

# Young Israel Shomrai Emunah - Pesach Shorts

April 8 - 16, 2020 - 15 - 22 Nissan 5780 - Pesach  
 Light Candles (1<sup>st</sup> day) by 7:21 - Havdalah (8<sup>th</sup> day) 8:29

The Pesach Shorts is sponsored by the family of Yosef Ezra Livingston,  
 Yosef Ezra ben Meyer Aharon, on the occasion of his first Yahrzeit.

## Pesach Schedule

The following times are relevant throughout Pesach for determining your personal Davening times, particularly if you do not Daven at the same time as your usual Minyan would meet.

- **Earliest Talis & Tefilin** - 5:46 AM on April 9, gradually getting earlier to 5:35 AM on April 16.
- **Netz Hachamah** (sunrise) - 6:40 AM on April 9, gradually getting earlier to 6:30 AM on April 16. This is the ideal time to Daven the Shacharis Shmoneh Esrai and, if possible, Shmoneh Esrai should not be Davened before that time.
- **Latest Krias Shma** - 9:54 AM on April 8, gradually getting earlier to 9:48 AM on April 16.
- **Earliest Mincha** - 1:43 PM on April 8, gradually getting earlier to 1:42 PM on April 16.

The usual time for Mincha is a little before Shkia (sunset), about the same time as listed for lighting candles on Erev Shabbos or Erev Yom Tov. If Mincha is Davened significantly earlier then it is preferable to Daven Mincha prior to Plag Hamincha and Maariv following Plag Hamincha.

### Wednesday, April 8 - Erev Pesach

*Remember to make an Eruv Tavshillin.*

- Light Candles 7:21 PM

*Even if one's Minhag is to say Hallel in Shul on Seder night, one would not say it if davening at home.*

- Seder starts after 8:20 PM

### Thursday, April 9 - Yom Tov

*We do not say the Tefillah of Tal on the first day of Pesach, as it is part of the Chazan's repetition. The first Shmoneh Esrai in which we stop saying Mashiv Haruach is Mincha of the first day of Pesach.*

- Light Candles after 8:21 PM

*No acts of preparation may be made for the second night before 8:21 PM. Even if one's Minhag is to say Hallel in Shul on Seder night, one would not say it if davening at home.*

*Begin counting Sefiras Haomer.*

### Friday, April 10 - Yom Tov

- Plag Hamincha 6:19 PM
- Light Candles 7:23 PM

### Shabbos, April 11 - Chol Hamoed

*There is no obligation for an individual to say Shir Hashirim on Shabbos Chol Hamoed. If an individual wants to do so it is certainly acceptable to do so.*

- Shabbos Ends 8:24 PM

### Tuesday, April 14 - Erev Yom Tov

- Plag Hamincha 6:22 PM
- Light Candles 7:26 PM

### Wednesday, April 15 - Yom Tov

- Light Candles after 8:28 PM

*No acts of preparation may be made for the second night before 8:28 PM.*

### Thursday, April 16 - Yom Tov

*One says Yizkor on the last day of Yom Tov even when davening without a Minyan.*

- Yom Tov Ends 8:29 PM
- Chametz which was sold for Pesach may be used after 9:15 PM

## Mazal Tov

- **Rabbi Sanford H. Shudnow** on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his Bar Mitzvah.

## Condolences

- **Melvin Sassoon** on the passing of his father, Jack Sassoon. The funeral took place in England. Shiva was completed before Yom Tov.

## COVID-19 Updates

- All public activities at YISE are cancelled, including Minyanim, Youth Groups, Shiurim and special events.
- The Shul office is still open, but hours may vary.
- Please continue to be vigilant regarding matters of personal hygiene as previously advised. If you are unwell, please do not enter the Shul or other public places. We urge you to adhere to all medical advice you may receive regarding self-quarantine.

Let us Daven to Hashem to keep us all in good health and to return our lives to normal as soon as possible. In protecting each other as we navigate this unfolding situation, may we grow stronger as individuals and as a community.

## Weekday Shiurim

Options for remote learning are listed below. For the latest list, go to <https://wp.yise.org/remote-learning-schedule/>

- **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Mussar Study Group for Women (spiritual self-improvement), Sundays at 9:30 AM, **Zoom A.**
- **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Gemara Shiur for Men, Tuesdays and Fridays (except Yom Tov), 6:00 AM, **Zoom A.**
- **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Nach Shiur, Wednesdays at 11:00 AM, *will resume April 22.*
- **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Chumash Shiur for Women, Wednesdays at 8:00 PM, *will resume April 22.*
- **Rabbi Silver's** Parsha Shiur for men & women, a mix of Halacha and Aggada. Tuesdays at 7:30 PM. For more details, contact [rbsilver@yise.org](mailto:rbsilver@yise.org), *will resume April 21.*
- **GWCK Sunday Kollel Brunch and Learn for Men** - Sunday mornings, 9:30 AM, *will resume April 19.*
- **GWCK presents CLAS (Community Learning at Shomrai)** - 8:15 PM - 9:15 PM. For more info. contact Rabbi Hillel Shaps, [hshaps@gwckollel.org](mailto:hshaps@gwckollel.org) 347-869-9361, *will resume April 20.*
- **Semichat Chaver Program**, Tuesdays at 9:00 PM with Rabbi Silver. For more information, please contact Rabbi Binyamin Silver: [rbsilver@yise.org](mailto:rbsilver@yise.org) or Rabbi Hillel Shaps: [hshaps@gwckollel.org](mailto:hshaps@gwckollel.org), *will resume April 21.*
- **The Golden Network Presents: Rabbi Barry Greengart's** Shiur on Daily Halachos for men & women, Tuesdays 9:15 AM, *will resume April 21.*

### Connection Details:

For Zoom, go to <https://zoom.us/join/> and enter the meeting ID, or call in using the listed number:

- Zoom A: ID: 416 963 9000, password 492019, phone 301-715-8592

## YISE Programs and Listings

**Siyum Sponsor** - The Erev Pesach Siyumim were sponsored by an anonymous donor.

**Conversations in Coping** - Join 3 of our esteemed local therapists for practical skills on maintaining sanity during coronavirus, online, **Zoom A** listed above. Dr. Howie Schulman, Monday, April 13, 8:00 PM. *See flyer for details.*

**Yom HaShoah v' Hagvurah Program** - Tuesday, April 21 at 7:30 PM. Please join us on ZOOM for this year's Yom HaShoah program, featuring Mr. Alex Raden, a child survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto. The Zoom link will be made public right after Pesach.

**Camp Shomrai 2020** is open for registration! Programs for campers entering 2-year-old Preschool through 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Camp Dates: Monday, June 29 - Thursday, August 13. Register online at <https://campshomrai.campapplications.com> For more information contact Sarah Dollman at [camp@yise.org](mailto:camp@yise.org)  
**Shomrai Preschool 2020-2021** - Online registration is now open for children ages 2 to 5 years old with customizable extended care options from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM. Visit [preschool.yise.org](http://preschool.yise.org) or email [preschool@yise.org](mailto:preschool@yise.org) for more information or to schedule a tour. Ask about our special, deeply reduced tuition for incoming 2-year-olds!

**Helping Hands Across Kemp Mill** is a part of YISE's Chesed Committee. The program helps members undergoing serious medical crises. We are always looking for volunteers to help. To be a part of this program by helping with meals, visitation, shopping, childcare, etc., contact: Melanie Karlin, 301-681-4740, [mkskarlin@gmail.com](mailto:mkskarlin@gmail.com) or Miriam Friedman, 301-754-1517, [mfriedman2@yahoo.com](mailto:mfriedman2@yahoo.com)

**The Rachel Bassan Horwitz Fund** is used for medical needs in our area, elsewhere in the US, and in Israel. In order to continue this much needed medical fund your financial help is needed! Tax deductible contributions may be made payable to: YISE Charity SPECIAL Fund, c/o Norma Burdett, 11720 Lovejoy St., Silver Spring, MD 20902. Earmark: Bassan Fund. For more info: Norma Burdett, 301-593-5964 or Pearl Bassan, 301-649-3137.

**Shiurim from Rabbi Gedaliah Anemer, ZT"l**, are available at <http://audio.yise.org>

## Community Programs & Listings

**The Magic of Mara: Healing and Menschlichkeit** - Monday, April 13, 8:00 PM with Rabbi Elchanan Adler. This Shiur is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Allen Gaisin, Z"l (Eliyahu ben Menachem Mendel HaKohen). Zoom Meeting ID: 969 661 019 or dial in at 301-715-8592,

**HaMizrachi Pesach 5780** - Download and print at [www.rza.org/hamizrachipesach](http://www.rza.org/hamizrachipesach)

**Remote Night Shiurim from YGW** - Sunday 8:30 PM - 9:15 PM, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Blate; Monday/Wednesday 9:00 PM - 9:30 PM, Rabbi Ahron Lopiansky; Tuesday/Thursday 9:00 PM - 9:30 PM, Rabbi Eliyahu Reingold. Register at

[https://zoom.us/webinar/register/1715843153121/WN\\_n6jNGqUpTpCN6ikCabUutA](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/1715843153121/WN_n6jNGqUpTpCN6ikCabUutA)

**Daf Yomi Shiur** currently meets online via a WebEx video conference. There is still room for a few more participants. Anyone interested may email Judd Lifschitz at [lifschitz@slslaw.com](mailto:lifschitz@slslaw.com) to be added to the invite list. Sunday 7:00 AM, Monday - Thursday 9:00 PM, Friday 5:45 PM.

