

NCSY Israel presents

# TORAH 4 TEENS BY TEENS

Haggadah Companion  
Pesach 2024



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בנימין אליהו יהודה לייב  
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In memory of our grandparents & aunt ז"ל

**Rabbi Eli & Lillian Kahn  
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## A Message from NCSY Israel's Founders

**A**s we write this opening letter for our NCSY Israel Haggadah companion, it is Erev Rosh Chodesh Adar 5784 and we are five months into the war in Israel. Since October 7th, we have been fighting, praying, and learning Torah to defeat our enemies in and outside of our homeland. It is our hope that when you receive this publication the Mashiach will have come, and we will be dancing in the streets of Yerushalayim and offering the Korban Pesach together celebrating our nation's physical and spiritual redemption.

The Talmud in Megilah (6B) has a discussion when there is a leap year when should one perform the mitzvot of Purim, in the first Adar or the second Adar? It first raises the idea that it would seem to make most sense to perform the Mitzvot in the first Adar since "We do not pass over the opportunity to perform Mitzvot" and therefore we should take the first opportunity that comes available to us. Ultimately, we conclude the second Adar is when one should celebrate Purim because "The juxtaposition of the redemption of Purim to the redemption of Pesach is an even more worthwhile principle." Since the holiday of Pesach follows directly one month after Purim we decide to therefore celebrate Purim in the second Adar instead of the first to connect their redemptive narratives.

Why is it so important to connect the redemptive narratives of Purim and Pesach? What lesson is so vital for us to learn in juxtaposing each experience a month apart from one another. The Talmud in Megilah (14a) asks why isn't Hallel recited on Purim? One of the reasons mentioned is because "The redemption was not complete, and we remained as servants to Achashverosh." Although we were saved from an imminent physical danger, we still were subservient to a foreign kingdom without Jewish autonomy. On Pesach we declare at the Seder night "Once we were slaves in Egypt. Now, we are free." If we are not slaves in Egypt anymore then is it not obvious we are free? What is the deeper message to this seemingly obvious proclamation? Rav Adin Steinsaltz z"tl explains that it is not enough to physically leave servitude and automatically become fully liberated. Complete freedom for the Jewish people is the ability to live out our purpose dictated by God alone. We must recognize the miracles of Purim and our physical salvation, but we must not be complacent and stop there. Pesach wasn't just about leaving Mitzrayim it was about beginning the path to ultimately receive the Torah and live as a nation in Israel to develop into the model nation the world so desperately needs. It was our spiritual salvation.

From our own personal experiences these past five months it feels like our nation is finally transitioning from the "Purim redemption" to the "Pesach redemption." Medinat Yisrael became a safe haven after the devastation of the Holocaust providing a physical asylum for Jews worldwide. At the same time, we have witnessed the spiritual light of our nation develop slowly. Since October 7th, that light is shining brighter than ever before. More Tzitzit are being worn by IDF Soldiers than ever before, more Torah is being learned now than in any point in Jewish history, and we have never seen such unprecedented unity in our Nation. More so, the teens of NCSY Israel and all around the country are fired up with Jewish connection and Jewish pride. May this year be the year we merit to experience the juxtaposition of redemption to redemption with the bringing of Mashiach and a rebuilt Jerusalem now!



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yosef Ginsberg'.

Rabbi Yosef Ginsberg  
Regional Director



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Kahn'.

Rabbi Michael Kahn  
Executive Director



## The Meaning of Kadesh

Ikey Elstein  
10th grade, Efrat



The steps of the Seder are: Kadesh, Ur'Chatz, Karpas, Yachatz, Maggid, Rochtzo, Motzi, Matzo, Marro, Korech, Shulchan Aruch, Tzafun, Barech, Hallel, Nirtzah.

The first step of the Seder is Kadesh where we recite the Kiddush over wine, sanctifying the night and the holiday. What is the significance of beginning the night with this step?

The step of Kadesh, the sanctification of the holiday, is something that the nation of Israel can do only when they themselves are sanctified and holy. What exactly is this sanctity and holiness?

