

5.

M a g i d

מ ג י ד

Tell the story

Hold up a piece of matza and say:

This is the most meager food imaginable.

Our ancestors ate it when they left the land of Egypt.

All who are hungry for something other than mere physical food, come and participate.

All who are missing something in their lives, come and celebrate Pesah.

As we celebrate, our lives are enriched, our inner being is transformed. This year we are here; next year we hope to ascend to Eretz Yisrael, to the land of Israel.

This year we are still enslaved; in the year to come, may we find our liberation, our enrichment, our fulfillment.

הא לחמא עניא

די אכלו אבהתנא בארעא
דמצרים.

כל דכפין ייתי ויכל,

כל דצריך ייתי ויפסח.

השתא הקא, לשנה הבאה בארעא
דישראל.

השתא עבדי, לשנה הבאה בני
חורין

*Ha lah'ma anya
Diy ah'alu avhatana bara dmitzrayim.
Kal dih'fiyn yeiyteiy vyeiyh'ol
Kal diizriyh' yeiyteiy vyifsah'.
Hashata hah'a, Ishana habaa bara dyisrael.
Hashata avdeiy, Ishana habaa bney h'oriyn.*

Put the Matza down

This night is very different from all others!!!

Our Seder is designed to encourage participation, to encourage us all to ask questions, to wonder why we do the things we do to celebrate. And so before we even begin to tell our story, we set it up so that the youngest person has rehearsed some questions.

The youngest person capable, says:

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות!!

Ma nishtana halayla haze mikal haleiyot

הלילה הזה בלול מצה.

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה,

Shebh'ol haleiyot anu oh'liyn h'ameitz umatza, halayla haze kulo matza

הלילה הזה מרור.

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות,

Shebh'ol haleiyot anu oh'liyn shar yrakot, halayla haze maror.

הלילה הזה שתי פעמים.

שבכל הלילות אין אנו מטבילין אפילו פעם אחת,

Shebh'ol haleiyot eiyen anu matbiylyen afilyu paam eh'at, eh'at, halayla haze shtey famiyen.

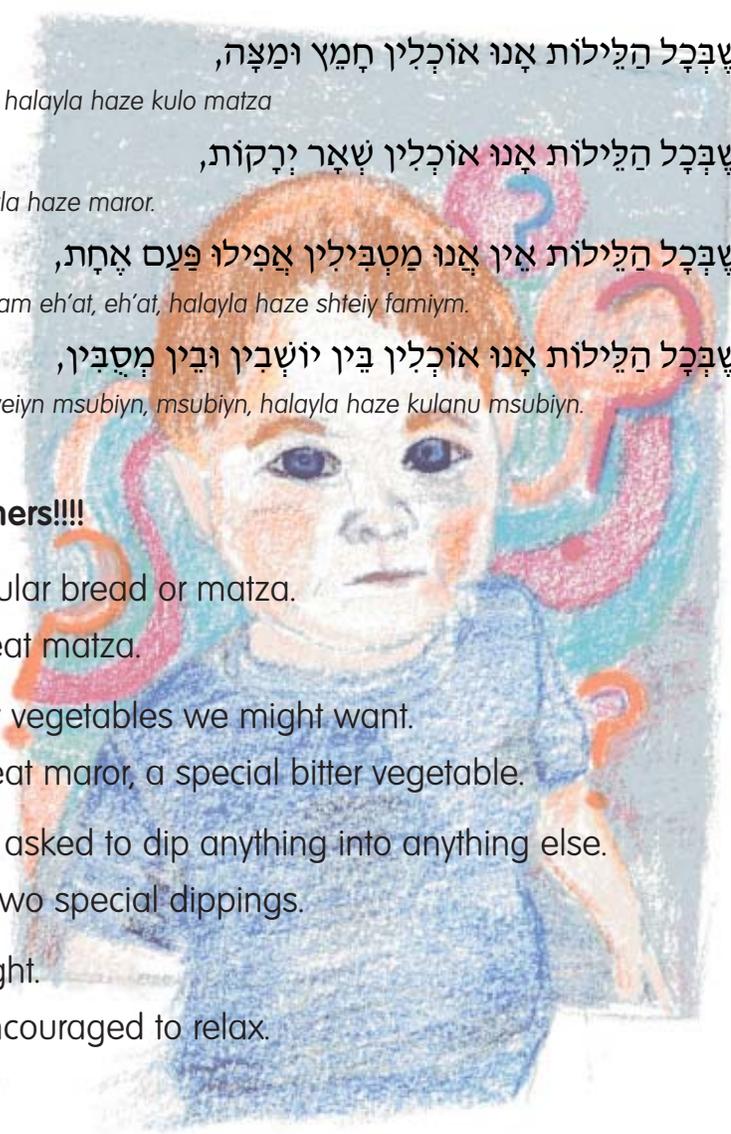
הלילה הזה בלנו מסבין.

