

NCSY Israel presents

TORAH 4 TEENS BY TEENS

Haggadah Companion
Pesach 2022



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A Message from NCSY Israel's Regional Directors

On Pesach night Jewish people from around the world will open up a special book called the Haggadah in which we will tell the story of our servitude, the miracles we experienced in Mitzrayim, and our redemption. Through the Haggadah we fulfill the Mitzvah of "סיפור יציאת מצרים" the telling over of our exodus from Egypt. Specifically this year, the Seder coincides with Shabbat. During Kiddush every Friday night we recall or "זכר" the the leaving of Egypt The Mitzvah of "זכר יציאת מצרים" is a Mitzvah for each day and each night throughout the whole year. What then is so special about the Seder and the Mitzvah to "tell" over the story of our departure from Egypt specifically on this night?

Many answers are given to this question. The Minchat Chinuch (1801-1874) explains that while on each night there is a commandment to remind oneself of our departure from Egypt, tonight we have an obligation to tell the children what happened. We are commanded to continue our story and pass it on to the next generation tonight. Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (1903-1993) suggests that it is specifically through telling the story that one is brought to a place where they thank Hashem for the miracles that He has performed for us, while merely recalling the story does not do that for the individual. Rav Kook (1865-1935) writes in his commentary on the siddur, Olat Re'iyah that the fundamental distinction between this night and every other night is that one must actually feel like they are leaving Egypt right now. On the Seder night one must describe their own departure from Mitzrayim as if they are being sent free themselves. The night of the Seder is the night in which we left Mitzrayim and that same influence and energy are recreated every single year at this time. Rav Kook takes this further and explains how it is from this special experience where the power of freedom is evoked in the world where we as a nation must return to our natural independence to fulfill our unique mission. Rav Yosef Tzvi Rimon writes that what we experience on the Seder night is what we try to tap into each and every day. We find ourselves in a world where one can limit themselves and not actualize their full potential. Whether one is caught up being distracted by their smartphones, fixated on the news, or even worrying about the future. When one cannot be present on their today and tap into their unique independence they can't truly live and experience the world around them and everything they have to be thankful for.

Over 300 NCSYers are lucky to have the experience to connect to Hashem every day in the most natural way possible living in His Eretz Hakodesh. As we open our eyes daily and walk through the cities and streets of Eretz Yisrael we are experiencing the Geulah - redemption every single day.

We welcome you to experience the Seder together with us and to feel the Torah of Eretz Yisrael which embodies Hashem's presence in the here and now with the beautiful Divrei Torah written by the teens and staff of NCSY Israel.



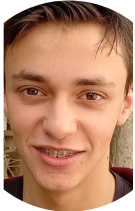
Michael Kahn
Rabbi Michael Kahn



Yosef Ginsberg
Rabbi Yosef Ginsberg

The Message Behind Karpas

Eli Jerozolim
10th grade, Efrat



The Seder starts late and we are all hungry. We would love to dive right into the meal. We say the kiddush and wash our hands but are then a bit disappointed with what comes next: karpas.

Apparently before we tell over the story of the Jews leaving Egypt it is important we eat this vegetable dipped in salt water. Clearly this is meant to symbolize something, but what does it all represent? Why is this so important that it comes right at the beginning of the Seder?

I heard an interesting answer from a pasuk from shir hamalot. The pasuk reads "הזרעים בדמעה ברינה יקצורו" "those who plant crying will harvest with happiness." This pasuk is a metaphor for how someone works on something for a period of time and starts with nothing but then eventually he will see his hard work pay off with the proof of his results i.e. the harvest. I think this same idea applies to the salt water for karpas. We are not crying because we failed. We cry because

we succeeded. These are tears of joy and while we were crying in Egypt as slaves, that was all part of the process. Now we sit and remember how we cried. We remember the process and our failures and how they shaped our success. And now after we've succeeded we still need to remember what we've been through and where we came from.

All the time we see ourselves in our current challenges and it feels so hard or even painful. But we need to realize that it is all part of Hashem's plan and in the end we will be able to understand and see what all of our hardships have been for. May we all be able to recognize that Hashem is in charge and have emuna that we will see the fruits of our labor.

We are not crying
because we failed.
We cry because we
succeeded.

