



A SEDER GUIDE

Rabbi Yosef M. Rosenholtz

טבת תשע"ח - January, 2018

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	1
INTRODUCTION	3
THE BASICS	9
PREPARATION	10
PARTICIPATION	10
FULFILL THE REQUIREMENTS	12
UNDERSTANDING	12
THE MITZVAH TO RECLINE	13
THOUGHT PLUS ACTION!	13
THE CENTRALITY OF PASSOVER	16
CORE COMPONENTS	17
HAGGADA	18
THE CORE MESSAGES - PESACH, MATZAH AND MARROR	20
THE PESACH OFFERING	20
MATZOH - THE CENTRAL ELEMENT OF THE STORY	21
EGYPTIAN FAST FOOD	24
TIME AND PERSONAL FREEDOM	24
THE FIRST MITZVAH OF THE TORAH	25
THE STRATEGY OF CAPTIVITY	26
AN ATTEMPT TO ASSIMILATE THE JEWS	28
“FREEDOM”	28
MARROR - THE SWEETNESS OF THAT WHICH IS BITTER	30

ELEMENTS OF THE SEDER35

THE NAME - PESACH OR CHAG HAMATZOT?35

THE NUMBER FOUR37

THE CUSTOM TO EAT AN EGG41

AN ALLUSION TO THE NINTH OF AV42

BAIS HALEVY EXPLAINS43

WHY FOUR CUPS OF WINE?45

RECITING THE HAGGADA - מגיד47

ALL WHO ARE IN NEED - כל דכפין48

WE BEGIN WITH DEPRECATION - מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח50

I AM AS THOUGH SEVENTY YEARS OF AGE53

THE UNUSUAL STRUCTURE OF THE SEDER56

A TORAH APPROACH TO EDUCATION57

AN EMPHASIS ON CHILDREN59

RESPECT FOR A CHILD'S FEELINGS...59

FOUR QUESTIONS - MORE LESSONS ON EDUCATION61

WE HAVE BEEN LIBERATED...63

THE CONCLUSION - דיינו64

THE DESERT CHALLENGE65

THE HAGGADA69

APPENDIXES71

GLOSSARY AND COMMENTATORS73

NOTES75

PREFACE

A few years ago, several members of our weekly learning group asked for help in conducting a Seder that is spiritually meaningful and halachically correct for their families and guests – particularly for those who are not observant.

This guide was created to help meet that need. It contains some of the material that we covered during our weekly study sessions in the Wesley Hills community. We hope that you too will find it as useful and that we will be able to add to it, as time allows, to continue to help fill this need.

In the review we have attempted to capture some of the flavor and the core insights of our pre-Pesach sessions and discussions, albeit in a much shortened form. Please allow that we frequently spent one or more sessions on just one of the multiple points addressed herein and the written form as presented is necessarily abbreviated.

Comments and suggestions are welcome.

Please note that any omissions, errors, grammatical typos and just plain mistakes are solely mine to claim, as was the pleasure of having had the opportunity to lead this fine group of dedicated “learners” for over a decade.

I would like to express my appreciation to Kehillas Bais Yehuda of Wesley Hills and its leader, Rabbi Joshua Blass, for graciously allowing us to continue our shiurim in the synagogue over these many years. May the merit of our learning allow the community to grow and prosper for many years to come.

Finally, I would like to thank my dear son, Rabbi Avi Rosenholtz, for his help and effort to make the publication of this work a reality.

Yosef Rosenholtz

January, 2014 - סבת תשע"ח



INTRODUCTION

In his book, “The Novelist and the Physicist”, Herman Wouk quotes Richard P. Feynman, the reknowned Jewish physicist expressing his religious doubts by saying,

“It doesn't seem to me that this fantastically marvelous universe, this tremendous range of time and space and different kinds of animals, and all the different planets, and all these atoms with all their motions, and so on, all this complicated thing can merely be a stage so that God can watch human beings struggle for good and evil - which is the view that religion has. The stage is too big for the drama.”

Despite the skepticism, in his formulation Feynman succinctly captures the Jewish view of the importance of mankind. That all of the vastness of the universe and everything it contains, is but a backdrop for man's spiritual

quest. As we recently saw in our weekly class on Talmud:¹

”וא”ר חלבו אמר רב הונא כל אדם שיש בו יראת שמים דבריו נשמעין שנאמר (קהלת יב יג): ’סוף דבר הכל נשמע את האלהים ירא ואת מצותיו שמור כי זה כל האדם’. מאי כי זה כל האדם – א”ר אלעזר אמר הקב”ה כל העולם כלו לא נברא אלא בשביל זה רבי אבא בר כהנא אמר שקול זה כנגד כל העולם כולו ר’ שמעון בן עזאי אומר ואמרי לה ר’ שמעון בן זומא אומר ’כל העולם כולו לא נברא אלא לצוות לזה“

“Rabbi Chelvo said in the name of Rabbi Huna: The prayers of every man that has within him the fear of G-d are heard.”

We know this because it says in Koheles (Ecclesiastes, 12:13) ‘In the final analysis, all is heard. Fear G-d and fulfill his commandments because this is all of man.’

What is meant when it says: ‘...this

is all of man'? Rabbi Elazar said: G-d says, all of the universe was created only for this. Rabbi Abba the son of Kahana said, the keeping of mitzvot is equal to all of the universe. Rabbi Shimon the son of Azai said - and others attribute this to Rabbi Shimon the son of Zoma - the entire universe was created only as a means to accomplish this”

In other words, all of creation exists only so that man may work and struggle to ascend- to grow spiritually. The entire universe was created only so that it could serve as the stage on which man's holy mission is enacted.

Judaism believes that the stage of the universe is so large because the drama is in fact so important - and - there could be nothing more important. All that exists, exists solely to allow for man to struggle, and thereby to grow, spiritually.

Keeping this in mind it is therefore not surprising to find that the very moment of the birth of the Jews as a nation finds them in a life and death struggle with Egypt, the most powerful empire in the world.

The Egypt of that time was a nation with a culture completely antithetical to the Jewish world view which sees loftiness in mankind and holiness in man's mission on this earth. Egypt therefore strove powerfully and forcefully to prevent the Jewish nation from ever coming into being.

It is further not surprising that, in that struggle to bring the Jewish people into existence, all of the elements of nature itself - the heavens and the earth, the animals and the insects, plague and disease and the mighty seas of the ocean - are the props that are used in this greatest and most important of all dramas.

While recently reviewing the Torah notes of my father, may his memory be blessed, I came across the following observation:

The Midrash relates that the entrance to Pharaoh's chamber was quite low - so low in fact that one needed to bend to get in. Alongside the entranceway was an idol so that lowering oneself to enter the chamber also had the appearance of seeming to bow to

the idol.²

However, the Midrash notes, when our ancestors, Yaakov, Moshe and Aaron entered, the opening was enlarged and it was not necessary for them to bow their heads to enter. They entered standing fully upright.

This Midrash may plausibly be interpreted allegorically.