Rabbi Meir Simcha of Dvinsk, the "Or Sameach" connects the sanctity of Israel and the holiday to a statement of our sages. Cha"zal explain that the four cups of wine that we drink at the Seder night are representative of the four expressions of redemption, the "Arba L'Shonos shel Ge'ulah" that Hashem uttered regarding our redemption. Rav Meir Simcha notes that we see a connection in the Torah

between Kedusha – holiness, and separation in the context of illicit relationships – Arayot. This is true, as the portion dealing with Arayot is placed next to the portion known as "Kedoshim," which begins with a statement saying how the Nation of Israel is to be holy and sanctified. Since B'nei Yisroel strictly adhered to the laws regarding these relationships while in Egypt, they were considered holy and sanctified. This "allowed" Hashem to utter the first expression of redemption – "V'hotzeisi," "and I will take you out", as only a nation of sanctified people could be taken out of Egypt to then receive the Torah and Mitzvot.

Since we are holy on this night, we can therefore proceed with the sanctification of the night, a step which itself symbolizes our holiness and sanctification. The first cup which we drink is that of Kiddush. The first expression of redemption was uttered because of our holiness. Since we, the Nation of Israel are holy, we were taken out of Egypt, and given this night, this holiday to sanctify. After we perform this sanctification, we are ready to perform the Mitzvot that the Torah commands us to do on this night.

## Why Ask?

Carmelle Miller  
Bet Shemesh Madricha



Why is it a mitzvah to ask questions at the Seder? According to the Rambam, it is a mitzvah to prompt the children at the seder to ask questions. Ma Nishtana is the most tangible example of how this mitzvah manifests

- there is no way around it, even if you were to read the rest of Maggid without stopping for additional questioning. According to the Rama in the Shulchan Aruch, if there are no children at the Seder, and even if there are only Talmidei Chachamim (Torah Scholars) present, the youngest person at the table is still obligated to sing Ma Nishtana. Reciting Ma Nishtana means that there is no possible way of getting through a Seder at all, without asking a question.

But why? Surely one could argue that you are causing unnecessary doubt and an unnecessary interrogation of our faith by enforcing obligatory questioning. How is continual questioning fulfilling the mitzvah of passing down our Jewish identity and the story of the Exodus from Egypt?

Rabbi Sacks, by way of explanation, brings in the two Hebrew words for inheritance: nachalah, and yerusha. Nachalah comes from the word 'nachal', meaning 'river' - referring to an inheritance that is passed down, where the recipient is entirely passive. Rav Hirsch relates the word yerushah to the verb 'lareshet' which means 'to capture/to conquer.' This, Rabbi Sacks posits, refers to a more active form of inheritance, whereupon the recipient must earn or actively be involved in the act of receiving said inheritance.

This type of inheritance is arguably far more secure. You are more likely to be attached to an inheritance that you have actively earned, and invested time in receiving.

Thus, Jewish children must absolutely be asking questions, by way of priming themselves to receive the Torah - the inheritance of which is a yerushah, not a nachalah. The children must themselves put in the time and investment to then be able to continue to pass it on. So too must we all, even if we are great Torah scholars, continue asking questions and investing in our inheritance.

We tend to believe that to be religious is to be naive, to be passive, or to have 'blind faith.' Judaism fundamentally rejects this. The Seder night is designed to be emblematic of core Jewish values, and one of those values is engaging in critical thinking - asking meaningful questions.

To be a Jew is to be continually compelled to strive to gain more knowledge and to push ourselves further and deeper in our faith. Rabbi Sacks says that to ask a question is a "profound expression of faith in...the meaningfulness in human life." We want to achieve a level of faith that isn't blind, but is rooted rather in deep understanding and thought.

We ask questions as Jews not because we are constantly in doubt, but rather we are constantly aware of the drive to enhance and deepen our faith as much as possible.



