

Hagaddah Insights



*Rabbi Efrem Goldberg
Boca Raton Synagogue
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Connection between freedom and sharing with others

1. *Hegyonei Halacha Hagaddah*
R' Yitzchak Mirsky

כל דכפין ייתי ויכל, כל דצריך ייתי ויפסח. שאלו רבים, וכי זו השעה היפה להזמין אורחים לסעודה, כשבעל הבית כבר יושב בביתו, יפה היה להכריז כך ברבים, בשוק או בבית הכנסת, ולא בביתו? ביאר ר' יעקב מאיר פאדווע⁴⁶ שהיה אב"ד בבריסק, שאין אמירה זו מכוונת לאורחים ביחוד. אלא כיון שבליל פסח מצוה להרבות בסימני חירות, אמירה זו לדעתו מנימוסי חירות היא עכת"ד. והוא על דרך מה שכתב הריטב"א⁴⁷ במשמעות הא לחמא עניא: "שאנו אומרים... במצרים היה לנו לחם צר ומים לחץ, במידה במשקל ובמשורה, ועתה יש לנו אכול ושבע והותר לחם ויין ודרך חירות". ונראה שדבר זה היה מכריז בעל הבית⁴⁸ בפני בני ביתו⁴⁹, ואומר שיש לו לסעודתו די והותר, ויכול גם להזמין אחרים לסעודתו, והוא מנהג חירות.

שם) כשאלה מה ניתוסף במצות סיפור יציאת מצרים שבליל חמישה עשר שאינו נוהג בכל יום, ומהו החילוק ביניהם.

ומרגלא בפומי דהגר"ח זצ"ל ששתי מצוות אלו חלוקים בשלושה דברים. (א) מצות זכירת יציאת מצרים היא לומר בקצרה שיצאנו ממצרים ואילו מצות סיפור יציאת מצרים היא לספר בארוכה את כל הנסים שאירעו לאבותינו במצרים. (ב) מצות זכירת יציאת מצרים היא בינו לבין עצמו ואילו מצות סיפור יציאת מצרים מצוה היא לספר לבנו ולאחרים, מדין והגדת לבנך. (ג) מצות זכירת יציאת מצרים מצוה היא לקבל עליו מלכות שמים ע"י זה שמזכיר יציאת מצרים, והוא חלק ממצות קריאת שמע (כמו שביארנו לעיל אות כ"ו), ואילו מצות סיפור יציאת מצרים היא מצוה בפני עצמה לספר ביציאת מצרים.

Difference between remembering exodus and telling story of exodus



2. *Siach Ha'Grid*
Rabbi
Soloveitchik



כ"ז) בענין מצות זכירת וסיפור יציאת מצרים. ישנן שתי מצוות בענין יציאת מצרים, מצות זכירת יציאת מצרים הנוהגת בכל יום, ומצות סיפור יציאת מצרים הנוהגת בליל חמישה עשר בניסן כמצוה בפני עצמה. וכבר דנו האחרונים (מנחת חינוך מצוה כ"א ובמראה מקומות שהביא

③ ונראה להוסיף בזה דבמצות סיפור יציאת מצרים נכלל גם דצריכים להלל ולהודות לקב"ה על זה שהוציאנו ממצרים, ולכן אנו קורים הלל בליל הסדר, אך מצות זכירת יציאת מצרים היא רק הזכירה עצמה. וראי' לזה מדברי הר"ן במגילה (סוף פרק שני) שכתב דלראב"ע הסוכר דהפסח נאכל עד חצות, צריך לקרוא את ההלל קודם חצות. הרי להדיא דהלל נכלל במצות סיפור יציאת מצרים והוא חלק ממנה, ואפשר לקרותה רק בזמן שיוצא ידי חובת מצות סיפור. ועוד יש להביא ראי' לזה, דהנה דרשין בפסחים (דף ל"ו) דמצה היא לחם שעונין עליו דברים הרבה, וכתב רש"י (ד"ה שעונין) דדברים הרבה אלו הם הלל והגדה. הרי דסוכר רש"י שצריך לקרות את ההלל על המצה, ומזה מוכח דהלל הוא חלק מההגדה וסיפור יציאת מצרים, דאם מצותה היא ככל קריאת הלל דעלמא א"כ למה צריך לקרות את ההלל על המצה.

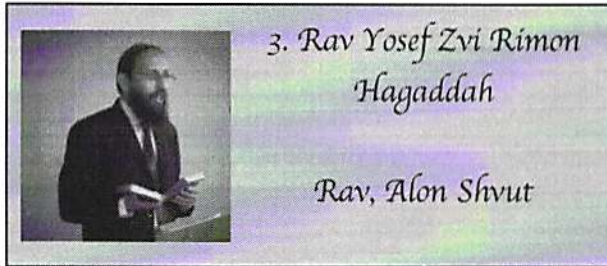
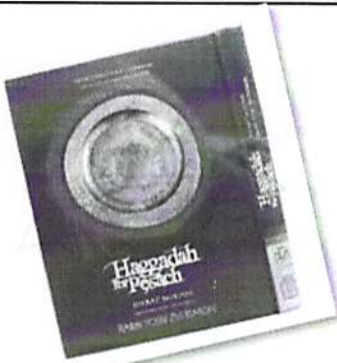
ובאמת הדברים מפורשים בספר המצוות להרמב"ם (מצוה קנ"ז) וז"ל: וכל מי שיוסיף במאמר ויאריך הדברים בהגדלת מה שעשו לנו המצרים מעול וחמס ואיך לקח ה' נקמתנו מהם ולהודות לו יתעלה על כל טוב שגמלנו יהי יותר טוב וכו' עכ"ל. וכן מפורש בספר החינוך (מצוה כ"א) וז"ל: לספר בענין יציאת מצרים בליל ט"ו בניסן כל אחד כפי צחות לשונו ולהלל ולשבח השם יתברך על כל הנסים שעשה לנו שם עכ"ל.

ובאמת מה שחז"ל קורים את סיפור יציאת מצרים הגדה (פסחים דף קט"ו): ואין עוקרין את השלחן אלא לפני מי שאומר הגדה. דף קט"ז: מאן דאמר אגדתא

כי רב יוסף) הוא משום דהגדה הוא לשון של שבח והודאה, כמו (דברים כ"ו, ג') הגדתי היום לה' אלוקיך, שתרגם בתרגום ירושלמי אודינן ושבחינן יומא הדין (בתרגום יונתן אודינן יומא דין), וכבר העיר בזה האבודרהם בסדר ההגדה. והיינו משום דהלל והודאה הם חלק ממצות סיפור יציאת מצרים. משא"כ במצות זכירת יציאת מצרים לא מצינו שתהא הלל והודאה חלק ממצוה זו.

אלא דעיין בברכות (דף י"ד) דאיכא

מ"ד הסוכר דאף דמצות זכירת יציאת מצרים נוהגת כלילה אבל אין אומרים פרשת ציצית כלילה, כיון דציצית אינה נוהגת כלילה. וכדי לקיים את מצות זכירת יציאת מצרים צריך לומר, מודים אנחנו לך ה' אלוקינו שהוצאתנו מארץ מצרים ופדיתנו מבית עבדים ועשית לנו נסים וגבורות על הים ושרנו לך. ומבואר בגמרא שצריך לומר מודים אנחנו לך, והיינו הודאה, הרי דגם במצות זכירת יציאת מצרים צריכים להודות על יציאת מצרים, ובאמת שווים כזה מצוות סיפור יציאת מצרים ומצות זכירת יציאת מצרים, והדבר צריך תלמוד.



3. Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon
Hagaddah

Rav, Alon Shvut

בְּרַחֵם
הַמָּקוֹם, בְּרוּךְ הוּא. בְּרוּךְ שָׁנַתָּן תּוֹרָה
לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל. בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

Blessed is God, blessed be He! Blessed is He who gave the Torah to His people Israel, blessed be He!

The Source of the Haggadah

This section is found between that of "Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah" and that of "the Four Sons." It only appears in some of the ancient *haggadot*, such as that of Rav Amram Gaon. It is possible that

this section is an introduction to the Four Sons (although it does not appear in the ancient sources of the Four Sons, such as the *Mechilta*, *Parashat Bo*, *Parashah* 18, and the *Jerusalem Talmud* 10:4), or it might be the concluding section of the previous one.

