

Pesach

תשפ"ד 5784
COMPANION

HALACHOS, DIVREI TORAH, AND
INSPIRATION BY

RABBI SHMUEL SILBER
with Rabbi Aryeh Richter &
Rabbi Yehuda Gross



תורת חיים
SUBURBAN ORTHODOX
CONGREGATION



INSTITUTE FOR
JEWISH
CONTINUITY

Schedule

PESACH תשפ"ד • 2024

Sunday Night, April 21

6:15p Plag Mincha
7:40p Mincha/Maariv
After 8:25p Bedikas Chametz

Monday, April 22 - Nisan 14 Erev Pesach Taanis Bechorim

5:50a Daf Yomi
6:45a Shacharis
7:25a Siyum Bechorim
9:00a Shacharis

10:16a Latest Time to Eat Chametz
Before 11:33a Biur Chametz/Kol Chamira

1st Night of Pesach

7:34p Candle Lighting
7:15p Mincha followed by Maariv
Before Maariv - Seder Hisorirus (Inspiration) by
Rabbi Silber
Begin Seder after 8:30p

Tuesday, April 23 - Nisan 15 1st Day Pesach

8:45a Shacharis
9:41a Krias Shema
6:50p Daf Yomi (Given by Rabbi Richter)
7:40p Mincha

2nd Night of Pesach

Sefiras Ha'Omer Hisorirus (Inspiration) by
Rabbi Silber
8:15p Maariv & Sefiras HaOmer (1)
8:35p Candle Lighting & Seder Preparation
Begin Seder after 8:30p

Wed., April 24 - Nisan 16 2nd Day Pesach

8:45a Shacharis
9:41a Krias Shema
6:50p Daf Yomi (Given by Rabbi Richter)
7:40p Mincha followed by Shiur - Topics in
Contemporary Halacha (Rabbi Richter)
8:38p Maariv/Havdalah/Sefiras HaOmer (2)

Thursday, April 25 - Nisan 17 Chol Hamoed

6:30a, 9:00a Shacharis
7:30a Daf Yomi
7:40p Mincha/Maariv/Sefiras HaOmer (3)

Friday, April 26 - Nisan 18 Chol Hamoed

6:30a, 9:00a Shacharis
7:30a Daf Yomi
7:00p Mincha/Maariv
7:38p Candle Lighting
Sefiras HaOmer (4)

April 27 - Nisan 19 Shabbos Chol Hamoed

8:45a Shacharis
9:38p Krias Shema
6:00p Pirkei Avos ethics of the Fathers/Lessons
for the Children
6:20p Early Mincha
6:45a Daf Yomi
7:35p Mincha followed by Shalosh Seudos
8:41p Maariv/Havdalah/ Sefiras HaOmer (5)



תורת חיים
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Schedule

PESACH תשפ"ד • 2024

Sunday, April 28 - Nisan 20 Chol Hamoed

7:00a, 9:00a Shacharis
8:00a Daf Yomi

2nd Days of Pesach
Shevi'i Shel Pesach

7:15p Mincha Followed by Maariv
7:40p Candle Lighting
Sefiras HaOmer (6)

Monday, April 29 - Nisan 21
Shevi'i Shel Pesach

8:45a Shacharis
9:37a Krias Shema
6:55p Daf Yomi

Acharon Shel Pesach

7:45p Mincha
Followed by Divrei Hisorirus (Inspiration) by *Rabbi Silber*
Followed by Maariv/ Sefiras HaOmer (7)
8:41p Candle Lighting

Tuesday, April 30 - Nisan 22
Acharon Shel Pesach

8:45a Shacharis
9:36a Krias Shema
10:30a Yizkor (Approx.)
6:50p Daf Yomi
7:40p Mincha followed by Neilas HaChag
8:43p Maariv/Havdalah/Sefiras HaOmer (8)

**Please note: A more detailed 2nd days
shiur schedule will be shared during
Chol Hamoed**



Wishing You a Chag
Kasher V'Sameach!
לשנה הבאה בירושלים

HALACHOS & GUIDELINES FOR THE SEDER

Kiddush & Havdalah

Kiddush and Havdalah (yaknahaz) are recited together at the Seder as printed in the Haggadah. One should recite Borei Me'orei Ha'aish using the Yom Tov candles, putting them together side by side while upright. They should not be tilted to touch each other. Alternatively, one may recite the bracha using a non-frosted incandescent light bulb which was turned on before Shabbos (or was turned on by a timer that was set before Shabbos).

At the Seder, there is one change to the Haggadah: In the bracha of Asher Galanu prior to the second cup of wine, we reverse the order and say min hapesachim u'min hazevachim (instead of the opposite order). This is due to the change in the order of korbanos when Pesach occurs on Motzei Shabbos.

The Seder

The Seder service is divided into 14 sections (the word Seder means "order"):

- Kadesh - Sanctifying the day over a cup of wine
- Urchatz - Washing the hands prior to eating karpas
- Karpas - Eating a vegetable like potatoes or parsley dipped in salt water
- Yachatz - The breaking of the middle matza
- Maggid - The story of our Exodus from Egypt
- Rachtza - Washing the hands in preparation for eating the matza
- Motzi Matza - Eating the required amount of matza
- Maror - Eating the required amount of bitter herbs dipped in charoses
- Koraich - Eating the "Hillel Sandwich" of matza and maror, dipped in charoses
- Shulchan Oraich - Eating the festive meal
- Tzafun - "Dessert," through eating the required amount of Afikomen (matza)
- Barech - Grace After Meals
- Hallel - Prayers in praise of Hashem
- Nirtzah - Conclusion of the Seder and the festive songs

The Seder Plate - Kearah

The Seder plate, upon which all the symbols of Pesach are placed, is at the center of the celebration. A large plate is set at the head of the table (and in many households, before each guest at the Seder) and includes the following items:

- Three covered Matzos.
 - A roasted meat bone, on the upper right, to remember the time when our ancestors would offer the Korban Pesach (Passover Sacrifice) in observance of the holiday.
 - A roasted egg, on the upper left, as a remembrance of the additional festival offering by our ancestors in celebration of Pesach.
 - Maror (bitter herbs: horseradish or romaine lettuce leaves), placed in the center and at bottom, to remind us of the bitter slavery suffered by our people during their long stay in Egypt.
 - Charoses, on the lower right, a mixture of nuts, apples, cinnamon, and wine, that serves as a symbol of the mortar used for making the bricks with which our ancestors built cities for Paroh.
- Many in the Sephardic community add fruits such as raisins, pomegranates, cinnamon, ginger and other sweet ingredients to the charoses.
- Karpas (potatoes, parsley, or any vegetable), on the lower left, to be dipped in salt water during the Seder, signaling the festive nature of the meal and to arouse the curiosity of the children.
- Some in the Sephardic community dip the Karpas into Kosher for Pesach vinegar instead of salt water.

HALACHOS & GUIDELINES FOR THE SEDER

Basic Seder Requirements & Measurements

FOUR CUPS OF WINE

Since everyone is obligated to drink four cups of wine during the Seder to commemorate the redemption of our people, each person attending the Seder should have his or her own cup of wine. Ashkenazim say a bracha over each of the four cups of wine. Most Sephardim only recite brachos over the first and third cups of wine.

The first of the Seder night mitzvos is the drinking of four cups of wine (known in Hebrew as Arba Kosos) by both men and women, in tribute to the Almighty for the four promises made and fulfilled concerning the redemption (see Exodus 6:6-7). In honor of the prophet Eliyahu (Elijah), an additional cup of wine is placed on the table. This wine is not drunk. Eliyahu is the symbol of peace and freedom that one day will reign throughout the world. To symbolize the coming of Eliyahu, the door is opened (following the meal) and all rise to welcome him with the words “Baruch Haba - Blessed is he who comes.” Based on the halachik decisions of Rav Moshe Feinstein zt”l, the following are the minimum amounts of wine required during the Seder:

For the Arba Kosos (four required cups of wine), for Kiddush (except on Friday night) and for Havdalah, the cup must contain at least 3.3 fluid ounces (revi'is ha-lug) in size. The obligation is fulfilled if more than one-half (rov kos) of each cup is consumed after each blessing over the wine.

Since the regular Friday evening Kiddush throughout the year requires a cup that contains at least 4.42 fluid ounces, the Friday night Seder Kiddush requires 4.42 fluid ounces, while the other three cups require 3.3 fluid ounces.

MINIMUM STRENGTH OF WINE

Note: The Bracha over all these mixtures is “Hagafen”

- Full-strength (undiluted) wine is required for the Arba Kosos.
- If one's health does not permit this, one may dilute the wine with grape juice. One should be careful to only dilute the wine as much as necessary, with the least amount of grape juice possible.
- If for health reasons one cannot use wine at all, one may substitute grape juice.
- If one must dilute grape juice with water, the ratio should not exceed two-thirds cup water to one-third cup grape juice.
- If one does not have enough wine to perform the mitzvah (Kiddush, Havdalah, etc.), water may be added but not in excess of two-fifths cup wine to three-fifths cup water.

MAGGID

Relating the story of our Exodus from Egypt is the vital mitzvah of the Seder night. The Torah teaches us that one is specifically obligated to tell the story of Passover to the children (V'hegadita l'vincha). It is therefore important for everyone present, the children in particular, to understand the story. Throughout the Seder, it is appropriate to offer commentary or insights into the Exodus, and anyone who amplifies the story through questions, interpretations, or discussion, is deemed to be “praiseworthy.” Most importantly, children should be encouraged to raise any questions they have at the Seder – separate from the well-known “Mah Nishtana” – to further demonstrate the true meaning of freedom.

MATZAH

The mitzvah of eating matza at the Seder is one of the most important of our Torah commandments, and both men and women are required to fulfill this mitzvah. We eat matza at three specific points during the Seder service:

Motzi Matza: This matza is eaten immediately after the appropriate blessings are recited.

Koraich: The sandwich of matza and maror, eaten prior to the main meal.

Afikomen (dessert): The eating of matza at the conclusion of the Seder.

HALACHOS & GUIDELINES FOR THE SEDER

The halachik requirement is to eat a “k’zayis” (the volume of an olive) of Matza Shmurah, at each of these points during the Seder. Matza Shmurah has been supervised by a Jew from the time of harvest through baking.

Based on the halachik decisions of the late Rabbi Moshe Feinstein zt”l, the following are the minimum amounts of Matza Shmura required during the Seder:

Motzi Matza: a piece equivalent in size to 6 inches by 4 inches

Koraich: a piece equivalent to 6 inches by 3 inches

Afikomen: a piece equivalent to 6 inches by 4 inches

If for health reasons, one cannot eat matza, Shmurah Matza meal (upon which one is permitted to recite the Hamotzi) may be substituted as follows:

- After reciting the bracha “Al Achilas Matza” and for the Afikomen, an amount of matza meal that can be compacted into a vessel measuring 1.5 fluid ounces.

- For Koraich – an amount of matza meal that can be compacted into a vessel holding 1.1 fluid ounces.

Matza Ashira: Most Sephardim, unlike Ashkenazim, permit matza ashira, which is made from fruit juice or eggs, on Pesach. Please check with your Rabbi to determine the appropriate use of these products on Pesach. Some Sephardic communities pass the Afikomen around the Seder table from right shoulder to right shoulder, thus reenacting the Exodus from Egypt.

