

Your first question will be, “Why are you dressed like this wearing a Kittel?” Because tonight is also a form of Yom Kippur, a day of reckoning. You see, each one of us has a double role. First and foremost, we are human beings, creatures in the image of אֱלֹהִים, and on Yom Kippur, we are examined if indeed we are worthy of that title. But we are also components of Klal Yisroel, the Jewish People, links in a chain that started over 3,000 years ago and will make it to the finish line at the end of times. It is a relay race where a torch is passed on through all the ages, and it is our charge, to take it from the one before and pass it on to the one after.

Tonight we are being judged as to how well we have received our tradition and how well we are passing it on. It is now 3,300 years since we received that freedom in Mitzrayim. If we imagine the average age of having a child to be about 25 years of age, there are four generations each century. That means there is a total of 132 people stretching from our forefathers in Mitzrayim to us today. 132 people had to pass on this heritage flawlessly, with a devotion and single-mindedness that could not falter.

Who were these 132 fathers of mine? One might have been in the Nazi death camps; one been whipped unconscious by Cossacks. One had children stolen by the Czar, and one was the laughing stock of his “enlightened” brethren. One lived in a basement in Warsaw with many days passing with no food to his mouth; the other ran a stupendous mansion in France. One had been burned at stake for refusing to believe in the divinity of a flesh and blood, and one had been frozen to death in Siberia for continuing to believe in the divinity of the Eternal G-d. One had been hounded by a mob for living in Europe rather than Palestine, and one had been blown up by Palestinians for not living in Europe. One had been a genius who could not enter medical school because he was not Christian, and one was fed to the lions by the Romans...

132 fathers, each with his own story. Each with his own test of faith. And each with one overriding and burning desire: that this legacy be passed unscathed to me. **And one request of me – that I pass this on to you, my sweet child.**

What is this treasure that they have given their lives for? What is in this precious packet that 132 generations have given up everything for? **It is a great secret known only to us. That man is capable of being a lot**

more than an intelligent primate. That the truth of an Almighty G-d does not depend on public approval, and no matter how many people jeer at you, truth never changes. That the quality of life is not measured by goods but by the good. That one can be powerfully hungry, and yet one can forgo eating if it is not kosher. That a penny that is not mine is not mine, no matter the temptation or rationalization. That family bonding is a lot more than birthday parties; it is a commitment of loyalty that does not buckle in a moment of craving or lust. And so much more.

This is our precious secret, and it is our charge to live it and to become a shining display of “This is what it means to live with G-d.” 132 people have sat Seder night after Seder night, year after year, and with every fiber of their heart and soul have made sure that this treasure would become mine and yours. Doubters have risen who are busy sifting the sands of the Sinai trying to find some dried-out bones as residues of my great-great-grandfather. They are looking in the wrong place. The residue is in the soul of every one of these 132 grandfathers whose entirety of life was wrapped up in the preservation of this memory and treasure. It is unthinkable that a message borne with such fervor and intensity, against such challenges and odds, is the result of a vague legend or the fantasy of an idle mind. I am the 133rd person in this holy chain.

At times, I worry that I am not passing it on well enough. I try hard, but it is hard not to quiver when you are on the vertical shoulders of 132 people, begging you not to disappoint them by toppling everyone with you swaying in the wind.

My dear child, may ה' grant us many long and happy years together. But one day, in the distant future, I'll be dressed in a kittel again as they prepare me for my burial. Try to remember that this is the treasure that I have passed on to you. And then it will be your turn, you will be the 134th with the sacred duty to pass on our legacy to number 135

Q What is the reason why the בעל הגדה is so מקפיד that the telling over the הגדה specifically through question and answer?

A The reason why we have the סדר is to incline heart to understand with pure אמונה, accepting the תורה, and the יסוד of this is through יציאת מצרים.

When you have something that a person wants and desires to know by himself, then the topic and reason will enter and stay in his heart more than hearing anything from anybody. When you ask a question on your own, you care to hear the answer, therefore we want to do things in front of the kids that shock them and that will cause them to ask on their own. Then they will desire to know the answer because it was their own question. And when they hear the answer it will cause them to ask more and more about *יציאת מצרים* and eventually to get closer to ה'. (page 43) 4/16/00)

Reb Chaim Shmuelewitz has a little different approach to this (הגדה של פ page מיר)

He says that even if you have nobody to ask it to, you have to ask and answer to yourself. Why? This is a hard *מצוה* to fulfill properly. The *ענין* of saying things over is to say something new. To tell your child something which he does not know already. But we know that “even if you are a *חכם* etc... you are still obligated to say it over” and this is very difficult to fulfill.

Therefore the *רבנן* decreed that the format be Q and A. You have to **ask** why and you have to **ask** how. And even though you are asking yourself, you are still going to give an answer. Similarly, there is a decree that we are supposed to do two dippings and in the times of the *גמרא* to remove the table. We do this so that the kids will see this and will have a *התעוררות* and be inspired to ask questions by themselves. The *הגדה* says, “if he does not have a son, his wife should ask, and if he does not have a wife, he should ask himself”. Because when a person asks himself, he gets the desire and strength to give an answer.