## Our Power is in Our Unity

Yoni Rosenberg  
12th grade, Chashmonaim



There is a less known Midrash that asks a very interesting question. The Midrash asks, "if עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל loved Hashem so much, why did he enslave them in Egypt?" The Midrash answers this question by saying:

Yaakov Avinu had 4 wives. Leah and Rachel, who were the main wives, and Bilhah and Zilpah, the secondary wives. The children of Rachel and Leah used to tease, make fun of and not act like brothers to the children of Bilhah and Zilpah. Therefore Hashem said "What can I do so that the children of Rachel and Leah will accept their brothers? I will send them down to Egypt, and they will become slaves, and then, when I take them out, I will give them and their children the mitzvot of Pesach, and they will come to the the Seder night and say עַבְדִּים הָייְנוּ לַפְרֵעָה, we were slaved to פְּרֵעָה and then they will be considered equal. All of this is to teach us how important peace and unity are to Hashem."

This is a very interesting Midrash. The whole point of sending עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל to Egypt and being enslaved by them, is for עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל to realize that all the brothers are equal! That was the goal of yetziat Mitzrayim, that everyone is equal, no one is better than the other. We are all one nation praying to the same G-D. If this is why they were enslaved in Egypt, can we assume that they achieved this unity? Otherwise they would not have been redeemed from Egypt. The Ritva, in his commentary on the Haggadah, writes that in Egypt, they looked like one nation, not spread out but rather unified. He continues and says that it was a big miracle that they stayed together because the reason for their galut was because they were divided.

During these hard times as a nation in Israel, we have become stronger together, and that is what Hashem wants from us. If we are as 'ish echad b'lev echad' then we could bring Mashiach and save us from these hard times.

Chag sameach!

## Focusing on the Geula

Noah Roffe  
Jerusalem Madrich



Many commentators point out that Rabbi Akiva was actually the student of Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabbi Eliezer and that it is unusual that the Rabbis would go visit their student at his house and not the other way around.

However, it is important to realize the historical context of this story: this incident happened in the darkness of the Bar Kochba rebellion involving the death of thousands of Jews. The Rabbis for chizzuk gathered by the optimist of the generation: Rabbi Akiva. These Rabbis were talking about "yetziat Mitzrayim" - how to escape from their "Mitzrayim" (their oppression), throughout the entire night, i.e. throughout the entire galut. And from this incident Rav Soloveitchik zt"l learned "that the Torah giants (Gedolei Torah) of each generation are deeply concerned throughout the long night of exile about the fate of the nation "vi'hayu misaprin bi'yetziat Mitzrayim kol oto ha'lyla."

Continuing with this deeper understanding of the story, Rav Aaron Adler elucidated on the next part of the story: "Until their students came and said: 'Our Rabbis, the time for the morning Shema has arrived.'" Rav Adler pointed out that while the Torah giants of the generation are involved in planning for Jewish continuity toward the geulah, it is still the naive students specifically who point out to their elders: "the time for the morning Shema has arrived," that the time of the geula has already come. Older generations are too burdened with the troubles of galut and focused on simple national survival. It is the younger, more naive, generations who are able to realize that we are actually living in the time of the geula and that we no longer need to focus solely on national survival. Rather, we must look forward to planning the future. As a generation of geula we have the unique opportunity to take the rich mesorah we inherited from our previous generations and use it to plan a future of geula.



## Who Knows Four?

Adele Nemirov  
Bet Shemesh Chapter Director



The Pesach Seder has a numerical theme: the number 4. We meet the 4 sons during Maggid, say the 4 questions of the Ma Nishtana, and drink the 4 cups of wine in honor of the 4 languages of redemption.

In Judaism, each number has a significance: the number four represents physical space. We have four directions on a compass, the foundational definition of "personal space" in Halacha is four amot, and there are four basic elements in creation.

How does this concept connect to Pesach? When the Jews arrived in Egypt, they were a large family, but a family nonetheless - not a nation. Despite years of slavery and suffering, they grew into a great and formidable group, but they had not yet distinguished

themselves as a people. Only through the redemption from Egypt, highlighted by the 4 languages of redemption, did they become an independent nation. The actualization of the potential of the Jewish people in the real, physical world is represented in the number four.