**Kemp Mill Toastmasters** - Wednesday, April 22, 8:00 PM - 9:15 PM. See what Toastmasters is all about and find out how you can become a more confident communicator & leader. Contact Manasseh Katz at [ymp@kempmilltoastmasters.com](mailto:ymp@kempmilltoastmasters.com) for more info. Zoom meeting ID: 986 546 841 password 3671.

**Partners in Tefillah** matches people with others in need of similar assistance from Hashem. The feedback we have received so far has been amazing. You, too, can Daven for someone else in the community and have them Daven for you. May Hashem answer all your prayers. Please visit [www.yadyehuda.org/partners-in-tefillah](http://www.yadyehuda.org/partners-in-tefillah) to learn more and to sign up.

**Community Helping Community: Yad Yehuda's COVID-19 Crisis Relief** - During this crisis, previously financially stable households in our community are already experiencing financial challenges. Yad Yehuda is receiving many more assistance requests than usual. With Pesach coming soon, we expect that to increase. Community financial donations are critical now. Please make an additional donation to Yad Yehuda today to help us address this unforeseen need at [www.yadyehuda.org/donate](http://www.yadyehuda.org/donate) A COVID-19 Telephone Assistance Hotline is now available at 301-494-1010, Sunday - Thursday 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM, Friday 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM. When you call, one of our dedicated Yad Yehuda volunteers will answer questions and help connect you with resources in the Jewish community and the area at large. If the volunteer is unable to answer your issue or question, they will, IY"Y, ensure that someone gets back to you in a timely manner. Our friendly volunteers are there to help and will do so with the utmost discretion and privacy. Please visit [www.yadyehuda.org/covid19](http://www.yadyehuda.org/covid19) for additional and updated information.

**The Franco Foundation** - Helping the community from within the community. The Foundation helps our community's needy all year long, and distributes more around Pesach to cover additional expenses. It is distributing assistance through Shalom scrip as well as financial assistance. If you know of a family or individual that requires assistance for Pesach or is in a financial bind, please contact the Foundation at its email address, below. Your suggestion will remain anonymous. Please send your generous tax-deductible donation to: The Franco Foundation/613 Bromley Street/Silver Spring, MD 20902, or through PayPal, at [thefrancofoundation@gmail.com](mailto:thefrancofoundation@gmail.com)

**Daily Halacha Program from Rabbi Eliyahu Reingold** - Receive one every day in your inbox. Visit [dvarhalacha.com](http://dvarhalacha.com) and click "Sign Up."

**Kemp Mill Village** is offering friendly phone calls and limited deliveries of medicine for the duration of the pandemic. Call 1-833-KMV-20902 to request service or to volunteer, and see the KMV website for further information: [www.kempmillvillage.org](http://www.kempmillvillage.org)

**Silver Spring Gemachim** - For a complete list: [www.gemachexchange.com](http://www.gemachexchange.com)

<b>The Week Ahead</b>	Sunday/Monday/Tuesday, April 12 - 14 <b>Chol Hamoed Pesach</b>	Wednesday/Thursday, April 15 - 16 <b>Yom Tov</b>	Friday, April 17 <b>Isru Chag</b>
No Minyanim will take place at YISE next week. You are encouraged to Daven at home at your regular Minyan time. Mincha was scheduled for April 12 - 16 at 7:30 PM (Ashkenazi)/7:25 PM (Sephardi). In addition to Shiurim listed above, conference calls are scheduled with Rabbi Rosenbaum for Tehillim and a 15-minute Shiur on the Parsha in the mornings (Sunday 9:00 AM, Monday through Friday (except Yom Tov) 8:30 AM) and for Tehillim and a 15-minute Shiur on Hilchos Pesach in the evenings (Sunday through Thursday, 7:30 PM) using Zoom A listed above.			
<b>Halachic Times:</b> Earliest Talis and Tefillin: 5:41 AM, Latest Krias Shma: 9:47 AM, Earliest Mincha: 1:42 PM			

### Upcoming Events

Monday, April 13	Conversations in Coping, 8:00 PM
Tuesday, April 21	Yom HaShoah v' Hagvurah, 7:30 PM

### Next Shabbos

**April 17 - 18, 2020, 24 Nissan 5780**  
**Parshas Shemini**  
**Light Candles: Friday by 7:29 Havdalah: 8:31**

Next Shabbos Shorts Deadline: Tuesday, April 14 at 12:00 Noon, for the Post-Pesach Shorts - no Shorts will be published on Chol Hamoed.

Submit items for the Shabbos Shorts to: [announce@yise.org](mailto:announce@yise.org)  
 Office Phone: 301-593-4465      Office Fax: 301-593-2330  
 Eruv line: 301-593-5561

E-Mail: [office@yise.org](mailto:office@yise.org) Website: [www.yise.org](http://www.yise.org)  
 Office Hours:

Closed for Pesach. Friday: 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum                      Sammy Franco - President  
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# CONVERSATIONS IN COPING:

## 3 SEPARATE SESSIONS

**JOIN 3 OF OUR ESTEEMED  
LOCAL THERAPISTS  
FOR PRACTICAL SKILLS  
ON MAINTAINING SANITY  
DURING CORONAVIRUS**



**Young Israel Shomrai Emunah**



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**MANAGING ANXIETY IN CHALLENGING TIMES**  
**DR. RACHEL RAVIN, PH.D, CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST**  
**MONDAY 3/30 -- 9PM**



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**ANXIETY, SELF-CARE, AND USING COVID-19 TO ENHANCE OUR  
RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS**  
**DR. EMILY FRIEDMAN, PSY.D, CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST**  
**WEDNESDAY 4/1 -- 9PM**



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**CORONA, CATASTROPHIZING, CAPPUCCINO, COPING AND  
HAKADOSH BARUCH HU: SOME THOUGHTS FROM A PSYCHOLOGIST**  
**DR. HOWIE SCHULMAN, PH.D, CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST**  
**MONDAY 4/13 -- 8PM**

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**Join Zoom Meeting**

**<https://zoom.us/j/4169639000>**

**Meeting ID: 416 963 9000**

**One tap mobile**

**+19292056099,,4169639000# US (New York)**

**No pin necessary**

**OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY**

**Please email questions in advance to: [Esteesilver13@gmail.com](mailto:Esteesilver13@gmail.com)**

Kemp Mill Synagogue & Young Israel Shomrai Emunah present the

## 40<sup>th</sup> Annual

# Yom HaShoah v'Hagvurah Program

featuring



# Alex Raden



Alex Raden was born in Warsaw, Poland in 1934. Following the invasion of Poland in 1939, the Nazis confined Alex's family and other Jews to the Warsaw Ghetto where they experienced starvation and ravaging epidemics and witnessed mass deportations. Alex's family escaped from the Ghetto in 1943, shortly before the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Thereafter, Alex was separated from his family and hidden by non-Jews. After the war, Alex was reunited with his mother and sister; his father had been killed. In 1951, he emigrated to the US. Alex married Eva Rosenberg, also a Holocaust survivor, in 1958. The Radens have 3 children and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. They are members of the Baltimore Orthodox community.

**Tuesday, April 21, 2020**

**7:30 pm**

**This program will take place online.**

**Login information will be made available after Pesach**

**Dvar Torah by Rabbi Brahm Weinberg**

**Co-Sponsors:**

**Berman Hebrew Academy • Ohr HaTorah  
Sulam • Torah School of Greater Washington  
Yeshiva of Greater Washington**

Children grades 6 and above are encouraged to attend with their parents

*Sign language interpreter available  
on request (by April 6) sponsored by Sulam, Inc  
Please email [dkatz@yise.org](mailto:dkatz@yise.org) if interested.*





# ISRAEL REPORT

To provide greater exposure to primary Israeli news sources and opinions in order to become better informed on the issues, and to gain a better understanding of the wide range of perspectives that exist in Israeli society and politics.  
Issue 1202 • April 8, 2020 • Pesach 5780

## PM: ISRAEL IN LOCKDOWN FOR PASSOVER HOLY DAYS, CONFINED TO HOMES ON SEDER NIGHT (YNet 4/6/20)

The whole of Israel will be on a strict lockdown for the first few days of the Passover holiday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Monday night, as part of the measures to fight the spread of coronavirus. He also said that there would be a full curfew on Wednesday night, to deter people who may be tempted to visit family and friends during the Jewish festival.

The prime minister said the nationwide lockdown would last from 4 pm Tuesday until 7 am Friday. The curfew will last from 6 pm Wednesday until 7 am Thursday, during which time people would be confined to their homes.

Speaking a televised address, Netanyahu urged Israelis to adhere to the restrictions, which he said would be enforced by police. "It is important to protect your health and the health of your loved ones," he said.

The prime minister said there were some optimistic indications that the spread of the coronavirus has slowed down, but the holiday week is crucial to maintain that trajectory. The Passover holiday begins on Wednesday night and lasts for eight days and is traditionally a time to spend with loved ones.

Because of these optimistic indications, the prime minister said the government was preparing plans for Israel's exit from the crisis.

Those plans, he said, would breathe life back into the economy after a record-breaking NIS 90 billion package was approved by the government Sunday to assist small businesses and the unemployed.

He also called on urged Israelis to purchase Israeli-made products to help the local industry.

## ISRAEL MARCHES TOWARD 9,000 CORONA CASES, BUT BOASTS A HIGH RECOVERY RATE (Israel Hayom 4/6/20)

The Health Ministry reported 8,611 confirmed cases of coronavirus in Israel on Monday, with 55 deaths to date. A total of 141 patients are listed in serious condition, 107 of whom are on ventilators. Another 191 are listed in moderate condition, with the vast majority – 7,643 – of cases being light or minor.