שלמה המלך (מלכים א ג כג) did the same thing. After hearing the testimony of two women he said “this woman said “this is my son and the dead son is hers” and “this woman said “this is my son and the dead son is hers” and this is how we *פסקין* in *זו משפט זו* the judge needs to hear the litigants and then repeat what they said. The reason for this is that when you repeat something and it comes out of your mouth it feels more like your own words. You have more of a connection to it. If you have a doubt in the matter it will appear to you as your doubt. Through this you will investigate with all your strength to find an answer to it and you will be giving a truthful judgment.

The גמרא in קדושין (מ.) says “when a person does a sin and then he does it again, it is מותר to him. So the גמרא asks, “it is מותר?” Then the גמרא answers that it is like it is מותר to him.” Why didn’t ר הונה say originally that it was like it was מותר to him? The גמרא wanted to shock you in to asking the question yourself “is it really מותר”? Now you are going to pay close attention to what the answer is and you are going to let it penetrate into your heart. Because wanting to know the answer came from within you. The גמרא in עבודה זרה (יט:) “Reb Alexander says who wants life? So right away people gathered around him and said we want life, so he said מי האיש הפין חיים נצור לשונך מרע ושפתך מדבר מרמה. In reality these people have read these פסוקים many times before, but never knew what it meant. But when he said “who wants life” this is a question they want an answer to, so they gathered around him and he explained to them what real life is.

Q1 The four cups represent the four languages of redemption. We are talking about leaving מצרים and receiving the תורה. It is all a path to הרה סיני; they are all an integral part of the process. How is each לשון a cause for another celebration?

Q2 The רמב"ם (הלכות חמץ ומצה פרק ז הלכה א) says it is a מצוה to say over the נסים and נפלאות. Why are we saying over miracles? We understand it to mean, in order to inspire people to have more אמונה. But The רמב"ם (הלכות חמץ ומצה פרק ז הלכה א) says that if you see a miracle there remains a doubt because it could have happened through some power. Miracles that were done by משה were done because they had to be done. So it is clear that miracles are not a basis for אמונה. So why are we telling over miracles to our kids?

Q3 Why do we have to say out loud if we already know the answers?

Q4 ה' says, “in order to tell it over to your children and grand children”. Why are we reiterating the miracles which have already happened?

Q5 “Then you will know that I am Gd” (שמות י, א+ב) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בֹּא (שמות י, א+ב) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל־פְּרַעֲהַ כִּי־אֲנִי הִכְבַּדְתִּי אֶת־לְבָבוֹ וְאֶת־לֵב עֲבָדָיו לְמַעַן שְׂתִי אֶתְתִּי אֱלֹהִים בְּקִרְבּוֹ: ב וְלְמַעַן תִּסְפָּר בְּאָזְנֵי בְנֵי וּבְנֵי־בָנָי אֵת אֲשֶׁר הִתְעַלְלִיתִי בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאֶת־אֶתְתִּי אֲשֶׁר־שִׁמְתִּי בָּם וַיִּדְעֻם כִּי־אֲנִי

יתוה, it should be in the opposite order, first it should say, “you will know that I am Gd”?

Q6 If you cannot afford wine, you have to knock on doors to collect the necessary funds to purchase wine. For a מצות עשה you only need to spend a fifth. For a מצות לא תעשה you need to spend all of your money, but you are not required to go out and knock on doors for the money. Why do we need to go collect for this מצוה?

Miracles are just as much from ה' as nature is. If so, why do we express them as opposites? The difference is that nature is G-d's plan for creation. Miracles mean that G-d took special interest in me. Miracles are to understand how much ה' loves us. (When someone does a favor for you, it is not the favor that you appreciate, rather it is the thought. You (mainly) don't owe someone for the thing, you owe for the thought).

A2+3 By פסח, the good is not the actual benefit, it is that ה' cared to do it for us. He is giving us his love, if you don't appreciate how much love is done to you, then it is a lack in you. If you don't love back, you don't feel loved. Talking about miracles is to remind us how much we are loved. In the סדר we are not talking to Gd, we are talking to each other.

Knowing means connection (from אדם and הוה, the גאון says that the first time a word is used in the תורה is the real meaning of the word).

A1 Each step showed us an additional level of love.

A4 The גמרא in שבת (:) says, כל הנותן מתנה לחבירו צריך להודיעו. If you don't have a relationship with the person, and you are looking for an obligation than you don't have to inform him, but if you do have a relationship than the more you tell him, the further the relationship goes. I love you therefore I am loved. You have an obligation to let someone know that you love them because then they know that they are loved (מתוך כך on the גמרא says רש"י). (יהא אהבו).

The whole telling over of the story of יציאת מצרים is to give us the feeling that ה' loves us.

A6 (בראשית כב,ג) רש"י says love has no limit (love breaks the limits of what seems to be proper behavior) **אברהם** saddled his own donkey (because he loved 'ה' so much). When it comes to love you will do anything, even knock on doors. When you are reminded that you are loved, then you want to express love. Someone who is really loved will not lose self-respect by knocking on doors, the feeling of love will compensate.

A5 First we have to know that we are loved, and then you will know that there is a 'ה'. (**Rabbi Zweig 4/14/00**)

The **שערי תשובה** (תעב) he brings down an **ארי"ז** that the 3 מצות correspond to three אבות. We break the middle מצה. Why specifically do we break **יצחק**? The **גמרא** (שבת פט:) is going to approach **אברהם**, and he says to wipe them out, he goes to **יעקב**, and he tells 'ה' you got to wipe them out, but 'ה' is not ready to do that, so he goes to **יצחק**, who is **מידת הדין**, which is what it is going to be **לעתיד לבוא**. He makes a whole **חשבון**, a person only lives till 70, you are not a **בר עונשין** until 20, so we are only dealing with 50 years, a person spends a lot of time sleeping, bathroom, eating, not to much time to sin. Since they are my children as well, so we will split it. Half for me, **פלגא עלי ופלגא עליך**, and with that he saved us forever. The **גר"א** says that all **שעבוד גאולות** took place on the night of **יצאת מצרים**. So when did we get rid of **שעבוד מלכות**? **יצאת מצרים**. What did **יצחק** mean? The next part is based on **פחד גלוי וידוע לפניך** we say **שמונה עשרה** (ברכות יז.) **גמרא**, **יצחק פורים מאמר ח**, **יצר הרע** says **רש"י**, **שרצוננו לעשות רצונך ומי מעכב שאור שבקיסה ושעבוד מלכות** that is 'ה', who gave **שעבוד מלכות**, **יצחק**, **רמב"ן** says in **תולדות**, the **ברכה** that **יצחק** gave **עשו**. **חצי עלי**, practically, the reason why we have sinned is because one of two reasons, the **יצר הרע** and **שעבוד מלכות**. That is what the **גמרא** means, we want to do your will, but we cant for two reasons, that is, **פלגא עלי ופלגא עליך**. Their my sons, and they are your sons.

נְחֻמוּ נְחֻמוּ עַמִּי יֵאמֶר אֱלֹהֵיכֶם (ישעיה מ) adds, **שבת נחמו** for **הפטרה**, **נְחֻמוּ נְחֻמוּ עַמִּי יֵאמֶר אֱלֹהֵיכֶם** of **לשון**, why double **נחמה**? Who is going to give us ultimate **נחמה**? **אֱלֹהֵיכֶם**, who is **מידת הדין**, **יצחק**. What is double **נחמה**. The **גמרא** in **סוכה** says that 'ה' is going to **יצר הרע** to attack **נחמה**, 'ה' created it, 'ה' is going to take care of it, who is going to give us a **נחמה** for **שעבוד מלכות**? that is **נְחֻמוּ נְחֻמוּ עַמִּי יֵאמֶר אֱלֹהֵיכֶם** of **לשון**. **יצחק**. That is the double **נחמה**.

יצחק = 208.

The middle מצה, is יצחק, what do we do with middle מצה? We break it in half. פסח is the beginning of the two sided מצה, פלגא עלי ופלגא עליך, we do it יחץ which has יצחק's name. פסח is when we got rid of שעבוד מלכות, that is the half that we are breaking now. יצחק says cant do קידושין: בראתי יצר הרע ובראתי לו תורה תבלין, תורה until you give us the רצון ה' (ל), if we don't have the תורה we cant fight the יצר הרע. ה' gives us the תורה at עירובין in גמרא That is the רב אחא בר יעקב אמר אין כל אומה ולשון שולטת בהן שנאמר (נד.) רב אחא בר יעקב אמר אין כל אומה ולשון שולטת בהן שנאמר (נד.) which is the matching book end of פסח. That is the רב אחא בר יעקב אמר אין כל אומה ולשון שולטת בהן שנאמר (נד.) which means that we are חירות from יצר הרע חירות אלא חירות only when we have the תורה.

The middle מצה is called לחם עני (פסחים טו: קטו:), לחם עני מצה, that is the middle מצה, correspond to יצחק, לחם עני, is spelled in the תורה, יצחק = 208 = לחם עני. (Rabbi Feiner Kitzur 3 18 10)

עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים ויציאתנו ה' אלוקינו משם ביד חזקה ובזרוע נמויה ואלו לא הוציא הקדוש ברוך הוא את אבותינו ממצרים הרי אנו ובנינו ובני בנינו משעבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים.

What is our goal on the night of פסח, what message are we trying to convey, seemingly the kids learn everything in school. I understand for people who don't know any better, but why for the kids? What is the whole need to go over the story again? and it says this in the הגדה, אפילו כולו חכמים, מצוה לספר ביציאת מצרים, why, what is the significance?

Why? You can say this about any learning, why is this so special?

Why don't we make a ברכה on the מצוה of מוצאת מצרים? Before we do any מצוה, we make a ברכה. Why not make a ברכה on מוצאת מצרים? The רשב"א says, since the more you do, it is a greater מצוה. The מהר"ל says, we make a ברכה on learning, and by תורה the more מצוה you have, so why then is the reason by מוצאת מצרים, don't we make a ברכה? So what is the logic of the רשב"א, it seems exactly like learning?

