

THE YESHIVAT OR CHAIM

# Haggadah

COMPANION



תש"ף • 2020



# Introduction

**Rabbi Dr. Seth Grauer**  
Rosh Yeshiva & Head of School

When one looks at the plague of darkness and the impact COVID-19 is having on all of us, one cannot help but see many similarities. Choshech was meant to create a sense of both loneliness and a feeling, a helplessness and the virus has at times created such thoughts and feelings among so many throughout the world.

Yet, if we look a bit more carefully at the plague of darkness, each and every makah was a punishing force that left the Egyptians crying for mercy from the sheer power and severity of the plague. How, then, was the plague of darkness really so bad?

To be sure – we are told by the Torah: “לֹא רָאוּ אִישׁ אֶת אָחִיו וְלֹא קָמוּ אִישׁ מִתַּחַת יְדוּ שְׁלֶשֶׁת יָמִים”.

We are told that the darkness was so intense that no Egyptian could even see his friend and the Egyptians couldn't move about – so please don't assume from my question that the plague was a picnic or an enjoyable experience for the mitzrim. But, amongst all the plagues, I would argue this plague was the easiest and least painful.

To a certain extent – Rashi and many of the other Rishonim even looked for reasons behind this plague to justify it. It is almost as if by itself the plague is not punishing

enough so our medieval commentators need to find outside justifications.

Rashi offers two such explanations and justifications:

1. First, Rashi tells us that there were many Jews who did not deserve to be freed with the Jewish people. These Jews were so assimilated within Egyptian culture that either H"KBH did not feel they should be redeemed and taken out of Egypt, or felt they had no hope of turning around and coming back to Judaism. Either way – they needed to die before the Jews left Egypt. If G-d had simply killed them, it would have been a terrible Chilul Hashem.
2. Second, Rashi says that the Jewish people were promised by G-d: וְאָחֲרַי כֵּן יֵצְאוּ בְּרַכְשׁ נְדוּלָה – That prophecy needed to be fulfilled and the plague of darkness provided the surveillance intelligence necessary to fulfill this promise by G-d.
3. The Medrash tells us (3rd answer) that the darkness was in order that the Egyptians would realize that the Jewish people had the opportunity to loot and steal from them, yet did not.

Yet, I return to my original question. How was the plague of darkness more difficult to bear and more punishing than all the other makot that preceded it?

Perhaps in reality, we could suggest that what was so intense and truly menacing about the plague of darkness was that the people of Egypt realized they were truly alone.

Rabbi Hirsch explains that the אפלה (darkness) experienced by the Egyptians had two aspects to it. First – it was obviously a darkness which precluded



physical movement, and second – the plague of darkness was a metaphysical spiritual darkness meant to compel and coerce introspection. Why the desire for introspection? Rabbi Hirsch writes that H"KBH wanted the Egyptians to ultimately repent – to regret their actions and the way they treated the Jewish people while they were in slavery.

Darkness is scary. Think of the ways in which the media through television and movies use darkness – the music often slows down and there is a feeling of extreme fright. All horror films are set in darkness for a reason. It increases the effect.

But, darkness is terrifying not just because one doesn't know what is coming around the dark corner, but because when one is in the dark – one is all alone. In many ways, this is why the current pandemic of COVID-19 has been so scary and so painful. The virus has forced us to feel alone in ways we find that frightening and scary.

However, amidst all of the panic and doom that has accompanied COVID-19, it is important to remember the ways in which we have not felt alone at all.

Our incredible community has responded by reaching out to the most vulnerable. I am proud that our students have volunteered their own time to deliver food and basic necessities to those that need it most. I am proud to be part of a Shul where

congregants have volunteered to make phone calls to shul members to check in and say hello. I am proud that communities across the world have facilitated more Zoom learning sessions than I can count and that we have harnessed social media and technology in a unique way to feel anything but alone.

At a time of such extreme physical and social distancing, we must continue to remember the Jewish nation's special mission – to be an אור לגוים – to continue to shed light unto others and to remind all those around us that we truly are not alone. Unlike the debilitating makat Choshech, the mitzrim experienced, we must not let this terrible plague defeat our very fabric of community but must channel this into a source of strength.

The return to prosperity – mentally, physically, and even economically – will no doubt be a long and challenging one. Though we may not see the light at the end of the tunnel just yet, we must remind ourselves that it is indeed coming and we hope and pray that this virus ends quickly.

May we all have the opportunity to return to our extended families, our shuls, our yeshivot and day schools, our communities and IYH celebrate many more yamim tovim together soon.





# Pesach: The Name

Mendy Kanofsky ('19)

**A** time when family and friends come together to feast, celebrate and remember the great Exodus. Normally, we refer to this holiday as Pesach. While Pesach is the most common name, the Torah has other names for it, like the Holiday of Matzot, The Spring Holiday and the Time of our redemption. Since we normally call it Pesach, let's examine the actual pesukim in the Torah and examine what the word actually means and what it may teach us.

The first place we find this word in the Torah is in Parshat Bo, right before the Jews leave Egypt. The Torah states "And it will come to pass if your children say to you, What is this service to you? You shall say, It is a Passover sacrifice to the Lord, for He passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, and He saved our houses. And the people kneeled and prostrated themselves" (Exodus 12:26-27). At first glance, it appears that the word Pesach means to pass over in the simple-physical sense. Seemingly, the Jewish Nation placed blood on their doorpost, and whenever Hashem would see the blood, he would skip over the home and leave the firstborn child unharmed.

