



# CMDM Passover Haggadah Companion

By Morris Dweck. The ideas in this compendium are from various sources including, Rabbi Mann, Rabbi Chait, Rabbi Soloveitchik and a few of my own. Any ideas that sound strange or are just wrong, you should assume are the ones that belong to me.



# Magid

## Keha Lachma Anya

This is the bread of affliction that our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. Whoever is hungry, let him come and eat; whoever is in need, let him come and conduct the Seder of Pesach. This year [we are] here; next year in the land of Israel. This year [we are] slaves; next year [we will be] free people.

**Keha Lachma Anya** - Magid begins with a paragraph that is unlike any other in the Haggadah. The first paragraph is in Aramaic while the rest of the Haggadah is in Hebrew. Of course the question is why do we start Magid in Aramaic? The paragraph discusses the Massa, which is the bread of affliction but also that of redemption. The major focus of the story of the Exodus is how we went from slaves to free men, yet we say, "this year we are slaves." What kind of redemption did we go through if we are still slaves? The Jewish people are scattered across the globe. We exist without our social system of the Bet HaMikdash. Language is fundamental to us as a people and we are often defined by our accent or fluency. Unfortunately, today many of us are not fluent in Lashon HaKodesh (the separated language, i.e., Hebrew). It is important to recognize that we are not in the ultimate state of redemption and in that sense we are slaves. We do not have the Korban Pesach at the Seder (we lack the entire system of sacrifices) therefore we begin the Haggadah by reciting a portion in Aramaic, the language of Exile. But even in exile we still eat the Massa, we do still exist as the Jewish people, a people defined by the Torah and Missvot. Gd took us out of Missrayim, a land of Avoda Zara, a land where people projected their fantasies onto animals and inanimate objects. He separated us and gave us a guide to living the good life. A life defined by using our minds to understand our personal makeup and our place in the universe; and by living this Torah lifestyle we can be free.

- There is a statement in this paragraph that says, Kol Dichfin Yete VeYechool (all who are hungry come and eat). This statement is actually the declaration of Rav Huna, brought down in the Gemara Taanit 20b, which says that whenever Rav Huna would eat bread he would open his door and invite anyone who was hungry to join him. The statement of Rav Huna was made all year round, what special place does it have in reference to the Pesach Seder? It is the manner of a rich person to conduct himself in such a manner, opening one's doors to the less fortunate. A slave does not own anything; therefore he cannot invite others to partake of his food, because it is all his master's food. Only a free person can open his door to invite others to partake of his food. -What is the reason for the next statement, all that need should come and partake of the Korban Pesach? This statement adds the idea that there is a Kiyum (fulfillment) in eating the Pesach offering with many people. Since this is the night of the Korban Pesach (in the time of the Beit Mikdash we would have been eating the Korban) we mention the idea in the Haggadah. The idea of a group is relevant to the Haggadah as well. The Torah says, you should "tell" the story, which necessitates another person being there to create a group.



## Mah Nishtanah

What makes this night different from all nights?

On all nights we need not dip even once, on this night we do so twice!

And on all nights we eat chametz or Massah, and on this night only Massah.

On all nights we eat any kind of vegetables, and on this night Marror!

On all nights we eat sitting upright or reclining, and on this night we all recline!

**Mah Nishtanah** - At this point we pour the second cup of wine and remove the Seder plate from the table in order to grab the attention and the interest of the children. (In the past each person would eat upon their own small tables. Removing the plate meant to remove the whole table from the head of the household before the meal, which would seem much more strange than removing the Seder plate from the middle of our large tables.) Although the Mah Nishtanah is usually thought of as a children's portion of the Haggadah there are actually a few interesting complexities. The first question of the Mah Nishtanah is why do we dip twice if on other nights we do not even dip once? But how does the child know we will dip another time? At this point in the Seder we dipped the Karpas (celery in salt water), but we have not yet dipped the Marror into the Harroset. One answer given is that it is really the Baal HaHaggadah (head of the household) who asks the questions, to arouse the interest of the children and the rest of the diners. A second question, we end up dipping the Marror twice, once alone, and once in the sandwich, which totals 3 dippings, so why does the question state 2 dippings? Answer: Since we have already said the blessing over the bread, at the point of dipping the Marror, all the dippings are considered as a part of the meal and thus only counted as one.

- It is interesting to note that the Mah Nishtana deals with the fundamental topics of the night. The first topic is dipping. The Dippings themselves are considered a part of the story of the Exodus from Egypt, in that they reflect on the idea of us being slaves (the salt water and the bitter Marror). The fourth question about reclining while we dine, is also a part of the story, bringing to mind the idea of eating like kings. These two areas are a Kiyum (fulfillment) in the story of Yessiat Mitzrayim, one of the fundamentals of the night.

- The two middle questions deal with the two Missvot of eating, another essential component of the night. (Eating Massa is still today a Missvah from the Torah. The Missvah from the Torah of Marror was to eat it with the Korban Pesach, as it says Al Massa, Oo-Marrorim Yocheluhu. Today however, eating the Marror alone is a Missvah of the Rabbis; we no longer can fulfill the biblical Missvah because we don't have a Korban Pesach.) One might ask if the Mah Nishtanah deals with the Missvot of eating on Pesach, why doesn't it mention the Korban Pesach. Well in truth it does, or at least it used to. The Talmud, in Masechet Pesachim (126a) the Mishnah brings down a version of the Mah Nishtanah which states "On all the nights we eat meat that is roasted, seethed, cooked and on this night it is all roasted." Today we don't recite this verse because we no longer eat the Korban Pesach.



## Avadim Hayeenu

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Lrd, our Gd, took us out from there with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm. If the Holy One, blessed be He, had not taken our fathers out of Egypt, then we, our children and our children's children would have remained enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt. Even if all of us were wise, all of us

**Avadim Hayeenu** - The language of the paragraph reads “Slaves we were to Pharaoh in Egypt.” It does not say, “Pharaoh’s slaves, we were in Egypt.” Although physically we were slaves to Pharaoh, psychologically we never identified ourselves as belonging to Pharaoh; rather we were always the descendants of Abraham and a people who affirmed monotheism. This is in contrast to the actual people of the house of Pharaoh, who are actually called “Pharaoh’s slaves” in the Chumash, (Shemot 10,7).

- Why does it say we would still be slaves if Gd had not taken us out of Egypt? There has been so much change over the centuries and at this point in history we would have surely been free even if Gd had not redeemed us. Perhaps it is not enough that our forefathers would have been freed. If the redemption was only a historical event and had not pertained to us sepcifically, we would not have to engage in the Seder. While we would have been physically free, we would not have emotionally or psychologically free, as we would have felt rejected by Gd. The fact that we were freed by Gd means that we in the 21st century partake of the same emancipation of our forefathers. It ties the holiday directly to our lives, forcing us to engage in the Seder.

- Why is the fact that our forefathers had been freed not enough for us to engage in the Seder? The night is not just a history lesson, but we reenact the Exodus, as if we ourselves have left Egypt. The night is supposed to move us to a new appreciation and reflection of what Gd has given us and naturally lead to a revived praise of Gd. There is a Machloket (halachik argument) about how many generations are required to give praise by a place where a miracle was preformed for a forefather. We hold that it stops by the grandfather, because the experiential influence wears off after the second generation. The relationship to the great-grandfather is not the same as with the grandfather. Therefore, for us to have a true reenactment so many generations afterward, it must stem from a personal tie to the Exodus. For this reason toward the end of the paragraph we see the language of telling the story “Bessiat Missrayim” instead of Yessiat Missrayim. The language of Bessiat suggests that we have to enter into all of the details, the feelings and ideas of the story, until it is as if we are actually actors in the story. It is not enough to tell the story over as a narrator, we must participate in the story.

- The Haggadah then transitions into a few of the laws of Sippur (storytelling). The first law informs us about who is required to tell over the story, “Even if all of us were wise, all of us understanding, all of us knowing the Torah, we would still be obligated to discuss the exodus from Egypt.” Since it is the establishment of the fundamentals, we cannot just say I believe in them, we must revisit the basics and re-establish them. The nature of the Missvah is not measured in terms of the result; it is to be involved in the telling of the story. We can ask a similar question by Amalek, why do I have to say it over every year if I know it already? There are certain historical events that we need to actively be engaged in. It is not enough for it to be in the back of our minds. There are different types of



understanding, all of us knowing the Torah, we would still be obligated to discuss the exodus from Egypt; and everyone who discusses the exodus from Egypt at length is praiseworthy.

### **Maaseh BeRebi**

It happened that Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarphon were reclining [at a seder] in B'nei Berak. They were discussing the exodus from Egypt all that night, until their students came and told them: "Our Masters! The time has come for reciting the morning Shema!"

### **Rebi Elazar**

Rabbi Eleazar ben Azaryah said: "I am like a man of seventy years old, yet I did not succeed in proving that the exodus from Egypt must be mentioned at night-until Ben

knowledge, conscious and subconscious. "Zachor" (remembering) is repeating something we already know subconsciously to bring it into the active consciousness. The Missvah is to be in a certain state of active involvement, the fundamental ideas being renewed. So too for the Haggadah the Missvah is to be in active engagement with the ideas of Gd redeeming us from Egypt. Alternatively, there is also an idea to teach others, which requires us to tell over the story no matter how well versed we might be.

- "Everyone who discusses the Exodus from Egypt at length is praiseworthy." By other Missvot there is usually no idea of increasing, e.g., eating Massa, you are required to eat a certain amount and there is no idea that eating more is better. The Missvah of telling over the story of the Exodus lends itself to increasing in the story. The Missvah is to lose oneself in the story of the Exodus and is not regulated to a specific length. (In addition to reciting the Haggadah there is a separate Missvah to tell the story according to level of the child.) The Haggadah is involved in so many different areas that there is room for even the wisest to delve into the ideas, even if it is not directly connected. The Haggadah itself demonstrates this idea by telling the story of Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah who did not find the proof for saying Shema at night. Even though saying Shema at night is not part of the story of the Exodus it has a relationship so that the Sages engaged in the ideas of Shema on that night. This also demonstrates that there is a Kiyum in learning Torah as a part of the Haggadah.

**Maaseh BeRebbi Eliezer** - The Rabbis became completely consumed in Sippur Yessiat Missrayim until they forgot about everything else including another Missvah. It shows that the Missvah of Sippur is an exploration; that even these wise scholars could be involved in the ideas of Sippur all night. We also learn there was no specific goal in terms of covering a certain amount of material; they were simply tied to learning. The goal is to have an attachment to Judaism, to seek a certain perfection in character and intellect. Goals are not always the ultimate end.

