

כשר ושמח

KINGSWAY JEWISH CENTER'S HAGGADAH COMPANION

תשע"ט 2019



A SHARING OF THOUGHTS AND IDEAS FOR THE SEDER NIGHT
BY MEMBERS OF KINGSWAY JEWISH CENTER
A PROJECT OF THE MORRIS SCHNABEL ADULT EDUCATION INSTITUTE



**This Haggadah Companion
is dedicated by
JONAH AND SMADAR MEER**

**in loving memory of
Jonah's parents,
ABRAM AND HELEN MEER**

**אברהם יצחק בן יחיאל מיכל ז"ל
העניע מאשע בת ר' שלמה הכהן ז"ל**



Cover Painting

Pola Bradman

My painting was inspired by Rabbi Tokayer's drasha on Shabbat Parshat Tzav (2018) when he explained the correspondence of the four cups of wine we drink during each Passover seder to the four Matriarchs: Sarah, Rivka, Rachel, and Leah.



We are pleased to present Kasher V'Sameach, Volume VI, Kingsway's annual Haggadah Companion. We hope this companion will enhance your Seder and we look forward to continue to expand this work in the years to come.

Wishing the entire Kingsway family
a Chag Kasher V'Sameach.

Rabbi Etan Tokayer, *Rabbi*
Rabbi Dr. Mordechai Schiffman, *Assistant Rabbi*
Norm Lerner, *Chairman, Adult Education*

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KJC Haggadah Companion 2

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Part I: Divrei Torah

Is it All About the Food?

Rabbi Etan Tokayer

Why does the Haggadah begin essentially with the **הא** **לחמא עניא** declaration - this is the bread of affliction; come and eat. The central thrust seems to be the invitation for the poor and needy and that is NOT unique to Pesach. Every holiday presents an Halachik obligation to provide food for the needy among us. Yet the Haggadah opens with a declaration/invitation as though it is somehow a special part of the Pesach holiday.

Rav Soloveitchik suggests that the opening declaration must be understood in light of the Talmudic principle **כל** **מה שקנה עבד קנה רבו** - whatever a slave acquires is immediately owned by the master. Meaning, a slave has no capacity to own anything. With the celebration of our independence and freedom from slavery, we Jews may arrive at the faulty conclusion that we actually, independently own something of this world. We might delude ourselves into believing that we exist independently with no master to serve. We are in fact free of any constraint.

Thus, explains, the Rav, we open the Seder with the declaration that this bread is the bread of slavery in order to remind ourselves we may be free from Pharaoh, but we exist in servitude of Hashem. We own nothing. We have nothing. We exist to serve the Divine Other and by implication to execute His Divine charge to serve the human other. So, all who are needy, anyone who is hungry, come and eat from my food because in the end,

it's not really mine anyway. Indeed, we do not declare this is My bread of affliction; rather we simply state this the bread of affliction, and it is open and available for anyone who wants.

The primary purpose of Seder night is to rouse ourselves from the illusion of our freedom. It challenges us to remember there is a G-d who has gifted us life. We are eternally in His debt and the way to repay that debt is by serving one another. If we meet that challenge then, we conclude our declaration - next year we will be בני חורין truly free of our self-misconceptions, fully and finally redeemed in Eretz Yisrael.

Thank you to Rabbi Dr. Mordechai Schiffman for coordinating "Kasher V'Sameach," our sixth annual Haggadah Companion. Thank you also to Yonah and Smadar Meer for sponsoring this publication, to Karen and Norm Lerner and the Morris Schnabel Adult Education Institute for all the Torah opportunities throughout the year that help make Kingsway a center of Torah, and to Yosef Seewald with his assistance in the editing process.

Enjoy and Chag Kasher V'Sameach to all.
Rabbi Etan Tokayer

Another Haggadah??

Rabbi Dr. Mordechai Schiffman

Every year there seems to be another influx of brand-new Haggados with different angles and different presentations than there were the year before. The Haggadah text on its own is not so long that there is that much material to work with and we only actively use it for a few hours over

the course of the entire year. How can there be a market for so many different Haggados?

I heard the following presentation from Rabbi Moshe Tzvi Weinberg, a rebbe at Yeshiva University (whom we had at Kingsway as a Scholar in Residence a number of years ago), which both answers this question and more broadly teaches us a powerful lesson about Pesach and confronting challenges. Apparently, the proliferation of different Haggados is not a new phenomenon as Rabbi Naftali of Ropshitz already reflected on the ever-growing list of brand-new Haggados back in the 19th century. Rabbi Naftali suggests that the reason for this phenomenon is because the cast of characters is ever changing. The rasha of last year is no longer a rasha and a new rasha has come to take his place. The other characters too are quickly evolving and changing so we adapt the story to the new players.

One of the most popular lines in the Haggadah is “Bechol Dor Vador” – in every generation we are obligated to re-experience the Exodus as if it we ourselves went through the experience. The Baal HaTanya adds a terse and cryptic line: Bechol Dor Vador, Bechol Yom Vayom – In Every Generation, Every Single Day. What is his intention by adding “every single day”? Rabbi Weinberg suggests that perhaps the message is that the world is changing so fast, that each day as it were is its own new generation. With the advent of brand-new technologies and the fast-paced world around us, the changes that used to take generations to take hold, can now evolve in an instant. The challenges, the struggles, and the battles represented by Mitzrayim that we face this year are different than the ones we faced last year. The ideas and strategies that

worked last year may already be outdated and need to be adapted to the current situation.

Perhaps most importantly, is also realizing that our approach this year might not work next year. “Who is wise? Someone who can foresee the future.” The Torah repeats a number of times the concept of teaching future generations about the Exodus. Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein points out that the way the Torah formulates the exchange between the parent and the child is “Ki yishalcha bincha machar” – “when your child asks you, tomorrow.” The Torah is teaching us an invaluable lesson. Predict what types of questions your child will ask in the future. Don’t just wait until we are asked a question to begin thinking about how to formulate our response. Anticipate, predict and prepare for the questions and challenges that will arise in the future.

As we mark the publication of our 6th Annual Kingsway Haggadah Companion, let us hope and strive for even more publications in the future by and for our Kingsway family to help us prepare and take on the ever-new, changing challenges and opportunities that are presented to us in each and every generation, in each and every year, and in each and every day.

Extra Credit

Dr. Gary Abberbock

וְעָבַרְתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם, בַּלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה, וְהִכִּיתִי כָל-בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם,
מֵאָדָם וְעַד-בְּהֵמָה; וּבְכָל-אֱלֹקֵי מִצְרַיִם אֶעֱשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים, אֲנִי ה'

“For I will go through the land of Egypt in that night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am Hashem (Shemos 12:12)

The Baal HaHaggadah meticulously dissects this verse:

וְעָבַרְתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּלִילָה הַזֶּה – אֲנִי וְלֹא מַלְאָךְ; וְהָכִיתִי כָּל בְּכוֹר
בְּאֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם. אֲנִי וְלֹא שֹׁרֵף; וּבְכָל-אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֶעֱשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים. אֲנִי
וְלֹא הַשְּׁלִיחַ; אֲנִי ה'. אֲנִי הוּא וְלֹא אֲחֵר.

"And I will pass through the land of Egypt" - I and not an angel. "And I will smite every firstborn" - I and not a seraph. "And with all the gods of Egypt, I will make judgements" - I and not a messenger. "I am the Lord" - I am He and there is no other.

The Haggadah is emphasizing that Hashem Himself, through no agent, afflicted the Egyptians on Pesach night – including directly killing the Egyptian first born children and purposely sparing and protecting Bnei Yisrael.

It would seem, however, that this open, hands-on involvement of Hashem is contrary to a verse (Shemos 12:23) which states that if the Jews, as commanded, touch their doorposts and lintels with the blood of the Korban Pesach, then:

וְלֹא יֵתֵן הַמַּשְׁחִית, לְבֹא אֶל-בְּתִיכֶם לְנוֹגֵף – Hashem will not allow the destroying angel to enter your homes to smite.

If indeed G-d Himself did the killing, why does the verse speak of the involvement of the destroying angel?

The Vilna Gaon, זצ"ל, gives a beautiful explanation. It is true that Hashem Himself performed the plague of killing the Egyptian firstborns. He, Himself, also spared the Jewish firstborns, in homes properly sprinkled with blood. However, on that very night of Pesach, there were Jews who were due to die simply because their predetermined

number of days on this earth had come to an end. It is these Jews whose lives would have been taken by the destroying angel, the regular מלאך המות – angel of death – since their time to expire had come. However, had even one death occurred in a Jewish home the Egyptians would have been comforted that Jews were dying too (even though those who did pass on did not die because they were firstborns). Therefore the verse teaches that in addition to Hashem not entering to kill the Jewish firstborns, the blood on the doorposts and lintels serve to protect against the angel of death who would be prohibited by G-d to enter and perform his regular duties of taking the life of the Jews whose end of life had come.

The Jews on Pesach night were afforded truly special protection. May our proper performance of mitzvos on this night give us “extra credit” too and protect us all from harm – to be able to continue to serve our Creator until we merit the final redemption and beyond.

From Rasha to Tzaddik
Yossi Acoca (5th Grade)

We are told about the Rasha, “הקהה את־שניו” which literally means to knock out his teeth. Why does the Baal HaHaggadah use such a strong expression for dealing with the רשע.

In the words of “הקהה את־שניו” there is an interesting hint of how to deal with a Rasha; the גמטרי (the numerical value) of a רשע is 570, the גמטרי of שניו is 366, if you knock out the teeth (366) of a רשע (570) you will be left with 204 which is the גמטרי of צדיק. Therefore, חז”ל are hinting to us to explain to him the מצוות. Knock out his שניו; take away the wicked part from him until he becomes a צדיק.

For Matza's Sake!

Leslie Berger

Shemot 13:7 and 8 “Matzot shall be eaten throughout the seven-day period... And you must tell your son on that day saying- for the sake of this God did for me when He took me out of Egypt.”

What exactly is this commandment instructing us to tell our children? Is this asking us to explain why God took us out of Egypt and the answer is to eat matza or is it asking why we eat matza and the answer is because God took us out of Egypt?

Ibn Ezra writes that the main commandment of this night is to explain to our children that the reason WHY God took us out of Egypt was IN ORDER for us to eat Matza. This needs some explaining.

In Bereishit 15:13-18, God informs Avram “Know that your offspring will be strangers in a foreign land that will enslave and oppress them. But that nation that oppresses them I will judge, and afterwards they will go out with great wealth.” Additionally, in Bereishit 17:1, God enters into a covenant with Avram and his offspring, “throughout their generations, as an everlasting covenant, to be a God to you and your offspring...”

God chose Avram to be the forefather of a nation that would serve Him. Avram's offspring would first need to experience servitude in Egypt and then miraculously be redeemed in order to become that special nation.

Becoming His covenantal people was not a one-shot deal of slavery and redemption from Egypt. These were just

steps in the process. The process of being His eternal nation is ongoing and needs renewal and recommitment to that relationship with God from all of Avram's offspring. In every generation, as instructed to us on the seder night, we thank God for choosing Avram and US, today, for this covenant and its purpose- to serve God. So indeed, as Ibn Ezra pointed out, on this special night we are instructed to tell our children and they their children that the reason why God redeemed us from Egypt is to eat matza, to serve Him through the performance of His mitzvot. God's master plan was to put us into slavery in order to redeem us, so that we would keep His mitzva of eating matza and to serve Him as He directs us- through all of His mitzvot.

(See Rabbi Menachem Liebttag "Mikra Bikkurim and How We Tell the Story of Yetziyat Mitzrayim" October, 2017)

צא ולמד - Go and Learn

Menachem Fruchter

1) צא ולמד

Go & learn. When will we learn/believe?

When we enter the סוכה. This is a gematria -

צא = סוכה = אמן.

2) ד"א צא ולמד

Go & learn. Is it ever too late to go out & learn?

Even if we leave our Egypt at the age of 80 (ולמד = 80) like דיין משה still, obviously,

3) ד"א צא ולמד

This is the moment where we extend the הגדה של יציאת מצרים לדורות.

The line "צא ולמד" is a common Aramaic phrase i.e. "פוק חזי" or "go see or study".

It also relates to a core gematria in the הגדה.

If you pay attention, you'll notice that the פרקי הסדר are almost all words with large numerical values. E.g. קדש is 404. The two exceptions are the main parts of the סדר. First מגיד is only 57 (same as אוכל) while הלל is 65 (same as השם בלשון אדנות). The low גמטריה, because it is always easier to hold a smaller number (תפסת מועט תפסת), is a reminder to how important these two sections of the סדר are.

Now צא in חז"ל is also $91 = 65 + 26$ and מאכל, while 57 = $31 + 26$.

So צא ולמד is teaching us that if we will eventually leave the state of מגיד and enter the state of הלל then קל of 31 becomes אדנות of 65 and the impersonal (אוכל) becomes the personal (מאכל).

Note: The third idea incorporates ideas from the Apter Rav - רב אברהם יהושע העשל ז"ל.

Three Life Lessons we can Learn from Matzah

Grodko Family

We all know that one of the main themes of Pesach is Matzah. The common reason behind the Matzah is to commemorate the Jewish people leaving Egypt in a haste without any time for the bread on their back to rise. However, there must be something deeper behind this timeless tradition. Here are three life lessons that we can gain from the Matzah:

- 1) **Zerizus.** We all know that the process for baking Matzah is one that is done in a quick fashion. If you

ever go to a Matzah factory you will notice the big clock on the wall and a rush in the air to ensure that the 18-minute rule is not violated. This concept holds true in life as well. A person must act with zerizus towards his or her service to Hashem. We must keep alert and vigilant not to pass by any opportunity that comes our way.

- 2) **Simplicity.** Let's face it, there is nothing simpler than a piece of Matzah. There is no glamour and fluff to it (this is despite the fact that it has the same ingredients as bread). What you see is what you get. The lesson is simple, in life, don't get wrapped up with the falsehood of this world. Keep your eye on what's important and learn to appreciate the simplicities.
- 3) **Faith.** Our Rabbis teach us that Matzah is the food of Emunah. When the Jewish people left Egypt, they did not question Hashem as to the assurance of their journey. They left with the bread on their back and nothing else. This was the first testament of their faith in Hashem. From there, they were guided with the cloud of glory, the wellspring of water in the desert, and the heavenly manna that Hashem provided. We must remind ourselves that Hashem created the world and he has a plan that is custom tailored to everyone's needs. We must have Emunah/faith, that Hashem is with us and will redeem us from our current exile just like he did to our ancestors in Egypt.

Two Ideas from Rav Moshe

Dani (Elman) Laster

On Pesach, when we recite Dayeinu, we are remembering everything that Hashem has done for us as a nation. One of the items mentioned speaks about the מן. Rav Moshe Feinstein points out that the מן fell according to the amount of people in each family. What are we supposed to learn from this idea? Rav Moshe states that if Hashem blesses a person with wealth, that person needs to realize that what they have been given should be shared with others. We should give when we are able to since there are many people in need. The מן is a clear example of this because it encouraged Bnei Yisrael to share their wealth with those around them.

פסח מצה ומרור – Rav Moshe writes that we can learn lessons about Emunah from these three words:

Pesach – The whole holiday of Pesach is about recognizing that Hashem saved us from slavery. The Jews at the time didn't know anything other than slavery and became comfortable with their lives in Egypt. When we celebrate Pesach, we are remembering and commemorating the fact that Hashem is always in our lives, whether we realize it or not.

Matzah – When the Jews were leaving Egypt, they had to grab their unleavened bread without a minute to spare. This idea teaches us that Hashem can bring salvation in an instant.

Marror - We learn from this that we should never get too comfortable in the country that we are living in. In Egypt, things started off well with Yosef ruling. Yaakov and his

family were treated like royalty. It was hard to see that life in Egypt would eventually decline. We should all be zocheh to see the next salvation quickly!

(Adapted from a shiur by Rabbi Rafi Rosenblum)

Formation Experience

Norm Lerner

Egypt: what should be our takeaway?

Egyptian slavery: Our formation experience.

Not the welcoming Egypt of Joseph, but the harsh Egypt of bondage.

The Egypt where Pharoah looked at a different, alien people and went to a place of fear - "They, (the Other) will combine with our enemies to harm us."

Why automatically go to this place of fear? How real was the threat of these shepherds living on the outskirts, scratching out a living amidst one of the most powerful empires of its time?

But these people looked different, dressed oddly, spoke a strange dialect, ate foods forbidden and had alien sounding names—An easy target for a new, perhaps insecure ruler. A target to rally Egyptians against in order to solidify his hold on power. And so hardship and slavery followed.

Later, after freedom was gained, we are given some guidance on how to conduct ourselves regarding those in positions of powerlessness, positions that we had been in, among those institutions.

We are commanded to give shelter to the runaway slave: “You shall not hand over a slave who escaped to you to his master. He shall live with you in your midst, in the place which he shall choose... where it pleases him; you shall not mistreat him” (Devarim 23, 15-16).

The above is rather extraordinary considering in surrounding cultures, such as Greece and Rome, runaways were severely punished — Rome put some in the arena. The general rule: slaves were returned—this rule even applied here in nineteenth century America upheld by Congress in the Fugitive Slave Law.

Yet we are commanded to give that runaway shelter. Why? Was it because we knew what it was like to be abused when in a powerless position? That seems to be the obvious answer. That we are instructed to learn and to cultivate a conscience from our sojourn in Egypt... to treat the runaway, the stranger, the alien, the refugee with respect :

“...And the stranger thou shall not wrong ...for ye were strangers in Egypt” (Ex. 22, 20).

Again: “Love ye therefore the stranger for you were strangers...” (Deut. 10,19).

And yet again: “...judge righteously between a man and his brother and the stranger that is with them” (Deut. 1,16).

But why all the instruction? Why the repetition? Why the emphasis? Shouldn't memory be enough? One would think we'd just know, just feel this way from our collective history. Tell us once - it's sufficient! But experience does not automatically immunize the future because we know

it's a short step from the abused becoming the abuser - Just ask the parent that mistreats where they learned their behavior. So, we must beware of duplicating the norms of a cruel, manipulative Pharaoh. The wisdom of our tradition tells us not to fall victim to this trap, a trap which can replicate and carry abuse through generations. It tells us to fight and overcome any violent or base instinct so we may create something better - Create a Counter Egypt, an alternative to it - A place where The Other, the Stranger, the runaway is treated with respect and kindness.

Thus, our teachings demand that we learn, grow and change because of our painful past so that we may create a new model for ourselves and for the world's future.

(Thanking Rabbi Shai Held for some insights)

Moshe's Humility
Yehuda Lieberman

Why were we worthy of being freed from slavery in Egypt, and of being granted all the gifts enumerated in the song of Dayeinu? As we know, we were steeped in the depths of impurity. Obviously, Moshe was instrumental in the process, and he was certainly a great man. However, there were other holy people among the Jews in Egypt. Moshe's parents, Amram and Yocheved, for instance, were righteous people. Regardless, was one man's greatness truly enough to overcome the sins of an entire nation?

Perhaps the answer lies in seemingly contradictory descriptions of Moshe. The Torah describes Moshe as both the greatest prophet ever and as the humblest of men. In the common vernacular, humility is generally

viewed as a tendency to denigrate oneself—or at the very least not to acknowledge one's greatness. Using this definition, are we to understand that Moshe was not aware of his stature? Did he not recognize his abilities and accomplishments? Was he not capable of seeing what everyone else clearly saw?

It seems obvious that Moshe was keenly aware of his greatness in all areas. Not only was he highly righteous and pious, but he was highly intelligent and introspective as well. How could he have otherwise been able to attain his myriad of accomplishments?

I would suggest that the “humility” mentioned in the Torah is in no way related to self-denigration or disregarding of one's essence. In fact, humility can be viewed as the ability to view one's qualities from a deeper and more profound perspective. Most of us are able to like others for their intrinsic qualities—who they are—not for their capabilities or accomplishments. We don't analyze others' qualities in order to decide whether we like them; our feelings toward others are instinctive. We judge ourselves, however, based on external factors. We therefore constantly rely on our abilities and achievements in order to like ourselves. The reason that we judge others is to feel better about ourselves. If we were able to simply like ourselves the way that we simply like others, we would have no need to judge ourselves or others.

I propose that Moshe's great humility lay in his ability to acknowledge his qualities from an intrinsic perspective. Since he simply accepted who he was, he had no need to focus on these qualities. He didn't put himself down or scorn his positive qualities. Nor did he try to inflate his ego based on his qualities. He therefore had no need to judge

others. In this sense, Moshe viewed himself as the same as everyone else. This may be what the Torah is referring to when it describes Moshe as the most humble of people.