The smallness of the entrance conveys the terrifying fear and smallness one felt as he made ready to enter before the greatest and most powerful king in the world - a king who by all appearances held power over life and death. That “fear”, that “smallness”, was really the “idol” - the false deity - that stood alongside the entrance and to which one payed homage when he feared. It was to the idol of fearing one of flesh and blood that all who entered Pharaoh’s chambers bowed.

But not Yaakov, Moshe or Aaron.

They understood that they were part of the “עם הנבחר” - “the chosen people” - who could

reach the spiritual level of angels, and who feared none other than HaShem. They bowed to no man and fearlessly broke with society and convention when belief in HaShem so warranted. For them, there was never a low passage - only a gateway of great dimensions through which they walked fully upright. As the Torah notes: “והתיצב לפני פרעה”- And you (Moshe) shall stand upright before Pharaoh.³ He did not cower, even though Pharaoh was the most powerful ruler in the world, seemingly with the ability to send Moshe immediately to his death if he so chose.

This year, as perhaps too often in recent memory, the Jew is challenged in many places around the world, and of course in Israel, yet once again by intimidation and threat and ugly terror. And once again the Passover Seder reminds us, we need fear no man and no nation. Our fate is in the hands of HaShem. May we be worthy of His redemption and celebrate Pesach next year together in Jerusalem.





Passover is the holiday of Jewish survival and continuity. It is the holiday that many Jews observe, even when they are scarcely recognizable as Jews and all other vestiges of practice have been lost.

It survives as a holiday because of the genius of its celebration, the eternity of its message, and the brilliance of its structure.

PREPARATION

Prepare early for the Passover Seder and have all foods ready with the table set so that the Seder may begin as soon as Halacha permits. Because a central theme of Passover is the continuity of the Jewish people and their traditions it is critical that the children assume a central focus of the evening. Delaying the start of the Seder makes it difficult for young children to fully play their role and makes it challenging for many adults to keep their interest up as well.

Finally, the Seder night is not the time for financial humility. Our very best should adorn the table. This is a royal evening – and we should play the part.

PARTICIPATION

As mentioned above, all adults are required to fulfill the mitzvot of the evening and children

who have reached the age of instruction must participate too.

Encourage participation among adults by assigning a particular topic or passage for research prior to Passover, to each of the adults. Make sure each person understands what he/she reads. The Haggada must be understood and may be read in any language that correctly translates the Hebrew. Translate and explain when appropriate, but save the extended discussion for the meal, or even later.

Extended and long-winded discussions early in the Seder before the children have asked the four questions and while less committed Jews wait desperately for something to eat, does not encourage future Passover commitment. (Even fully committed Jews have been known to stare longingly at food hoping for a quick end to over-extended discussion).

Full participation and making the abstract concrete are key elements of any well developed educational program and this is especially true of the Seder. Play acting by the children, and making the events of the Passover story come to life are important ingredients for inspiring children – and maybe adults too!

FULLFILL THE REQUIREMENTS

Each adult – male and female - must fulfill the requirements of eating Matzoh, drinking four cups of wine and reciting the primary elements of the Haggada. Children able to be instructed, (above the age of six or seven) are also required to participate. One engaged in preparing, cooking and serving the meal is not exempt from this requirement! Although females are frequently freed from time-bound positive commandments, the requirements of the Seder night are different, since to paraphrase the Talmud, “...They too were participants in the miracle.”⁴ For this reason, men and women are equally liable to participate in and fulfill the mitzvot of the evening! Be prepared to help your spouse participate in and fulfill the mitzvot of the evening.

UNDERSTANDING

The Haggada must be understood. If someone does not understand the Hebrew, encourage them to say it in English. Try to find translations

that are true to both the meaning and intent of the passages and, if necessary, explain it to them.

THE MITZVAH TO RECLINE

While women have traditionally accepted that their custom is not to recline, for men, reclining is not optional. Make sure to recline to the left when eating the Matzoh, drinking the four cups of wine and, to the extent possible, while eating the meal.

The Seder is above all, experiential. Reclining while eating has historically been associated with freedom, and we must not just mouth the words that we read, but feel and experience them.

Reclining helps one feel the exhilaration of freedom.

THOUGHT PLUS ACTION!

The Sefer HaChinuch explains that Judaism is a religion that emphasizes personal growth.

However, that spiritual growth does not come simply as a result of having good thoughts or expressing good intentions alone.⁵

It is only through the combination of both of these elements, of both having good thoughts and actually taking effective action – through combining both word and deed in unity -that man is elevated spiritually. This is the reason that Judaism asks for more than one's belief. As the Mishna in Pirkei Avos says:⁶

”הוא היה אומר: כל שחכמתו מרבה ממעשיו,
למה הוא דומה? לאילן שענפיו מרבין ושרשיו
מועטין, והרוח באה ועוקרתו והופכתו על
פניו... אבל כל שמעשיו מרבין מחכמתו, למה
הוא דומה? לאילן שענפיו מועטין ושרשיו
מרבין, שאפילו כל הרוחות שבעולם באות
ונושבות בו, אין מזיזין אותו ממקומו...”

“...One who's wisdom is greater than his deeds can be compared to a tree with many branches, but his roots are shallow and few. A wind comes and easily uproots it. But one who's actions are

even more than his wisdom is like a tree with a smaller number of branches, but with deep and plentiful roots, which no wind can move or dislodge...”

Wisdom, or thought must be used for action. It is only the combination of the two that makes a man strong and deep.

Some religions emphasize having the “right” thoughts or beliefs.

Judaism, the Sefer HaChinuch avers, insists and history surely and tragically shows, that good thoughts do not effect change in the nature of man.

Judaism insists that if man is to grow, he must combine his intellectual gifts with strong actions consistent with those beliefs.

Full involvement in the Passover Seder therefore demands that one involve both his or her studied thought as well as active participation.

THE CENTRALITY OF PASSOVER

Many of the six hundred and thirteen Mitzvot of the Torah are directly associated with the Passover holiday because it is the central theme and bedrock of the Jewish national religious experience.

To be properly appreciated it must be experienced both intellectually and by our actions.





CORE COMPONENTS



The “Seder” literally means order or arrangement. This expression precisely describes the very carefully arranged order of the evening - from the eating of Matzoh and Marror, the bitter herbs, to the recitation of carefully selected and arranged texts. Each

element of the Seder plays an important and defining role. When synthesized, all of these elements form a complete order and deliver the authentic and unique Passover experience.

HAGGADA

The Hebrew word Haggada literally means “telling”. The basis for the Haggada is the passage where the Torah says:

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

“And you will tell your child on that day, saying: ‘It is because of this that HaShem did for me when I came out of Mitzraim.’”⁷

The Sefer HaChinuch explains that this passage is the basis for the twenty first Mitzvah of the Torah – to relate the story of our exodus from Egypt. To tell our children of the events we experienced, the miracles done for us and the comeuppance of our enemies. And that we

ourselves ought to be moved by this telling, so that even if, sadly, we have no one to share the story with, we may tell it to ourselves!⁸

Most of the form of the Haggada is outlined in the Talmud in the tenth chapter of tractate Pesachim where the Mishnah details what needs to be said, including Rabban Gamliel's famous dictum which is the source for a primary passage in the Haggada that reads - "Whoever does not say these three things on Pesach does not fulfill his obligation; and these are: Pesach, Matzoh and Marror."

