

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-IOS? SHE-B'CHAWL HA-LAY-IOS AW-NU O-CHI'LEEN CHAW-MAVITZ U-MA-TZAW, HA-LA-LAW HA-ZEH KU-I O MA-TZAW. SHE-B'CHAWL HA-LAY-IOS AW-NU O-CHI'LEEN SH AVR Y'RAW-IOS, HA-LA-LAW HA-ZEH MAV-ROR. SHE-B'CHAWL HA-LAY-IOS AVN AW-NU MAV-BEE-LEEN A-FEE-IU PA-AM E-CHOS, HA-LA-LAW HA-ZEH SH TAV F'AW-MEEM. SHE-B'CHAWL HA-LAY-IOS AW-NU O-CHI'LEEN BAYN YO-SH YEEN U-VAAYN M'SU-BEEN, HA-LA-LAW HA-ZEH KU-LAW-NU M'SU-BEEN.

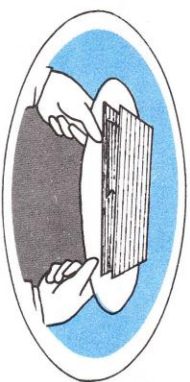
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When the dish is replaced on the table, the company responds:

עבדים 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 תמוז ומצות. הלילה הזה כלו מצות: שפבל הלילות אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות הלילה הזה אנו: שפבל הלילות אין אנו מטבלין אפילו פעם אחת. הלילה הזה שאנו פעמים: שפבל הלילות אנו אוכלין פון וישבון הלילות אנו הלילה הזה פלנו ופרו מקבלין:

עבדים היינו לפניה ממצרים. ויוציאנו יי אליהינו ממש פניו תוקפו וברוצו ומצוה. ואילו לא הוציא מן השרץ פרוק הוא ארד



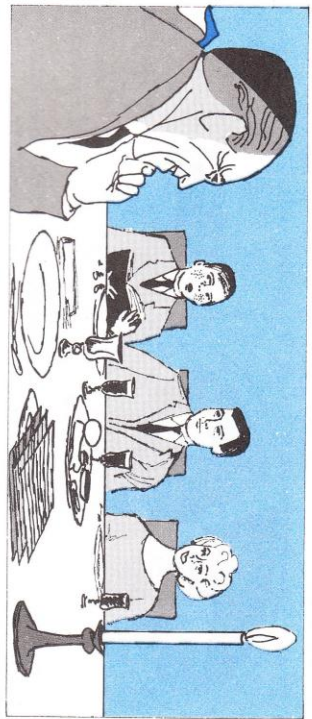
מצות

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 לחמא עניא די אכלין אפוקתא פארקא דמצותים. פלי דפכין יימי תבל. פלי דפוקין יימי תפסת. השתא הנה לשתא תבארה פארקא דישאאל. השתא תבארה תבארה פני חורין:

HAW LACH-MAW AN-YAW DEE-A-CHAW-IU A-VAW-HAW-SAW-NAW B'AR-AW D'MITZ-RAW-YIM. KAWL DICH-FEEN YAY-SAY V'VAY-CHUL. KAWL DITZ-FEECH VAY-SAY V'YIF-SACH. HA-SHA-TAW HAW-CHAW I SHAW-NAW HA-BAW-AW B'AR-AW D'YIS-RAW-AYL. HA-SHA-TAW AV-DAY, L SHAW-NAW HA-BAW-AW B'NAV CHO-REEN.



our ancestors in Egypt, as it is said, "They embittered their lives with hard bondage, in mortar and brick, and in all manner of labour in the field. All their labour was imposed upon them with rigour."

בכל In every generation each individual is bound to regard himself as if he had gone personally forth from Egypt, as it is said, "And thou shalt relate to thy son on that day saying, this is on account of what the Eternal did for me, when I went forth from Egypt." Thus it was not our ancestors alone, whom the Most Holy, blessed be He, then redeemed but us also did He redeem with them, as it is said, and He brought us forth from thence, in order to bring us in, that He might give us the land which He swore unto our ancestors.