However, there is a fifth word used to reference our redemption: "And I will bring you" to the Land of Israel, which corresponds to the cup of Eliyahu. Five is understood to be the central point that unites the four directions, the next level up from the physicality of four. We hint to this aspect during the seder; it can be hard for us to actualize or truly understand, but it is there. While our modern Seder focuses on four, the Geula comes at five, uniting our nation from the four corners of the world as one, in Eretz Yisrael.

## Lessons from the Four Sons

Dalia Lieberman  
Gush Etzion Madricha



In the Haggadah, we delve into the narrative of the four sons: the wise, the wicked, the simple, and the one who does not know how to ask. Each son contributes something unique to the table, revealing their distinct perspective on the Pesach story. What I found particularly intriguing, however, is that even the wicked son, who seemingly distances himself from the story, is still present at the table with his family.

The Four Sons impart upon us a profound lesson about the significance of diversity and inclusion. Rather than dismissing or excluding individuals with differing beliefs or attitudes, we should embrace diversity and engage with each person according to their individual needs and perspectives. Every member of the Jewish community holds importance, irrespective of their beliefs or level of observance.

Rav Jonathan Sacks emphasizes this idea and says, that we, as the Jewish people, are

one family. Despite our disagreements and divisions, we unite in times of adversity, relying on one another for support. This principle was vividly demonstrated in Israel over the past year. Approximately a year ago, the country was deeply divided, with protests, riots, and instances of individuals being denied services based on their political views. However, on October 7th, all these differences became inconsequential. Am Yisrael came together, offering assistance in any way possible. Jews from all corners of the globe united with one goal: **יחד ננצח** – together we will win.

Imagine if we could sustain this unity and embrace one another despite our differences, even during times of ease. What if we didn't require such hardships to bring Am Yisrael together? Let us strive to accept those around us regardless of differences – whether right-wing, left-wing, charedi, or chiloni – as illustrated in the story of the four sons, where despite everything, even the wicked son is welcomed to the table.



## Fitting In or Standing Out

Koby Erdfarb  
12th grade, Efrat



Vhi sh'amdah is one of the most famous paragraphs in the entire Haggadah. It states that in every generation enemies will rise up to destroy the Jewish people, and in every generation Hashem will save us.

Some rishonim have questioned the placement of this paragraph directly preceding how Lavan HaArami tried to destroy the Jewish people even before we were a true nation? The Netziv offers an enlightening answer to this question. When discussing the connection between these two ideas, he wonders what merited Lavan the "privilege" of being the one who follows the eternal declaration that we will always have enemies and Hashem always saves us? Yes, Lavan fits into the description of one who tried to destroy the Jewish people, but was he any different than any other historical enemy that tried to wipe us out? Therefore, the Netziv answers that, vhi sh'amdah is not an introductory statement that leads to Lavan at all, but rather it is following up on the Brit Bein HaBetarim which was just mentioned directly before it. There Avraham is told that his children will be "geirim" in a land that is not their own. They will be wanderers in a strange land without a home of their own. And in fact, this is exactly what Yaakov asked

from Pharaoh, to allow him and his children to be gerim in Mitzrayim. But what changed that moved us from high class geirim in Mitzrayim to slaves? The Shemot Rabba tells us that after Yaakov died, the Jewish people realized that without Yosef and Yaakov protecting them they were at risk. So they stopped performing the mitzvah of brit milah thinking it would allow them to blend in and be accepted into Egyptian society. Unfortunately, the exact opposite happened and as we know the Egyptians turned against us. This pattern is one that has been repeated countless times throughout Jewish history and continues even today. As long as we act like geirim there will be those that rise against us and try to destroy us. Living as geirim, and trying to blend in with the surrounding society has never worked and has only resulted in further hostilities.

However, now after 2000 years we are no longer geirim. We finally have our own country, our own society and our own ability to protect ourselves. Bezrat Hashem this will give us the ability to stand tall and proud as Jews, as we await the geula shlemah.