Food for Thought

The main element of the story – to be thankful!

What is the aim of telling the story of the Exodus from Egypt? Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (*Shiurim LeZecher Abba Mari*, Vol. 1, new edition, p. 14) explains that our primary duty on the *seder* night is to have the story motivate us to thank God:

The duty of remembering does not impose on a person an obligation to recite praise and thanks, whereas the commandment to tell the story obligates one not only to relate the wonders and miracles that God did for us, but also to praise and thank Him, "Therefore, it is our duty to thank, praise, hail, glorify, exalt, honor, bless..." and that is the basis for the obligation of *hallel* on Pesach night.

We begin *maggid* with *Mah Nishtanah*, which

is meant to excite the children – and us as well – **to make a change, and to change ourselves.** Afterwards, we tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt (according to Shmuel's view in the Talmud): "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Lord, our God, took us out from there." We then explain the dimensions of the obligation: who is obligated (everyone, including Torah scholars), how much one must say ("everyone who discusses the Exodus from Egypt at length is praiseworthy"), and we also tell of the Sages who spent the *seder* night together and spoke about the Exodus from Egypt the entire night.

Now, the time has come to thank God: "Blessed is God, blessed be He! Blessed is He who gave the Torah to His people Israel, blessed be He!"

This is the first stage in the structure of the story of the Exodus from Egypt and our expression of thanks. Over the course of the haggadah, this cycle will repeat itself three times, as we will see below (see, the chapter on the structure of the haggadah, p. 28).

There are many dimensions to the redemption. If but one dimension is missing, the redemption is incomplete and this means that we might have to return to exile. Every division, every narrowing spells exile; every encompassing (*hakhilalah*) points to redemption.

Certainly the most dangerous division is that between parents and children. This is the epitome of exile: "Woe to children who have wandered from their Father's table."⁹³ Contrariwise, there can be no more joyous expression of redemption than the "return of the hearts of the parents to the children and the hearts of the children to their parents."⁹⁴

The height of Israel's sanctity is its pedigree, one organic unity that comprises its entire population from its origin throughout the generations. They are all true seed, holy seed, fathers and sons. Woe to whoever would attempt to drive a wedge between the generations. He will not succeed in dividing them but only in forfeiting his soul! The division between parents and children is the essence of exile and dispersion.

Therefore the redemption from Egypt, which is the root of all redemptions—just as the exile of Egypt is the root of all exiles⁹⁵—begins with the bonding of children to their father's house. Just as they arrived in Egypt together—"a man and his household"⁹⁶—so at the time of the departure from Egypt, sons were reunited with fathers. They did not lose the connection to their parents. Every difficult existential question was brought to their parents: "If your child shall ask you tomorrow, 'What is this?'"⁹⁷ With bated breath they will await the response and take in every holy syllable. Even the wicked son defers to his elders, albeit with *hutspah*. The point is, he awaits his father's response. This is the explanation to a conundrum.

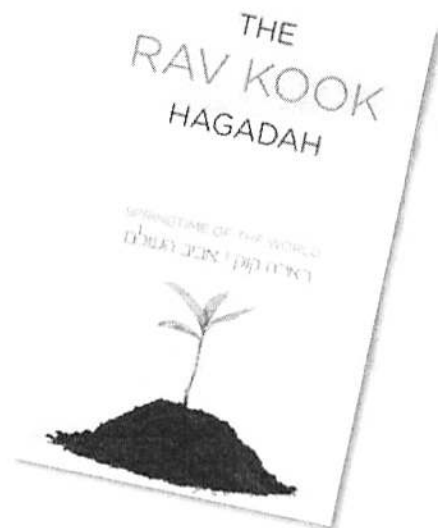
After the Torah states the question of the wicked son—"It will be when you enter the land and your sons will say to you, 'What is this work to you?'"⁹⁸—the Torah continues, "The people bowed."⁹⁹ RaSHI explains that their bowing was an expression of joy at hearing the tiding of the land and that they would have children in Eretz Israel.¹⁰⁰ It is difficult to comprehend how the people could bow in rejoicing at the question of the wicked son. Is the tiding that there will be born to them wicked sons cause for rejoicing? The answer is that despite their impudence, these distant sons still have the decency to pose a question to their elders. They spread out before them their confusion; they seek balm for their ailing souls.¹⁰¹

