

Seder: Introduction

Metaphor to understand the Seder as a whole:

There was a poor man that used to sell rags while dressed in ripped clothing, in town to make a living. One day he became extremely wealthy (By winning the lottery or the like) and no longer needed to sell these rags. Each year on the anniversary of the day he became wealthy, he would go back to town and sell rags dressed exactly as he would have years before. This was to remember where he came from. On this day he would also give to his children, new clothes, gifts and make a big meal. One year he lost all his money and needed to go and beg once again. When he returned home, the children saw his ripped clothing and expected to receive all sorts of gifts like the previous years. He explained that in past years this was only a remembrance of their poor years but now it is once again the times of poverty. So too by us. There are two different Nusachs of the “Ha Lachma Anya”, either this is the bread of poverty or this is like the bread of poverty. The former represents where we once were before the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, only symbolizing the affliction. While the latter represents our current state, homeless without the Beis HaMikdash. We should be conscious of our current state as we go through the Seder and its story. (Heard from Rav M. Willig)

Kadeysh:

Question: What do the four cups symbolize? Why are there four of them?

Answer: Each of the four cups, symbolize one of the four terms that are used to recognize our Geula from Mitzrayim. They are "I will take you out...", "I will save you...", "I will redeem you...", "I will take you as a nation..." The first step in our redemption was stopping the harsh labour that occurred in Egypt. The second was Hashem removing us from the physical boundaries of Egypt. Only after Kriyas Yam Suf and the destruction of the Egyptians did the Jews feel they were truly redeemed from Mitzrayim. The final step was Hashem unting us his chosen nation, Klal Yisroel. (Lubavitcher Rebbi)

Urchatz:

Question: Why do we wash our hands tonight if the Minhag throughout the year is to be lenient on the matter (Assuming that really we should be washing our hands for wet fruits and vegetables)?

Answer: Explains Rav Shimshon Pincus that the night is meant to rebuild oneself from the bottom up. The seder is a total cleansing of the soul as we go through the

process of the redemption from Mitzrayim. In order to accomplish this, we need to make sure that our body is ready for this. This washing is meant to prepare ourselves for the night ahead, symbolically saying that we are starting fresh and coming back to Hashem. The whole goal of the night is to reestablish the beauty of our relationship with our creator. This is also the reason why there is no Bracha recited on this Netillah, since it's not a Halachic washing. (Rav Pincus)

Karpas:

Question: What do the Karpas represent?

Answer: So that the children should see something different such as eating something before washing on bread. This is to keep them interested in the Hagada.

Also:

To represent the physical hardships that we went through. (Gemera)

Question: Why do we dip the Karpas in salt water (Or similar)?

Answer: So that the children should see something different such as eating something before washing on bread. This is to keep them interested in the Hagada.

Also:

To represent the tears that were shed by Klal Yisroel in Egypt. (Gemera)

Yachatz:

Question: Why do we break the middle Matzah which represents Shevet Levi, the only tribe that wasn't enslaved by Mitzrayim? (Kohen, Levi, Yisroel)

Answer: Rav Moshe answers that Shevet Levi felt as if they were enslaved since their brethren were going through those tough times. That is the ultimate message of feeling your fellow Jew's pain. (Rav Moshe)

Question: According to those that have only 2 Matzahs, how can one fulfill the requirement of Lechem Mishna (Two full loaves of bread) with the broken piece of Matzah?

Answer: The broken piece of Matzah, the Lechem Oni, is in its complete state. The bread of affliction is meant to be incomplete as it represents the slavery and hardships that we went through in Egypt. (Rav Eli Baruch Shulman)

Question: Why do we put away the bigger half of Matzah?

Answer: This symbolizes the ultimate Geulah that has yet to come. (Chasam Sofer)

Maggid:

HaLachma Anya: Bread of the poor person

Question: Does the Matzah represent the bread of affliction/poverty or the bread of redemption?

