

Parshat Bo
The Multiple Meaning of Matza
Melton Gesher at Shearith Israel, January 23, 2012
JSI at Akiba Academy, January 24, 2012

- A) Passover Hagada
- 1) "This is the bread of affliction which our forefathers ate in Egypt"
 - a) "In Egypt", and not while or after having left Egypt
 - b) 'Bread of affliction' and not the bread of freedom
 - (I) Devarim chapter 16, verse 3
 - Breishit chapter 15, verse 13
 - Shmot chapter 1, verses 11 – 12
 - Shmot chapter 3, verse 7
 - Shmot chapter 3, verse 17
 - Shmot chapter 4, verse 31
 - 2) "This unleavened bread which we now eat, what does it mean? ... neither had they made any provisions for themselves."
 - a) Eaten after having left Egypt
 - b) Not called the bread of affliction
 - c) Would seem to symbolize freedom or the flight to freedom
 - 3) We have found a contradiction within the hagada
- B) The verses of the Torah
- 1) Shmot chapter 11, verses 4 – 8
 - 2) Shmot chapter 12, verses 1 – 14
 - 3) Shmot chapter 12, verses 15 – 20
 - 4) Shmot chapter 12, verses 21 – 27
 - 5) Shmot chapter 12, verses 28 – 34, 37 – 39
 - 6) Shmot chapter 13, verses 1 – 12
- C) First Level of Meaning - Exegesis
- D) Commentators
- 1) *Masechet Pesachim*, page 36a - "Why does the *Torah* say *Lechem Oni*? - To exclude dough kneaded with wine, oil, or honey."
 - 2) *Masechet Pesachim*, pages 115b-116a - "*Lechem Oni* - ... What is the way of the impoverished (*ani*)? - He fuels the oven and his wife bakes, so here also – he fuels the oven and his wife bakes."
- E) Second Level of Meaning – Religious Philosophy
- 1) Vayikra chapter 25, verse 42
 - 2) Ethics of the Fathers chapter 6, mishna 2 – "Only he who is immersed in Torah is truly free".
 - 3) *Rebbi Yehudah haLevi*, *Kol Sherei Rihal*, "*HaTirdof Na'arut*" -
Temporal slaves are indeed the slaves of slaves,
While only the slave of God is truly free.
Therefore, as every human being searches for his portion,
My soul says – God is my portion.
 - 4) Martin Buber ("*Herut v'Yi'ud*", in *T'uda v'Yi'ud*, volume 1, *haSifria haTzionit*, 5720, page 316) "Freedom is not a matter that can be actualized according to any whim, arbitrarily. Rather, the central meaning of freedom and its very purpose, is the fulfillment of an ideal."
- F) Deeper Philosophical Analysis
- 1) Abraham Joshua Heschel and Yeshayahu Leibowitz
 - a) Freedom can only be found by going beyond the natural in a leap towards the transcendent
 - 2) Rabbi Abraham Isaac HaCohen Kook
 - a) Freedom is to be found inside, by overcoming the outside forces that would enslave the immanent godliness

מזה נשתנה

Fill the cups with wine the second time. The youngest present then asks The Four Questions.

מה Wherefore is this night distinguished from all other nights? Any other night we may eat either leavened or unleavened bread, but on this night only unleavened bread; all other nights we may eat any species of herbs, but this night only bitter herbs; all other nights we do not dip even once, but on this night twice; all other nights we eat and drink either sitting or reclined, but on this night we all of us recline.

MA NISH-TA-NAW HA-LAI-LAW HA-ZEH MEE-KAWL HA-LAY-LOS? SHE-B'CHAWL HA-LAY-LOS AW-NU O-CHI'LEEN CHAW-MAVITZ U-MA-TZAW, HA-LAI-LAW HA-ZEH KU-LO MA-TZAW. SHE-B'CHAWL HA-LAY-LOS AW-NU O-CHI'LEEN SH'AVR Y'RAV-LOS, HA-LAI-LAW HA-ZEH MAV-ROR, SHE-B'CHAWL HA-LAY-LOS AVN AW-NU MAT-BE-LEEN A-FEE-LU PA-AM E-CHOS, HA-LAI-LAW HA-ZEH SH'TAV F'AW-MEEM. SHE-B'CHAWL HA-LAY-LOS AW-NU O-CHI'LEEN BAYN YO-SH'VEEN U-VAVN M'SU-BEEN, HA-LAI-LAW HA-ZEH KU-LAW-NU M'SU-BEEN.

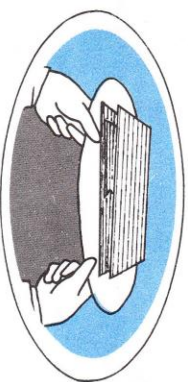
עצרתם דהייתם

When the dish is replaced on the table, the company responds:

עברים Because we were slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Eternal, our God, brought us forth thence with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. And if the Most Holy, blessed be He, had not brought forth our ancestors

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות: שפבל הלילות אנו אוכלין תבוא ומצות. הלילה הזה כלו מצות: שפבל הלילות אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות הלילה הזה קמח: שפבלו אפילו פנים אמת. הלילה הזה שתי פעמים: שפבל הלילות אנו אוכלין בון וישבון וירק מקפין. הלילה הזה פלנו מקפין:

עברים היינו לפניה ממצרים. ויציאתנו יי אלהינו משם בך תצא וברצת מצוה. ואילו לא הוציא מקדוש ברוך הוא את-



He then decorates the dish containing the matzahs, and all at the table take hold thereof and say:

מה This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt; let all those who are hungry, enter and eat thereof; and all who are in distress, come and celebrate the Passover. At present we celebrate it here, but next year we hope to celebrate it in the land of Israel. This year we are servants here, but next year we hope to be freemen in the land of Israel.

מה לחמ עניא די אכלין אפחנתא פארקא דמצותים. פלי-דקפין ייתי ויכל. פלי-דקפין ייתי וינסת. השתא הנה. לשנה תבא פארקא דישאאל. השתא עברי. לשנה תבאנה בני דורין:

HAW LACH-MAW AN-YAV DEF-A-CHAW-LU A-VAW-HAW-SAW-NAW B'AR-AW D'MITZ-RAY-YIM. KAWL DICH-FEEN YAY-SAY V'VAY-CHUL. KAWL DITZ-RECH VAY-SAY V'YIF-SACH. HA-SHA-TAW HAW-CHAV L'SHAW-NAW HA-BAW-AW B'AR-AW D'YIS-RAY-AYL. HA-SHA-TAW AV-DAY, L'SHAW-NAW HA-BAW-AW B'NAV CHO-REEN.