אֲדַמְתִּי אֲבוֹתַי בְּמִצְרַיִם. שְׂאֵמֶנְךָ יִמְרְרוּ אֶת-חַיֵּיהֶם בַּעֲבֹדַת קִשָּׁה בְּחֹמֶר וּבְלִבְנֵים וּבְכָל-עֲבֹדָה פְּשִׁיחָה אֶת פְּלִעְבֻּרָתָם אֲשֶׁר-עָבְדוּ בָהֶם בְּמִצְרַיִם:

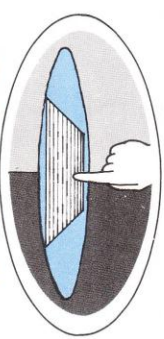
בְּכָל-דּוֹר וָדוֹר תִּקַּב אֶת־לִבְּאֵת אֲדַמְעֵינֵנו בְּאֵלֶיךָ הוּא יֵבֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם. שְׂאֵמֶנְךָ וְדַמְדָּמֶךָ יִבְנֶנּוּ בַיּוֹם הַהוּא לֶחֶמֶת מִמִּצְרַיִם: לֹא עָשִׂיהָ יי לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם: לֹא אֲדַמְעֵינֵיךָ בִּלְבָד וְעַל הַקְּדוּשָׁה בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הוּא. אֵלֶּכָּה אִתְּךָ וְעַל עַמְּךָ: שְׂאֵמֶנְךָ וְאֹתֵנִי וְעַל קִשְׁיֵנוּ וְעַל אֲדַמְעֵינוּ וְעַל חַיֵּינוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁפַּע לְאַבְרָהָם:

Elevate the cup of wine and say:

לפיר Therefore, we are bound to thank, praise, laud, glorify, extol, honour, bless, exalt, and reverence Him who performed for our fathers, and for us all these miracles. He brought us from slavery to freedom; from sorrow to joy; from mourning to festivity, and from servitude to redemption. Let us therefore sing a new song in his presence. Hallelujah!

"Ye shall say, it is a sacrifice of the Passover unto the Lord, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and spared our houses, and the people bowed themselves and worshipped."

וְאִמְרֻתְכֶם זְבַח-פֶּסַח הוּא לַיהוָה אֲשֶׁר פָּסַח עַל-בְּנֵי בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמוֹצָאֵם מִמִּצְרַיִם וְאֶת־בְּתוּרֵיהֶם הֲצִייל וַיִּקַּח הָעָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ:



Show the marzachs to the assembly:

מצה This Unleavened Bread which we now eat, what does it mean? It is eaten because the dough of our ancestors had not time to become leavened, before the supreme King of kings, the Most Holy, blessed be He! revealed Himself unto them, and redeemed them; as it is said, "They baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they had brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they made any provision for themselves."

מִצֵּה הִיא שְׂאֵמֶנִי אוֹכְלִים עַל שׂוֹם מוֹת. עַל שׂוֹם שְׂלֵא הַסִּפְיָם בְּצִנְקָם עַל אֲבוֹתַי וְעַל חַיֵּיהֶם עַד שֶׁנִּבְרָא עֲלֵיהֶם מִלְּחָה מִלְּחָה הַקְּדוּשָׁה הוּא וְהָאֵלֶּם שְׂאֵמֶנְךָ וְיֵאֵפוּ אֶת־הַבֶּצֶק אֲשֶׁר הוֹצִיאָה מִמִּצְרַיִם מִצָּאוֹת פִּי לֹא חָמוּץ פְּרִיגְרוּשׁוֹ מִמִּצְרַיִם וְלֹא רָקְלוּ לְדַהְמָתָם וְנִם-צִרְחָה לֹא עָשִׂה קִדְּוָם:



Show the bitter herbs to the assembly:

מרר This bitter herb which we eat, what does it mean? It is eaten because the Egyptians embittered the lives of

מִרְרָה הִיא שְׂאֵמֶנִי אוֹכְלִים עַל שׂוֹם מוֹת. עַל שׂוֹם שְׂמִרְרוֹת הַמִּצְרַיִם קִדְּוָם: