבן פסח*. "The consumption of *Maror* is not a separate Mitzvah, but it is dependant upon the *Korban Pesach* ... and it is from the words of our sages to eat the *Maror* alone on this night, even when there is no *Korban Pesach*." This is the meaning of the sequence that we have in our Haggadah.

B'tzeis Yisrael Mimitzrayim

When Israel went out of Egypt, the House of Jacob from a people of a foreign language, Judah became His holy one, Israel His dominion.

בְּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם, בֵּית יִעֲקֹב בְּמַעַם לְעֹז, הָיְתָה יְהוּדָה לְקִדְשׁוֹ, יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמְּשֻׁלוֹתָיו.

It would seem appropriate in the Haggadah of Pesach to read the שירת משה, which took place at Yetzias Mitzrayim, rather than בצאת ישראל, a psalm by David that deals with the same topic. Why do we read the latter?

If we study Shmuel II, the answer is evident. We read (23a): "The word of... the sweet singer of Israel." Rashi comments: "The sweet singer of Israel. In the Mikdash, the Jews do not sing any ballads but his poems and songs." There is no Shirah that Chazal established for B'nei Yisrael to recite that is not David's.

This is the implication of the title of נעים זמירות ישראל. This is true to such an extent that according to the Rambam, if אז ישיר is to be said in פסוקי דזמרה, it must be said after ישתבה, not before, for in ברוך, the פתיחה of Pesukei D'Zimrah, we say "with the songs of David Your servant we shall praise You, Hashem our G-d." Pesukei D'Zimrah is dedicated exclusively to David's praises, and no one else, not even Moshe, can have his psalms included. Only after ישתבה, when the Pesukei D'Zimrah as a unit are closed, can we say Az Yashir. The Rambam also was very careful in זכרונות and מלכיות ושופרות - although the Gemara writes that there must be three Pesukim from the Torah, three from Navi and three from Ketuvim, the Rambam replaces the word "כתובים" with "ספר תהלים," for זכרונות ושופרות also have a שירה; since they are שירה, the Rambam writes that the Ketuvim must be from Sefer Tehillim, the דוד שירות. This is why we read שירת דוד on the night of the Seder rather than שירת משה - only David is the נעים זמירות ישראל.

V'Nodeh Lecha

And we shall thank You with a new song for our redemption and for the deliverance of our souls.

וְנוֹדְהָ לְךָ שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ עַל גְּאֻלְתָּנוּ וְעַל פְּדוּתוֹ
נַפְשֵׁינוּ

Why does the Haggadah appear to repeat the same idea, "for our redemption and for the deliverance of our souls?"

עבדות, slavery, is a dual institution. There is a juridic, legal slavery, what we call ממון. The institution of property is totalitarian, and both the inanimate object and the human being can become property, owned by someone else - כשורו וכחמורו. A slave is a man owned by another man.

The second institution of slavery is a metaphysical institution; the slave has a different personality than the free man. He is exempt from certain obligations because of his subservience and dependence.

Thus, the Haggadah writes על גאולתנו ועל פדות נפשינו - in the Messianic era, we will be redeemed from physical subservience as well as from the slave personality.

Keeping Your Kids Engaged at the Seder: The Talmud's Caffeine-Free Method

Rabbi Josh Flug

Children play a central role at the seder. Their questions, comments and insights are an integral part of the mitzvah of *sippur yetziat Mitzraim*, the mitzvah of recounting the exodus from Egypt. One of the challenges of conducting a *seder* is that the *seder* must be conducted at night. Due to the late hour, it is often difficult to keep younger children engaged. In this article, we will explore a passage of the Talmud that provides one method of engaging the children. We will see various interpretations of this Talmudic statement which not only provide explanation to the particular method, but provide a general approach to keeping children engaged at the seder.

The Talmud states:

It is stated in a Beraita: R. Eliezer says 'chotfin matzahs on the nights of Pesach for the children so that they don't fall asleep.'

Pesachim 109a

תניא רבי אליעזר אומר חוטפין מצות בלילי פסחים בשביל תינוקות שלא ישנו.
פסחים קט.



- What is the definition of *chotfin*?
- How does this method prevent the children from falling asleep?
- Are we attempting to keep the children awake until the end of the seder or only until a specific point in the seder?
- What is the ultimate purpose of keeping the children awake?

It should be noted that R. Eliezer's statement is sandwiched between two statements regarding R. Akiva's methods of keeping the children awake:

1) They said about R. Akiva that he would pass out to the children roasted grains and nuts so that they wouldn't sleep and would ask [questions]... 2) They said about R. Akiva that in all his days there never was a time when he stopped learning except for Erev Pesach and Erev Yom Kippur. On Erev Pesach for the children so that they don't sleep.

Pesachim 109a

אמרו עליו על רבי עקיבא שהיה מחלק קליות ואגוזין לתינוקות בערב פסח כדי שלא ישנו וישאלו ... אמרו עליו על רבי עקיבא מימיו לא אמר הגיע עת לעמוד בבית המדרש חוץ מערבי פסחים וערב יום הכפורים בערב פסח בשביל תינוקות כדי שלא ישנו.

פסחים קט.

Rashi's interpretation

Rashi provides two explanations to R. Eliezer's practice. The explanation that Rashi prefers is:

We eat quickly. This interpretation is the primary interpretation. One can prove this from the fact that R. Akiva's practice was brought together with this statement.

Rashi, ad loc., s.v. Chotfin

אוכלין מהר, וזה הלשון עיקר מדמייתי הא דר' עקיבא בהדה.
רש"י שם ד"ה חוטפין

According to Rashi the purpose of R' Eliezer's practice is to conduct the seder before the children become tired. *Chotfin* is translated as "quickly eating" (see *Ma'aseh Rokei'ach, Hilchot Chametz UMatzah* 7:3). It would seem that according to this interpretation, one should try to ensure that the children are awake for the entire seder. As such, it is possible that the ultimate motive for the children to stay awake is to give them the ability to fulfill all of the *mitzvot* of the seder.

Based on this interpretation, *Shulchan Aruch* states:

One should have his table set before the day starts in order to eat as soon as it gets dark. Even if he is learning, he should pause because there is a mitzvah to hurry and eat in order that the children don't fall asleep.

Shulchan Aruch 472:1

יהיה שלחנו ערוך מבעוד יום, כדי לאכול מיד כשתחשך ואף אם הוא בבית המדרש יקום מפני שמצוה למהר ולאכול בשביל התינוקות שלא ישנו.

שלחן ערוך או"ח תעב:א

The idea that it is preferable to conduct the seder expeditiously seems to contradict a well known passage in the Haggadah:

Those who spend additional time discussing the story of the Exodus are praiseworthy. There is a story about R. Eliezer, R. Yehoshua, R. Elazar B. Azariah, R. Akiva and R. Tarfon who were reclining in Bnei Brak and were discussing the Exodus from Egypt the entire night until their

וכל המרבה לספר ביציאת מצרים הרי זה משבח. מעשה ברבי אליעזר ורבי יהושע ורבי אלעזר בן עזריה ורבי עקיבא ורבי טרפון שהיו מסבין בבני ברק, והיו מספרים ביציאת מצרים כל אותו הלילה עד שבאו תלמידיהם

students came and told them 'Our rabbis, the time for the morning Sh'ma has arrived.'

Haggadah

ואמרו להם: רבותינו, הגיע זמן קריאת שמע של שחרית.

הגדה של פסח

? **Question:** According to this passage, it would seem that one should not conduct the seder expeditiously. If one rushes through the Haggadah, how is it possible to fulfill the praiseworthy act of spending additional time discussing the story of the Exodus?

This question is addressed by the Rishonim. Rashbam, in his *Commentary on the Haggadah*, comments on the story of the five sages who spent the entire night discussing the Exodus:

This took place after the meal, for if [one wants to say that] it was before the meal, it states 'chotfin matzahs on the nights of Pesach for the children so that they don't fall asleep.'

Rashbam, Commentary on the Haggadah

וזה היה אחר אכילה דאי קודם אכילתו הא אמרינן חוטפין מצה בלילי הפסח בשביל התינוקות שלא יישנו.

רשב"ם פירוש להגדה ד"ה מעשה ברבי אליעזר

Similarly, R. Ya'akov HaKohen of Narbonne explains:

But one who spends more time discussing the Exodus from Egypt after the meal is praiseworthy.

Kol Bo, 51

אך המספר ביציאת מצרים אחר אכילתו הרי זה משובח.

כל בו ס' נא

Rashbam and R. Ya'akov HaKohen are of the opinion that expediting the seder does not contradict the idea of spending extra time discussing the Exodus from Egypt. Those additional discussions should take place after the meal, after the children are sleeping.

A person is obligated to study the laws of Pesach and the Exodus from Egypt and to speak about the miracles and wonders that the Almighty performed for our forefathers until one is overcome by sleep.

Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 482:1

חייב אדם לעסוק בהלכות הפסח וביציאת מצרים ולספר בניסים ובנפלאות שעשה הקדוש ברוך הוא לאבותינו עד שתחטפנו שינה.

שלחן ערוך אורח חיים תפב:א

This comment of *Shulchan Aruch*, refers to what one should do after the seder. His insistence on expounding upon the Exodus after the seder is consistent with the idea that the laudable practice of spending more time expounding upon the Exodus need not take place during *Maggid* or any other part of the seder.

Mishna Berurah presents a different approach to resolve the apparent contradiction between the idea that one should conduct the seder expeditiously and the idea that one should spend extra time expounding upon the Exodus. He bases his opinion on the comments of R. Shimon Ben Tzemach.

It states in a Tosefta 'R. Eliezer says chotfin matzahs on the nights of Pesach for the children so that they don't fall asleep.' This means that we hurry to **feed them** so that they won't be sleepy and will ask [questions].

Ma'amar HaChametz no. 120

תניא בתוספתא ר' אליעזר אומר חוטפין מצה לתינוקות כדי שלא [יהיו] ישנים. פי' ממהרין להאכילם כדי שלא יהיו ישנים וישאלו.

מאמר החמץ אות קכ

Mishna Berurah notes the stress on feeding them (as opposed to the adults) and comments:

One cannot conclude that the purpose is to spend less time on the Haggadah, for is the meal the main part [of the night]? In *Yavin Sh'mua* of the *Rashbetz*, he writes 'we hurry to feed them,' referring to the children. According to this explanation everything works very well.

Mishna Berurah, Sha'ar HaTziun 472:2

דא"א לומר דהכוונה הוא שיקצרו בהגדה דאטו האכילה הוא העיקר וביבין שמועה להרשב"ץ כתב בזה הלשון וממהרים להאכילם כדי שלא יישנו ואתינוקות קאי ופירוש זה אתי שפיר טפי.

משנה ברורה, שער הציון תעב:ב

According to *Mishna Berurah*, one does not have to conduct the seder expeditiously. Rather one should make sure that the children eat earlier than the rest of the participants. This means that the children will experience a seder that is quick and engaging while the adults spend more time discussing the Haggadah. [In order to do this, one adult would have to focus on the children until they are finished with their seder.] *Mishna Berurah's* interpretation shows an early precedent for the concept of differentiated instruction, the concept that encourages teaching a group of people at different levels based on each one's needs.

There is an important practical difference between the interpretation of Rashbam and the interpretation of Rashbetz (as understood by *Mishna Berurah*). According to Rashbam, one should perform the seder quickly and expound upon the Exodus from Egypt after the seder. According to Rashbetz, one should expound upon the Exodus from Egypt during the actual seder while simultaneously providing the children with an abridged form of the seder.

Both interpretations offer varied solutions to ensure that the children are active participants in the seder. They both agree that the participation of the children is of primary importance. Regardless of which approach one follows, one should ensure that the conversations and discussions surrounding the seder are age-appropriate to the participating children.

Rambam's Interpretation

Rambam, in codifying R. Eliezer's statement, writes:

One must do something unique on this night so that the | וצריך לעשות שינוי בלילה הזה כדי שיראו

children will see and ask (saying) 'why is this night different from all other nights?' until he answers them (saying) 'this and this happened; this is how it was.' How does one make it unique? He passes to them roasted grains and nuts and we remove the table from them before they eat and we grab matzah, one person from the other's hand, and other similar activities.

Hilchot Chametz UMatzah 7:4

הבנים וישאלו ויאמרו מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות עד ששייב להם ויאמר להם כך וכך אירע וכך וכך היה וכיצד משנה מחלק להם קליות ואגוזים ועוקרים השולחן מלפניהם קודם שיאכלו וחותפין מצה זה מיד זה וכיוצא בדברים האלו הלכות חמץ ומצה ז:ד

Rambam implies that R. Eliezer's method is that the adults grab matzahs one from another in the presence of the children. The ultimate purpose of doing this is to elicit questions from the children, specifically, the question of why this night is different.

There are still a number of questions that must be addressed regarding Rambam's position:

- 1) R. Eliezer's statement clearly indicates that the purpose of grabbing the matzahs is so that the children remain awake. Why does Rambam omit the idea of keeping the children awake?
- 2) The childrens' questions are ostensibly an immediate response to witnessing people grabbing matzahs one from another. If so, how will grabbing matzahs contribute to keeping children awake? If the child does not anticipate that this is going to happen, he may fall asleep before the matzahs are grabbed. And, if he anticipates this ritual based on previous years, he is not necessarily going to question why this night is different.
- 3) The four questions of *Mah Nishtana* question the peculiarities of the night of the seder and those questions are answered by reciting the Haggadah. Yet, the questions that Rambam attempts to elicit are questions that seem to have no answers. When the child asks "Why are you grabbing matzahs from each other," what should the father answer?
- 4) The questions of *Mah Nishtana* seem to highlight all of the major differences between the night of the seder and other nights of the year. Why is there a need for the child to ask more questions than the questions already found in *Mah Nishtana*?

An insight of R. Yosef D. Soloveitchik provides an answer to these questions. R. Soloveitchik (cited in *Harerei Kedem* 2:86) notes an interesting comment of Rambam:

We pour the second cups and here the child asks. And the reader says 'Why is this night different from all other nights? On all other nights we dip ...'

Hilchot Chametz UMaztah 8:2

ומוזגין הכוס השני וכאן הבן שואל, ואומר הקורא מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות שבכל הלילות אין אנו מטבילין וכו'. רמב"ם הלכות חמץ ומצה ח:ב

? **Question:** Rambam states that the one reciting the Haggadah recites the questions of *Mah Nishtana*. If so, what does Rambam refer to when he states "And here the child asks"?

R. Soloveitchik suggests that the questions that the child is supposed to ask are not the questions of *Mah Nishtanah*. Rather, the child is supposed to ask questions that personally bother him. According to Rambam, the purpose of *Mah Nishtanah* is to fulfill a technical requirement that the Haggadah be recited in question and answer format.

Based on R. Soloveitchik's comments, one can now answer the questions that we presented. The goal of eliciting questions is not an end unto itself. Rather, it is a means of keeping the children engaged at the seder. When a child asks a question about something that interests him, he is now engaged in the conversation and will take interest in the answer. One method of piquing the child's interest is to do something out of the ordinary. When the child sees this extraordinary practice, he will question the practice and take interest in hearing the answer. Therefore, R. Eliezer recommends grabbing matzahs. His ultimate motive is to keep the children engaged which he phrases as "so that the children don't fall asleep." Rambam, in codifying R. Eliezer's ruling, explains how grabbing the matzah achieves the ultimate goal of engaging the children. Upon observing matzah-grabbing, the children will inquire and anticipate the answers to their questions. This approach established an early precedent for the concept of inquiry-based instruction, a concept that encourages children to inquire about the study material in order to engage them in the material.