## Merging the Internal and External Experiences

Rabbi Avi Berman  
Executive Director, OU Israel



There are two holidays in the Jewish calendar that seem to be kept by most Jews across North America, and really around the world: the holidays of Chanukah and Pesach. What's so interesting to me about this is how these holidays really couldn't be more different from each other. Pesach commemorates our founding as a people taken out of slavery to freedom, and its story is described in great detail in the Torah. Meanwhile, Chanukah is historically our last holiday, established by the rabbis, and there is no biblical text about what happened. On Chanukah, we have the custom to eat oily, leavened sufganiyot, while on Pesach, even a small amount of the same chametz is absolutely forbidden. There are many more ways that Chanukah and Pesach differ, but I want to focus on one I find very intriguing, and which teaches us an important lesson about why Pesach is so important to us.

Chanukah is an external holiday. You can walk down the street during Chanukah and find candles burning in the window of every Jewish home, synagogue, and even in store-fronts. At a single glance, you can find the Jewish people proudly displaying their identity. Yet, Pesach is very much internal. Nobody knows if you cleaned your house or not. Nobody knows if you're eating bread at home or matzah. Nobody knows if you're drinking one or four cups of wine. Nobody knows if you are reading the haggadah or even at the Seder. The only people who would know are your family, in your house. That's it.

I believe the reason for this is simple: Pesach is all about education and passing the mesorah from one generation to the next, in an internal, private way.

*And you shall tell your child on that day, "It is because of what Hashem did for me when I went free from Egypt."*

(Shemot 13:8)

*When your children ask you tomorrow, saying, "What are the decrees, laws, and rules that Hashem our God has commanded you?"; you shall say to your children, "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and Hashem freed us from Egypt with a mighty hand..."*

(Devarim 6:20-21)

Again and again, the Torah commands us to pass along our story and our identity from parents to children, specifically in the context of Pesach. Walking with your children and pointing out all the sukkahs, seeing the Chanukah menorahs, these are all the external experiences that they can see of Jewish life. But Pesach is when we pass along the mesorah in a very private way.

There is something unique about Pesach's messaging. Pesach is the one time of year that we say, "In every generation, they stand against us to destroy us, but Hakadosh Baruch Hu saves us from their hands." No other time throughout the year do we say these words. On Purim, we focus on remembering what Amalek did. But remembering every generation, of all time periods, that is a Pesach-only activity. This is something more private. It's internal, inside our house, when we sit at the table as a family. We can explain that the Jewish people are unique, and important for the world. That there are those who wish to destroy us in every generation, and Hashem protects us. This is something easier to explain within the home, amongst each other.



## והקב"ה מצילנו מידם

In today's generation, and more specifically, this year, we're able to see in reality how true the words are shebechol dor vador, omdim aleinu le'chaloteinu, that in every generation they try to destroy us. These are not empty words to our children. We don't have to point to the distant past. It is in front of us right now. (Too many generations in Jewish history have had this unfortunate "advantage".)

This year, more than most, we are seeing the private mesorah burst into the public stage. Jews the world over are coming and saying, once again, "Never again." Saying this publicly gives it much more validity and legitimacy to the private mesorah we are passing along to our children. Our children are seeing out there what we have been saying at the Seder, that Klal Yisrael sticks together. We are seeing that the nations of the world want to kill us, Hakadosh Baruch Hu is there to save us.

So, as we sit at the Pesach Seder this year, let's take advantage of the fact that our children are able to see this. How our history and our future is really true, in reality, in front of their eyes.

It's not just one person passing it along to his or her child, in a closed room and a private setting, that nobody else can see. This year, we can actually look outside our door, no matter where we live, and see Klal Yisrael gathering together and supporting each other.

Many houses in Israel will have sons and daughters who cannot be at the Pesach Seder because they are soldiers at the borders and out defending the Jewish people. This Pesach will stand in stark contrast from the previous major holiday, Sukkot and Simchat Torah, where we were taken by surprise and could not defend ourselves properly. This Pesach, the State of Israel will be the most secure than perhaps it has ever been. Our soldiers will be out there, protecting Klal Yisrael, and not sitting at our seder tables. Our children can see that, and feel it. And they can now see the strong connection between, "When they ask you tomorrow..." and "In every generation, they stand against us to destroy us."

## A Great Fear to be Overcome by All

Lauren Shore  
Bet Shemesh Madricha



The line states: "And with great fear." This fear we will soon see is alluding to the revelation of the Shechinah. The Haggadah here is quite vague. A few questions arise from this statement: To which event or events does "the revelation of the Shechinah" specifically refer to? What is the basis of the Haggadah's connection between the words "great fear" and "revelation of the Shechina" and what does the Haggadah accomplish by citing the supporting verses that state yet again that Hashem's extraction of the Jewish people from Mitzrayim was done through "great wonders" and "great fear?"

The Netziv writes his own thoughts on these questions. The revelation spoken of in this statement as he explains, does not refer to any event that took place in Egypt but rather only those that occurred as the Israelites were wandering through the desert for 40 years. The Torah states on several occasions where a rebellion took place, when there was defiance among the Jewish people that "the glory of G-d appeared suddenly in the tent of meeting." The Jewish people complaining about a lack of food and water in the desert, during Korach's rebellion, and during the incident of the spies all bring about the sudden appearance of Hashem's glory filling the people with "great fear" and bringing

them to the immediate realization that they had committed a terrible and grave offense. The Netziv explained that after having established that the term "great fear" is associated with the Jews' experience in the desert with Hashem's Shechina, we can also see the first time that this term was used when explaining the fear of needing to wander the wilderness. "A great and fearsome desert, a place of snakes, fiery serpents, and scorpions, and thirst without water" as stated in Devarim. We see there is a singular type of fear that explains this feeling of dread. The "fear" described here in the Haggadah, unlike the one in Devarim can be used in the plural to show that Hashem's glory was revealed to the people in numerous ways and in many individual incidents rather than being one long continuous fear of hunger, snakes, and scorpions. It is through this question that we are able to see the many miracles and times that Hashem literally revealed himself to us and was there to protect us no matter what we had done previously. Just as Hashem arose to save the Jewish people out of Mitzrayim so too Hashem can free us from the slave mentality that we constantly tend to find ourselves in. We are Hashem's chosen people and no matter what happens to us, Hashem has been and will always be there to protect us with "signs and wonders" and an "outstretched arm" constantly taking us out of every situation we find ourselves in. We can never forget that.



## Appreciating Every Step of the Way

Benjamin Gutfreund  
9th Grade, Bet Shemesh



During the Pesach seder, it is customary to read and sing the song, Dayeinu. This song speaks of the incredible acts Hashem did for the Jewish people from taking us out of slavery in Egypt to bringing us to Eretz Yisrael and building the Beit Hamikdash. We proclaim that had He even done one of those acts, "Dayeinu", it would have been enough for us.

The fifth verse says: "*Ilu natan lanu et mamonam vi'lo karah lanu et ha'yam dayeinu*" - If He had given us their (the Egyptians') wealth, and had not split the sea for us, "Dayeinu." It would have sufficed us! But is this verse true? If Hashem had not split the sea, would it have been enough? If Hashem had indeed left us at the Reed Sea, the Egyptians would have taken us back to Egypt as slaves!

In the wise words of Rabbi Michael Bramson, shlita, "Doesn't it seem as if we are singing, (in the tune of Dayeinu) "We are liars. We are liars. We are liars. We are liars. We are liars?" Are we lying when we say that it would have been enough had Hashem given us the Egyptians' wealth but not split the sea? Furthermore, out of all the days of the year, how can we choose the day that Hashem saved us from the mighty hand of Egypt to lie to His face?!

Rabbi Shalom Rosner, shlita, answers this question. He explains that the word

"Dayeinu" teaches us the importance of our appreciating every step along the way. Instead of simply saying "thank you" to Hashem for the tremendous task of taking us out of Egypt, in Dayeinu, we have the opportunity to thank Him for every little (not so small) step towards redemption. When we sing and end each verse with the word "Dayeinu" that it would have sufficed, we are also thanking Hashem for every miraculous act He did for Bnei Yisrael on their way to Eretz Yisrael and building the Beit Hamikdash.

This midah, characteristic, of not only appreciating the result but also appreciating every step of the way, can also be applied to our daily lives. For example, if a parent organizes Shabbat, we could thank the parent for organizing the Shabbat and that would be it. However, what this song teaches us is that better than that, we should thank our parents for each step of the way in preparation and organization, for cooking the food, setting the Shabbat table, mopping the floors, etc. It is an important lesson in hakarat ha'tov that we learn from the words in Dayeinu.