A question arises; Could Hashem possibly have not known which houses contain Jews? We know that Hashem, not a

messenger or an angel, was responsible for the plague of the firstborns, how is it possible that Hashem needed a sign?

I think we can begin to understand an answer if we take a closer look at the details of the Mitzvah. The blood that was placed on the doorposts came from a very specific place. It had to come from the lamb that was slaughtered and eaten by each specific household. Lamb was the idol of the Egyptians. Therefore, by slaughtering it, eating it and smearing its blood on the doorpost, it actually served as a sign for those inside the household.

Additionally, Bnei Yisrael were on the 49th level of Tumah, which was so close to the tipping point or the point of no return. The process which included the placing of the blood on the doorposts, served as a wakeup call to our nation.

Pesach does not only refer to a menial act by Hashem, rather it is a deeper lesson for all of humanity.

Often times, we need help. We can't always accomplish everything on our own. Sometimes we need divine intervention, and sometimes we just need the help of our friends and family to wake us up. In our darkest times, we need others. We should never be afraid to turn to others for help or advice. We should seek help when we need it. It follows that we must definitely be cognizant around others, and help others to see the true light just like Hashem did.

When we celebrate this Pesach with joy and happiness and supporting our holy brothers and sisters in Am Yisrael, we will surely merit the coming of Mashiach and the true, complete and final redemption, speedily in our days.





## Seder Plate

**Mr. Efi Palvanov**  
Science Teacher

**W**hy is there an egg on the Seder plate? The classic answer is that the egg symbolizes the chagigah offering brought in the Temple. The reason it is symbolized specifically by an egg is because a whole egg is one of the foods traditionally consumed by mourners. (The round egg represents the circle of life.) In this case, the egg is a symbol of mourning for the destruction of the Temple, as we are unable to bring a chagigah offering. Intriguingly, Rav Sherira Gaon (d. 1006) wrote how it is customary to eat meat, fish, and eggs at the Pesach seder to represent the foods that will be eaten in the End of Days at the Feast of Mashiach. According to the Midrash, in that time the righteous will eat the fishy flesh of Leviathan, that great sea-dragon that Mashiach will slay; as well as the meat of the beast called Behemoth; and the egg of the legendary bird Ziz. So, eating an egg at the Pesach meal is symbolic of the future messianic feast that we await with the Final Redemption.



## Kadesh U'Rchatz: Sanctifying the Mundane

**Rabbi Noam Horowitz**  
Mashgiach Ruchani

**T**he seder is a series of activities on the first night of Pesach performed and discussed in a set order (seder). The fourteen items are all listed as separate things, except the first two are connected by a vav – the vav hachibur (connecting vav) – Kadesh and Rachatz, Karpas, Yachatz... Why is there a vav connecting kiddush and washing hands before karpas?

The sefer Divrei Shalom teaches that the word rachatz (washing) is related to a root meaning bitachon (trust, reliance), as we say in brich shemei: “bei ana rachitz” (on Him I rely). By washing my hands, without a bracha, before karpas, I am demonstrating my bitachon in Hashem! Kadesh – I sanctify myself, Urchatz – and I trust. By taking a simple washing of the hands (something that we may be more used to now than ever before) and doing it for a mitzvah, I elevate it into an act of bitachon. We declare at the beginning of the seder that things that seem little and insignificant can really matter and be sanctified.

In his explanation of the mitzvah to wash before a bread meal, the Mishna



Berurah gives two approaches. His second approach is just two words, connecting two concepts into one idea: nekiut u'kedusha (cleanliness and holiness). There again, we see the sanctification of a physical act of washing into the holy fulfillment of a mitzvah. Additionally, we see that we reflect our spiritual selves based on how we behave and carry ourselves physically.

Kadesh and Rachatz are connected by the vav because they are complimentary ideas of the seder and a microcosm of a Jew's existence. We are physical beings trying to live an elevated life; spiritual beings living in the material world. By living a life of kadesh urchatz, we show the interconnectedness between the physical and the spiritual, the holy and the mundane.



## The Hidden Meaning of the Karpas

**Coby Cohen**

Grade 11

When we think of the karpas portion of the seder, we usually do not think of it as the most relevant part. We usually only think of the karpas as a relation to the tears of Jewish people when they were slaves in Egypt or to the spring theme of the holiday. We do not see it to be as important as the matzah or the marror, or some of the more exciting events during the night. That being said, why is it one of the first rituals performed on the seder night? What is it that makes the karpas such an important part of the seder?

To find the true importance of the karpas, we have to travel back to the story of Yosef and the colourful jacket. When describing the jacket which Yaakov gave to his beloved son, Rashi says it was a “k’li mailat k’mo karpas” (“clothing of fine wool”). It is clear to see the connection between Yosef’s jacket and the karpas when looking at the wording of Rashi. Now, what place does Yosef’s jacket have in the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim and Pesach? Yaakov giving the colourful jacket to Yosef is what caused the whole chain reaction which led to the





Jews arriving in Egypt. If the brothers never became jealous of Yosef and his jacket, he would have never ended up in Egypt, and the Jews would most likely not have ended up settling there. The story of Yosef's jacket is what led to the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim.