Answer: Both. That's the whole idea of Matzah. For one item to represent our entire process as a nation. The same bread that was given to us as a cheap source of nutrition by the Egyptians, is the ultimate representation of our freedom as we quickly leave Mitzrayim saved by Hashem. This is true about all aspects of life. Many times the thing that we view as a Klala (Curse) turns into a great Bracha (Blessing). (Rav Shulman)

Question: *If all we have to eat is “Poor Bread”, why do we invite people to eat with us?*

Answer: It's not that all we have to eat is Matzah. The idea of the night is to truly feel what it was like to be in Mitzrayim. If someone can really plug into that idea, they will truly feel the pain of those that have nothing. They will invite all those that don't have enough for themselves to join with them.

Mah Nishtana: The four questions of the night

Question: *Why do we ask these questions?*

Answer: Questions are the key to the heart. When someone is genuinely bothered by something, they can't stop thinking about it. The reason the Seder is formulated as Q and A is to get us to care about the story. To have a burning desire to answer the questions. That is also why questions are more than encouraged throughout the whole Seder, to get everyone involved.

Question: *Why does it say that throughout the year we don't dip at all, even though every week we dip our Challah into salt?*

Answer: Only dipping into a liquid constitutes “Halachic Dipping”. (Rav Chaim K)

Avodim Hayenu: We were slaves in Egypt

Question: *What does it mean that Hashem took us out with a “Yad Chazakah”, a strong hand... Everything that Hashem does is “strong and powerful”?*

Answer: This “Strong hand” speaks to the effect of the action. Even though anything that has already changed can revert back to the way it was if Hashem wills it, this will never be undone. This freedom that we were given will last forever. (Rav Moshe)

Question: *Had we not been brought out by Hashem we and all future generations would be still enslaved by the Egyptians? But all major powers have fallen through all of history...?*

Answer: The slavery of generations wouldnt be a physical one but a spiritual one. Had we not been removed from the lowest level of impurity

that we were in we would always be slaves to the ideology of the Egyptians. Once Hashem saved us and gave us the Torah we were no longer held captive by the desires of the physical world. (Rav M. Willig)

Rebbi Eiliezer Ben Azarya:

Question: There are two types of “remembering Yetziyas Mitzrayim”, the first being the Chiyuv every day to just remember it, and the second being the obligation to speak out the whole story. Why is the former being spoken about when in reality the latter is the obligation of the night?

Answer: There was an orphan boy that was adopted. The new parents took care of everything for him. (Food, clothes, schooling, etc.) When the boy went off to college they gave him a special present, a brand new Ferrari. Everyday he would call and speak of this great gift that they had given him. Each day praising a different aspect of the car and how it helped him. After a while of this, the father says “For 18 years we gave you everything, and all you can thank us for is the Ferrari?” From then on the boy called and thanked them for adopting him and taking care of everything. One year after he left for college, the boy takes the car into the shop to get its one year inspection and it passes every test with flying colors. The boy calls his father and tells him that the car is in perfect shape! The father doesn't stop him this time. The next day the boy goes back to thanking the father for all of the goodness that he has given him.

So too by us. Each day we must thank Hashem for adopting us and making us his nation. Only once a year we focus on the actual events of Yetziyas Mitzrayim. The reason why this Mishna is presented here is to highlight the juxtaposition of the two different ways of thanking Hashem. (Maysa Nisim)

Baruch HaMakom:

Question: Why is this paragraph placed here? (Maysa Nisim)

Answer: Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz explains that this is an introduction to the four sons in the following section. There are four ways of relating to Hashem, which are found in this paragraph:

- 1) Makom: Nature (Relating to Hashem and how he manifests in the world)
- 2) Hoo: Rejection (Refusing to interact with Hashem or even call him by name)
- 3) Torah: Torah (Understanding him through the study of his beautiful Torah)

- 4) Hoo: Through our own parents (Basing the relationship off of what we have been taught our entire lives and only knowing of Hashem as Hoo, and not personally)

He explains further:

- 1) The Chachom explores the world for himself. He analyzes it and finds Hashem in the natural state of things much like Avroham Avinu.
- 2) The Rasha rejects Hashem, ignoring his existence. No matter how often he is taught about Hashem, he refuses to accept his Creator.
- 3) The Tam is “Ish Tam Yoshev Ohalim”, a simple man that sits and studies (Torah). This is the praise given to Yaakov Avinu to highlight his diligence as a Torah Scholar. The Tam finds Hashem through a deeper understanding of Hashem's way which is found in the Torah.
- 4) The SheEyno Yodeya is the one that doesn't know how to ask a question. He hasn't thought for himself, only listening to his parents. Our relationship with Hashem must be formulated by us. (With the help of others.) If one's only understanding of this is through his or her parents, one will not truly be able to relate to the Master of the World.

Note: What is interesting about this point is that the Chachom is not the Torah Scholar. He is only someone that chooses to think about things and contemplate them. By doing just that, he receives the high praise of Chachom, smart/intelligent.

The four sons:

Question: What do the four sons represent?

Answer: They represent generations as they move forward. Someone that comes to America has all the teachings of the previous generations. (Chachom) His son unfortunately threw it all away, rejecting Jewishism. (Rasha) The grandson is confused since his father is secular while his grandfather is a huge Torah Scholar. (Tam) The final generation doesn't know of Judaism since he never saw his great-grandfather. (SheEyno Yodeya) (Heard from Rav M. Willig)

Question: Is Tam a praise or a criticism? By Yaakov Avinu we refer to him as a “Ish Tam Yoshev Ohalim”, a diligent Torah Scholar. The simplicity of Yaakov was a positive description. However, the simple understanding of Tam here,

using context is not good. The boy isn't anything special. What's the difference between Yaakov and the boy in the Haggadah?

Answer: When a boy is young, he is encouraged to ask questions. To ask on what he doesn't understand or even on what he disagrees with. This is the method at which a true foundation of belief is built on. Only once he feels that his questions have been answered can he move forward with his life of Avodas Hashem, serving his creator. A simple child is ok going with the flow, allowing what he is told to go unchallenged. The opposite is true for an adult. In later years once a man has already established his beliefs, he should not constantly challenge them. At that point he should be focused on the actual Avodas Hashem. (Rabbi Ismach from Y.I.G.N.)

Question: Why is the Chachom presented as the opposite of the Rasha... Shouldn't the opposite of Rasha be Tzadik?

Answer: If someone is engrossed in true Torah Study, they are on the path to righteousness. As one learns more about Hashem's ways through the study of Torah, he will begin to refine his character and morals. The author of the Haggadah wanted to highlight this point in referring to the Chachom as the opposite of the Rasha.

Question: Why does it say "Lo" (To him) and not "Lecha" (To you) at the end of the paragraph about the Rasha... We are telling him directly that he wouldn't have been included in the Geula from Mitzrayim so it shouldn't be in the 3rd person?

Answer: When dealing with such a person we should be hesitant to talk to him. People who might bring us away from Hashem should be avoided less they succeed. This teaches us the important lesson of being careful who we surround ourselves with. (Beis HaLevi)

Metchilla... Oved Avodah Zarah: Avroham's father Terach serving false gods

Question: What is this concept doing here in the Haggadah? (Emes L'Yaakov)

Answer: Why do we thank Hashem for taking us out of Mitzrayim... Hashem took us down there?

- ***Metaphor:*** Someone is jogging in a park. Next thing he knows, he gets mugged by a thief asking for money. Once he gives the thief the money, he is let go and begins to run away. Unfortunately, he then trips and gets very scrapped up. The thief (Who did not mean to hurt him physically) picks him up and brings him to the hospital. The victim is going to thank the thief for saving him? Of course not, he caused the whole situation!

- Terach, Avroham's father, had so much Tumah from all the Avodah Zarah that even once Avraham purified himself as a Jew it still lasted until the next generation in the form of his son Yishmael. This is also true of the next generation in the form of Eysov. Then after Yaakov, Klal Yisroel still needed a final cleansing which would come through Mitzrayim. We needed to go down there to remove all of the Tumah that was leftover from our ancestry. This was done through the process of slavery and hardship, culminating with Yetizyas Mitzrayim.
- ***This shows us that even going down to Mitzrayim was an act of kindness from Hashem!***

Baruch Shomer Havtachtu: Hashem guarded his promise to Avroham

Question: The Gematria of "Keytz" is 190, symbolizing the amount of years that were removed from the originally planned length of time in Egypt (Which was 400 years). What's the big deal... Hashem took 190 years off... What is the significance of 190 that it warrants such an emphasis?

Answer: Hashem had two different calculations to deal with:

- 1) The amount of time that Klal Yisroel would be in Egypt. (400 years)
- 2) The shortening of the amount of time spent in Egypt would be relative to how hard the labor/slavery was there.

So while Hashem wanted to shorten the amount of time that we were in Mitzrayim, he needed to make sure that the hardships we went through would be bearable. 190 years shows the precise care that Hashem took of us in Egypt, making a perfect calculation of the two. (Brisker Rav)

Vehi SheAmda:

Question: What is this wealth/treasure that we will leave with (See previous paragraph/The paragraph of Vehi SheAmda is a build off of the last line of the last paragraph)... Where has it been all these years? It says that it will stand with us for every generation?

Answer: The Gemara (Brachos) says that Hashem told us we should take the money from Egypt so that Avroham couldn't say that Hashem didn't keep his word, "And your nation will leave a wealthy one". But Hashem needs to keep his word regardless of what anyone says?

- ***Metaphor:*** A young boy is working for someone. After many weeks of working the boss pays the boy for his work in the form of a check. The boy begins to cry, he doesn't want a piece of paper, he

wants money. So the father asks the boss to go to the bank and give the boy 100 shiny pennies. The boy is now thrilled with what he got! The father then deposits the check understanding it's true value.

- So too by us! We don't see the value in the gift we have gotten from Hashem. The beautiful Torah, the ultimate gift! The Torah is what has protected us through all these years of persecution. Avraham understood the value of the Torah while those that left Mitzrayim did not. Had we not taken the money Avraham could have said "I understand that the Torah is the real wealth that you promised but, the nation doesn't feel that you kept your word." It is for this reason that Hashem asked us to take the money from the Egyptians. (Emes L'Yaakov)

Question: What is this great wealth/treasure that we will leave with? What does the concept of Lavan that follows have to do with this current point?

Answer: The phrase of VehiSheAmda does not refer to the least line of the last paragraph, rather to the concept of being a "Stranger" in foreign lands. The fact that we will always feel as strangers in the land of the Goyim is what has saved us for generations and generations. In a situation in which we get too close and assimilate too much, Hashem makes it that the Goyim begin to hate us so that we don't get too close to them. We see this from Lavan as well. We were related and were at serious risk of getting too close to him. So the Haggadah brings that he tried to wipe us out in totality. (The Netziv)

VaYigar Sham:

Question: What does it mean, "To reside here (In Egypt)"?

Answer: Had Yaakov's/Klal Yisroel's intention been to live there permanently, there would have been no chance at the redemption. We must always be striving to get back to Eretz Yisroel, recognizing the fact that we are in foreign lands temporarily.

The rest of the transliteration of the Pasuk:

Question: What is the difference between "Did bad to us", "Afflicted us", and "Put upon us hard work"?

Answer: Bad refers to the Egyptian's evil intentions. All of the hardships were solely a result of the hatred they felt for us. Affliction refers to how hard the actual work was. Finally, "Hard work" refers to how abnormal the work was. They gave male jobs to the women and visa versa. (Gr'a)

VeNitzak El Hashem:

Question: What is the significance of the fact that on the day the king died, Klal Yisorel called out to Hashem?

Answer: On the day that the king died, the Jews had been off from work on account of the fact that everyone attended the funeral. This gave them the time to finally think about their lives. Upon contemplating all the hardships they are going through, they turned to Hashem and cried towards him for help. All too often we get lost in our daily routine, forgetting to think about the important things in life... Are we happy? Are we doing right by those that we love? Are we serving Hashem?!?!? (The Netziv)

Bonus Point: This is the silver lining in all of the Corona craziness. We have time to sit back and think about our lives. Spend time with those that we love, while we figure out our paths in life.

BeYad Chazaka: Hashem took us out with a “Strong hand”

Question: What does it mean that Hashem took us out with a “Yad Chazakah”, a strong hand... Everything that Hashem does is “strong and powerful”?

Answer: This “Strong hand” speaks to the effect of the action. Even though anything that has already changed can revert back to the way it was if Hashem wills it, this will never be undone. This freedom that we were given will last forever. (Rav Moshe) (Repeated from above)

Kinim: The plague of lice

Question: After the plague of lice, Pharaoh's sorcerers claimed “This is the finger of God”. This happened now because this was the first plague that they couldn't duplicate in any sort of way. What is the phrase “Finger of God”?

Answer: Even after they realized that this wasn't Moshe's doing, and finally admitted to the power of God, the sorceres still needed to take a “Shot” at God. They limited his power and greatness to only a finger as opposed to a hand or even “This is God himself”. We see here that even when the truth is in front of us, often we still rationalize and convince ourselves that we aren't wrong. Life is about owning up to our mistakes and growing from them. (Rav Moshe)

Barod: The plague of hail

Question: Is there a special significance that can be seen during the plague of hail?

Answer: The Medrash brings down that there was fire encased within the hail. Ice and fire are total opposites that naturally cannot coincide together. We see Hashem's ultimate power here. The ability to make two things that naturally cannot exist together, do his ultimate will. He is the master of nature, deciding what is "Natural".

The Simanim of the Macos: Rabbi Yehuda

Question: *What is the significance of these three categories? Why are the Macos broken up in this way?*

Answer: The three different groups of plagues were sent for different purposes: (The Malbim)

- 1) The first group was meant to prove that Hashem is present in the world. This is evident by "Dam" as it says "With this it will be known that I am Hashem".
- 2) The second group was meant to prove that Hashem controls every part of the world. This is evident by "Arov" as it says "So that it will be known that I Hashem am in the midst of the land".
- 3) The third group was meant to prove that there is nothing else like Hashem. He is the only God that exists and nothing matches his power. This is evident by "Barod" as it says "So that it will be known that there is no one like me in all of the lands."
- 4) The final stage was Makos Bechoros. This wasn't meant to prove anything like the others, but rather to punish the Egyptians after not having listened to the above. (And to free Klal Yisroel.)

Dayenu: It would have been enough

Question: *What does it mean, had we only been brought to Har Sinai but not been given the Torah it would have been enough... The only reason to go to Har Sinai was to receive the Torah?*

Answer: A beautiful metaphor helps us to understand the answer:

Metaphor: When one walks into a perfume store and only looks at all the different products, he leaves smelling like perfume! So too by the Torah! Had we only come to Har Sinai and been Zoche to be that close to receiving the Torah we would have gained a tremendous amount, beyond comparison. We must take this to heart and value/cherish the Torah that we were given.

Question: What does it mean, had we been taken into Eretz Yisroel but not had the Beis HaMikdash built for us it would have been enough... Isn't all of the significance of Eretz Yisroel reliant on the Beis HaMikdash?

Answer: Of Course not! Eretz Yisroel is the home of the Jewish people. Hashem wants us there regardless of the Beis HaMikdash. The first Rashi in Chumash speaks about how the entire Torah was written in story form (And not as a straight book of laws) so that we know that we have claim to our homeland.

Pesach, Matzah, VeMaror: Rabban Gamliel

Question: Why is the order of the three Mitzvos recorded as Pesach, Matzah and Maror... 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 as we left Egypt?

Answer: The order of these Mitzvos is most significant to least significant. The Korban Pesach is the most important as the other two are reliant on it. Meaning, the Mitzvos of Matzah and Maror aren't Min HaTorah without the presence of the Korban Pesach. Then there is the Mitzvah of Matza which is partially Min HaTorah (There are two aspects to the Mitzvah of Matza. One to eat it with the Korban PESach and another to eat it in itself. The latter is still a Mitzvah Min HaTorah nowadays.) Lastly is Maror which is completely Rabbinic without the Korban Pesach. (The Rav)

B'Chol Dor VaDor: Each man must view it as if he himself was saved by Hashem in Egypt

Question: What is the purpose of this statement?

Answer: This concept is meant to be a Chizuk for each individual in Klal Yisroel. Since the entire purpose of Yetziyas Mitzrayim was to receive the Torah and begin serving Hashem, understanding the idea that "Hashem saved me so that I can serve him" will help with our Avodas Hashem tremendously. This is similar to what Chazal tells us, "A man should always say that the world was created for me." This idea is meant to encourage man to succeed by the realization of how important we are to Hashem. (The Netziv)