

The
אֶרֶז לְבָנוֹן
Haggadah

Thought provoking and
practical chizuk drawn from the
Haggadah

Rosh Deshiva

Rabbi Simcha Sussman שליט"א
har nof

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compiled and written by
Rabbi Rafi Brodie שליט"א

פסח תשפ"ו

Introduction

There are fifty sections in the Hagadah. This corresponds to the fifty times that yetzias Mitzrayim is mentioned in the Torah. Fascinatingly there are also 1820 words in the hagadah that correspond to the 1820 times that Hashem's name is mentioned in the Torah. This gives us a clear indication that the avodah of sippur yetzias mitzrayim is to reveal Hashem's omnipresence in this world. By the time the seder is over we should be singing אחד מי יודע, אחד אני יודע, אחד אלקינו בשמים ובארץ

On a deeper level, Pesach celebrates freedom. It's the time to break loose from the chains of personal limitations and leave the confines of a sense of self that is mundane. It's a time to do what we truly want to do – develop ourselves into something greater. This is the choice that the Yidden made upon leaving Mitzrayim.

The Yidden were slaves. Choosing to leave Egypt imbued them with the realization they are so much more than they thought they were, and so much more than they thought they could ever be. They grew from being slaves to being a Chosen People, a light unto the nations.

The Seder has fifteen steps. This corresponds to the fifteen steps that led up to the entrance of the Beis Hamikdash. The sifrei kabbalah teach us that the physical world is an expression of the spiritual. The physical steps of the Beis Hamikdash allowed the people to “go up” into the Beis Hamikdash. So too, there are fifteen corresponding spiritual steps that allow us to “go up” and “grow up.” These are the fifteen steps of the Seder night. They are a way to self-growth. They fulfill our spiritual need to grow. However this must be done in precise order.

The Hebrew word seder means order. The Seder is comprised of fifteen sequential steps, and thus it is quite fitting that the word seder is used to portray the gist of the evening's proceedings.

Perhaps there is a lesson here. Shortcuts are convenient. They save time, effort, and sometimes even money. They can also be quite illusory. Sure, you can figure out an ingenious back-alley route to sneak by rush-hour traffic, or curl up with a single volume containing three-page summaries of everything you need to know, you can even do an eight minute daf. But don't try it in life.

If you want self-awareness, personal growth, deeper relationships, and a life of integrity, sorry, no shortcuts allowed. Only seder will do. Deeper living just doesn't flourish in the land of quick fixes. No child ever reaches adulthood without paying a visit to adolescence and no adult achieves inner maturation without first embarking on an orderly, if daring, course of human development.

Kadesh

Halachah query: Why do we not say the berachah of ניסים לאבותינו on seder night when we make kiddush.

The foundation of self-growth is to recognize that we are unique and therefore intrinsically valuable. Kadesh moves us to “set ourselves apart” – to realize we’re unique and worthy of investing effort in our personal growth. At the beginning of each yom tov we make kiddush and say אשר בחר בנו מכל עם ורוממנו מכל לשון וקדשנו במצוותיו .

Stage one of realising how unique we are is to understand the wonders of our existence.

Wonder number one is that we have seen the Jewish People survive for more than 3000 years. This was predicted beforehand. In Yirmiyah פרק ל"א Hashem says that as long as there's sun, moon and sky, there will always be a Jewish people.

Wonder number two is that the first rule of world history is that if you're going to scatter a nation all over the globe with no common land or language or history, they're going to lose their identity! And yet we are eternal and are still around - and kicking.

Wonder number three is that our eternal existence has been challenged countless times by cruel and sadistic persecution. We have survived thousands of years of turbulent exile. There is a strange fact that when every other nation tries to assimilate, their persecution stops. When the Jews try to assimilate, the persecution intensifies. This is where the Yiddish axiom comes from that “oib a yid macht nisht kiddush velen der goyim machen havdalah”, If a yid does not do kiddush i.e. to separate himself, the goyim will make havdalah i.e. will ensure that we feel separated.

Wonder number four is our lack of numbers. Simple demographics tell us that without the Crusades, the pogroms, the Holocaust, assimilation...the Jewish people today would number well into the hundred millions.

We've lost 90 to 95% of our nation. We keep diminishing and diminishing, yet we're still bouncing up and down there, barely hanging on, at the bottom of the graph. The only explanation of our continued existence albeit our small numbers is Hashem's promise that we will be an eternal nation.

Wonder number five is that those same nations that persecuted and denigrated us will come to us for wisdom and guidance. The fact that the Jews are in the news on a daily basis is completely unprecedented. We make up less than 1/2 a percent of the world yet have immense influence and ability to be a light upon the nations.

Wonder number six is the agricultural mystery of Eretz Yisrael, Could anyone have known

that the land would produce only for the Jewish people? Is there any other country on earth whose land responds to only one nation? Eretz Yisroel was known to be fertile for millennia. It was called, "The Fertile Crescent". But we see a very strange thing. As long as the Jews are living in the land, the land remains fertile. As soon as the Jews leave, the land becomes a desert and no other nation is able to cultivate it. This was predicted by the navi Yechezkel.

But this does not even touch on the real unique character of our existence. Our "kadesh" being set aside is only the background for the real kadesh which stems from the word "kedushah". Every Jew has innate holiness and the ability to transform himself into a spiritual being. Even more, Reb Chaim Volozhin writes that the fact that we were made **בצלם אלקים** in the image of Hashem means that **כביכול** just as Hashem can "create" so can we create. Every one of our actions builds world in shomayim or destroys world. He explains homiletically the words of the mishnah, **דע מה למעלה ממך** to mean, **דע מה למעלה**, if you want to know what is going on up in shomayim - **ממך** it is from you - i.e. made or destroyed through your maasim in this world. He explains that the words **יראת שמים** mean, fear what is going on in shomayim because of your actions.

There is a moshol of someone who booked a room in an hotel. While walking around his room he kept feeling a little bump in the carpet that annoyed him. He uncovered the carpet to reveal a bolt. Frustrated he unscrewed the bolt and returned the carpet. A little while later he went down to the ballroom and saw bedlam. Glass shards all over the place, a real disaster area. Slowly it dawned on him that what seemed like a simple removal of the bolt really had cataclasmic effects in another place!!! This is what our actions look like, in this world, nothing major, but in other worlds - huge.

As we begin Kadesh the baal haseder wears a kittel because he wants to instill from the beginning of the seder what the goal is. We all have the ability to outdo the malachim and become G-d like.

Urchatz

Halachah query: There are those who have the minhag on friday night (particularly yekke's) to wash for hamotzei before kiddush. Some say that on seder night one could do the same, and wash before kiddush for karpas. The Beis Yosef however writes that according to all opinions one may not wash for karpas before kiddush. Why?

Pouring water represents the purity that we achieve over the course of the night, in which it is as though we are spiritually reborn.

Reb Avraham Shur שליט"א offers some incredible insights to the inyan of urechatz. The halachah of washing before eating a dipped food is one that we are not makpid on a whole year, however on leil haseder we are makpid. The reason is that this is an halachah

that is normally reserved only for tzaddikim. However on seder night we are all elevated to the level of being considered a tzaddik. Therefore it is incumbent that the baal hasedrv washes, because *בכחוט השערה* 'מזקדק בצדיקים אפ' meaning that Hashem judged tzaddikim much more carefully than a regular person.

