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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

*Cover by Batya Stein*

*Carpas by Zach Abraham*

*A Double-Edged Song by Yoni Goldberg*

*Stubbornness: From Pharaoh to Princeton by Yoni Goldberg*

*The 4 Cups: Demonology? by Batya Stein & Adira Smirnov*

*The 4 COSot by Yael Stochel & Neti Linzer*

*Exile and Freedom in the Haggadah by Yaakov Zinberg*

*The Seder Night: Recreating Authentic Expression of Appreciation by Adam Hoffman*

*Things to Bring up at the Dinner Table by Claire Lessler*

*All who are hungry, come and eat by Aleeza Schoenberg*

*Ma Nishtana by Henry Koffler*

*Ma Nishtana HaLayla HaZoom by Joseph Rubin*

pg. 1



pg. 3

pg. 5



pg. 6 ESPADARANA CALLISTOMMA

pg. 7

pg. 9



pg. 10

pg. 12



pg. 14

pg. 15



pg. 17

pg. 19



ESPADARANA CALLISTOMMA

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Rav Elazar ben Azarya by**

***Nathan Finkle***

**pg. 21**



**Four Sons by Amichai Feit**

**pg. 23**



**The Four Students of Zoom by**

***Aleeza Schoenberg***

**pg. 25**

**The Ten Plagues by Yael Stochel**

**pg. 27**



**The Ten Plagues of Living at**

**Home by Aleeza Schoenberg**

**pg. 30**

**Where is Moshe? by Rivka**

***Mandelbaum***

**pg. 31**

**Plague of Frogs by Peter Brown**

**pg. 35**



**Jewish People and Not Eating**

**Chametz by Daniel Jubas**

**pg. 36**

**More Frogs by Peter Brown**

**pg. 39**

**A New Concept of Freedom by**

**Neti Linzer**

**pg. 40**



**Viewing Redemption with your**

**Own Eyes by Shira Kahn**

**pg. 42**

**Recipes**

**pg.44**



**Frog Illustrations by Peter**

**Brown**

# Carpas

By Zach Abraham

Right before Maggid, the part of the Seder during which we recall and experience the Jewish people's slavery in Egypt and subsequent redemption, we dip כרפס (Carpas, usually parsley or a type of vegetable) in saltwater. Like many aspects of the Seder night, this seems a little strange. Why do we have this separate step before Maggid, and what's the point in dipping the כרפס in saltwater? While there are a few answers to these questions, I'd like to suggest that the very name of this part of the Seder, כרפס, can shed light on its significance. Besides for our Haggadahs, another place the word כרפס appears is in Megilat Esther 1:6. While describing one of Achashverosh's lavish parties, the Migilah tells us that there were "hangings of חור כרפס ותכלת" (white, fine cotton, and blue). We learn from here that כרפס is actually the name of a type of fine cotton fabric. Taking this idea a step further, in the context of discussing Yosef's special garment that his father Yaakov made for him, the כְּתוֹנֶת פָּסִים, Rashi on Bereishit 37:3 comments that one reason the cloak was called a כְּתוֹנֶת פָּסִים was that the word פָּסִים comes from the word כרפס that appears in the Megillah! (In fact, the Gemara in Megillah 12a says that the word פָּסִים is the plural of the word פס, and that the word כרפס is a combination of the words כר and פס which mean cushion/pillow and fine wool, respectively.) I believe that by prefacing Maggid with Carpas, the Haggadah is trying to draw our attention to a very important parallel. The entire exile in Egypt was rooted in one grave sin: Yosef's brothers selling him into slavery.

## Continued

What was the central object of that very story? Yosef's special cloak! Bereishit 37:31 says, "וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת־כִּתְנֵת יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁחֲטוּ שְׂעִיר עִזִּים וַיִּטְבְּלוּ אֶת־הַכִּתְנֵת בַּדָּם" "they took Joseph's tunic, slaughtered a lamb, and dipped the tunic in the blood." The brothers tore his coat to pieces, dipped it in blood, and presented it to Yaakov who assumed Yosef was torn apart by a wild animal. Therefore, by dipping our "Carpas" in saltwater before discussing the slavery in Egypt, we are meant to be reminded of the original פס that was dipped in the blood of a lamb which started it all. However, that's not the end of the story. There's a second time that dipping played a central role in our history of enslavement and redemption, and that was when Benei Yisrael were commanded to dip hyssop (another leafy green) in the blood of the very first Korban Pesach in order to be saved from the plague of the firstborn. Not only that, but every family unit was meant to have its own lamb: "וַיִּקְחוּ לָהֶם, "אִישׁ שֶׁה לְבֵית-אָבֹת--שֶׁה לְבֵית" "on the tenth of this month each of them shall take a lamb to a family, a lamb to a household" (Shemot, 12:3). I'd like to suggest that these parallels are teaching us that it was the complete breakdown of the original Jewish family unit which led to our exile, and it was the reunification of the Jewish family unit which led to our redemption. While we are all sitting down at our Seder table with our dear families, Although some of us may be having our Seder this year without all family members we had expected to be with, I hope we can all internalize the message of Carpas that redemption can only come when we first appreciate the importance of being united as a family. Chag Sameach!

# A Double-Edged Song

By Yoni Goldberg

On the seventh day of Pesach, we read the Torah portion of the Shira (Song at the Sea) from Parshas Beshalach, and we read the Haftarah of David's Song from Samuel 2 chapter 52. However, when we read Parshas Beshalach during the year, we read the Haftarah of Devorah's Song from Samuel 1 chapter 5. Why don't we read the same Haftarah when we read identical portions of the Torah? One idea is that there is a certain duality in the Shira that is captured by the different Haftarahs. The Song of Devorah is a song of praise following a national victory over Sisera and his mighty army. However, The Song of David is a personal declaration of gratitude to Hashem for help through all of the difficult and triumphant times in David's life. We can extend these ideas to the Shira as well. During the year, when we read the Shira as part of Parshas Beshalach, we are commemorating the national salvation from servitude in Egypt that the previous Parshiyos have been building up to, the Shira of the nation that corresponds to Devorah's Song. However, on Pesach we emphasize the experience of the individual, the tremendous revelation of the presence of Hashem encapsulated by Chazal's statement "The maidservant on the sea saw that which Yechezkel did not see (Mechilta)." On Pesach, the holiday of faith and emunah, we highlight the Shira of the individual at the sea who is expressing a newfound belief in Hashem after experiencing the entire process of Yetzias Mitzrayim in all its hardship and its glory, and this is aligned with the themes of David's Song.

# Stubbornness: From Pharaoh to Princeton

BY YONI GOLDBERG

*In the year 2448, Pharaoh is confronted with 10 of the most devastating, incredible plagues ever to befall a nation, yet he refuses to let the Jewish people leave Egypt. His stubbornness is so astounding that according to many commentaries (Rashi, Ramban, Rambam) it is divinely influenced, and he repeatedly shuns what is clearly the prudent option of allowing a mass Exodus. Here are some of the quotes:*

Servant: Hey Pharaoh, do you hear all those frogs croaking?

Pharaoh: I think it is just the COS majors at the lunch table

**A few weeks later...**

Servant: Hey Pharaoh, you gotta let the Jews go, all of our cattle are dying!

Pharaoh: It's fine, we'll just eat bats instead.

**A few weeks later...**

Pharaoh: I can't let the Jews go now, it's so dark I can finally take a nap on a couch in the CJL in peace

# Stubbornness: From Pharaoh to Princeton

BY YONI GOLDBERG

*In the year 5780, students of Princeton University were confronted with one of the most contagious, disruptive plagues ever to befall the world, yet they refuse to leave campus. Their stubbornness was so astounding that according to many top school administrators (President Eisgruber, Rochelle Calhoun, Marni Blitz) it was Yale inspired, and they repeatedly shunned what was clearly the most prudent option of a mass Exodus. Here are some of the quotes:*

**Average college student during  
spring break:**

If I get corona, I get corona, at the end of the day I'm not gonna let it stop me from partying

**Average Princeton student  
during spring break:**

If I get corona, I get corona, at the end of the day I'm not gonna let it stop me from my thesis

**A week later...**

Student: "It's fine, I'll just go to a crazy party and brush my teeth in the water fountain."

**A few days later...**

University: "All students must leave campus and practice social distancing, it could help prevent a nationwide pandemic!"

Student: "I can't leave campus now, it's so empty I can finally take a nap on a couch in the CJL in peace"

# The 4 Cups: Demonology?

By Batya Stein & Adira Smirnov

Pesachim 108b and 109a is mainly focused on the mitzvah of drinking arba cosot, four cups of wine, and the various halachos surrounding it. On 109b, the gemara raises a concern about the number “four”: ולא יפחתו: לו מארבעה: היכי מתקני רבנן מידי דאתי בה לידי סכנה והתניא לא יאכל אדם תרי ולא ישתה תרי.

We learned in the mishna that even with regard to the poorest of Jews, the charity distributors should not give him less than four cups of wine. The Gemara asks: How could the Sages establish a matter through which one will come to expose himself to danger? But wasn't it taught in a baraita: A person should not eat pairs, i.e., an even number of food items; and he should not drink pairs of cups.