Although the child never directly receives the answer to the question of why the matzahs are grabbed, the child receives the answer indirectly. Through the Haggadah, the child will learn that in addition to the *mitzvot* of *Korban Pesach*, matzah and *maror*, one of the *mitzvot* of the night of the seder is to speak about the Exodus from Egypt. Part of that *mitzvah* is to create a dialogue between the parent and the child. When the child realizes that he is an integral part of the seder, he will realize that there are certain rituals of the seder that exist simply to keep him involved.

Rashi, in his other interpretation of R. Eliezer's statement, presents an idea that is similar to Rambam's interpretation. Rashi states:

We raise the plate in order that the children ask [questions].

Rashi, *Pesachim* 109a, s.v. *Chotfin*

מגביהין את הקערה בשביל תינוקות שישאלו.
רש"י פסחים קט. ד"ה חוטפין

According to this interpretation the goal is to elicit questions. However, rather than grabbing the matzahs one from another, Rashi explains that the plate is lifted in order to arouse the curiosity of the children. One can explain that Rashi is also of the opinion that the ultimate purpose of eliciting questions is to keep the children interested. As such, all of the questions that we asked regarding Rambam's opinion can be applied to this interpretation and they can be answered with the same answers.

In most families, the child recites the four questions of *Mah Nishtanah*. Nevertheless, this does not negate the basic premise that one should try to elicit questions from the children. In fact, Rama rules:

When the son or the wife ask [their own questions], וכשהבן או האשה שואלת אין צריך לומר מה נשתנה אלא מתחיל עבדים.
there is no need to recite Mah Nishatana. Rather
one begins with Avadim Hayinu.

Rama, Orach Chaim 473:7

רמ"א או"ח תעג:ז

One can explain that Rama agrees that ideally, the child should ask his own questions. However, if he does not ask his own questions, we instruct him to ask the questions of *Mah Nishtanah*. Although, the "spoon-fed" questions are not as effective in keeping the child engaged, they will certainly have a positive effect on the child's interest in the seder. [Furthermore, the technical requirement of reciting the Haggadah in question and answer format must be fulfilled. Therefore, someone must ask questions at the beginning of *Maggid*.]

Stealing the *Afikoman*

R. Yaakov ben Yoseif Richer Bechofen notes that Rambam's interpretation of R. Eliezer's statement is the basis for the practice of many families that the children steal the *afikoman* (the piece of matzah set aside for the end of the meal). R. Ya'akov states:

The Rambam ... writes 'we grab matzah one from the other's hand.' It is possible that this is the basis for the practice that we allow the children in these areas to grab the afikoman so that they won't sleep and will be encouraged to ask [questions].

Chok Ya'akov 472:2

והרמב"ם פ"ז מהל' חמץ ומצה כ' חוטפין מצה זה מיד זה כדי שיראו התינוקות וישאלו עכ"ל ואפשר שמזה נתפשט המנהג שמניחין לתינוקות במדינות אלו לחטוף האפיקומן שע"ז לא ישנו ויתעוררו לשאול.

חק יעקב תעב:ב

It should be noted that according to this interpretation, the ultimate goal is to elicit questions. The means of doing so is getting the children involved in an activity that will keep them awake until the end of the seder. This is the opposite of our original presentation. In our original presentation of Rambam's opinion, the questions are a means of keeping the children interested. The purpose of the grabbing the matzah is to elicit those questions.

There are a number of difficulties in attributing the practice of stealing the *afikoman* to Rambam. Some of these difficulties address attributing this practice specifically to the aforementioned passage of Rambam. Others address the validity of the practice as a whole, implying that Rambam would not have endorsed such a practice. First, R. Yosef D. Soloveitchik (cited in *Harerei Kedem* 2:79), notes that if Rambam would have written that the matzahs are grabbed 'one from another' (*zeh mizeh*), one can attribute the source of stealing the *afikoman* to Rambam's opinion. However, Rambam formulates the practice as "one from another's **hand**" (*zeh miyad zeh*). R. Soloveitchik suggests that this practice is actually what we call *yachatzt*

(breaking the matzah). It is accomplished by one person grabbing the matzah from another person's hand until the matzah breaks.

Second, R. Nachman Kahana writes:

See Me'orei Ohr ... who writes that the practice of children stealing the afikoman from under the pillow is false and worthless and among the non-Jews there are rumors that the Jews teach their children to steal. Therefore, one who refrains from doing so is praiseworthy.

Orchot Chaim 473:19

וע' בספר מאורי אור ... שכ' דמה שגונבים התינוקת האפיקומן מתחת הכסת הוא בדוי והבל ובגוים נשמע שיהודים לומדים ילדיהם לגנוב ... ע"כ המונע משובח.

אחרות חיים תעג:יט

According to *Me'orei Ohr*, the practice of stealing the *afikoman* is not a valid practice because it creates the perception that the Jews teach their children to steal.

However, other authorities disagree with this premise. R. Chaim D. HaLevi, *Shana B'Shana* (5746 pp. 144-148) addresses the issue of whether this practice violates the prohibition against stealing. He concludes that this is not real theft and that everyone knows that it is a customary part of the seder. As such, there should be no concern about the perception of this practice. R. Moshe Y. Veingarten, *HaSeder Ha'Aruch* (Vol. I pg. 337) notes that one should specifically call it "grabbing the *afikoman*" rather than "stealing the *afikoman*."

Third, R. Chaim Soloveitchik (cited in *Halichot HaGrach* pg. 65) objects to the practice of stealing the *afikoman* based on technical problem that occurs when children handle the *afikoman*. *Shulchan Aruch* states:

One takes the middle matzah and breaks it into two pieces. One of the halves should be given to one of the other members to guard for the afikoman and it should be placed under the tablecloth.

Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 473:6

ויקח מצה האמצעית ויבצענה לשתים, ויתן חציה לאחד מהמסובין לשומרה לאפיקומן ונותנין אותה תחת המפה.

שלחן ערוך אורח חיים תעג:ו

R. Chaim explains that the reason to place the *afikoman* under the tablecloth is that the *afikoman* serves to commemorate the *Korban Pesach*. Just as the *Korban Pesach* requires *sh'mirah* (someone to watch over it) so too, the *afikoman* requires *sh'mira*. This cannot be accomplished if one allows the children to steal the *afikoman*.

R. Yosef D. Soloveitchik (R. Chaim's grandson, cited in *Harerei Kedem* 2:95) presents the same idea of guarding the *afikoman*. However, he does not negate the practice of the children stealing the *afikoman*. Rather, he notes that the children should be told to guard the *afikoman* and leave it covered (in a cloth).

Is the *Seder* Table a “Round-Table” or a Lectern?

Rabbi Daniel Stein

The Seder experience occupies a unique role in the spectrum of annual life-cycle events. It is the paradigm of Jewish home schooling, where a rich legacy, adorned with generations of customs, is passed on from parent to child. Indeed, children and all participants in the Seder are provoked into participating in this exchange, to ask, learn, and discuss the awesome tale of our Exodus from Egypt. The narrator of the story is of course the text of the *Haggadah*, whose reading constitutes the accepted method of discharging our obligation of *sippur yitzias Metzrayim*, the positive commandment to recount the story of the Exodus on the night of the fifteenth of Nissan. The text of the *Haggadah* has earned this distinction because it is saturated with overt lessons as well as a world of subterranean meaning. In this context, we will focus on the formal reading of the *Haggadah*; more specifically on who is eligible to be the raconteur for others present. The following are some of the questions we will deal with in addressing this subject.

- Can one fulfill the mitzvah of *sippur yitzias Metzrayim* through a silent reading of the *Haggadah* or must the words be expressed audibly?
- Must all participants at the Seder recite the *Haggadah* for themselves, or can they suffice with listening to others? And, are women and men interchangeable in this regard?
- Can an adult’s obligation to recite the *Haggadah* be fulfilled through listening to a child? Should a distinction be made between the Four Questions and other parts of the *Haggadah*?

I Think, I Can?

The mitzvah to recall the Exodus annually on the Seder night has its source in the following pasuk:

*And thou shalt relate to thy son on that day saying:
This is done because of that which the Lord did to me
when I came out of Egypt.*

Exodus. 13:8

והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה עשה
ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים

שמות יג:ח

This obligation is distinct from the daily obligation to recall the Exodus, recorded in the preceding pasuk:

and Moshe told the people remember the day that you exited Egypt.

Exodus 13, 3

ויאמר משה אל העם זכור את היום הזה אשר יצאתם ממצרים

שמות י"ג:ג

This second mitzvah mandates not only mentioning the Exodus during daytime, but at night as well, as elaborated in the Mishnah (cited by the Haggadah):

We mention the Exodus from Egypt at night. Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah said, "I am nearly seventy years old and I did not merit mentioning the Exodus from Egypt at night until Ben Zomah derived from the verse, 'that you shall remember the day you went out from Egypt all the days of your life,' the days of your life implies the days, all the days of your life includes the nights as well."

Mishnah Berachos 12b

מזכירין יציאת מצרים בלילות, אמר רבי אלעזר בן עזריה הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה, ולא זכיתי שתאמר יציאת מצרים בלילות עד שדרשה בן זומא, שנאמר למען תזכור את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חיך, ימי חיך הימים, כל ימי חיך הלילות.

משנה ברכות יב:

Recent commentaries have discussed at length the relationship between these two mitvos. If one is obligated to recall the Exodus from Egypt every night, what is unique about the independent mitzvah on the night of the Seder? Many suggestions have been made as to the possible differences between these two mitzvos. Rabbi Yosef Teomim of Levov (d. 1792), the author of *Pri Megadim*, suggests that the nightly mitzvah of remembering the Exodus can be fulfilled through concentrated thought alone, whereas the local mitzvah to remember the Exodus on the Seder night can only be fulfilled through speech³. He writes the following:

One can ask, since there is a positive commandment to mention the Exodus from Egypt everyday, during the day and at night etc., why was it necessary to state, "and thou shalt relate to thy son on that day saying"? One can suggest that the daily mitzvah to mention the Exodus can be fulfilled through thought (mentioning in the heart), but on the night of Pesach one must mention the Exodus through speech, as the pasuk says, "and thou shalt

יש להקשות שכיון שמצות עשה להזכיר יציאת מצרים בכל יום, ביום ובלילה וכו' למה הוצרך לכתוב והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר, והרי בכל יום הוא מחוייב להזכיר יציאת מצרים ביום ובלילה. וי"ל דס"ל להרמב"ם שהפסוק למען תזכור את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חיך דמיירי בשאר ימות השנה, די בזכירה בלב, אבל בליל פסח צריך שיגיד בפה ויוציא בשפתיו כדכתיב והגדת

³ The assertion of the *Pri Megadim* is indeed found in earlier sources. The *Besomim Rosh* (Sec. 173), a work of dubious authorship, states based on the Gemara in *Megillah* (18a), that the word "remembering" (used by the Torah when describing the daily obligation to remember the Exodus) implies a remembering in the heart, not through speech. It would therefore follow that the daily obligation to remember the Exodus from Egypt can be fulfilled through thought. However when describing the obligation on Pesach night the Torah uses the language, "and you shall tell," clearly implying a verbal communication.

relate to thy son”, and the plain meaning of relating is through speech.

Introduction to the Laws of Shema

לבנך, וסתם הגדה היא בפה.
פתיחה להל' קריאת שמע אות ד'

Rabbi Yehudah Leib Gunzburg (d. 1785), the author of *Shaagas Aryeh*, disagrees with the basic premise of the *Pri Megadim* that the daily mitzvah of remembering the Exodus from Egypt can be fulfilled through thought. He claims that the daily remembering must also be expressed verbally⁴. The *Shaagas Aryeh*'s position has forced many commentaries to propose other distinctions between these two mitzvos of recalling the Exodus. Minimally, however, all agree that at the Seder one must speak the words of the *Haggadah*, and a silent reading will not suffice.

Lend Me Your Ears

Regarding mitzvos that require speech, halachah articulates a principle called “*shome'a ke'oneh*”, “listeners are like speakers”. If one hears someone else enunciate a blessing or prayer, the listener has vicariously fulfilled his own obligation of reciting that blessing or prayer. This rule is derived by the Gemara in the following way:

It has also been stated, Rav Chanan bar Rava said, it is a mitzvah to respond with the beginning of the chapters, the reader says: “Please, Hashem bring salvation, now!” And the people respond: Please, Hashem bring salvation, now!” etc. The reader says: “Blessed is he who comes,” and the people respond: “in the name of Hashem.” From here [i.e. from the fact that the listeners need not repeat “blessed is he who comes,”] it can be inferred that listening is like responding. They asked Rav Chiya bar Abba: If one listened to someone (recite a text that he is obligated to recite himself), but did not respond after hearing it, what is the law? (Has he discharged his obligation or not?) He answered them ... One who listened and did not respond has discharged his obligation.

Sukkah 38b

אתמר נמי אמר רב חנן בר רבא מצוה לענות ראשי פרקים הוא אומר אנא ה' הושיעה נא והן אומרים אנא ה' הושיעה נא וכו'; הוא אומר ברוך הבא והן אומרים בשם ה'; מכאן לשומע כעונה. בעו מיניה מרבי חייא בר אבא שמע ולא ענה מהו, אמר להו חכימיא וספריא ורישי עמא ודרשיא אמרו שמע ולא ענה יצא.

סוכה לה:

Shome'a ke'oneh has limitations as well. For example, Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveichik (d. 1892), the author of *Beis Ha'leivi*, claims that *shome'a ke'oneh* does not apply to the priests' mitzvah to bless the nation (*birkas kohanim*); each priest must enunciate the blessing himself⁵. The *Beis Ha'leivi*'s great-grandson, Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (d. 1993), the Rav z"l, explained his opposition as stemming from a limitation of *shome'a ke'oneh*. The halachah requires that the priestly blessings be said by in a loud voice, audible to both parties. This implies that *birkas kohanim* entails establishing a relationship between the “blessed” and the “blesser.” Even

⁴ This is echoed by Rabbi Samuel Strashun, the author of the *Rashash* (glosses on the Gemara), in his commentary to the aforementioned mishnah in Berachos, where he reads this halachah into the language of the mishnah itself.

⁵ *Beis Haleivi*, Commentary on the Torah, (Topics in *Hilchos Chanukah*).

though, *shome'a ke'oneh* can fulfill a formal requirement of speech which is incumbent on the listener, it can not create a connection between silent parties⁶.

The mitzvah of *sippur yitzias Metzrayim*, like *birkas kohanim*, might also entail forging a connection between two parties. The mitzvah's source is a verse describing an exchange between father and son. The Rambam quotes the following statement from Chazal:

This is the language of the Mechilta: the implication of the verse, "when your son shall ask you" is that only if one is asked must he relate the story of the Exodus, but if he is not asked he does not have to. Hence the verse, "and thou shalt relate to thy son on that day saying", even though you have not been asked. Perhaps this should be limited to one who has a son, but if he is alone or with another (who is not his son) how do we know he is still obligated to retell the story? This is to be derived from the verse "and Moshe told the people remember the day that you exited Egypt" (Ex. 13, 3), this teaches us that one is obligated to mention the story, just as we learned, and you shall remember the Shabbos to make it holy.