There is another way of understanding *urechatz*. The maharal writes that the wearing of the kittel is to represent that the *avodas halayla* is akin to the cohen gadol's *avodah* on yom kippur. The seforim write that *tom kippur* is *mechaper* on *bein adam lamakom* and *pesach* on *bein adam lachaveiro*, This *kapparah* happens through the *achdus* achieved through "going out of *mitzrayim*" together and through eating together as a *chaburah*. For this reason then one has to wash hands as the cohen gadol would before commencing the *avodah*. Some yidden have a *minhag* to clap hands before starting *maggid*. Reb Yissachar Dov of Belz said that the reason for this is because there is a *halachah* that the cohen had to make a noise when he entered the "kodesh". So too, as we begin the *avodah* of this night of *pesach* we have to make a noise as we are like the cohen gadol starting the *avodah*.

Karpas

Halachah query: If one has already eaten karpas, is he able to say the berachah again to be motzei someone else. Is it a birchas hanehenin or a birchas hamitzvos.

What is the significance of dipping the vegetable into salt water.

Karpas is the gematria of *sha*'s. this is a *remez* to the fact that Torah learning requires hard work, sweat and toil. The Zohar tells us that *כי היא התורה, היא את חייהם* - "וימרו את חייהם"; *בעבודה קשה* - "זו קושיה"; *בחומר* - "זה קל-וחומר"; *ובלבנים* - "זה ליבון ההלכה" *ובכל חייו*; *עבודה בשדה* - "זו הברייתא. This Zohar is giving us a life lesson. Every Jew has his *Mitzrayim*. He will have to endure certain pain in this world to forgive his sins. But he has a choice. He can be "yotzei" his pain through learning torah will tremendous toil, breaking his head and losing sleep over keeping up his learning schedule.

Many seforim explain that this is the deeper meaning of the *passuk אשרי הגבר אשר* *אשרי הגבר אשר י-ה ומתורתך תלמדנו*. Happy is the man that Hashem smites him and he learns His torah. He needs to receive pain from Hashem but he is "yotzei" the pain through *מתורתך תלמדנו* - through leaning torah. We could explain all *derech remez* that this is the meaning of the *halachah* that *הכרפס הוא פוטר את המרוך*, simply this means that the *berachah* on the *karpas* exempts the person from making the *berachah* on the *marror*. However according to the above we can explain it to mean that through learning *karpa*'s - *sha*'s, he can be "yotzei" his *marror* - his pains in life.

Another idea, cited by the Rema in his *Darchei Moshe*, is that the *Hagadah* is akin to a *Tefillah*, that we relating thanks and praise to Hashem for everything he has done for our

ancestors and us. Therefore, immediately prior to the recital of the Haggada we wash our hands in preparation without a brachah similar to the requirement before davening.

The Yismach Yisroel of Modzhitz says that the karpas symbolises to us that we must uncover the spark of our neshamah that is covered up "in the ground". Also, just like the vegetables that we eat at karpas grow while under the ground, yet we pull them out and make a berachah on them at the seder table, so too we are able to extract ourselves from earthliness and bring kedushah into our lives.

Yachat

Why do we break the middle matzah at this point of the seder?

The matzah that the tale of Mitzrayim is recounted over must be broken, symbolizing the bondage that broke the body and spirit of our ancestors.

Alternatively one could explain the mitzvah of yachat in another way. We know that the inyan of making a bris between two people is that we cut something into half (like at the bris bein habesarim) and the deep understanding is that I give you my half and you give me your half and in that way we are locked in to an eternal relationship. This then would be the pshat in yachat, Hashem gives us his part of the matzah and we give Him our part of the matzah and together we create an eternal covenant and bond that is unbreakable.

The Meir Einei Chachomim explains that yachat is done because the the second half of the matzah represents the korban pesach. However the korban pesach requires "zerikah" the sprinkling of the blood in order to be matir it to eat. Therefore we put that half away and by going through the story כאילו יצא ממצרים with all of the tears of pain and then of joy, through spilling blood over the servitude of klal yisroel in mitzrayim, it is considered as if we have sprinkled the blood on the "mizbeach (a yid's table is considered a mizbeach) and that in turn is "matir" the eating of the afikoman - korban pesach

Maggid

Halachah query: Since the mitzvah of סיפור יציאת מצרים and והגדת לבנך is a mitzvah min hatorah, why do we not make a birchas hamitzvos on it just like we do for all other mitzvos.

The haggadah is called so because of the inyan of "maggid" on pesach. Why is this word chosen out of all the names that one could have given to this sefer.

The answer is that this night is supposed to bring one to Ahavas Hashem. One of the ways of telling if someone loves the other person is how much he speaks about him. We all know that when someone just does not stop talking and talking about someone or

something, it is because they love him or it so so much. Maggid therefore is the important word here. This gives another level of explanation as to why **כל המרבה לספר** . ביציאת מצרים הרי זה משובח .

The Tur writes that Pesach corresponds to Avrohom who represents middas ha'ahavah. So to Pesach is all about coming to ahavas Hashem.

הא לחמא עניא

It would seem difficult to understand the purpose of starting the haggadah by mentioning the call to invite people to join the seder. Also the whole paragraph seems disjointed. First a mention of the bread of affliction, then the inviting of guests and finally a tefillah for moshiach to come?

The unusual invitation of guests as the introduction to the hagadah can be explained as follows. Although throughout the year, the nation of Israel finds itself divided into different groups and factions, on the night of Pesach, which is the night on which we were nationally born, the nation is united. This unity, which embodies the original state of a new-born nation of klal yisroel, is manifest in the custom of inviting guests. Around the year, we might be quite particular concerning which guests to invite. On Seder Night, however, our doors are open to anyone and everyone. In the final analysis, all members of the Jewish nation are brothers – and a brother is always invited.

The seforim Hakedoshim write that the matzah not only represents poverty but also humility. The matzah has no additives, it does not rise and become "big". This is an important prerequisite for starting the seder. Anavah means that I am not the center of the world. Once one achieves this middah, then there is room for Hashem in one's life. The richer a person is, the more he feels secure and "in the center". The poorer he is, the more inadequate and "off centre he feels. It is therefore important that we start the seder feeling that in reality we are not the "baal habayis" on our wealth, we only have it through the grace of Hashem. So we eat "the poor man's bread" to instill this concept within us.

With this understanding we give new meaning to the connection of the next part of the Hagadah where we invite the needy to share the seder with us. This is in fact the automatic reaction one has when he understands that he is not the centre of the world . Suddenly he has room for other people in his life. This then is the most beautiful introduction into the avodah of this night. We bring Hashem into our lives through instilling emunah in ourselves with the story of yetzias mitzrayim. we imbibe the lesson of the matzah. This gives us innate humility which in turn makes room in our hearts for guests.

The culmination of this is our tefillah for Moshiach's coming. The ultimate self sacrifice is asking for Mashiach. We are so entrenched in our lives that, as long as there is no

antisemitism, we would happily stay put. However, in a state of humility we understand that infact Hashem is the center of the world. In galus his kavod is trampled on, so we daven that the whole world should realise that Hashem is the master of the universe.

Reb Boruch Taam offers a beautiful explanation as to why we mention the inviting of guests in the first paragraph of the hagadah. He bases it on the gemara in Kesubos that writes **גדולה צדקה שמקרבת את הגאולה** anyone who ingnores the plight of the poor, it is as if the is serving idols. Since the mitzvah's of the night are korban Pesach which represents taking the avodah zara of the mitzrim and shechting it and telling the story of yetzias mitzrayim which is to instill emunah of Hashem in us, it would be completely counter intuitive and out of sync with the who;le spirit of the night if he would be an "idol worshipper" by not inviting guests.