MAROR

Bitter Herbs - horseradish or romaine lettuce. The eating of bitter herbs is another Seder night mitzvah, reminding us of the bitterness of slavery. Both men and women must eat the equivalent of a k’zayis. Bottled horseradish does not fulfill the mitzvah of maror. When Romaine lettuce is used, each leaf must be carefully inspected to ensure that there are no insects. Prior to the inspection, the outer leaves should be removed and discarded. Separate all leaves and wash each one thoroughly under a hard stream of water. Only then should the individual leaves be examined under good lighting. (Careful washing will ensure that no Torah laws are violated by the ingestion of insects.)

Rav Moshe Feinstein zt”l ruled that one may use iceberg lettuce for maror.

Sephardim do not use horseradish, as it has a sharp taste and not a bitter one. The Sephardic custom is to use the fresh leaves or stalks of Romaine lettuce or endives but not the root. One should check the maror for bugs on the eve of Passover, before the first Seder.

kadesh - yachatz

INSIGHTS TO SHARE THROUGHOUT THE SEDER

THE DEEPER MEANING



We make Kiddush all of the time, yet tonight, it is called not Kiddush but Kadesh (to sanctify). The goal of the night is to sanctify ourselves, discover our untapped holiness and figure out how we can become the best version of ourselves. Think: what do I need to do to increase the holiness in my life?

kadesh



The Midrash explains that we wash to remember the episode of Avraham and the three angelic guests he invited into his home. Before they entered, Avraham asked them to wash their feet. Rashi explains that Avraham assumed they were idolaters who worshipped the dust. "Before you enter my tent, you must wash away all impurities."

There are things in life which hold us back, tether us to present mediocrity or persistent pain and frustration. At the Seder we wash them away. We let go of the things holding us back so we may move forward, accomplish great things and seize our destiny.



Rebbi Nachman of Breslov explains that we take a potato, dip it in saltwater and we find it so delicious (most of us come to the Seder very hungry). We are reminded that one does not need vast wealth or extensive materialistic possessions to find happiness. Happiness is a choice and once you make that choice you can find true simcha even in the smallest of things.

reppas



We break the middle Matzah and return half between the two whole Matzos. We designate the other half for the Afikomen. Rav Mendel of Rimanov compares this to two beloved friends who must part ways. They take a picture of the two and tear it in half. Each friend keeps the photo of the other, ensuring they never forget one another.

The Matzah is a picture of God's salvational power and love for us. He took us out of Egypt so quickly that there was no time to let the dough rise. It is a picture of us. We followed God into the desert with hearts full of trust, love and hope. At times we move away from God and at times we feel God may move away from us. We each take our piece of Matzah so we may never forget one another.

maggid - dayeinu

INSIGHTS TO SHARE THROUGHOUT THE SEDER

THE DEEPER MEANING



We must tell the Exodus story. The Seder is the opportunity for parents to share messages of belief and tradition with children. We encourage our children to ask questions and gain deeper understanding. These questions begin with the Mah Nishtana. The familiar words and tune set the tone for the entire night. Yet, the Gemara explains that even if a person is making the Seder alone, one must ask these questions to themselves? Must I sing the Mah Nishtana to myself? The answer is a resounding – yes. The Jew must always sing. Whether I am surrounded by friends and family or alone at my table – I must sing. Whether times are good or turbulent – I must sing. The greatest power we possess is the ability to find hope, happiness and optimism even in the most difficult of times. The moment you find the courage to sing is the moment you begin to see the beauty even in the midst of difficulty.

The Mishna introduces the Mah Nishtana with the phrase, “V’kan haben shoel (it is here that the son asks).” The great Chassidic masters explain each of us is a son/daughter of Hashem. At the Seder we have an awesome opportunity to ask Hashem for what we need. Pesach is the Yom Tov of miracles. We each need our personal miracles – ask now for yourself and for your people.



We love the tune, but the words are strange. We say, “it would have been enough.” Is that true? Would it have been enough if God had taken us out of Egypt but not split the sea? Would it have been enough if God had taken us into the desert but not provided us with food?

Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twersky explains that too often we wait to give thanks until everything is complete. We only express gratitude when “all the pieces fall into place.” Dayeinu reminds us to give thanks for what we have now. Dayeinu doesn’t mean it would have been enough and we would have needed nothing further; it means each and every thing You, God do for us is enough to elicit an expression of gratitude.

Pesach Shiurim & Seder Symbolism at
rabbisilber.com/topic/pesach

Rabban Gamliel - tzafun

INSIGHTS TO SHARE THROUGHOUT THE SEDER

THE DEEPER MEANING



Rabban Gamliel explains that one must discuss the three pillars of the Seder experience, Korban Pesach (Paschal Lamb), Matzah, Maror (bitter herbs)

PESACH - The offering derives its name from the fact that God passed over our homes during the death of the first born (10th plague). We sat in our homes with our family partaking of the Paschal Lamb, while God brought justice upon Egypt. There are times in which we must be active partners with God in shaping human destiny and there are times when we must allow God to run His world and we become spectators.

MATZAH - Earlier in the Haggadah (Ha Lachma Anya) Matzah was referred to as the bread of affliction, which we consumed while we were slaves. Here, Matzah is defined as the bread of freedom. We left Egypt with such haste that there was no time for the dough to rise. Which one is it? Matzah reminds us that life is what you make of it. Some look at the Matzah and see the bread of affliction, some look at the Matzah and see the bread of redemption. It's a choice we each must make. When we look at ourselves and our lives, do we only see what is broken and deficient or are we able to focus on that which is good, beautiful and whole. Life is like a box of Matzah.

MAROR - We consume bitter herbs to remind us of our servitude in Egypt. The Talmud explains that it is preferable to use lettuce for maror. But lettuce isn't bitter? The commentaries explain that if you leave it in the ground for too long, it becomes bitter. We all have challenges and difficulties in life. If you allow them to take root in the soil of your soul, they will embitter you and tarnish your outlook. We must find the courage to deal with our personalistic challenges and not allow them to turn us bitter or cynical.



We remember the sandwich of Hillel, where he combined the Pesach Lamb, Matzah and Maror. Some of us have Matzah lives of beautiful redemptive blessing and others have a Maror existence filled with adversity and challenge. We must be cognizant of each other. If you have a Matzah life remember those who have a life with Maror. If you are living through Maror, remember that there is Matzah redemption in your future.



We consume the Afikomen, the piece of Matzah which has been hidden. We eat it as a remembrance of the Paschal Lamb, a representation of our Korban Pesach. The process of redemption as individuals and a nation is constantly unfolding - the greatest moments of redemption are hidden yet - but they are unfolding around us at all times.

barech - nirtzah

INSIGHTS TO SHARE THROUGHOUT THE SEDER

THE DEEPER MEANING



We recite Birkas HaMazon. During benching we stop to thank Hashem for all of the beautiful blessings we have. It is during the Seder that we begin to realize how blessed we really are. Take a few moments to go through the list of things you are thankful for. Recognize the smallest of blessings.

barech



Once we begin to say thank you, we quickly realize how long the list truly is. There are so many things Hashem does for us each and every day. There are big miracles and small miracles. There are the miracles we see and the ones we never even find out about. The Seder provides us with the opportunity to reflect on the miracles of the past and the present. Once we start reflecting, we are unable to stop thanking and praising our Father for all He has provided.

nirtzah



This is the conclusion of the Seder. The Ari z'l explains that when one comes to the end of the Seder one may look back and think to themselves, "I could have done better. I could have recited the blessings with greater concentration. I could have performed the obligations of the evening with greater joy or adherence to details." The Nirtzah section comes along and to tell us all has been accepted by Hashem. God doesn't demand perfection; He simply requests effort. As long as we tried to come closer to Him, to each other and to our inner self, God is happy with us and accepts our service with open arms and unbridled love.

*May we merit to celebrate together
next year in Yerushalayim.*



KADESH

KADESH

IT STARTS WITH SPEECH

We begin the seder with Kadesh, just as we begin every Shabbos and every Yom Tov seuda with the reciting of kiddush. The seder night is not just an opportunity to recall that which happened historically, and the essence of Pesach is not just to remember that we were emancipated thousands of years ago. The Mishnah tells us, "Chayav adam liros es atzmo k'ilu hu yatza miMitzrayim." The message and the mandate of the night of the seder is to view ourselves as if we were the ones who were emancipated from Egypt. What does this mean? Can I actually view myself as if I came out of bondage, having never experienced enslavement? When our ancestors left Egypt thousands of years ago, they had a new lease on life; they embraced their destiny; they pledged to live life to its fullest. The goal of our own Pesach seder is to arm us with the lessons, the ideas, and the ideals so that we too are amply prepared to be able to lead meaningful and impactful lives.

And so, we come to Kadesh, kiddush - the unique part about kiddush is that it is simply a recitation. We make kiddush on a cup of wine, and on Pesach night, the cup of wine is the first of the four cups. But kiddush in its essence is speech, is words, is an articulation. Perhaps what the Rabbonim are trying to teach us is a very profound lesson. The first step to kiddush, the first step to kedusha, to holiness in life is a verbal articulation of who you want to be, what you want to be, and what you want to accomplish.

Sometimes, we wonder why it is that we're not really getting traction in life. I want to do so many things; I want to accomplish so many things, yet I seem to be stuck in one place - because sometimes we fail to fully articulate what we want to do. Imagine setting out in your car with no destination. Yes, I get in the car. Yes, the tank is full with gas, and yes, I'm ready to go; plenty of snacks, plenty of coffee - I'm ready! I'm driving for an hour, two hours, three hours, and I say, "I can't believe I'm not there yet. I can't believe I haven't arrived. I've been driving for three hours! Oh right..., I don't have a destination; I actually didn't plan where I am going." If you don't plan where you're going, of course you can't arrive.

Life follows this same logic. In life, we must have a plan; in life, we must have a destination. There can be a daily destination - where do I want to get to today? What do I want to accomplish today? But then, there are also greater life destinations - what do I want to accomplish? Who do I want to be? I know that I want to be kiddush and want to be Kadesh; I want to have kedusha, holiness and sanctity in my life. How do I make that happen? It's not enough to just want it. Unless you articulate the destination, unless you make a plan, you're getting nowhere. In life, if I want kedusha, if I want fulfillment, if I want self-actualization, if I want to embrace a destiny, it starts with Kadesh, with kiddush, with dibur, speech. The power of the Pesach seder is that it gives me the opportunity to close my eyes, take a step back, and ask myself - what is my destination? Where do I want to go, and who do I want to be? The first step in actualizing my inner freedom is a verbal articulation of what I want out of life. That is the message of Kadesh, the message of Pesach, and a message for each day of life.



URCHATZ WASH IT ALL AWAY

As we continue in our journey through the seder, we find ourselves at the second part of the seder, Urchatz. We wash our hands prior to eating the karpas, a vegetable dipped in salt water. The Gemara discusses the technicalities as to why we perform this ritual washing but ultimately explains that we wash in order to encourage the children to ask questions. Over the course of the seder, we engage in a number of seemingly strange practices to elicit the curiosity and questioning of the children. The entire essence of the Pesach seder is to transmit our history, to transmit our destiny, to transmit the message of our people because the story of our nation is the story of us as individuals as well. However, in order to successfully convey this story, I don't just want to rely on frontal teaching, I don't just want to talk and preach. Instead, I want my children to learn, be engaged, and understand. Therefore, we encourage them to ask questions. And how do we spark their interest so that they ask questions? By doing things that are perhaps a little bit out of the ordinary. One such example is Urchatz, we wash our hands before partaking of the vegetable dipped in salt water.