”רבן גמליאל היה אומר: כל שלא אמר שלשה דברים אלו בפסח לא יצא ידי חובתו. ואלו הן: פסח, מצה, ומרור.“

“Rabbi Gamliel would say:
‘Whoever does not say these three things at the Seder on Passover has not fulfilled his obligation. These are: The Passover sacrifice, Matzoh and Bitter Herbs.’”⁹

THE CORE MESSAGES - PESACH, MATZAH AND MARROR

THE PESACH OFFERING

For the world at large the exodus of the Jews from Egypt openly showed that there is not only an omnipotent G-d but also one who is omniscient, takes interest in the affairs of man and that man's actions carry consequences.

But on another level, the exodus was also designed to declare the meaninglessness of pagan worship. The Jews took sheep, worshipped as deities by the Egyptian people, and openly slaughtered them for the “קרבן פסח” - “Passover sacrifice.”

This was an act of great defiance and great courage on the part of the Jews. Once again, the Jews were following their patriarch Abraham, the original iconoclast, and destroying pagan icons without fear right before their practitioners.¹⁰

Sheep, worshipped by the Egyptians as a deity,

was also first in the order of the twelve signs of the zodiac. As such, it might have been expected to be especially protective of them during the month of Nissan, when it reigns. This is why the Jews were freed particularly during the Hebrew month of Nissan, once again showing the emptiness of the “sheep” as a deity.¹¹

MATZOH - THE CENTRAL ELEMENT OF THE STORY

Nothing is more symbolic of the Passover holiday than Matzoh. Yet why the enormous emphasis on eating this particular food? While it may help us recall leaving Egypt when there was insufficient time for the dough to rise, is the rush of our exit the most dramatic and significant aspect of the experience? Is that to suggest that if sneakers had been in vogue in ancient Egypt, a strong case would have been made for their exclusive use while sitting at the Seder table?

Other possibilities certainly come to mind, not

the least of which is the great wealth showered upon us by the Egyptians as they urged us to leave. Could not that have been a point to be remembered?

Beis Halevy adds profundity to this question when he points out that, as any traveler knows, leaving your home in a rush is not the most elegant or desirable way to travel. In fact, the prophets promise that when the final redemption does come, we will be redeemed with great deliberation.

Why then so emphasize the haste?

Further, in the Haggada we recite:

“הא לחמא עניא די אכלו אבהתנא”

“This is the bread our fathers ate
in Egypt”

Yet in fact, the Torah seems to say, as just mentioned, that Matzoh was eaten in the rush to leave, not in Egypt itself. The Torah calls Matzoh, “Lechem Oni” – poor man’s bread. It writes:

”לא תאכל עליו חמץ שבעת ימים תאכל עליו
מצות לחם עני כי בחפזון יצאת מארץ מצרים
למען תזכר את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל
ימי חיך“

“You shall not eat chometz,
seven days you shall eat Matzoh,
poor man’s bread, because you
left Egypt in a rush, so that you
remember the day of your leaving
Egypt all the days of your life.”¹²

Rashi comments:

”לחם שמזכיר את העוני שנתענו במצרים“

“Bread that reminds us of the
suffering we endured in Egypt.”

But in fact, the above verse seems to be saying
that we ate Matzoh when leaving Egypt because
of the rush – but not in Egypt itself!

EGYPTIAN FAST FOOD

To answer this, the Shla explains,¹³ Matzoh was in fact eaten in Egypt itself. Under the terrific pressure of the Egyptians to fulfill their daily quota, the Jews were forced to always eat on the run. Even in Egypt there was insufficient time for the enslaved Jews to eat real bread. They just couldn't spare the time waiting for the dough to rise.

TIME AND PERSONAL FREEDOM

In other words, the essential difference between Matzoh and bread is not just that bread has risen and contains Chometz while Matzoh does not.

The larger and more significant difference is that bread takes time to make. Time is the one thing a slave doesn't have. He has no say in how he spends his time or how it is used. The cycle of the day, from sunrise to sunset, is built on his master's demands and becomes a repetitive ritual of a recurring nightmare.

More than anything else Matzoh, then, represents not only the image of the Jew rushing to leave Egypt, but also brings to mind the horror of the slavery of Egypt itself, because there is nothing more personal, nor more important, than being able to decide for yourself how you spend your time.

Used properly, time represents the key to accomplishment, change, personal growth and, ultimately, to find real meaning in living. Stripped of the ability to use his time the Jew remains unable to do anything with his life but remain a slave.

This is why Matzoh so perfectly symbolizes both the terror of the slavery and the sweetness of freedom and is, more than any other aspect of the Seder, the central theme of the story. More than anything else the Jews suffered from a lack of time. They didn't have it and they could not control it.

THE FIRST MITZVAH OF THE TORAH

In a stunning and ironic turnaround, after the tenth and final plague the irony of the Egyptian position is displayed via “מדה כנגד מדה” -

measure for measure, as the Egyptians one final time mercilessly rush the Jews and force them to eat quickly, allowing them only the time to eat unleavened bread. But this time they do it not to demonstrate their mastery over the Jews but out of fear for their lives and in order to set them free!¹⁴

HaShem then forever immortalizes this newfound freedom of the Jews with the very first Mitzvah He gives them - Kiddush HaChodesh, sanctifying the new month.

HaShem gives the Jew, who previously had no control of even his own time, the keys of control over the rule of time throughout the entire universe, representing the final and ultimate repudiation of the slavery of Egypt.

THE STRATEGY OF CAPTIVITY

There is an additional, yet generally overlooked, dimension to the story of the Jews in Egypt that is crucial to fully understanding the experience.

The terrible crush of time and their inability to even be able to bake bread was not just the byproduct of a cruel Egyptian attempt to squeeze more and more work from their slaves.

In fact, Pharaoh understood that the best way to keep the Jews enslaved was by depriving them of the time to think. But not just to stop them from being able to pay attention to what was happening to them, or to plan a rebellion against him. He wanted to make sure that they didn't have the time for any kind of thinking at all! His entire strategy to keep the Jews enslaved was built on making sure that they simply had no time for any kind of thinking.

Pharaoh understood that given time to think, the Jews could never be kept enslaved, neither physically nor psychologically. That only by not allowing them even the slightest time for thought or reflection, could the Jews be kept as Egyptian slaves. And the Egyptians carried out this strategy of not allowing them time by continually piling on the work.

In other words, the reason we did not have time to eat bread in Egypt was not because the Egyptians gave us so much work. Rather, it was the overall plan of the Egyptians to overwhelm us with work because more than anything else,

they feared what what the Jews could do if they would only have the time to think! Time and reflection, are the keys to personal growth, accomplishment and ultimately freedom.¹⁵

AN ATTEMPT TO ASSIMILATE THE JEWS

The Bais HaLevy adds that Pharaoh's real intent was directed specifically to limit the Jewish practice of the Mitzvot. While pretending to enslave the Jews for financial profit, Pharaoh's true motive was to force the Jews to assimilate. He would relieve them of the struggle and pain if they would agree.¹⁶

"FREEDOM"

Slavery is not, as many think, solely the state of physical bondage of one human being to another. Rather, it exists primarily in the limitation of the ability to think and imagine great thoughts.