If in the "footsteps of Messiah" before the appearance of the light of redemption, closed hearts and dim eyes seek to break this filial connection—"a son reviles his father; a daughter rises up against her mother"¹⁰²—boasting that they will destroy the entire order, they do not realize that they are merely "regurgitating" the non-Jewish culture. They are attempting to find favor in the eyes of nations who could care less for them. The more they reject their patrimony, the more the nations will stomp on them. These alienated Jewish children must overcome their emotions and return to their parents "whose honor is compared to the honor of God."¹⁰³

Let them seek Torah and knowledge from the mouths of their elders. The parents too must rise to the occasion. They must be imbued with a divine fire if their words are to penetrate the depths of their children.

(Rabbi Jacob Moses Harlap,
Mei Marom IV [Haggadah shel Pesah], pp. 26-28)

4. Rav Avraham
Yitzchak Kook
1st Chief Rabbi of
Israel





NECHAMA: ON TAXI DRIVERS, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Nechama was fond of recounting stories in which she learned things from unexpected sources. These stories often took place in buses or taxis. With regard to the verse "והגדת לבנך", "And you shall teach it to your child...", Nechama recounted the following conversation that she had with a taxi driver as she was grading papers in the back of the taxi:

DRIVER: You are a teacher ("morah"), aren't you? Once upon a time, a teacher was called a "melamed." What is the difference between the two?

NECHAMA: Nothing, they are the same.

DRIVER: No, there is a difference. I'll show you. Is whiskey good for you?

NECHAMA: No.

DRIVER: Do you drink whiskey?

NECHAMA: No.

DRIVER: If not, how do you know that it isn't good for you? I'll tell you how. If you sit in a bar and watch a respectable person when he begins to drink, and observe his behavior after several drinks, you understand that drinking whiskey is not good for you. That man becomes a "melamed." That is why the verse in *Tebillim* 119:99 that states "from all of my teachers have I learned" reads "מכל מלמדי השכלתי" and not מורי השכלתי.

Nechama recounted this story to illustrate to teachers and parents the importance of children not only learning from formal instruction, but also from personal example and life experiences.

6. Nechama Leibowitz
Haggadah



צֵא וּלְמַד, מָה בִּקְשׁ לָבוֹן הָאֲרָמִי לַעֲשׂוֹת לְיַעֲקֹב
אָבִינוּ. שְׁפָרְעָה לֹא גָזַר אֱלֹהִים עַל
הַזְּכָרִים, וְלָבוֹן בִּקְשׁ לַעֲקֹר אֶת־הַכֹּהֵן.

The central section of the Maggid portion of the Haggadah consists of a study of *Devarim* 26:5–8. This text was recited by farmers who brought their first fruits (*Bikkurim*) to the Temple in Jerusalem. Several reasons have been suggested for the observance of this mitzvah and the recitation of this text:

RAMBAM, GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED (SEC. 3): The reading of the *Bikkurim* text fosters the quality of humility. For

he lifts a basket (of the first fruits) on his shoulders and recognizes the kindness and goodness of God, in order to teach man that it is necessary in the service of God to recall experiences of suffering and distress in a later period of prosperity.

ABARBANEL: In order that he should subdue his passion—for the first fruits are dear to him...and he is therefore commanded to subdue his passion and not eat it, but rather he should give it to the Temple (i.e., the priests).

AKEIDAT YITZCHAK Because the essence of accepting Divine sovereignty is that a person should recognize that all good comes from Him, and that the person's own strength and effort are not in any way responsible for his accomplishments.... For in truth the bringing of the first fruits and other offerings teaches the Lordship of God.

Questions

- 1) Explain the educational goals behind the various reasons given for the first fruits ceremony.
- 2) Which of these explanations best connects the *Bikkurim* ceremony to the Pesach Seder?