A total of 585 Israeli corona patients have recovered from the virus. Last week, the Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel reported that the country was seeing a recovery-to-death ratio of 10:1, meaning that 10 corona patients were recovering for every one corona death in Israel. According to the Taub Center, this is much higher than the ratio in most OECD countries.

In the past 24 hours, three corona patients being treated at the Assaf Harofeh Medical Center succumbed to the virus: a 96-year-old woman who suffered from multiple pre-existing conditions; an 80-year-old man who was already terminally ill; and a 66-year-old man, whom COVID-19 caused to go into multi-system failure.

While most corona deaths thus far have been elderly patients, a 22-year-old man from Ashdod without any pre-existing health problems is still hospitalized and on a ventilator at Sourasky Medical Center in Tel Aviv.

Laniado Hospital in Netanya reported Monday that it was treating 17 corona patients, eight of whom were listed in serious condition, one in moderate condition, and eight minor cases. The hospital said that it had released another patient to a convalescent facility on Sunday night.

Barzilai Medical Center in Ashkelon reported that since the epidemic began, it has treated 69 corona patients, three of whom died and nine of whom made full recoveries. The rest were well enough to be transferred to convalescent facilities.

Meir Medical Center in Kfar Saba reported 43 corona patients, five of whom were on ventilators as of Monday morning. In the past 24 hours, the hospital has seen three additional patients in serious condition removed from ventilators after their conditions stabilized.

## UNITY TALKS SUSPENDED (Arutz-7 4/6/20)

Unity negotiations between the Blue and White and Likud parties were halted Monday evening, several hours after reports leaked detailing an agreement between the two sides.

Sources in the Blue and White party said that after reaching understandings on all issues, the Likud sought to re-examine the operation of the Judiciary Committee.

"As a result, the negotiations have been stopped. We will not allow any change in the functioning of the Judiciary Committee and the resulting damage to democracy," the party said.

Earlier, Journalist Amit Segal of Channel 12 News published the unity agreement between the Likud and Blue and White parties.

Under the agreement, the application of sovereignty in of Judea and Samaria and the Jordan Valley will be promoted within two and a half months, following a "consultation" with MK Benny Gantz and if the American government consents to the move.

In addition, MK Yuli Edelstein will not return to the position of Knesset Speaker. It was also decided that Minister Yariv Levin will be replaced.

The Blue and White Party will be able to choose between the Foreign Ministry and the Education Ministry and will receive half of the 30 ministerial positions. Following the end of the coronavirus crisis, the government will expand by four ministers.

Likud officials said that "the apparent agreement on the issue of sovereignty

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Mizrachi Shul, Johannesburg, SA  
North Shore Hebrew Academy HS, NJ  
Suburban Torah Center, Livingston, NJ  
The Learning Shul, Columbia, SC  
Temple Emanuel of Pascoack Valley, NJ  
Woodsburgh, NY Minyan  
Young Israel Bet Tefilah of Aberdeen, NJ  
Young Israel of Brookline, MA  
Young Israel of East Brunswick, NJ  
Young Israel of Fort Lee, NJ  
Young Israel of Hancock Park, CA  
Young Israel of Holliswood, NY  
Young Israel of Houston, TX  
Young Israel of New Hyde Park, NY  
Young Israel of North Woodmere, NY  
Young Israel of New Rochelle, NY  
Young Israel of Sharon, MA

YI Shomrai Emunah, Silver Spring, MD

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that after a short time, Netanyahu will be able to bring the sovereignty to the vote in government - is a great achievement for the party."

"Netanyahu will have to consult with Gantz and gain American support, but not beyond that," the sources told Kan 11.

### **ANNEXATION SET FOR JULY AFTER LIKUD, BLUE AND WHITE COMPLETE DEAL (JPost 4/6/20)**

Israeli annexation of all the West Bank settlements can move forward as early as July, according to a coalition agreement that was completed between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud and Benny Gantz's Blue and White on Monday.

The agreement's signing was postponed after Likud tried to walk back its compromises enabling Blue and White to control the Judicial selection committee. But even as Blue and White representatives left the Prime Minister's Office, they admitted that agreements had been reached on all remaining issues when Netanyahu and Gantz met at Netanyahu's Jerusalem residence on Monday and said they expected the signing to take place soon. Netanyahu compromised on the judicial selection committee and Gantz on how and when to implement US President Donald Trump's Middle East peace plan, especially its clauses on applying sovereignty in Judea and Samaria.

As early as July 10, Netanyahu can bring the plan to the cabinet for a vote. He would have to consult with Gantz and US President Donald Trump on the sovereignty plan, but Gantz would not have veto power on the plan.

There are enough votes in the Knesset to approve West Bank annexation, irrespective of the formation of the government.

The ultra-Orthodox parties of Shas and United Torah Judaism have adopted Netanyahu's policy on the application of sovereignty.

Yamina supports it, as does Yisrael Beytenu, whether they are in the government or not. Derech Eretz MKs Yoaz Hendel and Zvi Hauser as well as Geshet leader Orly Levy-Abecassis will support it, creating a pro-sovereignty bloc of some 68 votes without Gantz's MKs.

Gantz supports the application of sovereignty, but only if it's done in dialogue with the international community. When it comes to the Jordan Valley he only wanted to take action in coordination with the King of Jordan so as to avert destabilizing the Hashemite Kingdom's rule.

Efrat Council head and Yesha Foreign Envoy Oded Revivi welcomed news of the unity government that could allow for sovereignty.

"I am glad that the issue of sovereignty is on Netanyahu and Gantz's agenda, and I trust that with the right actions and the right discourse, both internally and externally, we will figure out how to apply Israeli law in Judea and Samaria," he said. But the Sovereignty Movement warned that "application of sovereignty must correspond exclusively to Israeli interests and the Zionist vision and not to the Trump plan that ultimately leads to a Palestinian terrorist state."

In a joint statement, Likud and Blue and White said negotiations were currently underway and were being carried out in a positive and constructive manner toward forming a government as quickly as possible. For instance, both sides agreed to maintain status quo on matters of religion and state and make changes that Shas requested to the controversial haredi (ultra-Orthodox) draft bill.

### **BLUE & WHITE, LABOR MERGER IN THE WORKS (YNet 4/6/20)**

The Knesset Arrangements Committee approved on Monday the breakup of the Labor-Meretetz union, after Labor chairman Amir Peretz announced his effort to merge the party into Blue & White.

Peretz told the committee that the original merger was made to not lose voters for the center-left bloc and that it was made "half-heartedly."

"We [Labor and Meretz] don't see eye to eye on how to serve the citizens of Israel," Peretz said. "I don't downplay the importance of an opposition in a democratic state, but I have decided to examine the other possibilities we

have to serve the public from within the government."

The Labor chairman earlier met with Blue & White Chief Benny Gantz, where the two agreed on working for a merger of the two parties.

The effort will be led by Blue & White MK Avi Nisenkorn and Labor MK Itzik Shmuli.

MK Mirav Michaeli, the only other Labor lawmaker in Knesset, slammed Peretz's decision, saying that "just to fix up portfolios for Amir Peretz and Itzik Shmuli, you don't sell out the party of [David] Ben-Gurion, [Yitzhak] Rabin and [Shimon] Peres."

"I call upon all my colleagues in the party to resist this move. Our camp deserves good and proper leadership that keeps its promises and fights for the State of Israel," she said.

### **IDF SOLDIERS SUPPORT FELLOW JEWS BY PRAYING KADDISH FOR PASSED LOVED ONES (JPost 4/7/20)**

A group of religious IDF soldiers are bringing comfort to Jews in mourning by saying the obligatory "Kaddish" prayer on their behalf for deceased loved ones in a minyan.

The soldiers serve with the Netzach Yehuda unit, a special battalion reserved for haredi soldiers who want to combine the rigors of religious Jewish practice with service in the Israeli army. Currently, all soldiers are on lockdown on their bases, with no leave allowed while the pandemic measures are in effect. As the soldiers have been together for more than two weeks with no contact with anyone from outside the base, they have been permitted to hold minyanim - formal prayer quora consisting of at least ten men.

In light of the coronavirus pandemic which is preventing others from forming minyanim across Israel and the diaspora, the soldiers have offered their services to anyone wanting Kiddish said for a loved one who has passed. They have been inviting people to send them names so that they can be remembered properly.

Rabbi Shmuel Schwartz, a father of a paratrooper with the brigade said: "Over the last few weeks I have been lost because I cannot say Kaddish for my mother. Then my soul was immediately revitalized when my son offered to say Kaddish for my mother in his unit. I felt so relieved and at comfort that my mother could be properly honored during my time of mourning."

The initiative was launched and is being supported by Nahal Haredi, an organization which supports haredi soldiers serving in the IDF. The organization has set up an online form for people around the world to place their requests for loved ones to be prayed for.

The Nahal Haredi organization currently supports and accompanies 2,200 active duty soldiers, 300 lone soldiers and over 13,000 veterans.

### **PROTECTIVE OF RELIGIOUS BEARDS, ISRAEL TO PRODUCE FITTED FACE MASKS DURING CORONAVIRUS CRISIS (Ha'aretz 4/6/20)**

Israelis who have beards for religious reasons will get the option of custom-made face masks to protect them from the coronavirus rather than being told to shave, a government official said on Monday.

As part of measures to combat the epidemic, Israeli authorities last week told people to cover their mouths and noses in public.

Many of the country's Jews and Muslims, and some Christian clergymen, wear beards as a mark of faith, and the order raised questions as to how facial hair would be accommodated.

Health Ministry deputy director-general Itamar Grotto said masks would be adapted accordingly.

"We are creating an industrial certification for masks, which means that in a few days there will really be masks of different sizes," he told Army Radio.

"...(So) those with beards will be able to use the appropriate masks."

Israel's Chief Rabbinate has said it might consider issuing a ruling permitting religious Jews to shave if the ministry were to deem it necessary.

Grotto said seeking a rabbinical dispensation to remove facial hair was "not on the agenda right now".

## ISRAEL'S HAREDI CITIES SEE DISPROPORTIONATE CORONAVIRUS SPREAD (YNet 4/6/20)

Haredi cities and communities in Israel have recorded the sharpest rise in the number of coronavirus infections per person in the country over the past week, according to the latest report published by the Health Ministry on Monday.

On Sunday evening the government decided to place eight Haredi cities and 15 Jerusalem neighborhoods under lockdown due to a rapid spread of COVID-19 in the ultra-Orthodox community in the country.

In Bnei Brak, which has been under a government lockdown for the past few days, the number of patients has jumped from 410 on Sunday, March 29, to 1,202 on Sunday, April 5, meaning the spread has risen by 2.9 times almost tripling itself.

For comparison, Israel's national average is 2.0, meaning over the past week the number of infected in the country has doubled itself.

In the Haredi settlement of Modi'in Illit, the number of cases has risen from 30 last week to 117 this week, quadrupling in numbers with a 3.9 infection ration and more than doubling the national average of 2.0.

A host of other cities also recorded a spread ration higher than the average in the country.

In Jerusalem, the weekly ratio 2.8, in predominantly Haredi cities of Beit Shemesh and Beitar Illit the ration stands at 2.7, in the ultra-Orthodox city of Elad the rations stands at 2.5, followed by Or Yehuda (2.5), Haifa (2.1) and Safed (2.1).

The community with the biggest ratio of coronavirus infection is a small Haredi town of Rekhasim near Haifa in northern Israel, with a population of 12,000. The spread of the virus in the town has jumped by an unprecedented 8.7 times over the past week.

The Haredi population has been hardest hit, both in Israel and around the world, as its traditionally insular way of life and heavy emphasis on community have created a perfect storm for the virus to spread.

The authorities fear that the desire to celebrate the Passover holiday will lead many in the community to ignore Health Ministry directives and gather in large numbers.

## BDS FOUNDER 'PERMITS' CORONAVIRUS VACCINE INVENTED BY ISRAEL (Arutz-7 4/7/20)

The founder of the anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement said that if Israel invents a vaccine for the coronavirus, those who reject normalization with Israel by boycotting it can still be given the vaccine.

Omar Barghouti made the comments in a Facebook live Arabic-language webinar on Sunday titled "BDS and Anti-normalization: The most important strategies to fight against the deal of the century, even in the time of COVID-19."

Barghouti said that Israel should not be allowed to use the coronavirus crisis to maintain relations with the Palestinian Authority and with other Arab states. "If you use medical equipment from Israel — it's not a problem. Cooperating with Israel against the virus — to begin with, we do not consider it normalization," he stated.

The same is true of other medical breakthroughs, added Barghouti. "If Israel finds a cure for cancer, for example, or any other virus, then there is no problem in cooperating with Israel to save millions of lives," he said.

He pointed out that "up until now, we have not been in a situation where we need Israel urgently and no one else can save us but Israel. If that will happen, saving lives is more important than anything else."

The description of the webinar in the Facebook post accused Israel of exploiting Palestinian workers in the country by not offering them protection against the virus, and accused Israel of "intensifying the looting of the land and arrests, oppression and killing, while normalization continues with the Arab official system."

The Qatari-born Barghouti is a resident of the Israeli city of Acre, and was

granted a permanent residency permit due to his marriage to an Israeli Arab. Despite advocating for a worldwide economic, cultural and academic boycott of Israel, Barghouti received a Masters degree from Tel Aviv University and is currently studying for a PhD there.

## YOU CAN NOW EXPERIENCE A TOUR OF THE WESTERN WALL TUNNELS FROM YOUR SOFA (JPost 4/6/20)

As the coronavirus lockdown moves in to its third week and regular activities are starting to wear thin, options abound online to expand our horizons far and wide - all from the comfort of our sofas. One such welcome opportunity is a personalized tour of the Western Wall Tunnels in Jerusalem, which can now be taken online.

The Western Walls Heritage Foundation has created a 360 LIVE experience for virtual tourists to explore the rich history of this remarkable landmark, offering a unique insight into the Jewish nation.

The hour-long experience combines a moving 3D tour of the entire route with film clips and illustrations which bring history to life, all guided by an expert on the tunnel system. Virtual visitors can even get personalized responses to their questions as they walk along the entire route of the tunnels, visit the vast underground caverns, stand opposite the Holy of Holies and walk through a Hasmonean aqueduct, while keeping their feet perfectly dry.

[www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=7&v=MccQtsHDWvY&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=7&v=MccQtsHDWvY&feature=emb_logo)

## GANTZ'S OPPORTUNITY TO MEND THE HISTORIC RIFT (Nadav Shragai, Israel Hayom 4/5/20)

The discord over Israeli sovereignty — which is currently delaying the establishment of an emergency government — isn't just a landmine on the path to unity. This disagreement is also a one-time relatively convenient opportunity that history has given Blue and White and its leader Benny Gantz: To finally advance internal Jewish consensus and broad national accord over the future of Judea and Samaria — harsh divisions that have clouded our lives here for 50 years in terms.

If they could only internalize this, it would be their finest hour. The deal of the century, which allows for the annexation of 30% of Judea and Samaria and the application of Israeli law in the communities there, is not just a plan from the "hard-line right" school of thought.

For years, the camp Gantz now leads has talked about the need for "separation." The deal of the century addresses this separation, even if imperfectly. For the longest time, Gantz's camp has been riddled with anxiety over the "demographic demon" and fear about the "Jewish majority." The deal of the century also addresses the demographic demon and the Jewish majority and leaves the vast majority of Palestinians outside the borders of the State of Israel.

For the longest time, people and bodies affiliated with Gantz's camp have tried in vain to convince settlers to "uproot back" inside the Green Line. In recent years, most of them have realized that uprooting people again is a very poor option. The annexation of Judea and Samaria resolves this issue for them. Best of all — to the chagrin of many Israelis — this deal ultimately envisions a Palestinian state as a solution to the conflict, making this vision a cornerstone of the Gantz camp's policies after all.

Gantz certainly hasn't forgotten that the enterprise of settling the Jordan Valley is the fruit of the Labor party's policies — which Levi Eshkol and Yigal Alon also supported in Gush Katif in Gaza and Alon in Kiryat Arba as well; which Yitzhak Rabin and Yisrael Galili championed in greater Jerusalem and Gush Katif.

Shimon Peres planted a tree in Ofra in the Judean Hills and approved its creation, and Motta Gur supported many of the communities across Judea and Samaria. All of them were leaders of the Labor, back when the party was centrist rather than leftist. Blue and White and Gantz can adhere to the legacy of Meretz and Labor circa 2020, but they can also choose a different

path and return to their true centrist roots and understand the magnitude of the hour and the historic opportunity for consensus between the Israeli government and American administration.

Such an act will also mute, to a large extent, the discord that has hung like an anvil around the neck of Israeli society since 1967: The discord over "the territories." The moment the status of the Jewish settlement enterprise in Judea and Samaria is finalized through internal and international agreement (the US is the deciding factor in this regard) Israel can free itself to deeper introspection. Then Israel can finally turn its attention to matters of welfare, society and other schisms that divide Israeli society.

#### **ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT, LITZMAN AND THE FUTURE** (Susan Hattis Rolef, JPost 4/6/20)

We keep being told that the formation of an emergency unity government is just around the corner. But as of the time of this writing, that corner has not been reached. While Blue and White is quite eager to sign the agreement as soon as possible, the Likud appears to be taking its time.

I admit that my lack of trust in Benjamin Netanyahu leads me to suspect that the main reason for his elusive conduct is the result of his desire to take his final decision on whether to sign the agreement after Benny Gantz's time to form a government runs out next week. This is largely because he apparently believes that while Gantz has no option except to join a unity government, Netanyahu still has the option to form a narrow government with the support of Geshet leader Orly Levy-Abecassis and former Telem members Yoaz Hendel and Zvi Hauser.

In light of the difficulties he is facing in his own party, and with his three religious partners to receive their blessing for the unity government, one can understand why Netanyahu wants to keep open the option - real or imaginary - of forming a narrow government for as long as possible.

The problems that Likud, Shas, United Torah Judaism and Yamina have with the unity government is primarily that there are only 15-17 ministerial posts for them to share among themselves. The issue of the immediate annexation of the Jordan Valley and the Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria under the umbrella of the Trump administration, which was promised by Netanyahu during the last election campaign, is also one that concerns Netanyahu, and at least some of his partners. Blue and White is ambivalent on this issue, and feels that a unilateral annexation at this juncture is politically unwise.

I shall be very happy if my suspicions prove to be wrong, and that the delays in the formation of the government are caused exclusively for reasonable, objective reasons. I shall also give Netanyahu all the credit due to him if the unity government will actually come into being and start operating smoothly.

This in itself will not exonerate him in my eyes from the criminal charges brought against him unless a court will find him innocent. It will not convince me to accept his theory that what is weakening the pillars of the Israeli democracy today is a liberal "deep state" conspiracy that is acting tirelessly to defeat the wishes of the (Jewish) majority while he is weakening Israel's democracy through systematic attacks on the gatekeepers, the law enforcement system and the Knesset's ability to work effectively.

With regard to a unity government, there is no doubt that both sides will have to swallow many frogs to enable its creation. But the one element that I believe both the Likud and Blue and White ought agree upon is that Ya'acov Litzman from UTJ must be removed from the Health Ministry.