In a similar vein the Chasam Sofer explains the connection between inviting the guests and davening for the geulah because the gemara tells us that **גדולה צדקה שמקרבת את הגאולה** "great is the zechus of tzedakah that it hastens the geulah. It is therefore appropriate to daven for the geulah after inviting in guests.

מה נשתנה

In the first question of the Ma Nishtanah, the child asks: On all other nights we eat chametz and matzah, but on this night – only matzah." Is this true? Do we actually eat both chametz and matzah on all other nights except for the night of Pesach?

The Binyan Ariel explains that the Mah Nishtanah is not stating that we eat both chametz and matzah throughout the year except for Pesach, but it is referring to the specific case of the korban todah, which consists of an animal sacrifice, as well as thirty loaves of matzah and ten loaves of chametz. The Rosh in fact says that the korban Pesach was a korban Toda as the yidden were released from bondage which is one of the four reasons that one must bring a korban.

The korban Pesach closely resembles a korban todah. Like the korban todah, the korban Pesach must be eaten by a certain time, before the next morning. Additionally, a korban Pesach must be eaten with matzah, much like the korban todah must be eaten with lechem. Indeed, the korban Pesach essentially serves as a korban todah, as it expresses our gratitude to Hashem for taking us out of Mitzrayim. The three matzos represent the three types of matzos incorporated in the korban toda.

Therefore, the child wonders: If, when we bring a korban todah, we eat it with both chametz and matzah, then why, when we eat the korban Pesach, is it accompanied only by matzah? The obvious answer, says the Binyan Ariel, is that on Pesach, chametz is forbidden in order to commemorate the haste with which Bnei Yisrael left Mitzrayim, without enough time for their dough to rise. Hence, chametz is assur on Pesach, and so only matzah can be eaten along with the korban Pesach.

The Chasam Sofer adds an incredible point, that the shte'i halechem, the korban brought on Shavuot from chametz, serves to complete the korban Pesach, which is only accompanied by matzah. In other words, the korban Pesach and shte'i halechem are really two parts of one whole, together creating a full korban toda. The Chasam Sofer quotes the Ramban (Vayikra 23:36), who writes that Shavuot is the continuation of Pesach; on Pesach, Bnei Yisrael were redeemed in order to receive the Torah on Shavuot. When it comes to the korbanos, as well, we see how Shavuot is an extension to Pesach. This brings out the beautifully so much of the theme of Pesach. We thank Hashem that He freed us from Mitzrayim and therefore bring a korban toda. However Hashem did not release us into a "free world", rather into a world of avodas hashem, epitomised by matan torah on shavuot. How apt then, that we bring the second half of the "toda" on Shavuot.

עבדים היינו

There is an interesting question, related to Avadim hayinu, posed by Rav Yitzchak Blazer of Petersburg, known as Rav Itzele. In Gemara Makkos (23b) it states, "Rav Chanania ben Akashia said: Hashem wished to bestow bounty on Klal Yisrael, therefore he gave them the Torah and mitzvos in abundance." Rav Itzele asks, what sort of bounty is this? The Torah is full of tedious commands and an abundance of prohibitions which spread themselves over all facets of our lives and intrude upon us day and night, all year round!

He explains that this question would only be a strong one if, initially, we were totally independent. Then, in the instance of the Creator asking us to serve Him in some manner, we would most likely choose the least and easiest possible service, and any request from the Creator to do more would seem like an imposition and not a gift. However, the truth of the matter is, we were slaves to Pharaoh in Mitzrayim, but Hashem took us out from there in order that we should serve Him and not Pharaoh. It is due to this unforgettable kindness that we owe every waking hour to the service of Hashem. How fortunate are we to have been taken out of Mitzrayim and been given the Torah and Mitzvos, and it is through our Hashem's mercy that we have what we have, and that we are where we are today.

Just as being a slave means that one's very eating, sleeping, dressing, and every act are part of his existence as a slave, so too, when Bnei Yisrael submit to "kabalas ol Malchus Shamayim" one is meant to dedicate his entire life to the service of his King. Rav Itzele carries on by explaining how, on the surface, the feeling of servitude might seem to make a man unfortunate, and thus make the fulfillment of mitzvos all the more difficult. Yet, when a man knows that he must serve, and realises the gratitude and praise that he owes Hashem, he does not suffer an inner turbulence. It is the supposedly free man who must struggle with every prohibition and in every situation.

With this understanding we shed light on the end of the paragraph that exhorts everyone, even if he is a chacham, navon etc. to engage in sippur yetzias mitzrayim. Not

only does he have a chiyuv of sippur yetzias Mitzrayim but the more he engages the better. Why is this. The answer is that if the purpose would be to increase the knowledge of what occurred, then there would be no place for an erudite scholar to be spending a lot of time on it. However, since the purpose is to instill the deep seated understanding that we are avadim and subserviant to Hashem, this requires going through the whole story so that we realise that were Hashem not to have taken us out, we would have no life. So we owe our entire existence to Hashem. This sits well with the well know pshat that כל משובח means that he will become משובח - a better person.

מעשה ברבי אליעזר ורבי יהושע... היו מסובין בבני ברק.

The Bnei Yissaschar has an incredible homiletic interpretation to this paragraph. Bnei brak is the gematria of HaSatan. Bnei Brak is in the chlek in Eretz Yisroel of Dan who were the ones who brought the Michah idol into Eretz Yisroel.

Who would have thought that Bnei Brak would be a place that would house the children of Amalek as it says מבני בניו של המן למזו תורה בבני ברק. However on this night of Pesach, through the internalising of the deepest messages of geulah and cheirus, all the barriers fall, and kedushah resides in the place of the satan. Pesach is a night where even the Jew who is on the 49th shaarei tumah can find deep inside him the emunah and connection to return to his roots. Krias Shema shel shacharis represents clarity in emunah. On this night of Pesach our emunah is as clear as day and all of us can break through and achieve clarity in life and our destiny.

אמר ר' אלעזר בן עזריה

Reb Elozor be Azriah bring the deroshoh of Ben Zomah who darshens that "lemei chayecha" refers to the days. The "extra" deroshoh which is the chiddush is from the word "kol" to include that even at night one must mention yetzias mitzrayim in krias shema. The chachomim learn that "yemei chayecha" refers to olam hazeh, and the extra deroshoh from "kol" teaches that even when moshiach comes we will mention yetzias mitzrayim.

The Shem mishmuel asks as follows, Ben Zomah makes sense, the main deroshoh is for the "days" that is when a person functions, it his main existence. The night is the extra deroshoh because it is only a function to renew him for the next day. However the chachomim are difficult to understand. Why would "olam hazeh" be the main deroshoh and "yemos hamashiach" the extra one, surely our whole raison d'etre is to try and bring on the glory days of yemos hamashiach, why would that be the "extra deroshoh".

The Shem mishmuel answers beautifully that the neshama lives a blissful life in shomayim, yet comes down to pass the tests of this world that try and make man be dragged into the dirt of this world. If he wins the battle he earn his reward in olam haba and purifies his body to give it existence after techiyas hameisim. This world is like the

big market place, the harder one works the more profit he makes. In this sense, olam hazeh is the main life, because it is only then that man can earn his eternal reward. However yemos hamoshiach are termed "day with no purpose" for they cannot bring man further reward.

Ben Zoma and the Chachomim understood the deroshoh in a very similar way, just Ben Zoma learn the pashtus, that "yemei chayecha" is referring to actual day which is where the main purpose of life is achieved. The chachomim stretched the deroshoh and explained "yemei chayechah" to mean the whole of olam hazeh where the main purpose of creation is achieved.