Suggested Answers

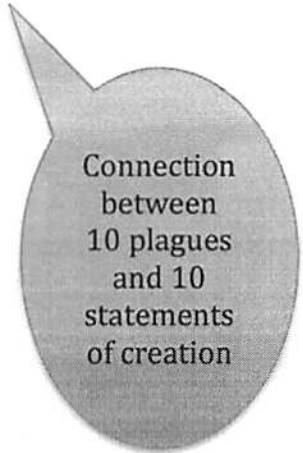
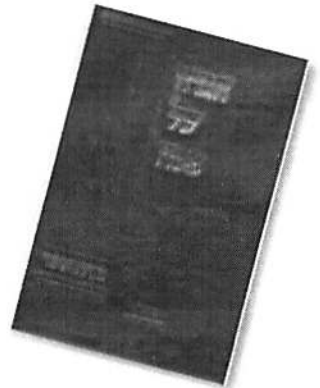
1) *Rambam*, *Abarbanel* and *Akeidat Yitzchak* all claim that the purpose of the *Bikkurim* ceremony is to improve the personal character of the individual. According to *Abarbanel*, it is to teach self-control. According to *Rambam* and *Akeidat Yitzchak*, it is to teach humility. In the formulation of *Akeidat Yitzchak*, it shows that all achievement does not come from human strength, but rather from God. According to *Rambam's* formulation, it is achieved by remembering previous experiences of suffering and distress.

2) The *Rambam's* explanation relates directly to the Pesach Seder. At the Seder, we recall the bitterness of the Egyptian bondage in order to better understand our freedom and its responsibilities. In a later portion of the *Rambam's* discussion of *Bikkurim*, he mentions other commandments that parallel this process including "and you shall remember that you were slaves in the land of Egypt" and "in order that you shall tell it to your children," both of which relate to the Seder.

7. *Minchas Asher*
R' Asher Weiss



עשרה נסים נעשו לאבותינו במצרים
הנה ידוע דעשרת הנסים של יציאת
מצרים מכוונים כנגד עשרה
מאמרות שבהם נברא העולם ולפיכך
נקבצו יחדיו בריש פ"ה ממס' אבות
(ועי"ש נרש"י משנה ג' ונרות חיים להגר"ח
מולח'ין ונדקח'ן חיים למהר"ל). אלא שבריאת
העולם היה מגילוי ההעלם ובכל מאמר
ומאמר נתחזק ההעלם ונתמעט הגילוי,
וביציאת מצרים היה להיפך מהעלם
לגילוי, מהנהגת ההסתר פנים בגלות
מצרים נתגלה כבוד מלכותו בכל מכה
ומכה.



בכל שנה ושנה (שמות ונה י"ט ח') הרי
דימי הפסח מישך שייכי לבריאת
העולם ועשרת הנסים כנגד עשרה
מאמרות.

ולכשתבונן בעומק הדברים תראה
דיש קשר בין עשרת
המכות לעשרה מאמרות זה לעומת זה
אלא בסדר הפוך, מאמר ראשון
"בראשית ברא" כנגד מכת בכורות
"ראשית אונס", המאמר השני "יהי
אור" כנגד מכת חשך "ולכל בני
ישראל היה אור במושבותם" וכן בכל
מכה ומאמר זה לעומת זה ודו"ק
בעומק הדברים.

וגם בדברי חז"ל מוצאים אנו קשר בין
יציאת מצרים לבריאת העולם
"כשם שכתחילה הם ז' ימי בראשית
וכשם שהשבת מתקיימת אחת לשבעה
ימים, כך יהיו אלה ז' ימים מקיימים