**Rambam, Sefer Ha'mitzvos
Positive Commandment 157**

ולשון מכילתא [דרשב"י במדרש הגדול] מכלל שנאמר כי ישאלך בנך יכול אם ישאלך אתה מגיד לו ואם לאו אין אתה מגיד לו תלמוד לומר והגדת לבנך אע"פ שאינו שואלך, אין לי אלא בזמן שיש לו בן בינו לבין עצמו בינו לבין אחרים מניין תלמוד לומר ויאמר משה אל העם זכור את היום הזה אשר יצאתם ממצרים. כלומר שהוא צוה לזכרו כמו אמרו זכור את יום השבת לקדשו.

רמב"ם ספר המצות מ"ע קנ"ז

The original source for *sippur yitzias Metzrayim* implies that if one is alone, lacking an audience, there is no obligation to tell the story of the Exodus. However, the *Mechilta* cites an additional verse obligating us to recall the story even in solitude.

Rabbi Yosef Babad (d. 1874), the author of *Minchas Chinuch*, suggests an original interpretation of the *Mechilta*⁷. He suggests that the *Mechilta*, even at its conclusion, did not redefine the mitzvah of *sippur yetziat mitzrayim* to include those who are alone, but rather informed us that such an act would be subsumed within a different mitzvah. In other words, the unique mitzvah to retell the story of the Exodus on Pesach night is in fact limited to one who has an audience. However, even without an audience, one can fulfill (on the Seder night) the mitzvah applicable every night of the year to mention the Exodus (which has no such stipulation).

Hence, the *sippur yitzias Metzrayim* of Pesach night is not a requirement of speech alone, but a requirement to recall the Exodus via a dialogue between "father" and "son". It stands to reason as

⁶ Rabbi Herschel Schachter, *Be'ikvei Ha'tzon* (pg. 95). The same explanation of the opinion of the *Beis Ha'leivi* is found in other sources as well, see Rabbi Aryeh Peromchik, *Emek Berachah* (pg. 17), *Haggadah Shel Pesach Mi'beis Ha'leivi* (pg.107), and Rabbi Yaakov Kanievsky, *Kehillos Yaakov* (*Berachos* Sec. 11 Part 5). Rabbi Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz, *Chazon Ish* (*Orach Chaim* Sec. 29 Part 3) and Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin, *Meshiv Davar* (Vol. 1 Sec 47) disagree with the basic premise of the *Beis Ha'leivi*, and they contend that *shome'ah ke'oneh* is operant within the mitzvah of *Birkas Kohanim* as well. Indeed Rabbi Betzalel of Vilna, *Reishis Bikkurim* (Sec. 4) records that the custom in Triest, Italy was that one priest would recite the blessing on behalf of all of the kohanim present.

⁷ *Minchas Chinuch* (Mitzvah 21 Part 1).

well, that this obligation can not be accomplished through *shome'a ke'oneh*. *Shome'a ke'oneh* can only discharge personal obligations but can not create a conversation.

This argument led Rabbi Yishmael ben Avraham Yitzchok Hakohen (d. 1811), the author of *Shevach Pesach*, to assert that the Haggadah must be recited independently by all those obligated in the mitzvah of *sippur yitzias Metzrayim*⁸. After all, everyone is obligated to create a dialogue, and creating a dialogue requires speech.

Even though his argument is compelling, most poskim do not accept the position of the *Shevach Pesach*. They base their counterargument on the following passage of Gemara:

Rav Acha bar Yaakov said: A blind person is exempt from reciting the Haggadah for it is written here regarding the mitzvah of recounting the Exodus, "(and you shall tell your son on that day saying) it is because of this (that Hashem acted on my behalf when I left Egypt)." And it is written there (in the passage of the rebellious son, ie. the ben sorer u'moreh) "this son of ours is wayward." Just as there the term "this" excludes blind [parents], here, too, (regarding the mitzvah of relating the Exodus) the term "this" excludes the blind. Is it so that the blind are exempt from recounting the Exodus? But Mereimar said, "I once asked the Rabbis of Rav Yosef's academy, 'who recited the Haggadah in Rav Yosef's house?' They replied 'Rav Yosef.' I also asked, 'who recited the Haggadah at Rav Sheishess' house?' They said 'Rav Sheishess.'" ... Is this analogy [between recounting the Exodus and the rebellious son] correct?! It is understandable that there (in the latter passage we expound "this" to exclude the blind, for since the Torah could have written "He" is our son, but wrote instead "this" is our son, we derive that the word "this" excludes the blind. But here, if not "because of this" what else is there to write? Rather it is to teach that one should tell his son that it is because of "this" - the matzoh and the maror, that this verse comes.

Pesachim 116b

אמר רב אחא בר יעקב סומא פטור מלומר הגדה, כתיב הכא בעבור זה וכתיב התם בננו זה, מה להלן פרט לסומא אף כאן פרט לסומין, איני, והאמר מרימר שאלתינהו לרבנן דבי רב יוסף מאן דאמר אגדתא בי רב יוסף, אמרו רב יוסף, מאן דאמר אגדתא בי רב ששת, אמרו רב ששת וכו', בשלמא התם מדהוה ליה למיכתב בננו הוא וכתיב בננו זה, שמע מינה פרט לסומין הוא דאתא, אבל הכא אי לאו בעבור זה מאי לכתוב, אלא בעבור מצה ומרור הוא דאתא.

גמ' פסחים קטז:

The Gemara states that Rav Yosef and Rav Sheishess read the Haggadah for all those present at their table. The Gemara seeks to prove from this that the blind are obligated in the mitzvah of *sippur yitzias Metzrayim*. Rav Yosef and Rav Sheishess were both blind, and if the blind are not obligated in the mitzvah of *sippur yitzias Metzrayim* how could their reading satisfy the obligation of those who are obligated.

Clearly, the Gemara assumes that one reader can fulfill the obligation of many listeners, and that the listeners need not recite the entire haggadah themselves. Indeed, it is recorded that the Vilna

⁸ *Shevach Pesach*, Laws of *Maggid*, Part 2.

Gaon, Rabbi Eliyahu of Vilna (d. 1797) had the practice of reading the Haggadah for all those present at his table, who themselves remained silent⁹.

Rabbi Zvi Pesach Frank (d. 1960) writes that even though the logic of the *Shevach Pesach* was convincing, based on the contradictory information, we must conclude that *shome'a ke'oneh* applies to reading the Haggadah. *Sippur yitzias Metzrayim* was indeed redefined by the *Mechilta*, rather than supplemented as the *Shevach Pesach* suggested. While the original verse alone implies that the mitzvah of *sippur yitziat Metzrayim* must be executed in the form of a conversation, the additional verse compels the *Mechilta* to conclude that it applies even in isolation. Therefore it should be included within the genre of mitzvos where *shome'a ke'oneh* is effective¹⁰.

Ladies and Gentlemen

We have now addressed the first two questions with which we began. In the opinion of most poskim the Haggadah must be read aloud, but one can satisfy his or her obligation by listening to others. Let us turn to the third question: Can a man satisfy his obligation to read the Haggadah by listening to a woman?

In order to answer this question, we must clarify halakhah's position on women performing mitzvos on men's behalf. The Gemara says:

Ravina said to Rava: Concerning women's recitation of Bircas Ha'mazon, is this required by Biblical law or Rabbinic law? What practical difference does it make? It is relevant as to whether a woman who has eaten together with men may discharge the public of their obligation by reciting Bircas Ha'mazon on their behalf. If you say a woman's obligation to recite Bircas Ha'mazon is Biblical, then she may indeed recite it on behalf of others, for here, a person Biblically obligated is coming and discharging the obligation of others whose obligation is likewise Biblical. However, if you say her obligation to recite Bircas Ha'mazon is Rabbinic, than her status is in effect that of one who is not obligated in this matter, and anyone who is not himself obligated to do a certain thing cannot discharge the public of their obligation.

Berachos 20b

אמר ליה רבינא לרבא, נשים
בברכת המזון דאורייתא או
דרבנן, למאי נפקא מינה,
לאפוקי רבים ידי חובתן, אי
אמרת דאורייתא, אתי
דאורייתא ומפיק דאורייתא,
ואי אמרת דרבנן, הוי שאינו
מחוייב בדבר, וכל שאינו
מחוייב בדבר אינו מוציא את
הרבים ידי חובתן.

גמ' ברכות כ:

The Gemara here lays down a substantial constraint to the application of *shome'a ke'oneh* - the reader must be equally obligated, or more obligated than the listener, in the recitation of the specific passage. The logic behind this principle seems to be that if the reader has a less intense obligation than the listener, then the reader's recitation is insignificant in reference to the listener. In exploring whether a man can fulfill his obligation to recite the Haggadah by listening to the reading of a woman, we must discern the degree to which women are, or are not, obligated to read the Haggadah.

⁹ *Maaseh Rav* (Sec. 187).

¹⁰ *Har Tzvi* (*Orach Chaim* Vol. 1 Sec. 57).

Ostensibly women should be exempt from the mitzvah of *sippur yitzias Metzrayim*, because it is relevant only on the Seder night. We are well acquainted with the universal rule that women are exempt from all time-bound positive mitzvos¹¹. However, there are two mitigating rationales to include women in the mitzvah of *sippur yitzias Metzrayim*.

A] The Gemara states the following regarding the nature of women's obligation to drink the Four Cups of wine at the Seder:

Rebbi Yehoshua ben Levi stated: Women are obligated in the drinking of these four cups, because "af hein ha'yu be'oso ha'neis," they too were included in the miracle.

Pesachim 108a

ואמר רבי יהושע בן לוי נשים
הייבות בארבעה כוסות הללו
שאף הן היו באותו הנס.
פסחים קח.

Since women participated in the miracles surrounding Pesach, they too are obligated in the mitzvos which commemorate those miracles. We could extrapolate from this that women should be obligated in all the particulars of the holiday of Pesach and not just the mitzvah of the Four Cups.

However, *Tosfos* notes that "*af hein ha'yu be'oso ha'neis*" cannot be all encompassing, since we find instances where this rule does not apply¹². This leads *Tosfos* to postulate that this rule is only pertinent to rabbinically binding mitzvos, such as the Four Cups of wine, but not biblically binding mitzvos, such as the mitzvah of *sippur yitzias Metzrayim*¹³. Other *Tosfos* suggest that "*af hein hayu be'oso ha'neis*" only serves to obligate women on a Rabbinic level, but not on a Biblical level¹⁴. Hence, women are obligated in the mitzvah of *sippur yitzias Metzrayim*, albeit only on a Rabbinic level.

The *Minchas Chinuch* writes that these positions of *Tosfos* both preclude women from reading the Haggadah for men, since their obligation is of a lesser intensity¹⁵.

Yet other *Tosfos* do not subscribe to these limitations of *af hein hayu be'oso ha'neis*¹⁶. Similarly, Rabbi Chaim Yosef David Azulai (d. 1806), the *Chida*, writes in his *Birkei Yosef* that women are Biblically obligated in *sippur yitzias Metzrayim*, because they too were involved in the miracle. Hence the force of a woman's obligation would correspond to that of a man, and she might indeed be able to read the Haggadah for him¹⁷.

¹¹ Mishnah *Kiddushin* 29a. The *Sefer Ha'chinuch* (mitzvah 21) writes that women are Biblically obligated to recite the Haggadah to the same extent as men. The *Minchas Chinuch* (ad loc. part 10) immediately questions this ruling in light of the fact that the mitzvah of *sippur yitzias Metzrayim* is a time-bound mitzvah. The *Minchas Chinuch* then points out that this is not merely a theoretical debate; since whether or not a man can satisfy his obligation by listening to the reading of a woman should depend on this issue.

¹²For example, the Gemara in *Sukkah* 28a states that women are exempt from the mitzvah of sitting in the Sukkah even though they participated in the miracles surrounding Sukkos just like men. Additionally, the Gemara in *Pesachim* 43b requires an independent source to Biblically obligate women in the mitzvah of eating matzoh on Pesach, which implies that *af hein hayu be'oso ha'neis* alone would not have been sufficient.

¹³ *Tosfos* to *Pesachim* 108b, sv. *Hayu*.

¹⁴ *Tosfos* to *Megilah* 4a, sv. *She'af*.

¹⁵ *Minchas Chinuch* ad loc.

¹⁶ *Tosfos* to *Megilah* ad loc.

¹⁷ *Birkei Yosef* (*Orach Chaim* sec. 473 part 15).

Nonetheless, it is entirely unclear that this last opinion is authoritative. Moreover, any time one's obligation in a mitzvah is established solely because of *af hein hayu be'oso ha'neis*, his relationship with those who are genuinely obligated is tenuous. Perhaps *af hein hayu be'oso ha'neis* cannot substitute for a fundamental obligation. It might only serve as an umbrella obligation, forcing one to act out of gratitude, but retaining no affiliation with the primary mitzvah per se¹⁸. This argument would preclude a woman from reading the Haggadah for a man by means of *shome'a ke'oneh* even if we accept the latter opinion of *Tosfos*.

B] Another avenue proposed to obligate women Biblically in the mitzvah of *sippur yitzias Metzrayim*, has been through the association of this mitzvah with other mitzvos. The Gemara states unequivocally that women are obligated in the mitzvah of eating matzoh (even though it is a time-bound mitzvah), because it is connected with the prohibition to eat *chametz*:

For R' Elazer said: Women are obligated in the eating of matzoh by Biblical law, for it is stated: You shall not eat chametz with it etc. From this juxtaposition, we learn that whoever is subject to the prohibition, "do not eat chametz" is likewise subject to the commandment of eating matzoh. Thus these women too, since they are subject to the prohibition "do not eat chametz," they are also subject to the commandment to "arise and eat matzoh.

Pesachim 43b

דאמר רבי אליעזר נשים חייבות באכילת מצה דבר תורה, שנאמר לא תאכל עליו חמץ וגו' כל שישנו בבל תאכל חמץ ישנו באכילת מצה, והני נשי נמי הואיל וישנן בבל תאכל חמץ ישנן בקום אכול מצה.

פסחים מג:

The Gemara earlier explains that this linkage between the prohibition of eating chametz and the mitzvah of eating matzoh is by virtue of the fact that they are juxtaposed in the same verse. Working off that paradigm, Rabbi Betzalel Ha'kohen of Vilna (d. 1878), in his *Mar'e Kohen*, writes that a similar portal should exist between the mitzvah of eating matzoh and the mitzvah of *sippur yitzias Metzrayim*¹⁹. These two mitzvos are enumerated in the same verse in the Torah. He therefore argues that since women are Biblically included in matzoh, they should be Biblically included as well in *sippur yitzias Metzrayim*.

From a different perspective, but in a similar vein, Rabbi Moshe Schick (d. 1879) suggests that women should be Biblically obligated to recite the Haggadah based on the following passage in the Gemara:²⁰

Shmuel said: The bread of affliction (oh'ni), the bread which has much said about it (oh'nim).

Pesachim 115b

אמר שמואל, לחם עני, לחם שעונין עליו דברים.

פסחים קטו :

¹⁸ Rabbi Yehudah Leib Gunzburg, *Turei Even* to *Megilah* 4a, and Rabbi Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik, *Chiddushei Ha'griz* to *Erchin* 3a.