Reb Yaakov Galinsky makes a georgeous observation. Whereas in the berachah of krias shema in the morning we are called 'yedidim' and "ahuvim", in the evening we are referred to as "banav". This is to allude that there are times where our relationship with Hashem is like day, when things are clear and the yetzer tov is in control. Then we are called "yedidim" and "ahuvim". However at night which represents darkness and times where the yetzer hara is in control, we are called "banim.

Even when we are not serving Hashem as we should be, we are called "bonim" and Hashem treats us as such and looks after us like a father looks after his son,

There is a sefer kadmon called Emes l'yaakov. He writes there a priceless gem. Chazal tell us that Moshiach will arrive and start his way up to Yerushalayim via Teveria, and the question is why?

The Emes l'yaakov answers that when moshiach comes the goyim will say, the Jews do not deserve moshiach, they do so many aveiros. They may have a good taanoh. This is why moshiach will come through Teveria, because the Mara D'asra of Teveria is Reb Meir (baal haness) and he says that **כלל ישראל אפ' חטאו קרואים בנים**. We will say, i'm sorry, Reb Meir is the posek here, and irrelevant of our actions, we are the children of Hashem and He has come to redeem us.

כנגד ארבעה בנים דברה תורה

The Sfas emes writes that we are not necessarily really talking about four different children, rather about each an every one of us that have all four traits in us. Each one of us have chochmah, rishus, temimus, and childishness. These traits appear in different situations in our lives and we have to have the correct response depending on the situation.

We all undertand why we have to use a unique approach to deal with the rashah inside of us, but why does the chacham need attention?

The answer is that he thinks that "echad chacham", there is only one chacham - himself,

he thinks that he knows everything and has the answers to everything. In this vein we can give a novel approach to the problem of the rashah, He thinks that "echad rashah", that he is the biggest rashah that exists, if people would only know of all of his sins, they would stay away from him. He is therefore in despair of being able to do teshuvah. That attitude is an aveirah and lack of emunah in itself.

The meforshim ask that really the opposite of rashah is tzaddik, so why does the baal hagadah use the term "chacham".

The answer is that really the antidote for the rashah to fight his yetzer hara is really only by learning and becoming attached to torah, as the gemara says **בראתי יצר הרע, בראתי לו תורה תבלין**.

חכם מה הוא אומר

There are a number of questions. When the torah writes the question of the chacham it says - when he will ask you tomorrow. Why does the torah insert this word. (simply the answer is because he will not ask the question for the first few years because he will have seen yetzias mitzrayim with his own eyes). Also, the torah answers "because Hashem took us out with an outstretched arm". Why then does the baal hagadah change the answer, that you should tell him hilchos pesach, like not to eat after the pesach afikoman?

The answer is that the chacham's question is one that we find ourselves asking ourselves all the time. True that on leil haseder we all feel a spiritual high, however those feelings do not stay with us, even "machar" the next day, so what is the purpose of it.

The reality is that when the time came for yetzias mitzrayim the yidden were not really on the level to be taken out by Hashem. So Hashem had to raise them to a high level and take them out. this is what the torah means when it writes **כי בחזק יד הוציאם ממצרים**, it needed a strong arm because it was above their level. They then had to spend the next 49 days reacheiving that level.

The baal hagadah is explaining the question of the chacham who asks, if the inspiration will not stay, what is the point of it. The answer is that once one has tasted the feeling of kedushah, of geshmak in learning, of a real shabbos, even when the feeling goes away, he will always yearn to have that good feeling again. Rav Dessler writes that it is for this precise reason that the malach learns the whole torah with the feteus before birth, if he is going to forget it, what is the point. The answer is that once we have "been there" and felt what it feels like, we want to return to that place. People will always return to the place where they felt pleasure. This is the addition to what the father answers the chacham, It is like the afikomen that is the last thing one may eat in seder night in order that the taste linger, After tasting what it feels like to be such an exalted yid, he will have cheishek and desire to return to that bliss.

רשע מה הוא אומר

The wording of the passuk regarding the rashah is different to those of the chacham and tam. With the chacham and rashah it says "leimor". What is the reason for this difference.

The Meshach chochmah explains that "leimor" means that they want an answer, However the rasha does not want an answer - he wants an excuse!! This is where the saying comes from that "some people don't have questions, they have tirutzim"!!!. Once he asks the question he feels that this expnorateshim for doing the mitzvah.

הקהה את שיניו

The meforshim ask what is the significance of this retort to the rasha, that we tell him to blunt his teeth?

There is a possuk refering to an עבד כנעני that says that לחפשי יפל אמתו או אמתו יפלו לחפשי. The Beer mayim chaim says that there is an allusion here that if someone is enslaved to his yetzer hara, the way to "free" himself from it is by "removing" his "tooth". The baal shem tov writes that homiletically the first mishna in bava kamma that talks about the 4 avos nezikin are refering to the 4 main "mazikin" that a person fights with. He says that "maveh" - the tooth, refers to the nezek of being too involved with everything connected to food and taavah in general, as the description of "shen" is יש הנאה להזיקו.

The Shelah HaKadosh writes that the taavah of food encompasses all taavah, as we see from the cheit of Adam harishon. Therefore we tell the rasha that he does not really have solid hashkafa questions. Rather he has taavah and is lookig for a way to get out of service of Hashem.

In the first piece in Kovetz Maamarim from Reb Elchanan Wasserman הי"ד, he asks how can it be that incredible minds like Aristotle succumbed to ridiculous atheistic theories when is is completely elementary that the world must have had a creator, He answers that the possuk says כי השוחד יעור עיני חכמים ויסלף דברי צדיקים meaning that bribery blinds a persons ability to think straight, Every goy has a huge shochad - bribe, He wishes to live an unhindered, consience free life where he will pleasure will not be comprimised. This is the real reason why he has "questions on Hashem - he has no questions, he has tirutzim!

לי ולא לו, אילו היה שם לא היה נגאל

The Vilna Gaon is medayek that really since we are talking to the rasha it should have said לי ולא לך - for me and not for you.

However, says the Gaon, since this is the answer for the rasha - we don't speak with a rasha because we do not want to be influenced by him. We therefore speak to the other

sons who are around in order to protect them from the rasha's influence.

Rav Steinman asked, why did the whole of klal yisroel have to remove their crown's after the chet ha'egel, the egel was made by the erev rav who were 600 people, add to this those 3000 who kissed it, why then did they all have to remove their crowns.

Answered Rav Steinman, from here we see the power of bad influence, just the fact that they saw the egel and those dancing with it etc. was enough to pull them down from their madreigah. How careful must we be not to have anything to do with someone who could have a bad influence, how much we must daven for this - as we say every morning יה"ר שתצלנו היום ובכל יום מעזי פנים ומעזות פנים מאדם רע ומחבר רע וכו'.

יכול מראש חודש.... בשעה שמצה ומרור מונחים לפניך

The Baal hagadah writes, based on the posuk that the mitzvah of telling over the story of yetzias mitzrayim is only on the night of the 15th when the matzah and maror are placed in front of you.

Rav Shach once received a visit from a Rav from Der alte heim. Rav Shach asked him to share torah with him. The visiting Rav said I will give you an eitzah how to be mechanech this generation, the baal hagadah writes "v'higadeta lebincha" - do you want to know how to be mechanech your children (or anyone else for that matter), "lo amarti" - homiletically translated, not by talking and telling them what to do, "ela b'shaa shematzah omaror munachim lefonecha" rather you should lead by example in doing the mitzvos meticulously. This way you will transmit the torah to the next generation.