8. Rabbi
Soloveitchik

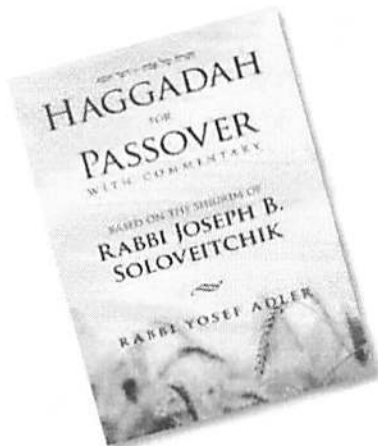


אשר גאלנו וגאל את אבותינו

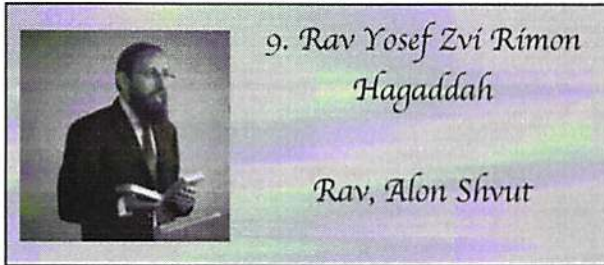
In this beracha we first make reference to our redemption and then to that of our ancestors. In the paragraphs preceding Hallel we say

לפיכך אנחנו חייבים להודות ולהלל... למי שעשה נסים לאבותינו ולנו,

mentioning our forefathers first and then our present generation. Throughout the entire Hagaddah we emphasize the drama that God orchestrated. We begin with the perspective of what happened to our ancestors. The challenge is to recognize that geulat Mitzrayim has relevance to our lives as well. When an individual understands that and bursts into song, נאמר לפניו שירה חדשה, the Hallel which I am saying is, indeed, new (חדשה) because it offers praise to God for my geula this year. Having recited the Hallel and fully recreated the experience of yetziat Mitzrayim for ourselves, we now have the right to say אשר גאלנו and then גאל את אבותינו. Until we reach that point we must first acknowledge the redemption of our ancestors. Yet once we have recited the Hallel and experienced redemption on a personal level, we have the right to acknowledge our own redemption and then that of our ancestors.



Food for Thought



Afikoman and returning to the internal self

Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook (in *Olat Re'iyah* on the haggadah, p. 50) explains that *afikoman* expresses the *tzafun* – the **hidden aspect of man and life**. The concealed tells us a great deal, for the more something is on a high spiritual level, the deeper and more concealed is its spirituality. The internal significance of *afikoman* is learned from the fact that one eats it when he is full, as emerges from Rav Kook's words:

Afikoman is eaten when one is full, as an **aim in itself**, and not as a necessity for maintaining one's worldly existence. From that perspective, it is appropriate for the deepest (*tzafun*) feelings of the soul.

Generally, a person eats in order to be full, and food is only a means. *Afikoman*, on the other hand, is eaten when a person is already full, and from this it follows that *afikoman* is an **aim in itself**.

We saw above ("Why do we eat *matzot* on Pesach?" p. 241) the explanation of *Maharal* regarding the significance of eating matzah. Matzah, on the one hand, expresses servitude and difficulty – the "bread of affliction" – but, on the other hand, we saw that matzah also has characteristics that teach us about freedom and improvement.

Maharal explains that this is not a contradiction. Matzah is indeed the "bread of affliction," but only because it is that which expresses true freedom. Matzah expresses the pure interior of the person, without any additions or external trappings.

We strive to live according to our true interior, based on our Divine nature and the pure soul that

God placed inside us. When the Nation of Israel reaches such a stage, and lives accordingly, our redemption will come.

Therefore, we were commanded to eat matzah before we left Egypt, for matzah was part of the redemption. According to this, eating matzah is not only a "reminder" of the historical event of the redemption from Egypt, but is the very reason for the redemption! Matzah expresses the level that the Nation of Israel attained by casting off all external influences, and that brought about our redemption.

By eating matzah on the *seder* night we are attempting to again reach this level, that our actions should reflect the truth of our internal self. The *seder* night is a process of redemption for us as well: at the beginning of the *seder* we eat matzah that expresses and displays our inner soul, but we eat it when we are hungry. What is mixed in here is also our desire to eat. After we have gone through the entire process of the *seder* night, with all its symbols and customs, we are now able to eat this matzah with pure intentions – without any real appetite and without any motives other than to fulfill the commandment. The eating of *afikoman* will reveal to ourselves what we have accomplished on the *seder* night, and what we strive for throughout the year. This is a life of freedom and liberation, a life of holy faith in our independence, without any external influences.

The holy pleasure

It appears that one can add further depth to the significance of eating *afikoman* when one is full, beyond what was said above (this is apparent from what Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook said in his commentary on the haggadah regarding *yachatz* - breaking the middle matzah - and also what I heard from my father-in-law and teacher, Rav Blumenzweig).

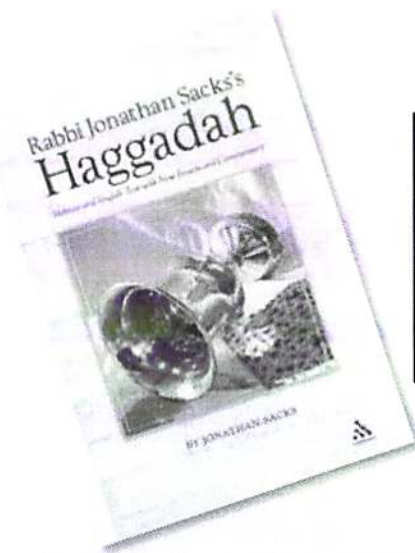
As far as Jewish Law is concerned, we are supposed to eat the *afikoman* when we are already full, but not when we are overly full, not to eat in a way that is gluttonous, which is abhorrent. *Afikoman* must be eaten when there is no physical need to eat, but while we are still able to have a little pleasure from eating it.

At first glance it would appear that enjoyment is something that serves no practical purpose in this world, apart from making life more pleasant.

However, God did not create the world without any rhyme or reason. Therefore, there is cause to investigate the spiritual significance of enjoyment through studying the laws of eating *afikoman*.

Enjoyment is a tool in serving God. The enjoyment a person experiences from engaging in a particular action indicates that the act is connected to his inner essence. In a certain sense, it can be said that enjoyment teaches about the inner essence of the act as well as the person's deep connection to it. The sense of enjoyment must then bring a person to ponder the significance of this connection, and this should lead him to consider how he can use this bond to serve his Creator. Through this enjoyment a person can reach great heights in his service of God, while still maintaining a deep and meaningful connection to reality, revealing its inner Divine spark.

However, in general, in this world it is difficult to implement this, as pleasure becomes a goal in itself. Therefore, the rabbis of the *mussar* (ethical teaching) movement advised people to limit their pleasures. On the *seder* night, however, after we have passed through the entire process of redemption and liberation from any external barriers, we take pleasure in eating *afikoman*. Now we are already capable of enjoying this pleasure in purity, without any lusts or cravings, and to transform this pleasure to something essential and significant in our service of God.



10. Rabbi Sacks
Haggadah



One only kid

That we end one of Judaism's most sacred rituals with a children's song tells us much about what sustained Judaism as a faith for longer, under more arduous circumstances, than any other heritage in the West. The Jewish love of children means that Jews look forward to the future even more than we look back to the past. Just as we began the seder with the questions of a child, so we conclude it with a nursery rhyme, reminding ourselves that what sustains a faith is not strength or power, but its ability to inspire successive generations of children to add their voices to our people's song.

The song itself, disarming in its simplicity, teaches the great truth of Jewish hope: that though many nations (symbolized by the cat, the dog, and so on) attacked Israel (the 'kid'), each in turn has vanished into oblivion. At the end of days God will vanquish the angel of death and inaugurate a world of life and peace, the two great Jewish loves.

Perhaps, too, there is deeper symbolism. The kid eaten by the cat reminds us of the story of Joseph, sold into slavery. His brothers then slaughtered a kid, dipped Joseph's coat in its blood, and showed it to their father to persuade him that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. Outwardly, Jacob accepted their story. However, the Torah says that 'he refused to be comforted'. Jewish law states that there is a limit to the period of mourning. Why then did Jacob say that he would *never* be comforted? A profound rabbinic commentary explains that there is a time limit to mourning only when one is sure that someone has died. Jacob, however, never gave up believing that there was a chance, however slim, that Joseph was still alive. His refusal to be comforted was a refusal to give up hope, and in the end it was justified. Joseph was still alive, and he and his father were eventually reunited.

Chad Gadya expresses the Jewish refusal to give up hope. Though history is full of man's inhumanity to man - dog bites cat, stick hits dog - that is not the final verse. The Haggadah ends with the death of death in eternal life, a fitting end for the story of a people dedicated to Moses' great command, 'Choose life'.