The הגדה begins, עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים ויוציאנו ה' אלוקינו משם ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה ואלו לא הוציא הקדוש ברוך הוא את אבותינו ממצרים הרי אנו ובנינו ובני בנינו משעבדים מצוה עלינו לספר וכל במרבה ברי זה, היינו לפרעה במצרים. Even if we are all wise, סיפור יציאת מצרים, the מצוה of the exodus. Next is who is obligated, third thing, the more we say the more credit we get. It would make more sense, first who is obligated, then the more you say, then start doing the מצוה, then we were slaves to פרעה?

The הגדה is telling us, we were slaves, and had ה' not take us out, we would still be slaves. We are not talking about, just saying how ה' intervened in history. It is telling us, had we not left מצרים, we would still be slaves. When we tell the story over we are saying how we benefited, by speaking, we are showing our appreciation. The opening statement is I have benefited, the הגדה בעל הגדה has defined our mission of the evening, it is a lesson of appreciation. To feel it, and to express it. Which means, the order does not begin with the story, rather first we have to express gratitude, that is the מצוה. We are teaching our self to show gratitude toward ה', it is not a history lesson.

Once that is true, the next statement is, that even though we know everything, we still have to speak about יציאת מצרים, because this is not about learning, it is about expressing thanks. No matter how much you say, it is never enough, the more you express, the bigger the מצוה is. The whole מצוה of סיפור is not about learning, it is about expressing gratitude. We want to teach our children that we get together once a year to express gratitude. The הגדה says that we are supposed to thank ה'. The הגדה is organized based on a משנה. When you bring your first fruit, you say, ארמי אבי, we went to מצרים and lived there with a small amount of people...Those are the פסוקים that we say in the הגדה, why not go back to original source in שמות? what is the point of bringing ביכורים? Showing appreciation. What goes along with that appreciation, you mention history. This is called וידוי ביכורים. We use the thank you of ביכורים for פסח night, because that is what the night is all about. Often a person knows that they are appreciated, but they need to hear it!! We have to let ה' hear our appreciation. in a relationship, it is not enough to feel appreciation, you have to express it. Learning how to say thank you, is not limited to ה'. It is

very hard to teach our children to appreciate us, because when you tell someone to thank you, they think it is because you need to hear it. If you teach them how to appreciate others, then hopefully that will carry over to the rest of the year. Thanking everyone.

Now we can understand the רשב"א. When you do a מצוה that the תורה or Rabbis told us to do, you make a ברכה, because you want to do it for the right purpose. Can you imagine someone asking someone to thank you? If you ask someone to say thank you, and they say it, it means nothing to you. If we would make a ברכה, that would lessen the experience of thanking. How does the רשב"א say that? By saying that the more you say, the more credit you get. Thank you is a lot better when it is spontaneous. We would not like a thank you note, saying my mother in law told me that I have to send this. Thank you is not limited to ה', it is the most important character trait that we have to have. The רמב"ן writes (פרשת בא), the fundamental מצוה is saying thank you. Realizing that things are not coming to me. The סדר is the highlight in the Jewish calendar because it giving the most Jewish message, thank you. The more we express, הרי זה משובח.

Most of us don't want to grow in showing appreciation. We resent that. We think things are coming to us, or the one that gave it to us, had ulterior motives. A good way to motivate us is as follows. No matter what a person does for you, what ever they did for you is not as much as the friendship they showed by doing the thing for you. What ever a person does for you, unless you are dying and they are giving you air, usually you could have done without. Your quality of life would not have been different. One thing that you cannot do with out, is that you have a friend. It is not about what they did for you, as much as that they are a friend. If someone does a favor for you, and you don't say thank you, they lost appreciation, but you lost more, you lost having a friend. The feeling of having a friend, is something that you never want to give up. By not expressing gratitude, what we are really doing is harming our self, by not realizing that you don't have a friend. By saying thank you, you are really the biggest benefactor. (**Rabbi Zweig תשס"ח**)

Rav Avraham Schorr (on the הגדת לבנך tape) 4/06

The בני יששכר went out to see how the עם are sitting by the סדר. He came to an איש פשוט עד מאוד and he was up to the four sons. All he knew from his פשוט life, was that a when a person says אחד, that by the א he has to be מכוין on the אחד that there is a עולם, and by the ה he has to has כונה that 'ה' lives in the seven רקעיות and above the seven רקעיות, and by the ד he has to be מכוין that 'ה' is שולט on the ד' רוחות. And when he came to the ארבע בנים in the הגדה, when he reached the word אחד, he read it as if he was saying ק"ש, when he said אחד חכם, he said it as if he was saying ק"ש, he went and again he was עול מלכות שמים, until he finished reciting the ארבע בנים.

The בני יששכר said that he learnt from him a כונה in the הגדה. We say by תם, שאינו יודע, הגיע זמן קריאת שמע של שחרית, מעשה רבי אליעזר, רשע, חכם, רשע. The תכלית of the סדר is until it comes the time of ק"ש, until it comes a time of עול מלכות שמים, קבלת עול מלכות שמים, all four sons should be עול מלכות שמים.