Freedom, Obligation and the Ka'ara

Eliezer Cohn
Bet Shemesh Chapter Advisor



What is this Cherus, freedom, that we speak of so much on Pesach? It is the focus of Sedarim in every Jewish home every year. Is this freedom simply a salvation from a cruel Pharaoh or liberation from the harsh labor in Egypt? Or is there more here? What is the deeper meaning behind this idea of freedom we celebrate on Pesach? And how can we experience this freedom today?

There is a story recorded in the gemara (Pesachim 115b) of Abaye sitting by Rabbah's Seder. It came time for the common custom of removing the Ka'ara, in their time it was more of a personal table similar to a TV tray. As they approached Magid, Rabbah had his attendant come to remove his table, to which Abaye asked "Wait, what? Why? We haven't eaten yet and you are already removing the table?!" Rabbah looks back and says "Thank you, now we don't need to say Ma Nishtana" and has the table brought back. If we take a deeper look into this story we can find a deep sod of Yiddishkeit and the Pesach Seder.

The Tzitz Eliezer explains that this story between Abaye and Rabbah is more than a simple innocent question, there is a bigger conversation being had, a conversation about freedom. Rabbah was about to start maggid, the part of the Seder where we tell the children the tale of Yetziat Mitzrayim and our people's story of redemption and liberation from oppression. Now what was on the plate right in front of him? His zroah (pesach), matzah, and maror, our 3 obligations on the night of Pesach... How can we talk about our freedom sitting in front of our obligations? How can you have freedom if you are obligated in mitzvos and service to Hashem: we are still slaves! When Rabbah removes his table or his obligations, he is implying that only

after you remove any obligations then you can have freedom. But "No!" says Abaye, "our obligation is our freedom!"

In Judaism we are taught what true freedom is. In the gemara (Kiddushin 32a) Rabbi Hanina says: Greater is one who is commanded to do a mitzvah and performs it than one who is not commanded to do a mitzvah and performs it. The simple explanation to this statement is that when you act out of spontaneity you have no resistance, everything is available to you. But when you are commanded in something, that very first moment you are met with a refusal to accept, the ego fights back, and you have a choice to make, a free choice. R' Akiva Tatz talks extensively on this topic and says there is a deeper level to this idea. One's actions can only match his greatness at that given moment. A spontaneous act comes from within you. You may be doing a great thing but it can never be greater than you are at that moment. An act that comes from following Hashem's commandments and doing his will can bring us to even greater heights.

Every Yid has a beautiful and unique path that is unlike anyone else's, and yet we still have the ability to unite ourselves and create a beautiful brotherhood. We have a choice of how we are going to use our freedom! Will our freedom be self-serving and do what "I feel" or "what I want to do" or will we use this gift Hashem has given us to be truly free, reach a greatness far above ourselves and bring unity to Am Yisroel.

Chag Kasher Sameach and NEVER forget Hashem loves you so very much!

Of Frogs and a Prince

Ephraim Fruchter
Jerusalem Chapter Advisor



Reclining as colleagues in Bnei Brak on a long Seder night, Rebbe Akiva and Rebbe Tarfon surely had much to discuss in recounting the exodus from Egypt. A portion of their retelling certainly covered the

nature of the miracles wrought by the Red Sea. In the following generation, their disciples would continue debating the points born of that evening.

A dove trapped between the hissing sea and the vulturous Egyptian horde (Mechilta Rashbi 14:12), the Jewish people were immobilized by fear. Rebbe Meir claims based on the hypothesis of his teacher Rebbe Akiva that the tribes jockeyed over who would lead the people forward into the water. Amid this squabbling for priority, the tribe of Binyamin leapt into the sea and in merit of their bold response, the future location of G-d's permanent presence was to be in Binyamin's territory. Rebbe Yehuda, a student of Rebbe Tarfon, counters with an alternative narrative. In fact, nobody wanted to proceed towards the menacing water. Emerging from this vacuum of paralysis, Nachshon ben Aminadav jumped into the sea. As a reward for sanctifying the name of G-d in public, the tribe of Yehuda was granted future political leadership over the Jewish people (Sotah 37a).

