

# Exile and Exodus

## The Exile of *Da'at* - Knowing

In order to understand the meaning of Passover, celebrating the Exodus from Egypt, we must be clear about the meaning of the Egyptian exile. It was, to use the terminology of the Kabbalah, 'The Exile of Knowing.' The Hebrew word for 'Knowing' is *Da'at* - דעת.

Of all the trees in the Garden of Eden, one was forbidden to Adam. In the text of Genesis (2 :9), it is named the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, the Tree of *Da'at* of *Tov* and *Ra*. In the simplest of terms, eating of the Tree of Knowledge precipitated a crisis in the world - it became and remains impossible to separate good and evil absolutely. Since the time of the eating, good and evil are mingled, confused and often indistinguishable. An example of the confusion that prevails: In Germany between the years 1933-45, cruelty toward animals was considered a heinous crime, and progressively harsher laws were passed to punish it. What can one say to such a statement? Is any part of it good or bad? Is the good not inextricably confused with the evil?

Maimonides, in his monumental work on Jewish Law (*Hilchoth Teshuvah* 5:5) discusses 'Knowing' both in the divine and human spheres.

If you ask: Since God knows everything, does He have prior knowledge of who will be virtuous and who will be evil, or does God not know? If God knows someone will be virtuous is it possible for him not to be so? If you say that God knows the person will be virtuous but the possibility remains that he will be evil, is there not something confused about God's knowledge?

Know, the answer to this question measures longer than the world, broader than the ocean. Many radical basics and axiomatic principles depend upon it. However, you must first know and understand the following that I tell you. As we have already explained in the second chapter of the Laws of the Fundamentals of the Torah, God's knowledge, unlike human knowledge is not separate from God; the way human ideas have an existence independent of the people who think them. God and His knowledge are one, and no human can grasp this idea without confusion, just as humans are incapable of grasping God's essential truth, as it is written; 'For no man shall see Me and survive.' Similarly no one has the power to grasp God's Knowledge, and this is what the prophet meant when he said: 'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, My ways are not your

ways.' It being so, we have not the ability to know how God knows everyone and everything. Without doubt though, we know that every human acts with complete autonomy and without God decreeing it so. This is not merely a religious tenet, we know it after proving it philosophically with words of wisdom. This why the prophets assert that humans are judged for their actions and by their actions, good or evil. This is a basic upon which all prophecy depends.

If you remain confused, dear reader, after reading Maimonides' explanation of Knowledge of Good and Evil, don't fret. It's paradoxical. Knowledge and Confusion are synonymous. This is what eating of the forbidden Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil did for the world. Human behavior and rational philosophy are but tiny facets of the cosmic whole. The universe is a big place and confusion reigns throughout. Modernity is premised upon acceptance that the time, place or sequence of events can never be established with absolute certainty.

Confusion is the central theme within Kabbalah too. In the Kabbalistic system of *Sephiroth* used to describe all interactions and events in the created universe *Da'at - Knowing* is a 'virtual' *Sephirah*. If one were to imagine the Kabbalistic *Sephirah* of *Da'at - Knowing*, exemplified in the human mind, we would have to postulate its momentary existence at the interface between the two hemispheres of the cortex at the front of the brain.

The Hebrew word דַּעַת - *Da'at* translates as 'Knowing.' Nevertheless, everywhere in literature this word is accepted as having other meanings. In the broadest sense, where heaven and earth meet is *Da'at - Knowing*. Where man and woman meet is *Da'at - Knowing*. Where the past and the future meet is *Da'at - Knowing*. Knowing is the place where inside meets outside. *Da'at - Knowing* is the inside of the outside. To imagine the inside of the outside we have to imagine a crown sitting on a head, encircling the skull and resting upon the brow. Obviously the crown is outside the head, but where is the inside of the crown if not inside the head? The inside of the outside, the central point in space within the crown resting on the outside of the head, is actually a point in the middle of the brain. This *Sephirah* of *Da'at - Knowing* is central to our understanding of Passover and the Exodus.

Uncertainty, confusion, lack of knowledge: most of us are confused much if not most of the time, but at least we are sure of our confusion. There's no confusion about that. The Exile of Knowing - *Da'at* only begins when we become confused about the very fact of our confusion.

**Officially, the Exile of *Da'at* is covenantal and begins with Abraham.**

In Genesis (15:13), God said to Abram:

"Know surely that your descendents will be strangers in a foreign land for 400 years."

Yet where we read the verse as, 'know surely,' the Hebrew text uses the words יָדַע תֵּדַע - *Yodoa Tayda*, which are both forms of the root דַּע - *Da*, 'to

know.’ It is as though Abram were told, ‘You will know that you know that your descendents etc.’ But because the Egyptian exile was an exile of *Da’at* - Knowing, we, Abram’s descendents in Egypt did not know that we did not know.

In order for the wound inflicted upon the cosmos by the eating of the Tree of *Da’at* - Knowledge to be healed, there has to be separation of good from evil. This involves a process of discernment, a long process, stretched over human history. The Exodus from Egypt described in the Torah is a paradigm of this discernment process. It was not only the process whereby a family of sheepherders became a recognizable nation, whereby God became the One God, the Lord and whereby good had discernment from evil. It was at every level, as we shall be learning, a discovery, a revelation, a determination and enlightenment of ‘Knowledge.’ It was the first big fixing of the damage caused by the confusion of *Da’at* - Knowing.

In order to properly understand the Exodus, we need to understand the reasons and circumstances surrounding our descent into Egypt. A simple reading of the text of Genesis tells the story of Joseph and his brothers. They were as confused about him as he was about them. They sold him as a slave into Egypt where his sexuality - Knowing was tested. In prison he was recognized as a Knowing man. Pharaoh, after using him to interpret dreams realized that Joseph was a man who knows things, someone with divine knowledge. Joseph tortured his brothers and they knew him not. Eventually the whole family descended into Egypt. Joseph and his brothers died. A new Pharaoh governed Egypt, one who knew not Joseph. He oppressed the Hebrews and enslaved them. Moses was born. He stood before Pharaoh and demanded he let God’s people go. “Who is God? I know him not,” exclaimed Pharaoh. (Exodus 5:2)

“You will know,” said God to Moses. (Exodus 6:7)

“We don’t know,” said Moses to Pharaoh. (Exodus 10:26)

We were brought forth out of Egypt, and now we know.

If the Exodus were a simple historical event we would not be preparing for the Passover Seder as though it were a major life-event each year. The Exodus continues to resonate and repeat and retell itself as a current event each and every year.

### **Seder night - *Giluy Shechinah* - Revelation of the Divine Presence**

The Exodus from Egypt is not merely an historical event. It is not the story of the migration of a people. It is a personal story about regaining our ability to achieve intimacy. At the macrocosmic level our capacity for intimacy describes our ability to become vehicles for the *Shechinah* - Divine Presence. One way of seeing how we have lost our capacity for intimacy is to realize we no longer have *Giluy Shechinah* - Revelation of the Divine Presence. The night of Passover in Egypt was the first night of *Giluy Shechinah* - Revelation of the Divine Presence, as will be described at length in the text. It was an historic and remarkable event through which we were changed instantaneously from serfs to



nobles, from being mired in blackest ignorance to the enjoy the ability to enjoy as commonplace breathtaking visions of the Divine.

Together, let us explore some of the eternal verities and profound mysteries hidden in the story told in this Haggadah. Let us re-enact the exodus in our own lives, that we be healed of the damage we suffer as a result of our own eating of the Tree of Knowledge - *Da'at* of Good and Evil. That we may merit *Gilyu Shechinah* - Revelation of the Divine Presence, the restoration of intimacy.



## Preparing for Passover

## The meaning of *Chometz*

It is an ancient Jewish custom, dating back to around 1300 B.C.E. to begin preparing for Passover 30 days in advance. We do this primarily by learning or familiarizing ourselves with the laws governing the festival, by cleaning our dwellings and other property of all *Chometz* (leavened foods) and by making ready for the Seder.

On the evening before the Passover begins, we search by the light of a candle all the nooks and crannies where *Chometz* may have conceivably been carried and forgotten. We remove all the cooking pots, crockery and cutlery that have been used throughout the year and prepare food for Passover using only Passover foodstuffs and utensils.

What is *Chometz* - leavening?

Take flour and water. Mix them and leave them for 18 minutes, and the result is *Chometz*.

Technically, *Chometz* is the fermentation action of a particular enzyme, B-Amylase found only in the five species of grain named in the Talmud. The five are all related to wheat and barley. The enzyme B-Amylase is not present in rice or maize-corn, so they cannot become *Chometz*.

Immediately upon the addition of water to the five grains, various fermentation processes begin. Polysaccharides are broken down into maltose, disaccharides into glucose, and proteins into various stages of decomposition. Gases such as oxygen and carbon dioxide are released in these processes, but remain trapped by the action of the gluten binding the dough together. As tiny bubbles of gas accumulate beneath the surface and the dough 'rises,' the fermentation process continues. Dough is considered to have become *Chometz* when the surface has whitened and hairline cracks have appeared. The process from first mixing flour and water until this stage takes about 18 minutes. Constant kneading of the dough releases the trapped gases preventing fermentation. Another way of preventing fermentation is to bake the dough, as B-Amylase is destroyed at 80 centigrade - 176 Fahrenheit.

The fermentation of dough, leavening - *Chometz*, is a metaphor, it describes a process of profound change, complete and total change.

In the dictionary, 'Leavening' is defined as a tinge or admixture with the quality of permeating, modifying or transforming an element.

Civilization as we generally define it, has roots in the 'Fertile Crescent', a place in time and space where cultivation of the five grains allowed for the development of

city-states and the evolution of liberal arts, literature, medicine and monumental building.

Bread is to western civilization what *Chometz* is to bread. Bread-making has changed the world by allowing cities with massive population densities. By allowing a transition from hunter gatherers, to civil society with writing, medicine and monumental building but a few examples of the profound changes it wrought.

Once a year the Torah demands that we examine the process of fermentation, take a week out to see how it has permeated and transformed our elemental selves. We are required to do without *Chometz* for long enough to become aware of its modifying qualities.

City-states depend on slavery, hegemony, power and eco-tyranny for their stability.

Egypt, arguably the greatest of the city-states was where we were slaves.

Slavery is another metaphor, discussed at length in the Haggadah.

In Talmudic literature, the evil-inclination is sometimes referred to as the 'yeast in the dough.'

During Passover we have to make our own internal connection, at the deepest level, between the *Chometz* - leavening in our life and our confusion, which is the not knowing that we don't know. We have to become acutely conscious of how we acquiesce in our own slavery.

### **We do this by looking at ourselves, cleaning our own houses**

For Passover to have meaning it must be relevant to each individual.

Ask yourself: How has *Chometz* permeated your life? How do slavery, power, exploitation and eco-tyranny suffuse your ambitions? How do they pollute your inner landscape?

### **Slavery - An Overview**

For the purposes of brevity and because it is easier to utilize a common language than invent a new one, I will be making extensive use of the clichés and terminology utilized by Twelve Step programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous. Despite the fact that there is such powerful resistance to the admission of slavery in the modern world, nonetheless it is very prevalent. The abolition of slavery in the 19th century seems to have left us unable to admit to ourselves that slavery can be personal, that bondage exists. In the Addictions - Recovery model, slavery is seen as a spiritual malaise brought on by an unhealthy relationship with a person, substance or behavior. Because the Twelve Step Program does not require medical intervention, pharmaceuticals or psychiatry in order to effect healing and since the malaise is recognized as being primarily a spiritual one in nature it provides the perfect model for the Egyptian Exile and Exodus. In addition, the most noticeable symptom common to all addictions is their power to prevent intimacy; in this they mirror the story of the fall of Adam and Eve, their loss of intimacy and the Exile of *Da'at* - Knowing.

Step Four in the book, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of AA, contains the following quote:

If men and women didn't exert themselves to be secure in their persons, made no effort to harvest food or construct shelter there would be no survival. If they didn't reproduce, the earth wouldn't be populated. If there were no social instinct, if men cared nothing for the society of one another, there would be no society.

So these desires — for sex relations, for material and emotional security and for companionship — are perfectly necessary and right, and surely God-given. Yet these instincts, so necessary for our existence, often far exceed their proper functions. Powerfully, blindly, many times subtly, they drive us, dominate us, and insist upon ruling our lives. Our desires for sex, for material and emotional security, and for an important place in society often tyrannize us. When thus out of joint, man's natural desires cause him great trouble, practically all the trouble there is.

Compare the above with a much older quote from the Midrash.

R. Samuel bar Nachman said: The words 'Behold, it was very good' refer to the impulse to good, and the words 'And behold, it was very good' (Genesis 1:31) refer to the impulse to evil. But how can the impulse to evil be termed 'very good'? Because Scripture teaches that were it not for the impulse to evil, a man would not build a house, take a wife, beget children, or engage in commerce. All such activities come, as Solomon noted, 'from a man's rivalry with his neighbor.' Ecclesiastes 4:4). (Genesis Rabba 9:9)

### Three questions we must ask before Passover

- 1) Can we survey our possessions and take stock of every single item in our lives?
- 2) Can we scrutinize what we own clearly and plainly?
- 3) How we are meeting our basic human needs?

### Processing the process

How can we apply all this insight to cleaning our houses before Passover?

A list of places where *Chometz* is usually to be found serves to emphasize how pervasive it is in our lives and hints at how much energy will be required to eradicate it:

Attic - basement - baby carriage - beds - bookcases - books - briefcase - cabinets - car and truck - carpet vacuum - closets - clothes - cookbooks - cosmetics - desk - dishwasher - drawers - freezer - garbage pails - garage - infant seats - medicine chest - play room - pocketbooks - porch- refrigerator - school locker - toys - etc.

**Remember, it's only a metaphor.**

Once there was a man who vowed to himself that he would have the perfectly Passover-cleaned house. Towards the end of the winter he began in the attic, and working his way downward, took the house apart stick by stick. Three weeks before Passover, there was no bread or *Chometz* in the house. People entering had to examine their clothing and pockets for crumbs, wiping their shoes on a special mat. He was satisfied that the house was completely free of *Chometz*, and had, so to speak, achieved a spiritual - *halachic* asepsis. He sat down to enjoy his Seder with a clear mind.

Now, a bird flew over the house with a cookie in its mouth. The cookie fell down the chimney - into the soup cooking over the fire - to appear on the man's plate as he was about to eat. He was horrified and aghast. He looked for a reason to explain what was obviously an act-of-God.

The man was clearly a control freak. But the real message, so obvious to us and so incomprehensible to the man in the story that he has neither insight into himself nor into the meaning of Passover.

**Clarity regarding our dependencies, and interdependences is crucial**

For most Western peoples, the axiom that we are powerless — that unless we receive the help of a Higher Power we are doomed to struggle in vain — is abhorrent. Most of us will go to any lengths to avoid admitting to powerlessness. Our culture tends to associate powerlessness with helplessness, cowardice and stupidity. In our world, powerlessness is synonymous with laziness, childishness and lack of moral fiber.

Thus we need to be able to admit to ourselves, with total honesty, how we have become dependent upon people, places and things to fill up the existential void we feel inside. How our dependencies prevent us from connecting to people with uncompromising honesty and integrity.



# Preparing for the Seder

## Making a Seder

The Hebrew word 'Seder' has only one translation: It means 'Order.'

If Passover forces us to examine all our relationships, the Seder gives us an opportunity to see them in action.

To celebrate the festival properly attention must be paid to People, Places and Things.

A. PEOPLE - No one voluntarily celebrates Seder alone, but, on the other hand, the Seder is not an impromptu party. The Seder should be enjoyed with loved ones and shared with guests. In preparing for the Seder it is important to know who will be participating.

B. PLACES - The Seder requires a table, chairs, kitchen, space, in short, a place to call home. The Seder will be an opportunity to take a fresh look at your environment and its ambiance. The Seder doesn't take place in a garden or a bedroom or a study. It requires a place for the gathering of family and friends where other standards apply.

C. THINGS - The Seder is a pageant of music, stories and symbols. It is lavish and rich in detail; with symbols of all descriptions from white linen and candles to books, goblets and pillowcases. Mostly, the 'props' are the items on the menu, namely the food eaten at the Seder. All this preparation requires logistics that may take weeks of organizing.

The leader of the Seder will require the following :

- To prepare the *Charoseth*, a chopping board and knife, peeler, nut-cracker and a dish to hold the finished *Charoseth*.
- *Charoseth* ingredients: Walnuts, Apple, Cinnamon, (sticks or ground), Ginger, (fresh or ground), Wine or Grape Juice.
- To prepare the *Marror*, a grater, a large dish or pan in which to collect the grated horseradish and a covered bowl in which to store it until it is eaten
- *Marror* ingredients: Horseradish and Romaine Lettuce. (A *kashruth* guide should be consulted for instructions on preparing the lettuce for eating. Most naturally grown lettuce are infested with insects and other non-kosher parasites.)
- To prepare and serve the *Karpas*: a sharp knife, a dish containing salt water and plates on which the *Karpas* will be served.
- *Karpas* ingredients: radish, or celery or parsley or endive.
- To prepare the Seder Plate: a flat dish or tray approximately 12" in diameter, preferably with handles on either side with which to pick it up. Three linen



napkins to separate the three Matzahs. A covering for the Matzahs, of velvet or silk on which the six symbols of the plate will be laid. The three Matzahs will lay on the plate beneath the silk or velvet covering. The six symbols of the plate will be laid directly on top of the covering

- Seder Plate ingredients:

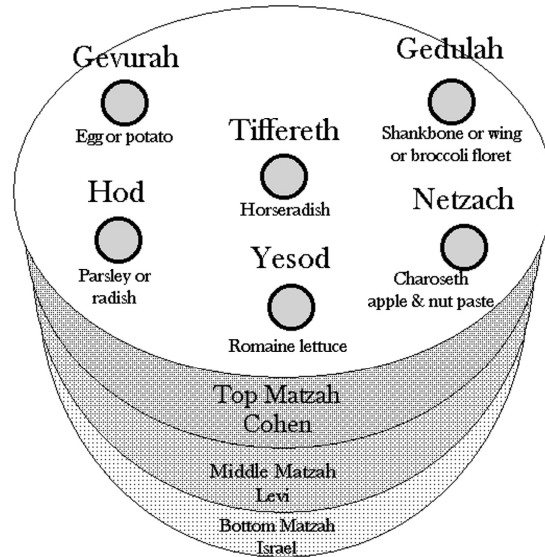
- 1) a roasted chicken wing, or lamb shank bone, or other symbol of the Powerful Hand and Outstretched Arm. For vegetarians, it has been suggested that a stalk of Broccoli with the florets sliced flatly to expose the 'hand' will make just as good a symbol.
  - 2) A roasted egg to represent the circle of Life.
  - 3) The head of a horseradish with small leaves growing out of the top, to represent the bitterness of Egypt.
  - 4) An amount of *Charoseth* on a small dish, to represent the mortar used in brick-making and building.
  - 5) A piece of the *Karpas*, representing the tears of the 600,000 Israelite slaves.
  - 6) A piece of Romaine lettuce leaf in which the *Koraich* - Sandwich will be wrapped, representing compassion.
- A goblet and plate for Elijah's Cup of Wine.
  - Candlesticks with candles that will burn throughout the Seder.
  - A bowl and laver in which water can be brought to the table to wash the

hands of the Seder Leader, and a towel.

- Each participant will require a goblet, glass, beaker or cup with a volume not smaller than 3.5 fluid ounces of wine or grape juice. A plate to go underneath each cup will help avoid spills.



## The Seder Plate



It is almost axiomatic of the 'way of the Kabbalist' that preparations before performing a *Mitzvah* - Commandment require as much time or more than that required for the performance of the *Mitzvah* itself. Preparations for the *Mitzvah* themselves become a ritual, deep in meaning. Preparations are the place where all *Kavanot* - Intentions are gathered and focused.

Before the Seder begins the following should happen.

A table - at which the Seder will be conducted - should be prepared. It should, ideally, be rectangular, of wood and with four legs. The table should be covered with two layers of white linen. Candles that will burn a minimum of four hours should be lit.

The leader of the Seder dons a shroud over any festive garments he or she may be wearing. Among Ashkenazi Jews, the *Kittel*, a pure white linen alb is worn for this occasion. The *Kittel* is only worn under the *Chuppah*, at one's wedding ceremony, during Yom Kippur, at the Seder and for one's interment. Pure linen has properties prized by Kabbalists.

The Seder Plate, the central image of the Seder, has evolved over time to the point where it now represents a complex series of interlocking symbols with dynamic interactions every bit as full of potential as those of pieces on a chessboard.

Its basic format according to most conventional systems of Kabbalah is that of the six lower *Sephiroth* on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life; the six *Sephiroth* represented by the six items used in the Seder ritual.

While a full exposition of the *Sephiroth* and their meanings is beyond the scope of this book, vis-à-vis the Seder Plate, this can be said. The sixth Hebrew letter is the letter ו - *Vav*, whose numerical value is 6. ו - *Vav* is shaped like a hook, and is actually the translation of the Hebrew word, וָ - *Vav*. The essential purpose of any hook is to join things together. The purpose of the six *Sephiroth* on the Tree of Life is to join the lowest *Sephirah*, *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty with the three upper *Sephiroth*, those of *Mochim* - Mentalities, (represented by the Three Matzahs,) via the six *Sephiroth* known as *Midoth* - Characteristics. In Hebrew, joining in any deeply intimate way is called 'having knowledge of.' There are three paradigms of intimacy:

- 1) Intimacy with another human.
- 2) Intimacy with God.
- 3) Intimacy with one's self.

The first manifestation of the Exile of *Da'at* - Knowing, was the divorce of Adam from the Garden of Eden, which entailed his separation from Eve, from God and from himself, all of which were direct consequences of his eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, as has been explained.

### Preparing the *Charoseth*

In the lower right hand corner of the Seder Plate, we will be placing a small dish/mound of *Charoseth*. *Charoseth* is primarily a mixture of apples, nuts, wine and spices. Mixed together and moistened with wine or grape juice it resembles the mortar used in the building projects to which the Jewish People were in bondage.

The Midrash tells us that Adam and Eve separated from each other for one hundred and thirty years after their banishment from the Garden of Eden. During that time the estranged couple refused food, solace or comfort. They sat alone up to their necks in the river refusing intimacy with one another. This rift between Adam and Eve still splits the world. It is a relationship that will have to be mended if there is to be a fixing of the eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

The damage to *Da'at*-Knowing is the sub-text for the entire book of Genesis. First, there is the rupture distancing humans from God, divorcing humans from Eden, splitting Adam from Eve. Next, there is the Cain and Abel tragedy, followed by Noah and the Deluge, the Tower of Babel and the spread of human civilization over the globe. Each event serves to propagate the damage to *Da'at*-Knowing, proliferating the three manifestations of the estrangement exile within society, exile within family and exile within the Self.

In order to mend the damage to *Da'at* - Knowing, God elected Abraham and his descendants to re-enact the drama, providing the opportunity to create a different ending to the story. The second half of Genesis describes the propagation of the Exile of *Da'at* - Knowing in the lives of one family - the children of Jacob.

We will skip details of the story and pick it up at the beginning of the book of Exodus.

Pharaoh and his Egyptian people saw the Children of Israel multiplying swiftly in spite of draconian programs aimed at controlling the Jewish birth rate. This included the practice of throwing all newborn male babies into the River Nile. They also tried to prevent Jewish men and women from getting together; by so arranging work shifts and timetables, married couples would rarely have time alone. In the event, though, it was the decision of one individual that brought about an historical re-enactment. Amram, husband of Yocheved and father of Miriam and Aaron publicly divorced his wife, saying, "We must not bring children into such a dangerous world." The rupture of *Da'at* — Knowing, among Jewish men and women at that time mirrored the 130-year separation between Adam and Eve; it was as though Man and Woman were once again doomed to a lifetime of estrangement and loneliness. Following Amram's public divorce of Yocheved, most Jewish couples did the same, for Amram was the leader of the generation. In a sense this was the moment the cosmos had been waiting for. The great wheel had come full circle, nothing could bring the world lower than it had already fallen: Adam and Eve were separated again.

As usually happened in Jewish history when there appeared no solution to a national problem short of divine intervention, women took the initiative. Acting in concert, this is what they did. They packed lunch boxes with food for their husbands and made their way to the building sites where their husbands toiled in the blazing sun. When the men folk were allowed to stop for a lunch break, the women led them away saying "Come let's climb to the other side of these sand dunes. It may be cooler there and who knows, we may enjoy a moment's privacy."

Understand now, the women were attempting intimacy. Intimacy by definition requires taking risks, risks of looking foolish, the risk of rejection and hurt. Nothing is as precious in the eyes of God as someone attempting intimacy.

The Rabbis tell us this: when God looked at the women and saw their holy intent, He caused apple orchards to spring up miraculously, wherever couples went to eat their picnic. And it was in those miraculous orchards that the Jewish People was conceived. As it is written (Song of Songs 8:5): "Beneath the Apple tree I aroused you. There your mother birthed you, where she herself was born."

Even the playful nature of their lovemaking beneath the apple trees, is recorded in the Rabbinic tradition, as it's message to us is considered so important. Rabbinic literature is not replete with romantic vignettes. But in an appreciation of that epoch, the following is unblushingly described in the Midrash. You will need to allow your imagination to fill in the gaps left in the text.

A couple is seated beneath the apple tree, in the privacy afforded by its drooping, blossom-laden branches. He has enjoyed the food she brought, and is probably thinking of stealing a few minutes rest before the whistle blows and he must return to work. She unhurriedly takes the cosmetics from her pocketbook and begins to 'make-up' her face. While looking at herself in the mirror she remarks coolly to her husband: "Which of us is more beautiful, do you think?" He leans closer to peer at his face beside hers in the mirror. But it is a small, polished, bronze, hand-mirror, and to see himself in its blurred convexity he must put his face very close to hers ...

Of course, the very first child to be born of the renewed intimacy between

Anram and Yocheved is none other than Moses the Redeemer, himself.

Oh, if only Eve had packed a lunch and taken it down to the riverside where Adam sat ...

This picnicking under the apple trees was the first successful attempt to fix the eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil by trying to re-establish intimacy between the sexes, to take risks and allow vulnerability. Those very mirrors the women used when applying cosmetics were given an elevated status in the Temple Building Fund towards which they were later donated. (Exodus 38:8) Moses was instructed to take them and cast them into the Great Bronze Washstand from which the priests drew water to prepare their hands and feet before approaching any services in the Temple.

In order to fully appreciate the significance of this episode in Kabbalistic lore, it is worthwhile noting that the reference to the birth of the mother in the verse quoted from Song of Songs 8:5, alludes to a principle more often known as 'The Field of Holy Apples.'

That aspect of God resonating with the actions of our matriarchs in Egypt, the aspect that craves intimacy and is ready to take risks, is called The Field of Holy Apples or the *Shechinah*. As a name for God it strives to depict the Dwelling Presence of the Creator on Earth and in ourselves.

[There was a spot on the altar in the Temple in Jerusalem where the ashes of burnt offerings were piled in a mound called 'the apple.' This was that very place on the altar in the Temple where the Presence of God was seen and heard growling in fire, crouching like a lion.]

In Genesis 15:1, while establishing a covenant 'between the rendered flesh', when God told Abraham the patriarch that we, his descendants, would be slaves in Egypt 400 years, God also promised not to forsake us. God even assured Abraham that He, God would go into exile with us. This then was the Field of Holy Apples where we were conceived, this was the *Shechinah*. The fixing of the Exile of *Da'at*-Knowing.

For Kabbalists, preparing the *Charoseth* is a ritual, beginning with the chopping of the apple into very fine pieces, while singing the verse from Song of Songs (8:5): 'Beneath the Apple tree I aroused you. There your mother birthed you, where she herself was born,' to a special melody attributed by tradition to the priestly musicians of the ancient temple in Jerusalem.

The second major ingredient in the *Charoseth* is the walnut. The walnut is notorious for its '*Klipah*,' its shell, (plural '*Klipoth*' - shells.) Kabbalists see many interesting things in the shape of the walnut. The kernel with its convolutions and striations is reminiscent of the human brain. But whereas our brains have two lobes the walnut has four. The universe, according to the Kabbalists has four 'lobes.'

The walnut hiding within its coats of armor is almost an analogy of the world we inhabit. It has four different layers of protection. Before we can get at the kernel we must strip away layer upon layer of defensive shell; just as we must in ourselves, if we are to reach the kernel of our own truth. The walnut is a meta-

phor representing all the manifold dishonesties that prevent us seeing ourselves as we really are.

The outermost shell is 1) dishonesty, denial and self-deception. Inside it are 2) close-mindedness, bias and blind prejudice. Approaching the core we find 3) unwillingness, defiance and inertia, until finally we are face-to-face with 4) the fog and clouds of habit, dependence and history.

Again, Kabbalists make a ritual out of preparing walnuts for the *Charoseth*, chopping them into very fine pieces while singing the verse from Song of Songs (6:11) 'I went down to the grove of walnuts to look and see...' Perhaps the most important feature of the walnut and why the Jewish people are compared to the walnut is the fact that no matter how dirty it becomes on the outside, its kernel remains untouched.

Even though the Seder has not officially started, these are the preparations for it, and it is here we focus our *Kavanot* - Intentions. So the time spent in preparation is not considered time taken out of the Seder. It is customary to dispense pieces of nut and apple to the children sitting at the table, especially if it will help them stay awake.

We add cinnamon, ginger and other spices to the *Charoseth*. Each tradition explains its choices with variant exegesis.

The final ingredient is wine, the juice of the grape. (The ethyl alcohol manufactured in the process of fermentation is but a tiny aspect of wine's multifaceted symbolism, and its role in Judaism.) The grape has been chosen to represent the powers of the mind, the capability for thought and faith, prayer and meditation. Wine represents the fulfillment of the promise of the conscious contact with God and the knowledge of God's will for us. Wine is a symbol for prophecy, the ultimate conscious contact, where awareness of God is a reciprocal event.

Wine's symbolism was acquired by the grape as a poetic expression of a rather mundane phenomenon. The mysterious action (of airborne bacteria) causes the fermentation of the grape into wine, almost an analogy of the process of human thought. The fermenting action with its vigorous bubbling, its transformation into 'spirit' and its spontaneous enhancement of the liquid form grape juice into wine, simulates the thought process that occurs in our own mind when ideas ferment, solidify and crystallize.

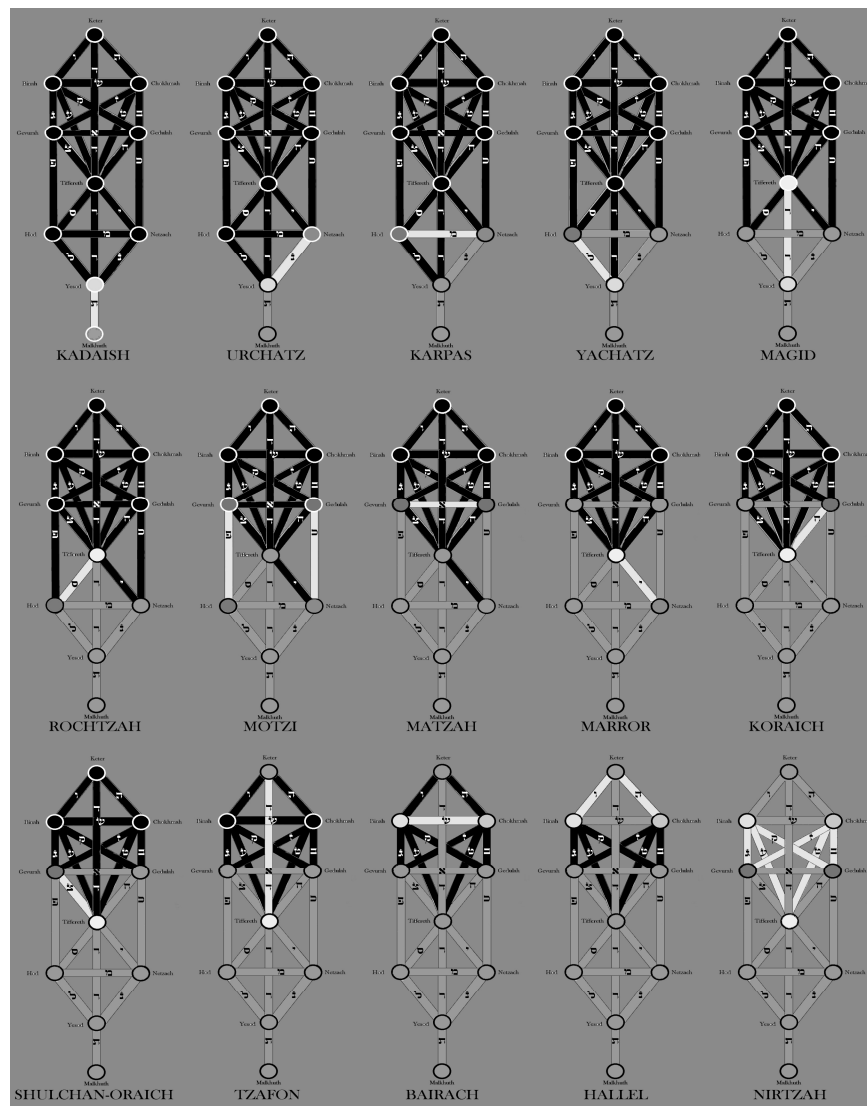
In addition to the 1) Charoseth, 2) the shank-bone, chicken wing or broccoli floret should be seared to look roasted. 3) A hardboiled egg or a potato should also be seared to look roasted. 4) Horseradish should be grated for the *Marror* and stored in a closed container. The top of the horseradish with a few remaining leaves will be used on the seder plate. 5) Some parsley or radish for *Karpas*, and 6) a leaf of lettuce for *Koraich*, make up the symbols on the Seder Plate itself



## The 15 *Simanim* - Stations of the Seder



1. Kadaish, 2. Urchatz, 3. Karpas, 4. Yachatz,
5. Magid, 6. Rochtzah, 7. Motzi, 8. Matzah,
- Marror, 10. Koraich, 11. Shulchan-Oraich,
12. Tzafon, 13. Bairach, 14. Hallel, 15. Nirtzah.



## The 15 *Simanim* - Stations of the Seder

I heard from my Rebbe, R. Shlomo Carlebach, that the *Simanim* given by Rachel to her sister Leah were these 15 *Simanim* of the Seder. What were the *Simanim* - Signs Rachel gave her sister?

In the biblical narrative describing the first meeting between Jacob and his cousin Rachel, Jacob refers to himself as Laban's brother. (Gen. 29:11-12)

Jacob kissed Rachel and wept aloud. He told her that he was her father's brother, and a son of Rebecca. She ran and told her father.

The Talmud, (Megilla 13b) comments, asking:

Was Jacob then a brother of her father's, he was but a nephew?

Jacob said to Rachel, "Will you marry me?"

"Yes," she replied. "But you must know my father is a cheat and will trick you."

"If it comes to cheating," retorted Jacob. "I am his brother in trickery."

"Is it permissible for the righteous to use trickery?" she asked him.

"Certainly! Treat the candid with candor, and cheats with trickery. But, tell me, what is it you think your father may do to cheat me?"

"I have an older sister. He will not allow me to marry before her."

So Jacob gave Rachel *Simanim* - Signs by which she might identify herself to him at their marriage. When Rachel, however, saw her sister Leah being readied for the night, she said, 'But now my sister will be shamed,' and gave her the *Simanim* - Signs. This explains the verse, "It was in the morning and behold, she is Leah!" (Genesis 29:25)

Up to this time was she not Leah? This tells us that because of the *Simanim* - Signs that Rachel gave her, Leah was not discovered until the following morning.

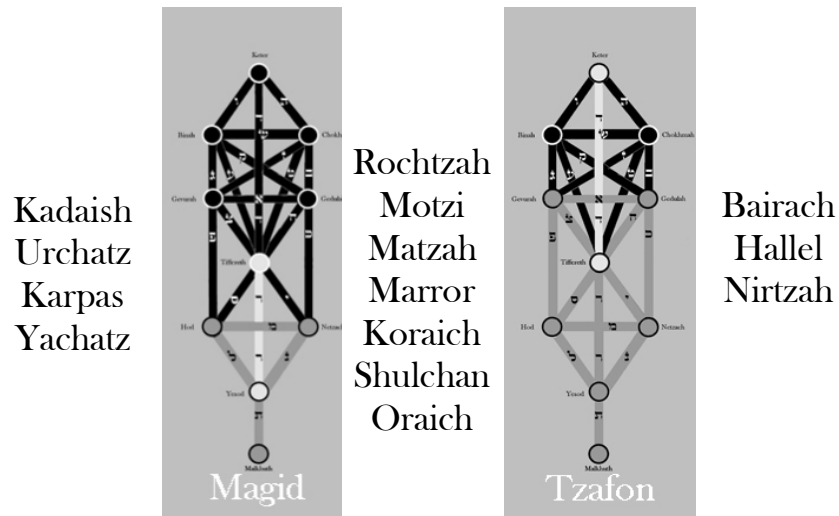
Our sages tell us that the reason Jacob did not discover the fraud until the following morning was that not only did Rachel give the *Simanim* - Signs to Leah, but actually lay under their nuptial bed and whispered them into Jacob's ear so that he would not recognize a stranger's voice.

The Hebrew word, *Siman* - סימן is used by the Talmud in a variety of ways. The meaning most apt to its use here in the Haggadah is as a mnemonic device or mnemotechnical note. (*Simanim* is the plural of *Siman*.) Such *Simanim* are frequently used in the Talmud as aids to the memorization and recall of large and complicated chapters of dialogue or legal wrangling. Their purpose in the Haggadah is to serve as reminders of the next step in the Seder. I have translated

the word *Siman* as ‘station’.

The Seder has three distinct parts, distinguished not only by the different mood but by two great leaps, the first from *Yesod* - Fundament up to *Tiffereth* - Glory, ‘the Heart’, during *Magid* - Tell the Story.

The second is the leap from *Tiffereth* - Glory to *Keter* - Crown, ‘the Mind’, during *Tzafon* - Eat the Afikomen. These two shifts in energy effectively split the Seder into three parts: physically, emotionally and spiritually.



The three parts may be divided into three Kabbalistic concepts, 1. *Mochin D’Katnut* - Small Mindedness; 2. *Gilyu Shechinah* - Divine Revelation; 3. *Mochin D’Gadlut* - Large Mindedness



# 1. *KADAISH* THE SANCTIFICATION



## Beyond the constraints of the Ego The letter *Tav*

The Hebrew letter/word תי -*Tav* translates as ‘sign’, ‘symbol’ or ‘impression.’ ת -*Tav* is the final letter in the Hebrew alphabet, and is also the last and bottom of the 22 paths through the *Sephiroth*. The letter ת -*Tav* connects *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty and *Yesod* - Fundament. What may not always be obvious is that the *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty of the world we inhabit is the *Keter* - Crown of the world below it, with *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty of the world below comprising the *Keter* - Crown of the world below it, and so on.

In order to leave the familiar world and make progress with the unfamiliar one, that of the *Sephiroth*, I must be free of the constant need to observe myself. I constantly watch myself watching myself watching myself.

In order to enter the World to Come I must leave behind me the world I live in.

The letter ת -*Tav* links different levels of consciousness within the self as much as it links the world of Spirit with that of Emotion, or the world of Creativity with that of Worship.

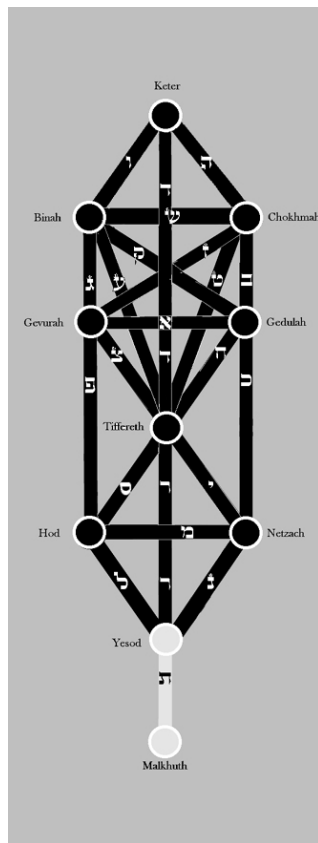
The path through the letter ת -*Tav* tests my ability to allow the judge within me to retire honorably. Acceptance of myself at some basic level is essential before any spiritual journeying or personal change and growth can occur.



# 1. *KADAISH* THE SANCTIFICATION

## THE PATH THROUGH TAV- ך CONNECTING MALKHUTH- SOVEREIGNTY AND YESOD- FUNDAMENT

### The First of the Four Cups



The Seder begins with '*Kiddush*'. The first path on which we begin our ascent must be negotiated by anyone attempting to traverse the paths of the Tree of Life. This path spans the gap between the *Sephirah* of *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty and *Yesod* - Fundament. We will make our crossing through the *Kiddush* - Sanctification. So let us begin with an understanding of *Kiddush*. The Hebrew word *Kiddush* or *Kodesh* is usually translated into English as Holy. It is astonishing that a concept as familiar as that of holiness should be so difficult to define. Before reading further, it is important that you be clear about your definition of holiness. Write down the half dozen or so key words you associate with the word Holy.

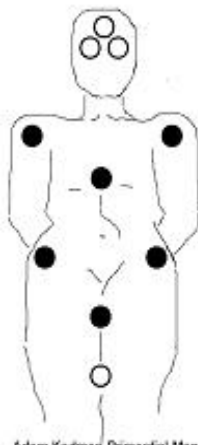
Words that sprung to my mind include: Separated - High - Untouchable - Inviolable - Awesome - Pure - Chaste - Contained. Well, *Kodesh* is all of these and none of them.

Holy is One. Holiness is oneness, unity and joining. It is commonly thought that Holiness is a consequence of separation. But it is at once, much more simple and profound. A couple joined in love and marriage are Holy, not because they are separated from the world, but because they are one. They are separated from the world because they are so joined with one another. The exclusivity is a conse-

quence of their unity. Their separation from the world is a result of their unity, as is their holiness.

The Jewish people are Holy, not because they are separate from other nations. They are holy because they are one. They are one with the Torah and with God. Anyone may join; no one is excluded. The price of joining is unity.

The profundity or ramifications of this definition of Holiness cannot be exaggerated or stressed too greatly. Entire religions, whole civilizations even, have been born and have died in ignorance of this simple truth. Most of the divisions in the world today have come about because people have confused separateness with Holiness. Let us be clear on this before proceeding in the study of Kabbalah. Oneness is Holy.



Adam Kadmon-Primordial Man

Oneness or unity can only come about through joining. All joining is in the *Sephirah* of *Yesod* - Fundament. Traditionally this *Sephirah* is associated with the flesh between the ten fingers and toes, more specifically the tongue between the fingers and penis between the toes of *Adam Kadmon* - Primordial Human. The simplest example of the joining between people is the analogy of sex. Another example of the connection between people is that of speech.

Whatever the method, when the organ of speech or sex is joining two people, they are relating through the *Sephirah* of *Yesod* - Fundament. *Yesod* - Fundament is the headquarters of Holiness. Internalizing the *Sephirah* of *Yesod* - Fundament requires a close examination of our most basic relationships. Without looking too deeply, it will not be difficult to find where we have been dishonest and deceitful. But this is the Passover Seder Night; we don't have to make a searching moral inventory of our behaviors. We are being given *Mochin D'Gadlut* - Large Mindedness for this night. There are shortcuts we can take this night to bring us to holiness and the fixing of our relationships.

Whatever stage of intimacy we are currently sharing, whether we are like Adam and Eve, avoiding each other because we are ashamed of ourselves, or like Joseph and his brothers, caught up in a vicious cycle of compounded misunderstandings, we are likely to be staring at the following awful myths:

- 1) I'm convinced that I'm basically flawed, defective and probably worthless.
- 2) I'm terrified of being discovered, because I am convinced everyone must reject me if they discover who I am.
- 3) I'm sure my needs will never be met unless I provide for myself.
- 4) I think my greatest need is for escape, ease, comfort, prestige, sex, oblivion, etc.

The fact that I consciously know these ideas, born of shame to be delusional does nothing to diminish their effect on my behavior on a day to day basis. So pervasive and pernicious is their influence in the affairs of humans, it is no exaggeration to say they are the bitterest after-taste of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good

and Evil. Ultimately they create Unholiness by preventing Oneness. They destroy intimate relationships and bring into being the three forms of Egyptian exile:

- 1) Ostracism - To be estranged in one's environment.
- 2) Displacement - To be estranged among friends.
- 3) Self-hatred - To be estranged from one's own soul.

These then are the four realities. It may be useful to repeat them out loud.

- 1) I was created to perfection. I am now just the way I am meant to be.
- 2) I was created to be known to others. Others will know me, intimately and still accept me.
- 3) I was created to have my needs met. I will have my needs met by others.
- 4) I was created to be loved. I am loved unconditionally, and this is always my greatest need.

Of course it easier said than believed or practiced. Let us deal with them one by one as we discuss the Four Cups of Wine.

One of the chief symbols of the Seder, the four cups of wine, corresponds to the four phrases referring to redemption mentioned in the Torah. As it is written; (Exodus 6:6-8):

Therefore say to the Israelites [in My Name], I am God. I will **transport you** from your forced labor in Egypt and **free you** from their slavery. I will **liberate you** with a demonstration of My power, and with great acts of judgment. I will **take you** to Myself as a nation, and I will be to you as a God. You will know that I am Adonai your God who is bringing you out from under Egyptian oppression. I will **bring you** to the land regarding which I raised My hand [swearing] that I would give it to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I will give it to you as an inheritance. I am God.

So, the four expressions of redemption are:

1. I will transport you from your forced labor in Egypt;
2. and [I will] free you from their slavery;
3. I will liberate you with a demonstration of My power;
4. I will take you to Myself as a nation; and

(There is a fifth term hence a fifth cup, but this by tradition refers to the future redemption.) I will bring you to the land.

1. The first cup of wine is drunk after the recitation of the *Kiddush* whose message is clear. 'I will transport you from your forced labor in Egypt,' says God. The Hebrew may also be read to say: I will be transported *with* you from your forced labor. God does not consider Himself divisible from us. We are a part of the Divine. When we are enslaved, God is enslaved. To consider ourselves basically flawed, defective and probably worthless is to think blasphemous thoughts about God. God is with me and I am created to perfection. I am just the way I am meant to be. That is the lesson of *Kiddush*, the first of the four cups.

As will be discussed later, each in its proper place, every cup of wine has its own myth to dispel. Each therefore appears at the appropriate time and place.

2. The second cup is drunk after the telling of the Haggadah following our journey into the *Sephirah* of *Tifereth* - Glory. This occurs after we have taken the



risk of exposing ourselves and our vulnerabilities, disclosing in a frank description the worst sides of our character and personality. Because, even knowing that we were idol worshipers, God reiterates His choice to embrace rather than reject us.

3. The third cup is drunk after *Shulchan-Oraich* - eating the festive meal, which symbolizes the gratification of our needs, for companionship, food, for a place to belong, etc. We have spent an eternity in the company of friends relatives and lovers. We have passed through the journey into and out of Egypt and we are about to make the leap into *Mochin* - Mentalities, *Sephiroth* of a higher order. We know we can have our needs met by others. We are not alone. We are connected. We are ready for the fixing of *Da'at* - Knowing.

4. The fourth cup is drunk after *Hallel* - Praises are sung. Now it becomes clear to us that love is unconditional. that the song out of our mouth is a gift of *Shefa* - Abundance flowing out of the Cause of all things, *Keter* - Crown which is *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty. Which was all we ever needed.

The fifth cup reminds us that the Exodus is a process we have we never completed and we are always on the journey. Only at the end of time will we have fixed the *Sephirah* of *Da'at* - Knowing for all dwellers on Earth. So we pour this cup but we do not drink it.

This is the cup of Elijah the prophet, author of the Haggadah, whose arrival heralding the Messiah we anticipate.

There is some difference of opinion and custom concerning the proper moment to fill this fifth cup. There are those who pour it before the *Ma-Nishtana* - Four Questions when we pour the second cup, to indicate that we feel secure in the knowledge that no matter what we have done, at the end of time when a final reckoning is made and all about ourselves is revealed, we will still not be rejected by the Almighty.

The other custom is to pour this fifth cup before *Hallel* - Praises when we pour the fourth cup. This reminds us that even when the great fixing is achieved our greatest need will still be the need to be loved unconditionally. Even after the Messiah comes the challenge will be to learn how to open our hearts to those who are close to us and love them in the way that God loves. As it is written, (Malachi 3:24)

“He will reconcile the hearts of fathers unto their children and the hearts of children unto their fathers.... Behold I send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of that great and awesome day....”

The Seder begins, as does any Festival meal with a benediction sanctifying the day. This is the declaration of a *Yom Tov* - Holy Day. It has a standard form, *Kiddush*.

We begin *Kiddush* by filling a 5 oz. cup with grape juice or wine. It is important that the cup be filled to the extent that the surface tension of the liquid forms a crown over the top of the cup, called a meniscus. The force that keeps the liquid together in this way, the surface tension, is an effect of natural, physical laws a fuller understanding of which is not required here. Nevertheless, without this effect there would be no life on the planet Earth, since water would behave as a gas not a liquid. We hold in the palm of our hand a cup of this serendipitous, magical liquid, whose

properties we take so for granted, yet which are fantastically providential. Looking at the light reflected off the edges of this crown, it is a good moment to reflect on all the forces joined in this moment and at work in our lives that have brought us to this point. We celebrate the four elementary components of the grape: sunlight, wind, rain and earth. We even celebrate the four forces that go to make up the atoms themselves.

Finally, we acknowledge God's hand in the creation of what we are about to drink. The wine we hold is a pure example of God's energy transubstantiated.  $e = mc^2$  means that if you have enough energy you can make matter. God has that energy and we are the matter He has fashioned. This is the meaning of the first Blessing: *'Who creates the fruit of the vine.'*

The second part of *Kiddush* refers us to our chosen-ness. Those of us in a state of awareness understand how mysterious is this condition of being chosen. It makes no sense at all.

Why are we Jewish people? What makes us so special that we have been granted the grace of this gift, this Torah, a blueprint for action, this program of life, the very concept of the Fixing - *Teshuvah*? The answer, of course, is always a mystery. God simply said, 'Enough! You've suffered enough!' We express our astonishment at the love and joy this festival represents and how different we feel as a consequence.