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין בין יושבין ובין מסבין,

Shebh'ol haleiyot anu oh'liyn beiyen yoshviyven uveyyven msubiyen, msubiyen, halayla haze kulanu msubiyen.

This night is very different from all others!!!!

- On all other nights we eat regular bread or matza.
Tonight, we only eat matza.
- On all other nights we eat any vegetables we might want.
Tonight, we also eat maror, a special bitter vegetable.
- On all other nights we are not asked to dip anything into anything else.
Tonight we have two special dippings.
- On all other nights we sit upright.
Tonight we are encouraged to relax.



Why do we do these special rituals?

We do these rituals to help us remember and tell our story.

Long ago our ancestors were slaves to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt,

And Adonai our G*d brought us out from there with a strong hand, with an outstretched arm.

And if the Holy One had not brought our ancestors out of Egypt,

Then we and our children and their children might still be slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt.

Everyone needs to celebrate.

No matter who we are, no matter how wise we have become,

No matter how much understanding we have gained through our years on this Earth,

No matter how much Torah we have studied,

It is still extremely important for us to talk about the Exodus from Egypt.

We go so far as to praise anyone who prolongs the time they set aside for celebrating this Seder.

Avadiym hayinyu lfaro bmitzrayim,

Vayotziyeinu Adonai Eloheinyu misham byad h'azaka uvizroa ntuya.

Vilu lo hotziya hakadosh baruh' hua et avoteinyu mimitzrayim,

Hareiy anu uvaneinyu uvneiy vaneinyu mshubadiym hayinyu lfaro bmitzrayim.

Vaafiylu kulanu h'ah'amiym, kulanu nvoniym, kulanu zkeiniym, kulanu yodiyim et hatora,

Mitzva aleinyu lsapeir biytziyat mitzrayim.

Vh'al hamarbe lsapeir biytziyat mitzrayim hareiy ze mshubah'.

The story is told of our greatest teachers of the age, 2000 years ago—Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarfon—who once celebrated Pesah Seder together at B'nai B'rak, and they celebrated **all night long!** They were so focused on celebrating that they would not stop until their students came and said, "Teachers; it is time for morning prayer, for reciting the Shm'a."

עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים,

ויוציאנו יי אלהינו משם

ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה.

ואלו לא הוציא הקדוש ברוך

הוא את אבותינו ממצרים,

הרי אנו ובנינו, ובני בנינו

משעבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים.

ואפילו כלנו חכמים,

כלנו נבונים, כלנו זקנים,

כלנו יודעים את התורה,

מצוה עלינו לספר ביציאת

מצרים.

וכל המרבה לספר ביציאת

מצרים הרי זה משבח.