Rav Shach loved the vort and said that is a vort from "der alte heim"!!

There is another important yesod that lies in these words. We often want and are drawn to seek inspiration from music, mekomos hakedoshim, speeches, dancing etc. While these are fine mediums, they will only provide momentary inspiration. Real kedusha comes from doing Hashem's mitzvos, as we ask - "קדשנו במצותיך".

I heard a beautiful vort for our esteemed Rosh Yeshiva. He was medayek what we say in davening הוא יפתח לבנו בתורתו. The word besoroso seems off. It should have said that Hashem should open our hearts לתורתו, to His torah not "with his torah.

He answered that we are davening that Hashem should help us not to need external stimuli rather should gain our inspiration to have our hearts opened to torah - through the torah itself.

This is the deeper meaning that the mitzvah of cv'higadeta lebincha is only בשעה בינך and we are engaged in intrinsic service from Hashem which is the deepest internal stimuli. It will cause the mitzvos and connection to Hashem to be seared into our hearts in a much deeper way than anything else.

מתחילה עובדי עבודה זרה היו אבותינו

This is a very important part of the hagadah because the gemara tells us that we must begin with telling "the dark side of the story", how we started out in not in a good state. One opinion holds that the dark side is our physical servitude in mitzrayim - hence we say עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים. The other opinion holds that the dark side is that originally our father were idol worshippers, hence we say מתחילה עובדי עבודה זרה היו אבותינו.

Reb Yechezkel Levenstien, the famed mirrer mashgiach said that there is a hidden message in these words that are a lesson for us. The Baal Hagadah writes that at the beginning we were עובדי avodah zara. This means that at least we were working, we were searching, experimenting, trying out different things, thinking etc. .So even though we got it wrong, we were on the path to discovery. Nowadays he said, bochurim do not want to be עובדים they don't want to work, think, try, discover, relegate bad ideas etc. The lesson is clear, without avodah we will get nowhere in life.

The Ritva writes that this paragraph is divrei chizuk to the Rasha, he does not believe that he can live like a good Jew and overcome his yetzer hara. We therefore recount that our grandfather Avraham had a father Terach who was a rabid idol worshipper, yet Avraham managed to overcome this and tear himself away from all of that and become a tzaddik. We may think that it is a weak chizuk - because we are not Avraham's. However on the other hand, firstly he did not have Avos to teach him, he did not have all of the doros that we have that have put such G-dliness in our DNA . Secondly we cannot fathom what he was up against. He was literally up against the whole world.

ויאמר יהושע כה אמר ה' אלקי ישראל

The Alter of Kelm asks why Hashem is called "elohei Yisrael" when really he is the "elokim" of the entire world.

The Alter gives an answer very in line with his whole worldview. He said, not every one who hears a great man talk automatically becomes his talmid. Hearing the speech is not enough. Only one who really wants to be a "mekabel" and instill and internalise the messages - he becomes a talmid.

This is true as well of Hashem. Not everyone can say that Hashem is their "Elokim" only someone who accepts His sovereignty and submits himself to be "mekabel" the messages and instill them and incorporate them in his life, he can call Hashem his "Elokim".

ואתן לעשו את הר שעיר

Why does the baal hagadah mention that Eisav received Har Seir as an inheritance, what does this have to do with the hagadah.

The Vilna Gaon explains that we are thanking Hashem that He gave Har Seir to Eisav as an inheritance. Because of this Eisav was moichel Yaacov of his portion in Eretz Yisroel. The baal hagadah is letting us know that Eisav has no shaychus to Eretz Yisroel.

Reb Aaron Bakst said that the baal hagadah want's to draw a parallel between Eisav's inheritance of Seir and Klal Yisroel's inheritance of Eretz Yisroel. There is a difference between a human and an animal. Chazal tell us that שור בן יומו קרוי שור. This means that almost as soon as it is born, an ox reaches its peak and does not develop any more in it's intelligence or abilities afterwards. On the other hand man starts off very limited and as life goes on he becomes more and more able in every sphere of his life. It is through his life challenges that he grows and becomes so unique.

Eisav's receipt of Seir immediately represents that he is animalistic and is not expected to grow, he "is what he is". Klal Yisroel however need to go through so much in every area of life in order to inherit Eretz Yisroel. This is indicative of their life's mission of growth and their morphing into something much bigger and greater.

ברוך שומר הבטחתו לישראל

Many meforshim ask the question, More than anyone ever, we totally expect Hashem to keep to His word, so why do we say ברוך שומר הבטחתו לישראל so why are we "blessing" Hashem for keeping His word.

The Dubno maggid answers, imagine the Rabbi in class announces that if everyone behaves well, there will be a trip. Then some of the boys in class misbehave. Does the Rabbi still have to take them on the trip.

The same is true with Hashem. He promised Avraham that we would be in galus for 400 years and then He would punish our oppressors and take us out. However this promise was contingent on our behavior, therefore in reality Hashem was exonerated from keeping His part of the deal as we did not keep ours. We therefore thank Hashem that he did not treat us with din, rather לפנינו משורת הדין and with tremendous chessed and rachamim, This has been the theme of Hashem's relationship with us almost always throughout the generations. In the vidduy of Rav Nissim GFaon that we say before yom kippur we say ...were You to judge us according to our maasim woe would be to us. We thank Hashem for His endless mercy, kindness and patience.

והיא שעמדה

The meforshim ask what exactly was it that kept the yidden going throughout the generations, despite constant struggle. What enabled klal Yisroel to endure all of the suffering over the millenia,

The sefer Darchei Noam offers a beautiful understanding, The medrash (Shemos Rabbah 19: 5) writes that when klal Yisroel did bris milah to themselves prior to eating korban

pesach, they did it immediately and the bloods of the korban and the bris mixed. At that moment Hashem took every one of them on their own and kissed them. This fatherly kiss given individually to each one of us, gave us the strength to feel Hashem even in the valley of death. The kiss reverbs in our heart until today - I love you, says Hashem.

צא ולמד... ולבן ביקש לעקור את הכל.

It seems puzzling, where do we see at all that Lavan wanted to destroy klal yisroel, men and women.

The answer is that throughout the generations klal yisroel were able to stand strong and firm against all kinds of persecution and gezeiros. It was when the goy (as if) sought friendship, closeness and inclusion that we failed time and time again to stay apart from them.

The Chasam Sofer says a moshol. The heat and the wind had an argument who is stronger. While they were arguing a man wearing a coat passed by. They challenged each other who would be able to remove the jacket from this person. The wind blew and blew, but this just caused the man to tighten his hold to his coat on him. However when the sun started to shine and heat him up, almost immediately he opened and finally removed his coat - the heat won!!

Said the Chasam sofer (who led the battle against reform and enlightenment), against decrees, the Jews managed to wrap themselves up and cling to the Torah and mitzvos, but when they faced brotherhood, equal rights and comradeship with the goyim, we fell in hordes rc"l.

This was the way of Lavan. Upon arrival, he kissed Yaakov, he made him stay with him with food and lodgings for over 20 years and when Yaakov left secretly he came running after him demanding, "why did you leave, why did you not give me the opportunity to kiss my children - your children are mine...". This attitude and relationship is much more poisonous than hatred.