Pharaoh, despite his role as ruler of the most powerful nation in the world, and the entire Egyptian people are considered, from the Torah

perspective, enslaved. They were descendants of Cham, cursed by Noah for all time to be slaves. This is true despite the power of the Egyptian kingdom, the advanced state of their culture and the knowledge they possessed!

Freedom is the power to appreciate the limitless possibilities of man and his personal relationship with HaShem.¹⁷

The difference between the slave and the free man is not purely situational.

We can find slaves of intelligence whose spirit is full of freedom and conversely we find ostensibly free men whose spirits are enslaved. True freedom is that spirit which lifts a person up and allows him to be true to his inner strivings. To that which is particular and unique to each individual and derives from his inner soul, his “צלם אלקים” - “Image of G-d.”

This freedom allows man to realize his innermost sense of purpose and allows him to feel his life has direction and meaning. He is able to do that for which he has been created. The enslaved spirit, on the other hand, never finds his true calling and is always bound and

limited by what those around him wish him to do.¹⁸

Slavery is best defined as one who is forced to labor, but will not see for himself the benefits of that labor. That being the case, every temporal act in this world that is not a spiritual act may be seen in fact as the act of a slave, since there will be no ultimate benefit to accrue to the one who performed it.¹⁹ As the Talmud states, "The only free man is one who labors in Torah."²⁰

A free person is one who is guided by his intellect without subverting his good judgment because of his emotions.²¹

MARROR - THE SWEETNESS OF THAT WHICH IS BITTER

Why do we eat Marror - The Bitter Herbs, on Passover? The basic explanation given, as we recite in Maggid of the Haggada, is as follows:

מָרֹר זֶה שֶׁאָנוּ אוֹכְלִים, עַל שׁוֹם מָה? עַל שׁוֹם
שֶׁמָּרְרוּ הַמִּצְרִים אֶת חַיֵּי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם,

שְׁנֵאמַר: "וַיִּמְרְרוּ אֶת חַיֵּיהֶם..."

This Marror that we are eating, for the sake of what is it? It is due to the fact that the Egyptians embittered the lives of our ancestors in Egypt, as it is stated (Exodus 1:14); "And they made their lives bitter..."

The obligation to eat Marror at the Seder is of Biblical origin and is one of the three fundamental aspects of the Passover Seder (As noted in the beginning of this section). Which begs the question, what is so important about remembering how we suffered in Egypt? Isn't focusing and celebrating the salvation and birth of our nation enough?

This question leads into even more fundamental ones such as - Why did HaShem enslave the Jewish nation in Egypt to begin with? As well as - If HaShem is loving and caring as well as omnipotent, then what is the purpose and meaning of the suffering in this world?

In his work on the Holidays, Shalmei Moed, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, of blessed

memory, provides a powerful observation about the meaning of Marmor that sheds a great deal of light on these issues.

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach explains as follows:

The Torah writes about the commandment to eat the Passover sacrifice: “על מצות ומררים יאכלוהו” - “On unleavened bread and bitter herbs you shall eat it”. This is the source for the obligation to eat Marmor.

Marmor on its own is bitter and as such helps us to recall the bitterness of our enslavement in Egypt. However, when combined as an ingredient with the roasted sacrifice and unleavened bread, it provides improved flavor and enhances the taste of the food. Which makes it an excellent parable for the purpose of suffering.

Suffering on its own is bitter. It is

painful and difficult.

At the same time it can be a powerful catalyst for growth and change as well. When viewed through the lens of eternity and the path of true personal growth, the “ingredient” of life that we know as suffering can be understood as something that can promote beneficial outcomes.

Much like a parent brings a child to a doctor for a painful but necessary procedure which will ultimately benefit the child, HaShem brings his children to that which will best allow for them to flourish and reach their potential.

It is precisely this understanding that we strive to tap into as we sit down at the Passover Seder and partake of the Marror.





ELEMENTS OF THE SEDER



THE NAME - PESACH OR CHAG HAMATZOT?

The Torah refers to the Passover holiday as “חג המצות” - the holiday of Matzot. But the Rabbis

of the Talmud refer to it as “חג הפסח” - “The holiday of Passover”, as evidenced by the name of the Talmudic tractate that deals with the holiday: “פסחים” - “Pesachim”.

Why is that?

We find in other contexts that the Jews take pride in their relationship with HaShem, while HaShem revels in joy with the Jews - His people. For example, the Talmud in Berachoth²² tells us that whereas the Tefillin of the Jew contains chapters of the Torah that declare the unity of HaShem - the Shema, HaShem, so to speak, wears Tefillin that contain passages that speak of the uniqueness of the Jewish people:

“מי כעמך ישראל גוי אחד בארץ”

“Who is like Your people Israel , a nation unique in the world”²³

In a similar vein, G-d and his people take pride in different aspects of the holiday.

For the Jew, the holiday is known as “פסח” -

“Passover”, since that term refers to the mercy of HaShem when He “passed over” the Jewish houses while killing the first-born of their oppressors.

But for HaShem, the holiday is seen as “חג המצות” - “The holiday of the Matzot”.

That is because despite the difficulties, and the dangers, the Jews hurried to fulfill G-d’s commandment to leave the land of Egypt, not even allowing their bread the time to bake.

This willingness of the Jewish people to follow their Creator, despite the awesome danger and seeming illogic of taking their families out of their homes to a barren desert, is celebrated by HaShem with His Tefillin that He (allegorically) wears.

THE NUMBER FOUR

Why are there so many allusions to the number four? Why do we drink four cups of wine, not three, or five?

Why do the children ask not one or two or three,

but exactly four questions? Why are there four types of children in the story?

There are so many references to the number four in the Passover Seder that one must ask what is special about that number on this night.

Following are two of the answers that are mentioned in the commentaries...

There are four letters in the Hebrew name of HaShem. Therefore, we drink four cups of wine to allude that each aspect of the story of Jewish redemption was conceived and orchestrated by an all-knowing and ever-present Creator.²⁴

There were four unique and distinct stages in the experience of the Jewish return to freedom, and each of these stages is marked and celebrated individually. The four stages were:

...והוצאתי, והצלתי, וגאלתי, ולקחתי...

...HaShem withdrew us from
bondage, HaShem saved us,
HaShem redeemed us, HaShem
took us...

Each of these terms mark another aspect of the redemption. Each step marked another degree of physical and psychological emancipation from the long years of physical and psychological torment of slavery.

- ① HaShem took us out of bondage: Initially, early in the redemption process, came the cessation of actual physical enslavement and torture.

- ② HaShem saved us: Secondarily, there came a measure of independence of movement and action - But even freedom from the physical abuse and a level of independence could not totally break the psychological bond that slavery still held on the psyche of the Jew.
Even when no longer under the direct physical control of their previous masters, the experience of having been slaves held strong sway over the mind and thinking

of the Jewish people.