Due to his humility, Moshe was able to completely devote his entire self to Hashem's will, allowing him to reach the heights that he attained. In this way, Moshe's humility and his greatness go hand-in-hand. Specifically, due to Moshe's great understanding and introspection, he was able to dispense with ego-related thoughts and actions. The more humility that he achieved, the greater a person he became...and the greater he became, the more humility he achieved.

Due to Moshe's great humility, he was able to view himself as the same as everyone else. Since he had no need to artificially bolster his self-esteem, he was able to measure himself and others against the true yardstick—Hashem himself whose qualities are immeasurable. From that perspective no human is measurably greater than any other.

Surely Moshe's concrete accomplishments helped lead to our freedom from slavery and to all the other gifts that were bestowed upon us. Perhaps, however, a key harbinger of our freedom and the establishment of our great nation was Moshe's continual demonstration of this goal—not to judge others, and to be as one with all of our fellow Jews.

Insight on the Splitting of the Sea

Henry Madnick (4th Grade)

There is a connection between the splitting of the Sea and the Hallel that we say during the Pesach Seders. The Medrash says that when Bnei Yisroel approached the Yam

Suf, Hashem first told Moshe to lift up his hands to part the sea, but it didn't work, and the water kept on coming. Then, Hashem told Moshe to lift up his staff but that also did not work, and the water still kept on coming down. Finally, the Shechina of Hashem came down and commanded the Yam Suf to split and so it did. That is why it says in Hallel, as Moshe said; מָה לָךְ הַיָּם כִּי תִנּוּס - What is happening to you, O Sea, that you are fleeing? And the Sea answered, - מִלִּפְנֵי אֲדוֹן חוּלִי אֶרֶץ - From before the Master, tremble O earth.

The Sea would not do as Moshe instructed, only as Hashem instructed. Hashem is the only One in control. Since Hashem alone created the sea and put it there, only Hashem can move it from that place.

What's in a Name?

Melanie M. Marmer

Why is the holiday we celebrate called Pesach or Passover? Why isn't it called Freedom Day or Independence Day (even though most people don't feel so free or independent when cleaning and cooking for the holiday - LOL)? Why isn't it referred to as Matza holiday even from the first night of Passover. Isn't the idea that Hashem passed over the homes of the Jewish first-born only one concept of the many reasons we are celebrating. We don't call the holiday, Bnai Yisrael were saved from 10 plagues. What is so important about the idea that Hashem passed over our homes that caused Hashem to call our holiday Passover? Perhaps it is so we realize that the role of the Firstborn children in the story is quite relevant.

Setting the question aside for one moment; Men wear tefillin every day and the tefillin contain four parshios. You

would think that if you could choose the sections that are contained therein, they would be the most relevant mitzvos in our daily lives and those declaring Hashem is One and we have no other. Then why is the mitzvah of peter chamor, the law regarding the broken-necked donkey, included in the four parshios? The concept of this law is that all first-born males, human or animal, need to be redeemed and sanctified to Hashem. With children, money is used. The reason for this may be because Hashem redeemed our firstborn in Egypt. In the case of kosher animals, a sacrifice is done, and the non-kosher animals are redeemed with money. However, a firstborn donkey must be killed, the Torah says by breaking its neck. But why is that law in the tefillin?

The emphasis on the first-born may run deeper than just the fact that there was a plague involving the first-born Egyptians and that the Jewish first-borns were saved during that plague. There is a strange statement made in Shemos (4, 22-23), even before any of the plagues that states:

וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶל־פַּרְעֹה כֹּה אָמַר ה' בְּנִי בְכֹרִי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: Israel is My first-born son.

וְאָמַר אֵלַיךְ שְׁלַח אֶת־בְּנִי וַיַּעֲבֹדֵנִי וְתִמְאַן לְשַׁלְּחוֹ הַנֵּה אֲנִי הִרְגָּת אֶת־
בְּנִי בְכֹרִי:

I have said to you, "Let My son go, that he may worship Me," yet you refuse to let him go. Now I will slay your first-born son."

Hashem refers to Bnai Yisrael literally as MY FIRST-BORN son and this is the first thing Moshe is instructed to tell Pharaoh. Moshe is told to then say to send my first-

born son to serve me. Pharaoh is then told that if you refuse you will ultimately lose your first-born son. This is exactly what happened in the last plague.

Perhaps the reason that the name of the holiday is Passover is because it is the story of the birth of the first-born nation, Am Yisroel, and the Haggadah is meant to be the story of Hashem's first-born nation.

(Adapted from Rabbi David Fohrman's Hagaddah)

The Power of Faith

Malka Marmer

"ויאמינו בה' ובמשה עבדו" - "They believed in God and His servant Moshe." This pasuk is written in the paragraph "Rabbi Yossi Hagellili" right before we're about to sing Dayeinu- the song of triumph. It seems that the Torah is trying to tell us that there is a relationship that exists between belief and triumph. And in fact, Chazal teach us that "Bnei Yisrael were redeemed from Egypt because of the faith they had." Did the Rabbis mean to teach us that it was just a simple trade, a form of reward-and-punishment, that the immediate wages of emunah/faith are ge'ullah/redemption?

It's not that simple. Chazal meant the faith in the redemption itself brought upon the redemption! The confidence that Bnei Yisrael had in the future determined the future. We can compare this to modern day Israel before 1948 a Jewish state was merely a vision. But those who maintained their faith in this vision, lived to see it fulfilled. Our faith itself was instrumental in achieving it. Indeed, the future tends to conform to our opinion of it.

But we need to be cautious of merely wishing ourselves into a better future. We must be careful that we may think of wishing strong enough the very wish will bring it about. Rather we should be committed to faith and optimism that brings work, dedication and infinite effort. The Rabbis promised us the ultimate redemption as a שכר אמונה. The word שכר, means not only reward, something given in return, but also payment. The ge'ullah doesn't come about as a reward for faith but as a result of שכר אמונה, effort, work, and faith in the vision. If we are willing to pledge, give, and pay as an expression of our faith then we will be privileged to experience the ultimate ge'ullah!

(Adapted from Rabbi Norman Lamm)

Musings on the Letter Vov
Yosef Seewald

When Rabbi Skaist, the menahel of Yeshiva Darchei Aliyamy son, Koby's school- offered a chabura for fathers, I decided to participate. And it was regarding the specific way the teachers of the school intend to teach the students Torah. So, we started with the first pasuk of Sefer Shemos.

The parsha starts with the word Vi'Eileh- And these. The Ramban comments that the reason the first word of the first pasuk starts with a Vov, meaning "and," is that these events in Sefer Shemos tie together to the previous storyline of Yaakov coming down to Egypt and Galus of Egypt.

But as I was perusing the rest of the prior pesukim, I noticed that they all started with the letter Vov. And I figured that every pasuk was tying back to an idea from a previous pasuk. So I kept flipping back through every

pasuk in Sefer Bereshis and found that every pasuk which was neither a quote nor the continuation of a list, started with a Vov up to but not including the first pasuk in the Torah. I literally thought either the Torah was playing a joke on me or I had just made the biggest breakthrough in Torah since Sheshach was revealed to be Bavel through the Atbash cipher. Thus, intent on furthering my discovery, I searched through the rest of the Torah and found that 85-90% of all pesukim in the Torah start with Vov (with the notable exception being Sefer Devarim which is mostly one big quote from Moshe Rabbeinu and thus fewer Vov's are found).

Now, further research found that unfortunately I had not discovered something hitherto unknown but rather a well-known fact to Hebrew grammarians and Baalei-keriya – namely, that most pesukim start with Vov. So much so that the entire Torah is written in such a way that the first letter of every column starts with a Vov. And this style of Torah calligraphy is aptly called a Vov Torah.

This led me to my next poignant factoid - Vov, as a prefix, in the Torah and especially at the beginning of a pasuk, only sometime means “And.” The more common usage of the letter Vov is as a tense change. This is known as a Vov Hahipuch or Opposite Vov, e.g. “yehi” means “it will be” but “vayehi” means “it was.” But the Vov in many cases changes the tense from past to present and vice versa.

Lexicographers argue the exact differences in Biblical Hebrew syntax regarding tenses and the Vov hahipuch. But notwithstanding the tense-changing Vov (the Vov hachibur) an adding Vov is also notable. This Vov is a prefix word that adds its own meaning to the verse.

Then I noticed that biblical translators have found no less than seven different translations for the prefix Vov - and, when, then, this, but, now, and untranslatable (like a 'fa' in Arabic). But I will leave it to the studious reader to find examples of these in the Torah.

Now, the full contents of this discussion about Vov's are too broad for this publication. Additionally, there are further grammatical and mystical avenues of research yet unexplored on this topic that I urge any like-minded reader to private message me to discuss further.

Thus I will leave the reader with a few fun factoids about Vov. And you may surmise your own answer to the crux question that piqued my interest in these musings- what's with all the Vov's?!

Facts:

- 1) In Hebrew, the word Vov means hook.
- 2) The pronunciation of the prefix Vov is markedly different depending of the letter and vowelization after it. (vi, va, ooh)
- 3) The Gemara remarks that the middle letter of the Torah is a Vov. (According to our current Torah letter count, it isn't, but that is debatable).
- 4) The Gematria of the letter Vov is six and the sixth word in the Torah starts with a Vov.
- 5) Humans were created on Day 6, or Vov.
- 6) The Torah was given on Har Sinai on Vov Sivan.
- 7) In Hebrew, some vowels can be written shorthand, Chaser, or longhand, Maleh. The difference being the presence of a Vov placeholder.

8) According to Midrash, after Kayin killed Hevel, Hashem placed a Vov on Kayin's forehead as a scarlet letter for all to see.

9) When Moshe Rabbeinu was counting up the finances for the Mishkan, his tally came up short until he realized that he had forgotten to include the Vov's or hooks, thus proving his honesty in accounting the communal funds.

Experiencing the Exodus

Asher Shanabrook

One of the goals of the Pesach seder is to put ourselves in the place of our ancestors, as if we literally experienced the Exodus. We not only have to understand and sympathize with the generation that left Mitzrayim for Eretz Yisroel, but even if for a night, become that same generation. How is that possible? They lived in poverty and oppression, while we grew up in affluence and comfort. They witnessed the miracles of the Makkos and Keriya Yam Suf, while at best we witness a few lachmagine left at a Shabbos Mevarchim Kiddush.