Rav Nison Alpert said, why is the word אחד mentioned four times? We think that we are talking about four different kinds of children. No, we are talking about one child with four different inclinations. Every child has different inclinations, he has the inclination of a חכם, רשע, תמימות and איני יודע רמוז. איני יודע and תמימות, רשע, חכם, רשע. רמוז. איני יודע is that four times אחד = בן. Four different parts make up one בן. A בחור is like a winter day, sometimes it is sunny, cold, rainy, cloudy etc... A בחור has not come to קבעיות, he is אחד חכם אחד רשע ואחד תם ואחד איני יודע לשאול, he has all the מעלות to him, he has all these חסרונות. Our עבודה is to know that תורה. The תורה gave a parent the כח to direct a child who has all the four כוחות and train him in the right way. The תורה gave us this כח, how to train him, how to bring out the best in him.

What are the ways the תורה tells us? (שמות יג, ה) והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמור. What does והגדת mean?

The גמרא in ב"ב (יג.) says that there are two kinds of חצרות, there is a חצר חציר, and a חצר שאין בו כדי חלוקה, and a חצר חלוקה. If we can make a חלוקה then we do, if we can't then we say גוד או אנוד, one partner says to the other, you buy off my חלק or I will buy off your חלק. It is too small to divide, it does not have

8x8, so both can't end up with 4x4 אמות, so we say one has to buy out the other.

So the שפת אמת says והגדת means המשכה, continuance. בית=412= והגדת, A Yiddish house is אין בו כדי חלוקה. There are many who think that you can divide the house, you have 4x4 of הלכה and 4x4 of the opposite influence and it is אין בו כדי חלוקה, I can have two שותפין in my house, the יצר טוב and the יצר הרע. I could use one room for a ספרים shelf, and the other for something else ח"ו. **No, a Yiddish house is אין בו כדי חלוקה, it is either גוד או אגוד, either you sell it off to the יצר הרע, or you buy off the יצר הרע.** There are no ways to have a Yiddish house with חלוקה אין בו כדי חלוקה. We have to know that a Yiddish house is גוד או אגוד. A Yiddish house has to be permeated with a אויר of שכונה. If there is a different influence in the house, then it is impossible for the אויר to influence good on the child.

והגדת לבנך does not mean to talk to a child, **you don't talk to a child with words, you talk to a child with your actions.** The תרגום translates the word והגדת, ואחוי, The אבני נזר says that you are supposed to show, to prove it, to show it with your actions, show it with a way of life.

The word לאמור is extra, לאמר means you are telling someone else. But you are not telling someone else, I am telling my child?

The end of the פסוק (שמות יג ח) says, זה עשה ה, בעבור זה עשה ה, לי בצאתי ממצרים. Where does לאמר come into this פסוק? והגדת does not mean to talk, it means action. Show your son with your actions, let your actions talk. ואחוי, והגדת לבנך, that will be the לאמור, your actions will give over the חירות, בעבור זה עשה ה לי בצאתי ממצרים, it will show the child why I appreciate חירות, is because like רש"י says, because it gives me the opportunity to be an עובד'ה. Where did I show my child that? Not by talking, rather by actions, by the way the בית is.

This is really what the ספורנו says. The ספורנו says, ראה אנכי נותן לפניכם ברכה, וקללה, the תורה is telling us there are now two ways, either ברכה or קללה. There is no פשרה in Yiddishkeit, either right or left. That is והגדת, either גוד או אגוד, can't have both, that is the לאמור, that is what trains a child and that is what talks to a child. That is the only way to talk to a child. You can't talk to

a child and have the house give them a different message. Because what a child sees is what he takes in.

Mr. Charlie Harary
Envisioning Freedom

ותתן לנו... חג המצות הזה זמן חרותנו

When was the first Seder in all of history? While we would assume it to be the first year after the Jews left מצרים, **in truth, the night before they left they were already acting as a free nation eating מצה and the Korban Pesach.** Why would ה' command them to have a Seder before actually leaving מצרים? How can you have an anniversary before getting married?

Josh told the following story about himself. I was big and the perfect fit for a great football player. In truth, however, I was not a great player, but only decent. When I finally joined a team, my coach one day came to practice and said, "Josh, do you think you can give me the death crawl?" Knowing that a death crawl meant crawling on the floor only using your hands and feet without your elbows or knees, I knew that doing so would be a challenge. But I would do my best. "Yeah," I said back to the coach. "How far can you go?" he asked. "I don't know, but I think the twenty yard line." "You promise me you are going to go to the twenty?" "Promise," I replied.

Right before I was about to begin, my coach called me over again. "Wait a minute, Josh. Billy is going to be placed on your back." "What? You told me to go to the twenty; I didn't know someone would be on my back?" "Josh," sternly said the coach, "you promised me." With little option to argue, I agreed to shoulder the extra pounds.

"But don't go quite yet," he added, "there is one more thing." Pulling out from his pocket a handkerchief, he walked over to me and blindfolded me. Now about to perform a difficult task with a boy on my back and my eyes blindfolded, I didn't think I would get too far.

But I simply began to move. Inching five yards and then ten yards, my coach yelled out to me, "Josh, you are doing great!" I felt as if I had gone so far, but then my coach signaled only the ten yard line. "Keep on going!" I

soon heard being yelled. "You're at the fifteen!" Working as hard as I could, I soon felt I could go no more. "I can't do it coach! I have nothing left." "C'mon," he yelled, "five more steps." Putting in a few more steps and getting closer and closer... I collapsed.

Rolling over, I repeated, "Coach, I told you, I can't even get to the twenty." And then my coach said, "Josh... turn around. You are at the fifty."

We often live our lives thinking that who we are is who we are.

We get stuck in our own limitations. Before we left מצרים, ה' had us visualize with a Seder what it means to be a nation free to carry out His מצות. Freedom does not merely mean changing your geography or altering your mode of dress. **Freedom begins when you decide in your mind that you are going to be free.** Only when you can visualize such a reality will you experience true freedom and reach above your limitations. (2018)

Every plague had an aspect of "measure-for-measure," which is how the Almighty evens the score in the world:

1) Blood: The Jews would drink fresh water from the Nile. The מצרים would drink blood. "Give me that glass, Jew!" cried Muchmad. But when he drank, it turned into blood. "Refill the glass and let's drink at the same time!" ordered Muchmad. But even now, the Jew drank water and the מצרים drank blood.

We all live in our separate worlds, and in the מצרים' world it was blood. Only by paying money could the מצרים get water. "That will be \$100, please!"

2) Frogs: Pharaoh sealed his palace frog-proof and posted a big sign: "No frogs allowed!" When the swarms of frogs banged on his window, he sat nonchalantly on his throne. The frogs then went into a huddle: "We have to do something!" One little frog decided to get into the pita that was baked for Pharaoh daily. He jumped into the kneading trough and then into the dough. As the frog was put into the furnace, he prayed, and miraculously survived the heat.

When Pharaoh began to eat, the frog jumped into his stomach and wildly started croaking. Pharaoh yelled for help, opened the palace windows, and in came hopping all the frogs.

3) Lice: מצרים's magicians, who were so far able to duplicate the miracles of Moses, were dumbfounded. How can (what they thought was) the "black magic" of Moses have effect on such tiny creatures? They were forced to admit it was the finger of God.

The above three plagues were measure-for-measure, in that the מצרים would not allow the Jews to drink, sleep or bathe. They מצרים now appreciated the difficulty of being deprived of water (blood), sleep (frogs) and a bath (lice).

All three plagues in this series take place at sea level (upon the Nile River bank and in the sands of מצרים.)

The Sages point out that the first three plagues were carried out only by Aaron, because Moses owed a dept of gratitude to the Nile for saving his life (the baby in the basket), and to the sands of מצרים for concealing the מצרים he had killed years earlier (who had been beating a Jew).

4) Wild Animals: From the onset of the plagues, the Jews were switched from working on the pyramids to doing domestic labor. "Morris! Take my children for a picnic in the park!" When the plague of wild animals struck (lions and tigers and bears -- oh my!), Morris and the מצריםian kids were eating their picnic lunch. When Morris returned home alone, the frantic parents inquired, "Where are our children?" To which Morris replied, "One was eaten by an elephant, another by a boa constrictor, and I also saw some wolves and bears having a feast, but they didn't touch the sandwiches."

5) Cattle Plague: The pride of מצרים was their world-famous horses and livestock. When they all suddenly dropped dead in the fields (those in the barns were spared) -- except for the livestock of the Jews -- the מצרים started to ponder things more seriously...

6) Boils: Three of the plagues were performed by Aaron, three by Moses, and three directly by God. The plague of boils was the only one that was

done by all three. Moses and Aaron both filled their fists with soot from the furnace, and then Moses miraculously took all four fistfuls into one fist and tossed it up to the sky, where God spread it throughout the entire Land of מצרים, causing boils to erupt on the מצרים bodies.

The measure-for-measure of this second series of three plagues was that the מצרים had forced the Jews to risk their lives hunting for them (wild beasts), attending to their livestock (cattle plague), and would constantly beat them until their bodies were covered with sores (boils). This second series of plagues occurred at ground level.

7) Hail: Although it rarely rains in מצרים (the Nile periodically overflows enough for the מצרים to water their crops), Moses predicted fire-entrapped hail (a natural contradiction) and even warned the מצרים to bring their remaining livestock and servants indoors. Those who feared the Almighty took them inside, while those who didn't pay attention to His word (teaching us that the definition of fearing God is taking His word seriously) kept them outdoors, and when the hailstorm came (except for the land of Goshen) all was destroyed. Only the wheat and spelt that were not yet fully ripened (so as to bend in the hailstorm, instead of breaking) were spared.

This led the מצרים to ask, "Why didn't your great Deity wait for the wheat to be hard and break as well?" The answer: "He had to leave something for the locusts to eat!"

8) Locusts: The locusts swarmed down from the sky after being transported by a strong easterly wind. They covered the entire land and consumed whatever the hail had spared. Pharaoh hurried to summon Moses and begged him to stop the plague.