¹⁹ *Mar'e Kohen* to *Pesachim* 116b. This same suggestion was subsequently made by Rabbi Reuven Katz (d. 1963), *Degel Reuven*, (vol. 1 sec 6.). See also Rabbi Yechiel Epstein, *Aruch Ha'shulchan* (sec. 472 part 15) for a similar idea.

²⁰ *Maharam Schick*, Commentary to the Enumeration of Mitzvos, (Mitzvah 21 part 2).

The Gemara mandates that the matzoh be “matzoh which much has been said regarding it”. The discussion which must take place in the presence of the matzoh is that of the Haggadah. It therefore stands to reason, that since women are obligated to eat matzoh, presumably they must eat matzoh in the optimal form. In order to properly fulfill the mitzvah of eating matzoh, the Haggadah must be recited in the presence of the matzoh. Women would then be included in the recitation of the Haggadah by way of the mitzvah of matzoh²¹.

[It should be noted, that *Tosfos* themselves endorse this line of reasoning. *Tosfos* write that since women are obligated to drink the Four Cups of wine, and one of those cups must coincide with the conclusion of the Haggadah reading, women would be obligated to read the Haggadah by virtue of their obligation to drink Four Cups of wine. However, the implication of *Tosfos* is that women are only obligated on a Rabbinic level to read the Haggadah, since the Four Cups are only Rabbinic in origin.]²².

We have mentioned two possible rationales which would obligate women on a Biblical level in the recitation of the Haggadah, thereby allowing them to read it for a man through *shome'a ke'oneh*. Practically, the *Shulchan Aruch* states that women are indeed obligated to read the Haggadah²³, but there is no clarification as to the level of that obligation. Therefore, since the matter is unclear, most poskim are reluctant to allow a man to fulfill his obligation to read the Haggadah by listening to a woman. However, if one did so, there is sufficient room to argue that he did not err²⁴.

Question and Answer Format

We now turn to our final question. Can an adult's obligation to recite the Haggadah be fulfilled through listening to a child? Should a distinction be made between the Four Questions and other parts of the Haggadah?

Based on what we have learned, it should be apparent that neither a man nor a woman can fulfill their obligation of reading the Haggadah by listening to a child, whose obligation is only Rabbinic. Nonetheless, the *Mechilta* indicated that the ideal way of reciting the Haggadah is to have children ask questions, and adults provide the answers. Indeed, the *Mechilta* suggested that in the absence of children, the Haggadah need not be recited. Only after the onset of a secondary verse did the *Mechilta* revise its position to include even two adults having a Seder together. The original statement of the *Mechilta* felt that a child's questioning is indispensable even in terms of an adult's obligation to recite the Haggadah.

²¹ From this approach it would emerge that women are not be obligated in the mitzvah of reciting the Haggadah for its own sake, but for the utilitarian purpose of eating the matzoh. This argument then would be very narrow in its application and would probably not be relevant to our discussion of a woman reading the Haggadah for a man, as opposed the suggestion of Rabbi Betzalel Ha'kohen of Vilna which is relevant.

²² *Tosfos* to *Sukkah* 38a, sv. *Mi*. See also Rabbi Avraham Danzig, *Chayei Adam* (sec. 130 part 14) who explains a woman's obligation to read the Haggadah in a similar fashion.

²³ The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* sec. 472 part 14) as explained by the *Mishna Berurah* (part 45).

²⁴ Rabbi Ovadyah Yosef, *Chazon Ovadyah* (Pesach, pg. 52). See also *Teshuvos Chazon Ovadyah* (vol. 1 sec. 20).

It would be fair to assume that this would still be valid even within the concluding statements of the *Mechilta*. The *Mechilta* in its revision sought only to broaden the mitzvah further, not to retract its original breadth. This is borne out by the Gemara:

Why do we remove the table? It was said in the house of Rabbi Yannai, so that the children will notice and ask. Abaya was once sitting in the presence of Rabba. He observed that they were removing the table from in front of Rabba. Abaya asked: "But we have not yet eaten?" Rabba responded: "You have exempted us from reciting the Four Questions."

Pesachim 115b

למה עוקרין את השולחן, אמרי דבי רבי ינאי כדי שיכירו תינוקות וישאלו, אביי הוה יתיב קמיה דרבה, חזא דקא מדלי תכא מקמיה, אמר להו עדיין לא קא אכלינן וכו', אמר ליה רבה פטרתן מלומר מה נשתנה.

פסחים קטו :

The *Rashbam* and *Tosfos* explain that the removal of the table will eventually lead children to ask the Four Questions. Once the children have asked the Four Questions, the adults need not repeat them. This is codified by the *Rema*, Rabbi Moshe Isserles (d. 1530)²⁵.

Is this because *shome'a ke'oneh* can be applied to the reading of a child who is not Biblically obligated to read the Haggadah?

It would appear that this has nothing to do with *shome'a ke'oneh*, because if that were true, it should not be limited to the Four Questions specifically. Rather an adult satisfies his obligation to read the Four Questions by listening to a child since the Four Questions are not an essential part of the Haggadah text as per the mitzvah of *sippur yitzias Metzrayim*. They serve merely to set the tone. As mentioned previously the Seder is meant to be conducted in question and answer format; the Four Questions are meant only to create that setting, but not to discharge a formal obligation²⁶. Presumably, even though *shome'a ke'oneh* can not be applied to the reading of a child, his recitation can serve to set the tone of question and answer.

In light of this, there is a puzzling statement in the *Rambam*:

After that, the table is removed from the reader of the Haggadah alone, and the second cup of wine is mixed, and here the son asks, and the reader recites the Four Questions.

The Laws of Chametz and Matzoh 8:3

ואחר כך עוקרין השולחן מלפני קורא ההגדה לבדו, ומזגין הכוס השני וכאן הבן שואל, ואומר הקורא מה נשתנה. הלכות חמץ ומצה פ"ח ה"ב

²⁵ *Rema* (*Orach Chaim* 473:7) as explained by the *Mishna Berurah* (69).

²⁶ This is highlighted by a minority opinion in the *rishonim* who disagree with *Tosfos* and the *Rashbam*, and assume based on this passage in the Gemara as well as others, that as long as the child asks any question the Seder can proceed, even if the Four Questions themselves were never uttered by anyone present at the Seder. This is stated explicitly by the *Maharil*, Rabbi Yaakov Moellin (d. 1427) who is in fact the source cited by the *Rema* (ad loc.) mentioned before. This opinion can also be found in a much earlier source, the *Rokeach*, Rabbi Eleazar ben Yehudah of Worms (d. 1238) Sec. 283, as well as in a plethora of later commentaries collected by Rabbi Ovadyah Yosef, *Teshuvos Chazon Ovadyah* (Vol. 1 Sec. 22).

A literal reading of the Rambam suggests that the child is not supposed to ask the Four Questions at all. The child was only intended to ask what troubles him particularly, and then the adults should recite the Four Questions. The medieval commentary by R. Manoach of Narbonne writes that the Rambam rejects the aforementioned passage of Gemara which gives significance to the child's presentation of the Four Questions.

Based on this comment of the Rambam, Rabbi Chaim Soloveichik (d. 1918) instructed all those at his Seder to repeat the Four Questions after they were recited by the child²⁷. In understanding this opinion we are forced to conclude that the Rambam believes: either that the text of the Four Questions is itself a primary component of the Haggadah text (and not meant merely to set the tone); or that the reading of a child is insufficient even to create the question and answer format²⁸.

The Final Act

We have demonstrated that the Haggadah must be recited verbally. Under certain circumstances one can suffice by listening to others, but only through the principle of *shome'a ke'oneh*. What is the significance of this halachah?

The Mishnah (cited by the Haggadah) presents us with a daunting charge. In every generation we are obligated to view ourselves as if we had just left Egypt²⁹. This is an overwhelming task; how are we supposed to feel like participants in a situation we never experienced?

The answer is that through the verbal recitation of the Haggadah, we are emphasizing to ourselves the immediate nature of the story. A historical lesson is read and recorded mentally, a recent story is on the tip of our tongues ready to be recounted.

We mentioned that the story of the Exodus should be told in question and answer format, to the extent that if one is alone he must ask himself questions. Rabbi Noach Isaac Oelbaum explains that this is linked to this theme as well³⁰. A story which is unfolding and developing is generally clarified through questions and answers. Even though we are sitting alone, asking the same questions as last year, we must conduct ourselves as though the story, with all its details and nuances, is new and fresh.

The Gemara has a tradition that the final redemption will take place in the month of Nissan, corresponding to the original redemption from Egypt which occurred in Nissan³¹. May we all properly experiencing the redemption of Egypt, and in that way merit to see the redemption in our times, culminating in the building of the *Beis HaMikdash*.

²⁷ *Haggadah Shel Pesach MiBeis HaLevi* (Vol 2. Pg. 80).

²⁸ Meaning there are two distinct points. Firstly, that the child must ask what troubles him specifically; and secondly that the story of the Exodus be told by the adults in question answer format This explanation can be found in the *Siach HaGrid Haggadah* (pg. 23), authored by Rabbi Yitzchok Lichtenstein and containing lessons conveyed by the Rav z"l, Rabbi Joseph Dov Soloveitchik.

²⁹ *Mishnah Pesachim* 116a.

³⁰ *Haggadah Minchas Chein* (New York 2001) pg. 87.

³¹ *Rosh Hashana* 11a.

An Understanding of Charoses and Karpas

Rabbi Michael Taubes

Charoses

One of the tastier items on the Seder table is the charoses, but the nature of the requirement to have it is not so clear.

[After the Karpas] they brought before him matzah, chazeres, charoses, and two cooked dishes. [charoses was brought] even though charoses is not a mitzvah. R' Elazar the son of R' Tzadok says it is a mitzvah.

Pesachim 114a

הביאו לפניו מצה וחזרת וחרוסת ושני תבשילין, אף על פי שאין חרוסת מצוה. רבי אליעזר ברבי צדוק אומר: מצוה. פסחים דף קיד.

It is certainly not required by the Torah, as no mention of it is made there. This dispute thus focuses simply on whether or not there exists a mitzvah Miderabonon to have charoses. Everyone agrees, however, that in practice, one must have charoses at the table, and the only question is if it is a mitzvah or not.

The “Kappa”

The Gemara (Pesachim 116a) asks, according to the view that it is not a mitzvah, why we must have it at all, and answers that the charoses is needed because of the “kappa”. Rashi and the Rashbam (*s.v. mishum*) explain that this kappa is a very sharp tasting substance that is found in many vegetables, including some used for maror, which can actually be poisonous. The charoses thus serves, apparently, to weaken or even nullify the taste and the danger of this substance³².

The Rashbam (*s.v. tzarich*) and Tosafos (*s.v. kappa*) quote Rabbeinu Chananel there that this kappa is actually a kind of worm found in vegetables, which although allowed to be eaten, is, as Tosafos concludes, unhealthy or dangerous; the charoses somehow is able to destroy this worm by being in contact with or near it. According to this view, then, the purpose of charoses is to prevent any medical danger that may develop from eating maror.

³² The Gemara earlier (Pesachim 115b) discusses whether the maror must actually be dipped into the charoses or simply placed near it in order for this to work.

The Mitzvah

According to the second view in the above Mishna, however, that having charoses is a mitzvah (Miderabonon), what is the nature and purpose of this mitzvah?

What is the nature of this mitzvah? R' Levi says it is a commemoration of the tapuach. R' Yochanan says it is a commemoration of the clay. Abaye said, therefore, one must make [the charoses] tart and one must make it thick. Make it tart since it is a commemoration of the tapuach, and make it thick since it is a commemoration of the clay.

Pesachim 116a

מאי מצוה? רבי לוי אומר: זכר לתפוח. ורבי יוחנן אומר: זכר לטיט, אמר אביי: הלכך צריך לקהוייה, וצריך לסמוכיה. לקהוייה - זכר לתפוח, וצריך לסמוכיה - זכר לטיט. פסחים דף קטז.

The first opinion is that the charoses reminds us of the *tapuach*, a certain fruit. Rashi and the Rashbam (*s.v. zeicher*) explain this by referring to the Midrash on a Posuk in Shir Hashirim (8:5), also cited in the Gemara in Sotah (11b), which indicates that the righteous Jewish women in Egypt would encourage their husbands, exhausted and frustrated by the difficult labor, to continue to have children and perpetuate the nation with faith that they would soon be redeemed. When they were ready to deliver their babies, they would go out to the fields to escape the detection of the Egyptians, who wanted to destroy all the male Jewish babies, and give birth under the *tapuach* trees. To commemorate this righteousness and heroism, we have charoses, a principle ingredient of which is *tapuach*³³.

The second opinion in this Gemara is that, presumably because of its texture, the charoses commemorates the mortar with which the Jews had to work when building in Egypt, and the Gemara seems to accept both opinions.

Tosafos (*s.v. tzarich*) quotes a third opinion, found in the Yerushalmi in Pesachim (Chapter 10, Halacha 3, 70a) that the charoses is to remind us of the blood, a reference either to the first of the ten plagues, as suggested by the Pnei Moshe (*s.v. tzricha*) or to the spilled Jewish blood in Egypt, as suggested by the Korban Haeida (*s.v. milsei*).

Tosafos then notes a practical difference between these latter two opinions: if the charoses is to commemorate the mortar, its consistency should be chunky and thick, like mortar, whereas if it's to commemorate the blood, it should be more of a liquid, like blood. Tosafos thus suggests that initially one should make it thick, like the mortar, and keep it that way until just before dipping

³³ It should be noted that although in modern Hebrew, *tapuach* usually means an apple, and apples are indeed a basic ingredient of charoses in many Ashkenazic homes, in Biblical Hebrew, as pointed out by Tosafos in Shabbos (88a *s.v. piryo*) and in Taanis (29b *s.v. shel*), *tapuach* refers to a citrus fruit, like an esrog. In many Sephardic homes, therefore, apples are not used at all for charoses; it would thus seem proper that even if one does use apples, one should also include some citrus fruit or citrus juice in one's charoses, especially since the above Gemara in Pesachim (116a) states that the charoses should have a pungent flavor.

the maror into it. Then, one should add some wine and make it more of a liquid, thereby following both opinions.

The Ramo (O”C 473:5) rules that charoses should first be made thick and then have wine added to it, although he doesn’t say when to do this. The Chayei Adam (130:4) writes explicitly like Tosafos that one should add the wine before dipping the maror in the charoses. He also points out, as do the Magen Avraham (473:15) and others, that when the first night of Pesach falls on Shabbos, one cannot mix the wine in during the Seder, but must do it beforehand, unless he does it in a specific way³⁴.

The Rambam (*Hilchos Chametz U’Matzah 7:11*) rules in accordance with the above view that having charoses is indeed a mitzvah Miderabonon. Tosafos there (*s.v. tagri*) indicates that this seems to be the implication of the Gemara. The Kol Bo (50) implies that actually, both of the above views are correct: having charoses is a mitzvah, but it also serves to prevent the health danger posed by the kappa, as described above. The Pri Chodosh (473:5) likewise suggests that even the authority according to whom charoses is a mitzvah agrees that it is also necessary for the kappa problem, and he posits that this is also the view of the above cited Rambam. He notes later on, though (475:1), that this kappa is no longer a problem in our times, an idea pointed out as well by the Shulchan Aruch Harav (473:11); we therefore have charoses only because it’s a mitzvah.

What is the Mitzvah of Charoses?