Rav Yisroel Meir Lau shlita, in his commentary on the Haggadah, says something incredibly beautiful. Rabbi Lau explains, what does Urchatz mean? Urchatz not only means to wash, but sometimes, Urchatz could mean *to wash away*. Over the course of the seder, our job, our sacred mission is "*Chayav adam liros es atzmo k'ilu hu yatza miMitzrayim*." I must view myself as if I have left Egypt. But what does it mean? It can't mean historical Egypt – am I supposed to view myself as though I actually left the slavery of Egypt? Rather, what it means on a deeper level is that everyone has their own Mitzrayim, everyone has their narrow straits, everyone has their difficulties and their challenges. The same way that thousands of years ago we physically left Egypt, Pesach of today gives me the springboard, the platform, the opportunity to leave behind my difficult circumstances and embrace a beautiful new future. I can embrace my destiny, embrace something bigger than my present. Rabbi Lau explains, in order to leave your Mitzrayim, you have to do something very important – Urchatz. You have to wash away the things that are holding you back because we're all shackled by something. The slave is shackled by literal chains; the slave is shackled by his master. But even those of us who don't have a physical master and those of us who aren't bound by physical shackles, are all shackled by something. There is something that holds me back. For some of us, it's negative behaviors. For others, it's toxic relationships. Sometimes, it's the feelings of past failures that weigh us down. Urchatz says - wash it away. Find the courage to figure out what is holding you back, and then find even more courage to let it go.

The beginning of the seder can be viewed almost as a progression - it's Kadesh, Urchatz. Kadesh of course is kiddush. Urchatz is washing before Karpas. But perhaps on a more spiritual, metaphorical level, it's Kadesh Urchatz. You want kedusha, you want accomplishment in life, you want to achieve something? Urchatz – what are you willing to let go of? What are you willing to wash away? How many of us walk around with so much baggage in life? Anger, personalistic toxicity, cynicism, and so many negative emotions that we have acquired over the journey of life for a variety of good reasons. The question is, do you want to hold onto it? Do you want to harbor it in your heart and in your soul forever? By doing so comes a reality that you will forever be stuck in your current circumstances, unable to move forward.

In Avadim Hayinu, we say, "*vi'illu lo hotzi Hakadosh Baruch Hu es avoseinu miMitzrayim, harei anu u'bnei baneinu mishbadim hayinu li'Pharaoh biMitzrayim*." If God would not have taken us out of Egypt, we would all be enslaved to Pharaoh. What does that mean – after thousands of years we'd all be enslaved to Pharaoh if God wouldn't have taken us out? The Haggadah, on a deeper level, is teaching us that if Hashem would not have taken us out of Egypt, we would have still remained enslaved to something. Pesach teaches us that we have the power of freedom. The power of personalistic freedom comes from the ability to identify and let go of that which holds you back. I don't want to stay in Mitzrayim, I don't want to remain mired in mediocrity, I don't want to remain tethered to my present. I want to become the best version of myself, I want Kadesh, I want holiness. How do you do that? Urchatz – identify your Mitzrayim, identify what's holding you back, and find the courage to wash it away. Find the courage to leave your present, to leave the mediocrity, to leave your Mitzrayim, and move forward to become something great.

MAROR

DANGEROUS MAROR

The Torah tells us that amongst the many things that we are commanded to eat on the night of the seder, we are obligated to consume maror, bitter herbs. As we read in the Haggadah, Rabbi Gamliel explains that the reason we are obligated to consume the herbs is to remember the bitterness of our servitude in Egypt, "*Vayimariru es chayei hem ba'avodah kashah.*" The Egyptians bittered our lives with difficult work. To remember the difficulty, the sadness, the bitterness of our circumstances in Egypt, we eat maror. The Gemara explains that the bitter herb of choice was lettuce. The Mishna explains that one would take his lettuce, maror, and dip it into charoses, ground spices, apples, nuts, and wine in a paste-like mixture. And why do we dip the maror into the charoses? The Gemara gives a two-word answer, "*Mishum Kaffa*", because of Kaffa, lit., "poison". Apparently, there was something poisonous in the lettuce of Talmudic times, and it was dangerous. In order to neutralize the "poison" of the lettuce, you would dip it into the charoses. It then posed no danger and could be used to fulfill the mitzva.

Perhaps Chazal are coming to teach us something incredibly profound - sometimes maror can be poisonous. We all have our periods of maror; we all have our periods of difficulty and our moments of overwhelming challenge and adversity. But my obligation in those moments is not to allow the mirrirus, the bitterness, to color the entirety of my circumstances. Have you ever had a day where you're just experiencing a lot of difficulty and challenge? It's incredible to see how one day of challenge can color an entire lifetime. If someone were to stop you on the street after your day of maror and say, "Nu, how's life?" You'd likely respond, "terrible, terrible, terrible, you're not going to believe what happened..." There's a poison in maror. Maror has the ability to poison your life outlook. Difficulty, adversity, and suffering have the ability to poison your well of positivity. The greatest challenge in life is to not allow adversity to color everything.

So many times in life, we run into maror circumstances. The Gemara says something amazing - we take maror on Pesach night because we have an obligation to remember the difficulty of shibud, enslavement, the bitterness of our circumstances. But before I consume maror, I dip it into charoses, I take out the poison. I'm going to consume it - I'm going to remember that which was bitter, but I am not going to allow this maror to overtake me. I'm not going to allow the maror to poison my well of optimism, my outlook, or my disposition. We all have our moments of maror, and for some of us the moments are more than just moments. For some, the moments turn into days, into weeks, into months, and even into years. But no matter how long your maror continues, don't let it poison you! Find the ability to neutralize the poison and maintain a disposition of positivity, optimism, and hope.

KARPAS

SEEING THE MIRACLES OF EVERYDAY LIFE

As we continue in our journey through the seder, we find ourselves in the section titled karpas. When partaking in karpas, we take a vegetable, dip it in salt water, recite the bracha, *borei pri haadama* (having in mind our later obligation of maror), and we consume it. The Rabbis once again explain that we engage in this process so that the children will ask. The practice itself doesn't have significant relevance in halacha or hashkafa, but we follow the process because it's a departure from the norm and will consequently spark the curiosity of the children, creating an opportunity to pass on our mesorah, our tradition. We want both our children and ourselves to be engaged, to question, to think and contemplate.

Rebbi Nachman of Breslov shares a truly beautiful thought. The Rebbe says that Pesach is all about the celebration of the supernatural. Think about the seder – we speak about the makos, the ten plagues, we take a little bit out of our wine, we speak about dayeinu, and delineate every step of our miraculous salvation: the splitting of the sea, Sinaitic revelation, entry into the land of Israel, the man that fell for 3.5 million people over the course of forty years – miracle, after miracle, after miracle. On Pesach night, there is no shortage of the supernatural. Says Rebbi Nachman so beautifully, it is not enough to simply see God in the supernatural. One must strive to see the presence of the Ribono Shel Olam in the natural world as well. The Rebbe poignantly continues, can you see God in a potato? You take a seed, put it in the ground, water it, and amazingly enough, you suddenly have a potato. It starts one way and transforms into something completely different. Moreover, the potato has a peel, and amazingly, the peel is able to protect the internal vegetable from any rot or damage so that it can be safely eaten – it's miraculous. We don't view it as miraculous, but why is it any less miraculous than the splitting of the sea? Only because we're used to it, only because we see it day in and day out, only because potatoes are part of our staples, not just of our Pesach lives. As Jews, a good part of our week is based around potatoes as well! But, says the Rebbe, can you see the Ribono Shel Olam in the potato? Can you see Hakadosh Baruch Hu in the simple, ordinary things of everyday life?

In Shemoneh Esreh, we say *Modim anachnu Lach*, and we thank Hashem for *nisecha shebechol yom imanu*, for the miracles that He has performed for us each and every day. There are miracles in everyday life. There are miracles all around us - we just call them nature. Because we become acclimated or habituated to them, they lose their miraculous identity, and they just appear ordinary. The fact that my body works, that I have someone who loves me, that I have food in my refrigerator, that the sun comes up and shines – it's miraculous! Just because these occurrences are a part of everyday life doesn't make them any less miraculous than all of the great miracles that we learn about, read about, and celebrate on the night of the Pesach seder. Therefore, says Rebbi Nachman of Breslov, in the midst of an evening that is really focused on the supernatural and dynamic miracles that Hakadosh Baruch Hu performed for us in the past and im yirtzeh Hashem will perform for us in the future, we take out the potato and remind ourselves that the Ribono Shel Olam is as manifest in the potato as He was in the ten plagues. God is as present in everyday life as He was at the splitting of the sea and is as much at my side as I go through the activities of regular everyday living as He was during Sinaitic revelation. The message of karpas is to find the ability to open our eyes and our hearts to see Hakadosh Baruch Hu and to see the miracles of everyday life.

YACHATZ

THOUGHTFUL THEFT

Continuing through the Seder, we arrive at Yachatz. At our seder table, we have three matzos. We take the middle of the three matzos, break it in half, and leave the smaller half sandwiched in between the two whole matzos. The larger half is tucked away and designated as the afikomen, symbolizing the Pascal Lamb, to be consumed at the end of our meal right before Birchas Hamazon. We are familiar with the custom to steal the afikomen. The children sneak to take the afikomen, hide it, and then use their bargaining power and prowess to secure prizes, treats, and gifts. Depending on how desperate you are to get back your afikomen will determine how successful the children are in this particular endeavor. The Baal Hafla'ah asks a simple question: how can it be that we are encouraging our children to steal? Consider this for a moment; it's Pesach night, we're celebrating our newfound emancipation, and our primary mandate at the seder is *vihigadita livincha*, teach and engage our children, convey to them the necessary lessons of what it means to be a free people, what it means to have the destiny, what it means to live with responsibility. Yet, here on this seder night, we're encouraging our children to steal. What a seemingly strange lesson and practice to incorporate into our seder.

The Baal Haflaah gives such a beautiful interpretation. The Gemara relates that when a person dies, after 120, there are a number of questions that are asked by the heavenly tribunal. One of the questions asked is "*kovata itim latorah, did you set aside time to learn?*" The Haflaah explains, the word "*kovata*" is often translated as established or set aside, but the Hafla'ah points out that in Sifrei Malachi and Mishlei, the word "*kovata*" or "*kovea*" means to steal, to enact theft. The Baal Haflaah asks, why would the Gemara use a word like that for "*kovata itim latorah*"? There are so many better words, lomadita, did you learn, *osakta*, did you engage in Torah? But, "*kovata itim latorah*", did you set aside time, could also be translated as *did you steal time to learn Torah*? Hakadosh Baruch Hu understands that there is a finite amount of time in the day, and whenever you choose to use time for one particular endeavor, you're effectively stealing it from another endeavor. If I choose to devote my time to A, I'm stealing time from B. And the greatest decision we make in our day to day lives is what we choose or how we choose to use our time. You're always stealing time from somewhere. If I choose to work longer hours each and every day, I'm dedicating more time to my career, but I may be stealing that time from my family. On the other hand, there are times when I may have to put my career on the back burner in order to be able to give more time to my family; I'm stealing time from work to give it to my mishpacha. The reality, says the Baal Haflaah, is that in order to accomplish something in life, you're always stealing time from something. After 120, the question that we are asked is not simply, did we learn, but *kovata itim latorah, did you steal time to learn Torah? Did you have your priorities in the right place?*

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YACHATZ

THOUGHTFUL THEFT - continued

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Did you allocate your time appropriately? People like to say there is enough time to do everything you want. That is false. If there was enough time to do everything, then time management would not be such an incredibly important concept. That is why at times, I have to steal time from one area to make time for Torah. I have to steal time from some other endeavor to make time for chessed. I have to steal time from things that I determine are not as important in order to make time for the things which are. Perhaps that's the message we're teaching our children on the Seder night, the message of Yachatz. We break the middle matza, we wrap up half of it for the afikomen, and yes, we encourage the children to steal it; not to steal things from other people, but to steal time from certain things and reallocate it to other endeavors. *Kovata itim LaTorah*; when my child steals the afikomen, the message I'm trying to convey is that yes, you must learn the art because if you're going to be successful in life, you have to learn what to steal time from and allocate time to.

This is an important message on the night of the seder because it is on this night that we celebrate our freedom, and one of the major distinctions between a slave and a free man is control over time. A slave has no control of his time and lives on the clock of the master. When the master says sleep, the slave sleeps; when the master says eat, the slave eats; when the master says work, the slave works. This is one of the reasons that the first mitzva that Hashem gives us in Egypt is "*hachodesh hazeh lachem*", control over the calendar, control over time. You're free – decide how to use your time. You're free – decide where to steal your time from and where to allocate your time to. This is the message of Yachatz, the message of afikomen, the positive message of theft for our children and for ourselves.

HOLY WORK: APPRECIATING THE RASHA BASED ON A SHIUR GIVEN BY RABBI SILBER TRANSCRIBED BY MIRI SILBER

In the Haggadah we speak about the ארבע בנים, the Four Sons. The רשע (Wicked Son) asks, "What is this work for *you*?" He excludes himself from the collective, and in the words of the Haggadah, is כופר בעיקר (denies the existence of God). The response to this son, is "*hakey es shinav*," literally, "hit him in the mouth, knocking out his teeth, and tell him, yes, G-d did this for *me*, and *not you* because if you were there, you would not have been זוכה to be redeemed." Four-fifths of כלל ישראל died during the מכה of darkness, and only one-fifth was זוכה to leave. We are telling the רשע that he would have been part of the four-fifths that died during מכת חושך.

What kind of parenting is this? How does the רשע feel after hearing these words? The רשע will only feel worse. Shouldn't we try to lift him up and help him change? What are we meant to learn from this?

Rav Yisrael Meir Lau, the former chief Rabbi of Israel says, everyone gets worked up when the רשע says "לכם," meaning "for you," thus excluding himself. Yet the חכם asks a very similar question but is treated with כבוד, so what is the difference? Rabbi Lau answers that there is a fundamental distinction between the questions of the רשע and the חכם. The חכם says there are so many different types of mitzvos - משפטים, חוקים, עדות. The Wise Son is trying to understand why we need so many different categories of laws. However, the רשע describes the entirety of Judaism as עבודה (toil, work, burden). The רשע's question is "*why work so hard?*" He views this whole religion is burdensome. When the רשע looks at Yiddishkeit, he does not see different types of laws, rather, he sees it as a yoke around his neck. Many times, we visualize the רשע as someone who doesn't adhere to the mechanistic details of Judaism, having cast off the burden of responsibility. But this is not necessarily the case. It is quite possible that the Wicked Son is fulfilling all of his behavioral obligations - he just resents it, as it feels like carrying around a backbreaking load.

Yiddishkeit is a like package of precious jewels. If you lift it up and it is too heavy, then you do not have the right package; you are not serving Hashem in the correct way because "דרכה דרכי נועם." (the ways of the Torah are pleasant).

Rabbi Lau continues by explaining that the way of the world is to have parties and celebrations to mark the end of something. However, in Judaism, we have a Bar/ Bas Mitzvah to celebrate the beginning of the entrance to adulthood. We are celebrating the entry to the responsibility of מצות because we see the responsibility as a privilege. But the רשע does not see it as a privilege. He instead sees it as a cumbersome load.

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HOLY WORK: APPRECIATING THE RASHA BASED ON A SHIUR GIVEN BY RABBI SILBER TRANSCRIBED BY MIRI SILBER (CONT.)

The Rebbe of Piacenza (Rav Kalonymus Kalman Shapira) says that the whole תכלית, (purpose) of our service to Hashem is to change from being a שפחה בן to a בן מלך (son of servant to a son of a king). A servant, while connected to the king is physically and emotionally distanced from the king. A child of the king is in close proximity to the king, his beloved father. We can serve Hashem as servants or sons. Servants carry a load which at times feels heavy, and they can develop the urge to offload it. A son feels light, privileged, and ready to serve. We yearn to close the gap and stop serving Hashem as a servant and begin to feel like a son.

But what happens if I feel burdened like the Rasha, the Wicked Son? How can I change these feelings? The Piacenza explains the answer is simple – *try harder* and *do more*. One day, if you keep trying, you will feel it. When you put in the workday, day-in and day-out, you will become inspired.

It is normal at times to feel burdened like the רשע. In those moments, the answer is simple (even if it sounds a bit counter-intuitive) – work harder, keep going, move forward. The עבודה itself will inspire you. Give it time, and you will transform from servant to son.

Our response in the Haggadah to the רשע is "הכה את שניו." It doesn't mean to literally hit him in the mouth as this would accomplish nothing. The Dvar Aharon explains הכה means to "say it straight." Tell the רשע like it is. In normal circumstances, you have to be careful what you say and how you say it in order to avoid hurting and offending another. But other times, you just need to say it like it is. *Hit him in the teeth* with your blunt words. *My beautiful and incredible son who feels like Yiddishkeit is a complete burden – is this the way you want to feel your entire life, or are you interested in changing? If you are content with who and what you are – know, that you would have never left Egypt. My dear son, my heart breaks for you as you feel like a servant, a beast of burden to Hashem. But that can change – you can become a son – but it will require more: more service and more dedication. The pathway to inspiration is paved with ongoing, sometimes uninspiring dedicated service. But if you keep to it – if you remain committed, the inspiration, the feeling of being a son will come.*

As we celebrate Pesach and experience the Seder, we must also make the choice to be a servant or a son. May we merit to choose wisely.



LIFE IS LIKE A BOX OF MATZOS

Rabbi Shmuel Silber

Judaism is filled with ritual objects meant to convey a narrative and life meaning. We have the Shabbos candles which create radiant, spiritual light, Tefillin which bind us to Hashem in both mind and body, and many other objects of holiness whose message and meaning enlighten and inspire. But nothing compares to Matzah. It is by far the most discussed and ingested religious object! We spend the entire seder night with the matzah on the table, and it serves to spark spirited discussion, deep thought, connection to the past, and contemplation of our future. But what does it represent? And herein lies the matzah contradiction.

In "*Ha lachma anya*," we refer to matzah as the "bread of affliction," attesting to the idea that matzah was the food staple provided to us by our Egyptian tormentors. Yet, later on in the Haggadah (Rabban Gamliel) we reference Matzah as the food we consumed as a result of the haste with which we left Egypt. According to Rabban Gamliel, Matzah represents freedom and salvation. So, which one is it? Does matzah represent adversity and servitude or freedom and emancipation?

The answer is "yes." Matzah represents both of these opposing concepts and stages. We consumed it when we were slaves and when we left Egypt. And herein lies the true power of matzah. Matzah reminds us that life circumstances are what we make of them. There are times of incredible adversity, which if channeled the right way could become incredible platforms for meteoric growth. There are moments of *beracha*, which if not used in the correct way can pave the way for heartbreak and defeat. What do you see when you look at a piece of matzah? Do you see slavery or salvation? What do you see when you look at your personal challenges? Do you see opportunity or disappointment? There is no wrong answer, just a question of your life orientation.

One more point to ponder – perhaps, it is a progression. We start out looking at the matzah as the bread of affliction and then transition to seeing it as the bread of salvation. It takes time to adjust perspective. It takes time to become a person who sees opportunity in adversity. The Seder and the Yom Tov of Pesach afford us that time. May we merit to become the Matzah Jews who are able to make this transition and truly see the salvation, even in the servitude.

DAYEINU: IS IT EVER ENOUGH?

Rabbi Shmuel Silber

It is a song which enralls young and old alike, *Dayeinu*. We say the words, sing the chorus but do we understand its meaning?

**If He had brought us out from Egypt,
and had not carried out judgments against them,
Dayeinu, it would have sufficed us!**

In each successive line we discuss something that God did for us and we say, even if He had done this and nothing else, it would have been enough! But is this true? Would it have been enough if God had taken us out of Egypt and not split the sea? Would that have sufficed? We would have been slaughtered by the Egyptian army. Would it have been enough if God brought us to the desert but didn't give us the manna? We would have starved! What is the deeper meaning of the *Dayeinu* song?

Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twersky advances an incredible idea. We often assume that gratitude is expressed at the completion of a task or initiative. If my wife prepares a beautiful dinner, I don't express my gratitude as she puts in each ingredient, I express my thanks when the delicious meal is served. But we must learn to express our gratitude to God in a different way.

"There is an important lesson to be derived from this hymn. We must learn to be grateful for every favor we receive, even if at the moment we cannot see its ultimate good. The refrain "*Dayeinu*, it would have sufficed us" means that every incident was sufficient to elicit prompt gratitude from us..."
(From Bondage to Freedom).

God does so much for us, yet we often only express our gratitude when dreams come true, initiatives actualize, and things fall into place. We forget to express our gratitude during each stage of the journey. We must learn to say thank you for all the miracles and beautiful things God does for us each and every day. Life is often imperfect, but don't wait to say thank you to your Father until you have everything you want, and your life is exactly how you imagined it. Learn to give thanks for the beautiful and miraculous events (big and small) which occur around us and to us every moment of every day.

Dayeinu, doesn't mean, "If You would have done this for us it would have been enough, and we would not have wanted or needed anything else"; this is simply false. *Dayeinu* means we recognize that each and everything You did for us requires and deserves an expression of gratitude and thankfulness. We thank You for taking us out of Egypt, even though we were stuck by the banks of the Red Sea. We thank You for bringing us into the desert and allowing us to be free, even though we weren't exactly sure how we would be provided for. Thank you bringing us to the Mount Sinai and allowing us to experience unity even before You gave us the great treasure of Torah. Thank you for each and everything You did for us. We don't just thank You at the end of the forty-year journey we find the courage to thank You for each and every step.

***Dayeinu* is not just a statement of historical gratitude. *Dayeinu* reminds us to express our gratitude to God for the incredible and wondrous things He does for us. Things like mobility and vision; miracles like livelihood and health; friends and family – these warrant an expression of gratitude.** Yes, there are many things in my life that are broken and require repair, but I can't wait to express my gratitude until everything is perfect and as I desire, I must live a life of *Dayeinu* and learn to express my appreciation for all of the perfect miracles in my imperfect life.

FREEDOM - ONE NIGHT AT A TIME

Rabbi Shmuel Silber

There are many unique *mitzvos* we have on Seder night. We drink the four cups, consume *matzah* and *marror*, ask the four questions and, of course, enjoy a celebratory meal. But the true essence of this sacred night is to retell and re-experience the Exodus from Egypt. *Chayav adam lir'os es atzmo k'llu hu yatzah mi'Mitzrayim* (A person is obligated to view himself as if he left Egypt). **The rabbis explain that we each have our "Egypt"; we each have those circumstances which keep us shackled and enslaved. Through remembering our redemption from Egyptian servitude, we have the ability to experience emancipation from our personal servitude. By retelling and reliving the past, we can bring that redemptive energy to our present circumstances.** But there is a problem – even if I can reach this level, even if I am able to actually “feel free” on the Seder night, the next morning my life will be the same as it was. No matter how moving or emancipatory my Seder may be my circumstances will still be the same. What is the lasting impact of my Seder emancipation?

Rabbi Eleazar ben Azaryah said: *"I am like a man of seventy years old, yet I did not succeed in proving that the exodus from Egypt must be mentioned at night - until Ben Zoma explained it: "It is said, 'That you may remember the day you left Egypt all the days of your life;' now 'the days of your life' refers to the days, [and the additional word] 'all' indicates the inclusion of the nights!"*

The commentaries are bothered by the inclusion of this section in the Haggadah. The great sage Rabbi Eleazar ben Azaryah is not referring to the night of Pesach, he is referring to the nights throughout the year. There are two distinct obligations which relate to remembering the Exodus. Each and every day we have the *mitzvah* of *Zechira* - remembering the Exodus. This can be fulfilled by simply mentioning that God took us out of Egypt (we fulfill this obligation through the recitation of the third paragraph of *Shema*). On the night of Pesach the *mitzvah* is *Sippur* - an in-depth retelling and recounting of the entire Exodus narrative (we fulfill this through the Haggadah). Rabbi Eleazar ben Azaryah is discussing the obligation of *Zechira*, as such, why is this discussion included in the Haggadah?

Although there are many answers, I would like to share with you one that relates not to the content of Rabbi Eleazar ben Azaryah's words but rather to his personality. The Talmud (Berachos 27b) relates the story of the search for a new head for the rabbinical academy in Israel. There was a short list of distinguished personalities for this important position but the list was ultimately narrowed down to one man, Rabbi Eleazar ben Azaryah. The delegation approached the great sage and asked if he would become the Rosh Yeshiva (head of the academy).

They went and said to him: *"Will your honour consent to become head of the academy?"* He replied: *"I will go and consult the members of my family"*. He went and consulted his wife. She said to him: *"Perhaps they will depose you later-on (Rabban Gamliel, the previous head was removed from the position)"*. He replied to her: [There is a proverb:] *"Let a man use a cup of honour (expensive crystal glass) for one day even if it be broken the next"*.

Rabbi Eleazar ben Azaryah's wife felt that he should consider all of the possibilities before taking this position – most notably the risk of being deposed. To which Rabbi Eleazar ben Azaryah responds, *"I am not blind to the potential risks. I am not ignoring the reality that perhaps those who respect me today may turn on me tomorrow. But there is an opportunity right in front of me now; there is promise and possibility at my doorstep. How can I not take advantage? My dear wife, better to use the beautiful goblet today and see it break tomorrow than to never use the goblet at all."*

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FREEDOM - ONE NIGHT AT A TIME

Rabbi Shmuel Silber

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In the words of the English poet, Alfred Lord Tennyson, "Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all." **All opportunities come with risk. In-fact the greater the opportunity, the greater the risk and possibility of failure and defeat. If a person only takes advantage of the opportunities for which they are guaranteed success, a person will accomplish very little.** I must see the beauty in the opportunity, grab it with full force and commitment and try to the best of my ability to succeed. And if I fail, I will know that I have grown from this opportunity, I have learned from this experience, I am enriched as a result and better prepared to tackle future life initiatives.

The greatness of Rabbi Eleazar ben Azaryah was his willingness to engage life without the guarantee of success. Perhaps, this is why this section is included in the Haggadah. On this coming Pesach, we are going to strive to feel free. We are going to do whatever we can to leave our personal Egypt. For a few hours, we are going to find a way to extricate ourselves from the shackles and bondage which keep us tethered to mediocrity, sadness and despair. And even if the next morning, when I wake up, my circumstances are exactly the same and I am right back in my personal Egypt;

I drank from the goblet of redemption. I know what freedom feels like. I have experienced emancipation. And now that I have tasted this inspiring elixir, I am going to work hard to make it an ongoing experience. I am going to figure out how to strip off the shackles, I am going to work hard to change my circumstances; I am going to toil to be free.

Dear friends, this is the deeper meaning and goal of our Seder experience – to feel free. Because if we can free ourselves from the things that hold us back in life even for just a few hours – this is a meaningful accomplishment. If I can let go of the anger, resentment, frustrations and failures which occupy prime emotional real-estate and keep me tethered to the past - I can begin the process of building a beautiful future. The Seder is not only about eating matzah and drinking wine, it is about providing us with the platform to feel and ultimately become free. **The Seder is about allowing us to drink from the beautiful goblet of personal redemption with absolutely no guarantees about what the future will bring. May we be privileged to experience the redemption of the past, the salvation of the present and the anticipatory excitement of an undetermined future.**



CAN I DO THIS?

Rabbi Aryeh Richter

Can I do this? Do I have what takes? Am I cut out for this? During difficult times, many of us will feel overwhelmed and will ask such questions. When we are honest, we may feel like we don't have a great answer to those questions. How indeed do we know that we embody the greatness needed to overcome all the challenges of the generation?!

In truth, we are not the first ones to feel this way and to pose such questions. On the day of the inauguration of the Mishkan, Rosh Chodesh Nissan, Aharon Hakohen was assigned the task of offering sacrifices that would atone for the sins of Klal Yisroel. Rashi (Vayikra 9:7) teaches us that instead of hastening to offer the sacrifices, he hesitated. It took Moshe Rabbeinu, his younger brother, to encourage him and persuade him to approach the alter and complete the tasks. Rashi explains that Aharon HaKohen was ashamed and felt like he was not worthy of serving as the conduit between HaShem and Klal Yisroel to achieve forgiveness. Moshe needed to tell him, that it was specifically that attribute of humility, that qualified him to be the representative of Klal Yisroel.

Rav Moshe Greenwald zt"l the Av Beis Din in Chust, Hungary (1853-1910) author the sefer Arugas Habosem points out that Moshe Rabbeinu had a similar experience to Aharon. Moshe Rabbeinu also hesitated when he was initially tasked with leading the Bnei Yisroel out of Mitzrayim. He expressly asked HaShem:

“מִי אֲנִי כִּי אֵלֶּךָ אֶל פַּרְעֹה וְכִי אֹצִיא אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם”, *Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the Children of Israel out from Egypt?*

What is interesting in both cases, is that neither Moshe nor Aharon were given a response to their challenge, validating why they were indeed worthy of leading the mission. Hashem did not tell Moshe that he was worthy of going because he was the greatest man alive. HaShem simply responded “I will go along with you, and here is a sign that I sent you”. Similarly, when Aharon hesitated, Moshe didn't convince him that he was the greatest man for the job, he just told, him “Why are you embarrassed, for this reason you have been chosen”. Rav Greenwald zt"l points out that at times, it is specifically those who don't see themselves as worthy of greatness who accomplish the greatest things. Both Aharon and Moshe legitimately had the humility to question their qualifications of leadership, but who can imagine Klal Yisroel without Moshe Rabbeinu and Aharon Hakohen!!

There is a parallel to this in the Haggadah, in perhaps a surprising place. The author of the Haggadah references the four sons. Among them, famously, is the *rasha*, the one who seems to be obnoxious, always willing to stir things up and cause conflict. He challenges everything and doesn't seem to care for a response. He is viewed as an insincere nuisance who deserves to be dismissed. He is even told, that had he been in Egypt, he would have not merited redemption; he would have been left behind!

Rav Moshe Weinberger Shlit"a, Rav of Aish Kodesh in Woodmere advances a very different, perhaps revolutionary, understanding of the *rasha*. He offers an approach which carries a lifechanging lesson. He begins by quoting Rav Kook zt"l, the chief rabbi of Jerusalem, who makes the argument that most of the difficulties people experience with their faith are not the result of philosophical or theological questions or doubts. Rather, they stem from their lack of belief in themselves they don't see themselves as worthy of being a vehicle for the revelation of G-dliness.

CAN I DO THIS? (CONT.)

Rabbi Aryeh Richter

Rav Weinberger goes on to explain that this too is the mistake of the wicked son, the *rasha*, he simply sees himself as unworthy. He's not the caricature evildoer as so many depict him. The wickedness of the *rasha* originates only in his own mind. He does not see himself worthy of greatness or redemption. When the Haggadah tells us that "had he been there in Egypt, he would not have been redeemed", it simply means that he would not have believed that he was worthy of being redeemed and tasked with starting a nation of princes and holy people. When called upon to leave Egypt, he would have stayed behind, because he didn't believe he had what it takes to do something great. He simply can't imagine the possibility of greatness in himself.

Rav Elimelech Biderman Shlit"a, a noted lecturer in Yerushalayim adds a fascinating insight into the message that is told to the *rasha*. He is told that the redemption happened "לִי וְלֹא לְאֻרֵי" traditionally understood as, *for me but not him*- the *rasha*. Rav Biderman explains that this is incorrect, rather we tell the *rasha* that the *geula*, the redemption is "לִי" for me, not "לו", for someone else. Redemption is for each one of us as individuals, regardless of how low we have fallen or how poorly we think of ourselves. We need to remember that the *geula* was for *me*, not for the other guy.

It seems like, in light of this understanding, there is only a slight difference between the *rasha* and the great person. It is the determination to act, even if we aren't sure that we are great enough to accomplish great things. Moshe and Aharon questioned their worthiness of leadership, but when called to action, they dropped their doubts and advanced to great positions of leadership, in ways that shaped the future of the entire world. The *rasha* doubts his abilities and curls up into a ball and hides, allowing opportunity after opportunity to pass by.

My dear friends, over the last 6 months, since the horrific attack on Eretz Yisroel, I doubt I am the only one who thinks occasionally, "who am I to make a difference"?! But let us never forget the lesson Rav Greenwald taught us, it is sometimes specifically those who don't feel they are worthy of greatness who achieve the greatest things. All it takes is acting when we are called to duty. We all know what our call to duty is, whether it is Torah study, more *tefilla*, or perfection in other areas of our *avodas HaShem*. We need to put our personal self-doubt aside and answer the call of the moment.

Additionally, let us remember the lessons of Rav Weinberger and Rav Biderman. When we see someone who is struggling with their faith or other areas of self-growth, maybe their struggle is more about their own self-worth than it is about theology. Maybe, you can be the friend to share a word of confidence that will give them the pickup they need in that moment. Maybe you can remind them that *geula* was "לִי" for me and you personally, not just for the other righteous guy.

May we merit to reach greatness and see the *geula shleima*, speedily in our times!

לשנה הבאה בירושלים!!

THE POWER OF A QUESTION

Rabbi Yehuda Gross

Pesach, more so than any other Chag, is a time for the children and genuine education. The Gemara In Pesachim[1] teaches us that they would remove the table before even starting to eat just to get the children to ask - "and with that, we have exempted ourselves from saying the ma nishtana"[2]. The Rashbam on that Gemara explains that we need a springboard question for us to explain "that we were slaves in Egypt," and any change will do just that. The Rambam[3] adds that we need to do strange things on the Seder night to arouse the children's curiosity. He explains that 'we practically do this by snatching the table away before we eat, giving out roasted seeds, and snatching away the matza.' Anything to look different and interesting. This idea is not limited to just children; the Mishna teaches us that if one is having a seder alone, they still need to ask the four questions and have a monologue in the form of question and answer.