Someone asked a group of bochurim a question and asked them to answer honestly. He asked, if you were in the middle seat on the plane, on one side of you sat a "nice" goy and on the other side a "nice" yerushalmi yid. Who would you prefer and feel more comfortable striking up a conversation with on the flight. Unfortunately the answer of many was, with the goy, the reason being that they feel that they have more common ground with him than with the yerushalmi yid. That is a holocaust.

ויגר שם

The Yidden had to serve time in Mitzrayim. The Ben Ish Chai explains one aspect of the need to sojourn in Mitzrayim with a mashal. A young orphan was once raised in the home of a wealthy man. The boy lacked nothing and was treated royally. After some time,

though, the rich man's wife sensed that the orphan seemed to be taking for granted his new, rich man's lifestyle. He had stopped appreciating what they were doing for him.

The rich man decided to make a test. He called in the youth and informed him that they had done all that they were capable of doing for him, but at this point it was time for him to leave their house. To his dismay, the orphan was put out on the street with only the shirt on his back and the few coins that he had in his pocket. The first night, miserable and lonely, he slept in the street and by the second day he was eating from the garbage.

By the third day the youth had had enough. He swallowed his pride and humbly knocked on the rich man's door. To his great surprise and joy he was welcomed in and served a meal etc. This time he did not take any chances. With joyful appreciation he thanked his host for every little thing that he did for him.

The Ben Ish Chai writes that had the bnei yisroel stayed in Eretz Yisroel, never to experience the solitude and difficulty of golus and the bitterness of slavery, they would have come to take for granted all the benefits and goodness that Hashem bestowed upon them upon entering Eretz Yisroel. In their minds they'd have it "coming to them" as would befit the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaacov. The golus was necessary to make them truly appreciate the goodness of Hashem and all the bounty that he bestows upon us.

This concept is so relevant to us. Boruch Hashem we live in great bounty, enjoying homes and a lifestyle that none of our forebearers had. We must make sure not to take any of it for granted and never need to have it taken away from us in order for us to appreciate it.

ויהי שם לגוי, מלמד שהי וישראל מצויינים שם

"Metzuyonim" means that they were separate, they did not mingle. As we know, they did not change their clothes, language or names. Reb Yaacov Galinsky asks a strong question. Chazal tell us that the yidden at the time were serving avodah zara and were on the 49th level of tumah. Surely anyone would say to such a double faced Jew, "take off your kippah, take off your hat and jacket and don't pretend to be a fake Jew" - "I don't need your beketcher"!!

There must be a value in staying dressed as a Jew albeit the drop in observance. Here is an important yesod. Life as a Yid is all about "gevurah", overcoming our yetzer hara. When winds of licentious behavior blow, when we are challenged by strong drives and our value systems are tested, every small effort to fight and retain some level of Yiddishkeit, however small or external, is appreciated by Hashem to no end.

Pesach was and is about "gevurah". At the time of yetzias mitzrayim their gevurah was tested in having to do bris milah, in having to roast the lamb in front of the mitzrim etc. Nowadays we do not exercise gevurah. There are many things that we cannot eat,

there are even time limits of how quickly we must eat. Every effort expended for Hashem is priceless.

The Tanna d'vei Eliyahu writes that one of the traits of Hashem is that he is shameach b'chelko. This means that Hashem appreciates every effort, every little mitzvah, every success in the battle against the yetzer hara, and even waging a battle that ends in failure

This is why it was and is imperative to keep up the levush, language etc. even when torah observance is not where it should be.

Furthermore, just wearing clothes that give one a bearing of a frum Jew serve to stop people doing aveiros. They make one feel respectful and "put together". They also deter unsavory people from approaching him as he does not look like easy prey and "low hanging fruit"!!

ויראו אותנו המצרים

Normally this is translated that the Mizrim were bad to us. Rav Gedalia Schorr would translate it differently. He said that it means that they made us think that we were bad people. They demoralised us saying that we were baalei aveiroh with no hope of returning to our exalted state. Pharaoh knew that the way to beat the Jews is by planting seeds of yeush in their spiritual state.

The mishna in Avos states 'אל תהי רשע בפני עצמך'. The Rambam says that this means that a person must not view himself as a rasha, because by doing that he will allow himself to fall further and further into the abyss of aveiros thinking that anyway he is doomed.

The Rambam writes that the sin of Moshe Rabbeinu with the rock was that he called klal yisroel "morim - sinners". The meforshim ask, if so, how could Moshe have repeated it afterwards in parshas Devarim. There he said 'mamrim heyisem - you sinned'.

The answer is rooted in the difference on nuance between telling someone that he is "a sinner" to telling him that "he did a sin". Labeling someone that he is a sinner is a recipe for him to just drop further to deeper levels of sin.

ובאותות זה המטה

This interpretation seems puzzling. The mach - the stick was only a tool to do the signs/wonders. Why then, does the baal hagadah translate "the wonders" as the stick which was just the medium.

The Torah writes that Hashem told Moshe that the yidden will not listen to the "kol", the voice, of the first sign, rather to the kol of the last sign. What is the kol of the sign, Why

did Hashem not say that they will listen to the sign of the last sign.

The answer is that the point of the sign is not to look at the wonder of the sign, rather to hear the kol, the voice of the sign. Hashem put power in the wonder that through it we should uncover and strengthen our emunah.

Mateh also means to turn towards or persuade. The osos - the signs, are for the mateh, the function of them are so that we turn our lives towards greater service of Hashem. All of us have been witness to countless nissim and "oso" in our lives. How many of us have seen them as a "mateh" a medium with which to increase and intensify our emunah and shemiras torah and mitzvos.

There is a famous story of a Rav who was in a taxi. The driver recounted a hairraising story about a friend who was saved from certain death in a completely miraculous way. He finished by saying that his friend is now a baal teshuvah. The Rav asked whether he was witness to this miracle. The driver said, yes. So why did you not also become a baal teshuvah. The driver answered... because the miracle did not happen to me!!! How sad it is that we are guilty of giving the same response so many times in our lives.

כמה טובות למקום עלינו - דיינו

The Rambam in his hagadah does not bring this piyut of "dayeinu". the question is why does he not mention it even though in Spain it was part of the hagadah.

Reb Tzadok HaCohen writes that the nusach of the hagadah does not include every mention or every detail of yetzias mitzrayim. How do we reconcile this with the chiyuv of "kol hamarbe l'saper harei zeh meshubach".

The answer is that it seems that the chiyuv on seder night is to be mechadesh something on your own about yetzias mitzrayim and to come to a new appreciation of Hashem's nissim and to thank him for it. It is for this reason that we have to relive going out of mitzrayim because every time we do this, we feel a new aspect of the geulah.

In one place of the hagadah we are left in the dark. Opinions are brought that there were really many more makkos. the most extreme opinion is that there were 50 makkos in mitzrayim and 250 at the yam suf. We are not told what these makkos were. Part of our avodah on seder night is to allow our imagination to fly and think and feel what must have happened. By doing this we will reveal many makkos inside the greater makkah.

אלו עשר מכות

The Ben Ish Chai writes that the possuk says **בין עמי ובין עמך** meaning, I will make a distinction between my people and yours. This means that the makkos were miraculously meted out with pinpoint precision in order to punish the mitzrim without hurting any Jew. The difference in gematria between $120 = \text{עמי}$ and $130 = \text{עמך}$ is 10 because the 10 makkos distinguished between Ami (the jews) and Amechah (the goyim).

In the Gaza wars Israel is always accused for bombing houses that had children inside. The Israeli answer is that the missile does not differentiate between a terrorist and a citizen. A missile is sent to any house that shoots a missile from it.