- ③ HaShem redeemed us: Only once the Jews saw their former Egyptian task masters drowned in the Red Sea were they fully, completely and unconditionally freed of all fragments of slavery. The psychological hold that those many decades of torture and servitude exerted on them was only finally lifted when they saw their former masters destroyed and washed up on the bank of the Red Sea.

- ④ HaShem brought us out: Real freedom necessitates a spiritual component. Though the Jews were now free men, what were their goals? What were they free to do? Full freedom, spiritual freedom, was achieved when the Jews were taken by G-d and presented with His covenant at Mount Sinai.²⁵

In fact, the language of the Midrash openly

demonstrates this idea that redemption came in stages since it states that these terms mentioned above, “והוצאתי, והצלתי, וגאלתי, ולקחתי” are not just four different expressions of redemption, but that each of these different terms represents a distinct aspect of the “redemption”. Each signifies another rung on the road of the Jew to full and complete freedom.²⁶

THE CUSTOM TO EAT AN EGG

The custom is to place an egg on the Seder plate. Why?

Chasam Sofer explains that an egg is different from most foods. Most foods soften when cooked. But the more an egg is cooked the harder and tougher it gets.

The egg symbolizes the nature of the Jewish people.

The more we face trials of fire and water, the tougher we get and the more faithful we remain to our beliefs.

AN ALLUSION TO THE NINTH OF AV

The Ramah, in the Shulchan Aruch, suggests a different reason for the custom of placing an egg on the Seder plate. He writes:

”נוהגים בקצת מקומות לאכול בסעודה ביצים
זכר לאבילות ונראה הטעם משום שליל תשעה
באב נקבע בליל פסח“

“...The reason for the custom to eat an egg during the seder is that the night of Tisha B'av always falls on the same day of the week as the first night of Passover... [Since the egg is commonly associated with mourning²⁷], ...it directs attention to the mourning of the Jewish people on the day of Tisha B'Av - the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av.”²⁸

In other words, the Ramah suggests that the symbolism of the egg on Passover is to associate the historical mourning of Jews on the ninth day of the month of Av with the celebration of

freedom on the first night of Passover.

The Bais HaLevy,²⁹ finds this odd.

Isn't the fact that the first day of Pesach always falls on the same day as Tisha B'Av just a coincidence? And if so, why should that coincidence be a cause for unpleasant associations on this remarkable and happy holiday?

It seems particularly incongruous to remember and mourn for the tragedies of Tisha B'Av, the day of national memory of exile and suffering, on the night of the year we most conspicuously commemorate liberation and freedom from oppressions and exile!

BAIS HALEVY EXPLAINS

The initial decree was for the Jewish nation to be enslaved in Egypt for a period of four hundred years.³⁰ In actual fact however, when one calculates the time, the Jews seem to have been freed after only two hundred and ten years.

While there are various explanations that attempt to resolve the discrepancy, Bais HaLevy says that the Jews did in fact leave Egypt before the designated time – before the time that had been decreed for their enslavement was complete. The reason was that HaShem’s hand was forced, so to speak, by the spiritual condition of the Jewish nation which was so degraded that it necessitated they be rescued earlier than planned.

Egypt was a rich, powerful and attractive culture and exerted strong influence on people in its midst. Because of that influence the Jewish people were inundated with ideas alien and completely contrary to the teachings of their fathers. Over time, they were slowly being transformed from the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who cherished mercy, compassion and kindness, to people comfortable with the heartless paganism and crass materialism of their hosts.

After a period of two hundred and ten years, the influence of Egypt on the Jews had gone so far and had become so overwhelmingly pervasive, that to save the Jewish nation from total and absolute spiritual extinction, HaShem was ‘forced’ to immediately extricate the Jewish

people from that culture.

Yet the spiritual debt of the remaining years of decreed slavery was not to be forgotten. It remained a debt that would need to be paid.

This is the allusion, and the reason, that Tisha B'Av always falls out on the same day of the week as the first day of Passover. It is not coincidence.

The Jewish freedom on Passover had to come early. But the remaining years of exile would remain as a debt to be paid over the millennia in future exiles, in further servitude. These exiles and oppressions are marked and remembered by the day of Tisha B'Av.

That is why we eat the egg on Passover. To remind us that the Passover redemption, as great as it was, was incomplete. There is yet to be a final and more complete redemption.³¹

WHY FOUR CUPS OF WINE?

While in many respects the Jewish people had assimilated into Egyptian culture, in some

important ways they maintained a separate identity.

The Medrash says that they did not change their mode of dress nor did they modify their names to an Egyptian form. Neither did they intermarry with the Egyptians. Maintenance of their independent identity as a people was the critical factor that allowed the Jews to be eventually redeemed because it meant that some Jewish values were kept alive despite their overwhelming immersion in the pagan world of Egypt.

Wine is frequently used to break down social barriers between people and is therefore a common staple at parties and social interactions. In fact, this is why the Chachomim, the Rabbis, imposed restrictions on the use of non-Jewish wine - to prevent just such unreserved interaction and any potential assimilation that might result.

Wine is therefore chosen on Passover as the medium by which to celebrate our freedom. It symbolizes the independence of the Jewish people and their ability to resist the allure of Egyptian society and maintain their own values, despite the difficulties. In spite of the obvious

advantages attached to assimilation, the Jewish people managed to resist and maintain their identity.³²

Other commentaries suggest that the reason for the use of wine is that wine is mentioned four times in the Prophets, specifically in reference to salvation.³³

A third reason offered is that since each of the four stages of redemption improved both the psychological and physical condition of the Jews, the Chachomim - the Rabbis, declared that wine be used so that we can experientially commemorate the redemption, since when one drinks wine, it induces a feeling of change and one can actually feel this newfound freedom.³⁴

RECITING THE HAGGADA - מגיד

The point of the Mitzvah to tell of the exodus is so that we should better remember it. In fact, as mentioned earlier, it is not only when asked a question that the Torah commands us to verbally speak and tell of the experience. Even if we are not asked - the Mitzvah of the Haggada

to express what happened, if only to ourselves, still remains.³⁵

ALL WHO ARE IN NEED - כל דכפין

The recitation of the Haggada begins with the recitation of the words...

“...הא לחמא עניא”

“This is the bread of my affliction...”

and continues with the passage of “כל דכפין” - “All who are in need”, wherein we invite all who are hungry to eat with us, and we affirm that although we are now enslaved, next year we will once again be free in the land of Israel.

This passage was added by the Rabbis during the period of the Babylonian exile, as is evidenced by the fact it is written in Aramaic – the language of Babylonia. The Babylonian exile occurred nearly a thousand years after the exodus from Egypt.

Why was it added? Why does the Haggada begin with this passage? Why begin with an invitation to the hungry to join us?

After all, the mitzvah to invite the poor to join us is not specific to Passover but is a mitzvah for every holiday? Why should this passage be the opening statement of the Haggada?

The fundamental distinction between the Jewish people and the other nations of the world is one of “חסד” - “kindness”. That was the unique strength of Abraham, the Patriarch, and it is on the basis of that trait that the Jewish people were founded.