We can also draw other connections between the karpas and Yosef's jacket. For example, the dipping of the karpas in salt water on the seder night relates to the brothers dipping Yosef's jacket in blood after they sell him and tell their father that he was brutally murdered by a wild animal. To further emphasize the connection between Yosef's jacket and the karpas, some medieval rabbis used to dip the karpas in red vinegar, to remind us of the dipping of Yosef's coat in the blood. However, over time, saltwater became the common liquid to dip the karpas in, as it reminds us of tears and slavery.

As with many other rituals and symbols on Pesach, the meaning behind the karpas is much deeper than we think. It is directly connected to the story of Yosef and his colourful jacket, which is what led to the Jews ending up in Egypt and the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim. This is why the karpas is so important, as, without it, there would be no seder at all.



## Yachatz

By Shalom Feuer

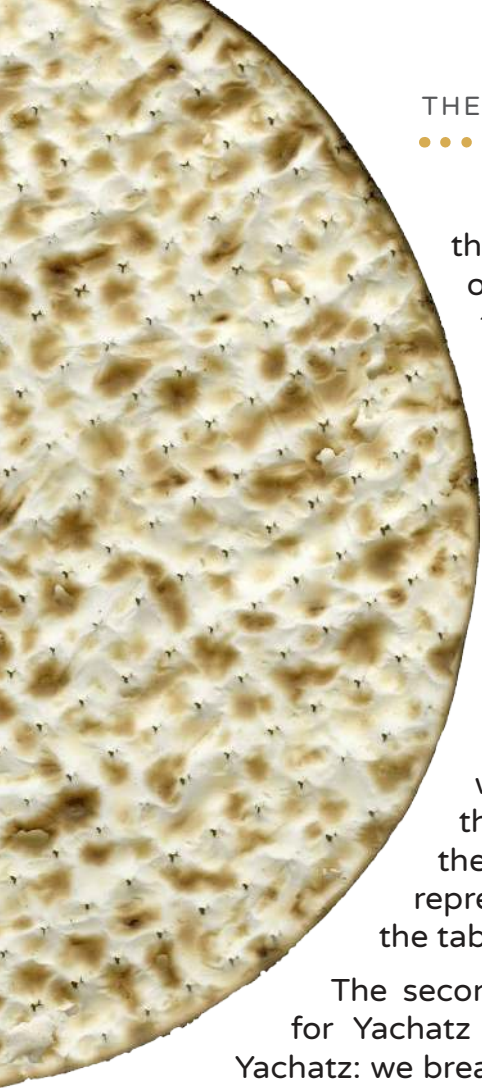
Grade 10

When it comes to the reasons we do Yachatz, the simple reason we give to children is that it represents the splitting of the sea, though the Maarechet Heidenheim gives two other beautiful reasons for Yachatz that I would like to discuss.

The first reason he gives is that Hashem told Avraham that Bnei Yisrael would be slaves for 400 years, though Bnei Yisrael were actually only slaves for 210 years and free for 190 years. To represent this divide of years, we split the matza unevenly and take the bigger piece of matza to hide for







the Afikoman in order to represent the 210 years of slavery while we take the smaller piece of matza to represent the 190 years Bnei Yisrael were free. To summarize, the division of Yachatz is a division of slavery and freedom and while we “hide away” the slavery, we leave the matza which represents freedom on the table.

The second reason he gives for Yachatz is on how we do Yachatz: we break one piece for the Afikoman and one piece to remain on the table to eat at Motzi-Matza. He explains that the bigger piece of matza represents the World to Come as it is hidden from us just as we hide the Afikoman. In contrast, the smaller piece represents the current world because we take the matza and eat it during Motzi-Matza, it is with us and visible on the table throughout the whole seder. The bigger piece is the piece for Afikoman because the reward of the World to Come is much bigger than this world.

In my opinion, a big question arises from these opinions. How can it be that the bigger piece of Yachatz matza represents

such polar opposite things: slavery and the World to Come? While the World to Come is about reward, slavery is about punishment!

The answer to this question is on the basis of the nature of the Pesach Seder. We split the matza and we are now going into Magid, describing the story of Pesach. During Magid, we say one of my favourite lines from the Haggadah: “In every generation, a person must look at himself as if he went out of Egypt.” Magid is not just a third-person experience, it’s a first-person experience. Therefore when we start Magid, we need to ground ourselves and realize that our present selves are in the past. For this reason, we hide away the matza that represents the World to Come and slavery. Now, in our current telling of the story of Pesach, we are in the present world as free men looking into the past as free men. Therefore, we hide away our notions of the World to Come in order to be present. Also, we hide away slavery because “we went out of Egypt”. We need the state of mind that we are the same free men that our forefathers were when they left Egypt. Therefore, we hide away all notions of slavery in order to tell the story of Pesach as free men. Before you go into Magid, ground yourself and realize you are a free person in this world just as your forefathers were in Egypt. That is the message of Yachatz; the fundamental divide between freedom and slavery and this world and the World to Come in order to set the mood for Magid through the splitting of the matza.