The above Gemara focused only on a requirement to dip maror into charoses, for whatever the reason, but did not mention any requirement to eat charoses. The Rambam (*Hilchos Chametz U’Matzah 7:11*) implies that simply bringing charoses to the Seder table is a mitzvah, but makes no mention of eating it. In his Peirush Hamishnayos on Pesachim (10:3), however, the Rambam writes that there is a requirement to eat charoses, and one must even make a bracha (*al achilas charoses*) before doing so.

According to one version of the Mordechai (*Seder shel Pesach, 38b b’dapei harif*) one is required to eat a kezayis of charoses. The Bigdei Yesha (19) asserts that this requirement is not mentioned by the other poskim, but the Vilna Gaon (*Biur Hagra 471 s.v. v’yesh machmirim*) implies that some poskim may hold this way. Based on this, the Gaon explains the practice quoted (and rejected) by the Ramo (471:2) not to eat the fruits used for charoses on Erev Pesach, just like we don’t eat matzah on Erev Pesach. Since both charoses and matzah are mitzvos, we refrain from eating them on Erev Pesach in anticipation of the mitzvah to eat it at night.

The Shulchan Aruch (475:1) does not require one to eat charoses and indeed rules that after dipping maror into it, one should shake the charoses off in order not to diminish the maror’s bitterness. Of course, one may eat charoses if he wishes as part of the meal.

³⁴ See the Mishnah Berurah 473:48 and 321:65-68.

Karpas

[After Kiddush on the first cup of wine] they brought before him [vegetables for karpas]. He dips [and eats] chazeres before he reaches the course that is secondary to the matzah³⁵.

Pesachim 114a

הביאו לפניו מטבל בחזרת עד
שמגיע לפרפרת הפת.

פסחים דף קיד.

The Mishna indicates that after one has made Kiddush on Pesach night, he is given a certain vegetable which is to be dipped into something. This is the vegetable which we commonly call karpas.

The Bach (O”C 473 s.v. *velokeiach*) gives three explanations as to why we have karpas. First, it is a sign of freedom to be able to dip a vegetable. Second, it gives people a chance to eat something before the long Hagadah is read. Third, dipping karpas foreshadows the later dipping of the maror. Tosafos (Pesachim 115a s.v. *v’hadar*) quotes another reason, namely, we have karpas to make the *borei pri ha’adama* earlier, precluding the necessity to recite *borei pri ha’adama* over maror, which already has its own bracha.

The Mishna identifies this vegetable as chazeres (a kind of lettuce that we call maror), but the Gemara (114b) explains that it is preferable to use another vegetable for this dipping and not chazeres. The Mishnah Berurah (473:20) points out that it is preferable not to use for karpas the same kind of vegetable which one will use for maror because when one eats the vegetable for maror, he must first recite the bracha of *al achilas maror* and it is inappropriate to make such a bracha after having eaten this very same vegetable earlier. According to the Gemara, the Mishna mentions chazeres only to cover a case where one has no other vegetable besides chazeres, and to teach that in such a case he may use it both for this dipping and for maror³⁶.

The Rambam (*Hilchos Chametz U’Matzah* 8:2) does not mention what vegetable to use for this dipping (see also Tur O”C 473), but writes in his Peirush Hamishnayos (Pesachim 10:3) that it can be whatever one has. Avudraham (*Seder Hagadah Upeirushe’ha*, p. 219) and the Kol Bo (50), however, both require a vegetable called “karpas” which Machatzis Hashekel (473:4) identifies as celery.

The Shulchan Aruch (473:4) writes that one should use either “karpas” (celery) or some other vegetable; the Magen Avraham (473:4) however, quotes that there is a preference for celery because the Hebrew letters of “karpas” hint at the phrase *samech perech*, meaning that 600,000 people were forced to do *avodas perech*, difficult labor, as mentioned in the Torah (*Shmos* 1:13).

³⁵ Rashi (s.v. *ad shemagia*) explains that this is a reference to the chazeres that is eaten after the matza for maror.

³⁶ See Rashi and Rashbam (s.v. *mevatel*).

The Shulchan Aruch Harav (473:16) expresses this preference as well. The Kaf Hachaim (473:49) adds some Kabbalistic reasons for this preference.³⁷

What is Karpas Dipped in?

The plain reading of the aforementioned Mishna in Pesachim indicates that there is a requirement to dip this vegetable into something³⁸. Rashi (*s.v. mevatel*) writes that it is dipped into the charoses, a position accepted by some cited in Tosafos (*s.v. mevatel*) as well as by the Rambam (*Hilchos Chametz U'Matzah ibid.*) and many others.

The Rashbam (*s.v. mevatel*), however, writes that one does not dip this karpas vegetable into charoses, a view agreed to by the Mordechai in Pesachim (*Seder Shel Pesach 38a b'dapei harif*) who writes that it is improper to use charoses. The Or Zarua (2:256 p. 59d) quotes an opinion that to eat charoses with karpas is to “jump the gun” similar to eating matzah on Erev Pesach. The Mordechai thus writes that the karpas should be dipped into vinegar or wine, and the Tur seems to accept this view.

The Rashbam (*s.v. mevatel*) and Mordechai (*ibid.*) however, write that one should not dip karpas into charoses. The Or Zarua (2:256 p. 59d) explains that to eat charoses with karpas is to “jump the gun,” just like eating matzah on Erev Pesach. The Shulchan Aruch Harav (473:14), however, rules that one may use charoses if he has nothing else to use.

Others write that karpas should be dipped either into vinegar, wine, salt water, or any of the above. For example, the Mordechai and Tur write that karpas should be dipped into vinegar or wine. It appears from Tosafos that Rabbeinu Tam would use either vinegar or salt water. The Beis Yosef also quotes a view that one should use salt water, as does the Or Zarua, in the name of the Yerushalmi (in a text which we don't seem to have). The Shulchan Aruch (473:6) writes that karpas should be dipped into vinegar, while the Rama (473:4) makes reference to salt water as well. The Mishnah Berurah (473:54) writes that karpas can be dipped into either vinegar or wine or salt water, but not charoses. The general practice today is to use salt water, as recommended by the Chayei Adam, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (119:3) and others.

Tosafos quote an opinion that what the vegetable is dipped into depends upon what the vegetable is: if it is chazeres, i.e. maror, it must be dipped in charoses like maror, but if one has

³⁷ It is worth noting that the Magen Avraham questions the use of parsley for karpas, although the Chayei Adam (130:5) among others clearly states that the standard practice in Ashkenazic countries was indeed to use parsley, a practice which he clearly accepts. This may be based on the fact that the Yerushalmi in Shevi'is (9:1, 24b) identifies karpas as parsley, as pointed out by the Tosafos Yom Tov, commenting on a Mishna in Shabbos (9:5 *s.v. tavlin*).

³⁸ It is interesting to note that the Baal HaTzur (Vol 2 Hilchos Matza Umaror 133b) implies that there is in fact no obligation to dip anything at all. Rabbi Menachem Mendel Kasher in his Hagadah Shleima explains that there is a question as to the meaning of the word in the aforementioned Mishna in Pesachim, which seems to require dipping (*mevatel*). He asserts that there may be others who agree that there really is no requirement to dip the karpas into anything. Nevertheless, the normative practice is that karpas is dipped before being eaten.

another vegetable, he should dip it into either vinegar or salt water. The Bach rules accordingly. However, the Rosh (Pesachim 10:25) cites Rabbeinu Yonah that it is unnecessary to use charoses even if one uses chazeres for karpas.

The Ramo (Darchei Moshe 473:15) writes that vinegar must be used, although he mentions that some authorities would mix charoses into the vinegar to satisfy all the opinions. The prevalent practice, says the Rama, is to use only vinegar for this dipping. (As noted above, the contemporary prevalent practice is to use salt water.)

How Much Must One Eat?

The Rambam writes that everyone at the table must eat at least a k'zayis of karpas. The Maggid Mishneh explains that this is because k'zayis is the minimum amount for all eatings required by halakha. The Rosh disputes this point, since there is no indication anywhere in the Gemara that karpas is a required eating; indeed, no *birchas hamitzvah* is recited over karpas, even though required eatings usually receive a *birchas hamitzvah*. Similarly, the Rashba (*Shut Harashba* 202) holds that one need not eat a k'zayis of karpas, because its purpose is merely to evoke questions from the children³⁹, as indicated by the Gemara (Pesachim 114b). The Hagohos Maimoniyos also holds that one may eat only the smallest possible amount of karpas, and he believes that there is an error in the text of the Rambam who, he writes, really believes that a k'zayis of karpas is not needed. Indeed, many poskim hold that one should actually avoid eating a full k'zayis so as not to become obligated to recite a berachah acharonah (see Shulchan Aruch 473:6 and Mishnah Berurah 53) and thereby allow the *borei pri ha'adama* said before the karpas to cover the maror as well (Mishnah Berurah 55).

³⁹ Rashi and the Rashbam explain that it is unusual to eat vegetables before the meal. When children observe this unusual practice, they assumedly will ask "why." The Tur, however, writes that the question is about dipping before the meal.



Pesach To-Go for Families

Pesach 2008/5768

Table of Contents

1. Introduction
Aaron Steinberg
2. Jewish Slave Owners?
Teen Discussion Sheets
3. Pesach Profiles
Passover Personalities Plays
4. 12 Simple Tips to Spice Up Your Seder

Dear YU Families,

As you all know, Pesach is a holiday of education. On the surface it seems to consist of the most repetitive lesson-plan that could possibly be imagined. Each year, Jews of all ages are instructed to read through the same text from cover to cover for two consecutive nights. It tells the same stories, has the same songs and requires the same blessings night after night, year after year. But as we said, that is only what it seems on the surface.

In actuality, Pesach is the holiday of informal and experiential education. The mitzvah of the day is for each Jew to see herself as if she personally had participated in the Exodus from Egypt. A popular custom among Jewish families from Arab lands to make this feel even more realistic is to actually throw sacks of matzah over their shoulders, and march around the Seder table in order to reenact the Jewish Exodus from Egypt. But don't be confused; this interactive educational experience is not limited to those families who dress up and role-play. The essence of this kind of engaging activity is inherent in the halachot and minhagim of the evening.

Passover night includes no lectures. There is no great schmooze or shiur that is offered in any community that fulfills the requirement for a Seder. The evening calls not only for a passive memory of the Exodus, but an active one as well. It calls for an interactive experience that brings in the entire family. It recommends that the evening revolve around the asking of questions and the giving of answers.

The paradigmatic method for accomplishing this is for the children to question the purpose and practices of the evening, and for the parents to respond by telling over the story of the Jews leaving Egypt. This may be the case in most situations, but it is important to realize that the halacha was prepared for exceptions. In a situation where there are no children at the Seder to ask questions, even the most learned of adults must recount the story of Pesach through a question/answer format. We see this in the story of the five sages in Bnei Barak – these masters of Torah were engaged with the story of Exodus so deeply that they had to be interrupted to begin morning prayers.

Rabbi Jonathan Saks, the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, explains that questions are not incidental to the story of Passover, but are integral to the essence of Judaism. Unlike with some religions, Jews are not encouraged to act blindly and out of sheer command. We are taught to follow in the ways of Avraham, Sarah, Moshe and Yirmiyahu who all questioned God. The question is not out of a lack of faith, but is the proof of faith. We ask the questions because we know that there will be an answer. Our thirst for closeness to God is manifested through our questions. We educate our children not by indoctrinating them with certain unquestionable tenets, but by teaching them to engage their faith through questions and exploration.

The goal for all educators is to transmit information while also engaging the students. The hope is to inspire the students with information, and create a drive within them to explore, learn and do much, much more. There are many things students have to learn. Students must understand

how fractions and decimals relate to one-another; they must be well versed in the history of the country they live in; they must have an appreciation for how living organisms function. Students must have an understanding of the stories in the Tanach; they should be able to dissect a page of Talmud; they must be able to determine the halachic requirements they will face in a myriad of regular day activities. When possible, educators do their best to veer away from a formal lecture-style class to one that is more interactive and more experiential.

We have to remember that the home is also a classroom. Families have the obligation to inspire their children with new knowledge and new ideas. In fact, the casual lessons learned and observed at home will stick stronger to the minds and souls of children than will anything they learn at school. We have the opportunity at the Seder to create for our children a learning experience that displays the richness and the beauty of our heritage. We can share our passion for Judaism, and the history we all share, by making this evening more than the rote repetition of an outdated book. By taking this holiday as an opportunity to engage Judaism with our families, we can leave an impression that will last for a long time.

The Torah anticipated the learning differences our children would have, and the Sages expanded on that with the story of the four sons. Different messages and different methods will speak to different children. The hagadah is a rich educational text that includes narrative, songs, prayers, questions, answers, activities, and food – it is begging to be used creatively. Take advantage of it. In this packet you will find a few suggestions we came up with to help make your Passover nights more meaningful for you and your families, but like children, every family is unique. Take the time to think about what will work best with your family, and prepare something special for each night of the Seder. A little work will go a long way for creating a more engaging and interesting Passover night for child and adult alike.

This is what you can find in the packet:

- A teen packet that addresses the question of how the Torah can allow slavery in light of the Jewish experience in Egypt.
- Three skits that will introduce your family to characters from the Pesach story.
- A list of 12 simple ideas to spice up your Family Seder.
- 30 Pesach Cranium cards that you can use to play with your family.

We wish you much hatzlacha with you Passover Sedarim, and would love for you to send us your ideas for making this Passover different from all other Passovers.

Chag kasher V'Sameach,

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Jewish Slave Owners?

Teen Discussion sheets

The core of the Passover *Seder* experience is asking questions and responding with answers. Everyone at the *Seder* is encouraged to ask about the process of the *Seder*, and the Passover story. With every question hopefully comes along some sort of an answer. Whether the answer is satisfying or not, a good question should not go ignored. The famous four questions of the *mah nishtanah* are basically asking the same thing – what’s so special about this holiday? The desire is to dig at the root meaning of the evening; the essence of the question is basic to the purpose of the holiday as a whole. We can see in the answer given to the child that the question was understood. The answer is as follows:

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the L-rd, our G-d, took us out from there with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm. If the Holy One, blessed be He, had not taken our fathers out of Egypt, then we, our children and our children's children would have remained enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt.

עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפָרֹעַ הַבְּמִצְרָיִם, וַיּוֹצֵיאֵנוּ יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִשָּׁם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזְרוּעַ נְטוּיָה.
וְאִלּוּ לֹא הוֹצִיא הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרָיִם, הָרִי אָנוּ וּבְנֵינוּ וּבְנֵי
בְנֵינוּ מִשְׁעֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפָרֹעַ הַבְּמִצְרָיִם.

OK. That was a pretty basic answer. What is the purpose of this evening we are spending together? It’s the commemoration of a momentous occasion in Jewish History. We are celebrating that fact that “once we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and now we are the children of free-men and free-women.

Passover is a festival of freedom! That seems pretty obvious; *zman cheiruteinu* anyone? The *Seder* is filled with symbolism associated with a free-person. We recline as we drink more cups of wine than we would usually drink. We eat the finest foods without a sense of rushing through the meal. We don our finest clothing and have others pour our wine for us. Passover is the Jewish emancipation holiday. We suffered at the hand of slavery, we broke free from our human masters, and it is time to abolish slavery from the world.