The love of good that characterizes the Jew is not some extrinsic sensation that on occasion arises within us. Rather it is intrinsic to the nature of what the Jew represents and what he yearns for in life.

This feeling, of wanting to help, to do good for our fellow man, goes right to the core of what it means to be Jewish and is the foundation of Jewish character.

It is not surprising then, that having been freed to act in accord with their own conscience for the very first time after centuries of slavery... The very first sensation the Jews experienced

was the feeling that had been so long repressed by their enslavement...

The Haggada therefore begins with this passage that best expresses the essence of what it means to be a Jew - How can I help others: “כל דכפין ייתי ויכול” - “Let all who are hungry come and join with me...”³⁶

WE BEGIN WITH DEPRECATATION...

מתחיל בגנות ומסיים... בשבח

The Talmud in Tractate Pesachim says:³⁷

משנה: “...מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח ודורש (דברים כו) מ-ארמי אובד אבי עד שיגמור כל הפרשה כולה...” גמרא: “מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח: מאי בגנות? רב אמר מתחלה עובדי עבודת גלולים היו אבותינו [ושמואל] אמר עבדים היינו...”

“He begins with disrepute and concludes with praise; and then

he expounds from the section: 'A wandering Aramean was my father' until he completes the section... What is the "disrepute"? Rav said: 'our fathers were idol worshippers'; Samuel said: 'We were slaves...'

The Mishna in Pesachim notes that in answer to the four questions the father includes chapters from history that are perhaps best forgotten - our origins as pagan worshippers and our history of slavery in Egypt.

Why is that? Why is it necessary to include our earlier history on the night we celebrate our spiritual elevation as a people?

From a Torah perspective, there is nothing so debasing as pagan worship. Talmudic sages relate that human sacrifice was a routine part of idol worship and the closest of family members were not spared from slaughter at the altar.

Why begin the discussion of this celebratory night with mention of our ancient paganism or our slavery rather than our courage? Why not begin with how we shattered Egyptian idols right before their eyes? How we followed the commands of HaShem despite threat to life and

limb.

Is there any other people who present themselves in so searching and so self deprecating a way?

Rav Kook, may his memory be blessed, explains that the the Mishna above does not merely take note of a fact. Rather the Mishna intends for us to understand that embedded in the response of the father to his child lies a larger truth.

Life is frequented by experiences we consider negative, or unfortunate. Often we suffer indignity or humiliation and chafe at the insult. But those experiences may carry necessary lessons in a larger sense.

The slave suffers horrific disgrace and perhaps physical torment. But humility is one of the most difficult traits to acquire and the lessons learned by the slave may be just what is needed in the broader vision of life's goals.

The ability to resist self-gratification in order to fulfill Mitzvoth may be made possible because the Jew was once, in his past, forced to accept a master. If, as a result of that humiliation he is now able to achieve a grander, more spiritual life, then that humiliation must be seen in an

entirely different light - as a stepping stone to a better more fulfilled life.

All we do carries meaning. Even the history of our forefathers idol worship, in the final analysis, played a role in catapulting the Jewish people to become what they ultimately would be: the “עם הנבחר” - “the chosen people”.

The greatness of our accomplishments need to be seen as the product of all of the pain we experienced along the way. The “גנות”, the “ugly and painful”, is very much a part of the story of the “שבח”, of the “praise”.³⁸

I AM AS THOUGH SEVENTY YEARS OF AGE

The Talmud in Tractate Brachot states:³⁹

משנה: “מזכירין יציאת מצרים בלילות א”ר אלעזר בן עזריה הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה ולא זכיתי שתאמר יציאת מצרים בלילות עד שדרשה בן זומא: שנא' (דברים, טז) למען תזכור את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חיך ימי חיך הימים כל ימי חיך הלילות וחכ”א ימי חיך העוה”ז כל להביא לימות

“The exodus from Egypt is mentioned at night-time. Said R. Eleazar b. Azariah: behold I am as seventy years old and I have never been worthy to understand why the exodus from Egypt should be mentioned at night until Ben Zoma explained - For it says: ‘That you will remember the day when you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life.’ ‘The days of your life’ mean the days; but ‘all the days of your life’ includes nights. The sages, say: ‘the days of your life’ refers to this world; ‘all the days of your life’ refer to the days of the Messiah.”

The Mishna relates that there is a disagreement between Ben Zoma and the other Rabbinic sages as to whether the redemption from Egypt should only be cited during the morning prayers or whether it should be repeated during the evening recitation of the Shema.

How is this disagreement to be understood?

The lessons of faith learned from the experience of the exodus may be understood in two similar, yet different, veins.

On the one hand, Divine intervention and miraculous salvation arm us with trust in G-d in a cynical world and helps us resist the impulses of a dark and unenlightened time. This is the reason for the importance of its daily recitation during the morning Shema and why “redemption” serves as the preface to the “שמונה עשרה” - “Shemona Esray” prayer. But there is another purpose in its recitation.

Understanding the experience of the Jews in Egypt equips us with a faith and understanding of HaShem that can be so profound it need not be regularly reinforced with miraculous interventions that expose the existence of a Creator.

This greater faith takes G-d’s existence as a given that needs neither proof nor reinforcement. Existence itself is sufficient evidence to see the reality of HaShem.

It is this secondary purpose that Ben Zoma

suggests, is the reason for citing the story of the redemption during the evening Shema as well.

While the other Rabbinic sages disagreed with Ben Zoma, there was no disagreement regarding the night of Passover itself.

During the Seder, the other Rabbinic sages agreed that we relive the experience not just to strengthen our faith but also to prepare for a world where faith and understanding are much deeper and the existence of G-d a given. And that is why at the Seder, even the greatest of scholars must retell the story of the exodus.⁴⁰

THE UNUSUAL STRUCTURE OF THE SEDER

The Pesach Seder is unique in Jewish celebrations. The entire structure of the ceremony as well as its obviously didactical nature is built to engage both adults and children. To paraphrase Rav Eliyahu Dessler, may his memory be blessed:⁴¹

The Haggada was arranged by the great scholars of Israel to enable

us to fulfill the mitzvah of “והגדת לבנך” - “and you shall relate to your child”. It is therefore possible to learn from its structure educational methodology, as they understood it.

A TORAH APPROACH TO EDUCATION

For example, much of the Haggada is arranged in the form of question and answer and there is much effort expended to engage a child's curiosity so as to provoke questions. There is also the notion of making the experience concrete. Examples of this are when we raise the Matzoh, point to it and say: “this Matzoh” and similarly with the Marror.

Likewise, it is difficult to fully appreciate a large complex multi-dimensional experience, so in the “דיינו” - “It would have been enough for us” prayer, the experience of the exodus is separated into multiple individual elements. This is done so that each individual aspect and element of the Pesach experience may be independently understood and appreciated. Then, at its conclusion, all of the many aspects

of the experience are, a fortiori, pulled together to allow us to sense the greatness of the whole.

All of these are elements of a Torah approach to pedagogy.