On 110a, the Gemara explains that the danger of drinking cups in pairs is as follows: “Rav Yosef said: Yosef the Demon said to me: Ashmedai, the king of the demons, is appointed over all who perform actions in pairs .... [and] he is an angry king who does what he wants .... Similarly, the king of demons has full license to harm people who perform actions in pairs.

Nowadays, when our world is seemingly devoid of demons and other supernatural entities, it is difficult to appreciate the relevance of this statement. If we work within this assumption, though, we now have to ask ourselves how we're supposed to drink four cups of wine. Four is an even number, and seemingly would invite the king of demons to harm us! The Gemara answers: אמר רב נחמן אמר קרא ליל שמורים ליל המשומר ובא מן המזיקין. Pesach, as it says in Shemot (12:42), is a night of night of “shimurim”, watching and protection from harm. Thus, the demons are unable to attack us even though we drink an even number of cups.

## Continued

But what exactly does a “night of shimurim” mean? The root ש.מ.ר. can mean both watching and protecting. This could be that Hashem is protecting us from harm on the seder night, which is what a simple read of the gemara seems to imply. Ramban, however, argues that this is not a guarantee of protection, but rather an obligation for the Jews to keep the laws of Pesach throughout the generations as it is written in Shemot 13:10 “ושמרת את החקה הזאת” - “you shall observe (ושמרת) this law” Questions for further thought (with some suggestions that are by no means final):

What is the connection between demons harming us and things that come in pairs?

- Maybe odd numbers, which are not associated with pairs, represent the unity of G-d.

Is there a deeper meaning to be found in the gemara’s concerns about demons, even if one does not rationally believe that they exist?

- Some, like Rav Avi Schafran, explain that the demons of the Gemara are actually what we know of as bacteria today. When we encounter difficulties in the Gemara, do we need to explain them rationally or can we say that our beliefs have evolved since then?

Is leil shimurim an obligation we have to G-d or something that G-d is doing for us?

- As Jonathan Sarna points out, there is an irony in saying that the seder night is specifically a time of protection, when it has historically been a time of heightened danger due to blood libels.

Citations: Sefaria, Leil Shimurim,

<http://www.balashon.com/2007/04/leil-shimurim.html>

# Arba COS(ot)

## FOUR TYPES OF WOMEN IN COS

### The 'Wise One'

aka the girl whose laptop looks like this



### The 'Wicked One'

aka the girl who takes COS 109--Emails for Females-- because she wants to be surrounded by her fellow female friends, but is dismayed to discover that there are more males than females.

### The 'Basic One'

aka the girl who always has 'java' on hand



### The 'One Who Doesn't Know How To Ask...'

questions ever since they switched from Piazza to Ed



# Exile and Freedom in the Haggadah

By Yaakov Zinberg

The Haggadah does not fail to remind us that the Jewish people are currently in a state of Galut, exile, lacking the Temple and full national sovereignty. We open the Maggid - which retells the divinely orchestrated Exodus from Egyptian slavery - with a reminder that, in reality, we are still slaves, hopeful that “next year we shall be free.” Although we lift the Matzah and Maror, bitter herbs, when discussing their symbolism, we can only verbally commemorate the Korban Pesach, the Passover offering “that our ancestors would eat while the Temple stood,” and note its absence from the Koreich sandwich we nevertheless consume “in memory of the Temple.” The declaration of “next year in Jerusalem” with which the Haggadah concludes, despite its joyful optimism, suggests that our exhaustive observance of the Seder night rituals is still less than ideal.

The Bible portrays the construction of the Temple as the ultimate aim of the Exodus. Shirat HaYam, the poem the Israelites sang immediately after the miraculous defeat of the Egyptians at the Red Sea, ends with the aspiration for God to deliver His people to the mountain designated for the Temple. This prophecy was realized when King Solomon began the Temple’s construction “in the four-hundred-and-eightieth year after the Israelites came out of Egypt” (I Kings 6:1). In Dayeinu, the song that lists each progressive manifestation of God’s kindness to the Jewish people, the construction of the Temple is likewise seen as the culmination of the Exodus. The lack of the Temple and its rituals is a significant deficiency in our Pesach observance and therefore earns mention in the Haggadah. However, referencing Galut also emphasizes that Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim, the commandment to retell the Exodus story fulfilled through our recitation of the Haggadah, transcends any one historical reality. Our objective during the Seder night - “Each person must see himself as if he himself had come out of Egypt” - has remained constant throughout Jewish history, no matter how absurd the notion of freedom may have seemed to Jews at the time

## Continued

The Seder experience may be recontextualized but never stripped of its eternal themes of freedom and abiding faith in God. Hence, Jewish exiles residing in Mesopotamia were the first to introduce Maggid in their native Aramaic by expressing their incomplete religious autonomy as “slavery,” but proceeded to recite the Haggadah in full. Several Bible verses that beseech God to “pour His wrath upon the nations,” likely added to the Haggadah in response to the First Crusade and the blood libel of the Middle Ages, are a reminder that hostility towards Jews has been the norm throughout our history, but this does not prevent us from reciting the Hallel, the joyous song, that immediately follows. Jews in several of the concentration camps, lacking far more than the Korban Pesach and often unsure of the actual calendar date, held Sedarim in which they somehow managed to celebrate the Exodus despite their own obvious lack of freedom.

More than any in recent memory, this Pesach will challenge our ability to feel free. How are we supposed to “see ourselves” leaving Egypt alongside millions of other Israelites (certainly not a model of effective social distancing!) when we are forbidden from leaving our homes? We are unquestionably restricted during the current crisis, but I would encourage everyone to consider the ways in which we are free, possessing freedoms our ancestors who read the same Haggadah could have only dreamed of: freedom from state-sponsored antisemitism, freedom from inescapable financial insecurity, freedom from perpetual mistrust of our non-Jewish neighbors. Our Pesach Sedarim will likely be less eventful this year - we cannot literally invite “all those in need (to) come and join us for the Pesach” - but we should be thankful for the freedoms we have and the chance to relive the freedom of Pesach yet again.

# The Seder Night: Recreating Authentic Expressions of Appreciation

By Adam Hoffman

In our new socially-distant world, I've found myself spending more time on YouTube. I've discovered a heartwarming genre: soldiers returning home to surprise their loved ones. In each video, a character, often a spouse or child, is consumed with emotion. Their faces flush, their hands wag, and they cry out praises for the returning soldier. Responses range from "you're amazing" to "I love you." All, though, are authentic expressions of appreciation. It is this same genuine feeling that the Seder night ought to evoke. The Rambam records the distinct Mitzvah to remember the Exodus from Egypt on the night of the Seder. What makes this night different from all others, Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik asks in Harei Kedem? In other words, the Jewish people are commanded to remember the Exodus every day, so why must there be a distinct Mitzvah on the Seder night? On the Seder night, we are not simply remembering, we are being moved to react, Rabbi Soloveitchik answers. At the Seder, we have a fundamentally different relationship with the Exodus. It is not simply a memory. *B'chol dor vador chayav adam lirot et atzmo k'ilu hu yatza mimitzrayim*, In every generation, each man is to view himself as if he were liberated from Egypt. We are to experience the Exodus ourselves. We are to be shaken by God's unbound power and provoked by our people's dauntlessness.

## Continued

The commandment to remember the Exodus from Egypt on the night of the Seder is unlike our daily commandment to do the same. While our daily commandment could be fulfilled by a mere mention of God's miracles, our Seder night obligation can only be fulfilled with authentic engagement. The Sefat Emet investigated the nature of our engagement with the Exodus on the Seder night. We ought to be aroused in a certain way, he argued on Pesach of 1880. If the night carries its own Mitzvah, then why does it not carry its own unique bracha? There is no bracha, blessing of thanks, precisely because we are not to say thank you — we ought to feel electrified. In the same way the military families from my YouTube videos were overcome with emotion, the Seder night should be the same. Seders are no place for the formalities of gratitude. It is a night and experience to share our deeply rooted, natural love and praise to God. On the Seder night, a bracha could not capture the authenticity of our feelings. The videos of return and expression that I found on YouTube illustrate what our Seders ought to look like. I can use them to understand the standard of Rabbi Soloveitchik and the Sefat Emet. Like the characters in the videos, we must turn towards our loved One, God, and reach a genuine expression of appreciation. As the Sefat Emet taught, we are to move beyond the formalities; we are to thank and praise God from the depths of our heart.

HEY PEEPS! I'M YOUR HOST, FLEUR, BUT YOU CAN CALL ME FLU FOR SHORT.



THE EGYPTIANS HAD 10 PLAGUES. WE ONLY HAVE 1. THIS BEGS THE QUESTION: WHO CAN WE KICK OUT OF OUR COUNTRY TO PREVENT THE PLAGUES FROM CONTINUING?



OPTION 1:

REDDIT USERS.

BACK OFF, OR WE'LL TURN YOU INTO A MORBID MEME.



ARE YOU IN NEED OF MORE TOXICITY IN YOUR LIFE? CHECK OUT ONE OF OUR SUBREDDITS!

OPTION 2: ALL JEWISH TWENTY-SOMETHINGS ON FACEBOOK:



"OMG! DID U KNOW I GOT MARRIED? LET ME POST ANOTHER WEDDING PICTURE TO MAKE SURE YOU GOT THE MESSAGE!"



OPTION 3:

THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION.



KNOCK- CLARE! ARE YOU ATTACKING MY PRESIDENT?!

OPTION 4:

EVERYONE ON TIKTOK.



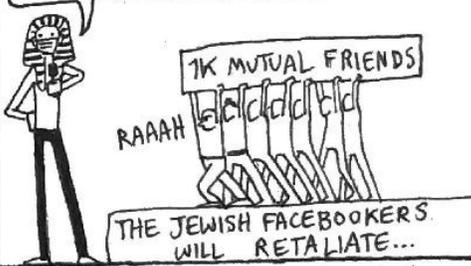
WITH THAT IN MIND... MAY I PRESENT... A BATTLE ROYALE! FIGHT FOR YOUR PLACE!



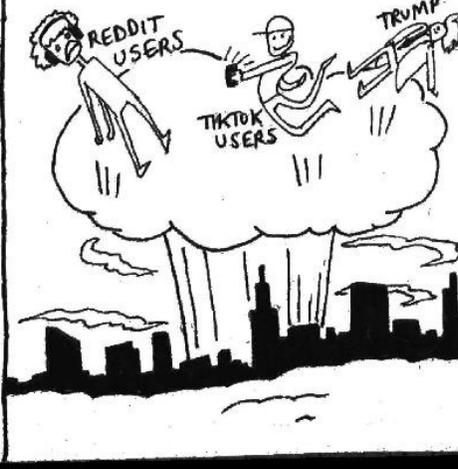
TRUMP ADMINISTRATION, YOU'RE UP FIRST!



FUNNY HOW BAD LEADERSHIP ALONE CAN HAVE SUCH AN EFFECT DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC!



THEY HAVE SENT A SPOKESMAN!



THE OTHERS CRUMPLE IN THE FACE OF THIS GLORIOUS HALACHIC ARGUMENT.



# All who are hungry, come and eat” in the time of (you guessed it).

By Aleeza Schoenberg

Note: Unlike my other contributions, this piece is not (meant to be) shtick. This year I’ve been wondering about the phrase “All who are hungry, come and eat,” which we recite right before Maggid in the seder. Do we mean it this year, if we’re socially distancing? True, we don’t usually expect someone to barge into our homes, or even hear our invitation, but there are certainly people we would not turn away if they showed up in the middle of the seder. I’d at least let in someone I know, for example. This year, if we’re letting anyone into our homes at all, we’re deciding at least fourteen days in advance, so they can self-quarantine (assuming we follow the OU’s guidelines). So I turned to my good ol’ Nishmat friends for some sources, and Rivka Mandelbaum responded with great sources and articles about the nature of “all who are hungry, come and eat.” I have summarized them, and I will provide some thoughts or discussion questions, but I want to make it clear that the main ideas are not my own. (It’s against the honor code, and Judaism, to plagiarize.)

- An article in the New York Times (an interesting read!) says the seder is a guidebook for understanding what it means to be free, and at the seder we “manifest our hope for liberation.” The article says that in the seder we focus much more on being free than on the story of slavery.

In that case, it seems to me that inviting all who are hungry is a way for us to practice inviting guests in general. How might that relate to other educational aspects of the seder, to our preparations for Pesach, or other moments in our lives? Do you agree with this approach?

## Continued

A source sheet by Rabbi Andrew Pepperstone says that we say the “all who are hungry” passage after having Kiddush and Carpas to point out a fault in the people saying it: if we meant it, we’d have said it earlier, but we didn’t. The source sheet quotes the Zohar as saying that “lechem oni” is “the stingy man’s bread” and Rabbi Jonathan Sacks as saying “lechem oni” (poor man’s bread) becomes the bread of freedom only when we can share it with others. Thus, the Haggadah mentions “lechem oni” right before the invitation in question, so show we have not converted it to the bread of freedom.

- According to this reading, when we say “all who are hungry, come and eat,” we are actually remembering that we are not completely free, since we are not able to share our “bread.” Should we be rebuked for this if we don’t have a choice? In other years, are we being thoughtless and stingy waiting until this point to invite guests? Does matzah become a rich man’s bread when we share it?

Rav Aharon Ziegler says in the name of Rav Soloveitchik that this declaration is not an actual invitation, since no one can hear us. Rather, it is a symbolic representation of our freedom—that we are able to invite guests.

- This understanding agrees with the previous one that our invitation is not sincere, but it takes the opposite approach. Rather than showing we are not free since we are not inviting guests, the declaration shows we are free because we can invite guests. For people who invited guests before the seder, then, this seems to be a meaningful declaration, because they could invite guests. What about the people who could not invite guests? Are they still free? Why or why not? If they are not free, how might we understand Rav Soloveitchik’s explanation?

An article in My Jewish Learning points out that nowadays, we invite guests before the seder or give money to support sederim of people in need, to fulfill “all who are hungry, come and eat.” The article suggests having discussions at the seder about how we can commit to serving people who are in need.

- Is helping or inviting people before the seder serving the same purpose as our invitation during the seder? Is our invitation during the seder, then, a retroactive invitation? What if we have not invited anyone or donated money? Can discussing ways to help the world serve as our way of inviting those who are in need?

*If you want easy-to-click links to the articles, email me at [aleezas@princeton.edu](mailto:aleezas@princeton.edu). I’d also love to hear your or your seder group’s thoughts on these ideas and questions!*

# Ma Nishtana

By Henry Koffler

Ma Nishtana, which asks “Why is tonight different than all other nights,” almost seems rhetorical in the age of Covid-19. It is painfully obvious what makes this year’s Seder night different: People who would have regularly come together for the Seder may not this year. Combined with Zoom University, quarantine and a global pandemic — what isn’t different this year?

Even at a regular Seder, you might’ve noticed something off — be it a lot of guests, the book everyone has at their seat or the giant cracker that was just snapped in half with an expertly hidden larger portion — not an indication of a usual meal. So, if you already know what’s different, what is the purpose of Ma Nishtana? One answer, as with seemingly everything at the Seder, is so that the children will ask. More precisely, this is a response to what the children will ask. Ma Nishtana is taken directly from a Mishna in Bavli Pesachim 116: מזגו לו כוס שני וכאן הבן שואל אביו ואם אין דעת בבן אביו: חלמדו...As translated by Sefaria: “The attendants poured the second cup for, and here the son asks his father the questions about the differences between Passover night and a regular night. And if the son does not have the intelligence to ask, his father teaches him the questions.” Rashi, commenting on וכאן, notes that the child is asking because it is unusual for a second cup to be poured before the meal has started. Yet, the Talmud omits this as the reason. The Talmud’s omission is particularly curious given other statements it has made. Regarding Karpas, the Gemara says “כדי שיכירו תינוקות ושאלו,” so that the children will ask.”

If the pouring of the second cup functions to provoke questions, then how is it different than the other acts, and why is Ma Nishtana the answer?

Furthermore, the Gemara explicates, “תנו רבנן חכם בנו שואלו ואם אינו חכם אשתו, שואלתו ואם לאו הוא שואל לעצמו ואפילו שני תלמידי חכמים שיודעין בהלכות הפסח שואלין זה לזה”.

## Continued

The Sages taught: If his son is wise and knows how to inquire, his son asks him. And if he is not wise, his wife asks him. And if even his wife is not capable of asking or if he has no wife, he asks himself. And even if two Torah scholars who know the halakhot of Passover are sitting together and there is no one else present to pose the questions, they ask each other. So, is it not only for the children? Additionally, the Gemara mentions on the previous daf that there are several cases of those exempt from saying Ma Nishtana: אמר ליה עדיין לא קא אכלינן אתו קא מעקרין תכא מיקמן אמר ליה רבה פטרתן מלומר מה נשתנה. He said to him: We haven't finished the eating, yet all the plates have removed. Ravah said to him: This exempts us from saying Ma Nishtana. So, we appear to be back at the start...why do we say Ma Nishtana? The answer is twofold. First and foremost, it is functional: it fulfills the halachic requirement for the Haggadah to be in the mode of ספור, question and answer format. Secondly, it is thematic. Ma Nishtana serves as a link between Ha Lachma Anya and Avadim Hayinu. The Seder is replete with contradictory acts — we lean like lords, yet eat bitter herbs. Ma Nishtana explains the duality of our identity, even though we are free, our national character is still predicated on our historic slavery; that we can only truly be free after being enslaved by Pharaoh.