Wait ... what? Did you just say that slavery is something that Judaism is trying to abolish? I’m pretty sure that after the Jews left Egypt and got the Torah at Mount Sinai, the first law that was taught to the Jews was how one should handle owning a slave! Not only did the Torah allow slavery to exist in Jewish society, it is the first law taught after the *Aseret Hadibrot*, the Ten Commandments! Below are the first sentences of Parashat Mishpatim, right after the Jewish people received the testimony at Mount Sinai:

And God spoke these things to say: I am the L-rd your G-d who took you out of Egypt from the house of slavery, you should not have any other gods before me.

Shemot 20:1-2

(א) וידבר אלקים את כל הדברים האלה לאמר:
(ב) אנכי ה' אלקיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים
מבית עבדים לא יהיה לך אלהים אחרים על פני:

שמות פרק כ

How is it possible that a people who had so recently been bitterly enslaved could even consider condoning slavery in their newly built civilization? Slavery is a dehumanizing institution. It places people in a lower class, and denies them the most basic of human rights. Slaves are forced to work against their will with little regard to their own wellbeing. Read the following passage written by the American abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass, taken from his 1852 argument for creating an anti-slavery U.S. Constitution:

“Would you have me argue that man is entitled to liberty? That he is the rightful owner of his own body? You have already declared it. Must I argue the wrongfulness of slavery? Is that a question for republicans? Is it to be settled by the rules of logic and argumentation, as a matter beset with great difficulty, involving a doubtful application of the principle of justice, hard to understand? How should I look today in the presence of Americans, dividing and subdividing a discourse, to show that men have a natural right to freedom, speaking of it relatively and positively, negatively and affirmatively? To do so would be to make myself ridiculous, and to offer an insult to your understanding. There is not a man beneath the canopy of heaven who does not know that slavery is wrong for him.

What! Am I to argue that it is wrong to make men brutes, to rob them of their liberty, to work them without wages, to keep them ignorant of their relations to their fellow men, to beat them with sticks, to flay their flesh with the lash, to load their limbs with irons, to hunt them with dogs, to sell them at auction, to sunder their families, to knock out their teeth, to burn their flesh, to starve them into obedience and submission to their masters? Must I argue that a system thus marked with blood and stained with pollution is wrong? No - I will not. I have better employment for my time and strength than such arguments would imply.”

Douglass cannot even comprehend someone defending slavery. He believed in the principles of freedom and liberty so much that it was unfathomable for him that rational beings could justify the possession of another human being. So how is it that our Torah can condone slavery? How is it that a people who had just been released from over 200 years of bondage could so easily accept a covenant that forgave the behavior of their taskmasters? How can we as modern, Torah-observant Jews understand a passage which seems to approve of the torture Frederick Douglass described his people as having gone through?

These are not easy questions.

To get a better sense of what is going on here, and to hopefully provide ourselves with an answer that will be satisfying, let's delve into the details of the laws of keeping a slave. It is important to note that Jewish Law recognizes two separate categories of slaves: Jewish and non-Jewish. The laws for these two types of slave are different, and we will explore them separately.

Let's see what the Torah mandates:

These are the laws you should put in front of them. When you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall work for six years, and go free in the seventh. If he entered servitude alone, he leaves alone, if he entered married his wife shall leave with him. If his master gives him a wife and they have children, the wife and children stay with the master and he leaves alone. If he says "I love my master, my wife, my children, and I don't want to leave" His master brings him to the door or to the lintel, and he shall pierce his ear and he shall remain forever.

Shemot 21:1-6

(א) ואלה המשפטים אשר תשים לפניהם (ב) כי תקנה עבד עברי שש שנים יעבד ובשבעת יצא לחפשי חנם (ג) אם בגפו יבא בגפו יצא אם בעל אשה הוא ויצאה אשתו עמו (ד) אם אדניו יתן לו אשה וילדה לו בנים או בנות האשה וילדיה תהיה לאדניה והוא יצא בגפו (ה) ואם אמר יאמר העבד אהבתי את אדני את אשתי ואת בני לא אצא חפשי (ו) והגישו אדניו אל האלהים והגישו אל הדלת או אל המזוזה ורצע אדניו את אזנו במרצע ועבדו לעלם:

שמות פרק כא

It is interesting to note that the Torah does not command Jews to take slaves. There is no mitzvah to take a slave. The first halacha of slavery is actually one that limits it. "When you take a Jewish slave, he shall work for six years, and in the seventh year he shall go free." The very first mention of this topic reminds Jews that the servitude of another Jew is not meant to last forever. In fact, the Torah does not only emphasize this to the slave owner, but the to servant himself. If a servant becomes so comfortable in the home of his master that he says he does not want to go free, the owner is instructed to pierce his ear on the doorpost, and the slave is indentured to the owner forever. The Torah seems very insistent that the ownership of Jewish slaves is meant to be temporary.

When it comes down to it, a Jewish servant only differs from a worker in one respect: he cannot quit. Aside from that, a Jewish servant is not subjected to hard labor, and is provided for completely while they are working for the owner. In fact, Tractate Kiddushin (15a-20a) goes into some significant detail as to what a Jewish servant is entitled to. At one point, the Gemara makes the comment that "one who buys a himself a slave, buys himself a master." What does that mean? It is explained that a Jewish master must provide his Jewish slave with the same quality of food and goods that he provides himself. That sounds like a nice perk, but how does that make the slave into a master? The Jerusalem Talmud gives the example of a master who only has one pillow; in such an instance, the slave cannot be given equal provisions unless he is given the only pillow. Hence, the slave becomes the master. While this explanation may not excuse the practice of slavery in modern terms, it is not as horrible as it may have appeared at first.

Not so, however, is this the case with non-Jewish slaves. In Leviticus, the Torah actually draws a stark contrast between the laws of Jewish and non-Jewish slaves:

If your brother becomes impoverished and is sold to you, you must not work him like a slave. Like a hired hand or resident [worker] shall he be with you. He shall serve you until the jubilee year. Then he and his children shall depart from you and return to his own family. He shall return to his ancestral estate. For they are My servants, whom I brought out from the land of Egypt, they shall not be sold [in the market] as slaves. You must not rule over him to crush him and you shall fear your G-d. Your slaves and maidservants that you shall possess from the nations that surround you, from them you may purchase slaves and maidservants. Also, from the children of the sojourners who reside with you from them you may purchase [slaves], and from their families that live among you that were born in your land. [All these] shall be your permanent possession. You shall will them as inheritance to your children after you as hereditary property; you shall keep them in servitude permanently. However regarding your bretheren, Bnei Yisroel, man over his brother, you must not rule over him to crush him.

Vayikra 25:39-46

(לט) וכי ימוך אחיך עמך ונמכר לך לא תעבד בו עבדת עבד: (מ) כשכיר כתושב יהיה עמך עד שנת היבל יעבד עמך: (מא) ויצא מעמך הוא ובניו עמו ושב אל משפחתו ואל אחזת אבתיו ישוב: (מב) כי עבדי הם אשר הוצאתי אתם מארץ מצרים לא ימכרו ממכרת עבד: (מג) לא תרדה בו בפרך ויראת מאלהיך: (מד) ועבדך ואמתך אשר יהיו לך מאת הגוים אשר סביבתיכם מהם תקנו עבד ואמה: (ה) וגם מבני התושבים הגרים עמכם מהם תקנו וממשפחתם אשר עמכם אשר הולידו בארצכם והיו לכם לאחזה: (מו) והתנחלתם אתם לבניכם אחריכם לרשת אחזה לעלם בהם תעבדו ובאחיכם בני ישראל איש באחיו לא תרדה בו בפרך:

ויקרא פרק כה

As we mentioned above, a Jewish servant must be released after six years of work. A non-Jewish servant, however, can be passed on to descendants through inheritance! The possession of a non-Jewish slave is eternal. But note another difference: A Jewish slave may not be subjected to “hard labor” (b’farech); a non-Jewish slave has no such condition. Seemingly, a non-Jewish slave may be worked to the bone with the most menial of work.

So far, this is not so reassuring. It may be that the Torah is not so strict with the Jewish slaves, but that’s not so surprising. The giving of the Torah to the Jews is based on the premise that God is true. The first of the Ten Dibrot reads as follows: I am Hashem, your God, Who has taken you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery.” The Jews were redeemed from the slavery in Egypt, and chose at Sinai to subject themselves to an exclusive servitude to God. It would be impossible for Jews to be truly enslaved to anyone but the Hashem.

Not so, however, is the case for a non-Jewish slave. How are we supposed to understand that they are kept forever? How are we to allow hard labor for someone who was purchased like property? How can we understand the purchase of another human being at all?

In order to feel a little better about this, the Rambam (Mishneh Torah: Laws of indentured Slaves 9:8) offers some guidelines for the treatment of a non-Jewish slave:

“It is permissible to work a non-Jewish servant harshly. Yet, although this is the law, the way of the pious and the wise is to be compassionate and to pursue justice, not to overburden or oppress a servant, and to provide them from every dish and every drink.

The early sages would give their servants from every dish on their table. They would feed their animals and their servants before sitting to their own meals. Does it not say (Psalms 123:2), "As the eyes of the servant to the hand of his master; as the eyes of the maid to her mistress [so our eyes are towards the L-rd our G-d...]"?

So, too, you should not denigrate a servant, neither physically nor verbally. The Torah made him your servant to do work, not to be disgraced. Do not treat him with constant screaming and anger, rather speak with him pleasantly and listen to his complaints. Such were the good ways in which Job took pride when he said, "Did I ever despise the judgment of my servant and my maid when they argued with me? Did not my Maker make him, too, in the belly; did not the same One form us both in the womb?"

For anger and cruelty are only found among other nations. The children of Abraham, our father-and they are Israel, to whom the Holy One, blessed be He, has provided the goodness of Torah and commanded us righteous judgments and statutes--they are compassionate to all. This is one of the attributes of the Holy One, blessed be He, that we are commanded to emulate (Psalms 145:9): "And He has compassion for all He has made."

Furthermore, all who have compassion will be treated compassionately, as was stated (Deuteronomy 13:18), "He will give you compassion and He will have compassion upon you and multiply you."

This seems good, right? The Rambam is saying that even though we are allowed to have slaves, the proper thing is to treat them with compassion and justice. Rambam lauds those who fed their slaves before sitting down to a meal. He berates anyone who physically or verbally abuses a slave. We may be getting somewhere with this.

But wait a minute. What's the reason the Rambam gives for us to be compassionate to slaves? Is it because it's cruel to mistreat slaves, and the Torah would never condone that? Not really. He explains that since God is compassionate to all of his creations, so too are we to be compassionate to all of his creations. The source for treating our slaves with kindness and compassion, and not working them with Hard Labor as the Torah permits, is because we are encouraged to emulate the Almighty. But if that is the case, why doesn't the Torah itself express this value of treating slaves with dignity and respect? It seems a little inconsistent.

What we have to realize is that the Torah was not created in a vacuum. It was not a magical document that could transform the realities of the world in an instant. Nor was it a document

given to angels. It was a document given to humans living in an imperfect world. It is an eternal document, but it is relevant in different ways to different generations. The chapters dealing with Temple service meant one thing to those who actually brought sacrifices in Jerusalem, and something completely different to a modern Jew who has never witnessed a functioning Jewish Temple. The Torah is a living document, and it was designed to fit each generation in the appropriate way.

When God gave the Torah to the Jewish people, it was meant to serve as, what Rabbi Dr. Samuel Belkin described as, the “blueprint for an ideal society.” The economy of that period was entirely based on agriculture. Any nation that could not maintain a serious farming culture were destined to fail as a whole. In order to develop a successful agrarian society, a lot of manual labor was required – much more than what the Jews alone could provide. If they would not have been able to utilize slave labor, the society could not have functioned properly. They would have failed economically, their enemies would have dominated them, and they would have been absorbed into another nation millennia ago. There would be no chance of creating an ideal society.

Slavery was a necessary evil in the ancient world. The Torah would not have been a practical blueprint had it outlawed slavery altogether. Still, the question begs, how did the Torah condone this practice? How was this law of slavery possible within the moral and ethical framework that respects and protects every human being? The answer is that the Torah redefined slavery.

What the Torah did was take an institution that was accepted without hesitation in the world, and made it something that was more humane, more compassionate and more respectful. As the Oral Law was passed on through the generations, clarifications arose that required equality for all non-Jewish slaves – they could not be treated any different than a worker with the exception of having the right to quit. It created laws for the treatment of slaves. It required that they be treated fairly, that they not be beaten endlessly as was accepted in other societies.

But we’re still not quite there yet! Why wasn’t the Torah explicit with its limitations? Why didn’t it say that slaves could not be beaten, that they must be spoken to nicely and that they must be fed with the same quality of food that the master is eating? Why did this only happen in the Oral Law?

The answer is again that the Torah was designed to be a living document. It would not be effective if it forced such a radical change in the way slaves had been treated since creation. God created this halacha to be participatory. Look back at the first mention of slavery in the Torah. There is no commandment to take a slave. Until now, we had interpreted the beginning of the phrase as “when you take a Jewish slave ...” But the word “Ki” can also mean “if” – “if you take a Jewish slave.” Similarly, the verse that explains the laws of a non-Jewish slave reads “and your slaves that you may have ...” It only speaks in response to the fact that this phenomenon of slavery exists and must be dealt with, not that it is encouraged or promoted.

The Torah put this law in the hands of the people. It gave each person the choice to take a slave, or not to take a slave. The hope was that over the years, the Jewish people would abolish slavery on their own – and so we did.

This love of freedom continued throughout the millennia through today. Below is an account of a Jewish abolitionist from the Civil War:

August (Anshel) Bondi was born in Vienna, Austria July 21, 1833. He was the son of Jews who wanted him to have both a religious and a secular education. Caught up as a participant in the failed liberal revolution of 1848, the Bondi family fled to New Orleans and settled in St. Louis, Missouri. Young Bondi encountered, first hand, the horrors of slavery and was deeply disgusted. In 1855 a New York Tribune editorial urged freedom-loving Americans to "hurry out to Kansas to help save the state from the curse of slavery." Bondi responded immediately. He moved to Kansas and along with two other Jews, Theodore Weiner from Poland and Jacob Benjamin from Bohemia established a trading post in Ossa-watomie. Their abolitionist sentiments very soon brought pro-slavery terrorists upon them. Their cabin was burned, their livestock stolen. Their trading post was destroyed in the presence of Federal troops who did nothing. The three courageous Jews joined a rabid local abolitionist, to defend their rights as citizens and to help rid the horror of slavery from Kansas. The Jews joined the Kansas Regulars under the leadership of John Brown.

In a famous battle between the Regulars and the pro-slavery forces at Black Jack Creek, with the bullets whistling viciously above their heads, 23-year-old Bondi turned to his 57 year old friend Weiner and asked in Yiddish--"Nu, was meinen Sie jetzt?" (Well, what do you think of this now?) He answered, "Was soll ich meinen? Sof odem moves" (What should I think? Man's life ends in death). Kansas joined the union as a Free State. Bondi married Henrietta Einstein of Louisville, Kentucky in 1860. Their home became a way station for the Underground Railroad smuggling slaves to the North and freedom. The Civil War began in 1861, Bondi enlisted in the Union army encouraged by the words of his mother. He later wrote in his autobiography, "as a Jew I am obliged to protect institutions that guarantee freedom for all faiths." August Bondi died in 1907, a respected judge and member of his Kansas community.