We celebrate at night. One of the participants at that Seder long ago, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah taught this lesson: "Even though I am considered an elder sage, I never really appreciated why we celebrate Passover at night until my colleague Ben Zoma explained:

"The Torah teaches, 'You should remember the Exodus from Egypt all the days of your life.' Since every syllable of Torah is filled with special meanings, if it had simply said, 'the days of your life,' I might have thought that implied literally "only during daylight hours." However, 'All the days of your life,' implies '24/7; remember the Exodus from Egypt all the time; day and night.'"

The great teachers of another age, however, derived a different implication from this quotation from Torah: "The days of your life" might imply only now, in this imperfect world in which we now live. "All the days of your life," on the other hand, implies that even in the time of Messianic redemption, when the world has been transformed totally and perfected, even then we will still celebrate the redemption from Egypt. No matter how fundamentally everything on Earth may change, we will still celebrate this holiday.

We Praise the One who Teaches us How to Teach Torah...

We celebrate to teach, to pass on the story of Passover, one generation after another.

בְּרוּךְ הַמְּקוֹם,

Four times the Torah tells us to teach about the Exodus from Egypt. Since every syllable of Torah is filled with subtle meaning, this repetition implies there are four types of students, and the most effective teaching requires that the teacher adapt the lesson to the student at hand.

בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

בְּרוּךְ שֶׁנִּתְּן תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל,

בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

כְּנֶגֶד אַרְבַּעָה בְּנִים דִּבְרָה תּוֹרָה.

One student is diligent,

אֶחָד חָכָם,

One could not care less,

וְאֶחָד רָשָׁע,

One is uncomplicated,

וְאֶחָד תָּם,

And one is too overwhelmed to even ask questions.

וְאֶחָד שְׂאִינּוֹ יוֹדֵעַ לְשֵׂאוֹל.

Baruh' hamakom; baruh' hua. Baruh' shenatan tora lamo yisraeil; baruh' hua.

Kneged arbaa vaniym dibra torah:

Eh'ad h'ah'am, Veh'ad rashaa,

Veh'ad tam, Veh'ad sheeiyno yodeia lishol

Each of us is sometimes diligent, sometimes disinterested, sometimes simple and sometimes overwhelmed.

The diligent student is one who asks, "What are all the laws and customs and details that Adonai our G*d has commanded us?" Answer this type of student by teaching the laws of Passover from beginning to end, from preparation for Seder to the conclusion of the meal when we eat the afikomen.

The one who could not care less is one who asks, "What is this ceremony to you?" By saying "to you," this person excludes himself or herself from the community and denies its essential teachings. You answer this one by shaking them up in the most dramatic way you can imagine. You tell them, "I do this because of what Adonai did for me when I left Egypt. If you had been there, you would have remained behind!"

The uncomplicated student is one who says simply, "What is this?" Give this student an uncomplicated answer: "With a strong arm, Adonai brought us out of slavery in Egypt."

For the student who is too overwhelmed to even ask questions, you must open the subject up with gentle encouragement. This is what the Torah means when it says, "In the future, you will tell your child, 'This is how we remember what Adonai did for me when I left Egypt.'"

You might think that the time for this instruction is not critical, that you could have sat down and taught it any time over the last few weeks. On the contrary, the Torah uses an unusual grammatical construction when it says, "This is how we remember what Adonai did for me," to imply that we teach about it now, at the Seder, when these symbols—this matza and this maror—are actually laid out on the table before us.

So we must tell the story, now.

The Story Really Begins Centuries before Slavery....

מִתְחִלָּה עוֹבְדֵי עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה הָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וְעַכְשָׁיו קִרְבָּנוּ הַמָּקוֹם לְעֲבֹדָתוֹ.

Mith'ila ovdeiy avoda zara hayu avoteinyu, vah'shav keirvanu hamakom laavodato,

Slavery is not only about physical servitude. Slavery is also about bondage to ignorance. The story of Pesah really begins centuries before slavery in Egypt when our ancestors worshipped all sorts of spirits. But now we recognize that G*d is One. Our books of the Prophets record that Yehoshua summed up this transition when he spoke to the people of Israel: