

Maggid - Retelling the Passover Story

Raise the tray with the matzot and say:

This is the bread of affliction that our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. Whoever is hungry, let him come and eat; whoever is in need, let him come and conduct the Seder of Passover. This year [we are] here; next year in the land of Israel. This year [we are] slaves; next year [we will be] free people.

The tray with the matzot is moved aside, and the second cup is poured. (Do not drink it yet). Now the child asks "Mah Nishtana?"

What makes this night different from all [other] nights?

On all nights we need not dip even once, on this night we do so twice!

On all nights we eat chametz or matzah, and on this night only matzah.

On all nights



we eat any kind of vegetables, and on this night maror! On all nights we eat sitting upright or reclining, and on this night we all recline!

The tray is restored to its place with the matzah partly uncovered. Now we say "We were slaves..."

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the L-rd, our G-d, took us out from there with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm. If the Holy One, blessed be He, had not taken our fathers out of Egypt, then we, our children and our children's children would have remained enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt. Even if all of us were wise, all of us understanding, all of us knowing the Torah, we would still be obligated to discuss the exodus from Egypt; and everyone who discusses the exodus from Egypt at length is praiseworthy.

It happened that Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarphon were reclining [at a seder] in B'nei Berak. They were discussing the exodus from Egypt all that night, until their students came and told them: "Our Masters! The time has come for reciting the morning Shema!"

Rabbi Eleazar ben Azaryah said: "I am like a man of seventy years old, yet I did not succeed in proving that the exodus from Egypt must be mentioned at night-until Ben Zoma explained it: "It is said, `That you may remember the day you left Egypt all the days of your life;' now `the days of your life' refers to the days, [and the additional word] `all' indicates the inclusion of the nights!"

The sages, however, said: "`The days of your life' refers to the present-day world; and `all' indicates the inclusion



of the days of Mashiach."

Blessed is the Omnipresent One, blessed be He! Blessed is He who gave the Torah to His people Israel, blessed be He! The Torah speaks of four children: One is wise, one is wicked, one is simple and one does not know how to ask.

The wise one, what does he say? "What are the testimonies, the statutes and the laws which the L-rd, our G-d, has commanded you?" You, in turn, shall instruct him in the laws of Passover, [up to] `one is not to eat any dessert after the Passover-lamb.'

The wicked one, what does he say? "What is this service to you?!" He says `to you,' but not to him! By thus excluding himself from the community he has denied that which is fundamental. You, therefore, blunt his teeth and say to him: "It is because of this that the

The Spark is Still Alive

He was the second boy who I had prepared for his Bar Mitzva in Ramat Hasharon. I wasn't yet used to the emotional meetings with Jews who look so far but, in their hearts, are so very close...For this reason, those first meetings are etched deep inside my heart.

Barak – that was the name of the father who spoke to me on the phone. He was interested in meeting with me. He came to the synagogue where I prayed especially to meet me – to see who would be the teacher who would prepare his son for the Bar Mitzva. "Listen," he said to me, "this Bar Mitzva is something special. It's not a normal one. Nobody made me a Bar Mitzva because I grew up on a Kibbutz of the HaShomer HaTzair movement. My father didn't celebrate his Bar Mitzva because at the time of his Bar Mitzva, he was hiding in the forests of Romania from the S.S. police officers and their helpers from the other nations. The Bar Mitzva of this boy is something special. Not a simple thing, not an obvious thing. Do you understand?"

Can anyone understand such a thing, with all of its deep meaning?! But could I say that I didn't understand?! "Yes," I said. And thus, the sign was given to begin the learning period with the boy.

"Hello," I said when I entered the house. "Today, I'm going to learn with David about the chain of the generations of the Jewish nation. We'll go over quickly the things that happened from the creation of the world until today. So David will feel connected."

"Ami," Barak turned to me, "I already told you that nobody made me a Bar Mitzva, nor did my father have one. I feel that I'm missing something. Can I join your session today?"

I can't describe in words the Barak – the lightning, that flashed in our eyes. "The Jewish nation is alive – Am Yisrael Chai!" – "David, King of Israel, is alive!"

L-rd did for me when I left Egypt"; `for me' - but not for him! If he had been there, he would not have been redeemed!"

The simpleton, what does he say? "What is this?" Thus you shall say to him: "With a strong hand the L-rd took us out of Egypt, from the house of slaves."

As for the one who does not know how to ask, you must initiate him, as it is said: "You shall tell your child on that day, `It is because of this that the L-rd did for me when I left Egypt.'"

One may think that [the discussion of the exodus] must be from the first of the month. The Torah therefore says, `On that day.' `On that day,' however, could mean while it is yet daytime; the Torah therefore says, `It is because of this.' The expression `because of this' can only be said when matzah and maror are placed before you.

In the beginning our fathers served idols; but now the Omnipresent One has brought us close to His service, as it is said: "Joshua said to all the people: Thus said the L-rd, the G-d of Israel, `Your fathers used to live on the other side of the river - Terach, the father of Abraham and the father of Nachor, and they served other gods.

"And I took your father Abraham from beyond the river, and I led him throughout the whole land of Canaan. I increased his seed and gave him Isaac, and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. To Esau I gave Mount Seir to possess it, and Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt."

Blessed is He who keeps His promise to Israel, blessed be He! For the Holy One, blessed be He, calculated the end [of the bondage], in order to do as He had said to our father Abraham at the "Covenant between the Portions," as it is said: "And He said to Abraham, `You shall know that your seed will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and they will enslave them and make them suffer, for four hundred years. But I shall also judge the nation whom they shall serve, and after that they will