The text in English:

***When the festival begins on a Friday night begin here:***

**(It was evening and it was morning,) The sixth day. The heavens and earth and all their multitudes were completed. On the seventh day God completed the work He had done, and rested on the seventh day from all the work He had done. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, for on it He rested from all the work that God created and made.**

***When the festival begins on a weekday begin here:***

**Attention colleagues!**

**Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.**

**Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the universe, who has chosen us from among all people, and raised us above all languages, and made us holy through His commandments. You have given us, Adonai, our God, with love (On the Sabbath, add: Sabbaths for rest and) festivals for joy, feasts and festive seasons for rejoicing (On the Sabbath**

## קִדּוּשׁ

(לשבת ויהי ערב ויהי בקר  
יום הששי ויכלו השמים והארץ וכל צבאם:  
ויכל אלהים ביום השביעי, מלאכתו אשר  
עשה, וישבת ביום השביעי, מכל-מלאכתו  
אשר עשה: ויברך אלהים את-יום השביעי,  
ויקדש אותו, כי בו שבת מכל-מלאכתו,  
אשר-ברא אלהים לעשות:)

סברי מרנו ורננו ורבנותי:  
ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי  
הגפן:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר בחר  
 בנו מכל-עם, ורוממנו מכל-לשון, וקדשנו  
 במצותיו, ונתתן-לנו יי אלהינו באהבה  
 (לשבת שבתות למנוחה ומועדים לשמחה,  
 חגים וזמנים לששון את-יום (לשבת השבת  
 הנה ואת-יום) חג המצות הנה, זמן חרותנו,  
 (לשבת באהבה) מקרא קדש, זכר ליציאת  
 מצרים, כי בנו בחרת ואותנו קדשת  
 מכל-העמים. (לשבת ושבת) ומועדי קדשך  
 (לשבת באהבה ובכבוד) בשמחה ובששון  
 הנתתנו: ברוך אתה יי מקדש (לשבת  
 השבת ו) ישראל והזמנים:

(כשחל ירט במוצאי שבת מוסיפים כאן  
 ברכות הברלה.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא  
 מאורי האש:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, המבדיל  
 בין קדש לחול בין אור לחשך, בין ישראל  
 לעמים, בין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה.  
 בין קדשת שבת לקדשת יום טוב הבדלת.  
 ואת-יום השביעי מששת ימי המעשה  
 קדשת. הבדלת וקדשת את-עמך ישראל  
 בקדשתך. ברוך אתה יי המבדיל בין קדש  
 לקדש:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, שהחיינו  
 וקיימנו והגידנו לזמן הזה:

add: this Sabbath-day and) the day of  
 this Feast of Matzahs the Season of  
 our Freedom (On the Sabbath add:  
 with love), a holy convocation, com-  
 memorating the departure from  
 Egypt. You have chosen us and sanc-  
 tified us from all the nations. You  
 have given us as a heritage Your holy  
 (On the Sabbath add: Sabbath and)  
 Festivals (On the Sabbath add: with  
 love and desire), in happiness and  
 joy. Blessed are You, Adonai, who  
 sanctifies (On the Sabbath add: the  
 Sabbath and) Israel and the festivals.  
 Blessed are You, Adonai, our God,  
 Sovereign of the universe, who  
 quickened us, supported us, and  
 brought us to this time.

*When the festival falls on Saturday night  
 add the following before the preceding  
 blessing 'Who quickened us.'*

Blessed are You, Adonai, our God,  
 Sovereign of the universe, who cre-  
 ates the fiery lights.

Blessed are You, Adonai, our God,  
 Sovereign of the universe, who distinguishes among sacred and profane,  
 between light and darkness, Israel and the gentiles, between the seventh  
 day and the six work-days. You have distinguished the holiness of the  
 Sabbath from the holiness of the festivals, and have sanctified the seventh  
 day above the six work-days. You have distinguished and sanctified Your  
 people, Israel, with Your sanctity. Blessed are You, Adonai, who distin-  
 guishes among holy and holy.

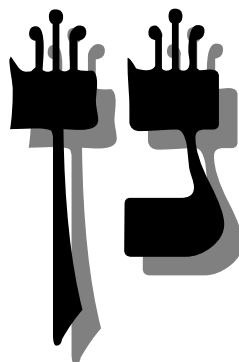
Before drinking the first cup of wine a moment is taken to look into the  
 light reflected off the top of the liquid crown and meditate upon the *Shechinah* -  
 Divine Presence.

*To receive the gift of the Shechinah I must first internalize the lesson of  
 Kiddush. I was created to perfection. I am just the way I am meant to be.*

Drink the cup of wine while seated, reclining to the left as a symbol of our  
 freedom.



## 2. *URCHATZ* WASH HANDS



## Bound or unfettered, humble or Divine The letter *Nun*

The Hebrew letter/word נון - *Nun* translates as ‘endurance.’ The Hebrew letter נון - *Nun* has two forms. Used in the normal construction of a word, the נון - *Nun* is bent upon and around itself as though to protect its center. When used as the final letter of a word, the נון - *Nun* is open, expansive and powerful. These are different aspects of the same concept. נון - *Nun* is the archetypal vessel for the divine. Known more commonly as the 50 Gates of Wisdom, נון - *Nun* provides the conduit through which everything, every newly-created moment, every creative thought of God, every divine desire flows into the universe; into the microcosm through the simple נון - *Nun*, into the macrocosm through the final נון - *Nun*.

נון - *Nun* represents the path between *Netzach* - Victory or Eternity, and *Yesod* - Fundament. It contains the secret of ‘endurance.’ To walk the paths of the letter נון - *Nun*, I must first become aware of the matriarchal qualities of Rachel that reside in me, for Rachel pays attention to the minutest details of every plan, to every outcome of each action, to the present in every moment of passing time. This is the exposition of the simple, humble נון - *Nun*.

Secondly I must be aware of the matriarchal qualities of Leah within me, for Leah sees the bigger picture, the cosmic ramifications of individual actions, and the world to come in every moment. This is the exposition of the final נון - *Nun*.



## 2. URCHATZ - WASH HANDS

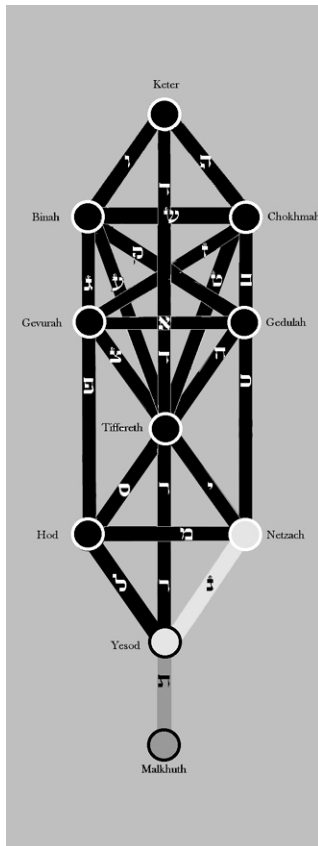
### THE PATH THROUGH *NUN* - נ BETWEEN *YESOD* - FUNDAMENT AND *NETZACH* - VICTORY

Washing the hands is an ancient Jewish ritual in and of itself, with no counterpart in any contemporary or adjacent cultures and religion. Neither Greeks nor Romans, Medes nor Babylonians had such a symbol as part of their religious ritual.

There are times when washing hands is a way of cleansing them of accumulated dirt and residue of the past. This is not one of those times. Its real role in the Seder is most closely reflected in the metaphor 'I wash my hands of it'.

The secret of the *Sephirah* of *Netzach* - Victory, is knowing where, when and how to begin. Now, as we begin the Seder proper, it is proper that we begin as those who were victorious before us began. It is said as an axiom of the martial arts, 'If you are still, I will also be still. But if you move, I will move first.' Before a priest (Cohen) might perform any rites or duties in the Temple, he had to wash his hands and feet from the Great Bronze Washstand that stood in the courtyard, between the sacrificial altar and the steps leading up to the sanctuary. This washing of hands during the Seder actually refers back to that Great Bronze Washstand of the Tabernacle constructed in the desert when we came out of Egypt, and even further back to the Jewish women and the mirrors they used in Egypt. Seen in context though, the path through the *Sephirah* of *Netzach* - Victory is our first window into the past, into slavery.

Everything may be a necessity at some point in our lives, even evil, even sin. But if it is not to leave us dirty or soiled it must be allowed to pass through our hands like water. The way we love and connect with our sexual partner is a prime example of the need to



let lust and other feelings flow through us like water. If we allow any process, be it hunger or lust or fear or anger expend itself in a natural way, we will be cleansed by it. If we attempt to hold on to it, to grasp or restrain it we will find ourselves dirtied.

When we let go of a process after we perform an action we allow it to serve God's purpose. As was discussed earlier in the making of the *Charoseth*, our mothers in Egypt showed us a prime example of an action that serves its purpose, when they used romance, intrigue and sexual desire to achieve reconciliation with their husbands. The way water flows between the fingers as it passes over the hands leaving them cleansed, copies the action of lust as it flows through the body. Water always tries to shed its energy and come to rest after doing so. So too do the sensations of anger, hunger, lust and longing. Healthy emotions and spirits do not hang on to things one moment longer than necessary. Even the mirrors our mothers used in lovemaking beneath the apple trees were holy, because they were ready to let them go and give them away. How proper than that these same mirrors were integrated into the Temple Service. They had a crucial lesson to teach; washing one's hands is the first lesson in letting go.

At this point in the Seder, washing the hands has a specific purpose other than to punctuate and elect. It is a statement of purpose, an elevation from the mundane. It symbolizes the wish to be relieved of the bondage of self. This is the meditation that accompanies this ritual. Silently we pray as we do before we begin any venture:

'God. Relieve me of my slavery, help me do Your will. Use me for Your purpose and ease my self serving impulses, so that my success in overcoming my character defects will show others how powerful You are, how great Your love and how sweet Your way.'

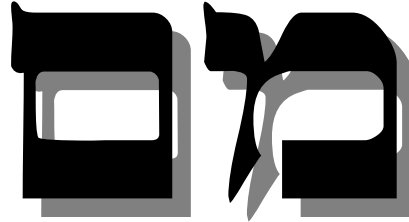
Note: In Jewish Law - *Halacha*, when eating dry foods other than bread, washing the hands is not necessary. But as soon as liquids are involved, as with the ritual of *Karpas* we are about to perform, when we will dip vegetables into salt water, we must prepare our hands by washing them. This is easily explained in terms of hygiene and cleanliness. But in light of what we just said, it attains a far deeper significance. Whenever hunger, lust or the expression of any of our needs comes over us, we beg God to help us express His will. We ask Him to ensure the lust or the hunger washes over us passing through our fingers, and leaving us cleansed just as washing our hands does.

According to the tradition I received, only the *Ba'al HaSeder* - Leader of the Seder washes his or her hands in this ritual, as it is only he the leader who dips the vegetables into water. No benediction is recited on washing the hands.



### 3. *KARPAS* - PARSLEY





## Mother of mothers - the letter *Mem*

The Hebrew letter מ - *Mem* has two forms, open and closed. Used in the normal construction of a word, the מ - *Mem* is open. When used as a final letter, the ם - *Mem* is closed. מ - *Mem* is womb, sealed against or inundated with forces of life, fecundity and birth.

The open מ - *Mem* represents the microcosmic world we each inhabit, where the Matriarch Rachel rules supreme.

The closed and final ם - *Mem* represents the Macrocosmic World-to-Come where the Matriarch Leah reigns. מ - *Mem*'s situation on the Tree of the *Sephiroth* is as the lowest of the Horizontal, Mother letters.

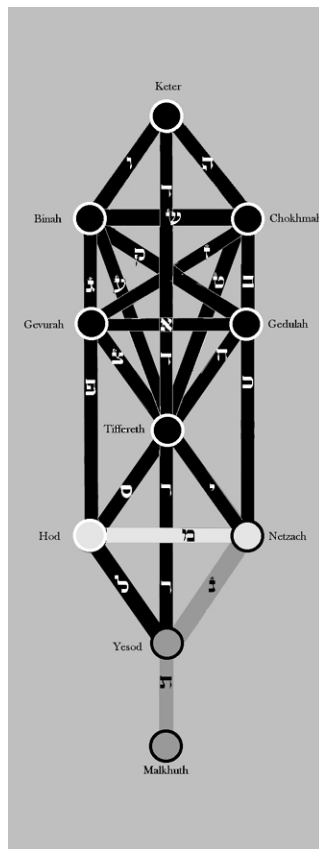
To walk the paths of the מ - *Mem*, I must be aware of the powers of longing as they flow through me, first, from left to right with desire to be filled with abundance, joy and contentment, and second, from right to left with need to share my gifts, my joy and self. מ - *Mem* is experienced in the abdomen where the body has its sensations of thirst, lust and laughter.



### 3. KARPAS - PARSLEY

#### THE PATH THROUGH MEM - מ BETWEEN NETZACH - VICTORY AND HOD - BEAUTY

Taking a small piece of vegetable, radish, celery, parsley or similar, less than the size of an olive, we dip it in saltwater, pronounce the blessing over vegetables and eat it.



This whets our appetite physically and intellectually. Even the child in us wakes up asking to be told the meaning. The *Karpas* signals our bodies it is time to eat, it is after all an hors d'oeuvre. We snap alert, then tax all our powers of concentration in the Seder that follows. The child has a short attention span and so we use tricks to keep the attention focused.

The teaching of the *Sephirah* of *Hod* - Beauty is as follows: Know when to stop, when to let go and when to withhold. The secret of Beauty is knowing when to stop.

*Karpas* must be dipped in salt, not sweet water. Know then that this is a story of tears; this is how they taste. This is the realm of our Mother Leah who has changed the past a thousand times with her tears. We too must do the same. A broken heart is absolutely crucial to any working of the Kabbalistic paths or ascent of the Tree of Life in safety. If you cannot access your broken heart you are not blissfully unaware, you are unconscious.

- Let the saltwater point to the tears that we have shed to earn our seat at this Seder table.
- Let the salt point to the eternal bond of God's covenant with Abraham and us.
- Let the saltwater point to the profoundest spiritual longing, the element of water, the ocean. It is the clutching sensation in our stomach that we experience in our longing for fulfillment. It is this, which

has been driving us onwards.

(But here we meet with the technical problems of audio-visual education so far removed from the historical source. Taking food and dipping it in condiments is itself an expression of wealth. Only people enjoying abundance, with quantities of food and the time to enjoy it, indulge in such practices - fiddling with bits of food. Is it not contradictory then to pretend we are poor slaves whilst playing with food? Are we pretending to be slaves tonight? Are we playing? Can we learn empathy, can we be taught? Is it possible to identify with the feelings we had when we were slaves?)

The Text in English:

**Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the Universe who creates the fruits of the earth.**

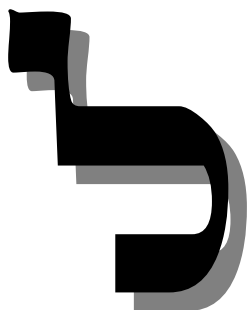
## כַּרְפֵּס

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי האדמה:

The Karpas is eaten without reclining to the left.



4. *YACHATZ*  
BREAK THE MIDDLE  
MATZAH



## Tower Flying Through The Air. The letter *Lamed*

The Hebrew letter/word לָמַד - *Lamed* translates as 'learn' and 'teach.' ל - *Lamed* connects two of humanity's most important intangibles: imagination and intuition. It is known as the "Tower Flying Through The Air" because it is the only Hebrew letter to stick its head up above the line. To walk the path of the ל - *Lamed* is to become ready to learn.

In Hebrew, as in Yiddish, 'learning' means both studying and teaching.

In order to teach, the master must condense the teaching from infinity down to byte-sized information. The student must empty the mind and make it a vessel capable of receiving the learning.

The deepest learning is that which connects the heart to the knowledge in the brain, forming a synthesis of internalized and external knowledge.

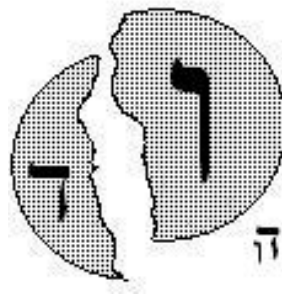
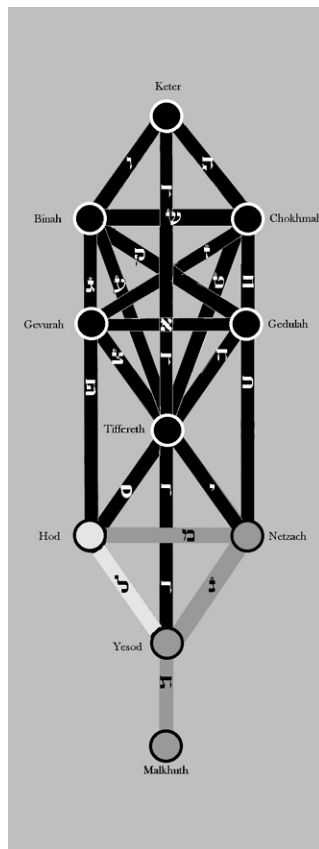
The ultimate path of the ל - *Lamed* is to be a student of God. That is to say, both to learn from God and to learn of God. God's students are the real ל - *Lameds*. This is the path between *Hod* - Beauty and *Yesod* - Fundament, where all our lessons have to be learned.



## 4. YACHATZ BREAK THE MIDDLE MATZAH

THE PATH THROUGH *LAMED* - ל BETWEEN *HOD* - BEAUTY  
AND *YESOD* - FUNDAMENT

We break the middle Matzah, the one called Levi. The smaller portion goes back into the Seder Plate, the larger is placed into a pillowcase and hidden somewhere during the meal, for children to seek and find. According to the Kabbalah when breaking the Matzah one should try to break it into two pieces, with the smaller resembling the Hebrew letter *Daleth* - ד and the larger piece resembling the Hebrew letter *Vav* - ו. Together, the *Daleth* - ד and *Vav* - ו make the letter *Heh* - ה. The symbolism will be explained at greater length in the commentaries to the 8th and 12th *Simanim* - Stations.



Is Matzah poor man's bread or the food of free men? Can it be both? If we regard it as the Bread of

Affliction why did we carry dough on our backs out of Egypt, to let it bake in the hot sun without leavening and rising? Can one Matzah be both a symbol of wretchedness and deliverance?

Matzah is a paradox. It is at once a symbol of everything we despise and everything we respect. There is a certain symmetry about this paradox. In fact it is usually thought that the *Sephirah* of *Yesod* - Fundament is itself the paradigm of Symmetry. *Yesod* - Fundament is the perfect balance between the two opposing forces of charge and discharge. Between purest chastity and orgasmic effulgence, between passion and indifference.

We do not have to decide at this point whether Matzah is a symbol of this or that, for we are about to expand upon the paradox. Not only is it at once so and not so, but in breaking the middle Matzah we are also about to split the metaphor, and make a break with all the different forms of known symmetry. There is, impossibly, a 'bigger half' and a 'smaller half'.

A 'bigger' and 'smaller' half, you say?

The Universe is not fair. This unpalatable truth is almost a preamble to the Haggadah. The universe is not symmetrical; all is not evenly divided. There is a richer and poorer half. The distribution of assets is not equal. This is one of the mysteries that persist, omnipresent, throughout time. Life the universe and everything is not fair. We cannot balance this sorry scheme of things entire, and so it goes. What then was our response as children to the dawning realization that the universe was not fair? Did we have coping mechanisms? We survived, we are here so we must have coped, but did we sacrifice our health or sanity in order to do so? Are we aware how badly we are split? How have we internalized the lop-sidedness of the universe? Or do we see asymmetry as symmetry, the ultimate insanity?

Most probably, as infants, as children we split. We broke into pieces. We hid ourselves away. And this is how we prepared ourselves for life.

Like the hungriest of paupers eating only what we absolutely must, laying aside the greater part for later - when 'time is riper' - we compromised. We accepted this imbalance, bowing to the 'Law of Unfairness' which we were told, must prevail.

Instead of admitting how sad this made us we found ways to rationalize the horrible state of things. We explained our place in Egypt as a natural event. Our alienation and self-loathing was all seen as perfectly natural. The Exile of *Da'at* - Knowing was exactly that. We didn't trust our own reading of things as unfair, so instead we rationalized the world our parents presented as the only possible world. Rather than believe their world insane we accepted our own internal world as flawed. Eventually we too began to accept that things were as they ought to be. We didn't know any more that we didn't know any more. We grew satisfied with the expression of a mere fraction of our personalities. We went into 'survival mode', subsisting on crumbs of humanness, hiding the greater part of ourselves from ourselves. This is exactly we do with the *Alikomen*.

But spiritual hungers have ways of expressing themselves disallowing the body to ignore them. If I do not acknowledge the God shaped hole in me, I will end up with some ravenous soul and body destroying habit, an addiction to some behavior

instead. And so it was in Egypt. The focus of our lives grew narrower as our preoccupation with gnawing hunger grew stronger. We had nothing to spare for our emotional or spiritual growth when all we had went to feed our selfish habits. There were fewer and fewer opportunities to do any fixing, as we chased the 'fix' with growing desperation. In the end it became obvious that we had developed a pathological relationship with the 'bread of our affliction'

We break the middle Matzah because the middle Matzah represents the Great Mothering Principle of the Kabbalistic *Seфирah* of *Binah* -- Understanding. We break it to show that in Egypt we had lost the ability to take care of our most basic needs, to 'mother' ourselves.

So, why now? The answer is heartbreaking. The reason this happens before the Haggadah is recited, is because the splitting of the self almost always occurs when we are still in a pre-verbal state. The disorder of our personalities, the shaming and abandonment of ourselves happens when we are still babies, infants. What follows is the story of our lives after the rupture. Since words cannot adequately describe our inevitable, inexorable descent into the blast furnace that was our Egypt, we act it out in this short ritual, we simply break the Matzah, leaving the smaller section on the Seder Plate; we wrap the larger piece in a pillowcase and put it away for *Afikomen*.

Redemption is a lifelong process, but tonight we are gifted with *Mochin D'Gadlut* - Large Mindedness, we are able to take giant steps in our recovery. We have the opportunity to realize, actualize and integrate the whole of ourselves into ourselves. We can do this by eating the *Afikomen* as a symbolic 'last-act' of the Seder. When it is all over we will have achieved reclamation of the 'Self' we abandoned.

Now, we take the *Afikomen* we have wrapped in a pillowcase, and slinging it over our shoulder we explain to our children:

This is what our parents did when they came out of Egypt; as it is written 'Their dough slung over their shoulders in sheets. The sun shone so hot that it was baked, without the opportunity to leaven as dough left alone will do. And so they continued to eat the unleavened bread even when they came out of Egypt.'

Why did we continue eating this bread after we had left Egypt? Why is this a point worth mentioning?

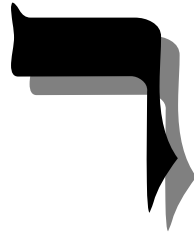
In a sense we are reminding ourselves of those times early on in our spiritual recovery journeys when we found ourselves in very painful situations, eating what seemed identical to the bread of our affliction. We can only see with hindsight that we were eating bread of freedom. In our haste to leave Egypt we were prepared to go to any lengths; even mothers with tiny children walked away from the only homes they had. They were walking into the wilderness with nothing to eat but unfinished pastry dough and trust in their Higher Power.

It is customary to hide the *Afikomen*, allowing children the excitement of the search. A deeper explanation will be given at the appropriate place in the Haggadah.





**5. *MAGID***  
**TELL THE STORY**



### Poorest of the poor - The Letter *Raish*

The Hebrew letter/word ריש - *Raish* translates as 'poverty,' but it also means 'head.' To walk the path of the ר - *Raish* is to achieve real humility. Real appreciation of one's poverty is the key to appreciating one's divinity. When the moon realizes it has no light of its own, but what the sun shines upon it, the moon realizes that its light is in fact sunlight. When I realize that I have neither light nor life nor will of my own, I can begin to appreciate that all these things in me are Godly.

ר - *Raish* is the pathway between *Yesod* - Fundament and *Tiffereth* - Glory, seemingly a huge gap. *Yesod* - Fundament represents the moon while *Tiffereth* - Glory represents the sun. On this, the path of the letter ר - *Raish*, the head must first be bowed in humility and self examination before it may be raised in joy heavenward.

Some say the ר - *Raish* is an upside-down version of the Hebrew letter נ - *Nun*, If so, it is teaching me that I need to empty myself of the notion that I am the vessel for the divine. Only when I when I no longer pretend I am a vessel for the divine do I become fit to be a vessel for the divine. To walk this path is truly to feel one's poverty.



