

THE ULPANAT OROT

# Haggadah

COMPANION



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## The Wicked Son

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Every year on Pesach I am bothered by the treatment that we give to the wicked son. As an educator this seems like a very poor system of education. The wicked son comes to the Seder with a question and rather than answer his question we smack him in the teeth and tell him that if he would have been in Egypt, he would not have made it out alive. How is this in any way productive? Pesach is the holiday where we are supposed to encourage questions from our children and when our child comes to the Seder with a question, we give him this harsh treatment.

To better understand this response, it is important to analyze what it means to tell him that “he would not have been redeemed had he been in Egypt.” Who exactly was not redeemed. According to Rashi only one-fifth of the Jews who were in Egypt made it out alive. Who exactly made it out. The Zohar teaches us that all the Jews in Mitzrayim were virtually unrecognizable from the Egyptians. Both didn’t keep Shabbos, kosher or any real system of morals. The only thing that distinguished the Jewish People was their language, their names and their clothing. Otherwise they were exactly like the Egyptians.

The Meshech Chochma writes that herein lies the answer as to who was redeemed. The Jews who felt “culturally” Jewish, although they did not necessarily observe Halacha or keep Torah and Mitzvos, they

felt a connection to the Jewish People. Although this is not nearly enough, there was some redeemable quality to these Jews that Hashem felt was worthy of their redemption.

When the Rasha comes to our Seder and “removes” himself from being a part of the Jewish People, he is telling his parents that he does not feel a connection to the Jewish People. When we “smack him in the teeth,” what we are really doing is shutting the Rasha up and explaining to him, that what made the Jewish People worthy of redemption was the fact that they felt a connection to the Jewish People.

More importantly, we are expressing to the Rasha that if he hopes to ever see redemption or salvation, he better introspect and figure out his place in the Jewish People. The Midrash cited by Rashi that says that only one-fifth of the Jewish People will leave Egypt, also says that at the time of Mashiach the vast majority of Jews will not be redeemed and will not get to go to Israel. We are not threatening the Rasha, we are simply pleading with him to connect to the Jewish People in some way, shape or form. Otherwise, when the call comes for the ultimate redemption, he will not be included.

May we all be zoche to the ultimate geulah where all Jews will feel a part of the Jewish People and merit to offer our Korban Pesach at the Beit Hamikdash.

Chag Kasher Vesameach!



# Hallel

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Every Rosh Chodesh in shul we stand up after **E**shmone asrey and sing Hallel before we finish our davening during Shacharit every month. While we are reading the Haggadah on Pesach we also read Hallel. To most people, it is just another part of the Haggadah that they speed through and read in order to finish faster. But if you take a step back and try to analyze this seemingly random placement of Hallel, many questions can be asked.

The first question that you can come up with is why are we saying Hallel during the Seder, it is most commonly said not during the mitzvot of a holiday but during davening. But we do say Hallel during davening at shul before we start the Seder, so then why are we saying it twice? Both in shul before the Seder and during the Seder we say it also. Another question that we can ask is whenever Hallel is being said at any time in davening we stand, but during the Seder, we sit for the entirety of the Hallel portion. This does not seem to make any sense at first glance.

The Hallel that we say during the Seder is in fact different than the one we say on Rosh Chodesh, and even a few hours before. This Hallel is called Hallel Hagadol, this is a much longer Hallel than the normal Hallel and we don't say this Hallel another time. It is longer and allows us to truly mean what we are reading and give us proper thanks to Hashem for all the miracles that he performed for us and for saving us from being a slave.

During the times of the Beit Hamikdash every time a Korban was being eaten, during the meal they would say Hallel after it was finished being eaten. For all of the Seders, we do different actions that will remind us of the different actions that they did during the times of the Beit Hamikdash so that we can mimic and commemorate them. We also want to prepare ourselves for Mashiach since we will already know what we are supposed to do during the different chagim. During the Seder, the meal portion of the night is meant to act like the Korban that we give every Pesach, and we will give when Mashiach will come. So in order to prepare for when we get to eat the real Korban Pesach, we recite Hallel after we finish eating out "Korban Pesach."