Immediately after the Four Questions, the Haggadah quotes the pasuk in Devarim 6:21, "And you will say to your children, we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and Hashem took us out of Egypt with a strong hand." We are instructed to teach our children that we were slaves. Both for ourselves and for our children, how do we relate to the slaves of Egypt? The Sforno writes that what the pasuk means by "slaves" is that we were unable to acquire wholeness, and by bringing us out of Mitzrayim into Eretz Yisrael, we then had the ability to acquire wholeness. For us, we also start with the relative inability to make ourselves kind, genuine, well-balanced people. For every person in every generation, Hashem gives us a boost to

make ourselves more whole, like putting us next to someone who has fallen so we can help them up or giving us a community with endless opportunities to learn, do chesed, and connect with other Jews.

There are innumerable other ways that we can strive to complete the difficult task of viewing ourselves as if we left Mitzrayim all those years ago. The Tzror Hamor says that Hashem allowed the Jews to remain in exile in Egypt despite negative influence from their neighbors but gave them the chance to leave before they were permanently changed by the foreign culture around them. This is a reminder to make our surroundings, not just ourselves, sacred, which is certainly what we try to do at Kingsway.

This Pesach and every Pesach, we should do better to identify with the generation of the Exodus, because Hashem didn't just create their story for them, but for every generation to come.

Barad, Some Short Ideas

Avi Simon (6th Grade)

וַיֵּט מֹשֶׁה אֶת-מִטְהוֹ, עַל-הַשָּׁמַיִם, וְה' נָתַן קֶלֶת וּבָרָד, וַתִּהְלֶךְ אֵשׁ
אֶרְצָה; וַיִּמָּטֶר ה' בָּרָד, עַל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם. וַיְהִי בָרָד--וְאֵשׁ, מִתְלַקַּחַת
בְּתוֹךְ הַבָּרָד: כִּבְד מְאֹד--אֲשֶׁר לֹא-הָיָה כָמוֹהוּ בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, מֵאֶז
הָיְתָה לְגוֹי

And Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky. And Hashem sent sounds and hail, and fire went down to the earth. And Hashem made the hail rain down on the land of Egypt. And there was hail, and the fire was taken inside the hail. And it was very hard. There had not been anything like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. (Shemot, 9:22-24)

The Chumash says the hail came down with noise and fire. This is the type of thing that you'd read in a midrash, but it says it straight in the Torah. Rashi says fire and ice cooperated together to do the will of Hashem. In the midrash R' Yehudah says the fire was inside the hail like a pomegranate and R' Nechemiah says it was like a lantern where water and oil mix.

Ramban is puzzled about why the Chumash says that nothing like this ever happened before in Egypt. Does that mean it happened like this somewhere else? It must mean that this was a phenomenon only because it happened in Egypt (where it never even rains). But he also quotes the midrash that says that this was amazing worldwide. Another midrash says that when the hailstones stopped falling, they were held until the time of Yehoshua's battle against the Emori Kings and the noise was held until the time of Yehoram

United as Seventy

Esther Vago

בְּשִׁבְעִים נָפֶשׁ יָרְדּוּ אֲבוֹתֶיךָ מִצְרַיִם

"With 70 people, your fathers went down to Mitzrayim."

Why does the pasuk use the lashon yachid (singular) when referring to 70 people? Why does it not say "שבעים" (plural)? This is not the only place where the pasuk uses this language. In Parshat Vayigash, everywhere it discusses Bnei Yaakov going down to Mitzrayim, it uses the same singular language. By contrast, when the pasuk talks about Eisav in Parshat Vayishlach, it lists the children of Eisav and it says "כל נפשות ביתו", with the lashon rabim (plural). Rashi offers one explanation - that Eisav served

many gods, and therefore his family uses lashon rabim, but Yaakov and his family served only Hashem.

Rabbeinu Yona offers another explanation. He says, he who goes after his own needs and desires is by definition separate from all others. Each person has their own individual desires, and no two people have the same exact needs. When a person goes after their own goals, they automatically push others away.

We also see lashon yachid used in the words of kedusha, when it refers to the malachim. It says "כולם כאחד" - they were all as one. The malachim do not have needs and desires, and therefore they are always as one.

Yaakov and his family had one goal - to serve Hashem. They were united in this singular desire, and therefore the pasuk is able to refer to them as one soul.

A Different Order Zeitz Family

There is an order to our Seder familiar to all... Kadaish, Urchatz etc... We say it; We sing it; We do it. But do we really understand it?

Kadaish is, of course, Kiddush... the 1st of the 4 cups, which starts the Seder as Kiddush does every Shabbat and Yom Tov.

Urchatz—We wash, no bracha, no Matza, but for Karpas, in keeping with an ancient tradition of potential defilement... and so on the next steps.

But it says KADAISH—not KIDDUSH; U'RCHATZ—maybe not washing at all!

Shifting from Hebrew to Aramaic, every time we remove the Torah from the Ark we say and sing: BAY ANA RACHITZ—IN G-D I TRUST

And so--KADAISH—To feel the presence of G-d at all times. In the challenging times; the difficult times; the crisis times and yes, most difficult and all too often neglected, the good times, the blessed times. To feel the Yad Hashem Bechol Edan Ve'Edan, in all circumstances. Not just to say Baruch Hashem but to feel the presence of Hashem as a source of Bracha in every circumstance.

And so as we begin the Pesach Seder, really the unfolding of the Seder of Life itself, with Matza and Marror, freedom and slavery; wine, symbol of joy; salt water, symbol of tears; and we declare: KADAISH –I see the hand of G-d in every event and as I am challenged to rise to the occasion URCHATZ- I accept the challenge and respond with the strengths and capacity with which I have been blessed.

I look around the Seder table; I look at the objects on the Seder table and I count my blessings.

Part II: Pesach Reflections

MiDor L'dor- Seders in Brooklyn and the Five Towns

Miriam Bradman Abrahams

My sister Sheila and I are part of the 'sandwich generation'. We are old enough to recall fondly our family seders since we were kids in the '60's with our own grandparents and parents, and to also have our own children, married and unmarried join us in our seders. As our Abuelos/grandparents handed down the responsibility of preparing and hosting the seders to our parents Pola and Juan Bradman, so they too passed the torch to us, with each of us taking charge of one evening.

In the 1960's-1970's Abuela Regina and Abuela Rosita did the cooking and Abuelo Julio led the seder together with Abuelo Leon first in their Crown Heights apartment and then in their apartment on Kings Highway. The seders were old-fashioned style with my grandfather doing most of the reading and associated rituals in a quick, strong accented yiddishized sounding Hebrew straight out of the iconic free Maxwell House Hagaddah.

We Yeshivah Rambam educated girls piped in for the Ma Nishtana, Dayenu and the lively ending songs. The most fun part of the evening for us back then was searching for the Afikoman and getting very modest gelt as the prize for finding it.

Forward a few years later to when our grandparents were no longer, and we felt the empty space left by them at our seder table. Our dad felt the weight of responsibility upon him and reluctantly took over the mantle. By then my sister and I had married and so we and our husbands were

called upon to help run the seders. We all became actively involved in the Hagaddah, the retelling of Yetziyat Mitzrayim, with each attendee taking turns reading in the language of their choice. Though the major parts are read in Hebrew, now with a more modern Israeli style pronunciation, some paragraphs are recited in English and some in Spanish. Besides the original Hagaddah we began adding newer versions to our collection.

When my boys were born, they delightfully took over singing Ma Nishtana from our very grateful then-20-year-old cousin. As my sons, daughter and nieces grew up they took more active roles in our seder nights which moved from Brooklyn to our homes in the Five Towns. Each grandchild injected their own personality, commentary and skills into the hours-long evening.

When they were still little kids, my sister bought finger puppets and masks to demonstrate the plagues. The seder plates were created by the kids in school and home and then bigger projects like my son's life size paper mache lamb sacrifice made it to our expanding table. As university students, the kids expounded on different points with their professorial voices and acted the parts of the Four Sons in ever creative ways. We all enjoy singing the fun songs together and feel pride for the continuation and evolution of our seder traditions.

We feel blessed to live close to each other and to continue enjoying this important annual gathering together, ever adjusting and enhancing. The highlight way back and still to this day is of course the delicious feast! Though traditional chicken soup with matza balls, gefilte fish and brisket are vital, we've included more vegetarian dishes, wonderful variations of charoset and yummy wines to

please everyone. Wishing everyone a healthy and happy Pesach! L'chaim and B'tayavon!

Seders Throughout the Generations

Rina Blech

In memory of my dad Rabbi Meyer Blech, ע"ה

When I was young, Passover seders were celebrated at my grandparents, Shlomo and Necha Eiger a"h. It was a large family affair with all the cousins. My grandmother, Bubba Necha, fried latkes (very thin and crisp). We each held a paper towel. The latkes went straight from the pan to our paper towel.

I remember my cousins, who were in Yeshiva elementary school coming with huge notebooks for Divrei Torah which meant that the Seder would last past 3AM.

I remember my grandfather calling out for my grandmother, after the gefilte fish was served, "Necha, Chrein!" Then slurping his soup. You could hear him all across Boro Park.

My father was a chaplain in Korea and conducted the Pesach seders for the Jewish soldiers. Years after he completed his service, my father was asked to conduct a Seder for the servicemen in Greenland. My father was always game for an adventure. A non-Jewish general asked my father, "Rabbi, what's the meaning of kosher wine?" My father was very quick on his feet. My father answered, "General, you know how in the olden days people made wine by stomping on the grapes. Kosher wine is untouched by human feet."

When my father was a Chaplain in the Veteran's Hospital in Manhattan, our family used to attend to liven up the Passover seders for the patients.

At our Seders at home, we always used the Jewish War Veteran's Haggados, with their wine stained cover and some pages stuck together. My father used to sit on the Afikoman, which made it more difficult to steal. I'm still waiting for the bicycle.

One Passover, my father fell, and my mother and I could not lift him off the floor. We called Hatzolah and in less than a minute three men in kittels (like the three angels who came to visit Abraham after his bris), picked him up off the floor and made sure he was OK.

Our seders now are short and never last past 10:30. After our seder, I sometimes walk over to my first cousin's seder. The father is my first cousin, one of the young boys with the big notebook of divrei torah, who is now leading a seder for his family including, kein ayin hara, many grandchildren. Their seder has not even begun.