## 5. MAGID - TELL THE STORY

### THE PATH THROUGH *RAISH*- 7 BETWEEN *YESOD*- FUNDAMENT AND *TIFFERETH*- GLORY

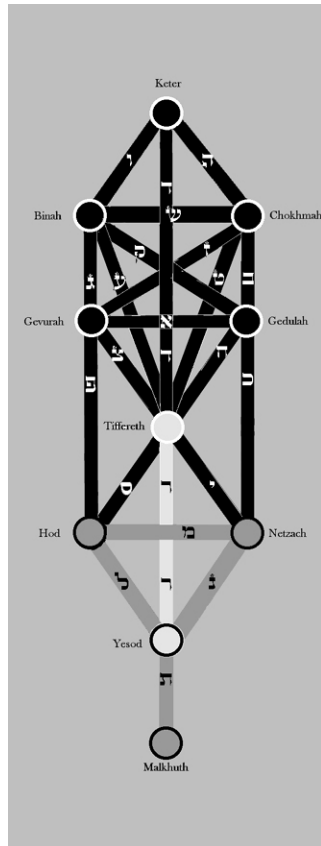
#### The Second of the Four Cups

The biggest lesson Judaism has to teach the modern world is the secret of this journey from the Sefhirah of *Yesod*- Fundament to *Tiffereth* - Glory, from the genitals to the heart. It is the secret of Jacob's transformation into Israel. So many people come to the study of Kabbalah in search of power and other imagined benefits. In this as in all the other branches of Jewish mysticism you will encounter only powerlessness.

It is no exaggeration to say that this is the most painful lesson we have ever had to learn. And many of us have had to learn it again and again, each in our own time. Some of us have taken a lifetime without fully internalizing these lessons. We cannot expect miracles to happen in our lives as long as we refuse to relinquish the controls. Our lives cannot improve if we insist on remaining in charge. When we are ready to admit we have made a mess of things and that we are powerless, then the message of Passover becomes intelligible.

What so precious was it we brought out of Egypt with us on the first night of Passover that was so precious? What could possibly have been worth those hundreds of tormented years, the slavery, the pain or the degradation?

First of all we realized that we could not manage our own lives. Intelligent and well meaning though we were, children of the holy patriarchs and matriarchs, twelve tribes of God, alone we were not enough. Nothing we ourselves were capable of was going to



stop our descent to the lowest depths of defilement.

This may seem at first glance like a very unpretentious truth. Until you realize that many a civilization has gone from evolution to extinction with no inkling of its ramifications.

Secondly, we in Egypt came to believe that a only a power infinitely greater than ourselves was capable of managing, maintaining a sane balance and governing our life's affairs. Throughout the year that revealed the Ten Plagues, we became imbued with the profound awareness that the God of our Fathers is the Creator of the World, and no one else. We realized that we had failed in all our attempts to control our Egyptianization. Even though it was true that we had not intermarried, we'd maintained our identity as the Children of Israel, we spoke Hebrew and we dressed as Jews, we were nonetheless in all respects a nation of idolaters bent upon assimilation into the prevailing culture.

At most, at best we were Jewish Egyptians, and it was not enough to feed our spirits. If there are 50 disgusting ways to live, we had tried 49 of them. We could not escape our insane lifestyle on our own; we were powerless. In order to be delivered out of Egypt we would need the Almighty to act as midwife. To have our Jewish gold separated from the dross that was Egypt we would need an omnipotent, caring and loving God. What priceless knowledge this was.

The only path into *Tifereth* - Glory is an admission of powerlessness and recognition of the unmanageability of my own life. Strangely though, the longer we work at this path the trickier and subtler grows the craziness. Here is an example: Once there was a man who walked out of his house and fell into an open manhole in the street. Once the cast was off his leg and he could walk once more, he left his house and promptly fell into the very same manhole again. Rehabilitation was long and pain-filled. The man persevered though and recovered his strength. After falling into the manhole a third time he begged a friend to tell him what he was doing wrong...



### **THIS IS THE POOR BREAD - *HA LACHMA ANYA***

The first Seder in its modern form was conducted on the road into Babylonian exile some 2500 years ago. We had reached the nadir of our resources. Our homes were wrecked, our families torn apart, we had been stripped of all our pride. Nebuchadnezzar was uprooting whole peoples, dispersing an entire Jewish population, dragging us into slavery. Bondage seemed to dog our steps, it was history repeating itself. We felt powerless.

Our leaders however, made us aware in our despair that this was not a repetition of the Egyptian story. In tents open to weary travelers they prepared a Seder. Inviting anyone who cared to join, they prepared the Seder we are following now.

## מגיד

### הא לחמא עניא

הא לחמא עניא די אכלו אבהתנא בארעא  
 המצרים. כל דכפין ייתי ויכול, כל דצריך ייתי  
 ויפסח. השתא קא. לשנה הבאה בארעא  
 דישראל. השתא עבדי, לשנה הבאה בני חורין:

free people, we have the choices to choose and to change. We cannot be enslaved without our consent.

So we begin our recitation with an invitation in the dialect of common man. The Aramaic tongue was for thousands of years the Yiddish language of Diaspora Jews. As English is to the reader of this Haggadah, so was the *Ha-Lachma-Anya* of yesteryear.

'This then is bread of poverty that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt.....'

Lest there be those amongst us who feel trapped in the present, enslaved to a substance or destructive behavior. The message is crystal clear: We have been there and this is our story.

There is an interesting play on words in the text, and a hint implicit in the invitation. First and foremost, if the miracle is to happen in our life, we have to hunger for freedom. We have to want it more than anything. Only then, the Haggadah tells us, 'All who need may come and celebrate Passover.'

You can have freedom if you want it. Do you want it? Needing it is just not enough. Are you ready to go to any lengths to achieve it?

The text in English:

**This is poor man's bread that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Whoever is hungry come and eat; let whoever is needy come and join in this Passover Seder. This year here, next year in the land of Israel. This year as slaves, next year as free people.**



### THE FOUR QUESTIONS - MA NISHTANA

The *Ma Nishtana*—Four Questions in the text of the Haggadah arise out of various readings in the Five Books of Moses. In four different places in the Torah,

God, through Moses told us to speak directly to our children, to teach them about the Exodus from Egypt. Each of the four quotes varies slightly in its wording, as though each were referring to a different sort of child with a different mentality. It is most unusual to have a Torah commandment instructing us to ask questions. As though the very *Mitzvah* - Commandment to celebrate Passover depended upon our asking questions.

The first line is usually translated as: Why is this night different from all other nights?

As a translation this is incorrect. The Hebrew for such a question would have to be the word, *Lamah* - למה - Why, or *Eich* - איך - How. The word we have in our text is, *Ma* - מה - What.

In fact, the first line of the *Ma Nishtana* is not a question at all but a statement of fact. *Ma* - מה - 'What' is different this night from all other nights. *Ma* - מה - 'What' always refers to the *Sephirah* of *Chokhma* - Wisdom, the highest of the *Sephiroth* of *Mochin* - Minds, the part of our brains connected to the source of all knowledge in the universe.

Generally speaking, the *Sephirah* of *Chokhma* - Wisdom can only be opened in us through the power of the question. The Hebrew word for Wisdom, *Chokhma* - חכמה, may be split into two words, *Koach Ma* - כח מה, the Power of What. If a question can be verbalized, then the question comes from the *Sephirah* of *Binah* - Understanding. But very often a verbalized question will trigger a more profound, inexpressible question, a sense of wonderment and perplexity. If it is just the right question it will trigger a sense of mystery and send the questioner reaching and groping for something new to explain the mystery and answer the question. It will impel a connection to the *Sephirah* of *Chokhma* - Wisdom and something entirely new may come into the world. Something from nothing, a new piece of information, hitherto unexpected and undiscovered. We tend to think of such flashes of pure enlightenment and inspiration as being expressions of genius, and restricted to the experience of the gifted few.

Tonight, though, it is Seder night. All the Gates of Wisdom are open. Everyone, anyone may experience *Mochin D'Gadlut* - Large Mindedness. Whereas normally, on every other night of the year, such exalted states are strictly the domain of gifted individuals, tonight, *Ma* - מה - 'What' is different. Hence the opening line of the *Ma Nishtana*.

Kabbalists of every era and epoch have addressed themselves to the *Ma Nishtana*, to explain the questions in a meaningful and personal way. The most general question is this. What is it about the *Mitzvah* - Commandment to eat Matzah and *Marror*, and the other rituals of this Seder night, that is so crucial to the *Gily Shechinah* - Divine Revelation and healing and restoration of intimacy that we are promised as a reward for celebrating the Seder? Why should the experience of *Mochin D'Gadlut* - Large Mindedness require all these small details and minute distinctions? Why are we still so fixated on the Exodus from Egypt at all?

Of people on this spiritual path, working towards the recovery of intimacy, others sometimes ask the following:

## מה נשתנה

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות?

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה.  
הלילה הזה בלוי מצה:

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות  
הלילה הזה מרוה:

שבכל הלילות אין אנו מטבילין אפילו פעם  
אחת. הלילה הזה שתי פעמים:

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין בין יושבין ובין  
מסבין. הלילה הזה בלגנו מסבין:

'Why can't you just leave your past behind you, why must you process, process, process all the time? Why go back and visit with the past? Is it healthy to live in the horror story? Look to the future. Don't talk about the past as though you had a miraculous healing from some kind of disease. You glorify the Exodus, treating it like a Dialysis machine or Iron Lung without which you could not live. Why can't you be like a normal person?'

The youngest person sitting at the table is expected to be the one to ask the four questions. The youngest is essentially the newcomer, and these questions are natural to the newcomer.

1. Was our madness in Egypt so all-encompassing, so all-excluding? Perhaps we are making the mistake of judging another culture and another era by standards appropriate only to our own? Surely it wasn't that bad, we could not have been that bad?

2. You say the Egyptian Exile was so bitter, but why could we find no pleasure in what we were doing? Everyone has to bear some degree of pain in life, but who says pain has to be experienced as suffering?

3. The relaxed attitude we adopt at the Seder, symbolized by the condiments, dipping food into food, begs the question; If we are working at spiritual growth, then why don't we just get on with life? Why pay so much attention the way we feel? Surely a little more discipline, more will-power, a tougher daily regimen, all would work more efficiently than this extended Seder-feast?

4. Why do we take the journey so slowly? Surely we ought to be rushing to get where we want to be? We need fixing now! The pace at which we expect changes to occur, is symbolized by the leaning. Sprawling and reclining as though we were 'in our cups'. Why does all this take so long?

The text in English:

**What makes this night different from all nights?**

1. On all nights we eat *Chometz* or *Matzah*, tonight only *Matzah*.
2. On all nights we eat any kind of vegetables, tonight *Marror*!
3. On all nights we need not dip even once, tonight we do so twice!
4. On all nights we eat sitting upright or reclining, tonight we all recline!



**WE WERE SLAVES - AVADIM  
HAYINU**

The answer is simple and we keep it simple.

We weren't just being made to work very hard in Egypt, we were slaves! And we were powerless. It took the power of the Omnipotent Almighty to extract us from there. Which He did this with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. So severely were we addicted to our own slavery and

shame that if God had not taken our parents out of Egypt then we would still be hopelessly enmeshed in that sickness and slavery. We, our children and grandchildren would be without honor. And such is the nature of this slavery disease that we must constantly treat it by talking about it. It doesn't matter whether we are clever, intuitive, experienced or whether we know the whole Torah backwards, whether we can recite the Talmud by heart. We are still commanded to share with others our journey. And the more processing we do the more praiseworthy we will be.

The metaphor of the 'strong hand and outstretched arm' refers to the behavior or activity to which we were enslaved. The strong hand as explained later at greater length, is the breaking of the habit, breaking the pattern of acting out our shame. This is the first and most difficult step to take.

The outstretched arm refers to the gradual separation and the distance we put between ourselves and the paraphernalia of shame based behavior; the escape from people, places, and things.

The text in English:

**We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. Then Adonai our God, took us out of there with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm. If the Holy, blessed One, 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 are wise, all of us understanding, all of us knowing the Torah, we would still be obliged to discuss the exodus from Egypt. Anyone who discusses the exodus from Egypt at length is praiseworthy.**

**עַבְדִּים הָיִינוּ**

עַבְדִּים הָיִינוּ לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם. וַיֹּצִיאֵנוּ יי  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִשָּׁם, בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְרִוּוֹעַ נְטוּיָה, וְאֵלֹו  
לֹא הוֹצִיאָה הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵינוּ  
מִמִּצְרַיִם, הָרַי אָנוּ וּבְנֵינוּ וּבְנֵי בְנֵינוּ,  
מִשְׁעַבְדִּים הָיִינוּ לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם. וְאֵפִילוּ  
כָּלֵנוּ הַכּוֹמִים, כָּלֵנוּ נְבוֹנִים, כָּלֵנוּ זְקֵנִים, כָּלֵנוּ  
יֹדְעִים אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה, מִצְנוֹה עָלֵינוּ לְסַפֵּר  
בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם. וְכֵל הַמְרָבָה לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת  
מִצְרַיִם, הָרַי זֶה מְשֻׁבָּה:



**A STORY - MAASEH**

The Talmud, (Gittin 43a) considers it axiomatic that no one is given insights



## מצעה

into Torah unless they have stumbled in that very field. The five Rabbis mentioned in this story are very famous. Many details of their public and private lives were recorded in contemporary literature. Even the most cursory reading will reveal they had this in common, they were struggling with their personal character defects, their shortcomings, behaviors and personal life patterns.

Rabbi Eliezer is quoted often in the Mishna and Talmud, and this is one of the ways through which we learn of his personal struggles. The following four quotes are from the Mishna Avoth, (2:3)

1. Respect your friends as you respect yourself.
2. Avoid rage.
3. Repent a day before you die.
4. Bask in the glow of the wise but beware lest you get too close and burn yourself.

All are quotes attributed to R. Eliezer, but he of course, had trouble following his own advice. His own life was a shambles, particularly in areas touched by those aspects of his personality which made him such a good advice-giver. He argued with his friends, trying to impress his will upon them by force. He stubbornly refused to accept the majority ruling, rationalized his disrespectful treatment of colleagues and ended up excommunicated by them, dying in total isolation.

Rabbi Yehoshua was wont to say, (Ibid. 11)

1. Meanness
2. Selfishness
3. Hatred of people, these three things destroy a person's life.

Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria was wont to say, (Ibid 3:17) One whose knowledge is not matched by deeds, that is to say, one who 'talks the talk without walking the walk' is like a big tree with lots of leaves but no roots. The first strong wind to blow will uproot it and throw it on its face. One whose deeds more than match his knowledge, is like a tree with few leaves but deep roots. All the ill winds in the universe won't move it from its place.

Rabbi Akiba described himself as recovering former Jew hater. Up to the age of 40 his anger at religious Jews was murderous and fanatical. It was the unconditional love of his friend, later his wife Rachel, that restored him to sanity. The patience of his gentle teacher Nachum Ish-Gamzu, turned this bellicose, belligerent ignoramus into an intellectual giant. Still, he retained his tendency to militancy all his life. 24,000 of his disciples died of 'disrespect', and he was arrested, imprisoned and martyred by the Romans.

Rabbi Tarphon, the Talmud tells us, while on a dangerous stretch of road frequented by robbers and cutthroats, lay on the ground one night, in order to recite the *Shma* according to the ruling of Shammai. Boasting to his friends of the danger he had braved in order to fulfill the ruling according to Shammai, they told him he needed help. They warned him that what he was doing was not religious but compulsive and if he died he wouldn't be a martyr, just another O.D. [overdose].

These then are the Rabbis who sat all night talking about the Exodus and their own healing journeys.

Careful examination of the text reveals a superfluous word. Instead of saying 'all *that* night' it could simply have read 'all night' the Hebrew word for that, *Oto* - אותו, means Him. Each spoke for himself, of his personal journey, and so they passed the whole night away until their disciples came and said, 'Surely, Rabbis, by now you're all cured? Enough, already.'

The text in English:

**It happened that Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Akiba and Rabbi Tarphon were reclining [at a Seder] in B'nei B'rak. They were discussing the exodus from Egypt all that night, until their students came and told them: ' Masters! The time has come to recite the morning Sh'mal'**

## מעשה

מעשה ברבי אליעזר, ורבי יהושע, ורבי  
אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן־עֲזַרְיָה, וְרַבִּי אֶקִיבָא, וְרַבִּי טַרְפוֹן,  
שֶׁהָיוּ מְסֻבִּין בְּבֵנֵי־בְרַק, וְהָיוּ מְסַפְּרִים  
בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם, כָּל־אוֹתוֹ הַלַּיְלָה, עַד שֶׁבָּאוּ  
תַלְמִידֵיהֶם וְאָמְרוּ לָהֶם: רַבּוֹתֵינוּ, הֲגִיעַ זְמַן  
קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע, שֶׁל שַׁחֲרִית:



## RABBI ELAZAR BEN AZARIA

Rabbi Elazar said, 'I am like seventy years old.' Various reasons are proposed to explain the way he looked. He was after all only 16 or 18 years old at the time he is quoted in this Mishna. Maimonides suggests Rabbi Elazar destroyed his physical health with compulsive study of the Torah. Grueling stretches of non-stop study, indifferent nutrition, appalling conditions, insufficient rest and recreation, all of which accelerated the aging process.

Others claim it was a miracle! When he was appointed to head the Academy at this early age, he was granted instant distinction as all his hair turned white overnight.

Or perhaps it was simply his response to being loaded with heavy responsibilities at such a young age. Whatever the reason, Rabbi Elazar said, 'Even though I look the way I do I couldn't convince the sages that talking about the Exodus from Egypt is mandatory at night as well as during the day. When Ben Zoma introduced his exegesis of the verse, etc.'

We of course avoid projecting our legislation onto the post-Messianic era. Even though the ruling might normally have been decided as the majority of Rabbis suggested. Nevertheless, in this instance we accept the minority ruling because it is so important that we take one day at a time, one night at a time, and not project onto the future. We say the *Sh'ma* at night, according to Ben Zoma.

The text in English:

### רבי אלעזר בן-עזריה

אמר רבי אלעזר בן-עזריה. הרי אני כבן  
שבעים שנה, ולא זכיתי שתאמר יציאת  
מצרים בלילות. עד שקדשה בן זומא שנאמר:  
ים. כל ימי למען תזכר, את יום צאתך מארץ  
מצרים כל ימי חייך. ימי חייך היום  
חייך הלילות. וחכמים אומרים: ימי חייך  
העולם הזה. כל ימי חייך להביא לימות  
המשׁיח:

Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah said: I  
am like a man seventy years old, yet  
I have not succeeded in establishing  
that the exodus from Egypt must be  
mentioned at night. Then 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 the Messiah'



### BLESSED IS GOD - *BORUCH HAMAKOM*

In this paragraph we bless and thank God, but we refer to Him as, *Hama-*  
*kom*, 'The Place', or The Omnipresent'

God is the Lord of People, Places and Things.

- First we bless Him for being there when we need Him and giving us some-  
where else to be instead of that place, Egypt.

- Second, we bless Him for being God and giving us Himself instead of  
those people and gods of the Egyptians.

- Third, we bless Him for giving us what we need to replace all the destruc-  
tive things in our lives; we thank Him for giving us the Torah. And then again, we  
thank Him for being God.

When addressing our primary duty to teach and give away the gift so freely  
given to us, and in so doing to become symbols and witnesses of God's power and  
purpose, The Torah makes reference to four kinds of children. These are the four  
personality types to whom we carry the message.

1. The Cleverdik. He is fiercely intellectual, much too smart for his own  
good, an incessant debater and 'terminally unique'.

2. The Wicked. With grandiosity matched only by his low self-esteem,  
he thinks he's too wicked for any miracle to 'work for' him.

3. The Simpleton. He's the newcomer, barely coherent, and ready to  
admit powerlessness.

4. The Ignoramus. He cannot stop running and doesn't know how to ask  
for help.

The text in English:

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

### בְּרוּךְ הַמָּקוֹם.

בְּרוּךְ הַמָּקוֹם. בְּרוּךְ הוּא. בְּרוּךְ שֶׁנָּתַן תּוֹרָה  
לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל. בְּרוּךְ הוּא כִּנְגֵד אֲרֻבָּעָה בָּנִים  
הַבָּרָה תּוֹרָה. אֶחָד חָכָם, וְאֶחָד רָשָׁע, וְאֶחָד  
תָּם, וְאֶחָד שְׂאִינֵי יוֹדֵעַ לְשֹׂאֵל:



### THE CLEVER ONE SAYS MAH! 'WHAT'

He uses the word 'What' in the deprecatory way that Moses used it when he and his brother Aaron were being called to task by the Jewish People for not providing adequately for them. Moses asked, 'And what are we that you rebel against us?'

'So what's the big deal?' asks the Cleverdik. 'What are all these complicated legislations, statutes and laws that God has commanded you?'

From his use of the word 'you' in the question, we can infer his real, if unspoken argument. He would most prefer to keep distance between himself and the process, either by pretending he can master it all so easily he does not need to devote all his attention to it. Or by pretending such tedious lengths won't be required for him to recover from his spiritual crisis. Underneath it all, he's scared.

Grandiose in his fear, he makes two big mistakes. He thinks he's too clever for such simple solutions to work in his life, and he thinks he can do it on his own.

The Haggadah tells us 'You should also say to him.' The word 'also' seems superfluous. The Hebrew word for also *Af*- אַף, has another, emotional, meaning. *Af* – אַף means heavy-nasal-breathing-anger. The Cleverdik's attitude is extremely provoking; he will often infuriate, frustrate and provoke anger in us. But we have all been in his position.

In response the Haggadah warns us to be gentle in our response. The Hebrew word for 'say', *Emor* - אָמַר is the softest, lightest form of address as opposed to the harsher 'speak' or 'tell'. Gently is the only way to carry the message.

#### And the Message is?

We throw the book at him. We tell him, 'You can't take the course without the book. Here, learn all the laws of Passover, from beginning to end, including what happens after the Seder is over.' The underlying message we are trying to get him to internalize is this, 'You can't do it on your own.' Almost the first law of Passover is that you require a group. One person alone can't eat the Paschal lamb; it must be

## חֶכֶם

חֶכֶם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה הַעֲדָת וְהַחֲקִים  
וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים, אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתְכֶם? וְאֵיךְ  
אֵתָהּ אֶמְרֶלְךָ כְּהַלְכוֹת הַפֶּסַח: אִין מִפְּטִירִין  
אַחַר הַפֶּסַח אֶפְיֻקֻּמֵּן:

celebrated en masse. Groups of people whose only requirement is a desire to join may come together in the ritual of Sharing.

You cannot bake Matzah on your own. You cannot escape from Egypt on your own. So don't say 'You' say 'Us'.

Finally we tell him; the reason this works is because we take it with us wherever we go. Even when the Seder is over we don't eat anything else, so that the taste of the miracle we have shared remains with us until we meet again. This is why we eat no dessert after the *Afikomen* - Paschal lamb.

The text in English:

**The clever one says 'What!' "What are the testimonies, the statutes and the laws which Adonai, our God, has commanded you?" You, also, say to him: Like the laws of Passover. 'One is not to eat any dessert after the Passover-lamb'.**



## THE WICKED ONE SAYS MAH! 'WHAT'

He uses the word 'What' in the exclamatory way that Jacob used it when, upon waking from his dream of the celestial ladder and God's pact with him, he exclaimed, 'What an awesome place this is.'

'What a staggeringly difficult path is this you walk,' says the wicked son. He thinks everyone sitting at the Seder Table, every observant Jew with a smile on his or her face must be adhering to some impossible program of perfection. (From which he is excluded by virtue of his irredeemable nature) With his grandiose low-self-esteem, the Wicked one is no less annoying than the Cleverdik was. He asks, in his wickedness, 'Am I not more unique than anyone else?' When you attempt to reassure him he is no worse than others who have recovered, he thinks you must be mistaken. For surely, however redeemable you think a person remains, he's sure he's beyond help.

In essence our response is to identify with him. Yes! We too felt that way. In fact we all felt the same way, unsalvageable and despicable. In those days when we cut great swaths through people's lives as though we were gods, we acted as though we thought we were God, so if we couldn't fix things, who could?

That's why God brought us out of Egypt, doing for us what we couldn't do for ourselves. We blunt his argument; we take the bite out of his snarl, telling him

'Because of this ' The Seder we're having now. ' God did for us.' The reason He did for us was that we might carry the message to you, not because we were any better than you were.

'What does he think?' we ask 'For us and not for him?' Does he really believe God would have left him in Egypt? Does he think he's irredeemable? He obviously never met us before we began our spiritual journeys.

In the quote that we put to him, *'Because of this, God did for me when I came out of Egypt.'* the word 'Did' is ambiguous. The Hebrew for 'Did' is *עשה* - *Asa*. In the world of Kabbalah *Asiya* - עשייה is the world of *Tikkun*, it suggests fixing. That God fixed me.

The word, *Asa* - עשה also refers to the final act of creation, that which God did when He breathed the spirit of speech into Adam and Eve. God's last act is the creation of our world, the world of words, of speech. Words can change everything. Words can give meaning and redeem an act previously thought to have been irredeemable. Because, my words can add or explain the *Kavanah* - Intention of the act I have already performed. Therefore, speech can put the very final stamp upon an act. In this situation, at the Seder while we are telling the story of our personal Exodus from slavery, it is God putting words in our mouths, teaching us how to verbalize all the pain that we could not speak for ourselves. This, we tell the so-called Wicked one, is what God did for me. He taught me the words with which to express my feelings.