פסח מצה מרור

There is a well known question, Reb Gamliel seems to have written this list in the wrong order. Surely first we were in servitude - represented by the maror, and only afterwards we were redeemed - represented by the pesach and matzah.

The Hagadah Maasei Nissim offers a wonderful answer. The maror represents the bitter times in Mitzrayim. If Reb Gamliel would have mentioned the maror first, we would have thought that the main geulah was from the physical golus, from the **וימררו את חייהם**. The truth is, however, that the main geulah is that of our neshamah. We were on the 49th level of tumah and were extricated at the last minute. We have to instill into our minds and hearts that on the most fundamental level, the main yetzias mitzrayim was the ruchnius geulah, and a pre-cursor for klal yisroel's march towards matan torah.

Another answer offered by the meforshim hinges on the deep hashkafah of a yid that he really knows that any "bad" things that happens in his life is ultimately for the good, for his tikkun and kapparah. It is the yissurim that bring him towards his destiny. This is why we relegate maror to the end, because we want everyone to view the suffering in the light of geulah, understanding that it was all an integral piece of achieving shleimus and geulah.

Rochzoh

Halachah query: Riddle, what reason could there be for someone to scratch their head at rochtzoh.

motzei matzah

*Halachah query: The halachah with regard to food that is assur to eat is that even if he only had hanaas garon, meaning that the food only entered his food pipe but then he vomited it out and his stomach never had hanaah from the food - it is still considered that he ate something that is **אסור באכילה**. if this is the case, what would the din be if one ate matzah but didn't actually swallow it, rather he vomited it out. Would we say that in the same way as it would be called eating issur, it would be called eating matzah.*

The makeup of chametz and matzah, and particularly the way they come into being, are very revealing. Chametz is leaven bread, is dough that has risen and now looks puffed up and larger than when you began mixing its ingredients. Matzah, on the other hand, remains flat and without excess volume. But there is something even more telling about

how each of these processes unfold.

To make chametz, you would think that it should require a lot of work. After all, there is more of the bread. It's larger, denser and much more significant than something slender and flat. But it's quite the opposite. Chametz is relatively easy to make. You place the initial ingredients of water and flour together, and then simply sit back and let it do the work. You let it rise by not doing anything to it, but rather allowing it to grow on its own accord.

Matzah, in contrast, is exactly the opposite. You'd think that it's flat and meager, and doesn't require much work and effort to produce, especially in contrast to real bread. But it's not so. It, in fact, demands from the very minute when the water and flour make contact that the baker work assiduously and without respite and ensuring no leavening takes place.

The lack of work generates a chametz status, and the continuous application of effort is what keeps it matzah.

In life, true success and spiritual growth occur when there is never a lack of stagnation, not a point of resting on one's laurels and thinking that now is time for a vacation, now is time to sit back and rest. The continual effort is what is required, at its very basic and elemental level, to retain the matzah in our life, to obtain the goals of spiritual ascent and mastery. It's human to desire a break, pine for a respite and look forward to time off. But not a break from acting as a committed Jew and focusing on our Torah values and principles. A vacation from those, an unguarded attitude in those realms, leads to a life of chametz, of inflation and self-aggrandizement where Hashem finds little room to enter.

The yom tov of Pesach reinforces the principles of hard work, of spiritual labor. Our freedom comes when we remain committed, always and always, to the Torah. Instead of being enslaved to our passions and desires, we are devoted and dedicated to Hashem. And nothing, not even for a moment, will stir our attention away from our desired result: matzah. A life of purity and subordination to the will of G-d.

There is no greater life, neither rich nor rewarding, than that.

Maror

Halachah query: In the time of the beis hamikdash the marror was just a "side dish" served with the korban pesach, and thus, did not need the shiur of a kezayis. Since the destruction of the beis hamikdash chazal instituted a mitzvah d'rabbanan of eating marror. Does this d'rabbanan requirement need him to eat a kazayis like other mitzvos d'rabbanan or does it reflect the torah mitzvah that was in the time of the beis hamikdash and needs a kazayis.

The torah reminds us a number of times **וזכרתם כי עבד היית במצרים** . Some examples are when Hashem instructs us how to look after geirim, also when warning us not to charge interest when lending money to poor people.

When we arrive at seder night and we dress and adorn our tables like royalty, it would be too easy to forget that once we were poor and destitute and in a difficult situation. This is a problem so serious that we must deal with it by eating maror to remind us of our past. In this way we will have empathy and pity on the less fortunate.

There is a famous mashal of a man who became rich but every year on the anniversary of him gaining his fortune would go into a room and dress in his poor man's clothes to remind himself of his "previous life" so as not to fall into the trap of forgetting and turning a cold shoulder and blind eye to those less fortunate.

This is the function of the maror. It is so important that if we are zocheh to be blessed with wealth and popularity, not to forget the simple friends that we had, and to help them as much as we can, not in a pretentious way but truly as an equal.

koreich

Halachah query: The reason that we do koreich is because matzah is min hatorah and marror is only d'rabbanan, it is therefore questionable if they can be eaten together. Perhaps the taste of the marror will be mevatel the taam of the matzah. Therefore we eat them separately. Hillel instituted that they should also be eaten together, zecher of the way they were eaten in the time of the beis hamakdash. The Tur writes that one should not talk until after koreich so that the berachah should go on the koreich as well. If so how are we allowed to say the nusach of "zecher l'mikdash k'hillel". Why is it not a hefsek.

The first sefirah of the omer is "chessed she'bchessed" which means appreciating the totally undiluted chessed of Hashem. Chessed she'bchessed is the gematria of marror. This comes to teach us that the pnemius of marror and suffering at it's core is chessed. On seder night we come to the deep understanding that the trials that we have in life are really chessed, Golus is one exression of the sufferings that we endure. Tonight we rewire ourselves to understand that the greatest thing that happened to us was golus mitzrayim and we would never have become the Jewish people if not for Mitzrayim. This is the avodah upon leaving the golus.

For this reason we eat the matzah and marror as a sandwich on seder night to correct any bad feelings that we have towards Hashem for things that come up in our lives. We eat the matzah that symbolizes geulah from mitzrayim together with the marror that symbolizes the suffering, and we realize that they are to "be eaten" together and serve to

get us to reach our tafkid in this world.

Shulchan Oreich

Halachah Query: On seder night we lean on our sides "derech cheirus". Does one have to lean during the shulchan oreich or not, and why.

The mechaber writes that one should take out nice dinner ware for the meal on seder night. The Magen Avraham writes that you may even put on the table fancy dishes, gold and silver that you have as a collateral from a goy. The simple understanding of this din is to show off our freedom, and to feel like kings.

The Chasam sofer offers a novel explanation, The reason that we adorn our table with gold and silver etc. is to remember the greatness that Hashem put our favor in the eyes of the mitzrim and they agreed to "lend" us their gold and silver vessels. The hagadah Maaseh Hashem points out that this a greatness of the highest magnitude, that the heart of the enemy can be metamorphosized into a heart so compassionate that he is willing to lend (under dubious circumstances) his most precious belongings to "stranger" jews, who until now, were his arch enemies.

One may add al pi derush that we are actually trying to relive what happened at yetzias mitzrayim. It is for this reason that although normally one is not allowed to use a collateral, tonight this is allowed in order to reenact what happened on the night of yetzias mitzrayim when the goyim lent us their most precious possessions.

Reb Shlomo Kluger adds that on normal nights of the year we take care not to take out all of our finest dinner ware in remembrance of the churban. Since tonight we "go all the way" and bring out our finest ware, we counteract this by eating an egg in salt water at the seudoh to remind us of the churban.