Question: Why was Pharaoh in such a rush?

Answer: Pharaoh wanted the plague stopped before the locusts could lay eggs and doom the future crops as well.

The מצרים, lacking anything else to eat, figured they might as well eat the locusts (and it is a delicacy in מצרים until today). They froze, pickled and preserved locust. They canned, bottled, and salted locust. What happened next? A westerly wind suddenly came and transported all the locusts

(including the preserved ones) into the Red Sea.

9) Darkness: For three straight days the מצרים couldn't see, and for three additional days the darkness was so thick that they couldn't move. They were literally "glued to their spots" and could not eat, drink, sleep, or even use the facilities. During these days the Jews (who could see) searched for the מצרים homes for hidden wealth, to prevent them from later claiming poverty.

The measure-for-measure here is that the מצרים had forced the Jews to tend their crops (locusts), stoned them with rocks (hail), and chained them to the wall in dark dungeons (darkness). This third series of three plagues came from the sky.

10) First Born: The Almighty Himself descended on מצרים (i.e. a revelation of the Divine presence), and the first-borns, who are more spiritually attuned, were killed by the overdose (Maharal). The miracle was that the Jewish first-borns were not killed, which is why even today they fast (or complete a tractate of Talmud) on the day before Pesach.

This plague was announced in advance: God refers to the Jewish people as His "first born" (Exodus 4:22), and Pharaoh was immediately informed of the consequences that his first born will die.

During the war, the Nazi's were approaching Chust just before Pesach, and the chassidim asked the Chusta Rebbe for words of chizuk. The Chusta Rebbe quoted the Haggada from the paragraph of 'Ha Lachma Anya'. The Haggada tells us "Hashata Hacha – now we are here, L'shana Haba B'arah D'yisroel – in the year to come may we be in the land of Israel". Why is the Haggada telling us 'Hashata Hacha' - now we are here? We are certainly well aware of this fact. The Chusta Rebbe tells us, that the words 'Hashata Hacha' do not simply mean - that we are here - rather it means that we are STILL here. The Chusta Rebbe continues to explain that if Klal Yisroel is STILL here, despite their persecutions, then we can certainly believe that 'L'shana Haba B'arah D'Yisroel'. We have experienced unspeakable tragedies- expulsions, inquisitions, pogroms, a holocaust- yet we are STILL here. Klal Yisroel always responds with a resiliency and determination that is ever stronger and deeper. We must take comfort in this fact, and with

renewed hope, we can indeed believe L'shana Haba B'arah D'Yisroel. We find this same concept elsewhere in the Haggada. It says "Rivavah Ktzemach Hasadeh – We are a myriad as the grass of the field". Why is Klal Yisroel compared to grass?

The more frequently that one cuts the grass, the quicker and taller the grass grows back. Nations have tried to cut us down, and yet we emerge quicker, taller and stronger. Chazal tell us "Heichon Kevuraso shel Moshe Rabbeinu – where is Moshe Rabeinu buried? Yesh omrim l'malah, v'yeish omrim l'matah – some say in shamayim and some say in this world. V'hatorah amrah, but the Torah tells us, V'lo yada ish es kevuraso - we do not know where Moshe Rabbeinu is buried". Rav Ephraim Wachsmann gives us a fabulous interpretation. In every generation, our enemies want to know – 'Heichon kevuraso shel Moshe Rabbeinu' – how can we bury daas Moshe? How can we get rid of the teachings of Moshe and destroy Klal Yisroel? Yesh omrim- l'malah – sometimes our enemies say "l'malah" we will accept them into our society. We will have them mingle with us, integrate, and intermarry. V'yeish omrim -'matah- sometimes our enemies say "l'matah"- lower them-crush them, persecute and annihilate them. V'Hatorah Omrah –however, Hashem and His Torah say "vlo yada ish es kevuraso"- no nation will ever know how to bury Daas Moshe. They will never eradicate Klal Yisroel.

Bnei Yisroel display a resiliency that defies words or logic. Years ago, a man sat down on a bus in Bnei Brak, next to Rav Kluff, a grandson of the Steipler. The man turned to R' Kluff, and after introducing himself said "I am just a pashita yid – a simple Jew" R Kluff asked the man to tell him a little about himself. The man responded with the following story "Decades ago I was in Stalin's army, and one thing that I knew for certain was that I had to keep Yom Kippur. The only way to remain in the barracks for the entire day, was to get a medical dispensation. I went to the dentist and fabricated a story. I told him that I had extreme pain in my tooth, and that the tooth had to be removed. He removed the tooth without any anesthesia or pain killers! The pain was indescribable! However, I now held in my hand, the cherished note of exemption. I showed it to my superior and I was able to observe Yom Kippur by remaining and davening in my barrack. R' Kluff was incredulous at the mesiras nefesh of this "pashita yid". As the man was exiting the bus, he turned to R' Kluff to say goodbye. The front of his mouth displayed four huge spaces where this man used to have four teeth. He said to Rav Kluff "Rebbe, I was in Stalin's army for four years,

and I kept Yom Kippur each of those four years". Yes-Hashata Hacha - we are STILL here. Therefore, let us be mechazeik ourselves this Pesach that- L'shana Haba B'arah D'yisroel. (Rabbi Ephraim Shapiro 2020)

The *גאולה* of *פסח* is *יציאת מצרים*, the leaving of *מצרים*, the boundaries, the things that I have been long convinced that I have no hope for overcoming those boundaries,

We all have things that we need to work on, we all have our limitations and restrictions. We all have our *מצרים* that we need to get out of.