## What in Reality is Different About Pesach?

Avishai Tebeka

Grade 10

Every Pesach Seder, every Hagada around the world, contains the **מה נשתנה** which is the passage that the youngest member of the family recites every Pesach. Although this may seem like a passage that is simply understood, there are many secret teachings that lay in this passage. In order to understand the depth of this passage, we need to ask what **מה נשתנה** really means. Why is the passage out of order? Why does the youngest one need to say it? When answering these questions we can then finally analyze the message that Hashem may be trying to tell us.

The song begins with the child asking **מה** (what) **נשתנה** (changed/is different). Expressing that tonight the **מה** is **נשתנה** (the 'what' is different). What does this mean? **מה** represents an idea called **בטול**, self nullification. Throughout the year we are egoistic, we are selfish, we are self-centred, but tonight is different, tonight the **מה** (the ego, the selfishness) is different because it encompasses another level of kedusha. On Pesach, Jews around the world are fully connected to Hakadosh

Baruch Hu, especially the person saying **מה נשתנה**, as we will see later on. But how does this really connect us to Hashem and how can we ensure that we connect in the right way?

The Zohar says that on the Seder night, Hashem watches Bnei Yisrael. This is when Hashem's presence is redeemed from its mundane setting (the **מה** is enlightened), and this is done with Hashem's name (which can also be His Shechina) which is spelled out yud, heh, vav, heh. When enlightened, the youngest person in the family asks **מה נשתנה**, but the Zohar says something amazing here. How is **מה** connected to Hakadosh Baruch Hu and how is it enlightened by His Shechina? If one spells out yud, heh, vav, heh in a complete form (e.g yud = yud + vav + dalet and so on), then you get a numerical letter value of 45, which equals **מה**. Meaning the night of Pesach the **מה** is enlightened/illuminated and Hashem's name is complete. When it is complete, only then may you ask what's different, because you have now reached that level of kedusha.

To further this discussion we need to ask why put **מה נשתנה** out of order, why would the sages place it that way? As we know there are four levels to understand the Torah: Peshat, Remez, Drash, and Sod. Only the last and deepest level of Sod will be discussed, which is Kabbalah, or secrets of the Torah. The Kabbalah says that these four questions allude to the four higher spiritual worlds. Chassidus explains this statement by asking, what is the world of Atzilut about (the world of emanation)? What is different about this night? It is that we are able to leave all three spiritual realms/worlds with tiny bits of evil and be one with Hashem, and totally connected



to him. How could that be? When Bnei Israel were in Egypt, they were on the 49th level of tumah, and therefore Hashem had to take us by himself with no angel or messenger, in order to not harm them. This relates to every seder Pesach when going to the level of Atzilut, and there is no evil because Hashem is taking us out of our mundane exile.

Finally, the last question we need to ask is why does the youngest recite נמה נשתנה? Hashem says that Israel is like His child, and Hashem loves his children. Love is based on the actions of children, but the love to a baby is unlimited and is beyond anything a person can imagine. Therefore, the youngest family member recites it as we want to arouse the inner chambers of Hashem since it is unlimited love. Even if a person who doesn't act in the most religious way needs to say it in order to arouse the love of Hashem. Therefore, the message that Hashem may be telling us is that although we are currently in the longest exile, Hashem is giving us more chances than ever before to connect to Him. Hashem is asking us to say נמה נשתנה in order to connect to Him, which is the most important achievement for a Jew in this world.



## Avadim Hayinu: A Cryptic Response

**Chaim Straus**

Grade 10

**A**t this point of the Pesach Seder, we have just heard the children of the family sing oh so sweetly the Mah Nishtana, the four questions, and it is now time to respond. Our response to the (fairly valid) questions of our children, however, is a very cryptic one. We respond to them:

"עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים, ויוציאנו ה' אלהינו  
משם ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה."

"We were slaves to Pharaoh in the land of Egypt. And the Lord, our God, took us out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched forearm." (Sefaria)

How does this answer our children's questions? We have just been asked four





questions based mostly on the procedural manner of this special night, and we answer it with a phrase that does not even begin to answer the questions! “We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt...” Very well, but why does that make this night any different? Why do we have to break the norm, you can say, and make the procedure of this meal so different from even other major Yamim Tovim, even the other Shalosh Regalim?!

While there are many commentaries that discuss this, I would like to highlight the words of Rabbi Eliyahu ben Harush, the author of the כּוּס אַלִיָּהוּ, a commentary on the Pesach Haggadah. He points out that our opening statement, עֲבָדִים הֵיינוּ, is comprised of two different verses, Devarim 6:21 (...עֲבָדִים הֵיינוּ לַפֶּרֶעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם...) and Devarim 5:15 (...וַיֹּצֵאֲךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִשֵּׁם בֵּית...). The first verse is to fulfill the commandment of telling the story of the Exodus (one which begins with slavery and ends with kingship). The second verse is not only praise of Hashem, but it is also our answer to the four questions posed by our children. He teaches that in this phrase, there are four answers, one for each question. I would like to go over these parts, and explain how each one answers a question.

### 1) וַיֹּצִיאֵנוּ ה'

This statement answers the third question, which is why tonight, during the Seder, we dip twice. The two dippings are representing the two blessings that Hashem granted the nation of Israel in Egypt – 1, that they were brought from slavery to freedom; and 2, that Hashem himself was the one who redeemed us. We allude to these two

blessings in the words of וַיֹּצִיאֵנוּ, And [He] took us out, ה', Hashem.