The text in English:

**The wicked one says 'What!' "What is this work you do?" He says 'you,' not him! He is excluding himself from the community. And because he has denied that which is fundamental, you therefore also, blunt his teeth and say to him: "It is because of this that the God did for me when I left Egypt; 'for me' - but not for him? If he had been there, would he not have been redeemed?"**



### THE SIMPLE ONE SAYS MAH! 'WHAT'

The Simple one uses 'What!' in the bewildered, confounded sense that Jeremiah used it when he lamented, after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Holy Temple, 'Remember, Oh God, What has happened to us'

Just what is this?' asks the simple son. Compared to his two brothers, the simple one is open-minded, willing to listen and to learn.

The 'simple' one is ready to hear the simple message, as his name implies. *Tam* - תם, the Hebrew word meaning simple has another translation. It means 'The

### רשע

רשע מה הוא אומר? מה העבירה הזאת  
לכם? לך ולא לו. ולפי שהוציא את-עצמו  
מן הקלל, קפר בעקרו. ואף אתה תקנה  
את-שניו ואמר-לו: בעבור זה עשה ה' לי,  
בצאתי ממצרים, לי ולא-לו? אלו היה שם,  
לא היה נגאלי:

End', an unequivocal finality. He is not in two minds about things. He is sure of where he is and the simplicity of these spiritual truths are now apparent to him.

*Tam*, the simple one says, 'What's this?' *Mah-Zos*. The Hebrew word, זאת - *Zos* - 'This', is one of the most often used Zoharic references to the *Shechinah* - God's Dwelling Presence. The simple son asking, *Mah Zos* - 'what's this', has reached deep into the heart of the matter. Like the innocent child in the story of the emperor's new clothes the simple son sees what's really there.

The very first word ascribed to Adam, in the Torah, (Genesis 2:23) is the word, זאת - *Zos* - 'This'.

'This time,' said Adam, 'It is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh.'

Because God breathed into Adam the spirit of speech, the first word Adam spoke was an exhalation of God's *Shechinah* - Dwelling Presence. זאת - *Zos* - 'This' is thus understood as being Adam's expression of the Divine Breath in himself. The rule in Kabbalah is that when a word first appears in the Torah, it remains the headquarters of that word and concept. Forever after, the word, זאת - *Zos* - 'This' carries something of the same meaning.

Describing the entry into the Holy of Holies by the High Priest on the day of Yom Kippur, the Bible text (Leviticus 16:3) uses the word *Zos*. 'With *Zos* - This shall Aaron enter the sanctuary'. There too the word *Zos* is understood to mean more than just simply 'this'. It is said to refer to *T'shuva* more commonly translated as Fixing.

The three elements in the classic description of *T'shuva* are Repentance, Prayer and Charity.

These are the building blocks of the spiritual journey.

1. We confess, admit and come to believe in the possibility of our healing.
2. We become willing, grow humble and make restitution.
3. We pray and meditate, and we become vehicles for the divine message.

Another description of *T'shuva* uses word's *Gematria* - Numerical Equivalence.

1. <i>T'shuva</i> - TZOM	FASTING = צום	=136
2. <i>T'illa</i> - KOL	VOICE = קול	=136
3. <i>Tz'daka</i> - MAMON	MONEY = ממון	=136
ZOS	THIS = זאת	= 408

If we think of the High priest entering the Holy of Holies, we are picturing an approach to the center of ultimate intimacy. In order to be prepared for the Revelation of Divine Presence, an encounter with the *Holy Shechinah*, the Cohen - Priest was required to make sure the three aspects of intimacy were whole. The intimacy between himself and the Jewish People, between himself and himself and finally, between himself and God.

1) *T'shuva* - Repentance, is associated with *Tzom* - Fasting. *T'shuva* covers the relationship a person has with himself. Fasting is one way of creating the emotional and spiritual space required for examination of all the aspects of the damaged self. Achieving intimacy with the self through the use of a period of fasting is part and

parcel of the Yom Kippur service.

תָּם

2) *T'filla* - Prayer, is associated with *Kol* - Voice. *T'filla* covers the relationship a person has with God. Confession and supplication are among the aspects of the Yom Kippur service in a person's attempt to achieve intimacy with God.

תָּם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה זֹאת? וְאִמְרַת אֱלֹהֵי:  
בְּחֶזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ יְיָ מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים:

3) *Tz'daka* - Charity, is associated with *Mamon* - Money. *Tz'daka* covers the relationship a person has with other people. Reaching out and being vulnerable to people are among the aspects of the Yom Kippur service a person may practice in order to achieve intimacy with others.

All three are necessary if the goal of achieving real intimacy is to be reached. The Simple one has put his finger on the great question of the night. How can we possibly go from this state of unpreparedness to the attainment of intimacy in a sudden flash of *Gilyu Shechinah* - Divine Revelation?

*Mah-Zos* - What's this? Asks the simple one. Can we enter the Holy of Holies, without preparing ourselves as High Priests did?

In answer, we tell him that it is not we who are about to do anything. That it is always God who performs the miraculous. One minute we may be stuck in the pit of despair, and suddenly, without exertion on our part we have been fixed, our world has been fixed, the people around us are healed and fixed. Why not do what we need to do and leave the results up to God?

The text in English:

**The simple one says 'What.' 'What is this?' So, say to him: 'With a strong hand God took us out of Egypt, from the house of slaves.'**



### THE ONE WHO CANT ASK - *SHEYNO YODAYA LISHOL*

You must carry the message to the one who can't ask for help.

That is actually our primary purpose as it is written; 'You shall tell it to your child on that day, saying: 'Because of this, God did for me, when I came out of Egypt.'

This is exactly what we told the wicked one when he asked his question, the message to the one who can't ask is identical: 'It works! Look at me, I'm not a slave, I am free. You too can be free. This is why God brought me all this way, so that I could bring this message to you.'

In fact we tell him the Haggadah.

The text in English:



## שְׂאִינוּ יוֹרֵעַ לְשֹׂאֵל

וְשֹׂאִינוּ יוֹרֵעַ לְשֹׂאֵל, אֵת פֶּתַח לוֹ. שְׂנַאֲמַר:  
וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ, בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: בְּעֵבֹר זֶה  
עָשָׂה יי לִי, בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם:

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 God did for me when I left Egypt.'



## I MIGHT HAVE THOUGHT - YOCHOIL

Since it is written, 'You shall tell the Haggadah to your child' I might have thought any time in the spring around Passover time is a good opportunity to talk about the miracle of Healing. Therefore the Torah states specifically, 'On that day.' So now I know the Torah is referring to a more specific period.

However, I might have thought that day-time, while going about the business of preparing for the Festival - *Yom-Tov* would be a good opportunity to say the Haggadah, to talk about the Seder and the spiritual journey, while we are cleaning the house for Passover. Therefore the Torah states precisely; You shall tell the Haggadah to your child, on that day, saying, 'Because of this God did for me when I came out of Egypt.'

I can only say 'Because of this' at the formal Seder when the symbols of the Seder, Matzah and *Marror*, the symbols of slavery and freedom are clearly visible. We need to stay in touch with the basics. 'We must keep it green.' The subject of our discourse must not become some abstract journey we talk about. We need to keep it real and tangible to all our senses.

The text in English:

**I might have thought [the discussion of the exodus] should begin on the first of the month. The Torah therefore says, `On that day.' Now, that day,' could mean during the daytime; So, the Torah tells us to say, `because of this.' The expression `because of this' can only be said when Matzah and *Marror* are placed before you.**

## יְכוֹל

יְכוֹל מֵרֵאשׁ הַדָּשׁ, תִּלְמֹד לֹמַר בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא. אִי בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא. יְכוֹל מִבְּעוֹר יוֹם תִּלְמֹד  
לֹמַר. בְּעֵבֹר זֶה. בְּעֵבֹר זֶה לֹא אָמַרְתִּי, אֶלֶּא בְּשַׁעַה שְׁלֹשׁ מִצָּה וּמִדּוֹר מְנַחֵם לְפָנֶיךָ:



**FROM THE BEGINNING - MITCHILO**

When we were commanded to tell the Haggadah to our children this was the reference. The actual Haggadah begins here. The word Haggadah means tough talk. Hard words to swallow: The Talmud refers to Haggadah as ' words, hard as sinews '

What could be so unpalatable and indigestible about the Haggadah story?

More than just the admission of powerlessness it must be the level of our depravity, a major component of the story that embarrasses us. This isn't the noble story of our struggle to get out of Egypt. The Exodus was not a civil rights march. We weren't fighting anyone. This is not our struggle for the right to equality or freedom of religion. This is a retelling of events as they really occurred. Our contribution to the whole saga was not a valiant or gallant one.

To understand anything about our history, put it in the context of daily commerce in a civilization of Bronze-age Mesopotamia and Egypt 1800-1300 BCE. What did people do for 'kicks'? The overwhelming mood and mind-altering experience of ancient times was paganism, idol worship in all its multifarious forms. Without going into sordid detail, suffice it to say that most sane, healthy, 'modern' people would be disgusted by most forms of ancient idol worship.

What is worse is that humanity had developed powerfully pathological relationships with it. That is to say, they persisted in practicing idolatry in the face of all evidence that it was harmful to their physical, mental and spiritual health.

High on our list of contemptible people are the panderers and purveyors of death-dealing habits, be they crack dealers, tobacco houses, sugar barons, propagandists, polluters or televangelists.

Well, the bad news, the unpleasant truth the Haggadah reminds us of, is that we were up there on the list of exploiters. Our family business was the making and distribution of idols and fetishes. We had the local franchise dealership in Ur of the Chaldees.

The good news is that now God has attached us to His worship, as it is written. 'Joshua said to all the people etc. etc.'

The text in English:

**In the beginning our fathers served idols; but now the Omnipresent One has drawn us into His service. As it is written; Joshua said to all the people: Thus says Adonai, God of Israel, `Your fathers lived on the other side of the river for ages - Terach, father of Abraham and father of Nachor, when they worshipped idols. 'Now, I took your father Abraham from beyond the river, and I led him throughout the 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 as a possession, and Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt.'

### מתחלה

מתחלה עובדי עבודה זרה היו אבותינו. ועכשו קרבנו המקום לעבודתו. שנאמר: ויאמר יהושע אל-כל-העם. כה אמר יי אלהי ישראל, בעבר הנהר ישבו אבותיכם מעולם. תרה אבי אברהם ואבי נחור. ויעברו אלהים אחרים: ואקח את-אביכם את-אברהם מעבר הנהר, ואולף אותו בכל-ארץ כנען. וארבה את-ורעו, ואתן לו את-יצחק: ואתן ליצחק את-יעקב ואת-עשו. ואתן לעשו את-הר שעיר, לרשת אותו. ויעקב ובניו ירדו מצרים:



### BLESSED IS THE KEEPER OF PROMISES - *BORUCH SHOMER*

The text reads: 'Blessed is the keeper of His promises to Israel!' Is there some suggestion here that God doesn't always keep His promises? Is the text implying that He deserves validation for keeping this one? The next line of text reads: 'Because the Holy, blessed One calculated the end, to do'. What is the connection between this and the previous statement?

What promise to Israel is being referred to here in the text? Nowhere in the recorded history of Israel before the Exodus, do we find such a promise made to them. To who then was the promise made, and what is the meaning of the phrase; 'calculated the end, to do'?

To do what?

The Haggadah is referring to mysteries spoken about in whispers even by the Kabbalists. Mysteries included in the phrase, 'The last action is already implicit in the first thought' - meaning, the end is already recorded before the beginning happens.

An example of how Jewish history sees itself in the context of the evolution of the world is the following statement. The last act on the stage of classical history was the appearance of Israel.

Even in antiquity Israel was a newcomer. By Jewish tradition, we were, in fact, the last of the 'nations' to evolve. Israel was the end, as it were, of the evolutionary process of creation, of nationhood, of language and culture. According to the historical development described in the book of Genesis, there was a great deluge, after which seventy nations and tongues spread out upon the face of the Earth. Thereafter begins the story of one man, Abram and his wife Sarai and their relationship to God, upon which the text focuses. Everything preceding the election of Abram is The Beginning.

**The promise to Israel, is the promise God made to Himself to create Israel.**

The final act of God, so to speak, in the creation of everything was the election/evolution of Israel, but in context, it was also the primary purpose.

**What was the great wealth promised to our father Abraham?**

'The Children of Israel came through the sea on dry land' (Exodus 14:22). Were they in the sea or were they on dry land? asks the Midrash. It goes on to say, from here we learn that each individual had to throw himself into the sea before it parted.

The Midrash tells us that Nachshon b. Aminadav, prince of the tribe of Judah was first to jump into the sea, which reached his nostrils before splitting for him. Did Nachshon know what would happen or was he committing suicide? And all those who followed, the six hundred thousand, did they know the sea would split or did they expect to drown? Were they expecting some sort of miracle to occur?

It is well known that when the Jewish people left Egypt, they emptied it of treasure and booty, leaving it like an ocean without fish. There was nothing left in Egypt for them to borrow or take. Yet we are told that seven days later Moses had to drive them away from the scene of the Splitting of the Red Sea, because they were so busy plundering the booty, stripping the corpses of the Egyptian dead, that they could not move on. Furthermore we are told: the value of the spoil picked at the seashore was hundreds of times greater than the loot hauled out of Egypt. The Midrash makes a ratio comparison as that of dots of silver to lines of gold. How empty could Egypt have been, if there yet remained the vast treasure carried by the pursuing army, which later drowned in the sea?

The answer is of course that there is treasure and then there is Treasure!

**So, what exactly happened at the sea?**

Knowing intellectually that something is true is only the first step of the learning process. Internalizing that knowledge is crucial before we become capable of acting on it. When beset by fears, acting on faith is difficult and challenging. Doing an act of faith in spite of all one's fears is the first real step towards a free life. Practicing one's faith regularly reduces the fears created by the unknown to lesser and lesser obstacles.

There we were at the Red Sea, the Egyptian cavalry and army bearing down on us; there was nowhere to run.

Moses said, 'God has said, 'Be quiet. He will do the fighting for you. Why are you crying at me? Tell the children of Israel to begin moving.'

This was the first moment in history when our collective fear and our collective faith were tested against each other. It was a triumphant moment because

we made the decision to turn our will and life over to the care of God.

To answer the question did Nachshon know the sea was going to split for him? He didn't stop to ask.

Turning one's life over to the care of God precludes such meaningless speculation. When I know I'm being taken care of, what does it matter whether I'm being told to walk or stand still, to jump into the sea or into the flames?

When it was all over, when we understood what had happened to us, the jump we had made, the quantum leap, the purest act of faith; we couldn't get over it. We sat together on the seashore going over it, again and again. This was wealth beyond anything we had dreamed. That we could give up managing our own lives and turn them over to the care of a kind, caring, loving God? It was totally unprecedented. It was revolutionary. It was even greater wealth than that which we had brought out of Egypt with us. Moses had to get us moving, urging us away from there. He knew it was not the end of our spiritual journey; there was more to come.

It is said that the riches we brought out of Egypt were given us in the merit of the women, while the riches we acquired at the Red Sea were in the merit of the men. In Kabbalistic terminology to take action is a masculine trait, to receive is a feminine trait. This then is the meaning of that statement.

1. Jewish women in Egypt began fixing the exile of *Da'at* - Knowing when they created intimacy with their husbands. They brought about a general realization that we needed help and that God would help us if we only made ourselves available to Him. In a sense the pioneering work they did in fixing *Da'at* - Knowing made us available and open to the possibilities of God working in our lives. Later we did no more than watch the plagues as they befell the Egyptians. The unfolding of this part of the drama required no participation on our part. While not entirely passive, the experience was vicarious. The plagues served, if anything, to highlight aspects of our own existence that required scrutiny. Watching our hosts, the Egyptians suffer the complete collapse of their civilization forced us to examine our own.

2. The subsequent realization that we could make leaps of faith requiring bold action on our part was a lesson we learned from Nachshon b. Aminadav and his friends. We ourselves had to do the jumping; intellectualizing about faith in God wouldn't save us.

The first gift of knowledge is known as the Plunder of Egypt. It refers to our realization that we are powerless and there exists a greater power than our own; that we have lost our sanity and it will require divine intervention if we are to be restored to sanity. These two realizations were the fruit of the Field of Holy Apples.

The second gift of knowledge and riches is referred to as the Plunder of the Red Sea. It refers to a fixing of the relationship between our selves and our soul. Intimacy with the Self is one of the three steps in the healing of *Da'at* - Knowing. We were faced with the Egyptian army whose only thought was our annihilation. Behind us was the sea. We felt trapped and desperate. We cried to

Moses; he cried to God.

God told Moses to tell us not to worry, 'Just let go worrying about the outcome. All you have to do is start walking.' Now, we might have cried out again, 'where shall we walk to?' Instead, we had a profound insight. We turned our will and life over to the care of God and started walking into the sea. We walked without looking back until the water came up to our nostrils. And the waters parted. It became obvious that there was another principle operating in our lives. A revelation had occurred. We each had a personal breakthrough, a *Gilyu Shechinah* - Divine Revelation.

According to the Zohar, when Moses began crying to God on our behalf, he was told: 'Why are you crying to me? The matter depends on *Atika* - The Ancient One.'

God has another name: The Holy Ancient One. If the Field of Holy Apples represents the idea of God present at every moment in history, The Holy Ancient One represents the idea of God outside time and history. This brings us back to the concept mentioned earlier: The end is implicit in the beginning.

There are many different types of salvation, but the ultimate salvation is to discover that you were never in any danger at all.

In the words of the Midrash, before creating the world, God made a condition with the Sea that when the day would come that the Jews needed the sea to split for them, the sea would do so. While we may have been terrified by the danger we thought we were in, the truth was we were never in danger at all.

Some doorways must be passed through, but the ultimate door can only be opened from the other side, from the inside. If you've opened the door it means you were already through it, you were inside to begin with. The revelation at the Red Sea was that we were saved. It was all already history.

We are told that the Plunder of the Sea was more valuable than the Plunder of Egypt. The requirement for bringing about salvation on the order of the Splitting of the Red Sea is to make decisions to let go and then to 'jump in'. To discover that you already possess the wherewithal to make such a leap of faith is to be given tremendous wealth.

The text tells us, 'God calculated the end, to do what He had promised Abraham.' The word used for 'end' is the Hebrew word *Kaitz* - קצ. It has a *Gematria* - Numerical Value of 190. One hundred and ninety years before the Jewish People descended into Egypt, the exile of *Da'at* - Knowing had already begun. It began with the birth of Isaac. Abraham divorced Hagar and sent her and their son Ishmael away from home. This was a great kindness, for if God had not so 'calculated the end to do', we would have had to spend a full 400 years in Egypt.

Exile and the loss of intimacy have three manifestations:

1. Exile from the self,
2. Exile among friends and family, and
3. Exile among strangers

In each form of exile there is a corresponding loss of intimacy. The first

loss of intimacy and exile, discussed earlier, occurred as a result of eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and involved our banishment from the Garden of Eden. This was the exile of self from Self. Adam and Eve lost their intimacy with each other, with God and themselves.

The second exile began with the birth of Isaac, because, that is when our family began to display its first signs of dysfunction. The exile of Hagar and Ishmael foreshadowed the breakdown in the family of Abraham and Sarah, and the struggles and failures to communicate and care that erupted between their children and among their grandchildren. This was the beginning of the second sort of exile, that of a person among friends and family.

Our descent into Egypt completed the triplet of exiles. So, even though Abraham had been told that his descendants would be in exile for four hundred years, the count began at Isaac's birth, because the second type of exile, that of a person among their own family, began with the birth of Isaac. The Jewish People were thus only required to be in Egypt for two hundred and ten years.  $400 - 190 = 210$ .

This then is the meaning of the reference in the text to God's calculations.

At that time, when God was making a covenant with Abraham, He told Abraham 'They will be slaves to them. They will oppress them four hundred years.' The text fails to make clear who will oppress whom, and who will suffer the most. At the end of that passage in Genesis (15:14), recounting the details the pact with Abraham, the text quotes God saying, 'And also the nation they serve I will judge,' as though God promised to be judgmental of the Egyptians. Apparently, God was most judgmental about us. According to tradition, the vast majority of us never made it out of Egypt. Four-fifths of us died in the days of darkness during the Plague of Darkness. The percentages don't seem to have changed much over the millennia.

The Haggadah tells us that 'God calculated the end to do'.

In the world of the Kabbalah, words have meanings within meanings. The Hebrew word, *Asa* - עשה - 'to do', appears a number of times in the story of the Exodus. It refers to the fourth and final stage of development in the creation, *Asiya* - Doing. 'Doing' in Hebrew is a euphemism for 'Fixing'. The world of *Asiya* is the world of Fixing. It is the ultimate purpose and meaning of the creation. Now, the order of creation is formalized corresponding to the four stages of thought into speech: 1) Unconscious thought, inspirational out of nothing. 2) Conscious creative thought out of ideas. 3) Rational, reflective, selective thought, and 4) finally speech, words and inflections. These four stages correspond to the four worlds or stages of creation:

1. *Atziluth*, Archetypes,
2. *B'riyah*, Creation,
3. *Yetzira*, Formation,
4. *Asiya*, Doing.

Each is a stage of creation but *Asiya* - Doing, is the most tangible, as speech is the most tangible thought.

Corresponding to this are four stages of our journey:

1. We are relieved of behavior patterns preventing our achieving intimacy.

2. We make decisions and begin to make different choices.

3. We take steps towards honesty and openness.

4. We teach others what we have learned.

The phrase: 'When God did for me' hints at these processes.

The text in English:

**Blessed is the keeper of His promise to Israel, blessed be He! For the Holy, blessed One, calculated the end, to do as He had promised our father Abraham at the 'Covenant between the Portions.' As it is written; 'He said to Abraham, 'Know then surely, that your seed will be strangers in a land that is not theirs. They will enslave them and make them suffer four hundred years. But that also the nation whom they serve, will I judge, and thereafter will they leave with great wealth.'**

### בְּרוּךְ שׁוֹמֵר הַבְּטָחָתוֹ

בְּרוּךְ שׁוֹמֵר הַבְּטָחָתוֹ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל. בְּרוּךְ הוּא.  
שֶׁהִקְדִּישׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא חֹשֵׁב אֶת-הַקֵּץ, לַעֲשׂוֹת  
כְּמֵה שֶׁאָמַר לְאַבְרָהָם אֲבִינוּ בְּבְרִית בֵּין  
הַבְּתָרִים, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיֹּאמֶר לְאַבְרָם יְדַע תְּדַע,  
כִּי-גֵר יִהְיֶה יְרֻעָה, בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לָהֶם, וְעַבְדוּם  
וְעָנּוּ אֹתָם אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה: וְגַם אֶת-הַגּוֹי  
אֲשֶׁר יַעֲבֹדוּ הֵן אֲנִי, וְאַחֲרָי כֵן יִצְאוּ, בְּרַכְשׁ  
גְּדוֹל:



### THIS IS WHAT STOOD - VHEE SH'OMDO

The promise to Israel that the 'Keeper of Promises' made is what has stood as a beacon for us, a guarantee of our continuity.

We raise the cup of wine in our hands to remind us of the second term of redemption '[I will] **free you** from their slavery'. The Holy, Blessed One frees us again and again. In this context, *Hatzala* - Freedom refers to the intimacy we enjoy with God, our intimates and our own soul. We need keep no secrets. For, it wasn't only in Egypt that we were slaves. After leaving Egypt we relapsed again and again. Each time our enemies rejoiced in our slavery and each time they saw us recover.

Every time this happens, and we stumble back into old behaviors and patterns, our enemies think they hold us in the palm of their hands. But before they can squeeze and crush us we are gone, for God holds us in the palm of His hand.

(We lift the cup and hold it in the palm of our hand as we recite this paragraph.)



## וְהִיא שְׁעֵמְדָה

וְהִיא שְׁעֵמְדָה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ. שְׁלֵא אֶחָד  
בְּלִבָּהּ, עֶמֶד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ. אֲלֵא שְׁבָכֵל דּוֹר  
וְדוֹר, עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ. וְהַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ  
הוּא מְצִילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם:

The text in English:

**This is what has stood by our fathers and us! For it is not just one who arose to destroy us, but in every single generation there rise up enemies intent on destroying us. But the Holy, blessed One, saves us from their hand!**



## GO OUT AND LEARN - TZAY ULMAD

Go out and learn what Laban the Aramean plotted to do to Jacob our father. Pharaoh only wanted to kill the males whereas Laban tried to uproot us completely. Pharaoh hated us as a people; Laban hated us as an idea. To glimpse how profound such hatred can be it is necessary to project ourselves beyond the present moment and imagine the world devoid of the possibility of redemption, for this is the world of Laban.

Laban was the brother of Rebecca who was the wife of Isaac. When Eliezer, Abraham's loyal servant, went to Mesopotamia to betroth Rebecca as a bride for Isaac, Laban tried to poison him so that no Jewish nation could be born.

Later Jacob (Laban's nephew, son of his sister Rebecca) came to Mesopotamia looking for a wife for himself. He fell in love with Rachel, Laban's daughter, but was tricked into marrying Leah. Laban was desperate to prevent the marriage of Jacob and Rachel, for they would give birth to Joseph, the archetype of Holiness and perfection of *Yesod* - Fundament, the hope of sexual intimacy and the redemption from Egypt.