With Hashem's help may we see the soldiers and hostages all return home safely, and may we continue to be united and see the building of the third and final Beit Hamikdash bimheira biyameinu!

## The Importance of the Torah and of Israel

Chaya Robinson  
9th Grade, Efrat



If He had given us the Torah and had not brought us into the land of Israel; [it would have been] enough for us.

In Dayeinu we say it would have been enough if Hashem would have given us the Torah and wouldn't have brought us to Israel. But without Israel, so much of our identity is gone. Do we really mean this? Are we crossing the line here? Especially right after we got the Torah that tells us to go to Israel?

Rav Ovadiyah Yosef says the following: These words are directed against the chalutzim who are thinking of building the Land of

Israel without the Torah of Israel, that is why the main thing is the Torah and not: *"Ilu hichnisanu la'aretz Yisrael vi'lo natan lanu et haTorah, Dayeinu."* Because the Land of Israel without the Torah is simply like no Israel, and on the contrary, it is better to stay outside Israel, and not do any sins in the Land of Israel, to not "anger the king in his palace".

So in conclusion the Rabbanim wanted to show us that the Torah is our base for everything and without it we wouldn't be the same and Israel wouldn't have its significance and that is why it comes before Israel in Dayeinu. I hope you gain a little spark of appreciation for Israel and have an amazing Pesach!



## Bringing the Korban Pesach Today

Atara Serwatien  
11th grade, Bet Shemesh



*"Hashem spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, on the first new moon of the second year following the exodus from the land of Egypt, saying. Let the Israelite people offer the Passover sacrifice at its set time.*

*You shall offer it on the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, at its set time; you shall offer it in accordance with all its rules and rites."*

Bamidbar 9:1-3

The first Korban Pesach was brought in Mitzrayim and it was different than any other Korban Pesach. But later Hashem commands Bnei Yisrael to do it for generations. Furthermore, in Bamidbar 9:13, the punishment for not bringing the Korban Pesach is clearly stated:

*"But if any party who is pure and not on a journey refrains from offering the Passover sacrifice, that person shall be cut off from kin, for Hashem's offering was not presented at its set time; that party shall bear the guilt."*

The Korban Pesach is one of two positive commandments which a person receives the punishment of karet (the other one being brit milah). We see the importance of bringing the Korban Pesach even more by the fact that when people were not able to bring the korban, they requested and Hashem agreed to give them a second chance- Pesach Sheni.

So why have we stopped? And are we all chayav karet?

To follow the ways of the unwise, I'll answer the second question first. We are not all chayav karet, even if we are able to bring the Korban Pesach today and everyone is refusing to since the Rambam tells us that there must be over fifty who are willing and able to bring the Korban Pesach to create a chiyuv on everyone.

But technicalities aside, are you allowed to bring the Korban Pesach today? (Disclaimer, this is not a halachic psak but rather an explanation of the two sides of the debate.)

So the first and most obvious problem is Har Habayit. The rabbis throughout the ages have held two different beliefs each one complicating the bringing of the Beit Hamikdash. Either Har Habayit doesn't have the previous holiness it did and the Shechinah left with the destruction of the last Beit Hamikdash, or it stayed. If it left, then we are allowed to build bamot and we can bring the Korban Pesach anywhere. But if it stayed we can only bring it on Har Habayit in the place of the Mizbeach. Some rabbis say we know where that is and some say we don't.

Another problem would be our impurity. But proponents of bringing the Korban Pesach argue that this isn't a problem since if a majority of the Jewish people are impure, we are all considered pure.

While those are the two biggest hurdles there are other ancillary problems that come up. This includes the problem of not being certain that our kohanim are actually kohanim (though we hold that a Jew has a presumption of kashrut for his shevet), that previous generations never did it (as the Rogatchover said "they had their mitzvot and missions and we have ours), and the fact that doing so today could endanger a person's life and this isn't one of the three mitzvot that we are commanded to die for (though the fact that it's targeted at us simply for being Jewish may change its status).