### 2) אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִשֵּׁם

This statement answers the first question, which is why tonight, during the Seder, we eat Matzah. When the nation of Israel were slaves in Egypt, they were not much better than their masters – like them, they would worship false gods. As they were leaving Egypt, they reaffirmed their faith in Hashem and repented their sinful past. We can find a reference to this in Shemot 12:21, which the Chachamim interpret to mean to draw yourselves away from idolatry and bring a sacrificial lamb. We know that chametz is a symbol for the evil of idolatry, while Matzah is the symbol of holiness. Therefore, when the nation of Israel would eat their Matzah, they were affirming that their God, Elokeinu, had never ceased to be their God, and that they were rejecting idolatry. This is the reason that we only eat Matzah on Pesach, as it is an affirmation of our acceptance of God and our total rejection of idolatry.

### 3) בֵּית חֲזָקָה

This statement answers the second question, which is why we eat the Maror, the bitter herbs. It is a reference to the mightiest of the plagues, the death of the firstborn. This plague was a main party to the escape from bondage of the nation of Israel. As a result of this plague, אֵין בַּיִת אֲשֶׁר, – there was no house in which at least one person was not dead. There was bitterness and sorrow in each and every Egyptain household. We eat the Maror as a reminder of the pain we caused the Egyptians through the hand of Hashem.





The כוס אליהו also says that a different explanation is given later in the Haggadah, and both are correct.

#### ובזרוע נטויה 4)

This statement answers the fourth and last question, which is why we are reclining as we eat the Seder. Due to the fact that Hashem took us out of Egypt “בְּזֶרַע נְטוּיָה”, “with an outstretched arm”, with no hint of fear or anxiety, we lean at our Seder as a symbol of our comfort and leisure.

I hope that I have been able to convey at least a part of what the Rabbi wrote. In this tumultuous time, I would like to wish everyone a heartfelt “Chag Sameach!”, and the hopes that the phrase we recite at the end of the Seder will this year be true.

לשנה הבאה בירושלים הבנויה!



## B'chol Dor VaDor

**Mr. Jonathan Parker**  
Assistant Principal

**T**he הגדה tells us that “בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיִּיב”, “אָדָם לְרֹאוֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יֹצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם”, “In each and every generation, a person is obligated to see himself as if he left Egypt.” COVID-19 aside, we live in a time of unparalleled prosperity and opportunity for Jews. How does one see himself as personally having been a slave 1000 years ago, to a monarchy long since fallen, giving personal gratitude to G-d for miracles that





he never personally experienced? The הגדה cites 13:8 from שְׁמוֹת as evidence that we must see ourselves as slaves seeking freedom, and on this verse, the Or HaChaim specifies that, even though the verse tells us to speak these lines to our son, even alone on the night of the Seder we must view ourselves as slaves departing Egypt! What is the essence and importance of this mitzvah?

Interestingly, when he codified this mitzvah in his משנה תורה, the Rambam changed the phrasing to “ובכל דור ודור חייב אדם להראות” “את עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים”; the הגדה uses the word “לראות”, so why change it? להראות, the Rambam’s word, tells us that the participants in the Seder must do more than just “see” themselves as slaves; Jews during Pesach must demonstrate, must truly believe that they were slaves whose freedom came from Hashem. In his commentary on the הגדה, Rav Yosef Tzvi Rimon tells us that “the departure from Egypt is not history. The Exodus is happening now, for every one of us. We need to feel and behave as though right now we’re leaving Egypt... We must live the moments, sense them, and thereby bring about changes in the direction of our lives.”<sup>1</sup> According to Rav Rimon, the halachic imperative the Rambam describes is to take the feelings and central motifs of the הגדה and use them as catalysts to make positive changes to our lives. “בְּכָל־דֹּר וְדֹר חַיִּב אָדָם לְרַאוֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם” is a call to action, not a direction in a play.

Knowing this, what are we to do? As mentioned above, while modern Jews may find it difficult to empathize with a slave, we are better positioned than ever to help

those in need and make positive changes to our world. This section of the הגדה ends by reminding us that “וְאוֹתָנוּ הוֹצִיא מִשָּׁם, לְמַעַן הָבִיא אוֹתָנוּ, לְתֵת לָנוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם”, “And He took us out from there, in order to bring us in, to give us the land which He swore unto our fathers”. In order to act on the Rambam’s imperative, we need to emulate the Divine actions that brought us where we are today. By identifying those in need, we can bring them to a better life and help to fulfil the emotional journey described in the הגדה. Think about it this way – what needs would a newly-freed slave have? What can we, in the modern-day, do to make sure nobody in our society still has those needs unmet?



## V’hi She’amda

Rabbi Chaim Kowalsky  
Shaliach

In every office of the Israeli Air-Force today, you’ll find one of the most amazing pictures you’ll ever see: three Israeli F15 with a big star of David flying over Auschwitz.

Every nation has a mission in the world, and since our mission is to בתקן עולם במלכות ש-י, to bring God’s light to the world, no matter what we go through, God will make sure that we stay. He, כביכול, needs us since

<sup>1</sup> Translation is my own. I apologize if it is not literal and lacks the poetry of Rav Rimon’s Hebrew.

he is not a God if we are not an existence (רמב"ם אגרת תימון).

This is an essential part of the Seder night – God took us out of Egypt, because he, כביכול, needs us. He needs us as a nation and he needs each and every one of us to be an amazing part of our amazing nation.