Laban tried a hundred ways to cheat Jacob out of every possible joy and profit, but he never succeeded, because Jacob was such a straightforward man, and because God took charge of his affairs, causing them to prosper. Laban hated Jacob and everything he stood for; as it is written, (Deuteronomy 26:5): 'the Aramean loathed my father.' It was only the promise that God has made to Himself regarding Israel that stood us in good stead.

The rest of this verse quoted in the text segues neatly into the Haggadah and the story of the Exile into Egypt, as it continues: '[Jacob] went down into Egypt, and he sojourned there, small in number. There he became a great nation, powerful and numerous.'

Laban's hatred of his son-in-law Jacob and his own daughters and grandchildren was so great, that when there was a famine in the land of Canaan, Jacob

never contemplated for a moment sending to his father-in-law in Mesopotamia for succor. Instead he sent down to Egypt for food and fodder to sustain his family.

What follows is a note on how we came to be in Egypt. Don't think we went willingly. Oh No! We were forced down by the word of the Almighty. Don't think we went down into Egypt intending to stay there. No! We went down merely to sojourn as it is written...etc.

Did all this hesitation and reticence prevent us becoming enmeshed in the experience of Egypt and the subsequent slavery? The answer is history. Those of us traveling spiritual paths, healing from multifarious obstacles to intimacy, each have a different story. The feelings however are all identical. We began, like drug addicts using a medication prescribed by a medical practitioner, thinking we could control our selves, our behaviors and our environment. In the early days some of us were simply eating to assuage a ravening spiritual hunger. Others were genuinely angry at something in our lives that needed change. The end result though, was always the same. The medication became a habit, the meal became a binge, the anger became abusive rage, friendship became obsession, the rules changed as we were playing and we never noticed.

The text in English:

**Go out and learn what Laban the Aramean wanted to do to our father Jacob. Pharaoh had issued a decree against the male children only, but Laban wanted to uproot everyone - as it is written; 'The Aramean wished to destroy my father, who went down to Egypt and sojourned there, few in number. There he became a nation - great, mighty and numerous.'**

**He went down to Egypt, forced by Divine decree. He sojourned there; this teaches that our father Jacob did not go down to Egypt to settle, but only to live there temporarily. Thus it is written; They said to Pharaoh, 'We have come to sojourn in the land, for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks because the famine in the land of Canaan is severe. Now, please, let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen.'**

## צא ולמד

צא ולמד, מה בקש לבן הארמי לעשות  
ל'עקב אבינו. שפרעה לא גזר אלא על  
הזכרים. ולבן בקש לעקור את-הכל. שנאמר:  
ארמי אבד אבי, וירד מצרימה, ויגר שם  
במתי מעט. ויהי שם לגוי גדול, עצום ורב:

## וירד מצרימה

וירד מצרימה, אנוס על פי הדבור. ויגר שם.  
מלמד שלא ירד יעקב אבינו להשתקע  
במצרים, אלא לגור שם. שנאמר: ויאמרו  
אל-פרעה, לגור בארץ כנען. כי אין מדינה  
לצאן אשר לעבדיו, כי כבוד הרעב בארץ  
כנען. ועתה, ישבו-נא עבדיך בארץ גושן:



## בְּמַתֵּי מֵעֶט

בְּמַתֵּי מֵעֶט. כַּמָּה שְׁנָאָמַר: בְּשִׁבְעִים נַפְשׁ,  
יָרְדוּ אֲבוֹתֶיךָ מִצְרָיִמָה. וְעַתָּה, שְׂמֵךְ יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ,  
כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם לְרֹב.

## וַיְהִי שֵׁם לְגוֹי

וַיְהִי שֵׁם לְגוֹי. מִלְמַד שֶׁהוּא יִשְׂרָאֵל מְצַיֵּנִים  
שָׁם:

FEW IN NUMBER - B'MSAY  
M'AT

As it is written; Seventy souls were your fathers who went down into Egypt.

Seventy seems to be a pivotal number in the Jewish story. Seventy years is a lifespan. Seventy Elders or Judges sat on the Sanhedrin. There are seventy interpretations to each facet of the Torah. A Judge had to be familiar with 70 languages. There are 70 nations, as there are 70 names of God. The

Hebrew word for mystery is *Sod* - סוד. It too has a *Gematria*—numerical value of 70.

Significantly, Yocheved, mother of Miriam, Aaron and Moses, was neither born in Egypt nor in Canaan, she was actually born during the journey down into Exile, as Jacob and his the family was passing through the walls of the city, into Egypt. Yocheved was the last of the 70 who descended into Egypt, and Yocheved was the first woman to take her husband into the Field of Holy Apples. She had to have existed before the Exile began, for, as we are taught, when an illness comes to the world, it will be found that God has already prepared the remedy in advance.

Text in English:

**'Few in number' as it is written; 'Seventy persons went your fathers down to Egypt, and now, Adonai, your God, has made you numerous as the stars of heaven.'**

## AND BECAME A NATION - VAYHI SHOM

We didn't quite fit into the Egyptian lifestyle. Try as we might we could never quite get comfortable, always feeling outside the mainstream. The story that follows depicts the beginning of our slavery. We may have tried to assimilate by doing things contrary to our nature simply to be more like the Egyptians. We experimented with their ideas, trying to absorb and be absorbed by their culture. All we got was the poisonous propaganda and none of the benefits. They denied us citizenship and as so many anti-Semitic countries since then have done, they ended up giving birth to us. Instead of melting us down they showcased us. As a grain of irritating sand in the stomach of the oyster, we became a pearl. We stuck out. Egypt became the womb that carried us, it became the crucible of our shaping.

The text in English:

**'And became a nation there.' This teaches that the Israelites stood out there.**



## GREAT AND MIGHTY - *GADOL* *ATZUM*

'I saw you wallowing in your blood and I said to you, 'By your blood shall you live.' And I said to you, 'By your blood shall you live.'" (Ezekiel 16:6-7)

This is the all-important rule of the spiritual path we walk. Are we prepared to go to any lengths? Will we live by it? Can we chase the wholeness and balance of our forces as hard as once we chased our pain-killer of choice? Are we prepared to carry the message to others the way it was carried to us?

'The message is clear,' says God. 'Either you invest your blood in this mission I give you, or else you'll live by your blood.'

The text in English:

**Great, mighty, as it is written, The children of Israel were fruitful, increasing abundantly, multiplying and becoming very, very mighty. The land was filled with them.'**

## NUMEROUS - *V'ROV*

And numerous, as it is written, 'I caused you to thrive like the plants of the field, and you increased and grew becoming very beautiful, your breasts full formed and your hair was grown long, but you were naked and bare. I passed over you and saw you wallowing in your blood, and I said to you 'By your blood you shall live,' and I said to you 'By your blood you shall live!'"



## THE EGYPTIANS PLOTTED EVIL - *VAYOREIYU*

As it is written, 'Let us deal craftily, lest they multiply. For it may happen if the opportunity arises, a war will break out and they will join our enemies and fight us and leave the land.'

This is the description of the first manifestations of the forgetfulness. Here we find the onset of the Exile of *Da'at* - Knowing, when the destructive behavior or habit itself takes on a guile and cunning as though it were part of a master plan. Pow-

## גָּדוֹל עֲצוּם

גָּדוֹל עֲצוּם, כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וּבִגְיֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, פָּרוּ וַיִּשְׂרְצוּ, וַיִּרְבוּ וַיַּעֲצֻמוּ, בְּמֵאֵד מְאֹד, וַתִּמְלֵא הָאָרֶץ אֹתָם:

## רָב

רָב, כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: רִבְבָה כְּצִמְחַת הַשָּׂדֶה וַתִּתְיַף, וַתִּרְבֵּי, וַתִּגְדְּלֵי, וַתִּבְאֵי בְעֵדֵי עֲדֵיִים: שְׂדֵיִם נִכְנְוּ, וַיִּשְׁעֲבֹד צִמְחָת, וְאֵת עֵרֶם וְעֵרִיָּה: וַאֲעֹבֵד עֲלֶיךָ וְאֶרְאֶה מִתְבוֹסֶסֶת בְּדַמְךָ וְאֹמַר לָךְ בְּדַמְךָ חַיִּי וְאֹמַר לָךְ בְּדַמְךָ חַיִּי.

## וַיַּרְעוּ אֶתְנוּ הַמִּצְרַיִם

וַיַּרְעוּ אֶתְנוּ הַמִּצְרַיִם וַיַּעֲנוּנוּ. וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ  
עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה: וַיַּרְעוּ אֶתְנוּ הַמִּצְרַיִם. כָּמָה  
שָׁנְאָמְרוּ: הִבָּה נִתְחַכְמָה לּוֹ. פֶּן־יִרְבֶּה, וְתִהְיֶה  
כִּי־תִקְרָאנָה מִלְחָמָה, וְגוֹסֵף גַּם הוּא  
עַל־שָׂנְאֵינוּ, וְנִלְחַם־בָּנוּ וְעָלָה מִן־הָאָרֶץ:

וַיַּעֲנוּנוּ כָּמָה שָׁנְאָמְרוּ: וַיִּשְׂמִי עָלַי שְׂרֵי  
מַסִּים, לְמַעַן עֲנֹתוּ בְּסִבְלֹתָם: וַיִּכְּן עָרֵי  
מִסְכְּנוֹת לְפָרְעֹה, אֶת־פְּתֹם וְאֶת־רַעְמֶסֶס:  
וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה. כָּמָה שָׁנְאָמְרוּ:  
וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ מִצְרַיִם אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּפִרְוֹ:

erful and baffling!

So it was with the Egyptians. They did whatever was necessary to beguile us, making sure not to 'spook' us into refusing the bait. Once we were hooked, they led us gently by the nose down the path to the point where we no longer had a choice but to do as we were told. They gave us important tasks to perform, granaries and treasures to build, told us how well we were doing, how much they needed us. They told us that what we were paying them in labor was just taxes. As it is written; 'They appointed tax collectors over them.' Then it is written, 'They gave us hard work.' And

then, 'The Egyptians worked the Children of Israel with rigor.'

The Midrash describes the skill with which the plan was conceived. First all Egyptians gathered to make bricks, Pharaoh himself rolled up his sleeves and played in the mud with us, making bricks. We thought we were doing no more than our patriotic duty.

The actual Hebrew word for, rigor, is *Parech* - פָּרַךְ, which is made up of two separate words, *Peh-Rach* - פֶּה רַךְ, meaning 'soft mouth'. This is how it always begins. It feels good. Softly we were seduced into a life that became increasingly harsh and oppressive. Then we were on a treadmill from which there was no relief.

The text in English:

**'The Egyptians treated us badly, making us suffer, and forcing hard work upon us.'**

The Egyptians treated us badly, as it is written, Pharaoh said, 'Come, let us act cunningly with them lest they multiply. For if there should be a war they will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the land.'

They made us suffer, as it is written, 'They set task-masters over them, making them suffer beneath their burdens. Then they built storage cities for Pharaoh, Pithom and Rameses.'

They put hard work upon us, as it is written; 'The Egyptians forced the children of Israel work rigorously, making their lives bitter with hard work, with mortar and with bricks, and all manner of service in the field. All their work they made them do was with rigor.'



## WE CRIED - VANITZAK

'We cried to God, God of our Fathers.' You may notice how the text avoids the assumption that we ourselves were believers. We did not cry to our own personal God. We had no God. We were devoid of any conscious contact with God. We had no interior vision and faith in a Higher Power. The spiritual path of prayer and meditation was not yet open to us.

The closest we could get was to cry to the God of our Fathers. We knew that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had a very personal relationship with God. They tried to pass that information on to us, but we had to go the long way around and make our own journey.

Most of us are familiar with 'foxhole prayers', in which we promise all manner of things to God if only He will save us this one more time.

'And God heard our voices.' It does not say; 'He heard our prayers' since they were hardly that. We were incoherent, in great pain. We did the most we could do, reaching out and asking for help.

The text in English:

**We cried out to Adonai, God of our fathers, and God heard our voices, He saw our suffering, our labor and our oppression.**

We cried out to the Adonai, God of our fathers, as it is written, 'It was during those many, long days, the king of Egypt died; and the children of Israel groaned beneath their servitude, crying out, and the cry for help from their servitude rose up to God.'

Then God heard our voices, as it written; 'God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.'

## וּנְצַעַק

וּנְצַעַק אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וַיִּשְׁמַע יי  
אֶת־קִלְגֵנוּ, וַיִּרְא אֶת־עֲנִינֵנוּ, וְאֶת־עֲמֻלְגֵנוּ, וְאֶת  
לְחַצְנֵנוּ: וּנְצַעַק אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, כְּמָה  
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הָרַבִּים הָהֵם, וַיָּמָת מֶלֶךְ  
מִצְרַיִם, וַיֵּאָחֲזוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן־הָעֶבְרָה  
וַיִּזְעֻקוּ. וַתַּעַל שׁוֹעֲתָם אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים מִן־הָעֶבְרָה:

וַיִּשְׁמַע יי אֶת־קִלְגֵנוּ. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיִּשְׁמַע  
אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נַאֲקָתָם, וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־בְּרִיתוֹ,  
אֶת־אֲבְרָהָם, אֶת־יִצְחָק, וְאֶת יַעֲקֹב:



## HE SAW OUR PAIN - VAYAR ES ONYANU

This is the loss of intimacy as it is written; 'God saw the Children of Israel and God knew.' (Exodus 2:25)

The word 'know' has sexual connotations as it is written, (Genesis 4:1) 'Adam knew his wife and she conceived and bore him a son.' God's Knowing, in this context, is the first direct reference in the Biblical text to the single essential component

## וַיֵּרָא אֶת-עֲנִינוֹ

וַיֵּרָא אֶת-עֲנִינוֹ: זוּ פְּרִישׁוֹת הָרָדָּ אֶרְצָן. כִּמְהָ  
שָׁנְאָמַר: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. וַיֵּדַע  
אֱלֹהִים:

וְאֵת-עַמְלֵנוּ. אֱלֹהֵי הַבְּנִים. כִּמְהָ שָׁנְאָמַר:  
כָּל-הַבֵּן הַיּוֹדֵד הַיֵּאֲרָה תִשְׁלִיכֶנּוּ, וְכָל-הַבֵּת  
תִּחְיֶיךָ:

וְאֵת לְחַצְנֵנוּ. זֶה הַדְּחָק. כִּמְהָ שָׁנְאָמַר:  
וְגַם-רָאִיתִי אֶת-הַלְחָץ, אֲשֶׁר מַצְרַיִם לֹחֲצִים  
אֹתָם:

of the Egyptian exile, the exile of *Da'at* - Knowing. If God knows then the universe knows. If everyone knows then the exile of *Da'at* - Knowing is already ending.

The inability to be intimate leads to the place where ultimately nothing remains of the joys and pleasures we are given as gifts of our nature. Intimacy and self-obsession are mutually exclusive, for excessively high levels of core soul-shame usually accompany self-obsession. Intimacy sets the stage for risking exposure and nakedness, exposure the person suffering toxic shame seeks to avoid at all cost.

Intimacy uncovers the core self, a degree of exposure we in Egypt could never risk for fear of rejection. That was the whole of our pain, which God saw.

We were cut off from our closest loved ones: husbands from wives, brothers from sisters. The next intimacies we lost were those with our children. We mirrored no one and no one mirrored us.

God also saw the pressure we were under, for who like a person self-obsessed, an addict in search of a fix, an adult child desperately searching for validation, comfort or relief, knows the meaning of pressure. The hunger is a ravenous beast to be kept sedated. The sheer energy expenditure involved in remaining trapped in one's self-obsession far exceeds the most arduous challenges we work at in the spiritual life.

The text in English:

**He saw our suffering, this refers to the separation of husband and wife, as it is written; 'God saw the children of Israel, and God knew.'**

**Our labor, this refers to the children, as it is written, 'Every boy that is born, you shall throw into the river and every girl you shall keep alive.'**

**And our oppression, this refers to the pressure, as it is written, 'I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.'**



## GOD BROUGHT US OUT - VAYOITZLAYNU

In His glory and solitary majesty He brought us out of Egypt. As it is written;

· I passed through the Land of Egypt this night. Egypt, the seduction of self-abandonment to the world of slavery is the Place, which we now had the power to resist.

· I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt. Firstborn, refers to the glitter-

ing pantheon of illusory hyped-up irresistible People, whom we now had the power to resist.

· All the idols of Egypt I judged and executed. Idols, refers to all the ephemeral objects of our obsession, Things to which we imagined ourselves eternally enslaved.

· I am God. I can restore you to sanity, no one else.

God brought us out of Egypt with:

1. A mighty hand.
2. An outstretched arm.
3. Awesome greatness.
4. Signs.
5. Wonders.

The text in English:

**God brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, with awesome greatness, with signs and wonders.**

**God brought us out of Egypt, not by an angel's hand, not by a seraph's hand, nor through a messenger.**

**The Holy, blessed One, did it in His glory, Himself!**

**Thus it is written, 'On that night will I pass through the land of Egypt. I will smite every first-born in the land of Egypt, from man to beast, and I will carry out judgments against all the gods of Egypt, I am God.'**

**I will pass through the land of Egypt, - I and not an angel. I will smite every first-born in the land of Egypt, - I and not a seraph. I will carry out judgments against all the gods of Egypt, - I and not a messenger. I- God, - It is I, and none other!**

## וְיִצְאֵנוּ

וְיִצְאֵנוּ יְיָ מִמִּצְרַיִם. בְּיַד חֲזָקָה, וּבְרִיעַ נְטוּיָה, וּבְמַרְאֵ גְדוּלָה וּבְאִתּוֹת וּבְמוֹפְתִים:

וְיִצְאֵנוּ יְיָ מִמִּצְרַיִם לֹא עַל-יְדֵי מַלְאָךְ, וְלֹא לְ-יְדֵי שֶׁרָף, וְלֹא עַל-יְדֵי שְׁלִיחַ. אֲלֵא הַקְדוּשׁ ע

בְרוּךְ הוּא בְכֹבֶדוֹ וּבְעֶזְמוֹ. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְעִבְרָתִי בְאַרְצֵי מִצְרַיִם בְּלִילָה הַזֹּאת, וְהִפִּיתִי כָל-בְּכוֹר בְּאַרְצֵי מִצְרַיִם, מֵאָדָם וְעַד בְּהֵמָה, וּבְכָל-אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֲעֲשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים אֲנִי יְיָ:

וְעִבְרָתִי בְאַרְצֵי-מִצְרַיִם בְּלִילָה הַזֹּאת, אֲנִי וְלֹא מַלְאָךְ. וְהִפִּיתִי כָל בְּכוֹר בְּאַרְצֵי-מִצְרַיִם, אֲנִי וְלֹא שֶׁרָף, וּבְכָל-אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֲעֲשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים. אֲנִי וְלֹא הַשְׁלִיחַ. אֲנִי יְיָ, אֲנִי הוּא וְלֹא אֲחֵר:



## WITH A MIGHTY HAND - B'YOD CHAZOKO

This is the pestilence. Pestilence was real in Egypt, for us now let it be a metaphor.

The five descriptions of God's power mentioned above correspond to the five stages we had to go through in order to put distance between us and our former slavery. The plagues that befell the Egyptians were designed to shake us out of our com-



## בְּיַד חֲזָקָה

יָד חֲזָקָה. זֶה הַדָּבָר. כִּמְהָ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: הִנֵּה יָדֵינוּ  
בְּ

הַיּוֹם, בְּמִקְנֶךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשָׂדֶךָ, בַּסּוּסִים בַּחֲמֹרִים  
בַּגְּמְלִים, בַּבָּקָר וּבַצֹּאן, הִבֵּר כִּבְד מֵאֵד:

וּבְיָדֵינוּ נִטְוֶה. זֶה הַחֲרֵב, כִּמְהָ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְחָרְבוּ  
שְׁלֹפָה בְּיָדוֹ, נִטְוֶה עַל-יְרוּשָׁלָּיִם:

fortable acquiescence to our spiritual malaise.

Redemption from our personal slavery first required the Mighty Hand of God. This is the mighty hand referred to in the Haggadah. For, just saying, I will do better, I will try harder and make more effort, will not achieve a cure for what ails us. Willpower will not do it. We need divine intervention.

As symbol of just how difficult this was in Egypt, we are given the image of the pestilence, the sudden loss of all support. Everything we relied upon died or was jerked out from beneath us. In an age where everything from running water to agriculture to transportation and clothing depended on beasts of burden and domestic animals, the instantaneous death of cattle, livestock, horses, asses, camels, sheep and goats, was catastrophic. This is what we needed in order to become aware of how much was wrong in our thinking.

The second metaphor, the Outstretched Arm, symbolized by the cutting sword, was how we saw cutting ourselves off from the people, places and things associated with our previous life. This is a crucial step, too. For, as history demonstrated, when the break with the past is not complete and without reservation the 'relapse' follows soon; and so, we found ourselves worshipping the golden calf at the foot of Mount Sinai.

God provided us with the greatest gift of all, Awesome Greatness, *Giluy Shechinah* - Divine Revelation. We were given a taste of the rewards of intimacy. The Exile of *Da'at* - Knowing meant we had tremendous fear of intimacy, the fear of displaying our vulnerability. We discovered that the whole fabric of our lives had been shot through with fear. With *Giluy Shechinah* - Divine Revelation, we were given a taste of the rewards of intimacy.

Then we were given The Sign, the image of something protecting us from hurting ourselves, an almost tangible, visible, physical guarantee of safety, The Staff.

The Hebrew word is *Mateh* - Staff, which besides meaning staff, also means tribe, and also means the lowest point. The meanings are interchangeable since the staff is actually a symbol of belonging to a gathering of people in a certain place.

The fifth symbol we were shown was The Miracle, the wonder, the new course our lives were taking. Earlier we referred to God's condition for healing us, 'By your blood you shall live. [or else] By your blood shall you live.'

The text in English:

**With a strong hand, this refers to the pestilence, as it is written, 'Behold, the hand of God will be upon your livestock in the field, upon the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the herds and flocks, a very severe pestilence.'**

**With an outstretched arm, this refers to the sword, as it is written,**

'His sword was drawn, in his hand, stretched out over Jerusalem.'

With awesome greatness, this refers to *Giluy Shechinah* - Divine Revelation, as it is written, 'Has any god ever tried to take for himself a nation from within another nation, with trials, signs and wonders, with war and with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and awesome fear, like all that Adonai your God, did for you in Egypt before your eyes?'

With signs, this refers to the staff, as it is written, 'Take into your hand this staff with which you shall perform the signs.'

It is customary to splash three drops of wine from the cup into the plate while pronouncing: Blood, Fire and Smoke.

Wonders, this refers to the blood, as it is written, 'I will show wonders in heaven and earth; Blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.'

Another opinion: 'Strong hand' suggests two [plagues]; 'Outstretched arm,' another two; 'Awesome greatness,' another two; 'Signs,' another two; and 'Wonders,' another two.

ובמורא גדול, זה גלוי שכינה. כמה שנאמר: או הנסה אלהים, לבוא לקחת לו גוי מקרב גוי, במסת באתת ובמופתים ובמלקמה, ובגיד תזקה ובזרוע נטויה, ובמוראים גדלים. ככל אשר-עשה לכם יי אלהיכם במצרים, לעיניך:

ובאותות. זה המטה, כמה שנאמר: ואת המטה הנה תקח בגידך. אשר תעשה בו את-האותות:

ובמופתים. זה הדם. כמה שנאמר: ונתתי מופתים, בשמים ובארץ

**דָּם. וְאֵשׁ. וְתִמְרוֹת עֵשֶׂן:**

דבר אחר. בגיד תזקה שתיים. ובזרוע נטויה שתיים. ובמורא גדול שתיים. ובאותות שתיים. ובמפתים שתיים:



## THE TEN PLAGUES - *ESER MAKOT*

It is customary when announcing the ten plagues to splash ten drops of wine from the cup into the plate, to indicate our lack of joy in the punishment of our enemies. It is never the right time to gloat at the downfall of others, and this ritual reminds us of that.

There is also a deeper significance. In the description of *Adam Kadmon* - Primordial Man upon whom the Ten *Sephiroth* are modeled, the *Sephiroth* of the left hand side are known as *Gevuroth* - Con/Restrictions (*Gevuroth*, plural of *Gevurah*) while those on the right are *Hasadim* - Loving-kindnesses (*Chasadim*, plural of *Chesed*). What this means is that the *Sephiroth* have been divided by time-honored custom and convention into categories such as reds and blues, with masculine generally taking on the blue aspects, leaving femininity in the red. Positive and

negative, good and bad, kind and harsh, soft and hard, one could go on and on.

We encounter this dichotomy in every facet of modern life. With blue and pink colors for boys and girls being only a small example. Another, more subtle example is the red and green of traffic signals with red being the withholding, stop, danger sign and its opposite, green color representing permission to go. Red and green of course, are the international colors designating the left and right respectively of air and seagoing traffic. Green is associated with the planet Venus, love and growth, whose metal is copper, which turns green as it oxidizes. Red is the metal iron, which turns red as it oxidizes. Mars the red planet is associated with war, iron and bloodshed.