It is unreasonable and unacceptable that Israel should have a health minister who openly states that the corona pandemic can be warded off by means of prayer, and that very soon the Messiah will arrive and save us (I heard him say so with my own two ears). To add insult to injury, Litzman has been infected by the virus after failing to follow the instructions that his own ministry issued on how to avoid infection and not spread the virus.

RATHER THAN make sure the haredi (ultra-Orthodox) community, which he represents, is made aware of those instructions by means of their unique system of communication, for several weeks he was busy trying to exempt

the synagogues, minyanim (prayer quorums), yeshivot and mikvaot (ritual baths) from some of those same instructions. We now know in retrospect that those places and gatherings increased the spread of the coronavirus in haredi neighborhoods to worrying dimensions.

But Litzman does not want to part with the Health Ministry. And Netanyahu seems more concerned with keeping his bloc of 59 together than with Israel's urgent need for a worthy head for the Ministry. What is needed is someone with exceptional administrative capabilities and understanding in health issues and economics. It doesn't really matter what party he or she belongs to, and there is really no objection to this person being religious, as long as they are qualified - which Litzman is not.

No one knows exactly what the world will look like after the coronavirus is finally brought under control. There is no doubt that we shall all be more sensitive than before to issues of hygiene and sanitation. We shall all be much more sensitive to questions of social and economic security, and keeping social and welfare services under much tighter public management and control. No doubt, certain aspects of social democracy will gain public support, while neoliberalism will lose some of its glamour.

I sincerely hope that the major part played by Israel's Arab population in coping with the crisis will also leave its mark. Most of the pharmacists and other employees in my local branch of Super-Pharm, and of the management and employees in my local branch of Supersol, are Arabs. So are the street cleaners and garbage collectors, the person who delivers my newspaper every morning, and the staff members who treated me at Shaare Zedek Hospital the other day.

In other words, most of the people I encounter these days, and who make my life more comfortable and tolerable, besides my neighbors who prefer WhatsApp messages to face-to-face contact even on normal days, are Arabs. And they are not terrorists planning to destroy Israel or the prime minister, who lives just over a kilometer away.

There is no doubt that the lives of the haredi community will undergo even greater change than the rest of us. Bnei Brak invited two retired IDF generals to help them run their city in the impossible situation created as a result of the health crisis, and thousands of soldiers from elite units are to be sent to Bnei Brak to assist the population. These are earth-shaking events whose long-term ramifications are difficult to predict.

There is also no doubt that parts of the haredi community face a major leadership crisis. In the first stages of the epidemic, the traditional rabbinical leadership misguided its followers and had no practical remedies to offer. Will this change of attitudes toward the state lead to greater integration of haredim into general society? Will there be some change in the approach to large families living under conditions of great crowding and poverty that have worsened the epidemic, and in some cases, become death traps?

The future will tell. In the meantime, we need a proper government to take

over from three successive transition governments ; one that will at least bring some responsibility and normalcy to the way we are governed.





# Likutei Divrei Torah

## Gleanings of Divrei Torah on Parashat Hashavuah via the Internet Volume 26 Pesach Issue

Sponsored by Arlene Pianko Groner and family  
in memory of her Uncle Sol Pianko, z"l,  
whose yahrzeit is 22 Nissan,  
and his brother, her Uncle Norman Pianko, z"l,  
whose yahrzeit was 3 Nissan  
Chag Kasher V'Sameach

### OU Dvar Torah

#### The Haggadah and Three Key Coping Mechanisms - Rabbi David Rabhan

This year's Seder will be different from all other Sedarim. It will be quieter and lonelier without extended family and friends. It will be a Seder where the words, kol detzrich yatay veyachol/all that are hungry let them come and eat, will ring hollow as the gravity of the COVID-19 situation will force, "no man to leave the door to his home." It feels like Passover is coming at the "wrong" time with many having asked for a second month of Adar to delay the holiday.

Despite our protests, Passover will shortly arrive in its rightful time and we are left to reflect and prepare. Although COVID-19 is powerful enough to ravage countries, it does not have the strength to postpone the Passover holiday. Like a perfect metaphor for the Jewish people and the plot line of our history; Passover perseveres, and so must we.

Despite all of our challenges and difficulties, we go on. Yet, the question remains how do we celebrate when so much of what brings us happiness is missing? How can we find joy and peace of mind, when life's challenges are hard to bear?

The Haggadah offers three coping mechanisms to help us during this coronavirus Passover. It explains how perspective, gratitude and joy can carry us through challenging times and live healthier and happier lives.

Vehi Sheamda and Perspective - The section of 'Vehi Sheamda' reminds us that we have experienced difficult and almost unfathomable challenges. The mightiest empires have savagely attacked the Jewish people and the roster of our enemies is a list of the most powerful nations of History. Yet, with the help of G-d, we persevered and overcame the Egyptians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, Nazis and Communist Russians.

Vehi Sheamda teaches us that in order to gain peace of mind, we must develop a balanced view of the past. The Vehi Sheamda Perspective means that while we understand the gravity of present dangers, we develop a cognizance that G-d has continually helped us in both our national lives as Jews, and in our personal lives as well.

The Corona Virus is frightening, but so was 1948, 1967 and 1973. The Vehi Sheamda Perspective, reminds us that the same G-d who helped us to navigate previous situations is present to help us now. Perspective taking can help give confidence, bring peace of mind and embolden faith during uncertain times.

Dayenu and Gratitude - The Dayenu section is an exercise in gratitude that can help us to find equanimity during difficult situations. Human beings are hardwired for negativity. We too often minimize our blessings and focus on the negative in our lives.

In a 2001 study of negativity bias, University of Pennsylvania Psychologist Dr. Paul Ruzio explained that, "negative events are more salient, potent, dominant in combinations... than positive events." Dr. John Cacioppo, a behavioral psychologist at the University of Chicago, conducted a study where his team showed subjects a series of positive and negative pictures while recording the electrical activity of the subjects' brains. The results showed a marked increase in electrical activity when the

subjects were shown negative images, as opposed to when they were shown more positive representations. Furthermore, negativity bias is so built into the human psyche that Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi noted, "with nothing to do, the mind is unable to prevent negative thoughts from elbowing their way to center stage".

In Dayenu, we isolate every step of the process of redemption. We thank G-d for each component of the journey by saying 'Dayenu, it would have been enough', if only that step had taken place.

Incredibly, after reciting the Dayenu section we effectively repeat the Dayenu in the Al Achat Kamah Vekamah section, as we again thank G-d by isolating and reciting each component of redemption.

The Haggadah teaches that to be truly free people and achieve the clarity of mind to be able to deal with trials and tribulations, we must foster gratitude and Dayenu Personalities. The Dayenu Personality looks at each and every single blessing in life and is thankful for it. Gratitude pushes away negativity bias from the center of the brain by focusing on the good in our lives. Maintaining a consistent awareness and being grateful for our blessings helps us to better confront life's challenges and live happier lives.

Hallel and Joy - At the conclusion of the Seder, we praise G-d and rejoice with the Hallel prayer. Hallel teaches us that when things are going well, we have to pause, celebrate and say hodu lashem ki tov/ praise G-d, for he is good. The section of Hallel teaches that whenever and wherever we can find joy and "say Hallel" we should, as happiness is a magical emotion. As Rav Noach Weinberg said, "Joy gives the power, motivation and confidence to achieve things that otherwise seem too difficult to attempt."

This Passover will be like no other, and for many it will be exceedingly difficult to have a joyous and meaningful experience. As challenging as the Seders might be, we have the Haggadah's lessons of perspective, expressing gratitude and finding joy to help us to celebrate. As Winston Churchill observed, "a pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."

May G-d have compassion for the world, heal the sick of our nation; and with perspective and gratitude, we will find joy and happiness during this holiday season.

#### The Mitzva of Matza [Excerpt] Dr. Alan Jotkowitz Yehivat Har Etzion

For many of us, this year's Seder will be a different experience celebrated without extended families; for others, it might even be a solitary event where one sadly has to take the advice of the Gemara and ask the four questions to oneself. The yearly transmission of the masora, the tradition, which occurs in many families, will be sorely missed. This year the experience of eating matza as paupers will be keenly felt by many.

We should do what we can to minimize the distress for our family and friends, thereby fulfilling the imperative of "Kol di-khfin yeitei ve-yeikhol," "Let whoever is starving come and eat!" We must also remember the message of the matza: it is not the physical circumstances which determines freedom but rather the mindset of the individual

May our fulfillment of the mitzva of matza, eaten as slaves and as free people, be a merit for the Jewish people and the world during these terrible times.

May we soon merit to fulfil the mitzva of "With matzot and bitter herbs they shall eat it." Finally, may we soon merit to see as well the fulfillment of the words of the prophet Zekharya: Thus says the Lord of hosts: There shall yet old men and old women sit in the broad places of Jerusalem, every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the broad places of the city shall be full of boys and girls, playing in the broad places thereof.

#### Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

"The Lord will do battle for you and you shall be silent" The last day of the festival of Passover is dedicated to the splitting of the Reed's Sea, one of the most dramatic and cataclysmic events in Biblical history. The Israelites have left Egypt and believe they are "home-free"; however, the Egyptian hordes change their mind and begin to chase after the newly formed free men. The Israelites, faced by the Egyptians behind them and the Reed Sea in front of them, panic – and in their fear they cry out to Moses, 'Are there then no graves in Egypt that you have taken us out to die in the desert?!'. Moses attempts to comfort his people, exhorting them not to fear but rather to watch for Divine salvation "The Lord will do battle for you and you shall be silent".