Fuurthermore, There is an opinion that they used the gold that they had from the egyptians to make the eigel hazahav. The indirect result of the eigel was that we brought sin back into the world which caused the churban. We eat the egg to remind us of the churban and warn us of the danger that wealth and possessions can bring with it. It is so paradoxical that if Hashem blesses someone with plenty, instead of it bringing him closer to Hashem in appreciation of the bounty, it almost invariably causes him to push Hashem further out of his life, as the possuk in Haazinnu says וישמן ישורון ויבעט , klal yisroel become fat and then kick away Hashem.

Tzafun

Halachah query: Why did Reb Chaim Brisker not speak devorim b'teilim even after koreich until after eating the afikoman.

Why do we steal the afikoman on seder night.

A famous story occurred on the night of Pesach. And lo and behold—it also involves thievery! the torah tells us that Yaacov grew old and his eyes became dim. He expressed his desire to bless his beloved son Eisav before he died. While Eisav went off to hunt for his father's favorite food, Rivka dressed Yaacov in Eisav's clothes, covering his arms and neck with goatskins to simulate the feel of his hairier brother, prepared two goats, and sent Yaacov to his father with the food.

Yaacov received his father's berachos for "the dew of the heaven and the fat of the land" and mastery over his brother. Yaacov, dressed in Eisav's clothes, has "stolen" Eisav's berachah. The Midrash and Rashi explains why Rivka prepared two kid goats for her husband - one as a korban pesach and one for his meal.

After Eisav returns with his hunt from the field, he begs his father to eat. And he too had made tasty foods, and he brought them to his father, and he said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of the game of his son, so that your soul will bentch me. But Yitzchak refuses to eat his food and thus cannot bentch him. He told Eisav "ba achichah b'mirmah" your brother came first through trickery.

Why could Yitzchak not eat more of the food? The word "bemirmah" is the same numerical value as the word "Afikoman," 287. Yitzchak is saying: Your brother came "bemirmah," with deception, giving me the "bemirmah," the Afikoman, and I can't eat anything else afterward. I therefore can't enjoy your food can't bless you afterward.

Some even go as far as saying that it is this story which constitutes the source for stealing the Afikoman: By feeding Yitzchak the Afikoman, thus depriving him from the ability to eat Eisav's food, Yaacov managed to "steal" the berachos from his brother Eisav. The Afikoman allowed the theft to take place. We commemorate that moment by stealing the Afikoman each year on the night of Pesach—just As Yaacov deceptively stole the blessings from Eisav via his Afikoman.

In truth, it is the deception of Pharaoh, and the deception of Eisav which captures the core of the Pesach experience. Eisav "being in charge" of olam hazeh would have been an eternal disaster. His concept of olam hazeh is that worldly possessions are an end in themselves. Yaacov taking over olam hazeh ensures that the bounty that Hashem gives us will be diverted to use only as a medium to grow and come to shleimus in our mission on this world.

boreich

Halachah query: The Tur writes that on seder night you should try and have at least three

people for "zimun". Some learn that the Tur is really referring to the hallel that is said afterwards and it should be said with three people so that one can say hodu etc. and the other two can answer. According to the other opinion that the Tur is referring to birchas hamazon, why would seder night require zimun more than any other night of the year.

What is the purpose of the kos shel Eliyahu?

Vilna Gaon writes that since there is an argument in the Gemorah, R' Tarfon says we should have a fifth cup & others say no. So we have a fifth cup because this machlokes is not resolved so we pour the cup but don't make a brocha on it. Since this is an machlokes that Eliyahu HaTishbi will answer when Moshiach will come, therefore it is called "kos shel eliyahu.

This part of the seder is the time that we turn our concentration towards our destiny and our hope and yearning for Moshiach to come. The Rema writes that we open the door to show we are not afraid. It is a night that we are guarded by Hashem with a special shemirah. This is part of the emunah that will bring moshiach. Adds the Sefer Hamanhig and Chok Yaakov that if moshiach comes and Eliyahu will come we want to be able to leave quickly. This is why we keep the door open. The students of the Maharil said that because of our emunah that we hope and expect him to come, we show our anticipation by putting out a cup for him, because if he does come he will need a cup

Finally it is worth noting that the Pirkei d'Reb Eleizer perek 29 writes that Eliyahu haNavi said about the 400 neviim who were worshipping avodah zarah "I am the only one who cares about HaShem" because the others have abandoned the bris. HaShem answered him and told him "This is not true and from now on you will testify to the truth that the yidden are still strong in torah and mitzvos. You must come to every bris and also to the seder (where only yidden who have a bris are invited to eat the korban Pesach).

hallel

Halachah query: Why do we say hallel on the first night of pesach, and why do we split it into half, saying the first part with magid and the second part after birchas hamazon.

The minhag in the world is that during Hallel on seder night we do not hold the fourth cup in our hand, although the fourth cup was instituted on the recital of hallel.

the "velt" say that the answer is based off a vort of the holy Berditchover. The possuk referring to Aaron HaCohen lighting the menorah say ויעש כן אהרן Aaron did so. Chazal darshan מלמד שלא שינה this is to teach us that he did not deviate at all from what he was told to do. The obvious question is, what is the chiddush that he did what he was told. He was Aaron HaCohen after all.

The Berditchover answered that out of the great fervor and hislahaus for the mitzvah of lighting the menorah he could have spilled the oil or even knock over the menorah. Aaron had to restrain himself מלמד שלא שינה. In this vein, the reason why we do not hold the cup of wine at hallel because at this stage of the seder we should be so on fire that it would be impossible to hold the cup without most of it spilling out.

Even if we are not holding there yet, we should know that such a mareigo exists. This is similar to the reason why the shulchan oruch says that one has to remove any sharp kniuves off the table because once a holy yid stabbed himself out of pain while saying uveneit yerushalayim. Even though we are far from this, we should know that such yidden and such madreigos exist.

Nirtzah

At this point of the seder, just before saying "I'shana haba biyerushalayim" the Minchas elazar of munkatz would say over the following story.

There was a jew who worked for a poritz. One year the poritz insisted upon joined the jew for the seder. He was very interested in every aspect of the seder. When the jew came to say לשנה הבאה בירושלים, the goy asked what this means. The jew explained that we are really in exile under the rule and persecution of the gentiles, we are hoping for the moshiach to come where we will have a homeland and return to Yerushalayim.

The goy insisted on coming back the next year. When the jew came once again to לשנה הבאה בירושלים and explained it once again, the goy commented in surprise, but you prayed for that last year, yet it did not happen. The jew had to fumble for an answer and said, it seems that we were not worthy of redemption but hopefully this year the moshiach will come.

This repeated it self again and again. The jew had to find new excuses every year why moshiach had not yet arrived.

One year when this yid was about to say לשנה הבאה בירושלים he broke down and screamed - he said "ribbono shel olam, help already, I am already so ashamed of the goy, every year I have to give him another excuse".

This is our sentiment at this time of the seder. Hashem, please, it is enough, we cannot bear the golus anymore and we are so embarrassed of what the goyim are saying about our "dreams of moshiach coming.

When the jews sinned at the eigel, Hashem was going to wipe out klal yisorel. His wiining argument with Hashem was "what will the goyim say - that Hashem cannot redeem us??" This is our teilloh to Hashem, we are so embarrassed for You that the goyim do not think that you are all powerful and can extricate us frim this golus.

May Moshiach come speedily - this year.