Wine is red and so takes on all the connotations of that color. Wine, as mentioned earlier, represents the left side, the *Sephirah* of *Gevurah* - Judgment. The redness of meat and wine are seen as important aspects of *Simcha* - Joy always associated with them. Prophecy requires *Simcha* - Joy and gratitude that are associated with wine.

Fear has its roots in the future, for there are many possible futures. Because fear is our response to an event imagined to happen in the future, the *Sephirah* of *Gevurah* - Judgment is also known as the *Sephirah* of *Pachad* - Terror. The future is feminine, and like a woman may give birth to many possibilities. Fears and joys are colored red.

The past is masculine; there is only one past. It is in the past that our resentments have their source. Resentments, jealousies and loving kindnesses are colored blue and green.

Just as a drop of wine on the end of our fingertip is attached to the entire cup of wine. So too, a drop of anger caused by something trivial may be connected to every wrong we have ever felt.

Fears and hatreds have similar dynamics.

At this point in the Seder when we announce the anguish suffered vicariously on our behalf by the Egyptians in the Haggadah, we spill our emotions over the edge, recognizing for a moment the primal nature of our rage and how it resembles a cup filled to the brim. What remains afterwards is thus our cup of joy and gratitude.

These are the ten plagues that the Holy, blessed One brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt. Each of us has suffered the plagues in all their variety of forms and richness of diversity. The order of manifestation as they occurred to the Egyptians in Egypt was particular to them. Rather than compare our own stories, let us identify. The plagues reveal 1) the fantasy of omnipotence, 2) denial, 3) defiance, 4) ambivalence, 5) capitulation.

## THE FANTASY OF OMNIPOTENCE

1. **BLOOD:** To understand the significance of the first plague we must first understand the importance attached to the River Nile in Ancient Egypt. God's striking at the Nile, turning its water into blood, was to strike directly at the heart of political, cultural, religious and economic life. It was much more than just a classic

military tactic. Cut off their water!

When swollen by rains in the mountains at its source, the Nile irrigates the whole of Egypt by inundation. Heavy with organic sediment, it overflows its banks, irrigating as it fertilizes. It is the source of life, wealth and art. It is a god. Ceremonies associated with the inundation, rituals and sacrifices comprised a large part of Egyptian daily life. The priesthood, centering upon Pharaoh, King of Egypt, and his Queen, was dedicated to the perpetuation of the links between the royal family and the Nile. As Pharaoh walked down to the water, it would rise to meet him. Pharaoh by association became a god. The Nile was not just a symbol; it was a reality.

Some of us have had similar relationships, that were just as difficult to abandon.

Suddenly, after millennia of being their most trustworthy, reliable friend, the river turned into a putrid filthy morass of blood, an enemy. But the Egyptians were unable to forsake the Nile; just because it had turned to blood didn't mean that their habits or thinking changed. They wanted to continue believing it was a god as it is written; 'The Egyptians continued to dig beside the river looking for water to drink, because they could not drink the river water.' (Exodus 7:24)

2. **FROGS:** This plague reduced Pharaoh from a proud, vain tyrant to a ridiculous figure, butt of a divine joke. When God warned that He would mock Pharaoh and his institutions, that He would playfully dismember the instruments of government, this plague of frogs must surely have been planned already. It certainly fulfilled all that promise.

A frog appeared in Pharaoh's palace, in his bedchamber, in his bed. When it was crushed, two live frogs appeared in place of the dead one. They multiplied when crushed and spread like vermin. Croaking, they hopped out of Pharaoh's bedroom, making their way through the palace. They invaded the ministry buildings surrounding the royal palace. From the government departments they split, multiplied and spread like tendrils of the bureaucracy itself into every corner of Egypt, into people's kitchens, their kneading troughs, even into their ovens.

The government of Egypt was being held up to ridicule. The Hebrew word for frog; *Tz'lar'dea* also translates as 'bird-witted'. Frogs establish territory and attract mates by croaking. They perform this rite as loudly as they possibly can. So do politicians. All this could not fail to be interpreted by the Egyptian civilian as a humiliation of their monarchy by a greater power.

Whenever we try controlling our world our efforts come to naught. When we attempt to get the cosmos to dance to our tune, and all its creatures to act the parts we assign to them, we appear no less ridiculous than Egypt with its frogs.

## **DENIAL**

3. **LICE:** This plague was an attack on the Pharaoh's most powerful weapon; denial. Denial is the mechanism whereby the most outrageous manifestations of insanity can be explained without admitting the least necessity for change. An exam-

ple would be someone with lung cancer blaming automobile emissions for the illness whilst smoking three packets of cigarettes every day. The Egyptians had a similar attitude. When the plagues began to strike, the Royal Egyptian College of Wizards produced experts who could simulate these effects with their magical arts. The result of their successful ability to copy Moses enabled Egypt to prolong its agony. It was business as usual; which is the function of denial. The mere fact that they could produce similar results with magic meant somehow that their lives were not as unmanageable as Moses was attempting to point out. Pharaoh didn't feel quite powerless over events as long as someone close to him was murmuring into his ear, 'It's only a manipulation of natural forces, your majesty. It can all be explained'.

But as with all illusion, there is a natural upper limit to the intricacy of the web a person can spin.

When first we lie or deny the truth to ourselves or to others, we have to compensate. The ripples spread outward from the event of the first untruth or denial. Each lie produces fresh ripple-like effects, ramifications that then also need to be explained away. If I deny the effect of the cigarettes on my lungs I have to redefine the meaning of the term carcinogenic. If I want to insist on maintaining a rational basis for that denial, I have to redefine the definitions of phenomena such as melanoma, asbestosis, Onco-genes and other things. If I want to continue in my denial, I have to find new scientific explanations of enzyme activity and then of amino acids and a thousand other facts.

Inevitably, there comes a point where lies and evasion can no longer explain events fast enough to avoid the momentum of the truth. Magic and illusion have their own, 'event horizon'. In Egyptian magic the illusion could not be sustained if it required the denial of something smaller than a grain of barley. There are simply too many details to take care of in order to maintain the illusion. This was the wonder of the plague of lice. Lice are smaller than a grain of barley. It was at this stage of events that the wizards of Egypt began to lose face and ultimately their power. They tried to duplicate the lice but were unable to. At which point, they broke through their first level of denial and admitted a Higher Power. As it is written; The wizards said to Pharaoh, 'It is a finger of God.' (Ibid 8:15)

4. **WILD BEASTS:** Maintaining His attack on Pharaoh's denial, God instructed Moses to confront Pharaoh in the morning, when Pharaoh went down to the water. Pharaoh relieved himself every morning privately by the water in order to maintain the illusion that he was a god who did not need the toilet. Moses confronted Pharaoh at his most vulnerable and private moment, warning him it was time to change, but Pharaoh would not budge.

Suddenly like some monstrous, collective delirium tremens, Egypt was filled with marauding animals. Crocodiles emerged from the river; jackals and other carnivores came out of the wild; snakes and scorpions appeared. Even domestic cattle began showing characteristics of wild, feral and dangerous animals. But the land of Goshen where the Children of Israel lived was free and peaceful.

At this point Pharaoh's denial began to crumble slightly, and so, like every

power - junkie, alcoholic or substance - addict ever to be confronted with the full enormity of their reality, proceeded to the next stage of his defeat. He tried to negotiate.

We have all at one time or another tried negotiating with our weakness. 'Oh, please. If I switch brands, add water, change machines, substances, quantities or partners; if I promise to do it only on weekends, can't I just continue?' We will attempt anything from geographic relocations to radical surgery to avoid doing what needs doing; to be allowed to carry on as we were. And all this effort is expended just to maintain the fantasy of omnipotence.

Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and told them they might begin public worship of God in the land of Goshen, hoping thereby to placate Moses while maintaining control. Moses demanded the right to travel three days into the wilderness, Pharaoh agreed on condition they went no further. The plague was lifted, so Pharaoh changed his mind and once again refused to let them go.

## DEFIANCE

**5. PESTILENCE:** The plague referred to earlier in the Haggadah as the mighty hand was the sudden death of all the livestock in the fields. The domestic animal in Egypt was food, clothing, transportation, status symbol, idol and war materiel. It was culture, commerce and art. The Egyptian people were suddenly and forcibly struck with the undeniable fact that life could not go on as before. Pharaoh's reaction to these events is not so strange; we've either seen it or done it ourselves. He became defiant. As it is written; 'Pharaoh sent inspectors, and behold not a single one of the animals belonging to Israel had died in the plague. But Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to send out the People.' (Ibid 9:6-7)

**6. BOILS:** At the point where their very bodies rebelled and broke into hundreds of suppurating boils, illusion and denial gave way completely, as it is written; 'The wizards could not stand before Moses because of the boils. The boils afflicted the wizards and the Egyptians.' (Ibid 9:11)

The wizards lost all their credibility at this point in history. In fact they are never heard of or referred to again in the Torah.

Why boils? Because self esteem in Egypt, as it is in our times, was based so much on body image, and they were so proud of their physical culture. They were smug and self-satisfied, safe in the knowledge that whatever hardships would have to be endured as a result of their obstinacy and defiance, it could always be deflected upon the slaves and lower orders of society. So they were themselves smitten. Their bodies became disgusting, repulsive and painful.

Even the small domestic and household pets of which the Egyptians were worshipfully reverent, the dog and cat, were equally subject to the plague of boils, though they had been immune to the pestilence.

The plagues of Egypt, their sequence, their targets and all the details of their execution were purposeful. Even though the Egyptians refused their salutary lessons,

we did take note and learn from them. Experiences, however painful and humiliating, are always of benefit to someone.

### **AMBIVALENCE**

7. **HAIL:** Before this plague occurred, God, through Moses warned Pharaoh very specifically about what was to come, adding: 'And this time I will send all my plagues to your heart.'

In the Biblical description of the falling hail, we are told that it was accompanied by very loud thunder. The hail was not the frozen rain with which we are familiar. It most closely resembled molten lava spewing in droplets from an erupting volcano in droplets. Yet damaging as the hail was, its impact was not as great as the thunder. The thunder was far more frightening. It was more than just symbolic. Very loud noise by itself is a form of torture against which the body is not equipped to defend itself. Very loud noise is disorienting, and in order to hang on to illusions we must be able to fixate on them without distraction. When we are forced into an utterly disorienting situation, our whole world collapses. Pharaoh bore the lice and the boils without demur. He was not afraid of pain. Yet when the noise of the thunder filled his head, cutting him off from his defense mechanism, he was just as frightened as any other human would be. When Pharaoh appealed to Moses to beg God to lift the plague, he referred to God's thunder and the hail. Moses told him, 'I will pray, the plague will be lifted but you are not ready to let the people go.'

It was clear to Moses that Pharaoh had no intention of letting go. He was ready to die and bring the entire world down with him. Now, Pharaoh was not a coward, he was not weak, but he was also not smart. He was challenging the Almighty to do His worst. And God was saying to Pharaoh, 'In order that all the world might see that I am the only Power and that ultimately there is hope, that prayer and faith are worthwhile, I will let you live.'

8. **LOCUSTS:** The locust was also preceded by negotiation. Pharaoh, urged by his people who were losing heart, tried to bargain with Moses. But when he was told that Moses intended leaving with young and old, men and women, he balked. One of the unusual things about locusts according to our Rabbis is that they have a collective mind and do without any form of leadership. Unlike other creatures that swarm, locusts have no Queen. They don't communicate by passing hormones to one another. They have only one instruction in their brain it seems, 'eat!!'

For reasons that are not entirely clear, the numberless, implacable locust horde scared Pharaoh at a very profound level. He panicked, and calling Moses and Aaron, confessed to having sinned against their God and them, and begged them to forgive him again and to beg God to remove 'only this death'.

But the truth is that as much as he wanted to let them go, he wanted to hold on to them.

## עֶשֶׂר מַכּוֹת

### CAPITULATION

9. **DARKNESS:** The significance of this plague was the isolation it imposed upon the Egyptians. As it is written; No one could see his brother and no one could get up for three days.

The darkness, we are told, was palpable. But the greatest darkness is when we cannot hear what our brothers are saying. 'Seeing' is analogous to all communication between friends. All meetings of the mind are called 'seeing.' If we continue determinedly down the path of self-obsession we must eventually reach that point of palpable darkness where all communication breaks down. If insanity is defined as making the same mistakes again and again while yet expecting different results, then Pharaoh of Egypt must by this time have been insane. Again he tried negotiating and saving face. He could not admit his powerlessness. He tried to salvage something from the situation. Eventually he took refuge in rage and forbade Moses from setting foot in his palace again. Moses agreed saying, 'Yes, let it be just as you have spoken. I will not see your face again.' (Ibid 10:29)

Note: During the three days of darkness, four-fifths of the Children of Israel died and were quietly buried by relatives and friends. Even with all they had seen, most slaves didn't believe in salvation.

**SLAYING THE FIRSTBORN:** We tend to blame providence, karma, fate, the stars and bad luck for the losses we suffer as a consequence of our behaviors. The price is the same whether we learn our lesson or not. There is no way to avoid reality, and death is always the ultimate price for failure to change. Pharaoh and all his people, every Egyptian regardless of race, caste or rank - all lost a loved one, child or sibling. The anguish was great. The capitulation was total: no more deals or negotiations, no more stipulation or clauses, no more conditions or half measures. They suddenly became aware of their own mortality. Sometimes it requires the death of someone close to make people ready to change. It is impossible to scare a self-delusionist since all the denial mechanisms forbid it. Sometimes though, a moment spent thinking about the state of life as it is, especially when a major tragedy has occurred, is sufficient for the seed of doubt to take root and grow.

The text in English:

**These then are the Ten Plagues which the Holy, blessed One, brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt, namely: 1. Blood. 2. Frogs. 3. Lice. 4. Wild Beasts. 5. Pestilence. 5. Boils. 6. Hail. 7. Locust. 8. Darkness. 10. Slaying of the First-born.**

אלו עֶשֶׂר מַכּוֹת שֶׁהִבִּיא הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא  
עַל-הַמִּצְרַיִם בְּמִצְרַיִם, וְאֵלוֹ הֵן:

דָּם. צְפַרְדֵּי. כְּנִיָּם. עָרֹב.  
דִּבְרֵי. שְׁחִין. בָּרָד. אֲרָבָה.  
חֲשָׁךְ. מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת:



### RABBI YEHUDA GAVE ABBREVIATIONS - *SIMANIM*

(It is customary to splash three drops of wine from the cup into the plate while reciting the three words made up of the abbreviated plagues.)

As though Rabbi Yehuda had written - **BF<sup>W</sup>L WP<sup>W</sup>B HLD<sup>W</sup>F**.

Aaron, Moses' brother brought about the first three plagues: **BF<sup>W</sup>L**, (blood, frogs, lice). Moses would have played no part in smiting the Nile or the earth and dust of Egypt. When he was a baby and placed in a basket and left to drift in the Nile amongst the reeds and bulrushes, the Nile was his refuge. It would have been an act of grossest ingratitude for him to make it turn into blood or frogs. After Moses killed an Egyptian whom he saw beating a Hebrew slave, he hid the corpse in the earth and dust of Egypt. To turn the dust into lice would also have been ingratitude. This, the Torah teaches us, is a measure of the responsibility on one who owes gratitude. The second three **WP<sup>W</sup>B**, (wild beasts, pestilence, boils) were performed by Moses and Aaron together. The last plagues **HLD<sup>W</sup>F**, ( hail, locusts, darkness, firstborn) were brought on by Moses himself.

The first three plagues happened at the lowest possible physical level (i.e., sea level and ground level). The second three were above ground level. The final plagues came from successively higher levels.

A lengthy Kabbalistic treatment of these acronyms entitled 'Mystery of the Finger of God', by R. Shimshon Ostropoli appears, in translation, at the end of this Haggadah.

The text in English:

Rabbi Yehudah referred to them by acronyms: *DeTzaCh AdaSh, BeAChaB*.

רבי יהודה הקה גותן בקם ספנים:

דצ"ך ער"ש באח"ב:



### RABBI YOSI HAGLILI

What possible difference can it make to know that the Egyptians suffered three times as much at the crossing of the Red Sea?

It is written (Ex. 15.26): [Moses] said, If you listen well to the voice of God your God. If you do what is right in His eyes, if you hearken to His commandments and guard His statues, all the illness which I brought upon Egypt I will never bring upon you, for I am God your Healer.

This is perhaps the clearest indication of the salutary nature of events in Egypt. The verse does not refer to plagues brought upon Egyptians as a people, rather it

speaks of weakness and illness upon Egypt, the country. It also introduces the concept of God the Healer. During the plague of lice the wizards referred to the 'Finger of God'. We explained there that this was a breakthrough in their denial. It was a crack in the apparently seamless wall of rationalization they had built to explain events that pointed at the need for a change in their lifestyle. What was their lifestyle?

Egyptians, we are told, had passed through the fiftieth gate of *טומאה* - *Tuma*. There is no specific translation into any language of the word *טומאה* - *Tuma*. It is however always associated with death. In this context it appears to mean the self-centered, self-deceptive, self-abusive, self-destructive and self-obsessive lifestyle which amounted to the soul-suicide of life in Egypt; it was soul destroying. The Children of Israel, we are told, had reached the portals of the fiftieth gate of *טומאה* - *Tuma*. They had already passed through forty-nine. One moment of hesitation and it would have been too late. God rushed them out of Egypt just in time to prevent them stepping through that final, fiftieth gate.

The experience in Egypt was a journey into sickness and enslavement. We went all the way. There was very little difference between our weakness and that of our slave drivers. The plagues which happened to the Egyptians was meant for us. God could have destroyed them instantaneously. The slaughter of the firstborn could have been extended to everyone.

We, Children of Israel, had to learn the lesson. We had to see before our eyes fifty kinds of denial stripped away. We had to come out of fifty kinds of excuses. Our attention had to be skewered and riveted for a lasting impression to be made. So the whole panoply of the Exodus unfolded. And Rabbi Yosi Haglili tells us that in fact; the Children of Israel saw the Hand of God, and they came to believe in God and His servant Moses.

Yet their enthusiasm lasted no more than three days as it is written: (Ibid 15:22) 'They went three days into the wilderness and found no water and complained to Moses....'

Here, Rabbi Yosi Haglili is reminding us of all the misery we need not suffer. If we only keep doing the right thing, God promises that all the misery He brought upon Egypt will not befall us, because He is our Healer. Rabbi Eliezer said: 'Each plague was in fact four plagues.' Rabbi Akiba said: 'Each plague was in fact five plagues.'

They argue over the nature of anger itself. What are the differences between anger and rage? Is it appropriate to describe God as having such feelings? What happens when God expresses feelings of anger or rage?

Rabbi Eliezer maintains that God may be angry in the descriptive sense of Being, without necessarily acting.

Rabbi Akiva says No! God's anger is not simply a phenomenon, it is a condition that affects the whole world.

The text in English:

**Rabbi Yosi Haglili says: How do you know that the Egyptians were stricken with ten plagues in Egypt, and then by fifty plagues at the sea?**

## רבי יוסי הגלילי

רבי יוסי הגלילי אומר: מנין אתה אומר, שִׁלְקוּ הַמִּצְרַיִם בְּמִצְרַיִם עֶשֶׂר מִכּוֹת, וְעַל הַיָּם, לָקְחוּ תַמְשִׁימִים מִכּוֹת? בְּמִצְרַיִם מָה הוּא אֹמֵר: וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַחֲרָטָמִים אֶל־פַּרְעֹה, אֲצַבֵּעַ אֱלֹהִים הוּא, וְעַל הַיָּם מָה הוּא אֹמֵר? וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַיָּד הַגְּדֹלָה, אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְיָ בְּמִצְרַיִם, וַיִּירָאוּ הָעָם אֶת־יְיָ, וַיֹּאמְרוּ בְּנֵי יִבְרָאֵהָ עֲבָדוּ. כַּמָּה לָקְחוּ בְּאֲצַבַּע, עֶשֶׂר מִכּוֹת, אָמֹר מֵעַתָּה, בְּמִצְרַיִם לָקְחוּ עֶשֶׂר מִכּוֹת, וְעַל־הַיָּם, לָקְחוּ תַמְשִׁימִים מִכּוֹת:

רבי אליעזר אומר: מנין שִׁכְל־מִכָּה וּמִכָּה, שֶׁהֵבִיא הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַל הַמִּצְרַיִם בְּמִצְרַיִם, הִיְתָה שֶׁל אַרְבַּע מִכּוֹת? שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: לְשַׁלְּחֵם תְּרוּן אָפוּ, עֲבָרָה וְנוֹעַם וְצָרָה, מִשְׁלַחַת מִלְאָכֵי רָעִים, עֲבָרָה אַחַת, וְנוֹעַם שְׁתַּיִם, וְצָרָה שְׁלֹשׁ, מִשְׁלַחַת מִלְאָכֵי רָעִים אַרְבַּע: אָמֹר מֵעַתָּה, בְּמִצְרַיִם לָקְחוּ אַרְבָּעִים מִכּוֹת, וְעַל הַיָּם לָקְחוּ מֵאַתְנַיִם מִכּוֹת, רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אֹמֵר: מִנֵּין שִׁכְל־מִכָּה וּמִכָּה, שֶׁהֵבִיא הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַל הַמִּצְרַיִם בְּמִצְרַיִם, הִיְתָה שֶׁל חֲמֵשׁ מִכּוֹת? שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: לְשַׁלְּחֵם תְּרוּן אָפוּ, עֲבָרָה וְנוֹעַם וְצָרָה, מִשְׁלַחַת מִלְאָכֵי רָעִים, תְּרוּן אָפוּ אַחַת, עֲבָרָה שְׁתַּיִם, וְנוֹעַם שְׁלֹשׁ, וְצָרָה אַרְבַּע, מִשְׁלַחַת מִלְאָכֵי רָעִים חֲמֵשׁ: אָמֹר מֵעַתָּה, בְּמִצְרַיִם לָקְחוּ תַמְשִׁימִים מִכּוֹת, וְעַל הַיָּם לָקְחוּ תַמְשִׁימִים וּמֵאַתְנַיִם מִכּוֹת:

In Egypt it says of them: The wizards said to Pharaoh 'This is the finger of God.' At the sea it says: Israel saw the great hand that God laid against Egypt; and the people feared God. They believed in God and in His servant Moses.

Now, with 'the finger' how many plagues did they get? Ten plagues! You must conclude therefore, that if in Egypt they were smitten with ten plagues, at the sea they were smitten with fifty plagues!

Rabbi Eliezer says: How do we know that each plague, brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt by the Holy, blessed One, consisted of four plagues?

It is written: He sent against them His fierce anger, fury, indignation, and trouble, a discharge of evil messengers. 'Fury,' is one; 'Indignation,' makes two; 'Trouble,' makes three; 'Discharge of evil messengers,' makes four.

Thus you must conclude that if in Egypt they were struck by forty

plagues, then at the sea they were stricken with two hundred plagues.

Rabbi Akiba says: How do we know that each plague brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt by the Holy, blessed One, consisted of five plagues?

It is written: He sent against them his fierce anger, fury, indignation, and trouble, a discharge of evil messengers. 'His fierce anger,' is one; 'fury,' makes two; 'indignation,' makes three; 'trouble,' makes four; 'discharge of evil messengers,' makes five. Thus you must now conclude that if in Egypt they were struck by fifty plagues, then at the sea they were stricken with two hundred and fifty plagues.



**IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH - DAYAINU**

*Dayainu* does not simply mean 'it would have been enough.' Rather: it would have been more than we deserved.

If we count our blessings here, we find fifteen reasons for being grateful.

1. God brought us out of Egypt. Obviously our first gratitude is for the fact that we are no longer trapped or enslaved. There could be no growth so long as we were in Egypt.

2. It does not say God judged them, rather, He did judgments among them. As has been noted previously, the Hebrew word, אָסָא - *Asa* - Did, refers to the most tangible form of creativity the ultimate unfolding of God's plans. It refers to the Fixing. God is not judgmental simply for judgments own sake. His judgments are very creative. God's judgments of Egypt were designed to show us the nature of our own illness and the power of the slavery to which we were bound. In order to make things perfectly clear to us, God 'did' the Egyptians.

3. God also 'Did' their gods. The creativity inferred by the use of the Hebrew word, *Asa* - Did, refers to the humor and irony involved in God's humiliation of the Egyptian gods.

4. God killed their firstborn. This is the culmination of the first lesson. Slavery means death. The worship of un-gods means death. Let this be clear and unequivocal.

5. God gave us their money. It does not say gave us their wealth, rather their money. A medium of exchange, the dollar is a piece of green paper of little value. But it represents agreement amongst people to maintain a monetary system and all the cultural ramifications implied in that agreement. For the system to be successful, a stable balance of forces must exist in the marketplace. We had enough on our hands without a forced return to the primitive barter system. The whole structure of economics that worked so well for the Egyptians now came to work for us. It was a sane, peaceful, rewarding system. The word chosen here to describe money *Mannon* — Money, is unusual in this context. One might have expected the word *Keseph* — Silver to be used. *Mannon* does not appear in the story of the Exodus, whereas *Keseph* - Silver is mentioned often. *Keseph* — Silver is the metal of the *Sephirah* of *Yesod* - Fundament whose planet is the Moon. *Keseph* in Hebrew also translates as 'longing' and 'desire.' The moon has no light of its own. Without the sun it would be invisible. Yet the moon has an obvious presence. It affects tides on earth in ways that are obvious. It affects men and women in ways that are not so obvious. Jewish people are connected, spiritually to the moon. The Egyptians had the *Mannon* we needed. We had quite enough of our own *Keseph* - Silver - Longing.