Overall, it's a complicated subject but if I want you to take anything away from here, it's that you should ask your rabbi. Ask him earnestly every day if today we can start bringing the korbanot. Realize that Moshiach isn't a distant dream, and cultivate a desire to be among those who usher him in.

## Moshe's Missing: How We Become the Heroes of the Haggadah

Avi Soclof  
Modiin Madrich



So, there you are at the Seder, the Haggadah open in front of you, ready to dive into the Exodus story once again. You'd think the big names—Yocheved, Miriam, Aharon, Moshe—would be getting some major recognition.

But as you scan the pages, something's off. Moshe? The rest of our heroes? They're nowhere to be found. It's like the heroes of the Exodus got snubbed. How could the key players be left out of the Haggadah?

Enter the Vilna Gaon, who offers a poignant insight: Passover is fundamentally about acknowledging Hashem's presence. The focus isn't so much on the individuals but on recognizing the divine orchestration of the events of Yetziyat Mitzrayim.

Building on this thought, the Klausenberger Rebbe, Rabbi Yekusiel Yehuda Halberstam, introduces a compelling idea. Redemption, he suggests, isn't solely dependent in the deeds of past giants; it's not exclusively Moshe's story.

Redemption is an ever-unfolding journey, divinely guided, and here's the twist—we are all part of it and worthy of experiencing it. Right here, right now, in the very fabric of our day-to-day existence.

This isn't just talk. The Gemara in Pesachim (116b) hits us with a direct charge: "In each and every generation, a person is obligated to see himself as if he left Egypt." Why? Because we are all worthy of attaining and engaging in redemption and the most effective way of recognizing that fact, is by placing ourselves in the narrative of the Yetziyat Mitzrayim, itself.

Every Pesach, as we retell the story of Yetziyat Mitzrayim, we're reminded that redemption isn't solely about historic acts of valor; it's an enduring process between us and G-d. The Seder is an invitation for each of us to step into this narrative and play our role in our own personal redemption and the redemption of the Jewish people as a whole.



## A Dream Come True

Meira Shapiro  
Gush Etzion Madricha



The story of persecution at the hands of those who hate us is as old as our nation, and this year we were written into the story in a way that our generation has never been before. The Rabbis of the Mishnah, who wrote the Haggadah and lived a little less than 2,000 years ago, also knew this pain and loss firsthand, as they lived through and right after the destruction of the Second Beit Hamikdash, and through the failed Bar Kochba rebellion. At the time, the Romans and Byzantines ruled Jerusalem, and did not allow Jews to enter the city. They left the Beit Hamikdash in ruin (some of the destruction can still be seen today) in order to be able to brag to the world that they had conquered the Jews. They made it illegal for Jews to enter Yerushalayim and renamed it Aelia Capitolina to try and erase our connection to the city, and to rub salt in our wounds by making Yerushalayim into a place for pagan worship. And so, when they wrote *"ka'asher zachinu li'sader oto, kein nizkeh la'asoto"* (like we merited to arrange it, so too we should merit to bring the actual Korban Pesach), they wrote from a place of true pain and longing. Just being allowed into the city was an impossibility to them—the thought of being able to actually rebuild

the Beit Hamikdash and bring the Korban Pesach felt so out of the question.

And so, the Rabbis of the Mishnah compiled the Haggadah, did the Pesach seder every year, and yearned and cried out to Hashem, begging Him to allow them to even step foot into Yerushalayim.

This year has been a year of pain and loss, but even still we are now living out the wildest dreams of our ancestors. Yerushalayim is ours. It is a beautiful, sprawling city, and one that we live in and visit without a second thought.

When we say *"li'shana haba'ah biYerushalayim ha'benuyah,"* our *kavanah* is so different from that of our ancestors. Like them, we are asking Hashem for the Beit Hamikdash itself, and for Him to reveal Himself in this world, but unlike them all of the other steps have already been completed. That's incredible! We are not in the geula yet, but we are certainly well on our way.

May we take comfort in the fact that we are our ancestors' dreams come true and may the rest of their (and our) dreams come true very very soon.



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