Since my dad is gone, our seders are not the same. When it came to the "Chad Gadya" the whole family would take a part, of course my father played "Abba". He used to bang his chest like Tarzan, howling "Abaaaaa!"

This year I feel very fortunate that my mother, Esther Blech, is doing well and we will enjoy another seder, along with the "kids", my nieces and nephews, who are now in their twenties and older. I didn't tell my husband, who is new to the family, that he has to play Abba this year.

Pleasant Memories

Pola Bradman

Not too long ago
Spring was the time
Far away from home
In a familiar place
I walked alone
In the rain-In the rain
It was Shabbat
It was Pesach

My destination: The House of God

Inside men prayed downstairs

From the balcony

Still empty of women

I sat and contemplated

The Holy Place

Illuminated in bright colors

By the sons of Jacob

From the pulpit

Soon it was announced

To honor our King Solomon

Everyone read with passion

Love and devotion

His great musical poetry

Later outside I walked back

In the rain-In the rain

This time together

With the man I love

Inspired

Grateful

Blessed

Hopeful

In the rain-In the rain

Far away from home

In a familiar place

The original poem was written in Spanish

SHABBAT DURANTE PESAJ

Pola Bradman

Llovía, llovía,
Shabbat era el día,
De Pesaj alegría.
Caminaba toda cubierta
Por la calle desierta
Con un rumbo fijo:
¡La casa de Dios!
Allí unos hombres oraban,
Las mujeres faltaban,
Los hijos de Jacob
El recinto alumbraban.
Desde abajo el rabino anunció
A la congregación:
¡Honremos ahora
Al Gran Rey Salomón!
los libros todos abrieron
Y pronto se entregaron
Al amor y pasión
De su intensa poesía,
De su única canción.
Afuera del templo
Llovía, llovía,
Caminaba toda cubierta,
De mi amado sujeta,
Inspirada, agradecida,
Respirando bendición,
Embriagada de ilusión.

A Lesson in דקדוק and a New Tradition

Judy and Ari Cohen

This happened close to 40 years ago. Our Seder was proceeding nicely and we were in the section that began with ארמי אבד אבי.... We were reciting the last sentence in this section and reached the two words ובמורא גדול. Our daughter, Andrea, told us that a classmate of hers at Shulamith Elementary School related what occurred at one of her family sedarim when they reached these words. Her younger sister, age 6 or 7, turned to her grandfather who was leading the Seder and said: “Zadie, shouldn’t it be מורה גדולה?” Her grandfather, knowledgeable in דקדוק, was overjoyed to hear his granddaughter make this observation. He then explained to her the difference between מורא (fear; awe) and מורה (teacher). She already had the gender thing under control.

We review this story every year at our Seder. Andrea asked her friend about this and the friend and her family had no recollection of this incident. But it is now part of the Cohen Seder tradition.

Songs for Your Seder

Carin and Ben Dachs

Just like many families around the world, we’re constantly trying to find ways to enhance the Seder to make it fun and more enjoyable, especially for grandchildren and occasional visitors who are less familiar with the traditions. With the second night essentially a mirror image of the first, the task is even more complex. As a consequence, our Sedarim have become filled with toy representations of the plagues, games and songs. The last has proven to

be a favorite among adults. Here are two of several songs we rotate throughout each Seder night:

There's No Seder Like Our Seder

(To the tune of "There's No Business Like Show Business")

There's no Seder like our Seder,
There's no Seder I know.
Everything about it is halachic
Nothing that the Torah won't allow.
Listen how we read the whole Haggadah.
It's all in Hebrew,
Cause we know how
There's no Seder like our Seder.
We tell a tale that is swell.
Moses took the people out into the heat,
They baked the matzo,
While on their feet.
Now isn't that a story
That just can't be beat?
Let's go on with the show!

Our Passover Things

(Sing to the tune of "My Favorite Things" from The Sound of Music)

Cleaning and cooking, and so many dishes
Out with the Chametz, no pasta, no knishes
Fish that's gefilted, horseradish that stings
These are a few of our Passover things

Matzah and karpas and chopped up charoset
Shankbones and kiddish and Yiddish neuroses
Tante who kvetches and uncle who sings
These are a few of Passover things

Motzi and maror, and trouble with Pharoahs
Famines and locusts and slaves with wheelbarrows
Matzah balls floating and eggshell that clings
These are a few of our Passover things

When the plagues strike,
When the lice bite,
When we're feeling sad.
We simply remember our Passover things
And then we don't feel so bad.

Reflections on Freedom and AIPAC

Alyssa Elbogen

Pesach, a mouth speaks. Today we associate freedom with the freedoms we are granted in the US: speech, choice, life, pursuit of happiness, courts of law, etc. peh-sach פה-סח/פסח as opposed to par'oh/peh-ra רע פרה/רע, evil speech, speaking judgments, falsehood, etc.

And so, a space here to express what Pesach means this year, and how is it different than all other years? How is it continuously relevant to speak about freedom and recall the enslavements from then and now?

This year I was blessed to join my first AIPAC convention along with other respected Kingsway members. Mouths spoke, indeed. Minds exchanged ideas. A buzzing of electricity filled the air as the future dangled before us all.

Reminded of the threats our world faces, reminded of the power of unity, reminded of our common goals and purposes. Reminded of Israel.

As we swarmed in and out of conference rooms, the Jewish and non-Jewish fans of Israel maneuvered together in harmony. Aligned with a love for Israel so strong, it was as palpable as tears.

We await a great redemption and we walk through the midst of it, as it touches us all in these days. Though the darkness is strong, the light beams brighter, and we are all gifted the freedom of choice to: Choose Good. Always.

I am often reminded of the teaching that in the End of Days, the world will become an Israel, Israel a Jerusalem, etc. The Nation of Israel lives, and we are much greater than 2 or 3 tribes wide. Many nations align with the vision of Israel and the Third Temple, a place for peaceful prayer and worship for all of the nations.

Yisroel/Yashar-E-I. We are aligning with our allies and working towards a greater peace for the world at large, as we all develop relationships Straight with G-d ישראל, and understand our common, sacred core of G-dliness.

In those days, when we widen our wings and the Shechina mirrors this, there will be a great peace. We can have a strong identity while also allowing ourselves to recognize the Divine nature in all of creation.

That is a teaching of Mitzrayim as well. G-d is with us, G-d is present, in each element of creation, אין עוד מלבדו, There's nothing but HaShem.

May we merit to feel the Living Torah expanding into the world at large as we protect its sanctity and make G-d proud of us.

Sedarim: Past, Present and Future

Alan Fintz

In my essay for the first Haggadah companion, several years ago, I recalled a college Seder where our Hillel rabbi asked us to suggest a 5th question.

I then suggested asking in essence: If we're told to imagine ourselves as if present three millennia ago -- personally liberated from bondage, and about to receive the Torah at Sinai -- then shouldn't we now, also try to imagine ourselves in the world of a Seder held three millennia in the future?

Today, I pose a variant of that question: How might our ancestors at Sinai react, if offered a chance to experience today's Seder, through their ancient eyes?

Of course, the word "Seder" itself, means "Order," and in this light, I imagine that if our guest were given some time to experience the reality of today's world, before joining our Seder, one of the facts our guest might find most striking, would be how much humanity has learned about both the order of things in Nature, and many ways to harness, manipulate and modify that order.

Whether we look again at modern mastery of atoms or genes, microscopy or astronomy, gene therapy or artificial intelligence, our guest might at first be amazed at how much more we seem to grasp the unseen order of things, than did our ancestors at Sinai.

Sadly though, if our guest remained long enough, he or she might also learn that the same society that has so mastered the order within Nature, has in the process, also

learned to disrupt that order, to decimate its diversity and diminish its vigor.

At a time like Pesach -- when we actively invite children to ask questions -- our guest might be surprised to learn that our ability to shape the physical world around us now seems limited less by the boundaries of facts we can know, than by the quality of the questions we may be wise enough to ask.

In this spirit, looking about, our guest might remind us of another kind of order pervading the Seder table: The crowning achievement of each Pesach family gathering is its capacity to enable even the youngest of children to sense they are a central part of the assemblage of adults at this table, of the larger community of Jews marking this day across the globe, and of the perpetual people in time, stretching millennia back, and into the future, for whom each of us feels a bond of kinship, and responsibility.

At long last, our guest might find cause for hope:

As our awareness of our part in the order of Jewish history over time, catches up with the modern world's adolescent grasp of new powers to manipulate the order of Creation, we may finally harness that awareness to manage that power, and then perhaps, secure the promise of many more hopeful and joyous Pesach celebrations together, for millennia to come.

The Five Questions (Kingsway Edition)

Bezalel Kosofsky

What makes Kingsway different from other orthodox shuls in Brooklyn? At Kingsway, the men and women eat together during kiddush and seudat shlishit but in other orthodox shuls in Brooklyn, the men and women eat on separate sides of the mechitza during kiddush and seudat shlishit.

What else makes Kingsway different from other orthodox shuls in Brooklyn? In other orthodox shuls in Brooklyn, there is a separate men's' entrance and separate women's' entrance to the shul building itself but at Kingsway, there's one entrance for everyone to the shul building itself.

How else is Kingsway different from other orthodox shuls in Brooklyn? At Kingsway, you don't need to wear a jacket or black hat when you daven for the amud but at other orthodox shuls in Brooklyn, you need to wear a jacket and black hat to daven for the amud.

What else makes Kingsway different from other orthodox shuls in Brooklyn? At Kingsway, we have BBQs for Yom Haatzmaut and Labor Day which they don't have at other orthodox shuls in Brooklyn.

What else is different Kingsway different from other orthodox shuls in Brooklyn? In other orthodox shuls in Brooklyn, the Motzei Shabbos learning program is only for fathers, sons, grandfathers and great grandfathers but at Kingsway, the Motzei Shabbos learning program is not only for fathers, sons, grandfathers and great grandfathers

but also for mothers, daughters, grandmothers and great grandmothers too.

The Newness of Freedom

Norm Lerner

I'm sixteen and both my birthday and Pesach are approaching— it's a breezy April day, winter's chills have left and warm breezes move across my face as I walk in Fort Greene Park.

I think of the possibilities that await: college, new friends, adventures— I breathe in the grass scented air feeling all the joys of youth and potential.