Furthermore, Ma Nishtana can be read with deeper significance regarding our Geula. Why is this exile different than the other exiles? These last two sentences show why Ma Nishtana is to be read even if there are no children present; it is applicable for all and answers the most meaningful question. Perhaps this is why it is traditionally asked by the youngest child present, as they represent another generation born in Galut — who now ask when they will be returning home and yearningly sing Le Shanah Habah BeYerushalayim. As you go about Magid, try to find analogies between Yetziat Mitzrayim and our deliverance from this exile. One in particular I like thinking about is ועברתי בארץ מצרים בלילה הזה - אני ולא מלאך; והכיתי כל בכור בארץ מצרים. אני ולא שרף; ובכל־אלהי מצרים אעשה שפטים. אני ולא השליח; אני ה'. אני הוא ולא אחר. Why did Hashem deliver them personally? As the Midrash says, it was due to their keeping of Shalal (an acronym): Shem, Lashon and Libush. So too if we remain steadfast and strong in our historic Jewish identity will we be personally delivered.

# Mah nishtanah, ha-laylah ha-Zoom, mi-kol ha-leylot?

BY JOSEPH RUBIN

*The haggadah prompts us with four quandaries on Passover:*



1. Usually we see our professor's dog once during lecture. On Zoom we see our professor's dog twice.

2. Usually we surf the Internet on our phones during lecture. On Zoom we surf the Internet on our phones and on our laptop.

3. Usually we play many games. On Zoom we only play skribbl.io.

4. Usually we listen to lecture while sitting or sleeping. On Zoom we are all sleeping.



Look at the next page to see the answer....



## Sefaria's translation of the answer reads as follows:

*We were servants of Eisgruber in the land of Princeton. And the Lord, our God, took us out from there with a sickly hand and an outstretched, leprous forearm. And if the Holy One, blessed be He, had not taken our ancestors from Princeton, behold we and our children and our children's children would still be stuck in Organic Chemistry lab. And even if we took the PDF grading scheme in all of our classes, it would still be a commandment upon us to attend all of our lectures and complete all of our assignments. And anyone who spends extra time on their independent work this semester, behold he is praiseworthy.*

*It happened once that Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarfon were not practicing social distancing. Instead, they were reclining in Teaneck and were telling the story of the exodus from Princeton that whole night, until their students came and said to them, "The time to complete your take-home midterm has arrived."*

*And Jake Brzowski said [once again], "Behold I am like a man of seventy years and I had not merited to understand why I should take my test tonight until Ben Zoma explicated it, as it is stated (Deuteronomy 16:3), 'In order that you should remember the content of your courses all the days of your life;' 'the days of your life' indicates that the remembrance should apply to those who take STEM classes, '\*all\* the days of your life' indicates that the remembrance should apply to those who take non-STEM classes." But the Sages say, "'the days of your life' indicates that the remembrance should apply to those who have a job, '\*all\* the days of your life' indicates that the remembrance should apply to those who do not yet have a job." The author does not understand the practical difference between the two interpretations.*

# Rav Elazar Ben Azarya

By Nathan Finkle

“אמר רבי אלעזר בן עזריה: הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה.”

Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria said: ‘Behold I am like one who is seventy years old.’”

This saying is mentioned tangentially in an amazing story on Berakhot 27b-28a, which details the Rabbis coup d’état against Rabban Gamliel. In this story, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah is appointed as the (eventually only part-time) Nasi. When he is offered the position, his first response is, as is appropriate, “I will go and discuss with the people of my house.” When he arrives home, he consults with his wife, who becomes concerned that he is not fit to be Nasi because he has no white hair. A miracle then occurs and eighteen rows of Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah’s hair turn white. This, parenthetically the Talmud relates, is why he proclaims that he is “like” one who is seventy years old.

Then, when Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah becomes the Nasi, he opens the Beit Midrash up to anyone who wants to learn. Rabban Gamliel had previously proclaimed that anyone for whom “אין תוכו כבדו”—their inside is not like their outside—is prohibited from entering the Beit Midrash (the Torah study hall). On that day, as a result of opening up the Beit Midrash to anyone who wants to learn, the whole teaching of the tractate of Eduyyot (testimonies) is taught, and there is no halakha whose ruling was pending in the Beit Midrash that is not explained. It seems clear that the opening of the Beit Midrash to those whose insides were not like their outsides was an incredible success for Torah and the Jewish people.

## Continued

However, Yoma 72b mentions a statement in the name of Rava that suggests something contradictory: “Rava said: ‘A Torah scholar whose inside is not like their outside is not a Torah scholar.’” How are we supposed to reconcile these two conflicting passages? I believe the key to answering this question is to understand that Rava became a Torah scholar more than a century and a half after Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah. As a result of Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah’s influence, anyone who wanted to study Torah was allowed to enter the Beit Midrash. Therefore, once Rava came around, there had been a significant period of time in which all types of Jews had been given the opportunity to be exposed to Torah. It is only in that context that Rava denounced those Torah scholars whose insides are not like their outsides. He is teaching us a valuable lesson: the point of Torah learning is to change who we are; if we let ourselves open up to the teachings of the Torah, it will have such a significant effect that it changes who we are. It is only those, says Rava, who were exposed to Torah and resist so strongly its transformative nature that are not to be considered Torah scholars.

May we all merit to have the Torah we learn affect us so greatly that our insides become like our outsides.

# The Four Sons

By Amichai Feit

At the start of his commentary on the four sons, the Vilna Gaon (Rabbi Eliyahu ben Shlomo Zalman/the גר"א) provides a thought-provoking grouping of the types of children that are discussed in the Haggadah: the wise, the evil, the innocent, and the one who does not know how to ask. The גר"א sorts the sons into sets of opposites, with the wise son as the opposite of the one who does not know how to ask and the evil son as the opposite of the innocent son. While one might be easily convinced that the wise son and the one who does not know how to ask are opposites, such a relationship is less apparent between the evil and innocent sons. In support of his interpretation, the גר"א quotes a verse from the book of Job:

אַחַת הִיאַ עַל־כֵּן אֶמְרָתִי תָם וְרָשָׁע הוּא מְכֻלָּה:

It is all one; therefore I say, "He destroys the blameless and the guilty." (Job 9:22)

Here, Job presents the guilty and the innocent as opposites, which surely would not strike anyone as strange. When the same comparison is made between the תם and רשע of the Haggadah, however, it is more odd (at least to me), mostly because the תם and רשע of the Haggadah seem to be defined more by their dispositions than by their actions. While people who are guilty and innocent of an action are obviously direct opposites, the snide, evil child and the simple, innocent child are not.

## Continued

So what else could be underlying the Vilna Gaon's presenting the רשע and the תם as opposites? One possible answer is that with respect to the specific process of learning through asking questions, the dispositions of the רשע and תם lead to opposite conclusions. Interestingly, in terms of the text of the Haggadah, the רשע and תם ask very similar questions (except for two words added by the רשע). Still, the רשע delivers an implicit critique through his question that isn't communicated by the תם. While through his question the רשע intends to undermine the entire enterprise of retelling the exodus story, the תם simply wants to understand what is going on. Their respective dispositions determine the meaning of their questions as much as the actual words they say. Thus, when children are tasked with asking questions to learn about the Pesach story, the רשע and תם are in fact opposites: despite asking similar questions, the תם shows a genuine attempt to learn, while the רשע does not.

# The Four Students of Zoom

ARTSCROLL TRANSLATION BY ALEEZA SCHOENBERG



## THE COS STUDENT

What does he say? What are these video recordings, extensions, and P/D/F grading policies Eisgruber has commanded you? And you will say to him, as per the Rights, Rules, and Responsibilities, “We may not change our backgrounds on Zoom [even] after our parents start making noises and faces behind us.””



## THE 2nd SEMESTER SENIOR

What does he say? “What is this online learning to you?” “To you,” and not “to him.” And since he excluded himself from the Zoom community, he is one who has blocked his camera. And you shall disable his microphone and say to him, “For the sake of this, Eisgruber did for me in sending me to quarantine.” “For me” and not “for him.” If he had been on campus (and not already in Miami for Spring break), he would not have been saved.



## THE FIRST YEAR

What does he say? “Professor, should I raise my physical hand or my Zoom hand?” And you should say to him, “With the strength of His hand, God took us out of Egypt, from the house of slaves.”



## AND THE ONE WHO DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO UNMUTE

you will continue calling on him anyway. As it is stated, “And you will tell your student on that day, for the sake of this, Eisgruber did for me, in my leaving the college campus.”

**RAV COVID'S COMMENTARY: The COS student. *And you will say to him*** How is the professor's statement an answer to the student's question? The COS student is asking the meaning behind these new policies and behaviors. The professor is explaining that Eisgruber recognized the inequity in each house, such as some students having nosy parents, and set laws to accommodate students. Eisgruber is also reminding the COS student not to change his background on Zoom because it's so 2011. P/D/F Does not the COS student already know what the P/D/F grading policies are? The COS student does know, since he's P/D/F-ing all his COS classes, but he wishes to show off his knowledge.