We left *מצרים* with a *בהפזון*, with a rush, if you know that there is a given, that is my way of life, that is who I am and there is nothing that I can do about it, the way to get out of that is, *בהפזון*. **It is a not a slow process**, you need to make a decision, and say I am going to get out of this.

Then you can start working, *ה'* takes us out, after *פסח* there is a lot of work to do, that is why we have *ספירת העומר*, we have a lot of work to do. What *ה'* gives us on *פסח*, we need to work on our own until *שבועות*.

It has to be a with a *בהפזון*, I am heading in the wrong direction, I have accepted things about myself that I know are wrong.

That is why we say *זכר ליציאת מצרים*, *זכר ליציאת מצרים*, *זכר ליציאת מצרים*, the beginning, the first thing that a Yid needs to know, *זכר ליציאת מצרים* to approach the *יום טובים*, *זכר ליציאת מצרים* he explains to be "the callings of holiness". The *זכר ליציאת מצרים* calls on us to be holy. What is the first thing that we need to do to respond to the calling of the *זכר ליציאת מצרים*? The answer is *זכר ליציאת מצרים*, remember that *ה'* took us out of *מצרים*. And just like he took us out of *מצרים* 210 years after we were enslaved, the *זכר ליציאת מצרים* will take us out of this *מצרים* a mere few weeks after we've been enslaved. If *כלל ישראל* was able to hold on to their faith then after centuries of slavery, then these few difficult weeks, these few difficult months, should *אם ירצה ה'* evolve into a tremendous *ישועה*. But the first thing we need to do is to remember that it can and will happen.

I can change myself and become something.

The reason why אסתר decided to fast on the 15th of ניסן, is that she wanted to show 'ה what it would be like if there was no סדר 'ה. 'ה has so much נחת from the seder that he could not imagine the world without it.

We shine by פסח and 'ה loves that. (Rabbi Wachsmann 2020)

וַאֲפֵ אֶתְהָ תִקְהָה אֶת שְׁנָיו וְאָמַר לִי

Most people understand תִקְהָה as knock out his teeth. This is not what it means as it is written with a Kuf and not a Kaf. It means to blunt his teeth, blunt his sharpness, and blunt his anger. What is the idea of blunting his anger?

Rav Aharon Kotler used to say over the following incident. He often went with the Kapishnitzer Rebbe collecting for Chinuch Atzmai. The two of them were known figures really carrying the burden of Chinuch Atzmai in the early years of the Yishuv in Eretz Yisrael. Once the two of them came to a wealthy man's office and the secretary said that he was not in. They understood that the man was really there so they said that they would wait for him to arrive. It became a waiting game and the man tired and came out angrily. He derided Rav Kotler and the Kapishnitzer Rebbe. He said people always come to me for money without appointments and they come to me at home and in the office. He berated them very harshly. Rav Kotler winked to the Kapishnitzer Rebbe that he thinks it is time to leave. The Kapishnitzer Rebbe motioned that they should stay. The man carried on and eventually became quiet. The Kapishnitzer Rebbe turned to the wealthy man and said, you have given us what we deserve now please give Chunch Atzmai what it deserves. The man mellowed and made a donation.

וַאֲפֵ אֶתְהָ תִקְהָה אֶת שְׁנָיו blunt his teeth. Blunt his anger, let his anger wear out. You will find that underneath he is not such a big Rasha. Don't Pasul the whole person because there is a good person underneath.

This reminds me of an incident that I once witnessed. Rav Moshe was coming into the Yeshiva to give a Shiur and he was in the Bais Medrash. He walked halfway down the Bais Medrash from the entrance towards his seat when a man sprang up and blocked his way and started screaming. The man was screaming the following words believe it or not. He said Rav

Moshe, your son in law Paskened that I am a Shoteh, Pasken that I am not a Shoteh. He proceeded to holler and repeat that over and over again really demonstrating to everyone there that he indeed was a Shoteh. Someone tried to move him away and he hit the person. He said to him when the Rosh Yeshiva wants me to stop talking I will stop talking. I remember that everyone in the Bais Medrash was holding his breath and watching. Rav Moshe just looked the man in the face and as the man kept on going Rav Moshe didn't nod yes and he didn't nod no he just waited and eventually the man ran out of steam like a siren at the end of its calling. He quieted down and his frustration ran out. I learned a lesson then. There is sometimes when a person carries on it is best just to be quiet. Let him spend his energy and eventually common sense will prevail. What a lesson. It is so hard for us to hold our tongues and hold our energy. וְאַף אֵתָּהּ – blunt his teeth. When someone speaks harshly take it easy, be calm about it, and you will do well. (2024)