It is a Jewish instinct to fight injustice. When Jews see atrocities in the world, they are bound to take action. Anshel Bondi saw slavery in his time, and he knew he had to fight it. Even though slavery was technically allowed in the Torah, he knew it was wrong. He knew he had to make personal sacrifices to fight for the freedom of others.

Today, in the year 2008, slavery has not yet been abolished. There are over 27 million enslaved people in the world. The forms of slavery are varied, and the law is no longer permissive of this practice, but it is a virus that plagues modern society. Passover is the holiday that brings us together to promote our values of freedom, and fight for those who are still enslaved.

Questions and sources for further thought:

1. What is the distinction between a Jewish worker and a Jewish slave? Why are there two different categories? See Kiddushin 15a.
2. The Ramban explains that the Jewish experience in Egypt was a process that taught the Jewish people a lot, especially how to treat other Humans. How can we understand the halachot about slavery with respect to this idea?
3. Look up the Rambam in Hilchot Avadim 9:8. Does his stipulations seem like fair treatment? Why do you think the Torah didn't mention this explicitly?
4. What obligation do we have today to people who are enslaved in countries around the world?
5. Eliezer was the servant of Avraham. Can we learn anything from him that would shed light on the issue of how to treat a slave?
6. Are there any parallels that can be drawn between the slavery that took place in America for over 200 years, and the slavery that happened in Egypt for over 200 years? What makes them different?

What types of slavery exist today?

- **Bonded Labor** affects millions of people around the world. People become bonded laborers by taking or being tricked into taking a loan for as little as the cost of medicine for a sick child. To repay the debt, many are forced to work long hours, seven days a week, up to 365 days a year. They receive basic food and shelter as 'payment' for their work, but may never pay off the loan, which can be passed down for generations.
- **Early and Forced Marriage** affects women and girls who are married without choice and are forced into lives of servitude often accompanied by physical violence.
- **Forced Labor** affects people who are illegally recruited by individuals, governments or political parties and forced to work -- usually under threat of violence or other penalties.
- **Slavery by Descent** is where people are either born into a slave class or are from a 'group' that society views as suited to being used as slave labor.
- **Trafficking** involves the transport and/or trade of people -- women, children and men - - from one area to another for the purpose of forcing them into slavery conditions.
- **Child Labor** affects an estimated 126 million children around the world in work that is harmful to their health and welfare.

What can you do to help stop modern slavery?

The holiday of Pesach is our commemoration of emancipation from the hands of Pharaoh, and our free-choice decisions to dedicate ourselves to God. It's the time of year to think about how to grant that freedom to countless enslaved people around the world.

Educate yourself and others:

Talk with your family, friends, colleagues, and classmates about the issue of modern slavery. Research the information, write Op/Ed pieces for a local paper, write about trafficking in an online blog, or work to include information about human trafficking in synagogue newsletters or bulletins.

Watch the movie "Amazing Grace" which portrays the story of an early abolitionist William Wilberforce. This powerful movie will show you what one determined person can do to fight injustice.

Advocate on their behalf:

Write a letter to your government representative asking what he/she is doing to prevent slavery where you live and around the world. Americans can find their representatives at:
<http://www.usa.gov/Contact/Elected.shtml>

Pesach Profiles

Passover Personalities Plays

Two years ago, Rabbi Jonathan Mishkin created the Family packet for the Pesach To-Go. He create the Pesach profiles Series. These are his words:

“To liven up the Seder, try putting on a play. I prefer to work out a script before hand, but improvisation also has its merits. You can decide whether to employ your children as actors or to let them be members of the audience, if you feel they’ll be too self-conscious to perform. Recognize that kids will pay much greater attention to a play or a puppet show than to the sounds of adults reading from a Hagadah. This is a good opportunity to press your adult guests into service. Speak with them before the Seder about participating and show them their lines - the number and intensity of rehearsals is up to you. Provide costumes and props. Have fun.”

Building off of Rabbi Mishkin’s initial episode of “Where are they now?” we will be introducing the second installation of this Pesach hit!

Tips: Make sure you print at least two copies of each script. Encourage your actors to review their lines before the skit, and allow them to improvise and add in their own lines if desired. You can do all three skits on the same night, or you can spread them out over the two nights – it’s your call!

Setup: *Set up your living room like a TV talk show set. Have a chair for the host, and a chair for the guests. Even better if there is a little table with glasses of water, fake microphones, and a laugh track provided by the audience!*

Act I: Nachshon Ben Aminadav

Douglas: Hello and welcome back to our annual Pesach episode of “Where are they now?” I’m your host Douglas and I’m happy to have you all here for this wonderful episode. Each year we welcome guests from the Passover story to hear about what role they played, and where they are now. Without any further adieu, I would like to welcome our first guest, Nachshon Ben Aminadav!

Nachshon: Hi Douglas, thanks for having me on the show.

Douglas: It’s our pleasure, really. It’s so nice to have such an important Jewish figure join us on the set.

Nachshon: Well I’m happy to get a chance to plug my new book on Jewish Leadership titled “Jump into the Deep End: How to take Initiative.” It’s a great read, and I recommend that all you young guys and gals out there check it out.

Douglas: Let's not get ahead of ourselves Nachshon, why don't you start by explaining to our audience what role you played in the Passover story?

Nachshon: Well I guess I first got my popularity not through any of my own doing, but from something my sister did. My sister, Elisheva Bat Aminadav, married Aaron. You know him right? He's Moshe's brother?

Douglas: Of course we all know Moshe. We had him on two years ago, but now his agent says we're small potatoes and we haven't had him since. Sorry about that. So you say you're Aaron's brother-in-law?

Nachshon: Yeah. It was really great to be so close with the leaders of the Jewish community at the time. I would go by their house all the time, and I got a behind-the-scenes look at what was going on with the Jewish community. When Moshe came back from Midyan to pressure Pharaoh to free the Jewish people, I learned a lot from what I saw.

Douglas: That sounds amazing! You had close access to Moshe, the leader of the Jewish people?!?

Nachshon: It was like nothing else. We would all sit around the dinner table, and Moshe and Aaron would plan out their meetings with Pharaoh, King of Egypt. It was pretty intense sometimes, and I got my first taste of leadership in Aaron's home.

Douglas: That's great that you got to shmooze with Moshe and Aaron over a plate of Rugelach, but what did **you** do that was so significant?

Nachshon: Yes, yes. Of course I did something... I was going to get there eventually.

Douglas: I know you're a humble guy; you probably picked that up from Moshe. So what was your role in this amazing story?

Nachshon: OK. So you know the basic story right? Moshe and Aaron kept asking pharaoh to free the Jews, but he refused. Even after God brought all of those plagues to afflict the Egyptian people, Pharaoh still denied the Jews the right to leave.

Douglas: Right...

Nachshon: Finally, after the 10th and final plague, Pharaoh relented and freed the Jewish people. We all knew that we had to get out of there quick. Moshe and Aaron made sure the word spread quickly throughout the Jewish community. We packed up whatever we could, made some non-rising bread loaves, and started gathering for our Exodus from Egypt.

Douglas: So you were in charge of the logistics for leaving Egypt? You directed traffic for all of the Jews? You were the mashgiach of the first Matzah Factory?

Nachshon: No, no, no. I did nothing of the sort. Of course I helped out with all of those things, but my big role didn't come until a little later.

Douglas: Oh. Sorry.

Nachshon: No problem. As you can imagine, it's hard to move a couple of million men, woman and children out of a country and across a desert. God didn't want us to go the direct route into the Promised Land because we hadn't really formed as a group yet. We needed some time to grow as a people before we went to Israel. So we took the long route.

Douglas: Is that how you ended up near the Reed Sea?

Nachshon: Exactly. There we were, camped out right on the Reed Sea. Pharaoh heard we were there, and he thought that he could capture us again since the water had trapped us. He sent his entire army with hundreds of chariots and all of his officers after us. Needless to say, many of us were pretty scared.

Douglas: So what did you do?

Nachshon: Well, Moshe kept his cool, and he knew that God had a plan to save us. God told him that if he stretched out his hand, and the Jewish people went into the water, we would all be able to pass safely through the water. The only problem was that nobody was willing to enter the water! We all trusted God, but it's not so simple just to start walking into the Sea!

Douglas: Oh man! So how did it happen then? I'm pretty sure the sea split, right?

Nachshon: I guess this was my shining moment. I looked around, and I saw that nobody was moving into the water. I looked at Moshe and saw in his eyes that he needed someone to step up. Aaron was busy keeping everyone calm. It was up to me. I couldn't just tiptoe into the water; I needed to show everyone that I trusted God. I took a few steps back, started running as fast as I could, and I did the most beautiful swan dive ever right into the Reed Sea. That moment, the waters started to recede, and a path of dry land formed through the middle of the sea. I thought I was going to hit the bottom of the sea hard, but I basically floated softly down to the ground.

Douglas: That's outstanding! Had you even taken diving lessons at the JCC growing up? Did your mother know you would one day be an Olympic diver?

Nachshon: Not quite, but let's just say she bragged about me a lot after that, even though I didn't become a lawyer or a doctor.

Douglas: What was going through your mind when you decided to be the first one to jump in the water?

Nachshon: I just realized that when there's nobody else around who is stepping up to the challenge, I couldn't just look around and expect someone else to do it. I knew I could do the job, so I had to act. That's what being a leader is all about: taking action when you see the need.

Douglas: Well that is quite an amazing story. And after that you became the Nassi of the tribe of Judah? You sure had an outstanding career.

Nachshon: I guess you can say that. It was a great feeling to continue to serve my people through the years in the desert. Now I work on training young Jewish men and women to be leaders by telling them my story. They can read about me in the midrash, or by picking up a copy of "Jump into the Deep End: How to take Initiative" at their local Baruch and Noble retailer.

Douglas: Thanks for joining us Nachshon. Before you head out, are there any questions from the audience?

Act II: Gus the Gefilte Fish.

[The actor playing Gus should try to act like a piece of Gefilte fish. Acting lessons are recommended.]

Douglas: Hello and welcome back to our annual Pesach episode of “Where are they now?” I’m your host Douglas and I hope you enjoyed those words from our sponsors. Remember, if your horseradish doesn’t keep you up all night, it’s not Danischevitz.

Now let’s see who our next guest is. Wait. This must be some kind of joke. You guys know Purim was last month, right? Are you trying to tell me that our next guest is ... a piece of Gefilte fish?!?

Gus the Gefilte: I really do prefer if you call me by my name. Legally I’m Gustave Gefilte, but my friends just call me Gus.

Douglas: OK... Gus. I guess we’re glad to have you on the show with us, but I’m not so sure what you’re doing here.

Gus: Well, if you didn’t notice, Gefilte fish play a big role at the Passover holiday. Our recent polling has shown that over 65% of Passover Seders around the world feature Gefilte fish as one of their first 3 appetizers. Now you tell me what I’m doing here.

Douglas: All right, I guess that’s true. I do love a nice piece of Gefilte fish every night before I go to sleep. But I still don’t see why you were booked for a show about people who had a major impact on the Passover story.

Gus: Oh don’t you? Why don’t I tell you a little-known tale of how Gefilte Fish saved the Jewish people?

Douglas: Well I’d love to hear that.

Gus: It all starts where your last guest, Nachshon, left off. The Jewish people had left Egypt, and they were crossing the Reed Sea to escape from the Egyptians. The only problem was that they didn’t bring enough water for the trip. They were in the middle of the Reed Sea, and people were getting thirsty. As you all know, the Reed Sea is filled with salt-water, so the Jews couldn’t just scoop out a little to drink.

Douglas: I’ve never heard that part of the story, but keep going.

Gus: Well, when us fish saw the problem, we told Moshe that we could help. We explained that if the Jewish people wanted, we could drink up the water, and filter out all of the salt. Then we could pour fresh drinking water out of our mouths like a water fountain. Moshe was relieved when he heard that we could help, and he promised us that we would forever have a place in Jewish homes. He explained what we were going to do to the Jewish people, and he started us off with three simple words: “Go filter, fish!” We were instant celebrities from that day forward, and we loved our new name.

Douglas: You've got to be kidding, right?

Gus: I don't know, this is the story that has been handed down through generations of Gefiltes. My great-great-grandfather, Gunther Gefilte sat me down on his fin and told me this story when I was a little guppy. It is a source of pride for all Gefilte Fishes around the world.

Douglas: I thought Gefilte Fish was really Carp. There is no such fish as a Gefilte Fish.

Gus: I don't know what you're talking about.

Douglas: Security! Can we get this big loaf out of here?! I apologize to our viewing audience for this horrible casting mistake. We will be firing whoever brought Gus Gefilte into the studio. We'll be back with our final guest after these messages from Yankel's Matzo Emporium – they make the crumbiest Matzos around.

Act III: Moshe's Staff, Mateh (Matt).

[The actor playing Matt should try to act like a stick. If Moshe's staff could speak English, it would probably be with a distinguished British accent.]

Douglas: Hi folks, welcome back to our special "Where are they now?" Pesach episode. I really do apologize for that last guest we had on – I can assure you that will not happen again. I seem to have misplaced my notes, so let's just welcome out our final guest.

Moshe's Mateh: Hi! Nice to see you Douglas. I'm so happy to be on the show.

Douglas: All right, that's enough, I'm sick of these practical jokes! It's not Adar any more guys. I say the entire crew is going to be let go if you don't get our real guest on stage this instant!

Moshe's Mateh: Excuse me? Real guest? What exactly are you talking about?

Douglas: Oh yeah, pretend you're not in on it. You're a stick of wood! What are you doing on my show? What are you doing on this set? How could you possibly be associated with the Passover story?

Moshe's Mateh: I'll have you know that I played a very integral role in the Passover story. I was as close to the action as anyone else throughout the whole thing.

Douglas: Sure. Like I'm going to buy that. So, your majesty, who might you be then?

Moshe's Mateh: I am Moshe's Mateh, his staff that he carried with him wherever he went.

Douglas: What? Oh. Oh my! I'm so sorry Mr... Mr... Mateh?

Moshe's Mateh: That's right, but you can call me Matt.

Douglas: Well then Matt, I owe you an apology. Welcome to the show. Since we're running late on time, why don't we get right to it? When did you first come on the scene?

Matt: Great question Doug. Can I call you Doug? In fact, I am pretty old, and my fame precedes my association with Moshe. I was actually one of the ten items that was created on the very first Erev Shabbat ever.

Douglas: That was a long time ago. I think I read that once in Pirkei Avot. Very interesting.

Matt: Well, from that first day I knew I was destined for greatness. It wasn't long – in stick years – before I was in the hands of the great Moshe! Of course he wasn't so famous yet; he found me when he was living with his father-in-law Yitro.

Douglas: Well that's amazing. I can imagine that you were able to witness some amazing things in your time with Moshe. But what made you so different from his turban, sandals and sunglasses? Didn't those things witness everything you did?

Matt: By Gosh Dougie boy, you are quite mistaken. I was not simply a witness; I was involved in the process. Did you know that Moshe threw me on the ground once in front of the Jewish people and I was turned into a snake? We, err I mean Moshe, was proving to them that he was a messenger from God.

Douglas: That's quite amazing. And what about those 10 Makkot? Those were doozies!

Matt: You don't know the half of it. Those were some crazy plagues that hit those Egyptians. I didn't get involved until numbers 7 and 8. Actually my nephew – also named Matt – who Aaron used to carry, helped out with the first three: blood, frogs, and lice.