**The second semester senior. *Second semester senior*** What does it mean to be a second semester senior? It used to mean being PTL, but when everyone stopped caring about their theses, it came to mean all 2020 seniors. Disable his microphone Can the professor really disable the student's microphone? It is a secret among younger professors how this is possible, and older professors may simply tell him to shut up. He would not have been saved He would not have been saved? Were not most students sent into quarantine? The meaning is a machloket. Some say the senior had already gone home before his trip to Miami, planning to skip all his classes, as well as graduation, thus never planning to return to campus. Others hold that "saved" refers to his getting coronavirus, not getting sent off campus.

**The first year. *Should I raise my physical hand, etc.*** Why does the first year ask about raising his hand? He is not yet jaded and actually cares about this stuff. And you should say to him How is the professor's statement an answer to the student's question? How is your face an answer to the student's question? The one who doesn't know how to unmute. How do we differentiate him from the second semester senior, who keeps his camera off? The second semester senior is texting while the professor cannot see him.

**The student who does not know how unmute wishes to unmute. *Continue calling on him*** Why does the professor continue calling on him? The professor does not understand that the student is muted. Eisgruber did for me What does it mean "Eisgruber did for me"? What did Eisgruber do? Who is "me"? The professor is happy that because of Eisgruber, he can be at home all day, wearing no pants; but he still requires the student to wear pants.

\*Note: ArtScroll, working to provide accurate translations, has edited this translation to match the masculine forms used in the original Hebrew text.

# The Ten Plagues

By Yael Stochel

Every year, the seder acts as another installment in the long oral tradition of Judaism. In our experiential retelling of the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim, Bnei Yisrael's exodus from Egypt, we annually rehearse the familiar parts and practices that have accumulated over generations. Throughout the seder, we read and enact ancient traditions, from the very retelling of the story itself that has roots in the Rabbis' late-night discussions under Roman persecution, to eating a sandwich of matzah and marror in Korech, as Hillel did in Talmudic times.

In his book *Halakhic Morality*, Rav Soloveitchik explains the Jewish approach to history and masorah that is displayed on seder night through the mitzvah of sipur Yetzi'at Mitzrayim. As the Gemara says, a person is obligated to see himself as if he came out of Mitzrayim (Pesachim 116b). Rav Soloveitchik expands on this idea, writing that the concept of masorah consists of a belief that the past is not isolated history, consisting of a linear timeline with specific chronology, but is rather a continuing dialogue with the future. Jews of each generation experience the lives of their forefathers as if they too are living through the tumultuous times of painful oppression or glorified redemption. Yet, the portion of the seder devoted to retelling the makkot is particularly susceptible to the inevitable perils of such integrative storytelling. Continually adding layers of masorah collapses time, preventing events from being understood in their original context. The makkot arguably comprise the most central component of the exodus, but the magnitude of the miraculousness is lost in a tendency to consider them in a more theatrical light. Of course, such a retelling is necessary to ensure that the seder is remembered as a celebratory experience, as it is meant to be, and to appeal to the children present. Furthermore, the supernatural events of the makkot are difficult to envision in our world today, tempting us to categorize them as tales of sensation rather than insight.

## Continued

Despite this inclination, the Torah is often interested in human perspectives, enabling access to various figures' outlooks.

How can we approach the makkot in a way that helps us internalize the seriousness with which they were viewed when the Jews left Egypt?

Professor Gary Rendsburg, a professor in the Department of Jewish Studies at Rutgers University explains a few of the plagues in the context of Egyptian culture. He explains that frogs symbolized the Egyptian goddess of life and fertility. When Pharaoh asks Moshe to remove the frogs, Moshe responds that the frogs will retreat to the Nile. However, after Moshe prays to Hashem, the frogs simply die, leaving corpses everywhere "till the land stank" (Shemot 8:10). Whereas Moshe himself may not have understood the significance of the frogs' deaths, Hashem intended for this to be an affront on the Egyptians' perception of life's origins. Furthermore, Professor Rendsburg notes that the "chartumim," commonly translated as "magicians," really served the role of priests in Egyptian society. The Torah explains that, "The magicians were unable to confront Moses because of the inflammation, for the inflammation afflicted the magicians as well as all the other Egyptians" (Shemot 9:11). Professor Rendsburg writes that these priests were unable to perform their duties when they were unclean, further explaining the theological consequences of the makkot for the Egyptians. Professor Rendsburg's interpretation helps us view the makkot as the Egyptians would, as devastating, faith-shattering demonstrations of Hashem's omnipotence.

Ramban similarly writes about the effect of the makkot on faith, but focuses on Bnei Yisrael's recognition of Hashem. In the Torah it seems that a central goal of the makkot was so "that you may recount and tell your children and your children's children how I made a mockery of the Egyptians and how I displayed my signs amongst them - in order that you may know that I am the Lord" (Shemot, 10:1-2).

## Continued

Despite the proliferation of Torah commentaries on this idea, there is little emphasis on the fear involved in seeing Hashem's power firsthand.

According to the Torah, the makkot are a basis for generations upon generations of Jewish faith. In order for an experience to be so enduring and sustained, it must involve some elements of fear, if only the terror of realizing earthly mortality and insignificance when faced with almighty might beyond human control or comprehension.

By thinking about the makkot through the lens of our own fear, we can better appreciate the magnitude of the events. In any given year, all of us are plagued by uncertainties that we can use to envision Bnei Yisrael's reaction to the makkot. This year, we do not have to dig very deep to empathize with the fear experienced by Bnei Yisrael. Just as our modern perception of the makkot has been influenced by countless retellings of the story, how will our traditions be shaped by the pandemic and future recollections of this time?

Though attempting to relive the makkot as Bnei Yisrael experienced them may be a crucial aspect of the seder, the lighthearted interpretations of the exodus have endured for a notable reason. Beginning with the makkot and after a lengthy process post-exodus only briefly mentioned in the Haggadah, a unified Jewish nation emerged. In Devarim Rabbah 4:22 it says כָּל צָרָה שֶׁהוּא שֶׁל יְחִיד צָרָה, וְכָל צָרָה שֶׁאִינָהּ שֶׁל יְחִיד אִינָהּ צָרָה, which can be interpreted to mean that sorrow borne by the community is easier to bear than sorrow felt only by an individual. Despite the terror of Covid-19 and the mandatory social distancing that prevents us from celebrating Pesach this year together, the clear demonstrations of communal unity (usually over Zoom) in the face of fear and loss are a dependable source of strength.

# The Ten Plagues of living at home

1. Waiting for the bathroom

Get out of the shower!!!!

2. Decluttering

Honey, Clean up your toys or throw them away

3. Self haircuts

Should have realized no one will see me until way after the omer

4. Wild animals

Aviva the cat

5. No more free printing

OUT OF INK

6. Feeding yourself

Boil water ... too much work

7. Snow

Princeton | Boston

70° | -12°

8. No roommates

Who will kill this?

spider

9. Never going outside

The light! It BURNS

10. Sibling rivalry

'nough said

Aleeza Schoenberg

Aleen Song

# Where is Moshe?

By Rivka Mandlebaum

The book of Exodus, and with it the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim (the exodus), begins, bar a paragraph or two, with the story of Moshe's life, from his family background to his infancy and then to his adulthood. He grows up in Pharaoh's palace, then flees to Midian, where he marries Tzipporah and lives in Yitro's household as a shepherd. There, God is revealed to him at the burning bush, and tells him to take the people of Israel out of Egypt. When Moshe is eventually convinced to go lead the people, he is joined by his brother Aharon, and together they confront Pharaoh and his court, bring the plagues, and finally lead the people out of Egypt, culminating in the dramatic splitting of the sea and drowning of the entire Egyptian army. Crazy stuff! Moshe continues to lead the people in the desert for 40 years; he is the "main character" of the majority of the stories from Exodus to Numbers; his leadership skills are crucial for getting the people through the desert whole, and he finally gives the leadership over to Yehoshua only when the people are about to enter the land of Israel.

So, if Pesach is about commemorating the exodus and internalizing the messages that are learned from it, why don't we hear about Moshe -- or even Aharon! -- at all? The names "Moshe" and "Aharon" appear a combined 844 times in Chumash, at least according to a quick Sefaria search, yet they only appear three times in the Haggadah, each time because a verse is quoted to highlight a different aspect of the verse. What's going on?

This question is a classic question, and I found the variety of responses to it pretty interesting. Here, I'd like to summarize the approaches and bring a few of my favorites, compiled based on an article by R. Yehuda Shurpin on [chabad.org](http://chabad.org) and a Mi Yodea ([judaism.stackexchange.com](http://judaism.stackexchange.com)) thread.

Essentially, the responses fall into three groups:

## Continued

The first group states that Moshe is absent from Haggadah in order to emphasize God's presence and uniqueness:

1. Moshe did not bring us out of Egypt; God brought us out of Egypt. On Pesach, we say "And I will pass through the land of Egypt": I, and not an angel. "And I will smite every firstborn in the land of Egypt": I, and not a seraph. "And I will carry out judgments against all the gods of Egypt": I, and not a messenger. "I—the L-rd": it is I, and none other. In order to show that ultimately only God was responsible for the exodus, we do not mention Moshe. This approach is commonly quoted in the name of the Gra.
  