Also on individual level, we should remember that even though לא אחד בלבד, עומד עלינו לכלותנו, we could and should rise to be a part of bringing God's – עם ישראל – light to the world עד תיקון עולם במלכות ש-ד!



## Spilling the Wine

Rabbi Effie Kleinberg ('05)

The poskim (Rema, Orach Chaim 473:7) quote the custom to spill wine from one's cup at the junctures of detzach, adash, beachav and during the mentioning of each of the ten plagues. This custom is rooted in a desire to empathize with the Egyptian loss of life; at the same time in which we rejoice in our redemption from the brutal Egyptian slavery, we tinge that joy with a symbolic display of sadness over the deaths of the Egyptian citizens and soldiers during the plagues. This practice is a curious one given that the very same cup we use to toast to our freedom, sing

hallel, and praise God for our salvation and victory over the tyrant Pharaoh and his cruel taskmasters, this cup is also used to evoke emotions of pain and suffering over the loss of life. Yet, in the Jewish experience, we often find ourselves using the same object or moment in time to experience two opposing emotions. At the pinnacle of the chuppah experience, with the joy and ecstasy of a new couple embarking on their new journey together, a glass is broken to tinge that happiness with the sadness over the Temple which has yet to be restored. Even on Tisha B'Av, the saddest day on the Jewish calendar, we do not recite the mournful daily prayer of tachanun, as one commentary explains, due to the fact that Mashiach is meant to be born on this day, tinging our sadness with hope and longing. Jews are experts at oscillating between emotions and experiences that are at odds with one another, and perhaps there is some sense to these behaviors. We are a people that seeks deep religious experiences, and to create these, we introduce complexity, because the complexity enables us to more fully experience that which we desire to feel. On Pesach, to truly feel the joy of our redemption, we must engage in the full story, that there was a loss of life on the Egyptian side and we recognize that this was part of our redemption and salvation. We do not run away from this fact, and we are better because of it, we are a more mature people because we confront the complexities of our history, the darker sides of our national behavior, and to this we are entitled to toast and sing hallel!



# Makkas Dam: A Lesson in Gratitude

By Shaul Harris ('17)

The Midrash teaches us that the Esser Makkos functioned Middah K'neged middah. Each Makah addressed a specific aspect of the Mitzrim's cruelty. By the Makah of Dam we see that because the Mitzrim attempted to prevent Jewish procreation by prohibiting Bnei Yisrael from purifying themselves from Niddah blood. In addition to this, the Mitzrim used to serve the Nile River as Avodah Zara so therefore Hashem decided to first strike their diety and only afterwards struck them. There is a very fascinating Rashi which mentions the procedure to summon Makka Dam, It states in Passuk Yud Tes in Parshas Vaeira, Hashem said to Moses "say to aaron, take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt: over their rivers, over their canals, etc." Rashi says the reason Hashem told Moshe to say to Aaron is because the river protected Moshe when he was cast into it, therefore it was not hit through his hand, neither at the plague of blood or by the plague of frogs but it was hit through the hands of Aaron. This is a tremendous insight into how we have to view Hakaros Hatov. There was such Hakaros Hatov that even to a river

which is an inanimate object we see there is an importance to show appreciation towards it and treat it with proper respect. It is known that Moshe was the humblest man to ever live and displayed great Anivus towards everything; which was what made him so great. I believe there is a great paralel between Hakaros Hatov and Anivus as the more one notices and shows gratitude to what others do for them, the more they will be humble and live a more fulfilling life as a whole. But what is the Jewish perspective on gratitude? The Jewish perspective is to be grateful when things are going your way but as well when things are not going as planned. We need to believe that everything is done for the best and even if we do not see the light and clarity right away, we need to be thankful that Hashem is looking out for us and we are part of his major plan. A Rebbi of mine in Yeshiva Mevaseret Tzion used to say a line that hits this point exactly. He said that people say that Goyim cannot experience happiness but that is not true they can experience happiness, but rather what makes us different to them is that they are only happy when things are going well for them but the moment something takes a turn for the worse they become unhappy again as they cannot see the deeper meaning. Us Yidden have the ability to be happy even in situations where seemingly it is not for the best, but we are still able to see the Yad Hashem which brings back our happiness. There is a major insight into Bein Adam Lechavero we can derive from this Rashi as well. The Midrash states that this teaches us an important ethical lesson; One must never harm anything that had once been beneficial to him.

A basic Kal Vachomer can be made from this as if one should not harm an inanimate



object which he derived benefit from, Kal Vachomer he should not harm a human which he derived benefit from. The human brain works in a way that it is a lot easier to be upset at someone who may of harmed you than to be happy at someone who performed a favor or chesed for you. We have to learn to appreciate what everyone around us does, and to remember in a time where you may be upset at someone to remember all the goodness that they have also displayed and being an all-around good character. During my yeshiva years in Israel, I participated in a Tefilla shiur which was life changing. One of our projects as part of the shiur was to recite the Morning Berachos as they used to by saying the Bracha in the exact moment it happens in one's morning routine. For example, to say the Bracha of Pokeach Ivrim as we open our eyes and Hamechin Metzadei Gaver when we take our first steps after walking each morning, and so on for all the Brachos. This was a great insight into Hakaraos Hatov as how often do we think about everything we have and just the fact that we won the lottery by being born Yidden. May we take the lessons of Hakaras Hatov we learn by Makah Dam and apply it to increase our Bein Adam Lemakom and Bein Adam Lechaveiro in the utmost fashion, and through this may we be zocheh to see the Binyan Beis Hamikdash Shlishi Bimhayra Beyamenu Amen.



## Abbreviated Plagues

**Mr. Efi Palvanov**  
Science Teacher

**R**av Shimshon of Ostropoli (d. 1648), based on the teachings of the Arizal, wrote how the gematria of the Ten Plagues abbreviation דצ"ך עד"ש באח"ב is 501. This is equal to the name of the main angel of retribution, called תק"א. Rav Shimshon also points out that 501 is the value of אשר, as in את אשר התעללתי במצרים, and also found within God's Name of Redemption, אהיה אשר אהיה. The Midrash (Shemot Rabbah 8:3) adds that Moshe's staff was made of pure sapphire, and had the letters דצ"ך עד"ש באח"ב engraved upon it.







## Attitude of Gratitude

**Mrs. Miriam Klein**  
Director of Educational Support

It is almost impossible to imagine the Seder night without the singing of Dayeinu. In our home this song is sung by even the littlest of participants. If one does not know the song in its entirety, they still chime in enthusiastically at the chorus.

For us, Dayeinu is a centerpiece of the Haggadah and a highlight of Seder experience. The tune is catchy, but the words and themes are somewhat strange. Rabbi Efreim Goldberg explains, we say “Enough” but really, would each action on its own have been enough? Had you taken us from Egypt but not split the sea, dayenu. Really, would it have been enough? If you had taken us to Har Sinai but not given us the Torah, dayenu, it would have been enough. Really, don’t we talk about how the Torah is the air that we breathe, indispensable to our lives and to our very existence? Had He given us the Torah but not brought us into Israel it would have been enough. Really? Wasn’t Israel created before the world because it, the Jewish people and Torah are the three pillars upon which the world is built?

What do you mean dayenu – it would have been enough? We know it would not have

been enough! We, as a nation, needed each event and miracle that G-d gave us.

Understanding what Dayeinu is really all about and why it is a centerpiece of our Seder requires us to look at the poem in a different manner. One must not examine each line, but rather look at it as a whole.

Explains Rabbi Nachman Cohen, Dayeinu is our reflecting on our history and repairing the lack of gratitude we exhibited in the past. Seder night we look back on our national history, we review our story and we identify those moments, those gifts from G-d that we failed to say thank you for. We rectify and repair our ingratitude and thanklessness through the years by saying Dayeinu now.

Freedom demands gratitude. It is an important trait for everyone to recognize actions that have been done for them and that without help from others one could not be in the place they are today. If you do not recognize the help of others then you are not freed of your self-absorbed way of life. Gratitude is a byproduct of true freedom.

Everyday actions may be even more important than big efforts, researchers say. “Express gratitude to your spouse, thank your kids,” Hofstra’s Dr. Froh says. “Parents say, ‘Why should I thank them for doing something they should do, like clean their room?’ By reinforcing this, kids will internalize the idea, and do it on their own.”

On the night of Pesach, when we relive the experience of becoming a people and celebrate our national birth we repair the ingratitude of our past with the recognition that we are unworthy and dayeinu, all that G-d did for us was beyond what we deserved.



Dayeinu teaches that Pesach is not just a time to learn the attitude of gratitude and how to say thank you for the present. Pesach reminds us that to set ourselves free we need to look back at our lives and identify those who made all the difference and whom we neglected to thank. Pesach pushes us to make a tikkun, to repair the ingratitude and reach out to say thank you.

Seder night is an incredible opportunity to model gratitude for our children, grandchildren and all those at the Seder table. As you read Dayenu, take a look around the table, and thank those that made Pesach happen. Whether it be the cleaning, the cooking, the menu planning, the financial support, the individuals that came from out of town to be at the seder, and all those around who help make the seder a more enjoyable experience. Parents: thank your children and children: thank your parents.

We all have family, friends, mentors and neighbours, whose efforts are responsible for who we are today. Freedom means knowing that we didn't get here on our own. This Pesach, let's sing our own personal dayeinu and fix our ingratitude by saying thank you to those around us.



## Marror

Yochanan Goldstein '19

Throughout Jewish history, and as we specifically recount during the holiday of Pesach,

we have suffered and been subsequently redeemed by Hashem. At this point in the seder, we

have the tradition to eat the marror – a tangible symbol representing the bitterness and

hardship our nation experienced in the hands of the Egyptians. As we suffer through the COVID-19 outbreak, chaos has evolved throughout the nations and the entire world has effectively shut down. In a matter of weeks, the world's population has come together and shared in the unified goal of eradicating this mysterious virus once and for all. Just like in the story of Pesach, we must recognize Hashem's power and understand that sometimes, we humans alone are incapable of putting an end to something such as incessant bitter slavery or an overpowering pandemic.

While it is true that we can do our very best to practice “social distancing”, as well as personal hygiene and self-isolation, we must at the same time rely on Hashem and recognize His part in the picture.