Douglas: So you were involved in bringing the hail and the locusts?

Matt: Well, of course God was really doing everything. The question is who helped deliver it. Aaron's staff was involved in the first three because the River and the Land had protected Moshe – he couldn't afflict them because he had appreciation for them. I sat on the sidelines for a while, but I was called up to help with hail and locusts. Moshe raised me up in the air, and God brought on the plague.

Douglas: That's quite a career!

Matt: It doesn't stop there. I heard your earlier guest mention that he was involved with splitting the sea, and another one claimed to give the Jews fresh water. Well the truth is that Moshe raised me up as God split the sea – I had a great view! Moshe raised me a lot when it was needed. Did you know that during the war with Amalek, Moshe kept his hands raised holding me high in the air, and that helped Bnei Yisrael focused on God so they could win the war?

Douglas: Well that is quite remarkable. To close us off in our final moments, I hear that you were involved in some sort of incident that got water for the Jewish people.

Matt: Twice actually. The first time God told Moshe to hit the rock with me, and water sprang forth. The second time Moshe was supposed to talk to the rock, but he hit it with me instead. Might not seem like such a mistake, but God was not happy with the decision. Hey, nobody's perfect. Like I said earlier. I've seen a lot of things in my years, but I know I didn't actually do any of them. All the miracles I got to play a role in came straight from God.

Douglas: Well thank you for joining us Matt. Before we run the closing credits, does anyone have any questions for Matt?

12 Simple Tips to Spice Up Your Seder

1. Assign a different part of the Seder to each participant. Ask them to come prepared with a story, dvar torah, question, or anything else they would like to share with the group.
2. Take white pillowcases before Pesach, and decorate them for the leaning you will be doing at the Seder table.
3. When pouring wine (or grape juice) for one another, take turns being the waiter. Take order, put a napkin over your arm, and treat the room to first-class service!
4. After singing dayeinu (if anyone can ever finish singing dayeinu), take a few minutes to think about the things that we take for granted and should probably be more appreciative of.
5. See who can do the most creative reading of the Mah Nishtana. Try Shakespearian, Japanese ninja movie, Dr Seuss, Haiku, old western, hip hop and any other style you can think of.
6. Play “Paperbag Dramatics.” Give each person 3-4 random props from around the room, and ask them to act out a part of the seder. The scenes can be from the 10 plagues, the story of Moshe, the story of Exodus, or anything else you think of.
7. Even if you are not Sefardi, you can still dress the part and pretend to be the Jews marching out of Egypt towards Israel. Bed sheets can make great robes, towels turn into turbans, and pillowcases make great matzah bags. Be really creative, and turn a hallway into a split sea (see Pesach To Go 5766).
8. If you have enough matzah to go around, give each person (or two people) his/her own set of three matzot. Give everyone the chance to break the middle one in half, and get hands on with the matzah.
9. The Jews ate manna for 40 years as they traveled through the desert. Manna could taste like anything they wanted it to taste like. Take a poll of what your group would have the Manna taste like.
10. Put trivia questions under everyone’s plate. Ask them to have any answer by the time the main course is served.
11. The 10 Plagues are not things to be celebrated. God was not happy to destroy any of his creatures. After pouring out some of your wine, discuss with a more mature group what sort of plagues the world is currently dealing with.
12. Play the Pesach Cranium game!

Passover Cranium

Rules and Introduction

- **Supplies:**
 - 30 cutout Pesach Cranium Cards - folded in half.
 - 4-40 people split into two teams: Gefilte Fish and Borscht.
 - A desire to step out of your shell at the Pesach Seder.
- **Game-play:**
 - Teams take turns responding to the challenges on their respective Cranium Cards.
 - A member of team Gefilte Fish should read the card aloud and, depending on the task, the card will be given to the Borscht member who will be accomplishing the task. Make sure they don't see the answer on the back of the card!
 - The card should always be given to the other team, except for the Gnilleps Cards that requires them to spell a word backwards.
 - Teams should be given approximately 2 minutes to accomplish each card, but hey, who's counting?
 - If the team gets accomplishes the task, they keep the card which is worth one point. At the end of the night, add up the points and see who won!
- **When do we play?:**
 - Strategize beforehand to think about when you might expect a lull in the action. Alternatively, keep it ready for when you see people going upstairs to check if Eliyahu is under their blanket.
 - You can play the game straight through, or stop to give each team the opportunity to do one card before moving on to the next part of the seder.
 - You can save half of the cards for the second night in order to allow for a rematch.
- **Important Reminder!:**
 - The Pesach Seder can be fun, so whether you use these cards or not, make it a night to remember! Have fun!



TEAM: **Gefilte Fish**

cameo

To win this **cameo**, your team must choose one performer to **act out silent clues**, just like charades.

Hint
Passover Story

Cameo Word
Plague of the Frogs

CRANIUM CUSTOM

star performer

* Plague of the Frogs

CRANIUM CUSTOM

gnilleps

To win this **Gnilleps**, choose a teammate who can correctly **spell** the word below **backwards** on the first try without writing it down. I'll read the word aloud and then start the timer.

Word

FREEDOM

TEAM: **Gefilte Fish**

polygraph

To win this **Polygraph**, your team must determine whether the statement below is **true or false**. I'll read the statement aloud, pass the card to you, and then start the timer.

Question

True or False? The dog eats the goat in the passover song "Chad Gadya."

CRANIUM CUSTOM

star performer

* Plague of the Frogs

CRANIUM CUSTOM

word worm

* M-O-D-E-R-F

CRANIUM CUSTOM

data head



* False. Who did?

TEAM: **Borscht**

cameo

To win this **cameo**, your team must choose one performer to **act out silent clues**, just like charades.

Hint
Passover Seder

Cameo Word
Eating Maror

CRANIUM CUSTOM

star performer

* Eating Maror

CRANIUM CUSTOM

gnilleps

To win this **Gnilleps**, choose a teammate who can correctly **spell** the word below **backwards** on the first try without writing it down. I'll read the word aloud and then start the timer.

Word

EGYPT

TEAM: **Borscht**

polygraph

To win this **Polygraph**, your team must determine whether the statement below is **true or false**. I'll read the statement aloud, pass the card to you, and then start the timer.

Question

True or False? Moshe was not the messenger for all 10 plagues.

CRANIUM CUSTOM

star performer

* Eating Maror

CRANIUM CUSTOM

word worm

* E-P-Y-G-E

CRANIUM CUSTOM

data head



* True. Who did the rest?





TEAM: **Gefilte Fish**

sideshow

To win this **sideshow**, choose a performer from your team who can get you to guess the answer on the back of this card by **moving a teammate's arms and legs like a puppet**, with no talking or sound effects.

Hint
Passover Preparation

Sideshow Word
Making Matzo Balls



TEAM: **Gefilte Fish**

zelpuz

To win this **Zelpuz**, your team must **rearrange the letters** in the mixed-up puzzle below to find the answer. I'll read the hint and puzzle aloud, pass the card to you, and then start the timer.

Hint
Passover Seder

Puzzle
SLEIHLL IASCHDNW



TEAM: **Gefilte Fish**

factoid

To win this **factoid**, your team must correctly answer the **question** below. I'll read the question aloud, pass the card to you, and then start the timer.

Question
How many minutes can a matzo bake before it becomes chametz?

CRANIUM® CUSTOM

star performer®



* Making Matzo Balls

CRANIUM® CUSTOM

word worm®



* Hillel's Sandwich

CRANIUM® CUSTOM

data head®



* 81 minutes



TEAM: **Borscht**

sideshow

To win this **sideshow**, choose a performer from your team who can get you to guess the answer on the back of this card by **moving a teammate's arms and legs like a puppet**, with no talking or sound effects.

Hint
Passover Preparation

Sideshow Word
Bedikat Chametz



TEAM: **Borscht**

zelpuz

To win this **Zelpuz**, your team must **rearrange the letters** in the mixed-up puzzle below to find the answer. I'll read the hint and puzzle aloud, pass the card to you, and then start the timer.

Hint
Passover Characters

Puzzle
FRIASH DAN AHPU



TEAM: **Borscht**

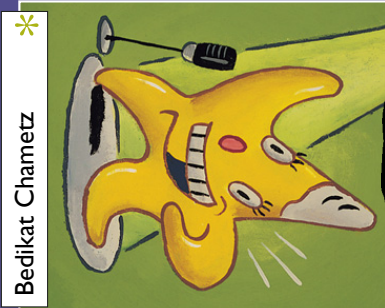
factoid

To win this **factoid**, your team must correctly answer the **question** below. I'll read the question aloud, pass the card to you, and then start the timer.

Question
During what part of the seder do we invite all hungry people to join in our seder?

CRANIUM® CUSTOM

star performer®



* Bedikat Chametz

CRANIUM® CUSTOM

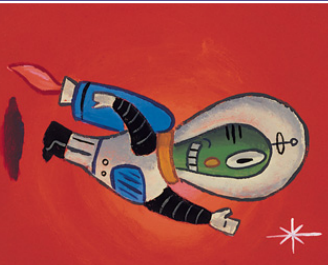
word worm®



* SHIFRA AND PUAH

CRANIUM® CUSTOM

data head®



* Ha Lachma Anya (1) This poor bread





TEAM: **Gefilte Fish**

cameo

To win this **cameo**, your team must choose one performer to **act out silent clues**, just like charades.

Hint
Passover Story

Cameo Word
Moshe approaching the burning bush.



TEAM: **Gefilte Fish**

gnilleps

To win this **Gnilleps**, choose a teammate who can correctly spell the word below **backwards** on the first try without writing it down. I'll read the word aloud and then start the timer.

Word

PASSOVER



TEAM: **Gefilte Fish**

polygraph

To win this **Polygraph**, your team must determine whether the statement below is **true or false**. I'll read the statement aloud, pass the card to you, and then start the timer.

Question

True or False? Aside from Matzo, the seder plate consists only of the Maror, the Pesach, the Egg and the karpas.

CRANIUM CUSTOM

star performer



See reverse.

CRANIUM CUSTOM

word worm



P-A-S-S-O-V-E-R

CRANIUM CUSTOM

data head



False. What's missing?



TEAM: **Borscht**

cameo

To win this **cameo**, your team must choose one performer to **act out silent clues**, just like charades.

Hint
Passover Story

Cameo Word
Nachshon jumping into the sea



TEAM: **Borscht**

gnilleps

To win this **Gnilleps**, choose a teammate who can correctly spell the word below **backwards** on the first try without writing it down. I'll read the word aloud and then start the timer.

Word

QUESTIONS



TEAM: **Borscht**

polygraph

To win this **Polygraph**, your team must determine whether the statement below is **true or false**. I'll read the statement aloud, pass the card to you, and then start the timer.

Question

True or False? The Jews were saved from the 10th plague because they prayed to God not to be killed.

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star performer



Nachshon jumping in sea

CRANIUM CUSTOM

word worm



Q-U-E-S-T-I-O-N-S

CRANIUM CUSTOM

data head



False. Why were they saved?



TEAM: **Gefilte Fish**

sideshow

To win this **sideshow**, choose a performer from your team who can get you to guess the answer on the back of this card by **moving a teammate's arms and legs like a puppet**, with no talking or sound effects.

Hint
Passover Story

Sideshow Word
Placing baby Moshe into the basket in the river.

TEAM: **Gefilte Fish**

zelpuz

To win this **Zelpuz**, your team must **rearrange the letters** in the mixed-up puzzle below to find the answer. I'll read the hint and puzzle aloud, pass the card to you, and then start the timer.

Hint
Passover Seder

Puzzle
DEERS NI EBIN ARBK

TEAM: **Gefilte Fish**

factoid

To win this **factoid**, your team must correctly answer the **question** below. I'll read the question aloud, pass the card to you, and then start the timer.

Question
Who were Moshe's Parents?

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star performer®



* See reverse

CRANIUM® CUSTOM

word worm®



* Seder in Bnei Brak

CRANIUM® CUSTOM

data head®



* Yocheved and Amram

TEAM: **Borscht**

sideshow

To win this **sideshow**, choose a performer from your team who can get you to guess the answer on the back of this card by **moving a teammate's arms and legs like a puppet**, with no talking or sound effects.

Hint
Passover Story

Sideshow Word
Miriam Leading Bnei Yisrael in song through the sea.

TEAM: **Borscht**

zelpuz

To win this **Zelpuz**, your team must **rearrange the letters** in the mixed-up puzzle below to find the answer. I'll read the hint and puzzle aloud, pass the card to you, and then start the timer.

Hint
Passover Seder

Puzzle
HOW WSOKN NOE?

TEAM: **Borscht**

factoid

To win this **factoid**, your team must correctly answer the **question** below. I'll read the question aloud, pass the card to you, and then start the timer.

Question
What number do you get when multiplying the number of plagues by the number of matzos and subtracting the number of sons?

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star performer®



* See reverse

CRANIUM® CUSTOM

word worm®



* WHO SWONK OHM

CRANIUM® CUSTOM

data head®



* $92 = 4 - (4 \times 01)$



TEAM: **Gefilte Fish**

sideshow

To win this **sideshow**, choose a performer from your team who can get you to guess the answer on the back of this card by **moving a teammate's arms and legs like a puppet**, with no talking or sound effects.

Hint
Passover Story

Sideshow Word
Egyptians suffering from the plague of Lice (kinim)

TEAM: **Gefilte Fish**

zelpuz

To win this **Zelpuz**, your team must **rearrange the letters** in the mixed-up puzzle below to find the answer. I'll read the hint and puzzle aloud, pass the card to you, and then start the timer.

Hint
Passover Seder

Puzzle
LAGPEU FO HET SFIRT
NBRO

TEAM: **Gefilte Fish**

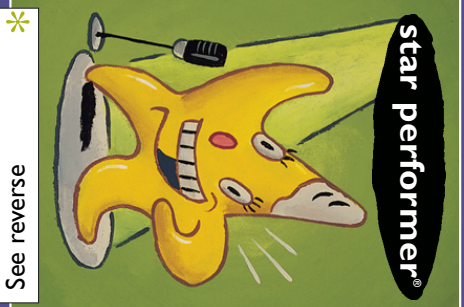
factoid

To win this **factoid**, your team must correctly answer the **question** below. I'll read the question aloud, pass the card to you, and then start the timer.

Question
In the song "Who knows one?" What is 13?

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star performer®



See reverse

CRANIUM® CUSTOM

word worm®



Plague of the First Born

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data head®



The 13 attributes of Gosh

TEAM: **Borscht**

sideshow

To win this **sideshow**, choose a performer from your team who can get you to guess the answer on the back of this card by **moving a teammate's arms and legs like a puppet**, with no talking or sound effects.

Hint
Passover Story

Sideshow Word
Jews putting the blood on the doorpost.

TEAM: **Borscht**

zelpuz

To win this **Zelpuz**, your team must **rearrange the letters** in the mixed-up puzzle below to find the answer. I'll read the hint and puzzle aloud, pass the card to you, and then start the timer.

Hint
Passover Seder

Puzzle
YLAUIHE NAIVHA

TEAM: **Borscht**

factoid

To win this **factoid**, your team must correctly answer the **question** below. I'll read the question aloud, pass the card to you, and then start the timer.

Question
We wash our hands twice at the Seder. Which time do we say the bracha "al n'tilat yadayim"?

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star performer®



See reverse

CRANIUM® CUSTOM

word worm®



ELIHU HANAVI

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The second time.