2. A fascinating speech given by Rabbi Norman Lamm on Parshat Bo 1970 relates that Rav Soloveitchik used to interpret the Midrash (Shir HaShirim Rabba) on Song of Songs 3:1: "On my bed at night" - this is the night of Egypt, "I sought him who my soul loves" - this is Moshe, "sought, but did not find him" as referencing the absence of Moshe from the Haggadah. Rabbi Lamm then relates the absence of Moshe's name from the Haggadah to the approach that only God was responsible for the Egyptian exodus, in contrast with the Babylonian exodus, which was initiated by the people. He explains that Moshe's greatness was "as Moses the Teacher of Torah," but "in the national political liberation from Egypt, only God is the Redeemer."
  
3. A third take on this explains that the Haggadah (at least, Maggid) is mainly an expansion on the verses from Deuteronomy that accompanied the bringing of bikkurim, first fruits (Zot HaTorah, Parshat Bo). That text is about emphasizing our gratefulness for everything that God gives us, and proclaiming that everything that we "have" is truly God's. It makes sense, then, for it to emphasize only God's role in the exodus. This perspective of the text in bringing bikkurim may also be related to the theme of "bechorot," firstborns, in the exodus.

## Continued

Exodus 4:22, God says that “Israel is my firstborn,” and after God kills all Egyptian firstborns, one of the commandments that Moshe and Aharon are told is the commandment to “sanctify for me every firstborn” (13:2), as a way to remember the exodus. Here, too, the first fruits are brought for God, in order to remember the fact that God redeemed us from Egypt, and not anyone else.

The second group says that Moshe himself is responsible for the absence of his name from the Haggadah. Some say that Moshe requested it, because he was so humble (Chofetz Chaim); others say it was a punishment because he did not want to redeem people at the burning bush (or, that this reluctance can be seen as his request to not be featured in the Haggadah), and one interesting opinion says that, on the first Pesach in the desert, the commandment to tell over the story of Egypt to one’s children was mainly carried out by Moshe, whose children had been in Midian, in contrast with the other children, who had been themselves redeemed. Moshe, being humble or speaking in the first person, omitted his own name, and future retellings were modeled after his (Sedei Yitzchak).

The final group states that Moshe’s name is omitted because the goal of the Haggadah does not fully overlap with the message of Exodus. That is, while Exodus mentions Moshe frequently, the Haggadah is trying to do something else:

4. One opinion that falls under this approach says that Moshe was mainly responsible for the physical redemption, that is, approaching Pharaoh, gathering everyone together, leading the way, and being the “go-between” in many ways. However, God was responsible for the spiritual redemption, which was fulfilled by the miracles of the plagues, at the giving of the Torah, and so on. On Pesach, we are celebrating primarily the spiritual redemption, since (in contrast to Dayenu, perhaps)

## Continued

that is what is most meaningful to us and that is what we need to learn from for generations to come. On Pesach, we are celebrating primarily the spiritual redemption, since (in contrast to Dayenu, perhaps) that is what is most meaningful to us and that is what we need to learn from for generations to come. As a result, the Haggadah discusses God's role, and not Moshe's. (Keli Chemda).

5. Last, one opinion states that the rabbis, when putting together or formalizing the Haggadah, understood that it would be read by many people in many different places, often in exile. While God is accessible from anywhere, Moshe is not, and many people or communities may feel that they do not have access to a strong leader at all, let alone one of the caliber of Moshe. The message that the Haggadah sends, then, is that ultimately it is God who carries out the redemption, and even those who do not feel they have a strong leader can still have hope. (Quoted in HaSeder Ha'aruch, ch.129)

This year, I am finding the last two explanations the most compelling. It is hard to feel disconnected from Jewish community on Shabbat, let alone on Pesach, when we celebrate national redemption. This year, when we sing "next year in Jerusalem," I'm sure many will think wistfully of a time when they were able to travel at all, let alone to Jerusalem, and when we open our doors to call "All who are hungry may come and eat," many will think of the irony that even our families are not invited to the Seder. Yet these approaches emphasize that the connection to God, to the spiritual, and to hope still remains. L'shana haba'ah b'yerushalayim!

# Plague of the Frogs: The Morning Of.... By Peter Brown



# The Jewish People and Not Eating Chametz

By Daniel Jubas

There are a lot of peculiar parts of the Exodus story and Pesach nights. We have fire burning hail, seas getting split, frogs here there and everywhere and the list can go on. One of the more subtly bizarre elements in my opinion is the radical reinterpretation of Chametz from its natural symbol as one of the more delicious classifications of food to what seems to be a major villain. How did that happen? What, if anything, makes chametz so evil? Who let the gluten-free people push their agenda on the rest of us?

This is a question which has been discussed by many. Some such as the Sefer Hachinuch take a historical perspective on chametz saying that we eat the chametz in order to remember “the miracles that were done for us in the exodus from Egypt, as is written ‘ . . .we should remember that which occurred to us with this matter’ - that as a result of the haste of the exodus, we baked the dough [into] matsah.” Others have a more metaphorical understanding of the chametz, saying that leavened bread is a symbol of arrogance or haughtiness. It is not just relating to Pesach that we see some dislike of chametz, but in the context of most Korbanot as well there is a prohibition of using it as well, suggesting a broader reason than just the particulars of remembering the Exodus for disliking chametz. And there are still others, such as the Rambam, who associate chametz with idol worship.

One facet of chametz that I found interesting with the prohibition of chametz, is its severity. Eating chametz on Pesach has the punishment of karet (literally being cut off), a form of spiritual excommunication. That is a really strong punishment for something which most of the year we are expected to eat on Shabbat and whose eating involves like six brachot. .

## Continued

To put it differently, a Jew could literally round up all of the Jews, bring them to Egypt, enslave them and still not receive karet. You would still be more a part of the Jewish people than if you eat chametz on Pesach (at least according to some interpretations). But, while it seems a bit odd, looking back at the text of the exodus story I think that chametz might actually have the most natural connection.

The story of the plagues is a bit interesting in that it really does not feature the Jews. Plague after plague are sent with a stated purpose of having the Egyptians “Know that I am Hashem” and it is not all that clear what the Jews, tucked away safely in Goshen, have to do directly with this. Extensively recording this seems uncharacteristic in a book which otherwise really focuses on the Jewish people. G-d also says that the Jews will learn about him as well, but that could be accomplished with the splitting of the sea, after which “[the people] had faith in the LORD and His servant Moses.(14:31)” So what is going on here?

While the Jews are not directly associated with the strong majority of plagues, the plagues do indirectly affect the Jews. Many of the plagues highlight a differentiation being made between the Jews and Egyptians. For example, “But the LORD will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of the Egyptians, so that nothing shall die of all that belongs to the Israelites.(9:4).”

Finally we get to Makkat Bechorot - the killing of the first born - and the Jews return to the focus of the Torah. This plague seems to serve as the ultimate differentiation between Jews and Egyptians.

Interestingly, G-d at first says, I am going to kill all of the Egyptian first born, but none of the Jewish first borns (11:5-7). However, later on, G-d tells Mosheh to relay that everyone needs to partake in an interesting meal consisting of unleavened bread and the Paschal Lamb and smear its blood on their doorposts in order to be saved. This seems like a bit of an incongruity. However, perhaps we can resolve this by saying that only the houses in which people were eating matzah were defined as Jewish and therefore saved from the final plague

## Continued

Rashi notes in his commentary on the plague of darkness that only some fraction of the Jews residing in Egypt actually left with the Exodus. That idea might be at play here. There is a differentiation being made, but instead of passively benefiting from the differentiation G-d makes, now it is the people making that differentiation for themselves. When each household would decide to eat the matzah and korban pesach and spread the blood, they would be declaring to G-d that their house was one belonging to Bnei Yisrael.

It is immediately following the description of this meal that the Torah goes into a discussion of the prohibition of eating chametz on passover - where it tells us that those who eat it are cut off from the people. I think that this juxtaposition is quite powerful. The eating of the matzah (as well as the Pesach - another issur karet if one refrains) took place at the defining moment of the Jews as a people. It was when the Jews were given the chance to identify as Jews and seized that opportunity to put their lot in with Hashem.

There were two weeks from the time this announcement was made until the meal and plague actually came. While the Jews certainly left in a haste - something worth commemorating - the original matzah does not seem to have been made due to a lack of time. Leavening bread takes 18 minutes. The decision to not eat chametz and to opt-in to this matzah extends beyond practicality. It is the symbol of specifically being different.