**Baruch Hamakom** - The Rambam in chapter 8 of the guide explains the phrase Makom as referring to "Gds rank and the greatness of His portion of existence...to signify the rank of His existence, may He be exalted, there being nothing like or similar to that existence."

- Why does the Haggadah refer to Gd as Hamakom? At a time of affliction, where one may feel that



Zoma explained it: "It is said, 'That you may remember the day you left Egypt all the days of your life;' now 'the days of your life' refers to the days, [and the additional word] 'all' indicates the inclusion of the nights!" The sages, however, said: "'The days of your life' refers to the present-day world; and 'all' indicates the inclusion of the days of Mashiach."

### **Baruch Hamakom**

Blessed is the Omnipresent One, blessed be He! Blessed is He who gave the Torah to His people Israel, blessed be He! The Torah speaks of four children: One is wise, one is wicked, one is simple and one does not know how to ask.

### **Chacham**

The wise one, what does he say? "What are the testimonies, the statutes and the laws

Gd is hidden we use the term Makom. For example, when visiting the house of a mourner it is customary to say "Hamakom Yinachem Etchem" (Gd will console you) and when visiting the sick we say "Hamakom Yishlach Refuah Shelmah" (Gd will send a full healing). This is in order to express the idea that Gd is the place of the universe (the universe is a dependent existence on Gd), and there is no place void of Gd. He will not desert us or hide from us. It is important to recognize as Jews of the Diaspora, that if we seek Gd and tap into the wisdom of Gds Torah and creation we will surely see Him.

This paragraph reveals a few of the components of the Missvah of Sippur Yessiat Missrayim. The paragraph starts off with a praise of Gd. It then introduces the topic of Talmud Torah and lastly discusses the four sons, which is really the fulfillment of VeHigadta Lebincha (And you should tell your children). The Sippur includes aspects of praising Gd, learning Torah, and teaching our children Torah. Additionally, the idea of Makom is joined to the four sons because Gd had revealed himself to the entire of the nation of Israel, and not just the Ben HaChacham (wise son).

The Torah references the four questions of the sons, but unlike the Haggadah the Torah does not characterize the sons into personalities. The Torah states questions a son may ask, but does not use the description of wise (Devarim 6:20), wicked (Shemot 12:26), simple (Shemot 13:14) and not knowing how to ask (Shemot 13:18). There is a Rashi (Shemot 12:27) that states in reference to the "wicked son," the people bowed down to Gd upon hearing the news that they would come to the land and have sons. This implies the people were happy that they were going to have sons like the one the Haggadah characterizes as wicked. Why would the people be happy (according to Rashi) if they were going to have wicked sons? These characterizations are based on the Derasha (inductive reasoning) of the author of the Haggadah, but are clearly not the characterizations of the Torah. Rashi was commenting on the plain meaning of the verse, which implies an average son who asks a question.

**Chacham Mah** - The wise son asks, "What are the testimonies, the statutes and the laws which the Lrd, our Gd, has commanded you?" Unlike the wicked son, the wise son includes himself amongst the people by asking what "our Gd" has commanded. Through the detailed question of the wise son, "What are the testimonies, statutes and laws" it is clear that he is interested in understanding the structure of the Halachick system. For this reason the Haggadah tells us to teach the wise son the laws of Pesach.



which the Lrd, our Gd, has commanded you?" You, in turn, shall instruct him in the laws of Pesach, [up to] `one is not to eat any dessert after the Pesach-lamb.'

But the way the Torah answers the Ben HaChacham is not the same as the Haggadah. The Torah in Debrim answers "We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the Lrd brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. And the Lrd showed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his house, before our eyes. And He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in, to give us the land which He swore unto our fathers. And the Lrd commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lrd our Gd, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, like this day. And it shall be righteousness unto us, if we observe to do all this commandment before the Lrd our Gd, as He has commanded us." (Devarim 6:21-25) Why is the answer of the Haggadah different than that of the Torah? Why does the Haggadah only answer regarding the Halachot, whereas the Torah starts with a description of the Exodus and leads into a general commandment to keep the Missvot?

The ultimate purpose of the Exodus and the Sippur of the redemption is to introduce the system of Missvot. The perfect retelling is the one mentioned above, in the Torah. It describes our bondage in Egypt and our emancipation via the hand of Gd. It culminates with the practice of the Missvot because they are good for us. The reason we do the Missvot and live in line with the Torah is because it is the best life for us. It is the life that satisfies all the parts of a person, through a person living in line with his or her nature. The retelling of the Exodus in its perfect form should lead to this idea and consequently to a praising of Gd. This being so why wouldn't the Haggadah answer the Ben HaChacham in the manner of the Torah? It is really a trick question. The wording of the answer to the son is "**Also** you answer him **like** the laws of Pesach..." The word "Also" suggests that you have already started your answer, you have already told the wise son the story of the Exodus. Once we posit this, it makes sense to say that you have also already answered the question of the wise son. The wise son began to categorize the different laws of the Torah and asked what is the difference between these categories. The wise son has demonstrated that he is ready to understand the structure of Halacha. So after having retold the story you presumably discussed the different categories of law with the wise son. This is where the Haggadah steps in. Once you have told him the story and the Halachick categories of law the Haggadah tells us to tie the Halachick discussion into the practical. That is why the Haggadah says "**Like** the laws of Pesach." You go through actual cases that pertain to Pesach. This is mostly because the practical arouses a natural interest. People are naturally curious as to what they are involved in. So to hook the wise son we wrap up the discussion by using practical examples from the laws of Pesach.

To summarize, "Also" means we have already told the son the story of the Exodus and answered his question about the different Halachick categories of Law. We can presume this is what was said before "Also" because it is part of the Torah's actual answer. The Haggadah's answer which deals with the Laws of Pesach is a continuation of the Torah's answer, to tie in the Halachick categories to the practical laws of Pesach. The complete response to the Chacham forms a bridge between the philosophy and the Halacha. There should be a unity between the two areas. The Chacham sees the Missvot in the context of their underlying philosophy and Halachik structure. The Halacha can't always exist as an extension of the philosophical but the two areas are intrinsically related in Judaism.

So what are the Edut, Mishpatim and Chukim that the Chacham is asking about? Edut is literally



## Rasha

The wicked one, what does he say? "What is this service to you?!" He says 'to you,' but not to him! By thus excluding himself from the community he has denied that which is fundamental. You, therefore, blunt his teeth and say to him: "It is because of this that the

translated as testimony. It is a group of Missvot that help a person remember certain ideas, like reciting the Shema or Kiddush. These Missvot testify to the truth of certain ideas. The Ramban mentions that the miracles that we recall on Pesach were to establish Gd as the creator of the universe. These miracles testify to the true unity of Gd, the true power of Gd to control the universe. For this reason there is a punishment of Karet (extirpation) to whoever eats bread on Pesach. Eating bread on Pesach is the denial of the idea that Gd is the creator of the universe. (Similar to Shabbat whereby doing one of the Melachot (39 forms of work) one is denying the idea that Gd is the true creator.) Since the Missvot of Pesach are testimony, they require explanation (toward the end of Magid, Raban Gamliel explains the three Missvot - Pesach, Massa and Marror.)

The word Mishpatim is a derivative of Mishpat, which means justice. Mishpatim are laws that are essential to societal order. This category includes laws about theft, damages, etc. The ultimate objective is the perfection of the soul, but the societal order is the context in which human progress can exist. The sages comment that even if Gd had not given these laws, man would have made them. So why did Gd give them? The social laws have a stronger character when they are commanded by Gd. They are given a conceptual framework, in which studying the laws will be a form of Torah study. It is transformed into the pursuit of understanding Gd's justice, as opposed to American Law which is tied to the practical. Studying the Torah's system of justice will lead to understanding the concepts and ideas of Justice.

Chukim are statutes or decrees. The word is sometimes used in a more general sense to mean Laws, for Example in Devarim 16:12 the Torah refers to the laws of Pesach and Shavuot as Chukim. But Chukim can have another meaning, i.e., a law of the king. A law where the reason might not be readily discernible. This doesn't mean there is no reason or that we don't know the reason. It means that we know the character of the general commandment, but the particulars are not readily understood. An example would be the laws of kosher animals.

**Rasha Mah** - The wicked son asks, "What is this work (Avoda) to you?" The Haggadah explains that since he excluded himself from the community he has denied that which is fundamental. But what exactly is the fundamental he is transgressing? We don't find that excluding oneself from the community is one of the 13 principles that the Rambam brings down. But in the laws of Teshuva (3:11) the Rambam says, "one who excludes himself from the community, even though he did not transgress sins, rather he separates himself from the nation of Israel, and doesn't perform Missvot with them or enter into their troubles with them...he has no portion in the world to come." The obvious question is, if he does not transgress sins, what is so bad about separating from the community? They seems like two separate things; if a person has affirmed the basic tenets of Judaism why should they considered a Kofer (non-believer)?

A Poresh (separator) is one who leaves the nation as a matter of principle in order to deny the phenomenon of the nation of Israel. He may regard his religion as Judaism but sees it as a purely personal phenomenon. However, Judaism is not merely a set of beliefs. If a non-Jew decides to keep



Lrd did for me when I left Egypt"; `for me' - but not for him! If he had been there, he would not have been redeemed!"

the Missvot it will not make him Jewish. You have to join the nation of Israel through conversion to be identified as Jewish. The Poresh is in a sense denying the reality of Har Sinai, where Gd gave a system, a way of life, to millions of people and created a nation. The essence of conversion is to become a part of the Jewish people. It is not enough to accept the laws of Judaism, one must accept the system of Judaism. Accept it as a societal guide to life.

There is another opinion that understands the Rasha as not having accepted the foundations of Judaism. The Rasha holds that the system of Judaism is a totally subjective one. The Rasha of the Haggadah does not keep the Missvot. He might indentify himself as Jewish but he doesn't keep Jewish law. He comes to sit at the Seder table but questions the practices that everyone else in engaged in. In a loose comparison he is akin to Korach, who maintained only the philosophy of Judaism was important, and that one shouldn't worry so much about the particulars. One of the questions Koarch asked Moshe was about a garment that was totally blue. (Sissit are usually white with one blue string, which causes reflection on the heavens and susequently on Gd. Korach asked if a garment is totally blue, which would obviously remind someone of Gd, does it still need a blue string. Even though it already achieves its philosophical purpose, would it still need a blue string?) The Rasha is not denying the ideas of the Exodus, he sits at the Seder and would probably discuss the ideas, but he attacks the particular Missvot of the night. On the other hand the Chacham embraces the Halachick system and wants to understand its categories and how it leads to a persons perfection.

The reason we hit the Rasha is because we see he is not asking a real question. He has already come to a conclusion and is just trying to cause an argument. So we attack him on an emotional level and tell him if he were in Missrayim he would not have been redeemed. The Rasha is showing a certain haughtiness, which needs to be broken down. But why would he care if he weren't redeemed? When you are trying to break someone down you have to work within their framework. The Rasha is still identifying himself as Jewish. We are telling him, 'you want to be a part of the Jews, but the philosophy you are living by is contradictory, because you are excluding yourself from Judaism through your own philosophy.' We are putting him into a state of conflict, to force him to think about what he is saying. It would be similar to telling a Reform Jew they are not a real Jew, they would be very offended and emotionally distraught, but it might cause them to reflect on the differences between Orthodox and Reform Judaism. (Disclaimer: I am not saying Reform Jews aren't Jews and Obviously one should not go around to Reform Jews and tell them they aren't Jewish. This was simply an example to be discussed further at another time.)

One further complexity; we respond to the wicked son saying "It is because of this that the Lrd did for me when I left Egypt." This is very perplexing, because this response is the same one we give to the son "who does not know how to ask". Why are we equating the two sons? We are not equating the two, rather we are ignoring the Rasha. We find proof for this at the end of the response to the Rasha, "For me, but not for him." If we were talking directly to the wicked son the Haggadah should have read "For me, but not for you." But the response to the Rasha is not directed at the Rasha, rather at the remaining children at the table. We treat the Rasha as if he has said nothing, and respond to the rest of the table with the response of the one who does not know how to ask, implying that the Rasha has not even asked anything.



## Tam

The simpleton, what does he say? "What is this?" Thus you shall say to him: "With a strong hand the Lrd took us out of Egypt, from the house of slaves."

## Veshe-eno Yodea Lishoal

- Clarification: on a literal level what the response to the Rasha reads "It is because of this that the Lrd did for me when I left Egypt." It is the short version of the response brought down by the Torah in Shemot (12:27). The Torah explains in Shemot "And when your children say to you: What is this work (Avoda) to you? You will say, it is the sacrifice of the Pesach to the Lrd, for He passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, and saved our houses." During the response to the Rasha we would basically be pointing to the Korban Pesach saying it is because of this Korban in Egypt, that Gd saved me when I left Egypt.

- It is also interesting that the Rasha uses the word Avoda, the same word that was used for the work that the Jews did in Egypt (Avoda Kasha, Shemot 1:14). Since he has no idea of the conceptual nature of Halacha and the beauty of its structure, he relates to the laws as a burden.

**Tam Mah** - Tam is translated as the simple son. He asks a simple question, "What's this? Not that the answer is simple but his question has structural simplicity. We answer him "with a strong hand Gd took us out of Missrayim from the house of slaves." The simple son has some type of curiosity so he takes initiation in asking. However, he doesn't proceed to involve himself in observation. Tam seems to mean undeveloped or natural, like a Shor (Ox) Tam. The Shor Tam is the normal ox that does not have a tendency to gore. The simpleton has curiosity with a certain intellectual passivity. There is no formulation to his question. We do not respond to the Tam with the Halachot of Pesach, since the essence of Sippur does not need to include the Halachot of Pesach. The Chacham is worthy of a more complete Sippur. But if we told the Tam the Halachot we would turn him off from Judaism. We need to first get him interested in the story of the Exodus to eventually get him into the Halachot of the Exodus, to the level of the Chacham. We tell him things that get him excited. Bechozek Yad and Bet Avadim are supposed to illicit a sense of drama and vividness. We play with his emotions of evil, oppression, power and might. We describe how badly we were treated in Egypt, and how Gd took us out in a miraculous and mighty manner. We basically engage him through story and a good story always hooks the simpleton because it hooks the emotions. With the Chacham there is a give and take because his interest is already peaked. The Tam has to be drawn in emotionally. It's like a child who's a genius when it comes to sports strategy but can't get a passing grade in history class. His intellect is totally drawn by the emotional, so we have to engage him emotionally to open up his intellect to the area of Judaism. We see from the Haggadah the necessity of having different types of curriculum. Otherwise you are going to turn people away from Judaism. Boring the Tam can be a tremendous harm. If you take the Tam and treat him like a Chacham you will completely lose him. A Yeshiva guarantees that students will be socially Orthodox but it often turns people away from the intellectual components of Judaism. The Tam is a relatively easy son to deal with because we just have to engage the curiosity already present.



As for the one who does not know how to ask, you must initiate him, as it is said: "You shall tell your child on that day, 'It is because of this that the Lrd did for me when I left Egypt.'"

### **Yachol Merosh Chodesh**

One may think that [the discussion of the exodus] must be from the first of the month. The Torah therefore says, 'On that day.' 'On that day,' however, could mean while it is yet daytime; the Torah therefore says, 'It is because of this.' The expression 'because of this' can only be said when Massah and Marmor are placed before you.

### **Metechilah**

In the beginning our fathers served idols; but now the Omnipresent One has brought us close to His service, as it is said: "Joshua said to all the people: Thus said the Lrd, the Gd of Israel, 'Your fathers used to live on the other side of the river - Terach, the father of Abraham and the father of Nachor, and they served other gods.

**VeShe-eno Yodea Lishol** - The "one who does not know how to ask" doesn't even have curiosity. It is not that he is just a youngster, because then we can just wait for him to become a Tam. There is a greater challenge here. We respond with "At Petach Lo" (we initiate a conversation for him). We have to dig into his mind and find an area that he is interested in. We have to put in effort to engage him until you bring him to the point where he asks a question. We can't just give up and say he is not interested; we must explore his mind. As an alternative we can tell him the story even though he might not reach the level of asking a question. But we have to prepare in a way where he is willing to listen. Even though it is not in response to a question and he is not curious the he might find the answer itself appealing. Although, you shouldn't force him to listen because there are certain cases where it would do more harm than good.

**Metechilah Ovde Avoda Zara** - The Mishnah in Pesachim brings down the Halacha that "Matchilim Begenut VeGomer Bashebach" (we start with disgrace and end with praise). The Gemara brings down a Machloket between Rav and Shemuel as to what the disgrace is. Rav says we start with Metechila Ovde Avoda Zara (idol worship) and Shemuel says Avadim Hayeenu (slavery). In the end we have the custom of doing both, we incorporate both disgraces, into the Haggadah (Avadim Hayeenu and Metechila).

What is the idea of starting off with disgrace and ending with praise, why not cut straight to the praise of Gd, isn't that the essence? It would be a lack in our praise of Gd if we tried to start with praise. In order to understand the true graciousness, the true magnitude of what Gd did for us we must paint a vivid picture of where we started. Only once we have the contrast, once we understand that we were slaves, worshiping idols, can we truly praise Gd for taking us out of Egypt and making us His nation.

- What is the argument between Rav and Shemuel? Rav is focusing on the spiritual redemption of Am Yisrael. It is not enough that we were freed on a physical level, but the essence of our freedom is that we were redeemed from idol worship to the worship of Gd. Shemuel, cannot simply say he is



## **VaEkach Et Avichem**

"And I took your father Abraham from beyond the river, and I led him throughout the whole land of Canaan. I increased his seed and gave him Isaac, and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. To Esau I gave Mount Seir to possess it, and Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt."

## **Baruch Shomer**

Blessed is He who keeps His promise to Israel, blessed be He! For the Holy One, blessed be He, calculated the end [of the bondage], in order to do as He had said to our father Abraham at the "Covenant between the Portions," as it is said: "And He said to Abraham, 'You shall know that your seed will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and they will enslave them and make them suffer, for four hundred years. But I shall also judge the nation whom they shall serve, and after that they will come out with great wealth.'"

## **He Sheamda**

This is what has stood by our fathers and us! For not just one alone has risen against us to destroy us, but in every generation they rise against us to destroy us; and the Holy One, blessed be He, saves us from their hand!

focusing on the physical, for it would mean little if we were freed physically but still Ovde Avoda Zara. Therefore, as opposed to saying Shemuel is simply focusing on the physical, it makes more sense to say that Shemuel sees the spiritual as a natural outcome of the physical. Part and parcel of Gd removing us from slavery is the idea that we became slaves to Gd. For example, if someone saves your life, you are automatically indebted to them.

**He Sheamda** - "This is what has stood by our fathers and us." The word 'This' refers back to the promise of Gd that "I shall also judge the nation whom they shall serve." (Beresheit 15:14 brought down in the previous paragraph.) The sages comment that this promise is meant for all time, not just in regard to the Egyptians. Gd promised that He will judge any nation that will ever persecute us. The paragraph states, "in every generation they stand against us to destroy us." The drive to annihilate the Jews is deeply rooted. It stems from the recognition that the Jews possess the truth; that the good life is one that strives for perfection of moral character, emotion and intellect. A life that focuses on the value of family and the Torah lifestyle. People who do not live a lifestyle in line with Torah values can feel threatened by the Torah's outlook and perspective as we have seen many times in history.

"The Holy One, blessed be He, saves us from their hand." This means that Gd will never let the persecutors succeed in their goal. It doesn't mean that they will have no success whatsoever, but that the Hashgacha (Divine Providence - the specific involvement of Gd in the world) is always tied to the Nation of Israel. Since it is Gd's will that the Jewish nation should exist it is impossible that our enemies will be completely successful in their pursuit of our annihilation.



## Se Oolmad

Go forth and learn what Laban the Aramean wanted to do to our father Jacob. Pharaoh had issued a decree against the male children only, but Laban wanted to uproot everyone - as it is said: **"The Aramean wished to destroy my father; and he went down to Egypt and sojourned there, few in number; and he became there a nation - great and mighty and numerous."** (Devarim 26,6)

**Se Oolmad** - Go forth and learn, is the beginning to a substantial section of the Haggadah. To understand the next couple of pages in the Haggadah it is imperative to understand the structure. In the paragraph "Go forth and learn" we find the excerpt "The Aramean wished to destroy my father; and he went down to Egypt and sojourned there, few in number; and he became there a nation - great and mighty and numerous." (Devarim 26:5) The Haggadah goes on to explain this excerpt in detail. We then find the continuation of the excerpt "The Egyptians dealt ill with us and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage." (Devarim 2:6.) And again the Haggadah explains the verse. The Haggadah does the same with the next two verses, Devarim 26:7 and 26:8.

We would guess, that if the Haggadah were going to bring down four verses and take the time to explain them in detail, the verses would come from Shemot, maybe at the crux of the story of the Exodus. But the quotes are brought down from Devarim and from an unusual context. The verses of Devarim 26:5-8 are a part of the Bikkurim declaration. The Missvah of Bikkurim deals with the first fruits of the seven agricultural products of Israel. It is a type of Terumah (gift to Kohen) brought as a sacrificial gift up to the altar, beginning at the festival of Shavuot and terminating at the festival of Sukkot.

The pilgrims brought Bikkurim to the Temple in beautiful baskets, as a part of a grand procession with music and singing. The pilgrims were obligated to recite a declaration set forth in Deuteronomy 26:3-10, part of which is brought down in the Haggadah. But what connection does Bikkurim have with the Haggadah? One of the essential components of Sippur Yessiat Missrayim is the idea of praise. We see this explicitly toward the end of the Magid, (4th to last paragraph) which starts "Thus it is our duty to thank, to laud, to praise, to glorify, to exalt..." As we mentioned earlier the purpose of the Haggadah is to engage in an active review of the fundamentals of Judaism, which will lead to a spontaneous praise of Gd. The whole institution of the Bikkurim is one of praise. We are praising Gd for blessing us with fruits and crops, recognizing that He is the creator of the universe. This praise of Bikkurim is given as a part of a larger praise to Gd, for saving us from Laban and from redeeming us from Egypt. It is only once we truly realize that our existences are solely dependent on Gd, His mercy and salvation time and time again that we can begin to praise Him for the fruits He has given us. With this recognition via the study of the declaration of the Bikkurim we can offer Gd praise on the night of Pesach. Similarly, through the study of the Exodus we recognize Gd is the creator of the universe. (see Rabbi Yehudah, below)

- How is Laban worse than Pharaoh? Pharaoh enslaved the whole Jewish nation and killed countless Jewish lives. But Laban was a worse threat because in his anger he wished to destroy Yaakov and his entire family, which at the time would have been the destruction of the entire Jewish nation. It is important to note the two different types of salvation. Yaakov was saved in a complete sense. Gd warned Laban (Beresheit 31:24) "Take heed to yourself, lest you speak with Yaakov either good or



**Vayered** - "And he went down to Egypt" forced by Divine decree. "And he sojourned there" - this teaches that our father Jacob did not go down to Egypt to settle, but only to live there temporarily. Thus it is said, "They said to Pharaoh, We have come to sojourn in the land, for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks because the hunger is severe in the land of Canaan; and now, please, let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen."

bad." In Missrayim we were persecuted before we were saved and the salvation was conducted in a very telling manner (see Camah Maalot, below). At the time of the Holocaust there was very little if anything that was shown to us explicitly compared to Missrayim. It is important to understand that the Hashgacha relates to the Jewish nation depending on our level. Even in times such as these, when the Hashgacha does not readily reveal itself, it is imperative to remember Gd will come to our salvation and judge any nation that persecutes us (as mentioned above He Sheamda). The Hashgacha will always relate to the Jewish nation and ensure its continued existence.

**Arami Oved Avi VaYered** - It says that Yaakov reluctantly (or by force) descended to Egypt because of the promise of Gd to Avraham in the Brit ben Habetarim "And He said unto Avraham: Know of a surety that your seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years" (Beresheit 15:13). But in Beresheit 45:28 Yaakov said "Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die." So how can the Haggadah say he was forced to descend, if it was his decision to descend? Further, Gd came to Yaakov in Be'er Sheva saying "I am God, the God of your father; fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of you a great nation. I will go down with you into Egypt; and I will also surely bring you up again." (Beresheit 46:3-4.) Yaakov was already on his way down to Egypt when Gd came to him and Gd seems to be comforting Yaakov, not forcing him into anything.

Perhaps Yaakov was planning to return to his home after the famine ended (which turned out to be five years). Gd then told him that the current descent would be a permanent one, in accord with Gd's previous discussion with Avraham. This is in line with the next phrase of the Haggadah "this teaches that our father Yaakov did not go down to Egypt to settle, but only to live there temporarily." He was planning on being there temporarily (as will be discussed below).

What does the descent of Yaakov has to do with the Exodus of Egypt? It is showing that even from the get-go things did not turn out the way we had planned, rather the Divine Providence was at work. Although Yaakov was planning on staying in Egypt temporarily, Gd planned for the descent to be more substantial. We see this theme of the Divine Intervention throughout the story of Yosef and his Brothers. Probably the starkest example can be found in Bereshrit 37:15. After Yaakov sent Yosef to Shechem to find his Brothers the Torah says "And a certain man found him (Yosef), and, behold, he was wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying: What do you seek?" The Torah takes the time to relate to us this seemingly insignificant story. Rashi comments that the man in the field who found Yosef was the angel Gabriel. Rashi is telling us that the Hasgacha was involved in making sure Yosef found his Brothers that day and was eventually sold and taken down to Missrayim.

- "To sojourn in the land we come; for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks; for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now therefore, we pray thee, let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen." (Beresheit 47:4.) The verse brought down by the Haggadah illustrates an additional element



**Bimtei Me-at** - "Few in number" as it is said: "Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons, and now, the Lrd, your Gd, has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven."

**Vayehi Sham** - "And he became there a nation" this teaches that Israel was distinctive there. "Great, mighty," as it is said: "And the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, and multiplied and became very, very mighty, and the land became filled with them."

**Verab** - "And numerous," as it is said: "I passed over you and saw you wallowing in your bloods, and I said to you 'By your blood you shall live,' and I said to you 'By your blood you shall live!' I caused you to thrive like the plants of the field, and you increased and grew and became very beautiful your bosom fashioned and your hair grown long, but you were naked and bare."

**Vayareoo**

**"The Egyptians treated us badly and they made us suffer, and they put hard work upon us." (Devarim 26:7)**

of Yaakov's reluctance to dwell in the land. Although at this point Yaakov knew his family would remain in Missrayim he wished to remain separated. He did not want his family to intermingle with the Egyptians.

**Bimtei Me-at** - When Yaakov's family descended to Egypt they were few in number only numbering seventy people. The Avot (forefathers) were perfected individuals. Even though they did not receive the Torah, they were able to see Gd through the natural world. They had an abstract relationship to Gd, relating to Him through studying the world, as opposed to the Nation today that has a concrete religious system to relate to Gd. Although the Avot were able to attain a state of perfection without the laws of the Torah, it is impossible for a whole nation to exist in this way. It is impossible to have a nation of outstanding philosophers that are on the level of the Avot.

- Additionally the Haggadah is telling us the Jewish people went from few in number to a great nation in a few generations. The Torah uses a number of phrases to describe the population explosion in Missrayim. "And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them." (Shemot 1:7.) This is to show that the Hashgacha was involved in causing the rapid increase in number. The Hashgacha was also involved in keeping the people 'one nation.' Often, when a people become too numerous they are forced to break up into smaller tribes. The Divine Providence made sure that the Jewish nation remained one united people.

**Vayare-oo Otanu Hamissrim** - "The Egyptians mistreated us, afflicted us, and placed hard work upon us." (Devarim 26:6.) There were three stages in the enslavement of the Jews. The first stage, Vayare-oo (mistreatment), was a change of the Jews in the eyes' of the Egyptians. The Egyptians developed a hate for the Jewish people and so they reasoned "Come, let us outsmart [the nation of Israel] lest it multiply and, if there should be a war against us, they will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the land." (Shemot 1:10.) The second stage, VayAnunu (affliction), was an enslavement of the physical. They made us build storage cities, and take care of other burdensome



**Vayareoo** - "The Egyptians treated us badly," as it is said: Come, let us act cunningly with [the people] lest they multiply and, if there should be a war against us, they will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the land."

**Vayanunu** - "And they made us suffer," as it is said: "They set taskmasters over [the people of Israel] to make them suffer with their burdens, and they built storage cities for Pharaoh, Pitom and Ramses."

**Vayitenu** - "And they put hard work upon us," as it is said: "The Egyptians made the children of Israel work with rigor. And they made their lives bitter with hard work, with mortar and with bricks and all manner of service in the field, all their work which they made them work with rigor."

### **Vanissaak**

**"And we cried out to the Lrd, the Gd of our fathers, and the Lrd heard our voice and saw our suffering, our labor and our oppression." (Devarim 26,8)**

**Vanissaak** - "And we cried out to the Lrd, the Gd of our fathers," as it is said: "During that long period, the king of Egypt died; and the children of Israel groaned because of the servitude, and they cried out. And their cry for help from their servitude rose up to Gd."

**Vayishma** - "And the Lrd heard our voice" as it said: "And Gd heard their groaning, and Gd remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

**Vayare** - "And he saw our suffering," this refers to the separation of husband and wife, as it is said: "Gd saw the children of Israel and Gd took note."

tasks that the Egyptians needed. At this point the Jews still felt a sense of value. True they were working tirelessly but they had a sense of purpose. They were performing important tasks. The third stage, Vayitenu, (placed hard work) was an enslavement of the mind. It was unnecessary and meaningless, a demeaning type of work. The Jews could not find value or purpose in performing this work. They lost their sense of dignity and confidence, and were thus psychologically enslaved.

**VaNissaak El** - The verse in Shemot 2:23 states, "During those many days, the king of Egypt died; and the children of Israel groaned because of the work, and they cried out. And their cry for help from their work rose up to Gd." The verse points out that it was not until Pharaoh died that the Jews cried out. The Jews most likely associated the enslavement they were in to the current Pharaoh. They wouldn't allow themselves to think it was an outlook or prejudice of the entire Egyptian people toward them. Once Pharaoh died and their enslavement continued they could no longer rationalize the bigotry away. Gd did not act until the Jews relinquished their security in the Egyptian people (He waited for them to cry). Even though the Jews cried out to Gd it was a situational cry. It was a cry motivated by the work, not because they now realized that Gd was the supreme ruler. In spite of this Gd heard their prayers. Once the Jews' false reality was shattered they shifted their securities toward Gd. At this point "Gd heard their groans and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob." (Shemot 2:24.) Once they turned to Gd, He chose to hear their groans.

**Vayishmah** - "And Gd heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil and our oppression." (Devarim 26:7.) We already know from the Pasuk in Shemot 2:24 that Gd heard our groans. Why does the Pasuk in Devarim tell us that Gd saw our affliction, toil and oppression? To answer the



**Ve-et Amalenu** - "Our labor," this refers to the "children," as it is said: "Every boy that is born, you shall throw into the river and every girl you shall keep alive."

**Ve-et Lachassenu** - "And our oppression," this refers to the pressure, as it is said: "I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them."

### **Vayossieniu**

**"The Lrd took us out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with a great manifestation, and with signs and wonders." (Devarim 26:9)**

question let us first understand what Gd saw. 'Our affliction' is not the same affliction as the Pasuk in Shemot. In Shemot affliction referred to a form of labor, a physical enslavement. The Haggadah tells us that 'affliction' here means separating from sexual relations. This could have been from a lack of time and energy, but more likely because the Jews knew their sons would be killed (as was the thought process of Amram, the father of Moshe). "Toil" is referring to the loss of our sons, for Pharaoh decreed that all the sons should be thrown into the river. These two areas, the love of a spouse and children are areas from which a person can derive much psychological support. A spouse is someone we can escape to after battling with the world. We come into our homes at night to find shelter in the unwavering love of a spouse. Our children bring us much happiness. We often see ourselves in them. We take great pride and joy in watching their development. The Missrim cut us off from delving into these areas of psychological pleasure. They caused us much pain and suffering in the psychological realm, which is far worse than in the physical.

The last thing Gd saw was our 'oppression.' The Haggadah explains oppression as Dachak (pressure). The Ritva explains that after the entire psychological affliction the Egyptians saw that we still identified ourselves as Jews. At this point they applied 'pressure' to force us to convert and adopt their religious practices. Now back to the question, why does Devarim mention what Gd saw? The verse in Devarim is explaining that although Gd heard our cries once we turned to him, he did not act solely because of our cries. Our cries were imperfect in that they were caused by the harsh work. However, Gd takes all factors into consideration. He saw the Egyptians were acting in an extremely harsh manner, doing anything they could to break us down. It was the combination of our crying and the Egyptian cruelty that Gd reacted to. Gd is a qualitatively superior type of Judge, for He can take all factors into account.

**Vayossi-enu Hashem MiMissrayim** - "The Lrd took us out of Egypt, not through an angel, not through a seraph (type of angel) and not through a messenger. The Holy One, blessed be He, did it in His glory by Himself." When the Haggadah mentions that Gd took us out of Egypt by Himself it is referring to the entire emancipation and not specifically to Makkat Bechorot (derived by learning the Pasuk in Devarim 26:8). Factually, it seems that the Pasuk is mistaken because we know Moshe was used to deliver many of the Makkot, and he definitely acted as a messenger in Missrayim; so what does the pasuk mean? There are two ways Gd could be responsible for the emancipation. One way is through hidden miracles. For example, if we assume that African Americans received their freedom via Divine Providence, it would certainly be characterized as emancipation via a messenger. It was a progressive process that happened through natural events. On the other hand, the Exodus from Egypt was not the result of a natural progression. In Egypt there was no drawn out battle for



**Vayossienu** - "The Lrd took us out of Egypt," not through an angel, not through a seraph and not through a messenger. The Holy One, blessed be He, did it in His glory by Himself! Thus it is said: "In that night I will pass through the land of Egypt, and I will smite every first-born in the land of Egypt, from man to beast, and I will carry out judgments against all the gods of Egypt, I the Lrd."

**Veavarti** - "I will pass through the land of Egypt," I and not an angel; "And I will smite every first-born in the land of Egypt," I and not a seraph; "And I will carry out judgments against all the gods of Egypt," I and not a messenger; "I- the Lrd," it is I, and none other!

**Beyad** - "With a strong hand," this refers to the dever (pestilence) as it is said: "Behold, the hand of the Lrd will be upon your livestock in the field, upon the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the herds and the flocks, a very severe pestilence."

emancipation, there was an immediate intervention. There were cataclysmic events outside of the natural law, which occurred. This is the distinction we are referring to when we say Gd Himself set us free.

This explains why we say "The Lrd took us out of Egypt" (himself) but how can we claim "not through a messenger?" When we read the story of the Exodus Moshe seems to be a very important character. When Hashem manifests himself through miracles it is usually in conjunction with a Navi (prophet). If we take a look at Shemot 3:11-12 Moshe asked Gd who am I to appear in front of Pharaoh and emancipate the Jews. Gd responds, "for I will be with you..." Gd used Moshe to carry his message to the people, so in that sense Moshe was needed. When we say "not through a messenger" it means Moshe did not do anything to further the Exodus, he only carried out Gd's commands. This idea would not be said in reference to the Megillah. There the personalities are in the forefront and Gd is in the background, operating via the Hashgacha. But the Exodus was a different phenomenon. A true messenger would be a charismatic leader that convinced the Egyptians to change their ways and free the Jews from servitude. Moshe was more of an instrument than a real messenger. Even though it says Moshe was great in the eyes of the people it was only through association to the miracles of Gd, but not through him teaching the Egyptians ideas or lessons .

Explaining it this way forces us to ask a question. If we are saying the entire exodus was brought about through Gd, why does the Haggadah single out Makkat Bechorot here: "As it says: In that night I will pass through the land of Egypt, and I will smite every first-born in the land of Egypt, from man to beast, and I will carry out judgments against all the gods of Egypt, I the Lrd." (Shemot 12:12.)

The first nine Makkot were a break in the natural events in that they were excessive and untimely, but they were brought about through the natural. People could still identify the plagues as occurring through nature, even though they were very strange events. The tenth plague could not be ascribed to any natural phenomenon. For example, the frogs still came from the water, and the miraculous hail did fall from the sky as a regular hail would. But there are no natural events that distinguish between the first born that could kill them at the same moment. There are two levels we are discussing, the general level via the natural, which was still clearly brought about through Gd and the level of Makkat Bechorot, which was totally removed from any normal physical phenomenon.

**Beyad Chazakah** - Why is Deber (disease of the beasts) demonstrative of Gd using "a strong hand"



**Ubizroah** - "And with an outstretched arm," this refers to the sword, as it is said: "His sword was drawn, in his hand, stretched out over Jerusalem."

**Ubemorah** - "And with a great manifestation," this refers to the revelation of the Shekhinah (Divine Presence), as it is said: "Has any Gd ever tried to take for himself a nation from the midst of another nation, with trials, signs and wonders, with war and with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with great manifestations, like all that the Lrd your Gd, did for you in Egypt before your eyes!"

**Oobe-Otot** - "And with signs," this refers to the staff, as it is said: "Take into your hand this staff with which you shall perform the signs."

**Oobe-Moftim** - "And wonders," this refers to the blood, as it is said: "And I shall show wonders in heaven and on earth."

### Davar Acher

Another explanation: "Strong hand" indicates two [plagues]; "Outstretched arm," another two; "Great manifestation," another two; "Signs," another two; and "Wonders," another

(indicative of might)? Deber was the first crippling blow. The Makkot before hand were temporary annoyances, but there was no permanent change. The death of the livestock was an irreversible economic blow. It was the first of the destructive Makkot. Another reason could be because Gd separated between the animals of the Egyptians and the Jews. "And the Lrd shall make a division between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt; and there nothing shall die of all that belong to the children of Israel." (Shemot 9:4.) The Ramban explains that there was an area where the shepherds of Egypt and Goshen mixed their herds, but Gd only applied the plague to the herds of the Egyptians. This separation points out an additional aspect in the power of the Divine Providence.

**Bezeroah Netuyah** - The Haggadah quotes a verse from Dibre Hayamim 1 (21:16) to show the word Netuyah (outstretched) is used in reference to wielding a sword. But where do we find any mention of a sword by the Exodus from Egypt? According to two different opinions the sword was part of Makkat Bechorot. The first opinion uses Tehillim 136:10 as a proof, "To Him that smote Egypt with their firstborn." There was a civil war the night of Makkat Bechorot. The firstborn of Egypt were afraid for their lives because of the plague that Moshe had foretold. In response they requested that the Egyptians allow the Jews to go free. When the Egyptians denied their request they started a civil war, wielding their swords against the Egyptians. The second opinion holds that "with an outstretched arm" is referring to Gd Himself. The first nine Makkot were not attacking the Missrim directly, they were attacks on crops or agriculture, or annoyances to the body. These plagues are called Otot (signs) and Moftim (wonders). Their objective was to cause the Egyptians pain so that they would reflect on the emptiness of the lives they were living, and the Gods they were serving. These nine plagues were to serve as a wake up call. Indeed we see there was a group of Missrim, namely "Erev Rav" who went out of Egypt with the Jews. Contrarily Makkat Bechorot was a punishment and a true act of war. In the sense that it was an act of war, we say that Gd wielded his sword against them.

**Davar Acher** - Why do we mention the Ten Makkot? (This might sound like an odd question but bear with me.) Imagine that there was a boy living in a house designed by a Genius architect. The house was beautiful and catered to all of the families needs for many years. Growing up the boy



two. These are the Ten Plagues which the Holy One, blessed be He, brought upon the Egyptians, namely as follows:

Blood. Frogs. Lice. Wild Beasts. Pestilence. Boils.  
Hail. Locust. Darkness. Slaying of the First-born.

### **Rebi Yehudah**

Rabbi Yehudah referred to them by acronyms:

DeTzaCh (blood, frogs, lice);

never really appreciated the architect because he took the house for granted. One day a cousin visits the house, but the house cannot cater to the cousin's needs. The architect has to make a special visit to change the home. On that day the boy recognizes that the architect was great because of the changes he made to the house. But the changes are really aberrations. The true genius of the architect is manifest in the beauty and amazing design of the original home.

We should recognize Gd through the foundation of his creation of nature and system of Torah and not through aberrations or miracles. Now we can really ask, why do we praise Gd for the miracles, for aberrations in nature instead of praising Gd for nature itself? To understand the answer we have to understand the idea of praise. In regard to people we usually give praise to benefit the person we praise; that this person should enjoy our praise. Clearly, we cannot ascribe the same reason for why we praise Gd. The praise must be to effectuate a certain change in us, for a person to reach their potential by reflecting on his or her true place in life, which naturally leads them to praise Gd who they recognize is above them. The Rambam in the Mishneh Torah writes that praise must be spontaneous. It is a natural reaction, or expression when we encounter Gd. When we see a miracle we can reflect on the idea that Gd is close to us, He is involved in this world. The nearness that is shown via the miracles is what demands us to praise Gd, not the miracle itself. The realization that Gd's relationship with us overrules His own system of nature so that we can partake of the true ideas. This motivation is what leads to praise. Studying the ten Makkot we can gain an understanding of how the Hashgacha was implemented in Egypt. It is then that we can understand (to a minute degree) how Gd relates to man, and come to a better praise.

**Rebbi Yehudah Hayah** - Rebbi Yehudah would group the plagues and refer to them by acronyms: DeTzaCh (blood, frogs, lice); ADaSh (beasts, pestilence, boils); BeAChV (hail, locust, darkness, first-born). Even the youngest of children have no problem memorizing the names of the Makkot, so was it really necessary to create an acronym? The groups are to demonstrate Gd's dominance over all over nature. The first group, DetzaCh, shows Gd has dominance over everything in the land, i.e. water and earth. The second shows that Gd controls all that roams on the earth. The last group shows that Gd controls the skies.

The Ibn Ezra in Shemot 9:1 breaks down the Makkot into different groups. He joins Blood and Frogs into one group of water plagues; Lice and Wild Beasts into a land group; Pestilence (airborne disease) and Boils (Moshe threw the soot into the air) into an air group. The Egyptians used to worship the different aspects of nature as separate Gods. Gd attacked every area of nature to teach the world the oneness of Gd, that one Gd controls all of nature. Why did Gd need to use two plagues for each of these areas; why not just one each? If it were just one plague people could specify too much



ADaSh (beasts, pestilence, boils);  
BeAChaB (hail, locust, darkness, first-born).

### **Rebi Yose Hagalili**

Rabbi Yosi the Gallilean said: How do you know that the Egyptians were stricken by ten plagues in Egypt, and then were struck by fifty plagues at the sea? In Egypt it says of them, "The magicians said to Pharaoh 'This is the finger of Gd.' At the sea it says, "Israel saw the great hand that the Lrd laid against Egypt; and the people feared the Lrd, and they believed in the Lrd and in His servant Moses." Now, how often were they smitten by 'the finger'? Ten plagues! Thus you must conclude that in Egypt they were smitten by ten plagues, at the sea they were smitten by fifty plagues!

and claim Gd just controls blood and just controls lice. But when there are two plagues that stem from the water people look for a unification, they look at the universal, the water, land and the sky. The Ibn Ezra categorizes each of the last four plagues into its own category. The seventh plague was a mixture of storms and fire, because the fire was inside the hail. It shows that even these distinct, opposite components of nature can be combined by Gd. In the eighth Locusts came from far away because of the wind. It shows that Gd not only controlled Egypt but the entire world. The ninth, Darkness was an absence of the two great luminaries and the stars from Egypt. It shows Gd is in control of the entire universe. The tenth, Makkat HaBechorot showed Gd's dominance over death. The Egyptians were infatuated with death and very involved in mummification. They had a reverence for the God of death. Gd showed that he was in control of the phenomenon of death. Gd broke down all of the ideas of God the Egyptians had and showed that He was the only Gd, a Gd that controls all of reality.

**Rebi Yose Hagalili** - The next four paragraphs are not included in the Haggadah of the Rambam. These paragraphs discuss the Hashgacha (divine providence) with which Gd took us out of Egypt and also reference the Hashgacha by the Splitting of the Sea.

The first three paragraphs explain three different calculations of the Makkot. But we all know there were ten Makkot in Egypt, and one miracle at the sea, so what are the Rabbis calculating? Only ten physical Makkot happened in Egypt, but the Rabbis are expounding on the various frameworks the Makkot impacted, which would cause one to number the Makkot differently. All the Rabbis agree that the Miracle by the splitting of the sea counts five-times more than whatever happened in Egypt. This means that psychologically the event at the sea had a much greater impact compared with all the plagues in Egypt. In one act by the sea Gd annihilated the entire army of Egypt including powerful chariots, horses and the Egyptian king, Pharaoh. (The Rabbis derive the multiple of five via the reference to an outstretched arm by the sea, in contrast to the reference of the finger of Gd by the plagues in Egypt.) The Rabbis argue about how to count the Makkot of Egypt. Rebbi Yose Hagalili holds that we count the Makkot by the actual physical phenomena that occurred. This is obviously the simplest view, and the one we are most used to.



### Rebi Eliezer

Rabbi Eliezer said: How do we know that each individual plague which the Holy One, blessed be He, brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt consisted of four plagues? For it is said: "He sent against them His fierce anger, fury, and indignation, and trouble, a discharge of messengers of evil": `Fury,' is one; `Indignation,' makes two; `Trouble,' makes three; `Discharge of messengers of evil,' makes four. Thus you must now say that in Egypt they were struck by forty plagues, and at the sea they were stricken by two hundred plagues.

### Rebi Akiva

Rabbi Akiva said: How do we know that each individual plague which the Holy One, blessed be He, brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt consisted of five plagues? For it is said: "He sent against them his fierce anger, fury, and indignation, and trouble, a discharge of messengers of evil": "His fierce anger," is one; "fury," makes two; "indignation," makes three; "trouble," makes four; "discharge of messengers of evil," makes five. Thus you must now say that in Egypt they were struck by fifty plagues, and at the sea they were stricken by two hundred and fifty plagues.

**Rebi Eliazer Omer** - Rebi Eliazer counts each plague as four plagues and consequently 200 plagues by the sea (4x10x5). He derives the number 4 from the Pasuk "He sent forth upon them the fierceness of His anger, **wrath**, and **indignation**, and **trouble**, a **sending of messengers of evil**." (Tehillim 78:49.) Rebi Eliazer holds that "His anger" is not counted because it is the general class, the title of the four specifics. The verse specifies 4 frameworks of anger which each reflect an additional framework of punishment brought upon the Egyptians. From the way Rebi Eliazer is Doresh the Pasuk it is clear the specific number 4, is of significance.

**Rebi Akiva** - Rebi Akiva counts the four frameworks of Rebi Eliazer but includes the first phrase of the verse, "His anger" as an additional framework sent against the Egyptians. He says the Pasuk simply named 5 specifics and did not first identify the general class. (It is difficult to comment further as the Rabbis were rather brief in their comments.)



## Camah Maalot (Dayenu)

How many levels of favors has the Omnipresent One bestowed upon us:

1) If He had brought us out from Egypt, and had not carried out judgments against them, it would have sufficed us!

**Camah Maalot Tovot (Dayenu)** - After the Haggadah began the study of the Hashgacha we offer Gd thanks for the kindness he granted us by reciting the Dayenu. The Dayenu is probably the most anticipated part of the Haggadah, due to the many fun tunes we use to sing it, but the Dayenu is also full of depth. Dayenu is often translated as ‘enough,’ but a more proper translation would be ‘it would have been more than we deserved.’ It makes sense to thank Gd for everything that He did on our behalf during the Exodus. If we take the story of the Exodus in a broad sense it might include the miracle by the Sea. This would include about half of the Dayenus. However, the Dayenu continues up to the building of the Beit Hamikdash. Why do we continue with thanks up to the building of the Temple? The building of the Temple is really the culmination of the Exodus from Egypt. Only when the Jews are living in Israel with the Temple is the system of Judaism complete. It is at this time that the total Judaic social structure is in effect, and the perfection of the system of Judaism can truly be seen and appreciated.

- The Dayenu expounds upon all the goods that Gd was so gracious to grant us. Why don't we thank Gd for all the goods with one statement of thanks? Why do we actually state each thanks separately? When thanking a friend, there is a tremendous difference psychologically between saying, “thanks for all you help” or if you actually list each act of help that was done for you and thank the friend for each act individually. When doing the latter your friend feels much more appreciated and truly believes you understand how much he has helped you. Obviously Gd doesn't need to feel appreciated, but there is an increase in our appreciation when we expound on all the kindnesses Gd afforded us individually. We are also able to pin point the different kindnesses of Gd's deeds.

1) “If He had brought us out from Egypt and had not carried out judgments against them.” - It would have sufficed for Gd to take us out of Egypt without punishing the Egyptians. Instead of the Ten Plagues, Gd could have made three days of darkness during which He would have removed us from Egypt. Also, why did Gd punish the Egyptians if he had told Avraham we were going to be enslaved? The Egyptians enslaved us out of their own free will. Gd punishing the Egyptians was emotionally benefiting for the Jews. Through the judgement we have the security of knowing the wrong done to us by the Egyptians did not go unpunished. Gd showed us that people do not get away with evil in the world and justice is carried out. There is a similar concept in the context of Teshuva. The Rambam in Hilchot Teshuva (1:4) brings down that certain transgressions can only be absolved after Yissurin (afflictions). Even though they are afflictions these Yissurin are a benefit to us, so that we should not feel that we may transgress the word of Gd without any consequences. Otherwise we would develop an improper association with transgression. But why do we need to thank Gd for carrying out justice, if justice is something Gd is always involved in? Of course Gd was going to carry out Justice, it would have been a lack if Gd had not carried out justice. What we thank Gd for is that we merited seeing the justice in a very explicit way. We do not always merit such a blatant demonstration of justice, e.g., the Holocaust. It causes great pain to the Jews to not see the manifestation of justice in an outright manner.



- 2) If He had carried out judgments against them, and not against their idols, it would have sufficed us!
- 3) If He had destroyed their idols, and had not smitten their first-born, it would have sufficed us!
- 4) If He had smitten their first-born, and had not given us their wealth, it would have sufficed us!
- 5) If He had given us their wealth, and had not split the sea for us, it would have sufficed us!

2) "If He had carried out judgments against them, and not against their idols." - The objective of the entire Torah is to uproot Avodah Zara. The discussions between Moshe and Pharaoh were aimed at removing Pharaoh from Avodah Zara. A number of Makkot targeted various Egyptian deities, such as, Dam, Choeshech and Makkat Bechorot. Makkat Bechorot was to destroy the Egyptians's whole system of Idolatry. The idolater places his security in his worship and assumes that his Idol will protect him. The sages tell us that on the night of Makkat Bechorot when the idolaters turned to their idols the idols disintegrated. Not only did we witness the judgment of the Egyptians, Gd showed us the falsity of Avodah Zara.

3) "If He had destroyed their idols and had not smitten their first-born." - This seems to be a part of the Judgment of the Egyptians, so why is it being singled out? This Makka was clearly different than all the other Makkot. It was after this Makka that Pharaoh released the Jews. Gd carried out this Makka himself, and not through a messenger like the others. When we say messenger we mean through the natural phenomena, the first nine plagues were a manipulation of the system of nature. In contrast to Makkat Bechorot, which was carried out by Gd, not via the natural law. When a Makka is executed through natural law there is a possibility that people will dismiss it as an extreme force of nature void of the Divine Providence. But it is impossible for a natural event to distinguish between the first born, especially when they are spread throughout the country. Through this Makka we were able to see the true power of Gd and the weakness of Pharaoh.

4) "If He had smitten their first-born and had not given us their wealth." - Why are we thanking Gd for the materialistic, it seems somewhat inappropriate amongst all the other kindnesses He did for us? The fact that we received money from the Egyptians is very important psychologically. We wouldn't have felt a complete sense of justice if what was taken away from us was not restored. There is also an idea of preparing someone for freedom, making sure they will thrive in their new situation. There is a law that when one frees a Hebrew servant you must send him out with gifts (Devarim 15:14). It is also the reason we try to give gifts to a newly married couple. There was also a change in the attitude of the Egyptians toward us. Many Jews struggle emotionally when they realize many Gentiles despise us. But when leaving Egypt "The Lrd gave the people favor in the eyes of the Egyptians. Also the man Moshe was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people." (Shemot 11:3.) Gd was emotionally preparing us for our freedom.

5) "If He had given us their wealth and had not split the sea for us" - This sounds like a strange praise. Wasn't it obvious that Gd would split the sea? It would be pointless for Gd to take us out of Egypt to have us killed by the Egyptian army at the sea. However, Gd could have taken us out without the splitting of the sea being necessary. We are recognizing it was the will of Gd for the miracle to take place, for the display of divine might to be manifest. "And Israel saw the great hand (work) which the Lrd did upon the Egyptians, and the people feared the Lrd; and they believed in the



- 6) If He had split the sea for us, and had not taken us through it on dry land, it would have sufficed us!
- 7) If He had taken us through the sea on dry land, and had not drowned our oppressors in it, it would have sufficed us!
- 8) If He had drowned our oppressors in it, and had not supplied our needs in the desert for forty years, it would have sufficed us!

Lrd, and in His servant Moshe.” (Shemot 14:31.) It was such an awesome event, it led to the affirmation of Gd and in Moshe being His servant.

6) “If He had split the sea for us and had not taken us through it on dry land.” - Wasn’t the dry land a necessary part of the miracle of the sea? Well actually it was not. Gd could have led us through the sea in damp, muddy water, but instead Gd completely dried the land. It sounds somewhat inconsequential, but to Bnei Yisrael at the moment it was not. The Torah mentions (Beresheit 37:25) that Yosef was sold to spice merchants. Who really cares what kind of merchants he was sold to in the context of him being sold into slavery? Evidently the psyche of man is fragile, and if one more thing had gone wrong for Yosef at that moment, e.g., was sold to fertilizer merchants, he might have suffered a mental break. The good smells were psychologically pleasing to Yosef and afforded him a sense of comfort and dignity. Gd treated us with a loving kindness during Exodus. While He saved us at the sea He maintained our dignity. We did not walk through mud but dry land.

7) “If He had taken us through the sea on dry land, and had not drowned our oppressors in it.” - It would have been possible for the Egyptians to have emerged on the opposite shore and return to Egypt. Drowning the army is another manifestation of Gd’s Justice. They deserved to die for chasing the Jews after all the miracles they had seen in Egypt. Gd gave us the privilege of seeing their destruction, to see evil destroyed. It was also beneficial psychologically to see the mighty warriors of Egypt reduced to nothing. The Jews were frozen and in a state of panic because their masters from Egypt were chasing after them. The Jews still projected onto the Egyptians a certain sense of superiority. Seeing them dying in the sea helped them to overcome the sense of subversiveness. It was also a demonstration that Gd is the man of war, whom security should be placed in.

8) “If He had drowned our oppressors in it, and had not supplied our needs in the desert for forty years.” - How could we have survived without this? The Dayenu isn’t talking about essentials; it wouldn’t make sense to give praise for something that was necessary for Gd to do. There could have been other ways to survive, as in the Jews purchasing food from the wealth they gathered in Egypt and by the sea; or by slaughtering their animals. It is referring to the quality of the experience, in the desert; not having this type of burden of worrying about and having to purchase food. Their needs were taken care of for them, like an all-inclusive vacation. This afforded them the time to engross themselves in Torah study. It was a tremendous opportunity where they were separated from distractions and their needs were taken care of.



- 9) If He had supplied our needs in the desert for forty years, and had not fed us the manna, it would have sufficed us!
- 10) If He had fed us the manna, and had not given us the Shabbat, it would have sufficed us!
- 11) If He had given us the Shabbat, and had not brought us close before Mount Sinai, it would have sufficed us!
- 12) If He had brought us close before Mount Sinai, and had not given us the Torah, it would have sufficed us!

9) “If He had supplied our needs in the desert for forty years, and had not fed us the manna.” - The Ramban regards the delivery of the Manna as the greatest of the miracles. ‘Manna’ was something unique, a special creation of Hashem used for the specific purpose of sustaining the nation. Not only was the substance of the ‘Man’ a gift, the whole system in which it was delivered was a kindness of Gd. The ‘Man’ was delivered each day, and any collected ‘Man’ could not be saved for a later day. It was a delivery system that trained Bnei Yisrael to place their securities in Gd.

10) “If He had fed us the manna, and had not given us the Shabbat.” - We thank Gd for the greatest of the days. Shabbat is a day of rest where a person is forced to remove himself from labor and is thus rejuvenated. The subject of the ‘Man’ and the Shabbat have a common thread of sustenance. - The Shabbat like the ‘Man’ is also an area where a person learns and trains himself to place his securities in Gd. In regards to Shabbat, we refrain from work for a day, trusting that Gd will deliver any sustenance we might be lacking as a consequence.

11) “If He had given us the Shabbat, and had not brought us close before Mount Sinai.” - It is interesting that it says “brought us close” instead of just “brought us.” It is not referring to a simple physical phenomenon of closeness but one of Kedusha. Before Har Siani we were required to attain a certain level of Kedusha by separating from relations. There are times when people wander aimlessly through life. People need a certain goal or ideal to strive for. Gd brought us close to Him; He gave us a goal, to attain a certain level of Kedusha, to undergo a certain process of Teshuva. Even if the event weren’t completed with the giving of the Torah it would have been a good in its own right. For example, if you were to prepare for a presentation but the event ends up getting canceled, you should still be thankful that you now have a real understanding of the area you prepared, and an appreciation for the ideas you gained. We see a similar idea by Moshe, who separated three cities of refuge in the Yarden (Jordan) although they did not have any legal significance until the last three cities of refuge in Israel were set up after his death. Why did Moshe want to do set up the cities if they had no effect in his lifetime? Moshe wanted to be involved in the Missvah. Being involved in the Missvah is an end in and of itself; the activity and involvement is itself a good even if it doesn’t achieve an effect.

12) “If He had brought us before Mount Sinai, and had not given us the Torah.” - There were two aspects at Har Sinai, the giving of the Torah and the manifestation of Gd or revelation to the nation. We could have had the revelation without the reception of Torah. That revelation itself is something to be thankful for. But Gd did not limit it to that. He gave us the Torah, the blueprint to every aspect of living the best life. Most people see the commandments as restrictions on their freedom, but they are really refinements that help a person refine him or herself and live in line with our true nature, i.e., exercising the mind, body and emotions.



13) If He had given us the Torah, and had not brought us into the land of Israel, it would have sufficed us!

14) If He had brought us into the land of Israel, and had not built for us the Beit Habechirah (Beit Hamikdash), it would have sufficed us!

### **Al Achat**

Thus how much more so should we be grateful to the Omnipresent One for the doubled and redoubled goodness that He has bestowed upon us; for He has brought us out of Egypt, and carried out judgments against them, and against their idols, and smote their first-born, and gave us their wealth, and split the sea for us, and took us through it on dry land, and drowned our oppressors in it, and supplied our needs in the desert for forty years, and fed us the manna, and gave us the Shabbat, and brought us before Mount Sinai, and gave us the Torah, and brought us into the land of Israel and built for us the Beit Habechirah to atone for all our sins.

13) "If He had given us the Torah, and had not brought us into the land of Israel" - We see from here the objective is the Torah, and the Land is not necessarily essential. There are laws of the land in the Torah, but that is only once Gd gives you a certain land that there is a greater perfection in including the laws of the land. But the Torah has existence without the land, like the Jews who exist in exile but still have a system of Torah. The benefit of receiving the land is a double-edged sword. You can become successful in the land and forget Gd, but in exile you are the minority and constantly facing anti-Semitism. The benefit of the land is to establish an entire society, where the goal of the society is to establish a system of Torah. The land affords independence and the cultivation of a certain type of society that breeds Judaism. This type of land would be much more beneficial than living in exile, amongst a culture that is steeped in the materialism and fantasy. A land where the institutions as well as the culture are focused on Jewish ideas can have tremendous advantages.

14) "If He had brought us into the land of Israel, and had not built for us the Bet Habechirah" - The final step is really the ultimate objective, the building of the Bet Hamikdash. It entails the benefit of the Korbanot and the sanctification of Gds name; the atonement for our sins and the ability to reach a new level as a nation; to be a Mamlechet Kohanim VeGoy Kadosh (sanctified people), to sanctify Gd's name as a nation. It establishes a degree of closeness between the nation of Israel and Gd. It is hard for us to appreciate this because we have no way of relating to the benefit of having the Shechina dwelling in the Bet HaMikdash.

**Al Achat Camah VeCamah** - If we already mentioned all the steps of the Dayenu, why do we list them again? The first phase was delineation and an exploration of the benefits Gd granted us. Once we understand the good that was done for us can we then begin to give praise for the acts. We have to work and think through the steps before we can appreciate them. Our praise of Gd has to be a genuine and accurate praise. The first step is to understand exactly what was done (Camah Maalot). The second phase (Al Achat) is the actual praise. This second step involves a humbling of the self, which can be done once we understand that we do not deserve all that was done for us. It was because of the kindness of Gd that these things were done.



## Rabban Gamliel

Rabban Gamliel used to say: Whoever does not discuss the following three things on Pesach has not fulfilled his duty, namely: Pesach, Massah and Marror.

## Pesach

Pesach - the Pesach-lamb that our fathers ate during the time of the Beit Hamikdash - for what reason [did they do so]? Because the Omnipresent passed over our fathers' houses in Egypt, as it is said: "You shall say, It is a Pesach-offering to the Lrd, because He passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians with a plague, and He saved our houses. And the people bowed and prostrated themselves."