A connection exists between the initial posture of the nation and the honors granted to those who took charge. Within the order of events as presented by Rebbe Meir, the tribe of Binyamin was specifically rewarded with a spiritual inheritance because they acted while others only undertook to do so. If "the glory of mitzvah performance is modesty" (Derech Eretz Zuta 5), most honor it in the breach. The willingness to follow through on one's spiritual proclamations, especially in a time of stress, testifies to one's true character. There is no pecking order when it comes to spiritual decisiveness. But according to Rebbe Yehuda, the initiative of an individual in the face of collective inertia rewarded the tribe of Yehuda with temporal governance. "In a place where there are no men, strive to be a man." (Avot 2:5). Or at least a prince from the tribe of Yehuda.

In a story rife with buzzwords of hierarchy (tribes, officers, Moshe, Ribbono shel Olam), it took a solitary man to get things moving. For this, the tribe of Yehuda was rewarded with handling the future mantle of Jewish political leadership and kingship.

Both Nachshon and the tribe of Binyamin responded to the situations facing them without consultation or deliberation. They would not be the last to do so. Theodosius, leader of the Jewish community in Rome in the late first century CE, preached that Chaniah, Mishael, and Azarya, faced with the choice of submitting to a monarch's command or certain death, drew inspiration for their own martyrdom using a kal vachomer from the frogs in Egypt's plague who vaulted themselves into flames to fulfill the will of their Creator (Pesachim 53b). Astounded by this tenuous connection between commanded men and uncharged amphibians, commentators struggle to make sense of the analogy. Rav Yechiel Weinberg (Lifrakim pg. 356), writing in 20th century Germany, posits that the a fortiori argument made in Babylonia on the cusp of the blazing furnace wasn't a technical or logical one. Instead, it reflected a shared spiritual characteristic. Theodosius was hinting at a primal inner force which erupts from the soul, emerging in a person's actions from a place past consciousness or clear knowledge, all without regard for technical requirements or distinctions between permitted and obligatory. Experience suggests that reflexive action taken in the absence of inquiry or consultation can have momentous implications on personal and communal destiny, determining the lot of nations and movements, for either good or bad.

To solely extol the virtues of instinctual religious sacrifice would be to overstate the case. However, balanced with a healthy respect for the value of considered and deliberative decision making, we are rightfully inspired by the actions of a tribe, frogs, and a prince.

Channeling our Inner Child for a Successful Seder

Shlomo Rayman

Bet Shemesh Chapter Director & Educational Director



I have never run my own Seder, having the great privilege to sit by my parents' table each year. This being the case, while most people focus on the educator's and parent's role in teaching the four children, I've always been more interested in this text from the child's perspective. Which son am I? Is it better to be the Chacham or the Tam? There may have been some years in which I've wondered if I was the Rasha, or perhaps I was the she'eino yodea lishol and wasn't even aware. I think this idea is reflected in the halacha, that even when no children are present, one must ask himself the four questions. We aren't meant to just be the educators on Pesach night, we are meant to be the children as well.

While the Haggadah makes it sound like there are four distinct children, I think it's safe to say that we have aspects of them all within each one of us. Perhaps this introduction to maggid is coming to tell us the different parts of our inner child we need to awaken to truly appreciate the Seder night.

The Chacham: The precursor to all learning, and the Seder in specific, is a child-like curiosity. We must be open to new ideas, thirsty for a deeper understanding. How fascinating that the Chacham isn't defined by his ability to answer questions, but his ability to ask them! Daniel J. Boorstin once wrote "The greatest obstacle to discovery is not ignorance - it is the illusion of knowledge." Sometimes we are too quick to jump to conclusions and settle for superficial approaches and understandings. Let's take a moment to focus on our questions, and be open to delve deep into the Torah and our traditions.

The Rasha: While instinctively one might think we shouldn't try and emulate the Rasha, it is interesting to note that the wicked child still has a seat at the Seder, and isn't kicked out. There is a role for that rebellious side of us as well.

What's special about a "wicked" child is his honesty, and true growth requires honesty. If we hide our issues under the rug, ignore our more negative aspects, we can never grow.

There is another aspect of the Rasha that we must be aware of, and try to overcome. He refers to the Seder as 'avodah', or 'work'. He focuses on the difficulty of the mitzvot. He views them as a burden, and therefore wants nothing to do with them. Who of us can say that in the middle of maggid we have never been guilty of wanting to skip right to the food? We have to recognize our childish desire for instant gratification, and subsequently blunt our teeth, recognizing that we will truly enjoy our food if we first appreciate why we are celebrating.

The Tam: There are few things purer than the excitement in a child's eyes when experiencing something for the first time. This innocence and wonder of discovery can be lost with the years. We have heard this story hundreds of times. Can we relate to the Seder night with the excitement of a wide-eyed child?

She'eino Yodeah Lishol: In the modern world, the art of experience is being lost. Everything we witness and see must be either recorded or responded to with a hot take. Sometimes we are so busy analyzing and forming ideas, or making sure to take pictures, that we forget to be aware and present. Let the text of the Haggadah speak to you. Like a newborn being nurtured and formed subconsciously by his environment, let the ambiance of the Seder envelop you, creating a truly transformative experience.

This Pesach, let us channel our inner child and have an informative, honest, exciting, and transformative Seder.

One Nation

Yehuda Sunshine
10th grade, Raanana



In Magid we talk about the four sons: the wise, evil, simple and the one who doesn't know how to ask. "The wicked son says 'What purpose is this to you.'" He says to you implying that he is not part of Am Israel. "Therefore you strike him in the teeth saying 'Because of this, Hashem did this for me during my departure from Egypt.'"

To understand, we need to go back to the times of Yosef. Yaakov tells Yosef "to check on the peace of your brothers, and the peace of the sheep." Why did Yaakov have to add "peace of the sheep" and not just "peace of your brothers and the sheep?" He was telling Yosef that there are two kinds of peace. The peace that the sheep have, which is that if you don't bother me, I won't bother you. And the peace of the brothers, which was one of caring for each other and being a community. Yaakov was telling Yosef, "See the peace of the sheep? That is how you are to your brothers, and it's wrong. Look at the peace of your brothers. They are a community, who care for each other. That is how you should act to them."

When Am Israel was taken out of Egypt, and camped at Har Sini, the Torah says the word ויחן, and he camped, instead of the proper word ויחנו, and they camped. This was to tell

us that the nation was איש אחד בלב אחד. We need to be an עם, and not just individuals, because individuals won't survive. Only a nation which looks out for each other will survive.

Only a nation which
looks out for each other
will survive.

This evil son tries to show that he is not part of Am Israel, and takes himself out of the community, saying that if you don't bother him, he won't bother you. But why does the Haggadah say, "Therefore you strike him in the teeth?" What does striking the teeth have to do with anything? The Haggadah tells us that Am Israel was as numerous as the grass. Why doesn't it say stars or dust, like how Hashem told Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov? It is to say that one blade of grass has no value. But when there are numerous blades, there is a significance. This is the same for teeth. One tooth does not help a person that much. So we strike the wicked son in the teeth to say, just like one tooth doesn't have significant value, so too separating yourself from the עם doesn't have a significant value. Just as teeth need each other to be of value, so too Am Israel needs each other to work properly.

The Power of Speech

Koby Erdfarb
10th Grade, Efrat



The Haggadah states that Yaakov was "אנוס על פי הדיבור" ("compelled by Divine decree") when he went down to Mitzrayim to see Yosef, his son. Yet, when you look at the psukim, the Torah states that Yaakov said that he wanted to go to Mitzrayim before he died in order to see his son Yosef and the idea of being compelled isn't mentioned. Additionally, the language used, "אנוס על פי הדיבור" is strange. Why doesn't it just say that Hashem told him to go down to Mitzrayim? Why is this lashon of דיבור used?

To answer these questions, we need to look at the events that led up to the redemption of Bnei Yisroel a little more closely. We all know that it all began with Yosef being forced down to Mitzrayim. But how did he get there? As we know and are taught from a young age, his brothers sold him. But why? We see from the psukim that there was jealousy and animosity between the brothers towards Yosef. But why? What was the cause of this animosity? Being the first born of Yaakov's true love, Yosef, from birth, was treated differently. Yaakov kept him

close, while his brothers were out tending to the cattle. The brothers were working hard in the fields, while Yosef was having a chavrusa with their father. Yosef receives a special jacket, a kutonet passim, while the brothers do not. The brothers felt that their father loved Yosef more and resented Yosef for it. In response, Yosef spoke lashon hara about them to Yaakov. As the Torah says: "ויבא יוסף את דיבתם רעה אל אביהם" ("and Joseph brought an evil report of them to their father"). It is this action of Yosef's that starts the process.

But was it really an action? In fact, it was speech, דיבור, that initiated his descent to Mitzrayim. Yosef's speech set into motion a series of events that ended up compelling Yaakov to go down to Mitzrayim. So, when the Haggadah states that Yaakov went down to Mitzrayim "אנוס על פי הדיבור", it specifically used the lashon of דיבור to show the power of Yosef's words. While we may not realize, our words have tremendous power. They can build up or break down. Our challenge is to always be conscious of our דיבור and the power it has.

Appreciating Our Freedom

Rabbi Avi Berman
Executive Director of OU Israel



Pesach is the חג החירות. It is a time to rejoice in the freedom of Klal Yisrael from the slavery of Mitzrayim. And yet, Chazal tells us to begin the Seder in a very specific way. The Mishnah in Masechet Pesachim, Perek Yud, Mishah Daled says:

מתחיל בגנות, ומסיים בשבח; ודורש מ"ארמי אובד אבי" (דברים כו,ה), עד שהוא גומר את כל הפרשה.

We are told to begin the Seder by talking about the slavery we experienced in Mitzrayim. To be quite honest, this idea bothered me. In the Berman household, we find ourselves working to the last moment to clean, cook and prepare for the Seder. We finally reach the Seder and we don't begin with praise and gratitude, but start with a detailed story of how we were slaves for 210 years? This is חג החירות! We're finally free!

But Chazal is teaching us a valuable lesson for life: freedom can only be appreciated when we know what it feels like to be chained.

Each and every one of us faces challenges in our lives. None of us are spared. And that is because during times of pain and uncertainty, we cling to HaShem for our salvation and

foster our relationship with Him. And when salvation finally arrives, we can look back and truly appreciate how the pain we experienced shaped us into stronger and better Ovdei HaShem. By going through the journey of pain and reaching salvation, we can wholeheartedly call out to HaShem with Shevach, acknowledging the glorious ways in which HaKadosh Baruch Hu runs the world.

Pesach is indeed the חג החירות, for the story of Mitzrayim, and the way we see our own lives, is all about perspective. Everything happens for a reason, and Pesach gives us an opportunity to reflect on this idea. Only once we detail the devastation and anguish we faced in Mitzrayim can we appreciate how those very hardships allowed us to become Am Yisrael. Throughout those 210 years, as we cried out to HaShem, He was patiently waiting to bring about a salvation that we never could have dreamed of or asked for.

Pesach is a time for self reflection and perspective. It is a time to look back on the hardships and rejoice in each and every personal freedom we have experienced. May we continue to see HaKadosh Baruch Hu's presence in our lives and utilize the Kochot we've gained through hardships to reach our potential.

Holding On To Our Lineage

Jonathan Bernstein
9th grade, Raanana



As the son of a כהן I would like to present the following דבר תורה. In the Pesach Haggadah we read:

ונצעק אל ה' אלוקי אבותינו,
וישמע ה' את קולנו, וירא את
ענינו ואת עמלנו ואת לחצנו.

"We cried out to Hashem, the G-d of our ancestors, and Hashem heard our voice and saw our suffering, our burden, and our oppression."

ואת עמלנו. אלו הבנים. כמה שנאמר: כל הבן
הילוד היארה תשליכהו וכל הבת תחיון.

"Our burden: This refers to the sons, as it says: Pharaoh said, cast every son who is born into the Nile, but let every daughter live."

We see that פרעה לא גזר אלא על הזכרים, Pharaoh only decreed death for the males. An obvious and puzzling question arises: If Pharaoh, a smart king, wanted to wipe out the Jewish nation, why did he request to cast the male newborns into the Nile? Since the

Jewishness of a newborn is determined by the mother, Pharaoh should have ordered the female newborns, not the males, to be cast into the Nile.

A possible answer to this question is that Pharaoh did not want to wipe out the Jewish nation. He needed them to do his hard work. His intention was to wipe out the יחוס the lineage of the Jewish nation - כהונה, לוייה, or Priesthood, Levites and Royalty - privileges which are determined by the father of a newborn.

A proof to this is apparent from the fact that when Hashem saw that the G-d fearing midwives Shifrah and Puah did not do as Pharaoh the king had requested from them and saved the male newborns, thereby saving the lineage of the Jewish nation, Hashem rewarded them measure for measure. The pasuk in Shemot states ויעש להם בתים Hashem made for them houses, which according to Rashi refers to the houses of Priesthood, Levites and Royalty-כהונה, לוייה, ומלכות.

Redemption is Coming!

Adira Marcus
10th grade, Chashmonaim



Towards the end of Maggid, the Haggadah quotes a Gemara in Masechet Pesachim: "Rabbi Gamliel used to say: Whoever doesn't say these three things on Pesach doesn't fulfill their requirement of Seder night: **"פסח, מצה, ומרור"**.

"פסח" signifies the Mitzvah of Korban Pesach that was given on the night that the Jewish people left Egypt. "מצה" symbolizes the redemption that took place when the Jews left Egypt in a hurry and their bread did not have time to rise. "מרור" reminds us of the bitter suffering of the Jews when they were slaves in Egypt.

Why did Rabban Gamliel list these iconic mitzvot of the Seder in this order? After all, if we were to list these in chronological order, you would first list **מרור**, then **פסח**, and lastly **מצה**!

HaRav Dovid Deutsch says that this Gemara is teaching us something fundamental about the ultimate Geulah. He says that the Galut that we are part of today is completing the Galut of Mitzrayim. The pain and suffering that is represented by the marmor is not limited to a specific moment in history when

we were slaves in Egypt. Rather, suffering is a key element of the future Geulah.

Pain is also a necessary component of childbirth. The pain which a mother feels during those last moments - lead to the immediate joy of the birth of the child. The same can be said about the Jewish people: the pain of persecution and suffering that we have endured for thousands of years will be replaced by an immediate simcha, when

...the Galut that we
are part of today is
completing the Galut
of Mitzrayim

Mashiach comes, and our nation is born anew.

This is the reason why marmor is listed last. When we "feel" marmor in our personal and national lives, the potential of Hashem's redemption of our people is near.

The Seder Plate and its Symbolisms

Tehila Eckhaus
12th Grade, Efrat



What does the Seder Plate symbolize? The Seder Plate known as the קערה is a special plate that holds different symbolic foods. It is often set in the middle of the table at the Pesach Seder. On the קערה, we place karpas (a vegetable), marror and chazeret (bitter herbs), charoset, zro'ah (a shank bone), and beitzah (an egg). These items provide a tangible representation of concepts that will be taught and discussed at the Seder. Karpas is a vegetable (other than bitter herbs) such as celery, parsley, or boiled potato, on which we make the bracha, Borei Pri Ha'Adamah. Pesach is the Spring festival when we celebrate the birth of our nation and these vegetables are a symbol of rebirth and rejuvenation.

Marror and chazeret are the bitter herbs which symbolize that the lives of the Jews in Egypt were embittered by hard labor. Many people use horseradish for marror and romaine lettuce for chazeret. Charoset reminds us of the hard labor the Jews performed with bricks and mortar. Charoset is a pasty mixture of ingredients such as nuts, dates, apples, wine and cinnamon. The Talmud says this serves as an "antiseptic" to dilute the harsh effects of the marror. In Egypt, the Jewish women, believing they would soon be redeemed, would entice their husbands who were exhausted and frustrated by the difficult labor, to continue to have children. In Kabbalah, the tapuach fruit (usually translated as apple or citrus) is a reference to femininity. Therefore, this fruity charoset brings to mind the righteousness of the women, who had faith Hashem would

redeem them and acted upon this faith to perpetuate the Jewish People.

During the times of the Beit HaMikdash, the Korban Pesach was brought to the Beit HaMikdash on Erev Pesach. It was roasted, and was the last thing eaten at the Seder meal. To commemorate this offering, we place a roasted chicken bone, with a little meat remaining, on the Seder Plate. In the times of the Beit Hamikdash, every Jew was "registered" to eat the Korban Pesach with his particular group. The Talmud states that the bigger the group, the better. This is a source for having large Seder gatherings!

A second offering, called the Korban Chagigah, was brought to the Beit HaMikdash and eaten as the main course of the Seder meal. Today, instead of a second piece of meat, we use a roasted egg - which is traditionally a symbol of mourning to remind us of the destruction of the Beit Mikdash. The Talmud points out that every year, the first day of Pesach falls on the same day of the week as Tisha B'Av, the day of mourning for the destruction of the Beit Mikdash.

We see that each item on the Seder Plate represents a spiritual concept. This should remind us that every object, and person contains a spiritual depth that we should seek to grasp, and from which we can learn significant lessons.

Beyond This Moment

Leora Kashnow
10th grade, Bet Shemesh



Every חג has something unique to offer. It's called a מועד which means it's a meeting place, a gathering point. שמחה brings us סוכות, on שבועות we have תורה.

On פסח, we learn about חרות, freedom. Both the גאון מוילנה and the בעל התניא are quoted as having said the following משל to explain this phenomenon.

Imagine two people are walking in the dark in a forest. Out of nowhere lightning lights up the sky. One of them looks at the light and is all awestruck, wow how beautiful! Crazy lightning! While the other takes the opportunity to use the light and look around. He's looking at where he needs to go, what path to walk on, at the house on the side of the road where they can sleep tonight.

As soon as the lightning has gone away and the darkness over the forest has come back, one fellow was left no better off than before. But the person who was paying attention was able to continue and know where he needs to go even though it was dark. He was able to remember what he saw during the flash of

light and use it to better his position.

The נמשל is that on פסח we learn about freedom. We talk about freedom, we eat like free people. If our focus is on what the מועד has to offer during the "moment of light," we can carry that vision of freedom throughout the whole year. So when we read the הגדה and we remember how Hashem lovingly

We can carry that vision of freedom throughout the whole year

blessed us with our freedom, we should pay close attention and take it to heart. Then throughout the rest of the year, we will be able to feel the closeness to Hashem and the freedom he has given us.

What's Eliyahu Got To Do With It?

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I distinctly remember the *Shfoch Chamatcha* from my family's sedarim. I wish I could say that it was because I was spiritually aware and awed by the fact that Eliyahu HaNavi was about to walk through my front door and sit at my table. But the real reason is that each year my older brother would put on a terrifying mask and sneak out the back door of our house. When my sister and I would open the front door for Eliyahu, my brother would jump out at us. *Not* the Eliyahu we were expecting.

Who was Eliyahu HaNavi, and what does *Shfoch Hamatcha* have to do with the Haggadah? In Sefer Melachim I, we learn that Eliyahu lived in the period after Yeravam ben Nevat, during the time of the first Beit Hamikdash, when the Jewish Kingdom was split into the two Kingdoms of Israel and Yehuda. Many Jews, led by Achav, were engaged in worship of the Ba'al. During this time, there was a horrible drought and subsequent famine. Eliyahu warned King Achav that it would not rain until Hashem willed it (presumably once they stopped worshiping the Ba'al), but the people continued to sin. Hashem ultimately told Eliyahu to confront Achav. Eliyahu arranged a competition against Achav and 850 false neviim in which both sides would pray to their respective gods to bring down fire on their sacrifices. Achav and his men failed to bring any fire. Eliyahu, to further remove any doubt among the onlookers, drenched his alter with water. He then prayed to Hashem to reveal Himself as the true god. Hashem sent down a fire upon Eliyahu's request, which consumed the sacrifice and the water.

Stunned and convinced, Achav and his men chanted "*Hashem Hu HaElokim, Hashem Hu HaElokim*", the familiar phrase we repeat several times throughout the tefilla and selichot of the *Yamim Noraim*.

What about Eliyahu and his actions are we trying to invite into our homes on Seder night, as we open our doors while singing *Shfoch Hamatcha*? When we sing "*Pour out Your wrath upon the nations that did not know You and upon the kingdoms that did not call upon Your Name*", we are refining the message of *V'hi She'amda* that we sang earlier in the Haggadah. Not only has Hashem continued to save us time and time again from our enemies, but He partners with us so that together we are establishing and revealing God's presence in the world. Like Eliyahu, we are proactively making other nations aware of God's presence and power. When we look at the story of Eliyahu, that is indeed the exact thing that he did – Eliyahu confronted Achav and facilitated a clear and deliberate demonstration of the true God that no one could deny.

While our enemies may be crouching at our doors, some in plain sight, some in scary masks and some camouflaged in the fabric of civil society, we must continue to invite godly ideals and morals into our homes. Just as Eliyahu Hanvai had the courage and determination to represent Hashem's strength to those who were worshiping false gods, we must have the strength to face the outside world and partner with Hashem to reveal his ultimate dominion and presence in the world. *Hashem Hu HaElokim!!*



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