Further, the Talmud states even if one is unmarried and has no children, he must ask the four questions of himself. Even when there are two Torah scholars they must ask themselves the questions.⁴²

What could be the point of asking yourself anything?

And how could identical questions be meaningful to both a child and an educated scholar?

In fact, the essence of the evening is to help us feel the experience of that night. And even if in our minds we may be scholars, in our hearts there is always still something of the child. And we need to reach both the children, and the child within us, to allow us to fully experience the meaning of the night of Pesach.⁴³

AN EMPHASIS ON CHILDREN

The emphasis on children is especially strong, as we have just seen. Rav Dessler, quoting the famed ethicist and Torah scholar Rav Israel Salanter, makes another point about children that is relevant here.

A child may be playing and imagining that a broken box is his ship at sea and that he is its captain as he sails the mighty ocean.

While thus playing, the child's imagination is vividly real to him. It is so real in fact, that Rav Israel Salanter commented, 'One who takes away a toy from a child is as though he sank the ship or destroyed the property of an adult'.

We must be as considerate of the child's fantasy as of an adult's reality. For a child, imagination is reality and ought to be respected.⁴³

RESPECT FOR A CHILD'S FEELINGS...

....And understanding them is part of education

An adult needs to care for the concerns and feelings of his children if he wants to succeed in passing to him the heritage of his ancestry. The love of a child for his parents is inextricably bound to the feeling that they want only what is best for him.⁴⁴

We may have the notion that the emphasis on children was somehow later added to the celebration of Pesach because of its importance and our wish to communicate that to our children. In point of fact, however, a clear reading of the Torah shows that children were at the very center of the Torah's design for the ceremony from its inception. As the Ritvah says, communicating the Passover experience was uniquely expressed by the Torah in four different ways so that every type of child could fully appreciate it.⁴⁵

This idea reveals an important insight into the centrality of children in the Passover ceremony.

FOUR QUESTIONS - MORE LESSONS ON EDUCATION

The structure of the Haggada is unusual in that it is designed as a didactic tool.

This has no parallel in the services of the other holidays.

Why is that?

Passover is the basis of Jewish experience. It established the Jewish nation as the people of one G-d, concerned with mankind, who rewards good and punishes evil.

It is therefore critical that this theme continue to be transmitted from father to his son, as it has been, for over three thousand years. But not all children think alike nor can they be taught the same way. Some children grasp ideas quickly while others require more patience and deliberation.

The Torah considers the instruction of Passover so vital that that it repeats this idea in four different ways to drive home that each child must be taught in the way he or she could best

understand it. The Passover experience must be passed on – and it is our responsibility to make it happen.⁴⁶

The Rabbis constructed the Seder as we have it to help instruct future generations of Jews with the central experience of Judaism.

Because of that, we can learn how they understood teaching to be most effective. We see in its construction the central role of dialogue – of question and answer and how important it is for a teacher to elicit questions in his students.⁴⁷

Only one interested enough to ask a question can be stimulated by an answer. The greatest truths will not move someone who is not searching for an answer.⁴⁸

We also see the necessity of bringing teaching to life. We don't just talk about Matzoh or Marmor – we point to them on the table and say “this Matzoh” and “this Marmor”.⁴⁹

“Judaism insists that HaShem reveals himself to the man who seeks after and thirsts for G-d. We want to initiate the child into the community

that seeks out the Almighty and yearns for His presence and illumination. We want the child to become a “Mevakesh HaShem” – a seeker of G-d.”⁵⁰

WE HAVE BEEN LIBERATED...

The Mishna in Pesachim says:

”בכל דור ודור חייב אדם לראות את עצמו
כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים, שנאמר. (שמות יג)
’והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה עשה
ה’ לי בצאתי ממצרים...”

“In each and every generation man
is responsible to feel as though
he himself was rescued from
Egypt...”⁵¹

Many commentaries understand this Mishna to mean we must relive the experience of our people and take it to heart. We need to feel the difference it has made in our own lives. Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchek, may his memory

be blessed, said that trying to feel that we as individuals have ourselves been set free from slavery is one of the most difficult mitzvot to keep on the night of Pesach.

Others, however, have an alternate reading of the Mishna. They read the Torah as meaning not that we need to feel as though we ourselves went out of Egypt, but rather that we must act as though we did.

This is the basis for the Sephardic custom of wrapping Matzoh up and tying it to the shoulder of a child while reciting the Ha Lachma Anya. Afterwards, the child knocks on the door. When the parent asks who is there, he answers, "Yisroel" - the Jewish nation. And where are you coming from? The child answers, "from Egypt". The parent asks, "Where are you going?" And the child responds again, "Jerusalem"...

THE CONCLUSION - דיין

How can we actually fathom the overwhelming national experience represented by Pesach? Because of its size, scope and complexity, it is almost too large and too dramatic to fully

comprehend.

The “דיינן” - “It would have been enough for us” prayer helps us to fathom what happened.

The creators of the Haggada broke all of the many aspects of the exodus experience into their component parts, and allow us to reflect on each one of them individually.

At its conclusion, the דיינן prayer then allows us to consider the extraordinary combination of all of these amazing experiences and what they truly represent as a shared national and spiritual experience.⁵²

THE DESERT CHALLENGE

A central theme of the forty-year period in the desert was the continual dependence of the Jews on miraculous intervention by HaShem for survival.

The notion that G-d would perform a miracle, time and time again, just for the sake of the “average” Jew was almost too much to accept.

Especially for a people who were nothing more than slaves only the shortest of times before.

As a result, it was assumed by many that the survival of the nation as a whole depended upon, and was a result of, the greatness of their leader Moshe. It was difficult for them to imagine that the extraordinary protection and care of G-d they experienced would be so beneficent as to regularly perform outright miracles, were it not for the continual and direct intervention of their leader Moshe.

Time and again, therefore, the Jews sinned not because of malice, but because of their fear that HaShem would not perform for them, yet again, a miracle to save them from disaster.

Even the gravest sin - that of the golden calf - was a desperate search for help when it appeared that Moshe was no longer there to assure the intervention of G-d. The constant goal and instruction of Moshe to his people was to help them understand that he was only an intermediary between the people of Israel and G-d. The miracles they witnessed were not because of him. They were for the sake of the Jewish people. The Jewish nation as a whole carried the inner spirituality that drove the

protection and guidance of HaShem.⁵³

This is as important a lesson today as it was then and is something we need to understand for ourselves and give over to our children.





The word “Haggada” literally means narrative or telling over. This is perhaps the best single word to choose to refer to the compilation of prayers and recitations the Jewish people have been using, from the time the nation was born, on the Seder night. Over the centuries

certain prayers and practices have been added to accentuate the experience, each community with their own custom, but the core has always remained the same. The essence of the Haggada is the aspects of מצה ומרור, פסח, - the Passover sacrifice, Unleavened bread and Bitter herbs.

These aspects and the deep meanings and messages they contain, kindle within us and our future generations the depth of our legacy and the importance of our mission as individuals and as a nation.

They are meant not merely as a means to review the history of our nation and the world, but to awaken and inspire us to our true place in it - both as individuals and as a nation.