## Massa

This Massah that we eat for what reason? Because the dough of our fathers did not have time to become leavened before the King of the kings of kings, the Holy One, blessed be

**Rabban Gamliel Omer** - "Whoever does not discuss the following three things on Passover has not fulfilled his obligation, namely: Pesach, Massa and Marror." What obligation is Rabban Gamliel talking about? The obligation to eat Massa on Pesach is to eat a KeZayit (roughly 23 grams) of Massa on the night of the 15th. The Rambam even holds that if one "eats Massa without intent, i.e. someone forced you to eat, one fulfils his obligation." It is therefore clear that Rabban Gamliel cannot hold that one who did not discuss the Massa has not fulfilled his obligation to eat Massa. Rabban Gamliel must be referring to the Missvah of Sippur Yissiat Missrayim (to tell of the Exodus from Egypt). Why is discussing these three Missvot so crucial to the story of the Exodus of Egypt? The Sippur is not limited to history, but a reenactment of the story that pertains to our lives. We mentioned previously (Avadim Hayeenu) that the Haggadah says "Missvah Alenu LeSaper Bessiat Missrayim" (it is required of us to tell in the story of the Exodus). The word Bessiat suggests that we have to enter into all of the details, the feelings and ideas of the story, until it is as if we are actually actors in the story. The Haggadah encompasses a number of Missvot, which take us back in time, making us active participants in the Exodus. We used to eat the Korban Pesach because Gd passed over our houses as he smote the Egyptians. We eat the Massa our forefathers ate, to understand the haste in which they were driven out of Egypt. We taste the bitterness of the Marror to reflect on the bitter lives our forefathers had due to the harsh labor of Pharaoh. If we do not reflect on the Missvot of the night, we do not become active participants and do not fulfill the obligation of "Bessiat Missrayim;" actively telling the story as if we are actually leaving Missrayim.

**Massa Zo** - Why do we point the objects we are referring to, everyone knows what Massa is? Why do we ask a question "Al Shum Mah" before we go on to explain why we eat the Massa? We should just say the reason we eat Massa is such and such. This ties into the idea of Sippur Yissiat Missrayim. The Missvah in its primary form is done in a group, it is a dialogue. The best way to learn is to reflect and then to discuss your ideas with others. When we converse with people we are animate and dramatic. We use our hands and show liveliness; like a criminal prosecutor who uses a bloody knife while giving his closing statement. We do not talk in the same way we would give over an essay. Instead we might ask rhetorical questions to spur thoughts in our friends.



He, revealed Himself to them and redeemed them. Thus it is said: "They baked Massah-cakes from the dough that they had brought out of Egypt, because it was not leavened; for they had been driven out of Egypt and could not delay, and they had also not prepared any [other] provisions."

## **Marror**

This Marror that we eat for what reason? Because the Egyptians embittered our fathers' lives in Egypt, as it is said: "They made their lives bitter with hard service, with mortar and with bricks, and with all manner of service in the field; all their service which they made them serve with rigor."

## **Bechol Dor VaDor**

In every generation a person is obligated to regard himself as if he had come out of Egypt, as it is said: "You shall tell your child on that day, it is because of this that the Lrd did for me when I left Egypt." The Holy One, blessed be He, redeemed not only our fathers from Egypt, but He redeemed also us with them, as it is said: "It was us that He brought out from there, so that He might bring us to give us the land that He swore to our fathers."

- There are two competing ideas on the night of Pesach, the idea of Derech Oni (Oni can mean 'affliction' or according to some 'poor person') and Derech Cheroot (freedman/wealthy person). We reflect on how we were oppressed slaves in Egypt and that Gd redeemed us and granted us our freedom. The Massa itself actually reflects these two ideas. We ate the Massa in Egypt while we were slaves and had no free time to allow our bread to rise. In contrast, the same happened as we were redeemed from Egypt. We had no time to allow the Massa to rise because the Egyptians could not stand any more plagues, so they hurried us out. The dichotomy in the Massa itself highlights the stark contrast in which we went from being slaves, to being like masters over the most powerful nation of the world, all due to the hand of Gd.

**Marror Zo** - We eat the Marror to focus on the goal of the Missrim, the destruction of the Jewish spirit. The goal was to push a person to a point where they break down psychologically and cannot live a normal human existence, similar to the Holocaust. That was the nature of the servitude in Missrayim. "And they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field; in all their service, wherein they made them serve with rigor." (Shemot 1:14)

**Bechol Dor VaDor** - The idea of being an active participant in the reenactment, after having being implicated by "Bessiat Missrayim" and by Rabban Gamliel, is stated explicitly here in The Haggadah. " (For further explanation on the quoted verse see Avadim Hayeenu.)

- What is the necessity of the statement "In every generation and generation we are required?" Why not just say 'We are required?' One might think mankind has outgrown the phenomenon of redemption. When the whole world was steeped in primitive practices and incorrect science, praise for redemption was necessary. But today, we live in a time where we have so much knowledge and understanding that everyone is redeemed and our redemption might feel somewhat unnecessary. We deal scientific phenomenon as large as the Big Bang and as small as Bosons, Leptons and Quarks.



## Lefichach

Thus it is our duty to thank, to laud, to praise, to glorify, to exalt, to adore, to bless, to elevate and to honor the One who did all these miracles for our fathers and for us. He took us from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to joy, and from mourning to festivity, and from deep darkness to great light and from bondage to redemption. Let us therefore recite before Him, Praise Gd!

## Hallelukah

Praise Gd! Offer praise, you servants of the Lrd; praise the Name of the Lrd. May the Lrd's Name be blessed from now and to all eternity. From the rising of the sun to its setting, the Lrd's Name is praised. The Lrd is high above all nations, His glory is over the heavens. Who is like the Lrd, our Gd, who dwells on high yet looks down so low upon heaven and earth! He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the dunghill,

Yet, even in such a world people do not exist in freedom. Many are still steeped in the most primitive aspects of culture, materialism and fantasy. Bechol Dor VaDor teaches us that the world will never be a qualitatively different world, a world not needing the Torah. The values of the Torah will be necessary in every generation.

**Lefichach Anachnu Chayavim** - Because our current freedom is directly dependent on the redemption from Egypt we are required to praise Gd. An interesting question arises. We have mentioned previously that Gd was involved in sending us down to Egypt. Why would we thank Gd for redeeming us from Egypt if He was the one who sent us into slavery? This is where Massa comes in handy. Massa is at the same time the bread of affliction and the bread of redemption. The affliction and redemption have an intrinsic relationship. Without the experience in Egypt we would have been just like every other nation. The enslavement was designed for our perfection, for us to learn what the aim of life is, what the perfect life is. The redemption is the culmination of a process, which was instrumental for us to relate to a life which values, family, intellectual study and practicing kindness. It is only through the Torah that we were able to achieve a better, more perfected life.

**Besset Yisrael** - The previous paragraph "Hallelukah" was from Tehillim 113. It is a fairly straightforward Psalm that discusses Gd's sovereignty over nature and mankind, very fitting for the night of Pesach. These ideas are fundamental to the night of Pesach, an essential context to studying the miracles Gd performed in Egypt. Besset Yisrael (When Israel left - Psalm 114) is a little more difficult to understand. The Psalm asks questions, "What is with you, O sea, that you flee; Jordan, that you turn backward? Mountains, why do you skip like rams; hills, like a pool of water, the flint-stone into a spring of water?" On the most basic level the verses sound very odd. We are asking the sea why it split, or the mountains why they skip. In relatiy though, the Psalm refers to different miracles that were performed by Gd. We aren't actually talking to the mountains, rather we are rhetorically asking why these miracles were performed generally. We are asking: what is the value of man such that Gd would cause an aberration in his creation on man's behalf (a break in his natural law)? In Tehillim 8:5 we say, "What is man such that he should be remembered" (Mah Enosh Ki



to seat them with nobles, with the nobles of His people. He restores the barren woman to the house, into a joyful mother of children. Praise Gd.

### **Besset Yisrael Mimissrayim**

When Israel went out of Egypt, the House of Jacob from a people of a foreign language, Judah became His holy one, Israel His dominion. The sea saw and fled, the Jordan turned backward. The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like young sheep. What is with you, O sea, that you flee; Jordan, that you turn backward? Mountains, why do you skip like rams; hills, like a pool of water, the flint-stone into a spring of water.

### **Baruch Ata**

Blessed are You, Gd, our Gd, King of the universe, who has redeemed us and redeemed our fathers from Egypt, and enabled us to attain this night to eat Massah and Marror. So too, Gd, our Gd and Gd of our fathers, enable us to attain other holidays and festivals that will come to us in peace with happiness in the rebuilding of Your city, and with rejoicing in Your service [in the Bet Hamikdash]. Then we shall eat whose blood shall be sprinkled on the wall of Your altar for acceptance; and we shall thank You with a new song for our redemption and for the deliverance of our souls. Blessed are You, Gd, who redeemed Israel. Blessed are You, Lrd, our Gd, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

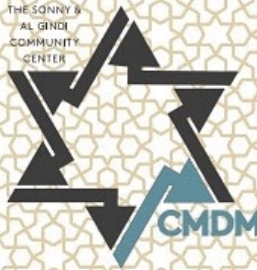
Tizkerenu). We are a dependent existence. We come from the dust and return to it. Our physical existence is fleeting and momentary. Gd does not cause miracles because man warrants them. Miracles are in a sense part of Gd's plan. The world is created so that everything should achieve its objective to honor Gd, as we say "Hakol Nibra Lichbodo" (everything was created for His honor). The objective of nature is for men and women to recognize Gd, that Gd should be manifest.

**Baruch** - During this blessing we thank Gd for the redemption from Egypt. The Blessing says, "who has redeemed us and our forefathers" stating first redeemed us and secondly our forefathers. In the paragraph of Bechol Dor Vador we find the order reversed, "not only our fathers from Egypt, but He redeemed also us." Why is there a different order? In Bechol Dor VaDor we are still in the process of learning that we must praise Gd, because the redemption relates to us, for if our forefathers had not been redeemed we would still be slaves. (See Avadim Hayeenu for further explanation.) When deriving the necessity of our praise or learning that we must praise, it is necessary to start with the primary, the starting point, and deduce from there. But we then praise and thank Gd because the redemption relates to us. Therefore, in the Blessing we mention our redemption first and subsequently mention the redemption of our forefathers.



# CONGREGATION MAGEN DAVID OF MANHATTAN SEFER TORAH CAMPAIGN

WE INVITE YOU TO PARTAKE IN THE LAST MITZVAH  
OF THE TORAH BY PURCHASING AND DEDICATING  
SEFARIM, PARASHIOT, PSUKIM, AND LETTERS IN  
CMDM'S SEFER TORAH.



DEDICATE  
FOR YOURSELF, IN  
HONOR OF A  
FRIEND, OR MEMORY  
OF A LOVED ONE.  
BUY A LETTER FOR  
AS LITTLE AS ONE  
DOLLAR.

וְעַתָּה, כְּתֹבוּ  
לָכֶם אֶת-הַשִּׁירָה  
הַזֹּאת, וְלַמִּדָּה  
אֶת-בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל

“And now, write this  
song (the Torah) for  
yourselves and teach  
it to the Sons of  
Israel”

- Deuteronomy 31:19