And now I wonder was this just a fraction of the emotions our ancestors felt as they marched from Egypt in Springtime—slavery's burden lifted and a new freshness all about.

Nature itself seeming to celebrate with them—mountains and hills moving - skipping— jumping like lambs with that newfound joy of freedom and the openness of possibility in view just ahead.

Pesach Thoughts

Mendi Scharf

Pesach is a major Jewish holiday with the intent purpose of remembering our past, where we came from, what we went through, and where we are hoping to go.

It is a holiday of traditions, and varying practices depending on cultures, regions, habits, and Mesorah.

I grew up in Communist Romania during the 50's and 60's where religious practices were discouraged or officially outright prohibited. Nevertheless, our family kept kosher, I went to Cheder after public school, as did my siblings. Why did we do this? We did not really want to do it when others went to play. My parents felt that it is important for us to learn about Yidishkeit, Davening, and learning in order for us to remain Jewish. Eventually we emigrated from Romania to be free to practice our Judaism and carry on the family trust. I was able to integrate seamlessly into Yeshiva because I knew the basics of Davening and reading Chumash.

We were the first post War generation that decimated the European Jewish population. Most of us never knew our grandparents. It just seemed to be the norm. Later, I began to see practicing religion as a responsibility. How can I abandon religious practices when my parents, grandparents were keeping and clinging to Jewish practices despite the odds and hardships? Who am I to abandon and dismiss their commitments and determination in face of extreme hardships?

Pre Pesach, I remember going to the bakery with my father to bake Mitzvah matzos. I was a young child and did not understand what that is about other than it was a fun thing to do. Later I began to understand the imprinting and ingraining of what my father was doing and transmit to me the practices of Pesach. I also remember going with my mother to the farm to milk the cows ourselves to make sure the milk was kosher for Pesach. Fifty-five years later, I still have vivid memories of those experiences as if it was only last week.

For many years, our family spent Pesach in Miami at “Hotel Scharf”. It was hard work, but we needed to make sure we schlepped everything anyone could possibly want. Our kids and grandchildren look back on those times with sentiment and remember it as “can we do that again?” attitude. Erev Pesach was a busy, hectic time, Michael making Pesach noodles, Lauren making chocolate chip Pesach cookies, and Eric grating the Maror on the terrace because everyone’s eyes were getting irritated. Those were good times making Pesach.

Schedules and jobs change and so we no longer go en masse to Miami for Pesach. We all miss it very much. During the Seders, I often felt like a cowboy wrangler trying to get all involved in the Hagaddah, usually with little success. My wife did a much better job engaging the kids and adults with her leading the singing. She got “shtick” for the Makos like jumping frogs, etc. I think mostly we tried, and we hope we transmitted to the kids the importance of the practices of the Pesach Seder, as our parents did for us.

Unfortunately, in our current state of religion I think many young people are falling away from performing the Jewish practices, because either they were not imbued with them, or they do not find them important to our collective Jewish survival as a distinct culture. Hey, they can always watch a Seder on YouTube, right? It is truly sad. I find that for many young people Judaism has become defined as something “to do good”, or as it’s known, Tikun Olam. However, that concept does nothing to promote future existence of actual Judaism. It’s a faux “feel good” religion idea.

If your religion and Jewish identity is defined by feeling good and helping others then it is no different from your friend Tony, or anyone else non-Jewish who may have similar empathetic feelings towards social fixing the wrongs. What is Jewish about it?

I strongly feel that the actual practices, Shabbos, Yom Tov, etc. are what sustain(ed) us as a distinct culture and religion over the millennia when others have disappeared. Yes, it may be inconvenient at times, boring, long services, sermons, and restraining to what we really want to do, but that is what makes it worthwhile to continue on the path laid by our ancestors. Commitment to something that has meaning and counts. We need to persevere and carry on otherwise we will simply melt into the greater population/society and perhaps future generations will only be left with "Oh yeah I remember my grandparents did a dinner with matzos."

Jewish identity in the Diaspora is only as thick as the walls of the synagogue and the home where one grew up.

Nachas Note: Our grandson lained the Megilas Esther in his school this Purim.

I have hope and have faith that my progeny have that Jewish spirit AND the practices of Pesach, and other holidays, ingrained in them, and when they will tell their kids "I remember Zaidy doing the Seder". It will be with the same table settings and practices: Haggadah, Matzohs, singing, and answering questions about the holiday. Having good memories of what we did and continue to do.

The practices and commitments of the Jewish religion makes us a distinct culture, not the ethos of “social feel good” stuff.

The Four Children

Harry Schiffman

Last year I read most, if not all, of the Kingsway Haggadah in wonderment. Each commentary was a pleasure to read. The one commentary that impacted me the most was Erika and Ruvin Levavi’s thoughts on the Four Sons/Children. In it they wrote that the four sons could be “likened to four generations following a collective calamitous experience”. They tied this into how succeeding generations questioned the Holocaust differently depending on their distance from the event.

Ancestry.com defines a generation this way: “As a matter of common knowledge, we know that a generation averages about 25 years—from the birth of a parent to the birth of a child—although it varies case by case.” If we then calculated generations since the Holocaust, it would mean we are still in the life span of the third generation (1995-2020) and quickly approaching the fourth generation. The question that I pose is to those of you who lived through those terrible years, how have you told your children and grandchildren your story of those years if at all. Having been born in 1951 , this means that I was born in the “Chacham” generation from 1945- to 1970. So did I know the questions to ask about the Holocaust? Probably not. Or maybe not the right ones.

The question to tie this together then becomes: have I passed down the knowledge of the events that I witnessed and lived through to my children and now to my

grandchildren. The answer is that I probably have not done an excellent job of it.

To those who come after me, I would want to tell them about the time period between 1945 and 1970 and the events that occurred during the first generation after the Holocaust. I would want them to know about how 50 years ago the United States aimed for the moon and got there. I would also want them to know that the period was marked with threats both real and imaginary including the Korean War and the Red Scare which led to “Blacklisting”, ie: the McCarthy Era. It was also the time of real nuclear threats where we as children had to “hide” under our desks because those desks would “protect” us.

It was also the time when Jews stood together with African Americans in the civil rights struggle. Men stood together with women as they both pushed for women’s equality. Young adults through music and dance were able to express their (ok, many of our) views of the United States and the impact the war in Vietnam was having on the country. It was also a time of assassinations, from JFK to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to Malcom X to Medgar Evers and Robert Kennedy. In many ways, the impact of those 25 years from 1945 to 1970 is still being felt today.

The questions I am posing here are two. The first is how well do we tell our children and grandchildren about the world we grew up in. The second question is how do we encourage our children and grandchildren to ask questions of us? To ask about our stories, our lives and what we lived through. To use their iPhones, tablets, laptops and ask us the tough questions? Do we do enough to encourage this dialogue? Or will they become like the last generation that Erika and Ruvin talked about -

not even knowing the right questions to ask? Maybe after the seders one day during the week, we as grandparents, parents, and children should sit and talk about the experiences of our lives. Maybe that will help us all be better off in the years to come.

A Seder Poem

Malka Schiffman (4th Grade)

Kadesh - we drink while we recline.
You should try it, it's so divine.

By Urchatz we wash our hands,
a bracha the Torah does not demand.

By Karpas, it's vegetables we dip,
but the salt water we do not sip.

Yachatz - it's Levi that we break,
then the big afikoman we take.

In Magid, it's the story of Pesach we tell,
Even the little kids know it so very well.

We wash our hands again in Rachtza,
but this time we do say a bracha.

By Motzei Matzah, it's matzah we eat,
but Elayahu Hanavi it's not time to greet.

Maror we eat, but first we give out,
And it is as white as sauerkraut.

Korech is a sandwich that Hillel ate,
By then it is very, very late.

Shulchan Orech is food we eat,
but we can't have roasted meat.

Tzafun - it's time to find
the afikoman we had to hide.

Barech – it's benching time,
'cuz we had matzah before we dine.

Hallel - it's time to give HaShem praise,
because He took us out from being slaves.

By Nirtzah we ask HaShem to like what we did,
making a seder because we're a yid.

Special Hametz Pickups – Only in America,
Dr. Zev Stern

Once again, we in Brooklyn will benefit from special garbage pickups by the Sanitation Department arranged through our local elected officials. The City will be going to considerable trouble and expense so we can have the hametz out of our sight before the zman ha-bi'ur [time by which leaven in our possession must be burned]. Never mind that garbage bags set out on the curb for the next scheduled pickup are probably not halakhically in our possession anyway. We tend to take this and similar accommodations for granted.

Can you imagine anything like this happening in Poland, Hungary or any of the other benighted tyrannies of Europe from which our parents and grandparents came, and for which some of us seem to wax nostalgic? Remember, the sanitation workers are doing us a favor, above and beyond their normal duties. Hakarat Ha-tov [appreciation of good

things done for us] is a desideratum in the Jewish scheme of things. True, they are being paid overtime out of our taxes, but that does not absolve us of our obligation to treat people who work for us, Jewish or not, like human beings. Everybody likes to feel appreciated, and sanitation workers are still too often the targets of undeserved derision and abuse. So, let's follow the guidelines set out in the leaflets we will receive concerning where, when and how to put out the refuse. And if we see the sanitation worker going about their duties, a "Hello" or "Good morning" will brighten up their day at no cost to us. This applies all the time, but especially Friday morning when they will be doing the extra pick-ups as a favor to us.

A Young Jew's Chews

Chaim Weinstein

I was seven years old and excited because we were going on a short class trip in the neighborhood. We had never left the Yeshivah building during school time before. Our rebbe had announced the trip to our class the day before. We'd heard that the PS 16 students three blocks over often went on school trips; but our yeshivah? Never.

That morning in our classroom, the nosh exchange was in full swing as we began trading with our private stashes. Shimi's little bag of green-edged Dagim potato chips would change hands with Yossie's Hershey's chocolate bar (with almonds, of course). Hagglng took place, along with its concomitant frustration and ultimate acceptance of getting less than the best deal possible. But the excitement of "wasting time from learning" in a setting that forbade such sentiments was a thrill for us students and overrode any upsetedness about being on the wrong side of the deal.

My oldest brother had given me money to buy one of my favorite chocolates: Goldenberg Peanut Chews, in its famous brown, red, white and blue packages. Each piece was bite-sized and filled with chewy, chocolatey, peanut-filled yumminess. I had three left from the open package in my jacket pocket because I was unwilling to wait to eat some until we started on our trip.