But is this indeed the religious message of the Exodus? Does the Almighty expect us to stand quietly by in times of danger and challenge, simply waiting for the Almighty to emerge as a deus ex machina plucking us out from the fires of our enemies? Is such silence on our part consistent with Jewish History, and especially with these last six decades following the Holocaust? Where would the Jewish people be today had we not attempted to take our destiny into our own hands and fought battle after battle for the Jewish State?

Indeed, the classical Hassidic interpreters have turned the verse we've just cited on its head by providing an alternate literal interpretation: "The Lord will provide you with bread (the Hebrew yilakhem can mean to do battle but can also mean to provide bread from the Hebrew lekhem; most wars are after all fought after bread or material gain) but you must plow (the Hebrew heresh can either mean to be silent or to plow)." And although this reading of the verse would seem to be the very antithesis of its meaning in context, it is nevertheless the true meaning of this most dramatic miracle. Yes, Moses expected G-d to act and counsel the Israelites to silently await G-d's miracle. But that is not the message that G-d conveys to Moses in the very next verse of the text: "And G-d said to Moses, 'Why are you crying out to me? Speak to the children of Israel and let them move forward'".

Yes, G-d is ready to effectuate a miracle, but not before the Israelites prove themselves by putting their lives on the line. Before G-d does anything, the Israelites must either do battle with the Egyptians or jump into the raging waters and attempt as best as possible to get to Israel by sea! It is only after "the children of Israel have entered into the midst of the sea" – despite its inherent dangers – that the waters will miraculously part and the Israelites will find themselves "on dry land" (Exodus 14:16). Rashi

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even goes as far as saying in G-d's name to Moses, "This is not the time to engage in lengthy prayer when the Israelites are in such deep trouble." When the going gets tough, tough people get going; from G-d's point of view; prayer must be coupled with action. From this perspective, the Hassidim may be literally wrong in their interpretation but are certainly conceptually most correct!

#### **The Person in the Parsha: R. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb**

**Imagine That!** - There was a time when I would only go out of my way to listen to speakers who were older and more experienced than I. Recently, however, I have changed my preferences and have begun to seek out speakers, rabbis and teachers, who are young and relatively inexperienced. I find their ideas fresh and often very much on the mark. After all, they are in much better touch with our fast-changing world than I am.

Once, during a visit to Israel, I sat in on a series of lectures which were designed to prepare the audience for the upcoming Passover holiday. The speaker, a brilliant young rabbi, focused upon the Seder night, and particularly upon the text of the Haggadah. He spent most of his opening lecture elaborating upon what he considered the most difficult task with which we are all confronted on the first night of Passover. The task is described in the following famous passage: "In each and every generation, a person must see himself as if he personally left Egypt. As it is written, 'And you shall explain to your son on that day that it is because of what the Lord did for me when I went free from Egypt (Exodus 13:8).'" The requirement is explicit in the biblical text: the Lord did it for me, when I went free from Egypt.

The young rabbi candidly confessed to his audience that he had never been able to fulfill this requirement. Indeed, he didn't think it was possible, certainly not for most of us, to envision ourselves as if we personally had experienced slavery and redemption. "This," he insisted, "is the most difficult task we are faced with on the Seder night."

When I first heard this assertion, I found it to be quite provocative. I wanted to protest but maintained my silence in respect for the young rabbi. I attributed his conviction to his relative immaturity. I have never found this obligation difficult. Personally, I have found it quite easy to imagine myself as a slave and to personally exult in the emotional experiences of redemption and freedom.

I usually forget the content of most lectures that I hear almost as soon as I leave the lecture hall. This time, however, I could not rid my mind of the young rabbi's statement. I began to question my own inner certainty. Had it really been so easy for me all these years to envision myself as one of those who had experienced both slavery and the Exodus?

In the midst of my extended preoccupation with the young rabbi's assertion, a long-forgotten memory suddenly surfaced in my mind. I was taken back in time to another lecture I had heard just before Passover many years ago. This time, the speaker was not a young rabbi at all. Rather, he was an old and revered Chassidic rebbe, a survivor of the Holocaust who had spent years in Auschwitz and had witnessed the vicious murder of his wife and children with his own eyes.

That old rebbe was Rabbi Yekutiel Yehudah Halberstam, may his memory be blessed, who was known as the Klausenberger Rebbe, after the small town in the Balkans where he had served prior to World War II.

In that lecture, Rabbi Halberstam recounted his own puzzlement over a lecture he had heard very long ago from one of his mentors. I no longer remember the name of that mentor, but Rabbi Halberstam was careful to identify him in detail

because of the strange and almost unbelievable experience that he reported.

The mentor said that he had no difficulty at all imagining himself to have been in slavery in Egypt and to have been redeemed. In fact, this mentor reported that he could clearly remember the experience. He could recall in great detail the burdensome work he had to perform, the dirty hovel in which he was forced to live, and the sighs and groans of his companions. He could even still see, in his mind's eye, the cruel face of his tormentors as they sadistically whipped him for not producing his daily quota of bricks.

The Klausenberger Rebbe confessed that when he first heard his mentor make those claims, he had difficulty believing them. He thought that his mentor had made such a claim just for the effect it would have upon his listeners. He stressed that sometimes it is justified for a speaker to resort to hyperbole to make his point more dramatic and more graphic.

But then the rebbe continued to say that after many years, he had come to realize that his mentor was telling the absolute truth. "It took the experiences I had during the horrible years of the Holocaust," he exclaimed, "for me to realize why my mentor was able to recall his experiences in ancient Egypt's tyranny."

The rebbe then went on to elaborate upon two psychological processes that are necessary to invoke during the Seder night as we recite the Haggadah. He used two Hebrew and Yiddish terms respectively: *koach hadimyon* (the power of imagination) and *mitleid* (empathy).

The lesson that the old Rebbe related to me and to the dozens of other eager listeners that evening so long ago was that we are often restricted by our own tendencies to rely upon our reason, rationality, and intellectuality. We underplay the powers that we have to fantasize, to imagine, to dream freely. In a sense, we are slaves to reason and need to learn to allow ourselves to go beyond reason and to give our imaginations free rein. Only then can we "see ourselves as if we had personally endured slavery." Only by cultivating our imagery can we ourselves experience the emotions of freedom and liberty.

We are all required to imagine ourselves as if we are the other person. If the other person is poor, the mitzvah of charity demands that we ourselves feel his poverty. If he is ill, we must literally suffer along with him. This is empathy, and to be empathic, one must rely upon a well-developed imagination.

Imagination and empathy are not words that one often hears in rabbinic sermons, but they are the words that the Klausenberger Rebbe used that evening. And, as he concluded in his remarks, he learned about those words through the bitter suffering that he endured when he was enslaved in Auschwitz, and he appreciated redemption when he himself was finally freed from his personal bondage.

The young rabbi who started my thinking about this had, through his good fortune, never really experienced anything remotely resembling slavery. Naturally, he was thus deprived of the ability to really appreciate freedom.

After a few days, I approached the young rabbi and shared with him the words that I had heard decades ago, before this young rabbi was even born. I told him what the Klausenberger Rebbe had said about empathy and imagination. The young rabbi responded politely and with gratitude, but with a gentle smile got in the last word: "But the Klausenberger Rebbe didn't say that learning to imagine and to empathize were easy."

I had to admit that the young rabbi was correct. Creative imagination and compassionate empathy are not easily attained. Achieving them may indeed be the hardest task of the holiday of Passover.

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But I feel confident that the young rabbi agreed with my assertion: Learning to use one's powers of imagination in order to empathize with the plight of others is the essential objective of this magnificent holiday, *zman cheiruteinu*, the season of our freedom.

#### **Dvar Torah: Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis**

How short can a Pesach Seder be? This can actually be a particularly relevant question, for example for a soldier who is on guard duty in the army, or a doctor who is engaged in life saving work, and many other people who are doing important work and want to snatch a few minutes to fulfil the mitzvah of 'v'higadeta le'vincha' – you must relate to your children the details of what happened when we left Egypt.

The answer to this question appears in the Haggadah itself. Raban Gamliel taught "Kol shelo omar shlosa devarim eilu b'pesach, lo yatza y'dei chovto", in order to fulfil your obligation of the 'hagadata', to relate the story of the exodus of Egypt, you must refer to three things. What are they? Pesach, Matzah and Maror!

Pesach refers to the pascal lamb offering, Matzah – to the unleavened bread that we eat, and Maror – to the bitter herbs that we eat. So all you need to do is to refer to these three things, it will take a few minutes and you will have fulfilled your obligation! And the Haggadah helps us by presenting three brief passages in which there are details of these three mitzvot.

I find it fascinating that actually within these passages we go one step further. In each instance for the Pesach, the Matzah and the Maror we ask the same question – "Al shum ma?" – for what reason? Why do we perform these mitzvot? We didn't have to ask the question. All that is required is to mention these mitzvot – but it is central to our Jewish psyche that we are inquisitive, that we always ask questions – we want to know why we do things! Even though to fulfil the precept, all you have to do is to say something, we want to know the rationale behind it. Once you understand the reasoning, it enhances the activity.

It is for this reason that the asking of questions comes right to the heart of our Seder experience. We encourage our children lovingly to ask, to enquire, to be inquisitive. We let them know that there is no such thing as a stupid question. We encourage them, as they enter into adulthood, to never stop asking.

The "al shum ma" needs to be an integral part of our Jewish experience always. Even when we have a 'chok', a law from God which hasn't any apparent reason that is obvious to us – even there we should enquire – what are the benefits? what could be the rationale? The "al shum ma" needs to be a constant feature of our lives.