This still doesn't really explain why chametz in particular. I think this relates to an idea from Rav Yoel Bin Nun. There is an interesting phenomenon that for the 49 days of the omer, an unleavened grain offering was brought in the temple. However, at the culmination of this counting, on Shavuot - when we received the torah - we offer two loaves of bread. The unleavened bread represents a beginning, when we first became a nation at all. The bread symbolizes reaching fulfillment as a nation through the receiving of the Torah. So when we are eating our matzah and refraining from chametz maybe we can remember that original unleavened bread at the birth of the Jewish nation and have in mind a reaffirming of our place within it

# MEET THE FROGS BEHIND THE PLAGUE: An Exclusive Look By Peter Brown



# A New Concept of Freedom

By Neti Linzer

Pesach is a celebration of freedom, but what does it mean to be free? The Mishna in Pirkei Avos provides an unexpected definition of freedom: אין לך בן חורין אלא מי שעוסק בתלמוד תורה, meaning, there is no truly free person except one engaged in Torah study. Their source is the verse הלחת מעשה ה' הלחת meaning that "the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved the tablets." The sages say, do not read חרות as charut meaning 'engraved' but rather as cheirut meaning 'free'-this then shows that our freedom is inextricably linked to Torah study. What do the sages mean when they tell us that Torah study is true freedom? The word cheirut, meaning freedom, does not appear anywhere in Tanakh. Instead, the word חפשי is used in the context of freeing slaves, while דרור is used in the context of the Jubilee year to say that all loans and slaves go free then. On Pesach, however, we refer to our freedom using the word with the word 'חרות,' calling the holiday זמן חרותנו, and thanking Hashem for taking us מעבדות לחרות (from slavery to freedom).

Why do the sages come up with a new word for 'freedom,' and, more specifically, why do they use a word that means engraved? Rabbi Jonathan Sacks explains that there were two methods of writing used in ancient times--parchment and ink, or engraving--that can be thought of as a metaphor for two forms of law. In the former, the ink is imposed on the parchment, but remains external to it, and can always be rubbed off. This corresponds to laws which we follow from fear of punishment, but which we do not endorse intellectually. When given the opportunity, and assured that there would be no consequences, we would violate these laws. Such a law is a limitation on freedom.

But when words are engraved onto stone, then the words and the stone become one and the same; the words cannot be easily removed. This technique corresponds to laws that we keep not because we feel forced to, but because we have learned the laws, we have understood them, we have internalized them, we have chosen to make them a part of who we are. We do not need to be coerced to follow these laws, we need only be educated so that we can appreciate them, and properly integrate them into our lives. The word חפשי is used in the context of the freeing of slaves--it means a freedom from any external impositions, from laws that constrain us like ink on parchment. But the sages coined a new word for freedom; “read not charut, engraved, but cheirut, freedom, for the only person who is truly free is one who occupies himself with Torah study.” On Pesach we celebrate not only our physical freedom, from the yoke of Egypt, but also our spiritual freedom, our newfound ability to live our lives in a deeply meaningful way. As God says through the prophet Yirmiyahu, “I will put My Teaching into their inmost being and inscribe it upon their hearts. Then I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” The very first commandment that the Jewish people receive, right before their exodus from Egypt is “החודש הזה לכם ראש חדשים” meaning, “this month will be for you the first month.” The Seforno explains then when God says “this month will be for you” it is meant literally-for the first time the time will truly belong to Bnei Yisrael. When they were slaves to Pharaoh their time was not their own; this month, Nissan, is the ‘first month,’ because it is the first time that they will be able to make the time their own. Now they can take ownership over their lives, can choose to make the Torah a part of their identity, and can engrave the words of God on their heart.

# Viewing Redemption with your own eyes

By Shira Kahn

The Seder night stands out as a monumental event in the Jewish life cycle. But with so much content embedded into one night it can be easy to forget - what exactly are we hoping to achieve on this night? The Mishna in Pesachim 116 gives one answer that serves as a focal point:.... In every generation a person is obligated to see himself as though he had left Egypt...

The obligation is stated very clearly. To fulfill the purpose of the Seder, we must imagine ourselves from the point of view of a redeemed slave leaving Egypt. But what does that mean to us today when, on the one hand, we we're not fortunate enough to see the greatness of that redemption, and on the other hand, we have never experienced the immediate burden of slavery?

To give one answer to this question I would like to take a deeper look into the discussion in the Talmud that follows this statement. The Talmud focuses on an interesting yet odd discussion regarding the obligation of a blind person to recite the Haggadah, concluding- at first- that a blind person is exempt from this obligation the same way they are exempt from the ruling of *בן סורר ומורה*, the wayward son.

While this conclusion is later refuted by pointing to obvious differences between these two scenarios, the Talmud first challenges this conclusion by bringing the example of two blind sages- Rav Sheshet and Rav Yosef- who viewed themselves as obligated and recited the Haggadah for themselves and their household.

Why does the Talmud even discuss the obligation of a blind person if there is already such a simple and definitive answer? I believe the Talmud is trying to explore the obligation for each person to "see himself". What does this requirement mean?

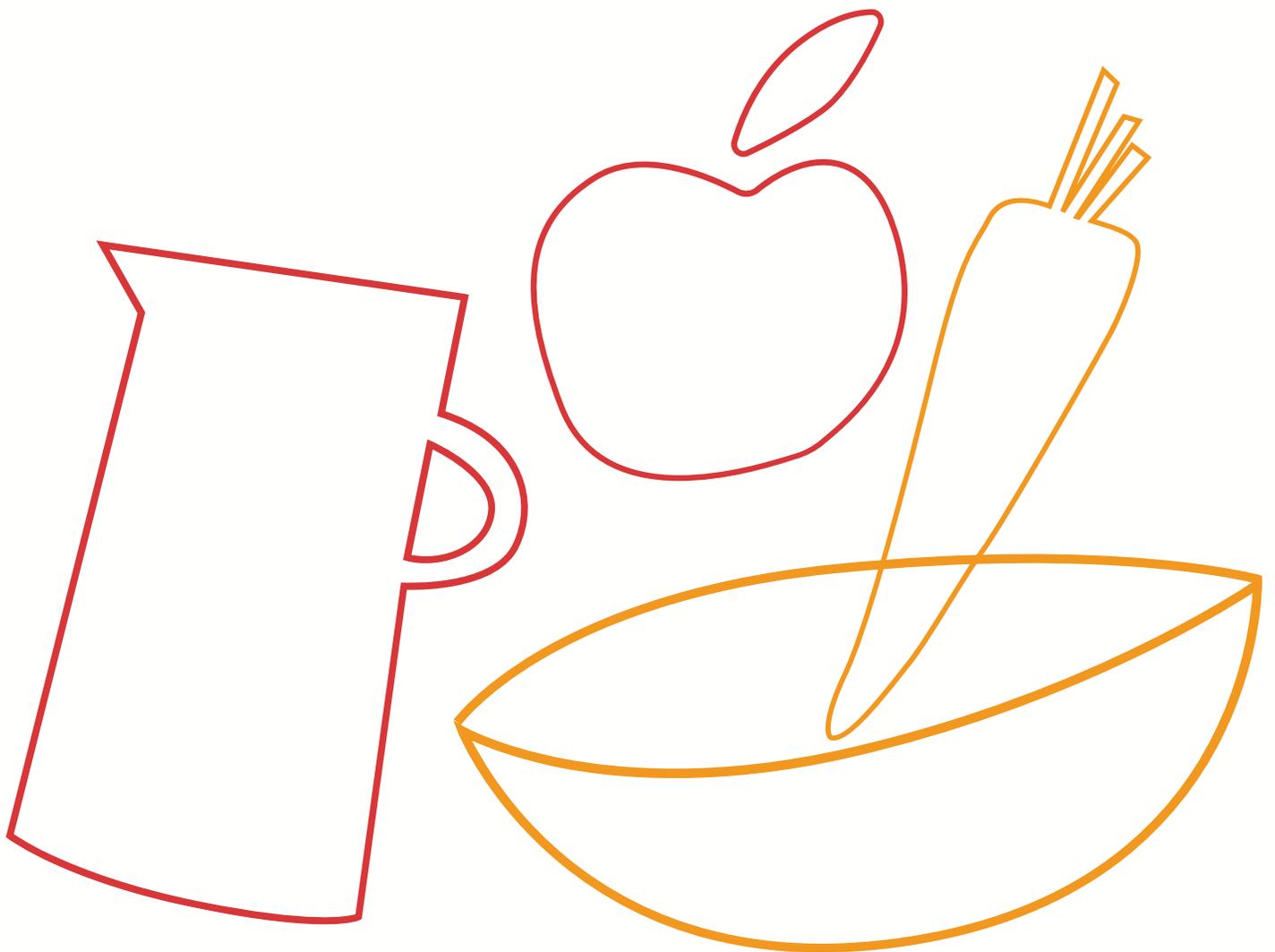
## Continued

Can we possibly view ourselves in a state of redemption when we were never physically enslaved? The reference of the Talmud to the two blind sages gives insight into this meaning. Sight here is clearly not a visual term but rather a state of mind. What we can learn from the obligation and commitment of the blind sages is that actual visual sight can often create an obstacle to the ability to see beyond. The story of Rav sheshet in Brachot 58a, where as a blind person he manages to see the reality far better than any seeing person, is a clear example of that. Our reliance on visual sight often blocks us from seeing beyond, from being sensitive to nuances, from questioning beyond our first impressions. Therefore, when we discuss the obligation to see ourselves as redeemed, understanding the experience of the blind is our best chance of fulfilling this obligation. Can we let go of the obvious visuals? Can we establish a sensitive ear and mind? If we manage to see beyond perhaps we will experience redemption as well.