It is sometimes only after we have been redeemed from a difficult situation that we have the clarity to realize that even the hardships were exactly what we needed at the time. As we are reminded of our bitter past, we should look to the future and not lose sight of the fact that, at the end of the day, Hashem makes everything happen for a reason. May we have the zchut to see exactly what Hashem wants from us with regards to the coronavirus and have our tefillot answered soon.



## Coronavirus and L'shana HaBa'ah B'Yerushalayim

**Avraham Yosef Adler**

Grade 11

**T**oday, we don't know exactly what the Ribono Shel Olam wants from us, but the Ribono Shel Olam wants us to become better, that's for sure. Hashem gives us a Torah so that we should become better so

that we should know how to behave. The greatest gift the Ribono Shel Olam gave to Klal Yisroel is called Klal Yisroel because we all have one aim, we all want to get closer to HaKodesh Baruch Hu. This statement was made by HaGaon HaRav Shmuel Kamenetsky, shlita, regarding Coronavirus.

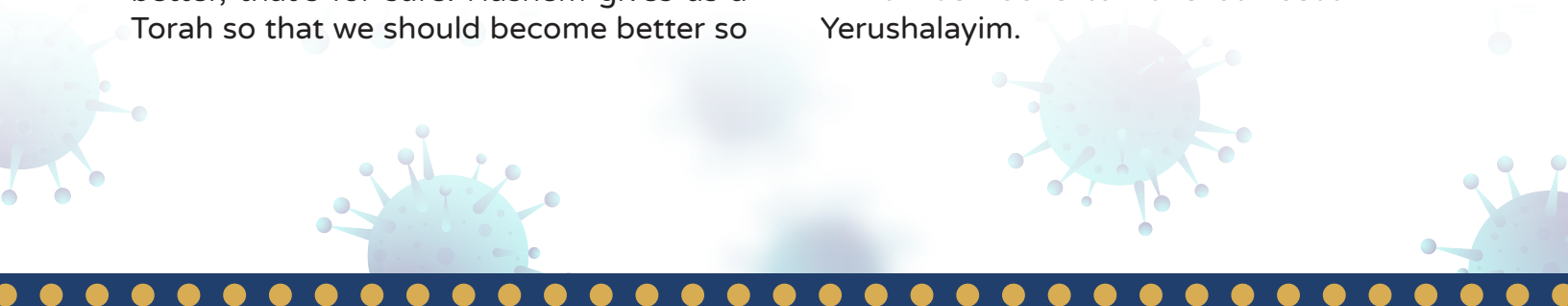
What does Coronavirus mean for the world? It could mean many things.

Maybe Hashem is trying to show us that Hashem doesn't need an atomic bomb, guns, tanks, or any weapons to destroy the world. A virus that is so small it's not even visible to the human eye can do the trick. It could also mean that Moshiach is coming. Moshiach, the one who will bring every Jew, whether frum or not frum back to Hashem, he won't forget anyone, but how?

Every year at the seder we say L'shana haba'ah b'yerushalayim, we ask for Hashem to give us the zechus that we may have the seder in Yerushalayim next year. How do we get there though?

We have to bring Moshiach, and we do this by doing mitzvos, learning Torah, doing chesed, davening, and many other things. However, it must be done in the way that Hashem wants it to be done.

It means going to a minyan every day, learning Torah in your free time, being a good Jew, and trying to reach the level of righteousness. I hope that Moshiach will come b'maherah b'yameinu and we will all be zoche to have our sedarim in Yerushalayim.





## The Lamb Overlooked

**Dovid Kark**

Grade 9

On the surface, Chad Gadya seems like a very basic, almost childish song. Why then do we sing this simple song at the Seder, no less? The simple answer is that this song is really a long Mashal all about reward and punishment, which is very fitting to sing after discussing the Shibud that the Mitzri'im put us through, and the Makkos they received in turn. Just as Hashem punished the Mitzri'im oppressors then, he will punish those who have wronged Klal Yisrael in the future, fitting in with the Geulah theme of the Seder. Another explanation is that the song is meant to mock Avodah Zarah. Similar with Avraham Avinu's famous debate with Nimrod, this is a conversation between the Jews and the Mitzri'im, starting with the god of the Mitzri'im, the sheep. Lastly, the Vilna Gaon says this song is actually an overview of Jewish history. It starts with saying "Chad Gadya" twice, hinting to the two goats Yaakov brought to Yitzchak on Pesach (Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer 32). It then moves on to the cat, which represents the Shvatim's jealousy when they sold Yosef. It is followed by the dog, which represents Pharaoh, who is hit by a stick, Moshe's staff. Afterwards was Matan Torah and

the awaited entry into Eretz Yisrael, where the Beis Hamikdash was built. Eventually, though, it was burnt down by fire, the next character in Chad Gadya. The water, which follows, represents the Torah learning in Galus Bavel, which led to the return to Eretz Yisrael and rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash. After 420 years, the ox of Malchus Edom destroyed the Beis Hamikdash. In the future, Mashiach Ben Yosef, represented by the Shochet, will be involved in the final Galus, but he will die. However, Hashem will ultimately slaughter the Malach Hamaves, and the Geulah will come. We can now see that the Geulas Mitzrayim is not just an isolated event, but rather an integral piece of the bigger picture, which ultimately leads to the coming of Mashiach, Bimheira Biyameinu.

*Adapted from The March of Centuries - From Mitzrayim to Moshiach by Rabbi Beinish Ginsburg*