This Halacha and theme seem to be strange and unnecessary. If we have a message to share, just tell them the story straight! Additionally, the response of "we were slaves" doesn't fully answer why we are acting so strangely; there is no direct connection between these three strange things that the Rambam mentions and being taken out of Egypt!

My Rebbe, Rav Mendel Blachman, always used to say, "You will only fully understand the answer when your tongue is white from the question." Judaism is a religion that is not afraid of questions but instead built off of questions and answers. Engaging dialogue exists at every level! In the world of Yeshivas, there is no more significant accomplishment than asking a good question! If one shares an idea or a concept with no context of what it accomplishes or solves, it is meaningless and bland. To create a connection and a passion for information, there needs to be active involvement and context. Those things don't come about passively!

Isadore Rabi, winner of a Nobel Prize in physics, was once asked why he became a scientist. He replied, "My mother made me a scientist without ever knowing it. Every other child would return from school and be asked, 'What did you learn today?' But my mother used to ask: 'Izzy, did you ask a good question today?' That made the difference. Asking good questions made me a scientist." [4]

There is another intrinsic connection between questions and *leil seder*. Pesach is the night of celebrating being free and experiencing the transition from physical and religious servitude to liberty! One of the most characteristic differences between an enslaved person and a freeman is the ability to ask and understand. A slave must do what he is told and has no right to ask why. In comparison, a free man can delve into the rationale and understand the reasons. When we go through this transition and journey to become a true *ben chorin*, we must utilize the gifts of being free.

Pesach night is the night when every Jew becomes an educator! It is a night when we strive to connect ourselves and our children to a long chain of connection, devotion, and passion. It is not an easy task, and it can only come about through asking hard questions and seeking authentic answers. To set the tone and start the process, we need to notice differences and tune into the theme of the night.

[1] Pesachim 115

[2] Tosfos does explain that it was only the start of the questions and they still would need to ask the four questions.

[3] Chumetz U'matza 7, 3-4

[4] Rabbi Jonathon Sacks <http://www.aish.com/tp/i/sacks/137847678.html>

אֶלֶּא שְׁבַּכָּל דּוֹר וָדוֹר,
עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ

תפילות לארץ ולעם

ישראל

Seffulah

וְהַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא
מִצִּילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם



**THIS פסח ,
TAKE A MOMENT
TO DAVEN FOR**

**THE SAFE RETURN
OF OUR HOSTAGES.**

יהי רצון מלפני אבינו שבשמים אשר הוציא את
עמו ישראל מתחת סבלות מצרים הוא יברך וינצר
את אחינו ואחיותינו החטופים האסורים בכבלי
ברזל יחזק נפשם ואמונתם ישמרם מכל נגע
ומחלה יתמל על בניו ובנותיו המצפים לישועתו
יבטל מעליהם כל גזרות אכזריות בחסדו הגדול
יחיש פדותם ויצאו מהרה מאפלה לאורה ומבור
השבי לחרות עולם וישבו לשלום אל
המשפחותיהם ואל בתיהם .

Prayer Was Composed Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, Former Chief Rabbi of Israel



THIS פסח, TAKE A MOMENT TO DAVEN FOR THE SAFE RETURN OF OUR HOSTAGES.

אברהם גלעד בן אמונה Abraham Gilad ben Emunah	דולב בן יעל Dolev ben Yael	ליאור בן מיכל Lior ben Michal	רום בן תמר נועה Rom ben Tamar Noa
אגם בת מירב Agam bat Meirav	דורון בת שרה סימונה Doron bat Sarah	לירי בת שירה Liri bat Shira	רומי בת מרב Romi bat Merav
אלכסנדר בן אוקסנה Alexander ben Oksana	דרור בן דורית Dror ben Dorit	מתן בן מרים Matan ben Anat	רון בן חנה Ron ben Chana
סשה אלכסנדר בן ילנה Sasha Alexander ben Yelena	עידן בן יעל Edan ben Yael	מתן בן עינב Matan ben Einav	שגיאה בן נעמי Sagui ben Naomi
אלכסנדר בן נינה Alexander ben Nina	עדן בת שירית Eden bat Shirith	מקסים בן טלה Maxim ben Tella	שגב בן גלית Segev ben Galit
אלמוג בן נירה Almog ben Nira	איתן אברהם בן אפרת Eitan Avraham ben Efrat	מישל בן סולמירה Michel ben Solomira	שירי בת מרגיט Shiri bat Margit
אלמוג בן אורית Almog ben Orit	איתן בן רות אידית Eitan ben Rut Idit	מוחמד אל אטראש Mohammad El Alatrash	שלומי בן רוזיטה Shlomi ben Rozita Ira
אלון בן עידית Alon ben Idit	אליה בן סיגלית Eliya ben Sigalit	נעמה בת איילת Na'ama bat Ayelet	שלומה בן מרסיל Shlomo ben Marcel
עמירם בן שרה Amiram ben Sara	אליהו בן חנה Eliyahu ben Chana	נדב בן חנה Nadav ben Chana	קית' שמואל בן גלאדיס Keith Shmuel ben Gladis
עמית אסתר חיה בת אילנה Amit Esther Chaya bat Ilana	אלקנה בן רוחמה Elkana ben Ruchama	נמרוד בן ויקי Nimrod ben Vicky	טל בן ניצה Tal ben Nitza
אנדריי בן יבגניה Andrey ben Yevgenia	אליקים שלמה בן אבישג Elyakim Shlomo ben Avishag	נועה בת ליאורה Noa bat Liora	תמיר בן חירות Tamir ben Cherut
ארבל בת יעל Arbel bat Yael	אמילי תהילה בת אמנדה Emily Tehila bat Amanda	עודד בן בלהה Oded ben Bilha	צחי בן דבורה Tsachi ben Devorah
אריאל בן שירי Ariel ben Shiri	אביתר בן יסמין גילה Evyatar ben Yasmin Gila	עופר בן כוכבה Ofer ben Kochava	יגב בן אסתר Yagev ben Esther
אריאל בן סילביה Ariel ben Silvana	גדי משה בן שרה Gadi Moshe ben Sara	אהוד בן אסתר Ohad ben Esther	יאיר בן רות אידית Yair ben Rut Idit
אברהם בן אגראנש Avraham ben Agranesh	גלי בן תמר Gali ben Tamar	אהוד בן אסתר Ohad ben Esther	יצחק בן גילה Yitzchak ben Gila
אבינתן בן דיצה תרצה Avinathan ben Ditzza Tirtza	גיא בן מירב Guy ben Meirav	עומר בן מלכה Omer ben Malka	ירדן בן פנינה Yarden ben Penina
בר אברהם בן ג'וליה Bar Avraham ben Julia	חמזה אלזיאדנה Hamza Alziadna	עומר בן ניבה Omer ben Niva	יוסף חיים בן מרים Yosef Chaim ben Miriam
ביפין ג'ושי Bipin Joshi	הישאם בן מנאל Hisham ben Manal	עומר בן אורנה אסתר Omer ben Orna Esther	יורם בן מרים Yoram ben Miriam
כרמל בת כנרת Carmel bat Kineret	עידן בן דלית Idan ben Dalit	עמרי בן ורוניקה אסתר Omri ben Veronika Esther	יוסוף אלזיאדנה Yusuf Alziadna
חיים בן נחמה Chaim ben Nechama	הירש בן פערל חנה Hersh ben Perel Chana	אור בן גאולה Or ben Geula	זיו בן תמר Zvi ben Tamar
חן חנן בן ורד Chen Chanan ben Vered	יצחק בן חנה Itzik ben Chana	אורי בן עינב אפרת Ori ben Einav Efrat	
דניאלה בת אורלי Daniella bat Orly	קרינה בת אירנה Karina bat Irina	אוריון הרננדז Orión Hernández	
דוד בן סילביה David ben Silvana	כפיר בן שירי Kfir ben Shiri	פרחאן אלקאדי Qaid Farhan Alkadi	

This list was compiled using several sources and our best efforts have been put into making it as accurate as possible.

תפילה למען חטופים ונעדרים

מהאדמו"ר מפיאסצנה הי"ד

רבוננו של עולם!

האזינה לקול בכינו וּלְאִנְקַת לִבְנוּ, רְאֵה אֶת צַעֲרֵנוּ וְעֵינֵינוּ, וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ מִמְצוּקַתְנוּ הַגְּדוֹלָה. קְרוֹבֵי נַפְשֵׁנוּ, נָשִׁים וְיִלְדִים, אָבוֹת וְאִמָּהוֹת, אַחִים וְאֶחָיוֹת וְשָׂאֵר אַחֵינוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, נִעְקְרוּ מִתּוֹכֵנוּ, הֵם נִלְקְחוּ בְּשָׁבִי וְעִקְבוֹתֵיהֶם לֹא נוֹדְעוּ. הֲיֵה נָא אִתָּה, אֵל שְׂדֵי, מְגַנֵּם שֶׁל כָּל הַשְּׂבוּיִים, שְׁמֹר עֲלֵיהֶם מִכָּל צָרָה וְצוּקָה, תֵּן לָהֶם כּוֹחַ לְעִמּוּד בְּעֵנֵינוּ מְעִנֵיהֶם מִחֲרִפְיָהֶם וּמִגְדִּיפֵיהֶם. הִמָּצֵא לָהֶם חַיּוֹת לְמַעַן יִזְכּוּ לָשׁוּב אֶל מְשֻׁפְחוֹתֵיהֶם. וְהַיְלָדִים וְהַתִּינוּקוֹת הַרְפִים, אֵלֶּה שֶׁנִּגְזְלוּ מִחִיק אֲבֵיהֶם וְאִמָּם, עֲשֵׂה נָא שְׂיִתְגַּלוּ וְיִזְכּוּ לָשׁוּב אֶל אָבוֹתֵיהֶם כְּבִימֵי צֵאתְנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם.

הַרְיֵנִי מִנִּדְבַּב צְדָקָה לְמַעַן עֲנִיִּים מְכִי רַעֲב, וּבְזִכּוֹת זֶה חוּם וְהוֹשִׁעַ אֶת (פב"פ) אֲשֶׁר נִלְקַח/נִלְקָחָה בְּשָׁבִי, וְהִבֵּא אוֹתוֹ/אוֹתָהּ בְּשָׁלוֹם בְּחֻזְרָה אֶל בְּנֵי בֵּיתוֹ/בֵּיתָהּ.

אל רחום וחנון!

עֲשֵׂה חֶסֶד וְרַחֲמִים לְכָל הַקּוֹרְאִים אֵלֶיךָ בְּלֵב שָׁלֵם. חוּם נָא וְרַחֵם עַל שְׂאֵרֵי הַפְּלִטָּה שֶׁל עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל - אָמֹר לְצָרוֹתֵינוּ דִּי. הִגֵּן עַל קַמִּץ שְׂאֵרֵי הַפְּלִטָּה הַקְּטָנָה - בְּשֵׁם שְׁהוֹשִׁעַתָּ אֶת אֲבֹרָהֶם אֲבֵינוּ מִיַּד נִמְרוֹד, וְאֶת יַעֲקֹב אֲבֵינוּ מִיַּד עֵשָׂו וְלָבוֹן, וְאֶת מִשָּׁה רַבְּנוּ מִיַּד פְּרַעֲהוּ, וְאֶת דָּוִד הַמֶּלֶךְ מִיַּד גִּלְיָת הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי, וְאֶת חֲנַנְיָהּ מִיִּשְׂאֵל וְעִזְרְיָה מִיַּד נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר, וְכַשֵּׁם שֶׁהִצַּלְתָּ אֶת דָּנִיֵּאל מִגַּב הָאֲרִיּוֹת, וְכַשֵּׁם שֶׁהִצַּלְתָּ אֶת מֶרְדֵּכַי וְאַסְתֵּר מִיַּד הַמֶּן הַרְשָׁע - כֵּן תוֹשִׁיעַ וְתַחַלֵּץ אֶת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיַּד שׁוֹנְאָיו, וְתִשְׁלַח לָנוּ גּוֹאֵל הַצֶּדֶק שִׁיגְאֵלְנוּ מִן הַגְּלוּת הַמְּרָה בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ, אָמֵן.