In class we had been learning about origins of Pesach, details of the Seder and even some halachot about how much matzah, marror, and grape juice we'd need to ingest in order to be in compliance with Jewish law.

I not only loved hiding the Afikoman from my father, alav hashalom, but also the strangeness of it all: the minhagim of the Seder, my father's wine-stained machzor from Europe which he used for the Haggadah, the white pillow-cased pillow upon which he leaned, the multiple dippings, the marror and the Korech. We did not use Romaine lettuce for Marror, instead, we used Gold's red horseradish for it and for Korech. My parents even put in a teeny drop of the horseradish between my matzah pieces. My mother's cooking was delicious and I, like every Jew on the planet, was too hungry to wait for the seudah, but I did. My fifth kasha at the seder was why we had to wait so long to eat, a question that was often answered with "You'll see," a very unsatisfying remark that left me still wildly hungry.

Back to my school trip.

We walked five short blocks to a nondescript building and were eventually allowed inside. We looked around and were told to be quiet because important Pesach work was being done inside. I didn't see anything there to show its Pesachness, so I just followed my fellow classmates down

a hall until we were stopped by a man in a white jacket and hairnet on his head and were told to wait.

By then I'd finished my delicious Peanut Chews and was looking to discard my candy wrapper but had seen no garbage can in this fortress-like place. About ten feet away, though, I spied a lidless, huge, beige-colored garbage receptacle. I saw my opportunity, quickly left the line, tossed my wrapper into it and made it back to the line before any adult could chastise me. The rebbe slowly led our class past this garbage container to an anteroom outside the matzah factory ovens and we were led inside. As the men took the flattened dough and placed them on long rolling-pins, I watched them slowly unfurl them into the oven, hearing "L'shaym Matzohs Mitzvah" over and over.

It was then that I nearly fainted, recalling my discarded Peanut Chews wrapper inside that big beige garbage container which I suddenly feared held pure ground Pesach flour waiting to be baked for the Chag. I ran out of the oven room and smack into the stomach of an apron-clad, very large chasid.

I was crying and trying to speak at the same time, terrified that Jews would be eating chametz on Pesach because of my careless discard of my candy wrapper. I couldn't get the words out fast enough. Then I feared what my rebbe would say? My parents? My classmates? G-d?

This very tall, stocky, but gentle chasid only asked me to show him where I threw the wrapper and I quickly did. He merely scooped out the wrapper with some extra ground matzah flour around it and tossed it out. I asked him if he was sure that was enough and if it was okay and he smiled

and said yes, that I shouldn't worry. I ran to a corner and snuffled myself to silence before I rejoined my classmates.

No one seemed to notice that I was missing or saw what I'd done or how it all was handled.

But I did.

And now you know.

Whew.

Word Find

Aliza Simon

ז	ל	נ	י	ח	ע	ל	ז	ס	ב	ט	ק	פ
כ	ה	צ	מ	ע	י	ב	א	ח	ת	י	א	ע
ד	א	ו	כ	צ	י	כ	צ	ס	ו	ו	ח	א
נ	ב	א	ת	ס	נ	צ	ס	פ	צ	ש	ד	צ
ח	י	ר	ו	ב	ר	ע	כ	ר	ח	ש	כ	פ
ת	ב	ב	כ	צ	ל	ד	ל	י	ר	י	ט	ט
ב	פ	ה	ו	ר	א	ג	נ	י	כ	מ	א	ס
נ	ס	ה	ר	ד	ש	ב	ר	ד	ז	ט	ג	ט
ו	ג	ב	ו	ר	ד	ר	מ	ג	ה	פ	ס	ס
י	ח	כ	ת	כ	ס	מ	י	נ	י	כ	ס	ה
צ	צ	פ	ר	ד	ע	ר	ת	א	ס	ס	ד	פ
ק	כ	ל	ד	פ	פ	ח	מ	ב	א	ד	ב	ס
ר	א	ח	ה	ת	ק	מ	ה	ס	ש	ג	ג	ר
ז	ל	נ	י	ח	ע	ל	ז	ס	ב	ט	ק	פ

Words to find

יין	ארבה
כינים	ברד
מכת	
בכורות	דבר
מצה	דם
ערוב	האביב
פסח	חושך
צפרדע	שחין

Part III: Pesach Recipes

Date and Nut Cookies

Dr. Marjorie Brown

This was my mother's recipe. If I were to make it, I'd leave out the sugar. I think dates are sweet enough.

Ingredients

- ½ lb dates
- 1 ½ cups chopped walnuts
- 2 egg whites, beaten
- ¼ tsp vanilla
- ½ cup sugar

Directions

1. Drop spoonfuls onto greased cookie sheet
2. Cook at 350 for 8-10min.

Prune Cholent
Bezalel Kosofsky

Ingredients

- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup oil
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1 lb. prunes
- 2 lbs. meat
- 2 onions
- 5 potatoes
- 1 teaspoon salt

Directions

1. Grate onions
2. Peel and dice potatoes
3. Put all of the ingredients into a crock pot and cook on LOW.

You can have this prune cholent all year round since it doesn't have barley, beans, kitniyot or chametz ingredients.

***Anna Cloud's Chocolate Walnut Puff
Perfect for Passover Cookies***

Debra Marcus

Ingredients

- 1 cup 6 oz Semi Sweet Chocolate Chips
- 2 egg whites (room temperature)
- ½ cup sugar
- ¾ cup chopped walnuts
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Grease cookie sheet.
3. Melt chocolate in a small pot set into a bigger pot of boiled water.
4. In a separate bowl, beat room-temperature egg whites with salt on HIGH until foamy.
5. Gradually add sugar and beat until stiff peaks form.
6. Beat in vanilla extract.
7. Fold in melted chocolate and walnuts.
8. Drop by the teaspoon on cookie sheet and bake.
9. Bake for about 10 minutes. Allow to cool before removing to storage.

Yields about 10 to 16 cookies.

Mike's "Breaded" Pesach Veal Chops
Debra Marcus

Ingredients

- 2 lbs veal chops
- 2 cups matzah meal
- 3 eggs mixed
- Paprika, Garlic Powder, Basil, Onion Powder, Parsley
- Vegetable Oil

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Mix matzah meal with all the spices stated above – measure spices to taste.
3. Dip veal in the egg mixture, and then dip veal into the matzah meal/spice mixture.
4. Drop a tablespoon or so oil into an aluminum foil pan.
5. Place veal in the foil pan and bake ½ hour on one side, and then turn the veal over and bake another ½ hour on the other side.

S'mores Pie
Randi Retkinski

Ingredients

- Ready-made crust
- Brownies
- 1 cup cocoa
- 2 cups sugar
- Mix together
- Then add
- 1 cup oil
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 4 eggs
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp baking powder

Directions

1. Mix everything together and put in crust
2. Bake for 25-30 minutes at 350 degrees
3. Then add marshmallows and bake for another 5-7 minutes... just until marshmallows turn brown
4. Let cool & enjoy!

Potato Kugel

Randi Retkinski

Ingredients

- 5 lbs potatoes, peeled
- 1 large onion
- 5 eggs
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup oil
- 1 Tbsp salt
- Black pepper to taste

Directions

1. Preheat your oven to 450°F
2. Process the onion and potatoes in your food processor, scraping down the sides.
3. Working quickly, crack the eggs into a bowl large enough to hold all the batter. Add the oil and seasonings and mix well. Add the processed potatoes and onion and mix until uniform. Pour into a greased 9x13" pan and bake uncovered for 2 hours.
4. Can also make this recipe into latkes.. don't use onions.. add everything except onions. then fry..

North of the Border Guacamole

Dr. Sheldon Retkinski

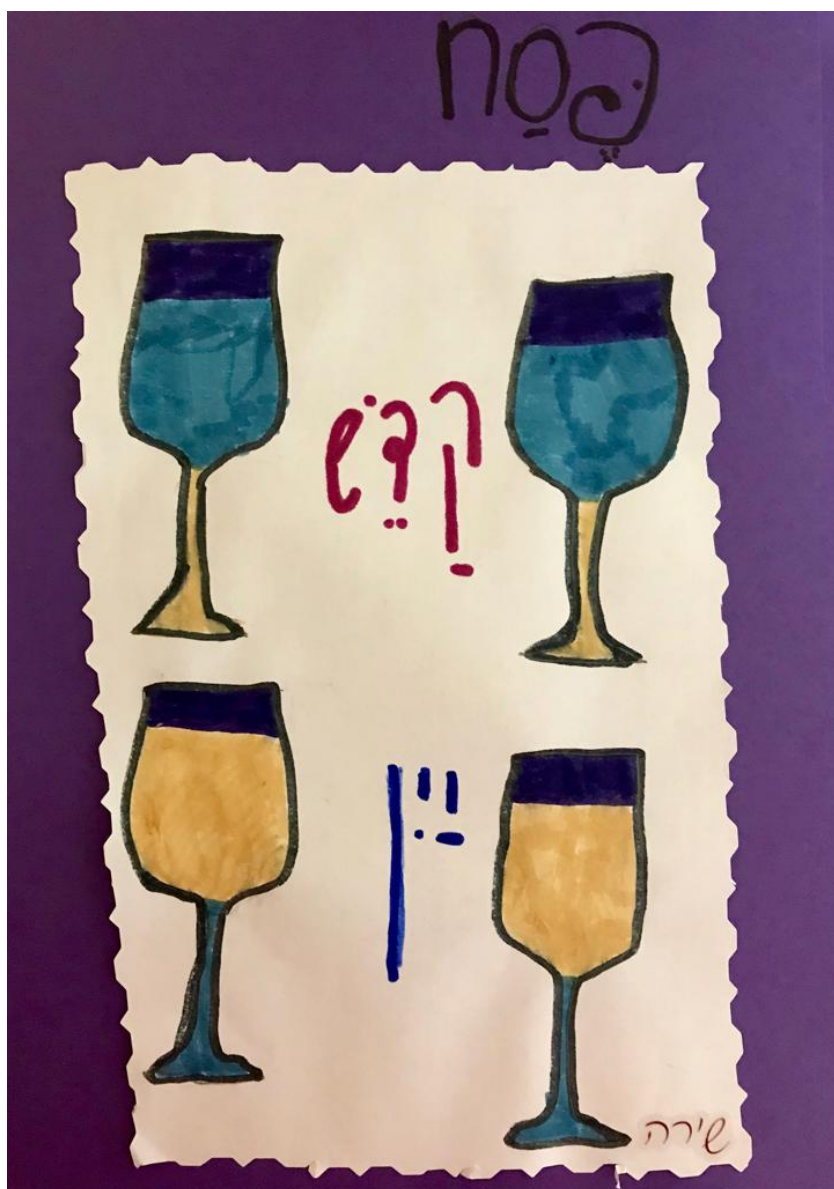
Ingredients

- 4 large avocados
- 1 medium tomato
- 1 lime
- 1-2 jalapeños
- 1 small red onion
- 1/2 bunch cilantro, checked
- 1 tsp cumin
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 tbsp olive oil