APPENDIXES

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ACHARON - Later Commentator, refers to scholars living from around the 16th century and on

CHOMETZ - Leavened food item

HAGGADA - *lit.* “The Narrative”; Refers to the traditionally utilized set of prayers and recitations for the Passover evening.

HALACHA - *lit.* “the way”; Refers to binding Torah law.

HAKODESH - *lit.* “the holy”; Esteemed reference to exceptionally pious individuals.

HASHEM - G-d

MARROR - Bitter herbs

MATZOH - Unleavened bread

MISHNAH - Early Rabbinic texts which are the basis on which the Talmud is founded and expounds upon.

MITZRAYIM - Ancient Egypt

MONTH OF NISSAN - The first month in the Hebrew lunar based calendar

MOSHE - Moses

PAROAH - King of ancient Egypt

PESACH - Passover

RAV - Rabbi

RISHON - Early Commentator, refers to scholars who

lived between around the 11th and 15th century

SEDER - *lit.* “Order or arrangement”; refers to the complete order of the passover evening experience

SHEMA - Biblical passage containing fundamentals of belief (Deuteronomy 6:4). Recited as part of daily required prayer service.

SHEMONA ESRAH - *lit.* “Eighteen”; Also known as the Amidah, refers to the eighteen primary blessings of which this main prayer is comprised.

TALMUD - The understanding of the written Torah which was passed down for more than fifteen hundred years until it was put into written form almost 2000 years ago.

TEFILLIN - Phylacteries - set of religious artifacts constructed of leather containing Biblical passages and worn during morning prayers.

TORAH - The Bible as given to Moses by G-d on Mount Sinai

RABBINICAL COMMENTATORS -

Along with citations from Talmudic passages, other well respected Rabbinical sources are drawn upon as well to assist in the elucidation of concepts and ideas.

BAIS HALEVY - Written by Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (1820 - 1892)

CHASAM SOFER - The title of the famous work and familiar name of its author Rabbi Moshe Sofer (1762-1839)

RAMAH - Commentary on the Code of Jewish Law written by Rabbi Moshe Isserles (1520 - 1572)

RASHI - Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (1040 - 1105), also referred to as 'Rabban Shel Yisroel' Teacher of Israel due to his great stature

RAV ELIYAHU DESSLER - (1892 - 1953) Most well known for his famous work 'Michtav Me'Eliyahu' which has been translated into English under the title 'Strive for Truth'

RAV ISRAEL SALANTER - The familiar name of Rabbi Yisroel ben Ze'ev Wolf Lipkin (1810 - 1883), famously known for his spearheading the 'Mussar (Ethical) Movement'

RAV SHLOMO ZALMAN AUERBACH - (1910 - 1995) Renowned Rabbi, former head of Rabbinical College

Kol Torah and author of several well received Rabbinic works

RITVAH - Rav Yom Tov ben Avraham Asevilli, well known author of extensive commentary on the Talmud who lived during the 12th and early 13th centuries.

ROSH - Early commentary on the Talmud that was focused on practical Jewish law attributed to Rabbi Asher ben Yechiel who lived during the 13th and early 14th centuries.

SEFER HACHINUCH - A classical work of the Middle Ages that explains the basic elements of each Mitzvah of the Torah and attempts to find logical reasons for them. It was written anonymously but is generally attributed to the Re'ah, a 13th century Rishon. In the introduction he gives as his reason for writing the sefer so that his son would have something to occupy himself with on Shabbos afternoon, other than waste his time on the streets.

SHLA - The title of the famous work and familiar name of its author Rabbi Yeshaya Horowitz (1565 - 1630)

SHULCHAN ARUCH - Authoritative Code of Jewish Law, written by Rabbi Yosef Cairo (1488 - 1575)

NOTES

1. Talmud, Tractate Berachos 6b
2. (Sefer 'Ayin Panim LaTorah') Midrash ?
3. Shemos, Parshas Va'eira 8:16, 9:13
4. Talmud, Tractate Pesachim 108b
5. Sefer HaChinuch Parshas Bo, Mitzvah 16
6. Pirkei Avos 3:22
7. Shemos, Parshas Bo 13:8
8. Sefer HaChinuch Parshas Bo, Mitzvah 2
9. Talmud, Tractate Pesachim 116a
10. Sefer Moreh Nevuchim, Section 3 : Chapter 46
11. The Alshich, Parshas Bo, Chapter 13
12. Devarim, Parshas Re'eh 16:3
13. Commentary of the Shla Hakodesh on the Haggadah (כי בחפזון) (הא לחמא עניא); Seforno, Devarim 16:3
14. Sefer Hegyonei Halacha, מצה משום עוני או משום גאולה, pg. 80-81
15. Sefer Messilas Yesharim, Chapter 2
16. Bais Halevy, Drush 10; Yalkut, End of Parshas Beshalach
17. Ohr Hatzafun, Volume 1 (עבדות וחרות)
18. Rav Kook on the Haggadah pg. 9; Sefer Olas Ree'ah (חירותינו וביעור חמץ)
19. Sefer Michtav Me'Eliyahu, Volume 3 : pg. 289
20. Pirkei Avos 6:2
21. Sefer Meshech Chochmah, Parshas Bo, 12:21
22. Talmud, Tractate Berachos 6b
23. Divrei HaYamim 1, 17:21
24. Eliyahu Rabbah, 472:12; Rabbeinu Bachya, Shemos 12:23
25. S'forno, Parshas Va'eira 6:6
26. Bereishis Rabbah 88:5
27. Among the reasons given is that the egg is circular, symbolizing the circle of life's events which ultimately affect all of us.

28. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 476:2
29. Bais Halevy, Drush 4
30. Bereishis 15:13
31. Bais Halevy, *ibid.*
32. Sefer Meshech Chochmah, Parshas Va'eira 6:6
33. Mordechai, Tractate Pesachim 109a
34. Netziv, Shemos 6:6
35. Sefer Hachinuch, Mitzvah 21
36. Haggadah of Rav Kook
37. Talmud, Tractate Pesachim 116a
38. Haggadah of Rav Kook
39. Talmud, Tractate Brachot 12b
40. Haggadah of Rav Kook
41. Sefer Michtav Me'Eliyahu, Volume 4 pg. 249
42. Talmud, Tractate Pesachim 116a
43. Sefer Michtav Me'Eliyahu, Volume 1 pg. 99
44. S'forno, Parshas Beha'aloscha 11:12
45. Ritvah on Haggadah (כנגד ארבעה בנים דברה תורה)
46. Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchek, "The Nine Aspects of the Haggadah"
47. Sefer Michtav Me'Eliyahu, Volume 4 pg.249
48. Rabbeinu Yonah, Pirkei Avos 1:4
49. Talmud, Tractate Pesachim 116b
50. Yitzchak Mirsky, "Haggadah of Pesach" pg. 6
51. Rambam, Hilchos Chametz and Matzoh 7:6; Yitzchak Mirsky, *ibid.*
52. Sefer Michtav Me'Eliyahu, Volume 4 pg. 249
53. Sefer Meshech Chochmah, Parshas Ki Sisa 32:19, Parshas Shelach 13:30

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