The Hebrew words for a reason is "ta'am" which literally means taste. When you have the reason for doing something, it makes the experience all the more sweet – and you will certainly come back for more.

#### **OTS Dvar Torah**

#### **Laughing at Foxes and Gratitude for the Holiday of Redemption by Rabbanit Naama Frankeld**

The Maggid is a key part of the Seder, reasserting the importance of recounting the story of the exodus from Egypt to future generations.

What story do we tell? How do we pass on the story of the exodus from Egypt so that our children will listen?

Tractate Pesachim, chapter 10 in the Mishna offers us some guidance: "A father teaches his son in accordance with the son's knowledge, starting with censure, and ending with praise..." Each parent must think about his children and contemplate how to convey the story of the exodus to them.

The Gemara discusses a dispute regarding the "censure" a parent is supposed to begin with. Should we begin with "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt?" – a reference to physical bondage, or should we begin with "... at first, our ancestors were idolaters..." – alluding to a "spiritual bondage"?

Ultimately, both approaches are discussed in the Haggada, in chronological order. Physical bondage appears first, and within this bondage, we can identify our spiritual bondage.

Many have wondered why we begin with censure. By preceding praise with censure, what have we enabled? The Slonimer Rebbe proposes a different interpretation of the word "censure". He views it not as an admonishment of the people of Israel for the sin they had committed, but rather as a state of baseness a person is in. He writes there that the greatest miracle isn't the splitting of the Red Sea or the ten plagues. Rather, it's the miracle of Hashem's love of the Jewish people. Even though they seemed "base", and had stooped to the lowliest spiritual level, Hashem chose them as His people. Had Hashem chosen the people of Israel at its spiritual heyday, we might suspect that His love for us is contingent on what we do, and that once we fall out of favor with him, He will abandon us. Knowing this allows us to feel secure, just like a couple that decides to marry does so not only because of their mutual esteem, but also because both are aware of each other's shortcomings and flaws.

So much for the beginning of Maggid. How are we supposed to end it?

The Mishnah, Tractate Pesachim chapter 10, discusses this issue: Up until when does he recount? "Beit Shammai... until "as a happy mother of children", Beit Hillel... : "the flint into a fountain of water". Rabbi Tarfon says: "who redeemed us and our forefathers from Egypt", and Rabbi Akiva states: "So Lord our God and God of our ancestors, let us come to reach other seasons and festivals in peace, joyful in the rebuilding of Your city, and jubilant in Your Temple service, where we will eat from the offerings and Pesach sacrifices etc. ...."

This text describes a dispute between the disciples of Shammai and the disciples of Hillel over whether the Maggid should end with the first chapter of Hallel or the second. When reading this for the first time, this strikes us as a surprise. Usually, the disciples of Shammai are more stringent. Their philosophy was based on their belief that the heavens were created first, and they have high demands of us. Conversely, the disciples of Hillel often adapt themselves to reality, following the philosophy of "the Earth was created first". If so, why would the disciples of Shammai opt to take a "more lenient" approach by shortening the reading, while the disciples of Hillel take a more stringent approach by extending it?

Some might suggest that the disciples of Shammai opt to shorten the reading, since they feel that the evening centers on the children, and fear that if the reading is too long, we'll lose the children's attention. This view is buttressed by a Mishnaic text recounting how Shammai the Elder would take special care to have newborn babies sleep in the Sukkah, since for Shammai, the children's presence in the observance of these commandments is paramount.

However, this explanation raises certain difficulties. First, were the disciples of Shammai so concerned about just one more chapter being included in the reading? Second, wouldn't the disciples of Hillel have been equally concerned about the children's needs?

Seemingly, a different interpretation could be offered for this dispute. We could say that the disciples of Shammai, based on their worldview,

which stems from the belief that the heavens are Hashem's, would choose to end Maggid, the most important part of the Seder night, with general verses of praise: "the name of Hashem is praised... Above all nations is Hashem". This is the sentence that, in their view, with which we should end the Seder.

The disciples of Hillel, however, base their philosophy on the idea that "the land is for human beings". Accordingly, they choose to end the Seder with statements of gratitude to Hashem for splitting the Red Sea and allowing the people of Israel to enter the Holy Land ("the Jordan ran backward"), for the water that gushed from the rock, and for the giving of the Torah ("mountains skipped like rams"). This is because they believe that it is best to end the Seder night not merely with a general expression of gratitude, but rather with our appreciation of our exodus from Egypt, which led to the giving of the Torah, to our right to settle the land, and ultimately, to the way we coalesced into a nation. It was thanks to close divine oversight that we had reached this point.

This line of reasoning can also be used to interpret the dispute between Rabbi Tarfon and Rabbi Akiva, described later.

Should the Seder end with a blessing offering gratitude solely for our exodus from Egypt? Or should it be the prayer of Rabbi Akiva, who saw foxes emerging from the area of the Holy of Holies (Makkot 24a), and held a prayer in his heart, that we should merit not only to thank Hashem for the Passover in Egypt, but also for the Passovers of generations to come. Our thanks to Hashem is for giving us a holiday of redemption which resulted in our becoming a "treasured people", and brought us to the Holy Land even while acknowledging that the road is long. The faith created by the exodus from Egypt is what gives us and the generations to follow us strength and faith to withstand those who rise up against us to destroy us – so that we can remember that full redemption will, only day, truly come.

We are living in a generation in which Am Yisrael has merited to witness the Redemption which is unfolding before us. We have merited to experience the in-gathering of the exiles, and an tremendous activity and progress. An abundance of rain in Eretz Yisrael, Torah, creativity, achievements, a spacecraft making its way to the moon and even, as we just experienced, an opportunity to choose who will lead the Israeli government. That is Redemption.

Rabbi Akiva's prayer gives strength to all generations: Rabbi Akiva – who knew to laugh when he saw the foxes because he believed with all his might that it was part of the process that Am Yisrael must pass through in order to grow and attain redemption. He prayed this wonderful prayer that we should merit to eat from the Pesachim and the Zevachim, that we should merit both personally and nationally to see the light of the Redemption and live the coveted dream even if the road is sometimes foggy.

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#### **Dvar Torah: TorahWeb.Org**

##### **Rabbi Daniel Stein**

##### **Talking Our Way Out of Mitzrayim**

Generally, Chazal advise us to be defined by our actions and not by our words, as the Mishna states "say little and do a lot". However, a notable exception to this rule is the night of the seder, when the Haggadah exhorts, "whoever talks excessively about the exodus from Mitzrayim is praiseworthy." Similarly, the matzah is described as "lechem oni - the bread of affliction" which could also be read as "the bread of responses," from which the Gemara derives that the matzah should be the topic of great and lengthy conversation, "lechem she'onim alav devarim harbei - the bread about which many answers are offered." The Arizal has observed that

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even the name of the yom tov of "Pesach" itself, can be deconstructed to form two words, "peh sach - a mouth which is speaking", because throughout Pesach our mouths should be working tirelessly to recount the story of yetziyas Mitzrayim. The month during which Pesach occurs is the month of Nissan, which has the numerical equivalent of one hundred and seventy, or two times eighty-five, which is the numerical value of the word "peh - mouth." This underscores the message that during the month of Nissan, and particularly on Pesach, our mouths should be operating on overdrive, speaking twice as much as usual, in delving into the miracles of the exodus.

Most of our discussions regarding yetziyas Mitzrayim are concentrated in the Maggid section of the Haggadah, which is introduced with the words "ha lachma - this is the bread," which also has the numerical value of eighty-five, and the word "peh," prompting us to be prepared to open our mouths immanently in conversation. Moreover, the formal beginning of Maggid opens with the letter mem, in the word "mah - why," and closes with a mem sofit, an ending mem, in the word "mayim" at the conclusion of the first part of Hallel. This is analogous to the Torah She'baal Peh itself which opens with the letter mem, in the word "me'eimasai," at the beginning of Berachos, and closes with a mem sofit, in the word "shalom," at the conclusion of Uktzin. The letter mem is one of the four letters in the aleph beis which are formed with the lips, along with the letters, beis, vuv, and peh. The Maggid section of the Haggadah, and the Mishnah commence with the letter mem which is produced with the lips as an indication, that we should seek to open our lips and mouths to a greater degree when speaking and engaged in learning Torah and retelling the story of yetziyas Mitzrayim. The mem sofit at the end, encourages us, to be to be more discerning and economical with what we say and how much we speak after we have concluded learning Torah and discussing yetziyas Mitzrayim.

When addressing the fourth son in the Haggadah, the one who does not even know how to ask, the Haggadah prescribes, "at pesach lo - you should initiate with him." However, here the narrator of the Haggadah transitions from the masculine "ata" to the feminine "at", which is curious. This leads the Divrei Chaim, to suggest that in fact the word "at" is an acronym for "a'leph...t'af", which coaches us to exhaust the entire lexicon, dictionary, and thesaurus, all the way from the letter aleph, at beginning of the aleph beis, to the letter taf at the end of the aleph beis, in order to engage the children at the seder and inspire them with our description of yetziyas Mitzrayim. A short while later, we raise our glasses of wine and declare, "vehi she'adma le'avoseinu ve'lanu - and this is what has stood for us" and preserved us throughout the diaspora and saved us from mortal danger. The item referred to in this proclamation, "vehi - and this," is vague and one of the classical mysteries of the seder which is the subject of voluminous speculation. However, perhaps on some level the word "vehi", which has the numerical value of twenty-two, is an allusion to the twenty-two letters of the aleph beis which we must utilize completely in speaking with and educating our children on the night of the seder regarding our beliefs and practices, and it is precisely this endeavor which has secured our continuity and survival from generation to generation.