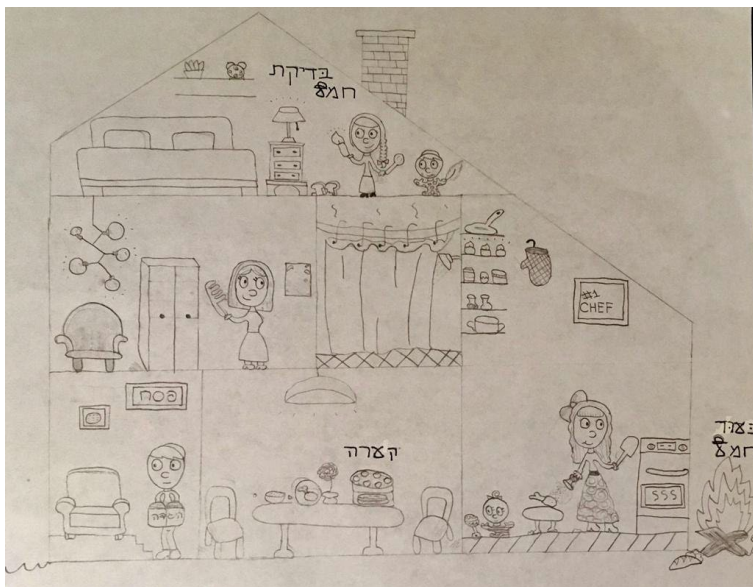
Directions

1. Finely chop tomatoes, sprinkle with salt, wrap in paper towels to drain.
2. Finely chop red onion, add to large bowl with a little salt, a little lime juice and olive oil.
3. Finely chop jalapeños and add to bowl.
4. Finely chop cilantro and add to bowl.
5. Slice avocados, remove pits and cut into small chunks and add to bowl.
6. Squeeze rest of lime juice.
7. Add remaining salt, cumin and chili powder.
8. Mix well and add drained tomatoes.
9. Mix again.
10. Taste and adjust seasoning.

If not using right away, put in covered container with a squeeze of lime juice on top. Serve with Crisp-it Passover crackers



Nechama Aufrichtig



Lieba Baker



Mason Brick



Hadassah & Emunah Herskovic



Henry Madnick



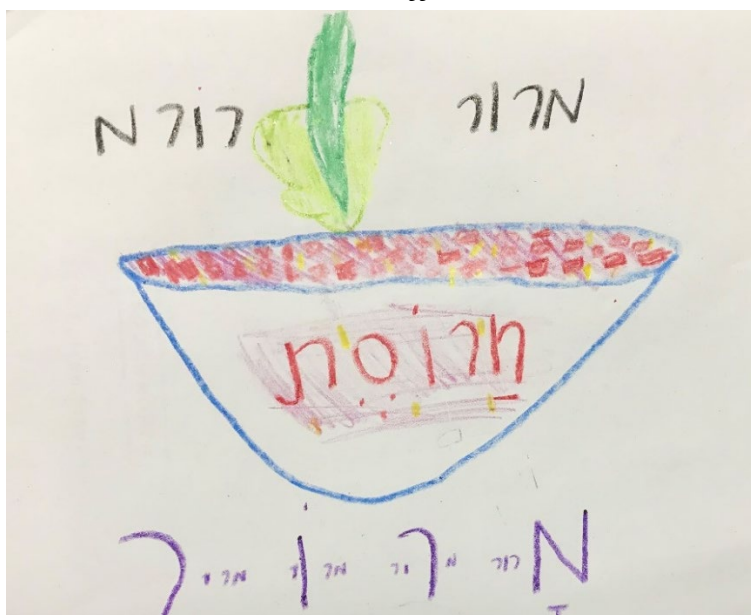
Tzippy Retkinski



Yitzi Retkinski



Malka Schiffman



Yvette Sabo



MATZAH



MAROR



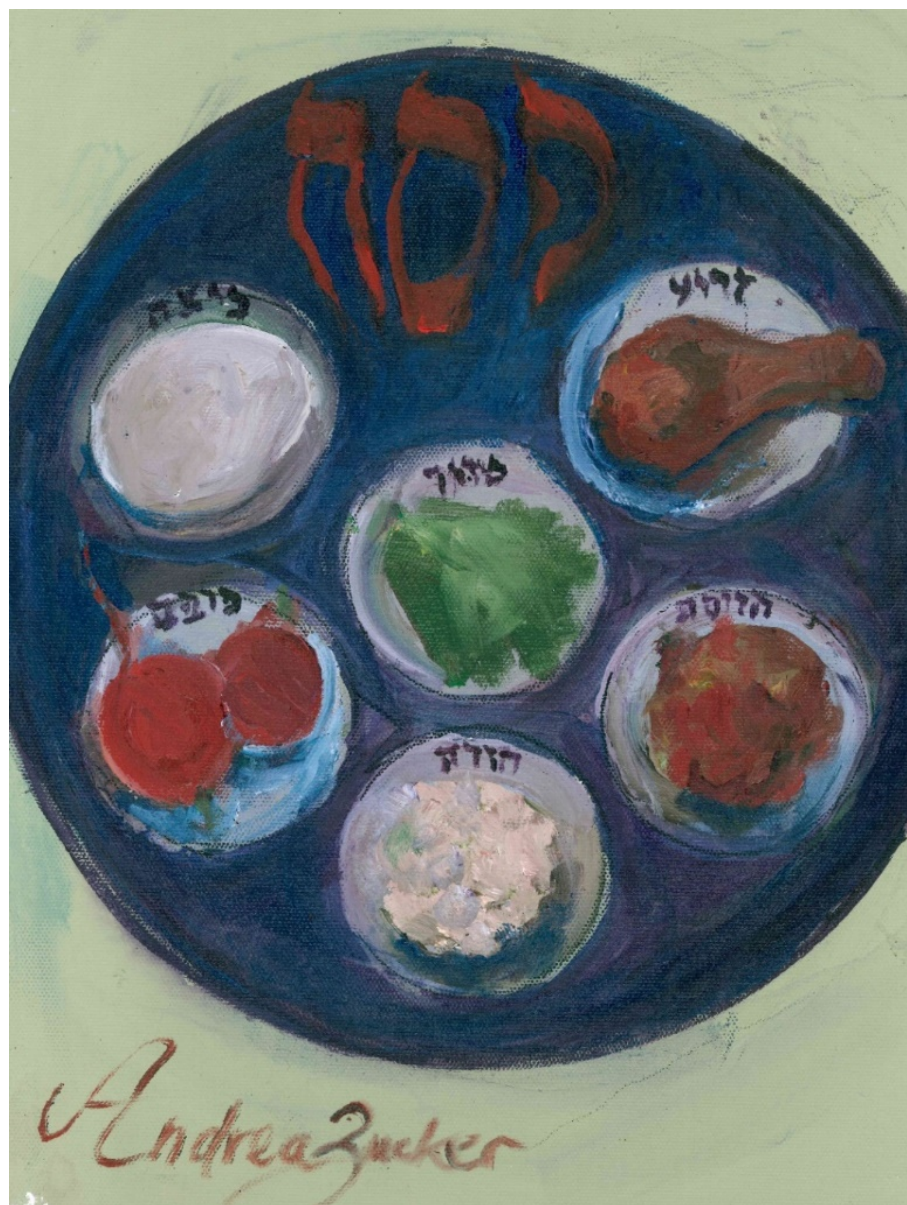
BEITZAH

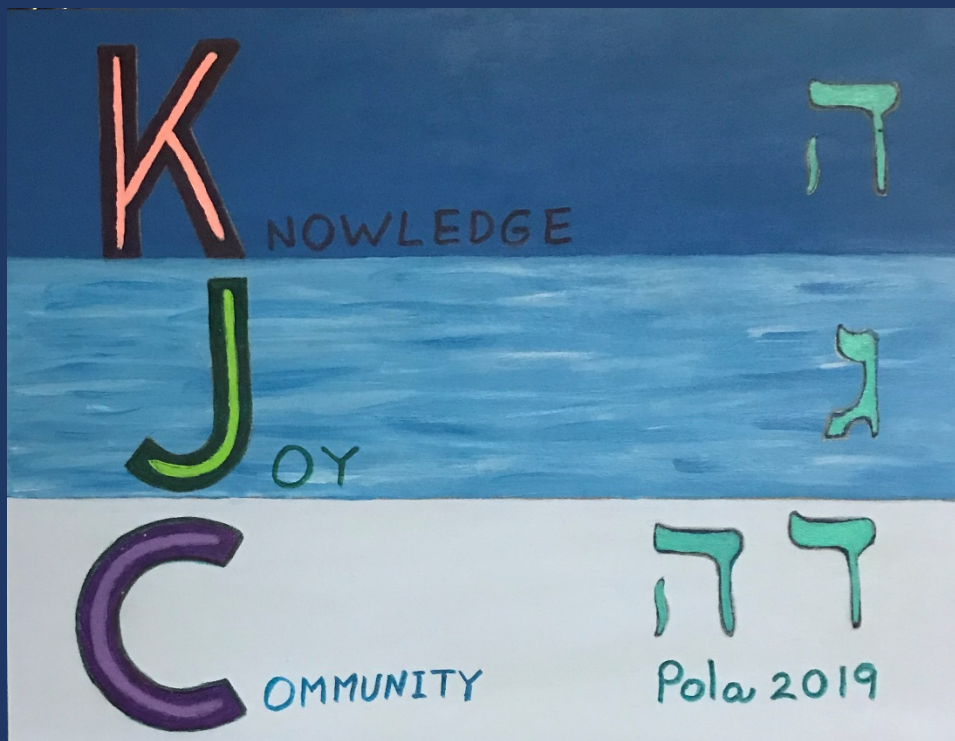


ELIYAHUS
CUP

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