This still leaves us to answer the question of why are we sitting and not standing if we are reciting Hallel. During the Seder we say "*yoshvim uvain mesubim*," we sit and we lean and not stand. By sitting and leaning we portray ourselves as the opposite of slaves, as free people who are free and able to sit and relax. This is why we continue that mindset and sit while we say Hallel after we eat our meal because we are free and no longer slaves in Mitzrayim. Another reason why we sit during the hallel is because we are in middle of Seder with our third cup of wine poured and we are supposed to hold it while reciting the Hallel. If we get up and start singing after eating and drinking two cups of wine you could end up not paying attention and spilling the third cup.



# The True Meaning of the Number Four

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**D**espite the time of night the Seder is held at, (not to mention the amount of wine drunk), all Jewish minds have wondered the same question: “What’s with the number four on Pesach?” Four sons, four cups, four questions, four names for Pesach – there has to be a meaning behind it!

The answer most rabbis agree with is that four symbolizes completion. This can be seen in the physical and spiritual world, as well as in the Torah and Talmud.

In the physical world, the number four pops up a lot. It’s the number that symbolises the material realities that surround us. There are four seasons (summer, winter, spring, and fall), four directions (east, west, north, and south), and four states of matter (solid, liquid, gas, and plasma).

In the times of the Talmud, they believed there were four basic compounds that made up the world (fire, air, water, and earth), and there are so many more examples where four can be found in our physical universe.

Besides the physical world, the spiritual world is also a place that the number four shows up in. For example, according to Kabbalah, the world was created in four stages: Atzilut (emanation), Beriah (creation), Yetzira (formation), and Assiyah (action).

In the Torah, the number four is associated with our four Mothers, Sarah, Rivka, Rachel, and Leah. (In fact,

during the Seder, in the song Echad Mi Yodea, this is mentioned). Mothers are the ones who give birth, and Pesach is when the figurative “birth” of the Jewish nation happened, and we as a people felt “complete.”

The number four is clearly very connected to Pesach, and symbolizes completeness of the spiritual and physical worlds, as well as the birth and freedom of the Jewish People.

Have a Chag Kasher VeSame’ach!

## Sources

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# Pesach: Our Wedding Anniversary with Hashem

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...כְּשֶׁלַח כָּלָה גֵרֶשׁ יִגְרֶשׁ אֶתְכֶם מִזֵּה:

...When he, Pharaoh, sends you forth it shall be entirely, he shall drive you out of here. (Shemot, Bo 11:1)

**H**ashem is telling Moshe Rabbeinu that He is going to send one more plague, Makat Bechorot, and then Pharaoh will drive Bnei Yisrael out of Mitzrayim.

Let us focus on the word “כָּלָה.” Rashi, along with most commentaries, translate this word as “entirely,” meaning, the whole nation, every one of Bnei Yisrael will leave Mitzrayim in unity. However, there is a seemingly contradictory pasuk in Parshat Beshalach (13:18). The Torah states “וְחֹמְשִׁים עָלוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ, מִצְרַיִם,” Bnei Yisrael left Mitzrayim וְחֹמְשִׁים. One of Rashi’s explanations of this word is that it means “Only one-fifth of Bnei Yisrael left Mitzrayim, the others died during Makat Choshech.” This is a huge inconsistency! How does 4/5 of Bnei Yisrael dying in Mitzrayim mean that all of Bnei Yisrael left בְּכָלָה, in entirety?!

In order to solve this apparent contradiction, perhaps there is an alternate way to translate the word “כָּלָה.” Maybe we can translate this word as “bride.” “... When he, Pharaoh, sends you forth it shall be like a bride, he shall drive you out of here.” In our Jewish belief, our relationship with Hakadosh Baruch Hu is often compared to a husband and wife. When Bnei Yisrael left Mitzrayim, we turned from Bnei Yisrael to Am Yisrael. Our relationship with Hashem transformed on a national level – we became his Kallah. We were the bride, and Hashem was the groom.

Yetziat Mitzrayim was the most climactic moment in our history, not only because we were free from 210 years of slavery, or because we witnessed the ten most awesome miracles, but because we entered the most important relationship to exist – Bnei Yisrael’s marriage with G-d.

Our relationship with Hashem is described in many ways; we are His children, servants, nation, and bride. As a Jewish person, it is our job to work on all aspects of our relationship with Hashem, and Pesach is the time to focus on our “marriage” with Him. Our commitment to the Torah and Judaism is not just one of annoying or tedious mitzvot (like cleaning every speck of chametz), but it is filled with love, and we should serve him with enthusiasm and excitement. May we use this Pesach as an opportunity to shift our mindset, and remember the most important relationship we entered when we left Mitzrayim, and we should be zocheh to be a part of the ultimate geulah once again as Hashem’s Kallah.



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## Dayenu

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Grade 9

**W**hat is the point of Dayenu? Would it really have been enough?

Everyone knows the classic song “Dayenu.” Whether you are a huge fan of the Maccabeats or just participate in the Seder. No matter what, you have heard this song.

In Dayenu, we thank Hashem for each step of our redemption from slavery to freedom. We say that even if Hashem had done one part, such as the maakot it would have been enough.

אלו קרע לנו את הים, ולא העבירנו בתוכו בחרבה – דינו

If He had split the sea for us, and had not taken us through it on dry land – Dayenu, it would have been enough!

The natural question that arises is, would it really have been enough if Hashem had only done part of the process of redemption?

One answer we can most relate to is that when it says

“it was enough,” it does not mean it was enough to save us, since we would still be stuck in a bad situation. Rather, it means that it was enough to thank Hashem for. According to this even if Hashem had only split the sea, but not taken us onto dry land and freedom, we still must thank him.

Similarly in our lives, we must always look for the silver lining and be grateful for every small thing that happens to us. When something positive happens, we cannot forget that this is a gift from Hashem and we must thank Him. The same should also be with struggles. When someone is going through a struggle in life “dayenu” teaches that we should always look for the good in even that situation and (as hard as it sometimes is) find a way to thank Hashem because there is hopefully something to thank Him for.

Hopefully, we will all have situations where we thank Hashem for our blessings and not have to find ways to thank Hashem during our struggles.





## The Kindness of Yachatz

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Grade 11

**O**n the Seder night we break the matzah in order to symbolize the bread the Jewish slaves ate in Egypt. There are many different ways of understanding this, one being that we break it because a poor person doesn't always know where their next meal will come from, so they save some.

Another opinion by Rabbi Yosef Dov Soleveitchik is that the Jews would break the bread to share with those who had less. When you think of the Jewish

enslavement in Egypt, it is common to think that all Jews were equally suppressed. Rather, there were different degrees of slavery. For example, according to our Sages the Shevet Levi were never enslaved. Those with access to food would give to those who were less fortunate.

When we break the matzah during Yachatz we should learn the lesson of giving to your fellow Jew, even in the toughest of times.





## (Don't) Stop the Steal!

Ruthy Cantkier, Lizzy Dalfen, Aviva Eizicovics, Shira Kronenberg and Rebecca Tator

Grade 10

For those too young to drink wine, the undisputed highlight of the Seder is the search for the Afikoman. It is why we endured the repetitive family stories, never-ending readings, and seemingly random traditions – all the while watching our parents for suspicious moves and hoping for that moment of glory. Matzah may be \$40 a box, but that small bag of shards was worth its weight in gold.

But the Afikoman is more than just a childish diversion or the world's worst dessert. According to Rabbi Milevsky, the Afikoman is a metaphor for the גאולה, which remains "hidden" from us. By searching for it, we are teaching children that redemption needs to be found; it won't simply appear on its own. We need to work for it, even when we feel as tired as we do at the end of a long Seder.

But why matzah? Couldn't we play hide-and-seek with anything from the Seder plate (ok, maybe not charoset). The Rif and the Rambam explain that

Matzah represents faith. It reminds us of the time we were slaves in Mitzrayim and lived on nothing other than this simplest of foods. Even in those dark times, our forefathers kept their faith in redemption, and matzah is forever intertwined with that faith. In asking children to look for matzah, we are expressing the hope that they acquire a similar connection with Hashem and faith in the ultimate redemption. We remind them of our past and inspire them to demonstrate those same qualities today.

So no, it is not about training a new generation of expert thieves. Rather, it is about showing our children that redemption doesn't come easy, that connection needs to be earned, and that it is precisely when you feel tired and beat that you need to dig deep to find the strength to continue. It is by learning and applying these lessons that we hope to achieve the final גאולה.

חג שמח!