Why do we exaggerate speaking and talking to such an unusual degree on the night of the seder? Perhaps it is because we were only exiled to Mitzrayim in the first place as a result of harmful and destructive speech. When Yitzchak was born, Sarah approached

Avraham Avinu and urged him to "evict this handmaid (Hagar) and her son", lest Yishmael have a harmful influence on Yitzchok. The Baal Haturim claims that since Sarah spoke in an exceptionally harsh fashion towards Hagar, the Jewish people were punished that they too would be driven from their home. In accordance with Hashem's usual method of administering justice in-kind, Sarah's descendants were exiled specifically to Mitzrayim, which was the birthplace of Hagar. Rav Shlomo Kluger (Yeriyos Shlomo), suggests that this is the meaning of the assertion in the Haggadah that we descended to Mitzrayim "trapped by the speech." This phrase is generally interpreted as a reference to Hashem's verbal bond with Avraham Avinu, "and your children will be strangers in a foreign land" which compelled our deportation and servitude. However, Rav Shlomo Kluger argues that it also refers to Sarah's severe tone in speaking with Hagar, which further induced our expulsion and held us prisoner in Mitzrayim.

But more directly, Yaakov and his sons originally traveled to Mitzrayim only as a result of the sale of Yosef. For this reason, the seder begins with karpas, the first dipping of the night. Rabbeinu Manoach contends that this dipping serves as a reminder of the first dipping recorded in the Torah, when the shevatim dipped Yosef's coat in the blood of a goat in order to deceive and mislead their father. This is supported by Rashi who defines Yosef's coat as a garment made from material "similar to karpas and techeiles." Additionally, the seder finishes with the cryptic chad gadya parable, which centers around a pivotal goat who is sold for two zuzim. Rav Asher Weiss proposes that this too is an allusion to Yosef and his fateful coat that was worth two sela'im, which aroused the jealousy of his brothers and led to his kidnaping and sale at their hands. The Torah attests that when Yosef "spoke evil tales about them to their father", the shevatim began to despise Yosef to the point that "they could no longer speak with him peacefully". The dysfunctional relationship between Yosef and his brothers, that facilitated the Jewish people's initial descent to Mitzrayim, deteriorated so dramatically and tragically because of a breakdown of peaceful and positive speech. Therefore, it is not surprising that the only way to leave Mitzrayim on the seder night, is to rehabilitate our speech and talk our way out of it. On the night of the seder we accentuate talking to a greater degree than usual, because we are attempting to cleanse our power of speech by channeling our words towards praising Hashem, learning Torah, and welcoming others.

The mouth and our ability to speak were designed expressly for the purpose of holy speech and engaging in Torah learning. The Shelah Hakadosh cites the Rokeach that there are thirty-two teeth in the mouth, sixteen above and sixteen below, corresponding to the sixteen aliyos of Torah reading we participate in each week, (seven Shabbos morning, three Shabbos afternoon, three on Monday, and three on Thursday), because our mouths were intended deliberately to enable weekly and daily Torah learning. Similarly, the five areas in the mouth where letters are formed, the throat, palate, tongue, teeth, and lips, are related to the five books of the Torah which we should be discussing incessantly. The Bluzhever Rebbe (Tzvi LeTzaddik) suggests that these five areas in which letters are enunciated are the basis for the five expressions of redemption mentioned by the Torah in connection with yetziyas Mitzrayim, "I shall take you out", "I shall rescue you", "I shall redeem you", "I shall take you", and "I shall bring you", as well as the five illustrations of emancipation and salvation contained within the Haggadah, "from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to joy, from mourning to festivity, from deep darkness

to great light, and from bondage to redemption." If we immerse ourselves verbally in the story of yetziyas Mitzrayim and limud haTorah on the seder night, may we be able to purge our mouths from all aspects of negative speech, and may we merit to attain and experience all of the five manifestations of redemption, culminating with "and I will bring you to the land" so that we may be able to celebrate Pesach next year in Yerushalayim!

**Yeshivat Har Etzion: Virtual Bet Midrash**  
**"Like Children or Like Slaves" The Significance of the Parallel Between the Haggada and Parashat Ha-Bikkurim [excerpt]**  
**By Rav Yehuda Shaviv zt"l**

**A. Recounting from "A Wandering Aramean was My Father ..."** The crux of the Haggada which we read on the Seder night revolves around "mikra bikkurim" (the recitation made when bringing first fruits to the Temple. Rambam understands the mishna as praising one who devotes extensive time to this parasha. At first glance, this seems surprising. In the time that it takes to explain this rich text fully, would it not be preferable to read other passages - those directly connected with the exodus from Egypt, describing the miraculous events surrounding our liberation? Would not the parashiot of Shemot, Va'era, Bo and Beshalach serve as more suitable subjects of discussion for the Seder night?

**B. Beginning with Shame** The answer may lie in the dual nature of the story which is recounted in the Haggada. The mishna teaches, "We begin with shame and end with praise, expounding from 'A wandering Aramean' until concluding the entire parasha: 'What is the "shame" with which we open our account? The Amora'im were divided on this issue: "Rav said: [The shameful account begins] 'In the beginning our forefathers were idol-worshippers. Shmuel said: [The shameful account begins] 'We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt.'" In other words, Shmuel understands that we should discuss the narrower sphere of the story: the slavery in Egypt and the exodus to freedom. Rav maintains that we address a broader discussion of our history, from the very start of our existence: how our forefathers originally worshipped idols, etc. Rav seems to base his opinion on the fact that the requirement to expound upon the 'wandering Aramean' appears in the Mishna immediately after the instruction to "begin with shame." The opening verse of this account, "A wandering Aramean was my father," deals with events which took place long before the descent to Egypt. The parashot from Shemot to Beshalach, on the other hand, deal directly with the shame and praise involved in our sojourn in Egypt and our liberation from it.

**C. One Must See Himself as Though He Had Left Egypt** Every Jew is required not only to recount the story of what happened in the past, but also to relive the experience, as if the exodus from slavery to freedom were taking place in the present. "In each generation the individual is obligated to see himself (lir'ot et atzmo) as though he [himself] left Egypt, as it is written: 'And you shall tell your son on that day, saying, For this God did for ME, when I left Egypt'". The Rambam reads it slightly differently: "In every generation the individual is obligated to show himself (le-hera'ot et atzmo) as though he himself had just now come out of Egyptian slavery, as it is written, 'And He took US out from there: And based on this, God commanded, 'And you shall remember that YOU were a slave' - in other words, it is as though you yourself were a slave and came out to freedom and were redeemed". The authors of the Haggada seem to have specifically sought verses which are recited by a person who was not present at the time of the exodus from slavery to freedom, but who nevertheless feels these events

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alive within him and who relives them in his account. What they found were the verses recited by the bearer of the bikkurim. And this is what the farmer, laden with his basket of first fruits, declares: I declare TODAY to the Lord your God that I HAVE COME to the land which God promised to our forefathers that He would give us ... A wandering Aramean was my father, and he descended to Egypt... and the Egyptians were evil towards US and they afflicted us and put hard labor upon us, and WE cried out to the Lord, God of our fathers, and God heard OUR voices and He saw OUR affliction and OUR labor and OUR pressure and He took US out of Egypt with a strong hand ... and He brought US to this place .... He recounts the entire story in the first-person plural. The Egyptians made his life a misery, they afflicted him, and he cried out. God heard his voice, took him out of Egypt, and brought him to the land flowing with milk and honey. And now, holding his first fruits at the entrance to the Beit HaMikdash, he recognizes and declares, "I have come to the land." This is the declaration of one who has been firmly established in the land for generations, both expressing and fulfilling the reliving of the experience, "as though he himself came out of Egypt." The verses in this parasha, starting with "I declare today ...," are indeed most suitable to serve as the skeleton around which the Haggada is built and upon which the leader of the Seder will expound and explain at length.

**D. A Double Exodus** There are 2 facets to Israel's redemption Israel from Egypt. This duality finds expression in the first of the ten commandments conveyed in God's revelation on Har Sinai: "I am the Lord your God who took you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery." There is a dual exodus: from the land of Egypt, and from the house of slavery. The first represents a move from exile to redemption (as happened again in the second redemption: the nation left exile in Babylon and went to the land of redemption, Eretz Yisrael). The second represents the move from slavery to freedom. This aspect is mentioned second at Sinai, but on the Seder night it is the principal one. What is its significance? ...

**G. "You are Sons, For You Belong to the Lord Your God"** Let us turn to the family aspect of the Pesach sacrifice: "A sheep for each household, a sheep for each house", and the emphasis on the children on the Seder night: "The Torah addresses itself to four sons ...": "They are the center of attention; the father turns to them and recounts the story of the Exodus. In this way he establishes a new link in the chain of the generations; through which all the children are related and belong to one another, and none have any master other than God. H. Recounting from the Beginning to the End There is another lesson to be learned from the introduction of the recitation over the bikkurim at the seder table. Like the successive levels of "dayenu" recited at the seder, the bikkurim recitation mentions first the Exodus and eventually reaches the ultimate level of the building of the Beit HaMikdash. In the parasha of the bikkurim, the beginning and end of the circle meet. The individual, bringing his bikkurim to the Beit HaMikdash, has himself realized the final purpose of the whole story, with his recitation reaching back and reliving the tale from the beginning. We, sitting at the seder and experiencing the Exodus for ourselves, recount the story forwards. And, together with the verses, we construct step by step the successive levels, aiming eventually to reach the ultimate goal: the ascent to the Beit HaMikdash, bringing with us the first fruits of the land which God has given us. (Translated by Kaeren Fish.)