את התפילה חיבר האדמו"ר מפיאסצנה רבי קלונימוס קלמיש שפירא הי"ד בשבתו בעבודת כפייה בבית החרושת שולץ בגטו ורשה בשלהי תש"ב. לפי התקנה נקבע לאומרה מדי יום ביומו לפני התפילה לאחר אמירת ג' פרקי תהלים: צד, קה, מב. בתו של האדמו"ר רעכיל יהודית נחטפה לבלי שוב בחודש אלול תש"ב.

תפילה לטבויים

מי שְׁבַרְךָ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבָרְהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב
יוֹסֵף מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן דָּוִד וְשְׁלֹמֹה, הוּא
יְבָרְךָ וַיִּשְׁמֹר וַיִּנְצֹר אֶת נַעֲדָרֵי צְבָא
הַגָּנָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת הַשְּׁבוּיִים
בְּתוֹךְ שְׂאֵר אַחֵינוּ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנְּתוּנִים
בְּצָרָה וּבְשִׁבְיָה. בְּעֵבוּר שְׁהֻקָּהּ מִתְפַּלֵּל
בְּעֵבוּרָם, הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יִמְלֵא
רַחֲמִים עֲלֵיהֶם, וַיּוֹצִיאֵם מִחַשְׁן
וְצִלְמוֹת, וּמוֹסְרוֹתֵיהֶם יִנְתֵּק,
וּמִמְצוּקוֹתֵיהֶם יוֹשִׁיעֵם, וַיְשִׁיבֵם מְהֵרָה
לְחֵיק מִשְׁפָּחוֹתֵיהֶם. "יִוְדוּ לַה' חֲסִדוֹ
וְנִפְלְאוֹתָיו לְבְנֵי אָדָם". וַיִּקֵּים בָּהֶם
מִקָּרָא שְׁכָתוּב: "וּפְדוּיֵי ה' יִשׁוּבוּן וּבָאוּ
צִיּוֹן בְּרִנָּה וְשִׂמְחַת עוֹלָם עַל רֵאשִׁים.
שִׂשׁוֹן וְשִׂמְחָה יִשְׂיִגוּ וְנָסוּ יִגוֹן וְאַנְחָה"
וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן

תפילה על הפצועים

מי שברך אבותינו אברהם יצחק ויעקב
משה ואהרן דוד ושלמה,
ואמותינו שרה רבקה רחל ולאה
הוא יברך וירפא את כל מי שנפצעו במלחמה
ובפיגועים.

הקדוש ברוך הוא
ימלא רחמים עליהם
להחלימם ולרפאתם ולהחזיקם ולהחיותם,
וישלח להם מהרה רפואה שלמה מן השמים
לכל אבריהם ולכל גידיהם
בתוך שאר חולי ישראל,
רפואת הנפש ורפואת הגוף,
השתא בעגלא ובזמץ קריב ונאמר אמן.



תפילה לצבא ההגנה לישראל

מִי טִיבֶרֶה אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבָרָהִם יִצְחָק
וַיַּעֲקֹב הוּא יְבָרַךְ אֶת תְּחִלֵּי צָבָא הַגְּנָה
לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, הָעוֹמְדִים עַל מְטִימָר אֲרִצְנוּ
וְעָרֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִגְּבוּל הַקְּבָנוֹץ וְעַד מְדִבְר
מִצְרַיִם וּמִן הַיָּם הַגָּדוֹל עַד לְבוֹא
הַעֲרָבָה בַּיַּבְשָׁה בְּאֵוִיר וּבָיִם. יִתֵּן ה'
אֶת אוֹיְבֵינוּ הַקָּמִים עָלֵינוּ נִגְפִים
לְפָנֵיהֶם. הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יִטְיִמֹר
וַיִּצִיל אֶת תְּחִלֵּינוּ מִכָּל צָרָה וְצוּקָה
וּמִכָּל נִגְעַ וּמִחֲלָה וַיִּשְׁלַח בְּרָכָה
וְהַצְלָחָה בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂיהָ יְדֵיהֶם. יִדְבֹר
שׁוֹנְאֵינוּ תַחֲתֵיהֶם וַיַּעֲטִירֵם בְּכֶתֶר
יִשׁוּעָה וּבַעֲטֹרֶת נִצְחוֹן. וַיִּקְּם בָּהֶם
הַכֶּתוּב: כִּי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הֵחֵלָה עִמָּכֶם
לְהִלָּחֵם לָכֶם עִם אוֹיְבֵיכֶם לְהוֹשִׁיעַ
אֶתְכֶם: וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן



תהילים ב'

לְמִנְצַחַת מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד: (ב) יַעֲנֶה יְהוָה בַּיּוֹם צָרָה יִשְׁׁגְבֶהָ טִים | אֱלֹהֵי (א)
יַעֲקֹב: (ג) יִשְׁלַח־עֲזָרָה מִקֹּדֶשׁ וּמִצִּיּוֹן יִסְעָדָהּ: (ד) יִזְכֹּר כָּל־מִנְחֹתֶיהָ
וְעוֹלֹתֶיהָ יַדְשִׁינָה סֵלָה: (ה) יִתֶּן־לָהּ כָּל־בִּלְבָבָהּ וְכָל־עֲצָתָהּ יִמְלֵא: (ו) נִרְנְנָה |
בִּישׁוּעָתָהּ וּבְטִים־אֱלֹהֵינוּ נִדְגַל יִמְלֵא יְהוָה כָּל־מִשְׁיָאוֹתֶיהָ: (ז) עֲתָה
יִדְעֵתִי כִּי הוֹשִׁיעַ | יְהוָה מִשִּׁיחוֹ יַעֲנֵהוּ מִשִּׁמֵּי קֹדֶשׁוֹ בְּגִבְרוֹת יִשְׁעַי יִמִּינוּ:
(ח) אֱלֹהֵי בָרָכָב וְאֱלֹהֵי בַסּוּסִים וְאַנְחֵנוּ | בְּטִים־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ נִזְפִיר: (ט)
הִמָּה כָּרְעוּ וְנִפְלוּ וְאַנְחֵנוּ קָמְנוּ וְנִתְעוֹדַד: (י) יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה הַמְּלֹכָה יַעֲנֵנוּ
בַּיּוֹם־קָרְאֵנוּ:

תהילים קב"א

טִיר לַמַּעְלֹת אֲשָׁר עֵינֵי אֱלֹהֵי־הַהָרִים מֵאֵיזֶיבָא עֲזָרִי: (ב) עֲזָרִי מֵעַם (א)
יְהוָה עֲטִיהַ טִימִים וְאַרְצָה: (ג) אֶל־יִתֶּן לַמּוֹט רִגְלָהּ אֶל־יָנוּם שִׁמְרָהּ: (ד) הִנֵּה
לֹא־יָנוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן טוֹמֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל: (ה) יְהוָה שִׁמְרָהּ יְהוָה צִלָּהּ עַל־יַד יְמִינָהּ:
(ו) יוֹמָם הַשִּׁמְשׁ לֹא־יַכָּהּ וַיִּרַח בְּלִילָהּ: (ז) יְהוָה יִשְׁמְרָהּ מִכָּל־רָע יִשְׁמֹר
אֶת־נַפְשָׁהּ: (ח) יְהוָה יִשְׁמֹר־צִאתָהּ וּבּוֹאָהּ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם:

תהילים ק"ל

טִיר הַמַּעְלֹת מִמַּעַמְקִים קָרְאֵתִיהָ יְהוָה: (ב) אֲדַנִּי טִימְעָה בְּקוֹלִי תַהֲיִינָה (א)
אֲזַנִּיהָ קִשְׁבוֹת לְקוֹל תַּחֲנוּנֵי: (ג) אִם־עוֹנוֹת תִּשְׁמֹר־יְהוָה אֲדַנִּי מִי יַעֲמֹד: (ד)
כִּי־עָמָה הַסְּלִיחָה לְמַעַץ תַּוָּרָא: (ה) קוֹיֵתִי יְהוָה קוֹיֵתָה נַפְשִׁי וְלִדְבָרוֹ הוֹחֵלֵתִי:
(ו) נַפְשִׁי לֹא־דַנִּי מִשִּׁמְרִים לְבַקֵּר שִׁמְרִים לְבַקֵּר: (ז) יַחַל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־יְהוָה
כִּי־עַם־יְהוָה הַחֲסֵד וְהַרְבֵּה עֲמֹן פְּדוֹת: (ח) וְהוּא יַפְּדֶה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל־
עוֹנֵתָיו:



MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

RABBI SHMUEL SILBER

As we prepare for the Yom Tov of Pesach, time is of the essence. At every turn we must be mindful of time. The difference between matzah being kosher l'pesach (fit for Passover use) and chametz is dependent on time. Get the matzah baked in under 18 minutes and you are good to go – delay, and it's chametz. At the seder, you can't begin before nightfall and need to consume the afikoman before midnight. In fact, this fixation on time starts even earlier, generations earlier. The first mitzvah we were given (while still in Egypt) was Kiddush HaChodesh, sanctification of the new moon, setting and establishing the calendar. Judaism is fixated on time. This preoccupation is for good reason. Life is filled with beautiful and holy opportunities, but they don't wait around. Time is fleeting, and as such, when the opportunity for something meaningful comes your way – grab it – because if you don't, you will miss the moment. If you miss the 18th minute mark, your dough is chametz, and if you miss your moment, the door of opportunity closes.

I have been thinking and perhaps, even obsessing over this idea during the last few months. October 7th changed our lives and our nation. While we learned and were versed in historical atrocities committed against our people, on October 7th we saw this hatred, barbarism and unbridled sadism come to life before our tear drenched eyes. We saw what Hamas did to our men, women and children. We witnessed an event where even the dead were not spared from brutality and no one and nothing was off-limits. On October 7th we saw evil in its purest form. To this very day, almost 7 months later – our hostages have not been returned and our hearts remain achingly broken over all that has been lost. In the initial days and weeks after October 7th, there was an opportunity. An opportunity for the community of civilized mankind to come together and fight against evil. There was an opportunity for the nations of the world to stand behind Israel, our beloved ancestral homeland, the only democratic nation in the Middle East and support them as they were and are the tip of the spear in this battle against evil. Imagine what would happen if civilized nations made their stand against evil. There was and still is an opportunity to change the entire trajectory of mankind – by standing up, unequivocally united against evil. This type of unity of good could change the very moral fabric of the world. But it feels as if the world has missed the opportunity. The nations of the world are focusing on the wrong things. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza is not Israel's fault – this was created and perpetuated by Hamas. Years of siphoning and pilfering aid meant to improve the lives of simple people; years of building terror infrastructure in dense civilian neighborhoods; an unprovoked attack filled with murder, rape, and innumerable atrocities on October 7th; these are the seeds which have blossomed into a humanitarian crisis. There is a price to be paid for abhorrent and evil behavior, and unfortunately, the residents of Gaza are paying it – but not because of us, but rather because of the



MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

RABBI SHMUEL SILBER

immoral, terrorist leadership who has betrayed them. While we mourn the loss of innocent life no matter what religion, race, ethnicity, or geographic location – it is important to have explicit clarity as to the cause and catalysts of this crisis. Every nation has a right and obligation to protect its citizens – Israel must do whatever is necessary to make sure every man, woman, and child is safe and secure. Our hostages deserve to be returned – not part of a negotiation but because the world should have enough moral backbone to never allow human lives to be used as bargaining chips. War always carries with it collateral damage. The innocent are swept up and suffer. But we must have the moral clarity to place blame where it truly belongs.