The celebration of Pesach this year takes place in a reality that would be hard to imagine just a few weeks ago. Suddenly, the commandment to the Israelites in Egypt to remain locked in their homes on the night of the Seder, for the fear of a plague outside, feels somewhat familiar. Our everyday experiences that we were so familiar with--a walk outside, seeing a friend, going to class, etc--all feel like a distant reality that we no longer take for granted. We are forced to look at reality through a very different lense than we were used to, where each small action carries waves beyond their physical appearance. Hopefully, soon enough G-d will send health and redemption to the world, curing its illnesses, and we can return to a somewhat normal reality. But perhaps this experience can serve as a reminder that the "normal" reality contains for more than we usually see in it. May the sight of Rev Sheshet and Rav Yosef serve as a model and example for us to experience life beyond the obvious appearances, and through that sensitivity may we merit to experience freedom and redemption.

# A taste from Home.

PASSOVER RECIPES FOR ALL YEAR  
ROUND



# Chocolate Souffle

RECIPE FROM SHIRA  
KAHN

**Preheat oven to 350f.**

## **Ingredients:**

**200 Gram Bittersweet chocolate**

**1/2 c. oil**

**1 tbsp instant coffee melted in a little hot water**

**5 tbsp potato starch**

**3 tbsp cocoa powder**

**1 1/2 cups sugar**

**5 eggs**

**Optional: more chocolate chips**

## **Instructions:**

**In small pot on fire, melt first three ingredients**

**On small fire, add while mixing potato starch, cocoa powder, and sugar**

**Turn off fire and add beaten eggs one by one, while mixing (quickly, so you don't get a scrambled egg)**

**Pour batter into individual tins, and top with a few chocolate chips.**

**Bake for approximately 15-20 minutes (till thin crust formed but still soft inside)**

# Lemon Curd

A RECIPE FROM NETI LINZER

## Ingredients:

1 cup lemon juice

1 cup sugar

2 eggs

2 egg yolks

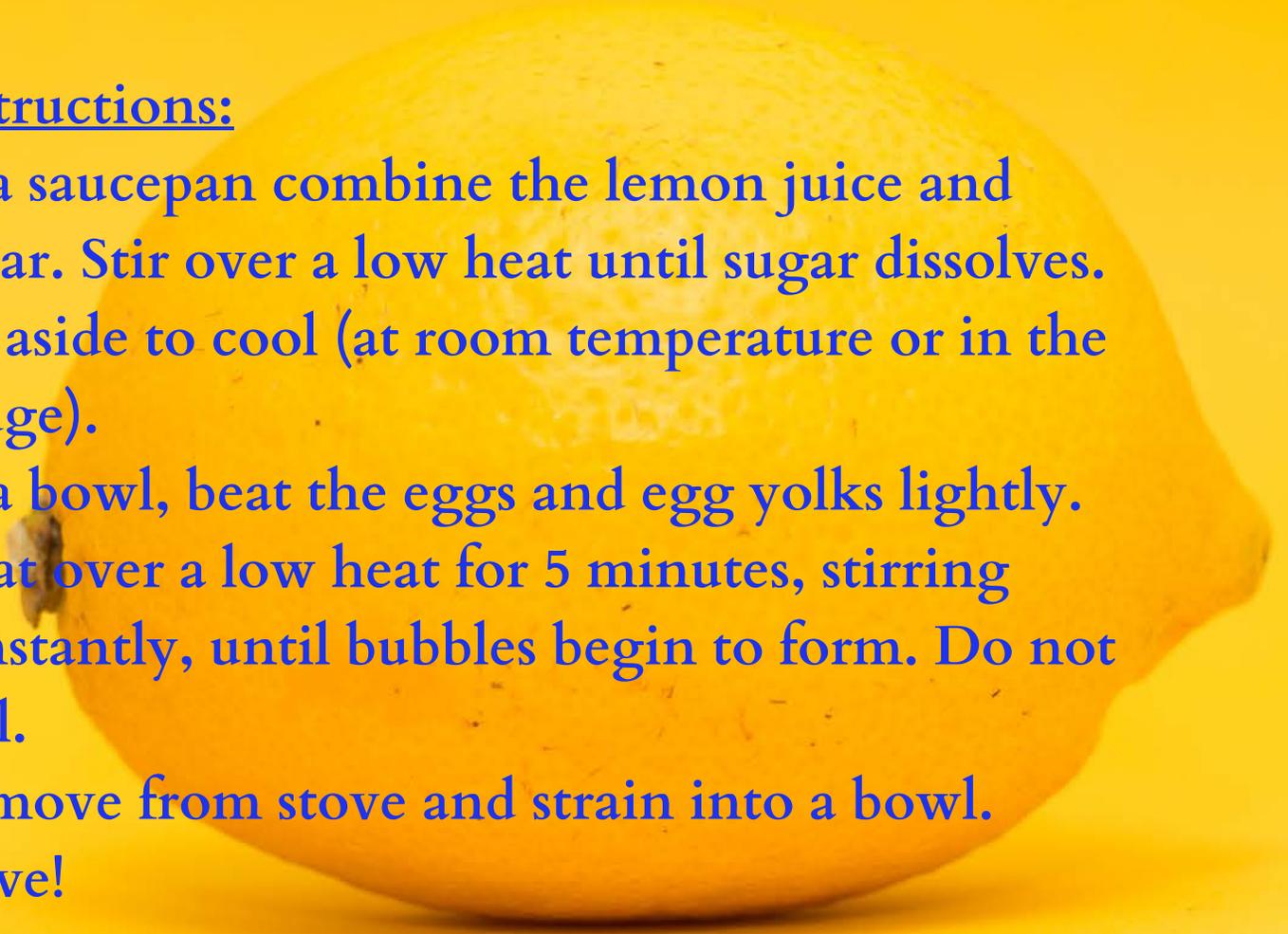
## Instructions:

In a saucepan combine the lemon juice and sugar. Stir over a low heat until sugar dissolves. Set aside to cool (at room temperature or in the fridge).

In a bowl, beat the eggs and egg yolks lightly. Heat over a low heat for 5 minutes, stirring constantly, until bubbles begin to form. Do not boil.

Remove from stove and strain into a bowl.

Serve!



# Walnut Cake with Mocha Frosting

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A recipe from Hillel Koslowe

8 eggs, separated  
1 1/2 cups sugar  
1/2 cup potato starch  
1/2 cup cake meal  
1/2 cup water  
juice of 1/2 a lemon  
1/2 cup ground walnuts

Beat yolks, add sugar, potato starch, cake meal, water, and lemon juice. In a separate bowl, beat egg whites. Fold egg yolk mixture into egg white mixture, along with walnuts. Pour into greased tube pan. Bake in preheated 350 degree oven for 1 hour.

The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of walnuts and walnuts on a rustic wooden surface. A large, textured walnut is the central focus, with several green walnut leaves scattered around it. The lighting is warm, highlighting the natural colors of the wood and the walnuts.

# CEREAL & MILK

A recipe from Daniel Jubas

## Ingredients:

**Kosher for Peach Cereal  
Milk**

## Instructions:

**Prepare a large cereal bowl on the counter**

**Take out cereal**

**Pour said cereal into bowl.**

**For each cup of dry cereal, add about 0.5 cups of  
milk**

**Add more milk to taste**

**Discard contents of bowl in trash**

# Pesach Brownies

A RECIPE FROM AKIVA GOLDBERGER

## Ingredients:

- 1 cup melted margarine
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 3/4 cup cocoa
- 3/4 cup cake meal
- 1/2 cup ground walnuts

## Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 325
2. Melt margarine
3. Combine ingredients and stir till smooth
4. Bake in an 8 X 8 square pan for 25 minutes



# walnut & chocolate cookies



A RECIPE FROM SARA SACKS

## Ingredients

2 3/4 cups walnut halves  
3 cups confectioners' sugar  
1/2 cup plus 3 tablespoons unsweetened Dutch-process cocoa powder  
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt  
4 large egg whites, at room temperature  
1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract  
A few sea salt flakes to finish

## Instructions:

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Spread the walnut halves on a large rimmed baking sheet and toast in the oven for about 9 minutes, until they are golden and fragrant. Let cool slightly, then transfer the walnut halves to a work surface and coarsely chop them.
2. Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper. In a large bowl, whisk (or combine in an electric mixer on low speed) the confectioner's sugar with the cocoa powder and salt followed by the chopped walnuts.
3. While whisking (or once you change the speed to medium), add the egg whites and vanilla extract and beat just until the batter is moistened (do not overbeat or it will stiffen; we're not trying to whip these egg whites as we would for a meringue)
4. Spoon the batter onto the baking sheets in evenly spaced mounds — I use a just-over-1-tablespoon, or #40 scoop. If you can spare the time, letting them rest at room temperature on their trays for 30 minutes (and up to 60), I find they get a taller dome in the oven, but it's also fine to bake them right away. Bake for 14 to 16 minutes

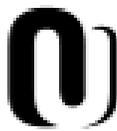


# פסח תש"פ April 2020



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