There is still time for the nations of the world to seize the moment and stand by the Jewish State as we battle evil. I know my words will have no impact on the global stage – but I'm not writing it for them – I am writing for us. We have seen time and time again what happens when humanity fails to calibrate its moral compass. We have seen countless times the destruction that occurs when nations capitulate, cave in, and act like cowards in the face of evil. We can't change them – but we can change ourselves. If they miss their moment – we shouldn't miss ours. We should be reminded of the dangers of failing to seize the moment, and may we become stronger and emboldened as individuals, as a community, and as a nation to seize life's opportunities for growth, holiness, and elevation.



אֲחֵינוּ כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,
הַנִּתְּוֵנִים בְּצָרָה וּבִשְׁבִיָּה,
הָעוֹמְדִים בֵּין בָּיִם וּבֵין
בִּבְטָחָה, הַמְּקוּם יְרַחֵם
עֲלֵיהֶם, וְיוֹצִיאֵם מִצָּרָה
לְרוּחָה, וּמֵאֲפֵלָה לְאוֹרָה,
וּמִשִּׁעְבוּד לְגֵאֻלָּה, הַשִּׁתָּא
בְּעִגְלָא וּבְזִמְזָא קָרִיב.

OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS
THE WHOLE HOUSE OF
ISRAEL, WHO ARE IN
DISTRESS AND CAPTIVITY
WHO WANDER OVER SEA
AND OVER LAND – MAY
HASHEM HAVE MERCY ON
THEM, AND BRING THEM
FROM DISTRESS TO
COMFORT, FROM DARKNESS
TO LIGHT, FROM SLAVERY TO
REDEMPTION, NOW,
SWIFTLY, AND SOON.



תפילה לטלום מדינת ישראל

אָבִינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים, צוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל וְגוֹאֲלוֹ,
בָּרַךְ אֶת מְדִינַת יִשְׂרָאֵל, רֵאשִׁית צְמִיחַת גְּאֻלַּתֵּנוּ,
הֶגֶן עָלֶיהָ בְּאֶבְרַת חֶסֶדָּהּ, וּפְרֹשׁ עָלֶיהָ סֶכֶת שְׁלוֹמוֹךָ,
וּשְׁלַח אֹרֶךְ וְאַמְתָּךְ לְרֵאשִׁיָּהּ, שְׂרִיָּהּ וְיוֹעֲצִיָּהּ,
וְתִקְנֵם בְּעֵצָה טוֹבָה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ.
חֲזַק אֶת יְדֵי מְגִי אֶרֶץ קְדֻשָׁנוּ, וְהִנְחִילֵם אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְשׁוּעָה
וְעֵטְרַת נְצַחוֹן תְּעֵטְרֵם, וְנַתַּת שְׁלוֹם בְּאֶרֶץ
וְשִׁמְחַת עוֹלָם לְיוֹשְׁבֵיהָ. וְאֵת אַחֵינוּ כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
פָּקֵד נָא בְּכָל אַרְצוֹת פְּזוּרֵיהֶם, וְתוֹלִיכֵם מִהֲרָה קוֹמִיּוֹת
לְצִיּוֹן עִירָךְ וְלִירוּשָׁלַיִם מְשֻׁכָּן שְׁמֹךְ, כַּכְּתוּב בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה
עֲבָדְךָ
אִם יִהְיֶה נִדְחָךְ בְּקִצֵּה הַשָּׁמַיִם, מִשָּׁם יִקְבְּצֶךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ"
וּמִשָּׁם יִקְחֶךָ. וְהִבִּיאֶךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְרָשׁוּ
אַבְתֶּיךָ וִירֻשְׁתָּהּ, וְהִיטִבְךָ וְהִרְבֶּךָ מְאֹד בְּתוֹרָתְךָ
וּמִלֵּי אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת לְבָבְךָ וְאֶת לִבְּךָ זָרְעֶךָ,
לְאַהֲבָה אֶת יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ,
לְמַעַן חַיֶּיךָ". וַיַּחַד לְבַבְנוּ לְאַהֲבָה וּלְיִרְאָה אֶת שְׁמֹךְ
וְלִשְׁמֹר אֶת כָּל דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָתְךָ,
וּשְׁלַח לָנוּ מִהֲרָה בֶן דָּוִד מְשִׁיחַ צְדָקָה
לְפָדוֹת מְחִי קִיץ יְשׁוּעָתְךָ. הוֹפֵעַ בְּהַדָּר גְּאוֹן עֲזָךְ
עַל כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵּבֵל אֶרֶץ, וַיֹּאמֶר כָּל אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁמָה בְּאִפּוֹ: "יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מְלֹךְ, וּמְלִכּוֹתוֹ בְּכָל מְשָׁלָה" אָמֵן סְלָה

PESACH YIZKOR

AS WE RECITE YIZKOR FOR OUR LOVED ONES,
LET US REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING:



We have the ability to continue the precious and holy work they can no longer do. Ask yourself what holy endeavor would my loved one have engaged in if they were still here? Take that project or initiative and make it your own. We are the agents and emissaries of our loved ones who are no longer here.



Channel the longing you feel for your loved one and use it to create a sense of longing for God. Ask yourself, "what must I do in order to come close to my Creator?" I no longer want to be distant, I yearn for connection. It is this powerful longing which brings us closer to Him with each and every step of our life journey.



Take the time to express gratitude to those who have come before you. We benefit from the sacrifice and commitment of previous generations. Thank the previous generations of your family and thank the previous generations of Am Yisroel for so many of the blessings we possess are in their merit.



Even if you are privileged and have the members of your immediate family and therefore don't normally recite Yizkor, this year, take a few moments and *daven* for the *neshamos* of those who have fallen victim to the atrocities of Hamas. *Daven* that their *neshamos* should have an *aliyah* and their families a *nechama*. *Daven* that Hashem should provide strength to the families who are mourning.

***May the neshamos of our loved ones experience an aliyah and elevation,
and may we be privileged to be together with all our previous generations
in a rebuilt Yerushalayim, speedily in our days.***

PRAYER FOR LIVING PARENTS

TO BE RECITED DURING YIZKOR

אָבִי שְׁבַשְׁמִים

בְּשַׁעַת הַזְכָּרָת נְשָׁמוֹת אֵלֶּה שֶׁהִלְכוּ לְעוֹלָמָם
נוֹשָׂא אָנֹכִי אֶת עֵינַי אֵלֶיךָ, אֱלֹהֵי, בְּהוֹדְיָה מִלֵּב
שָׁלֵם, עַל שְׁבִחְסֶדְךָ הַגָּדוֹל הוֹרֵי הַיְקָרִים חַיִּים
פֹּה עָמִי. בְּרַכֶּם בְּבְרִיאוֹת טוֹבָה, וְתֵן לָהֶם כַּח רַב
לְחַיּוֹת אֲתָנוּ עוֹד שָׁנִים רַבּוֹת וְטוֹבוֹת, תִּזְקַם
וְאַמְצֵם לְחַיִּים שֶׁל רוֹחָה בְּרַכֶּם בְּרִפּוּאֵת הַנְּשָׂא
וּבְרִפּוּאֵת הַגּוּף בְּרַכֶּם שְׂיִזְכּוּ לִיהֲנוֹת וּלְהַתְּבַרֵךְ
מִצְאֲצֵאֵיהֶם שֶׁתֵּהָא פְּרָנְסָה מְצוּיָה וְשִׁתְּהִיָּה
הַבְּרָכָה בְּבֵיתָם. חֲזַק אוֹתִי, שְׂאוּכַל לְעִזְרָם בְּכָל
פְּחֵי וּבְכָל מְאוֹדֵי, וְהִלְוֵאֵי וְאַזְכָּה לְקִים מְצוֹת
בְּבוֹד הוֹרִים בְּכָל דְּקְדוּקִיָּה וְהִידוּרִיָּה. יְהִי רְצוֹן
שְׂאֲבִין אֶת הָאֲחֵרִיּוֹת הַגָּדוֹלָה כְּלַפְיָהֶם הַמְּטַלֵּת
עָלַי. בְּרַכְנִי שְׂאֲרָאָה חוֹבְתֵי כְּלַפְיָהֶם בְּזָכוֹת וְלֹא
כְּנִטְלָה מְאֵהָבָה וְלֹא מִפְּרָחַת, בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְנִחַת וְלֹא
בְּקֶצֶר רוּחַ. וְיִהִי רְצוֹן שְׂאֲזָכָה לְהִיּוֹת מְקוֹר
שְׂמִיחָה לְהוֹרֵי וּמְשִׁפְחָתִי. בְּרַךְ אֶת אֲחֵי וְאֲחֵיּוֹתַי
וְכָל בְּנֵי מְשִׁפְחָתִי, שְׂמִיחָם וּבְרַכֶּם בְּבְרִיאוֹת
טוֹבָה וּבְחַיִּים שֶׁל אוֹרָה וְאַהֲבָה. וְתִהְיֶה בִּי
יְרֵאתְךָ וְאַהֲבָתְךָ לְעַבְדְּךָ בְּלִבְבִי שָׁלֵם וְנִזְכָּה כְּלָנוּ
יַחַד, לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים וְאַרְבִּים. אָמֵן

My Father In Heaven

During the time of Yizkor that we remember the souls of those who have departed this world, I raise my eyes up to you, my God, in heartfelt gratitude that in Your great kindness, my dear parents are alive with me. Bless them with good health, give them much strength to live with us for many more years. Give them strength and courage to live a prosperous life. Bless them with bodily and spiritual health. Bless them that they should merit to enjoy and be blessed with descendants. Bless them that their livelihood should come easily to them and that blessing should be found in their home. Strengthen me that I should be able to help them with all my strength and resolve, so that I should merit fulfilling the *mitzvah* of honoring my parents in all of its details and meticulousness. May it be Your will that I understand and appreciate my tremendous responsibility toward them as a privilege and not a burden, as an act of love and not necessity, with happiness and pleasantness and not distress. And may it be Your will that I merit to be a source of happiness to my parents and family. Bless my brothers and sisters and my entire family, and grant them happiness and blessings of good health and lives of spiritual light and love. May I be filled with Your awe and love to worship You wholeheartedly, and may we all merit together, long and fulfilling lives. Amen.

*May the neshamos of our loved ones experience an aliyah and elevation,
and may we be privileged to be together with all our previous generations
in a rebuilt Yerushalayim, speedily in our days.*