6. God split the Sea for us. We might have had to fight a pitched battle with them the way we did weeks later with the Amalekites. The Egyptians might have found themselves drawn away to fight elsewhere against marauders, or any number of other possibilities. Instead we were taught to surrender and turn our will over to God. That was good for us.

7. God passed us through it on dry land. We are not merely remarking that

## דִּינּוֹ:

כִּמָּה מַעֲלוֹת טוֹבוֹת לַמָּקוֹם  
עָלֵינוּ:

אֱלֹהֵי הוֹצִיאֵנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם.  
וְלֹא עָשָׂה בָּהֶם שְׂפָטִים.  
דִּינּוֹ:

אֱלֹהֵי עָשָׂה בָּהֶם שְׂפָטִים.  
וְלֹא עָשָׂה בְּאֱלֹהֵיהֶם.  
דִּינּוֹ:

אֱלֹהֵי עָשָׂה בְּאֱלֹהֵיהֶם.  
וְלֹא חָרַג אֶת־בְּכוֹרֵיהֶם.  
דִּינּוֹ:

God took care of the details. When the Red Sea split and we passed through it, we did not walk through mud and swamp. Everything was as dry as a bone and the walk was comfortable. We are really pointing out that God is loving and caring. The ungodly we worshipped in Egypt may have been many things, but no one would accuse of them of being loving and caring or anticipating of people's needs.

8. God drowned our oppressors in it. Apparently it was very important to us to see the Egyptians dead and destroyed. Perhaps we were afraid that so long as they could chase us they were incapable of letting go and we would have to battle

endlessly with them. Perhaps we ourselves could never let go until we saw them utterly defeated. Whatever the reason, God did drown them all in the Red Sea.

9. God took care of our needs, forty years in the wilderness. Protected us from sun and wind, snow and rain, snakes and scorpions. We were surrounded by 'Clouds of Glory' and never really lacked material things. We had our needs met.

10. God fed us manna. This was not just plain or normal food, it was an entirely new and miraculous creation. The Manna gave a whole new meaning to the phrase 'Living by the word of God'.

11. He gave us *Shabbes* - The Sabbath. It is not simply a public day of rest. To describe it is impossible. A marble statue has as much resemblance to a real person as the description of Sabbath has to the true experience of *Shabbes*. The Talmud describes it as the pearl of God's treasury.

12. God brought us to Mount Sinai. We had the most extraordinary experience there, before the Torah was given us. We found ourselves entirely unified, as one person with one heart. Everyone felt all there needs were being taken cared of, and was free to take care of everyone else's needs.

13. God gave us the Torah. Not merely a jewel out of His treasury, God gave us the whole treasury.

14. He brought us into the Land of Israel.

15. God built us the 'Chosen House' (Temple) to atone for our sins. Now wait a minute, who mentioned sins? God knows that we aren't angels. We aren't expected to get it right the first time or even the second time. We are going to keep on failing again and again. What matters is progress, not perfection. The Hebrew words chosen here to mean Temple are, בית הבחירה - *Beit Habechira*, which translates as 'House of Choice.' This is an allusion to the real meaning of the Exodus. We are no longer slaves because we have a choice. The real distinction between us in Egypt and now is the power of choice, freedom requires choices. And so our grati-

tude list ends with thanks for the gift of what is more commonly referred to as Free Will, freedom to choose.

The text in English:

**How many levels of favors has the Omnipresent One bestowed upon us:**

1. If He had brought us out from Egypt, and had not executed judgments against them, it would have sufficed us!

2. If He had carried out judgments against them, and not against their idols, it would have sufficed us!

3. If He had destroyed their idols, and had not smitten their first-born, it would have sufficed us!

4. If He had smitten their first-born, and had not given us their money, it would have sufficed us!

5. If He had given us their wealth, and had not split the sea for us, it would have sufficed us!

6. If He had split the sea for us, and had not taken us through it on dry land, it would have sufficed us!

7. If He had taken us through the sea on dry land, and had not drowned our oppressors in it, it would have sufficed us!

8. If He had drowned our oppressors in it, and had not supplied our needs in the desert for forty years, it would have sufficed us!

9. If He had supplied our needs in the desert for forty years, and had not fed us the manna, it would have sufficed us!

10. If He had fed us the manna, and had not given us the Shabbat, it would have sufficed us!

11. If He had given us the Shabbat, and had not brought us before Mount Sinai, it would have sufficed us!

אלו הרג את־בְּכוֹרֵיהֶם,  
וְלֹא נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־מִזְמוֹנָם,  
דַּיְנוּ:

אלו נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־מִזְמוֹנָם,  
וְלֹא קָרַע לָנוּ אֶת־הַיָּם,  
דַּיְנוּ:

אלו קָרַע לָנוּ אֶת־הַיָּם,  
וְלֹא הִעֲבִירָנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ בְּהַרְבֵּה,  
דַּיְנוּ:

אלו הִעֲבִירָנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ בְּהַרְבֵּה,  
וְלֹא שָׁקַע צְרִינוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ,  
דַּיְנוּ:

אלו שָׁקַע צְרִינוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ,  
וְלֹא סָפַק צְרָכָנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר  
אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה,  
דַּיְנוּ:

אלו סָפַק צְרָכָנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר  
אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה,  
וְלֹא הֶאֱכִילָנוּ אֶת־הַמָּן,  
דַּיְנוּ:

אלו הֶאֱכִילָנוּ אֶת־הַמָּן,  
וְלֹא נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת,  
דַּיְנוּ:

אלו נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת,  
וְלֹא קָרַבְנוּ לְפָנֵי הַר סִינַי,  
דַּיְנוּ:

אלו קָרַבְנוּ לְפָנֵי הַר סִינַי,  
וְלֹא נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה,  
דַּיְנוּ:

אלו נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה,  
וְלֹא הִכְנִיסָנוּ לְאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל,  
דַּיְנוּ:

אלו הִכְנִיסָנוּ לְאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל,  
וְלֹא בָנָה לָנוּ אֶת־בַּיִת הַבְּחִירָה,  
דַּיְנוּ:

על אחת כמה וכמה טובה  
 כפולה ומכפלת למקום עלינו:  
 שהוציאנו ממצרים,  
 ועשה בהם שפטים,  
 ועשה באלהיהם,  
 והרג את בכוריהם,  
 ונתן לנו את מנוחם,  
 וקרע לנו את תוים,  
 והעבירנו בתוכו בחרבה,  
 ושקע צרנו בתוכו,  
 וספק צרנו במדבר ארבעים שנה,  
 והאכילנו את המן,  
 ונתן לנו את השבת,  
 וקרבנו לפני הר סיני,  
 ונתן לנו את התורה,  
 והכניסנו לארץ ישראל,  
 וקנה לנו את בית הבחירה,  
 לכפר על פלעונותינו.

12. If He had brought us before Mount Sinai, and had not given us the Torah, it would have sufficed us!

13. If He had given us the Torah, and had not brought us into the land of Israel, it would have sufficed us!

14. If He had brought us into the land of Israel, and had not built for us the House of Choice, it would have sufficed us!

How much more so must we be grateful to the Omnipresent One for the doubled and redoubled goodness that He bestowed upon us. He brought us out of Egypt and carried out judgments against them, and against their idols, and smote their first-born, and gave us their money, and split the sea for us, and took us through it on dry land, and drowned

our oppressors in it, and supplied our needs in the desert for forty years, and fed us the manna, and gave us the Shabbat, and brought us before Mount Sinai, and gave us the Torah, and brought us into the land of Israel and built for us the House of Choice to atone for all our sins.



The Talmud, (*Pesachim* 116a) describes the *Magid* - Tell the Story section of the Haggadah as a narrative beginning with shame and ending with praise. There is shame in our historical involvement with paganism, we were idol worshippers and slaves. Now, however, there is gladness because we are servants of God. Up to this point the Haggadah has fulfilled the requirement to 'begin with shame'. The mood now undergoes a marked change as we move into the 'praise' section of *Magid* - Tell the Story.



### RABBAN GAMLIEL

We are generally taught to believe that actions are the ultimate, final, irrevocable form of events; that events narrate the acts from which they spring. We are told that actions are facts shaping the world, that whatever has been

done is done, that all acts are final.

Rabban Gamliel reminds us that speech has the last word. Ultimately it is what I say that shapes events in the world. Even the past can be shaped by what I say now. In Kabbalistic parlance *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty reveals *Tiffereth* - Glory, because *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty is associated with speech and speech is the vehicle whereby we reveal our heart. Even an act that once seemed utterly final may yet be changed by the words I utter in the future. For when you learn what was in my heart, what motivated my act, you will have seen a completely different event.

When God said to Adam, 'Did you eat of the tree from which I forbade you?' God was inviting Adam to admit, explain, mitigate or interpret his transgression. Adam took the opportunity to blame both God for Eve and Eve for his own act of eating, and the stage was set for the rupture of intimacy. Instead of revealing the humility, longing and prayer in his heart, Adam used his mouth to express his defensive thoughts.

The Passover Seder is a blueprint for the fixing of this rupture. Every mouthful is an indispensable component of an elaborate ritual staged to re-enact the original drama with a different outcome. It is not sufficient to eat or not eat as commanded or as the ritual dictates. Every mouthful demands verbal acknowledgment. It is not enough to name each item on the menu, there are *Kavanot* - Intentions in the act of eating. Our explicitly stated intentions can change everything. They express what we have in our hearts.

This far into the Seder we have fulfilled our obligation to recite the Haggadah, 'words tough as sinews'. We have described the process whereby we came to be in this place, we made no excuses and put up no defenses. Rabban Gamliel informs us that it is not enough. The promise of Seder Night is our own individual *Giluy Shechinah* - Divine Revelation. For that to happen we will have to change our perceptions. Changing perceptions happen in the *Sephirah* of *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty. Whether eating or talking, on Seder night we become adepts journeying through the *Sephirah* of *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty

As we will see, three aspects of divine revelation are displayed together in this ritual of Rabban Gamliel's: The mouth, the words and the sounds.

The text in English:

**Rabban Gamliel used to say: Whoever has not uttered these three words on Passover has not fulfilled his obligations.**

1. Pesach - Passover,
2. Matzah - Unleavened Bread
3. Marror - Bitter Herbs.

## רַבֵּן גַּמְלִיאֵל

רַבֵּן גַּמְלִיאֵל הָיָה אוֹמֵר: כָּל שֶׁלֹּא אָמַר  
שְׁלֹשָׁה דְבָרִים אֵלּוּ בַּפֶּסַח, לֹא יֵצֵא יְדֵי  
חֻבְתּוֹ, וְאֵלּוּ הֵן:

## פֶּסַח. מַצָּה וּמָרֹר:



## 1. THE MEANING OF *PESACH*-PASSOVER

The first thing we talk about is the Paschal lamb, the Pesach itself. The Hebrew word, *Pesach*, translates as 'Passover', as becomes obvious from the text. God passed over our dwellings as He moved through Egypt slaying every firstborn. The reason it is so important to mention it here; important enough to name the entire festival after this detail of a huge tapestry; important enough to invalidate the entire Seder if it is not explicitly acknowledged, demands some explanation.

It is yet another metaphor.

*Giluy Shechinah* - Divine Revelation, the fixing of intimacy may sometimes be had as a gift from God without our first having learned all we need to know about it. While as a general rule spirituality requires we take steps, on occasion spiritual evolution can come as a flash of insight. Moments of intimacy may be had amid the ruins of one's life. Blinding enlightenment may be enjoyed by the most unworthy, with one caveat. It is no more than a flash, a momentary and fleeting gift, soon gone and lost. While as a rule, the steps one must take before achieving enlightenment are many, there also exists an exception to this rule. It is called, *Pesach* - Passover.

When the first step towards healing the rupture of intimacy is taken with absolute integrity and utter fearlessness there may be a sudden and gratuitous revelation of the last step. In Twelve Step parlance this would be the equivalent of saying a really honest and thorough first step is of itself the best twelfth step. Admitting one's powerlessness and accepting full awareness of the unmanageability of one's life may be rewarded with *Giluy Shechinah* - Divine Revelation.

The entire experience of our exodus from Egypt was an example of this principle. Spiritually we were at the lowest levels of awareness and evolution as has been described at length in the earlier sections of the Haggadah. At God's behest we made a tremendous effort to abstain from idolatry for a few days, we made public sacrifice to God of an Egyptian sacred symbol, painting its blood on our doors and lintels, roasting its meat over open fires and eating it in a public act of ritual worship. All of a sudden, at midnight, there was *Giluy Shechinah* - Divine Revelation. Every single person was revealed to every other in his or her group and family in all their vulnerability. For one moment, each of our hearts was opened and shining, free to love and be loved, revealed to the deepest depths, to the inside of the inside. Everyone in every room was free to reveal themselves, to own and admit to their true self without fear of rejection or shame. For that one moment, as each person exposed their heart it became obvious that God is the heart of the Jewish people in the *Giluy Shechinah* - Divine Revelation.

The mouth is the seat of the *Sephirah* of *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty. It has five components, throat, palate, tongue, teeth and lips. The Hebrew word *Pesach* also hints at the idea of *Peh Sach*, 'the mouth that talks.' Rabban Gamliel emphasizes the three indivisible aspects of speech collected in these three com-

mandments. The first aspect is shaped by *Peh Sach* the speaking mouth.

The text in English:

**The Pesach that our forefathers used to eat when the Temple [in Jerusalem] still stood, what was it meant to symbolize? It was because God passed over the dwellings of our ancestors in Egypt as it is written;**

**'Say, it is a Passover offering to God Who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He smote Egypt, when He saved our houses. The nation knelt and bowed down.'**

## פֶּסַח

פֶּסַח שֶׁהָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אוֹכְלִים, בְּזֶמַן שֶׁבֵּית  
הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הָיָה קַיָּם, עַל שׁוֹם מָה? עַל שׁוֹם  
שֶׁפֶּסַח הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, עַל בְּתֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ  
בְּמִצְרָיִם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְאָמַרְתֶּם יְבוּחַ פֶּסַח הוּא  
לִּי, אֲשֶׁר פֶּסַח עַל בְּתֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִצְרָיִם,  
בְּנִגְפוֹ אֶת־מִצְרָיִם וְאֶת־בְּתֵינוּ הִצִּיל, וַיִּקַּד  
הָעָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ.



## 2. THE MEANING OF MATZAH

The essential metaphor expressed by Matzah is the need for speed and intervention to prevent the normal leavening process from occurring. What became obvious in Egypt was that our thoughts, behaviors and social patterns would only lead us further down the path to slavery and self-destruction. We could not stop ourselves; our wounds had become chronic, acute, and pathological. Our souls were no longer capable of healing themselves. Our whole existence as a people, as family and as individuals was facing the certainty of imminent collapse. We could not wait for ourselves to heal ourselves. Our situation required intervention at every level. Just as the presence of yeast in the dough is a virtual guarantee of leavening, so was the malaise of Egypt in us a virtual guarantee of destruction. Just as dough displays symptoms of its progress, a whitening across its face, the development of fissures over its surface and the smell of fermentation, so did we Jewish people display all the signs of our process.

Some degenerative diseases can be arrested, some may even be reversed. Most, though, reach a point after which they can neither be arrested nor reversed. So it was with us in Egypt. We had reached that point. Notwithstanding the spiritual awakening we had undergone that night, regardless of the fact we had glimpsed sanity and tasted intimacy, we were very ill and could not wait for intervention, it had to come immediately.

One of the great miracles we still remark upon is this: Though the *Giluy Shechinah* - Divine Revelation was given to us for a moment, disappearing almost immediately, it only disappeared in the sense that we ourselves could no longer access it. We no longer felt capable of the intimacy and the open heartedness we had experienced at midnight of Passover. But we were not really bereft.

## מצה

מצה זו שאנו אוכלים, על שום מה? על שום שלא הספיק בצקם של אבותינו להחמיץ, עד שנגלה עליהם מלך מלכי המלכים, הקדוש ברוך הוא, וגאלם, שנאמר: ויאפו את-הבצק, אשר הוציאו ממצרים, ענת מצות, כי לא חמץ: כי גרשו ממצרים, ולא יכלו להתחממת, וגם צנה לא עשו להם.

An intervention was taking place. God was acting upon us, setting in motion the process of our healing. That the dough remained Matzah and did not become *Chometz* - Leavened was itself proof positive of divine intervention. So, while we no longer felt the *Gilyu Shechinah* - Divine Revelation, one look at the Matzah we carried on our back was enough to show that God was present. As though the Matzah itself was a *Gilyu*

*Shechinah* - Divine Revelation.

The second aspect of *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty is in the words, strings of consonants bearing meaning, telling stories. The Talmud suggests that the Biblical text calls Matzah לחם עוני - *Lechem Oni* - 'Bread of Poverty and Affliction' because the Hebrew word, עוני - *Oni* - Poverty can also be translated as 'Answering.' So, the Talmud says, Matzah - לחם עוני - *Lechem Oni* is bread over which many words are spoken.

The text in English:

**This Matzah we eat, what is it meant to symbolize? It is because the dough of our ancestors in Egypt was given no time to leaven before the King of Kings, the Holy, blessed One was revealed upon them, redeeming them. As it is written; They baked the dough they had brought with them out of Egypt into Matzah cakes because they had not leavened. Because they had been expelled from Egypt, and could not wait. They had also not prepared any food for the journey.**



### 3. THE MEANING OF MARROR - BITTER HERBS

How is the bitterness of the herb we eat now at the Seder connected to events that occurred thousands of years ago? If the purpose is to re-enact the original drama then why not enact it in a more realistic way? On the festival of Sukkot we leave the comfort of our house and home to dwell eight days in a temporary dwelling house, a Sukkah. Why are we not commanded to make some symbolic act of slavery or hard work of bricks and mortar or fieldwork?

Perhaps it is because bitterness is already a metaphor for itself. When we taste something bitter we screw and twist our face into a grimace of distaste. Distaste! The word says it all.

The Egyptians taught us three forms of bitterness:

1. Hard Work,
2. Bricks and Mortar, and
3. Fieldwork.

1. Hard work referred to in this context refers to unnatural work. Work that makes a slave bitter because, *e.g.* it is unnecessary work, which involves a person being forced to do things for which he has no talent simply in order to torture him, while not permitting him to do the work to which he may be suited.

2. Bricks and mortar refers to the bitterness caused by being forced to do work from which the slave will derive neither pleasure nor benefit. He has to watch the work of his hands go unacknowledged and unappreciated.

3. Fieldwork refers to the bitterness caused by being forced to work at tasks that have no foreseeable end or completion. The slave is faced with an unending, unremitting series of tasks whose number grows exponentially. Even as one task is completed it is shown only to be the precursor to a myriad others of ever increasing urgency. Nothing is ever enough, sufficient or adequate. The more work the slave does, the more successfully he completes his task, the more pressured and stressed he is made to become.

The only commandment in the Torah, in Jewish religion, tradition and culture dealing specifically with taste, is this of *Marror* - Bitter Herbs. The Hebrew word for taste, טעם - *Taan*, is identical to the word for reason, טעם - *Taan*, and identical to the word for a musical note, טעם - *Taan*. *Marror* - Bitter Herbs are the Mitzvah - Commandment associated with taste, reason and music.

The speaking mouth (Pesach) whose five utterances shape every spoken word, together with declarative bread (Matzah - *Lechem Oni*) combine with sound, reason and taste (*Marror* - *Taan*) to comprise the seat for *Giluy Shechinah* - Divine Revelation.

The text in English:

**This Marror we eat, what does it symbolize? It is because the Egyptians embittered the lives of our ancestors in Egypt. As it is written; They made their lives bitter with bricks and mortar, with all types of work in fields and all manner of rigorous tasks to which they enslaved them.**

## מרור

מרור זה שאנו אוכלים, על שום מה? על שום שמרור המצרים את-חיי אבותינו במצרים. שנאמר: וימרו את-חיהם בעבדה קשה, בחמר ובלבנים, ובכל-עבדה בשדה: את כל-עבדתם, אשר עבדו בהם בפרה.



## בְּכָל־דּוֹר וְדוֹר

בְּכָל־דּוֹר וְדוֹר חַיֵּב אַתֶּם לְהֵאֵר אֶת־עַצְמוֹ,  
כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם, שְׁנֹאמֵר: וְהִגַּדְתָּ  
לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: בְּעִבּוֹד זֶה עָשָׂה יי  
לִי, בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם. לֹא אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בִּלְבַד,  
גַּאֲלֵה הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, אֵלֶּיךָ אֵף אוֹתֵנוּ גַּאֲלֵה  
עִמָּהֶם, שְׁנֹאמֵר: וְאוֹתֵנוּ הוֹצֵיא מִשָּׁם, לְמַעַן  
הִבִּיא אֹתֵנוּ, לְתֵת לָנוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע  
לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ.

IN EVERY GENERATION -  
B'CHOL DOR V'DOR

Let us summarize the Haggadah to this point. The recitation and exegesis of the text that we have narrated to this point in the Passover Seder is not simply a tradition but the fulfillment of a personal commandment to identify ourselves as and with those who underwent the experiences described in the text. If we cannot recognize ourselves in the

story as protagonists then we have failed in our duty to ourselves. We have not begun upon our personal redemption and are no bit closer to *Giluy Shechinah* - Divine Revelation.

The text in English:

**In every single generation each person has to see himself as having come out of Egypt. As it is written; Tell your children on that day, saying: It was because of this that God did for me when He brought me out of Egypt.**

**It wasn't just our ancestors whom the Blessed Holy One redeemed. We were redeemed together with them. As it is written; And we were brought forth from there in order to bring us, to give us the land sworn unto our ancestors.**



## THIS IS WHY - L'FICCOCH

With the end of the Haggadah recitation comes an awareness of our need to feel and express our gratitude. The paragraph begins with the phrase: This is why we need to give thanks. It's obvious though that few possess the words to match an event such as the Haggadah describes. How could we, sitting at the Seder table, formulate an adequate response to the exodus, to our own redemption and the *Giluy Shechinah* - Divine Revelation without going into a deep and joyous meditation lasting some time?

For most of us a clear articulation of our awareness of what the hour demands will have to suffice. Aloud we speak of all the creativity, the oratory, the rhetoric and epic poetry such an endeavor would require. In the face of such an overwhelming debt of gratitude we can do no more than sketch the outline of a magnum opus. And nothing less than a whole new song will serve.

(We lift the cup and hold it in the palm of our hand as we recite this paragraph.)

The text in English:

**This is why we need to give thanks, praise, laud, glorify, exalt, honor, bless, acclaim and applaud Him who worked all these miracles for our ancestors and us. He brought forth from slavery to freedom, from woe to joy, from grief to celebration, from profound darkness to great light and from bondage to redemption. Let us therefore sing a new song to Him, Hallelujah!**

## לְפִיכָךְ

לְפִיכָךְ אֲנִיחֵנו חַיִּים לְהוֹדוֹת, לְהַלֵּל, לְשַׁבֵּחַ, לְפָאֵר, לְדוֹמַם, לְהַדִּיר, לְבָרֵךְ, לְעֲלֹה וּלְקַלֵּס, לְמִי שֶׁעָשָׂה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ אֶת-כָּל-הַנִּסִּים הָאֵלֶּה. הוֹצִיאָנוּ מֵעֲבָדוּת לְחֵירוֹת, מִגֹּיֹן לְשִׂמְחָה, וּמֵאֲפֵלָה לְאוֹר גְּדוֹל, וּמִשְׁעָבֹד לְגִאֲלָה. וְנֹאמֵר לְפָנָיו שִׁירָה חֲדָשָׁה. הַלְלוּיָהּ:

## THE EGYPTIAN HALLEL

Psalms 113 and 114 are known as the Egyptian *Hallel*. Hallelujah is a transliteration of the Hebrew word, הללִיהָ. It has three components. *Hallel* - *U* - *Jah*. The singing of *Hallel* is an obvious response to such a journey as we have just taken. The desire to burst out in an expression of joy and thanks is only natural given the magnitude of the miracle we experienced.

1. Whether *Hallel* is sung with the mouth or danced with the feet it is rooted in the *Sephirah* of *Malkhuth* – Sovereignty, where all creativity finally ends. Numerically, *Hallel* - הלל - which equals 65 - is the *Gematria* of *Adonoy* - אדני - Lord, the four lettered name of God associated specifically with the *Sephirah* of *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty.

2. The sixth Hebrew letter, *Vav* - ו, the U in the word Hallelujah points to the six *Sephiroth* surrounding *Tiffereth* - Glory, the heart of all things which connect all things holy to all things mundane.

3. *Jah*, comprising the Hebrew letters, *Yod* - י and *Heh* - ה represents the *Sephiroth* of *Chokhma* - Wisdom and *Binah* - Understanding, also known as *Mochin* - Mentalities, while the point on top of the letter *Yod* - י represents the *Sephirah* of *Keter* - Crown, the highest and most mysterious of all the *Sephiroth*. The word, Hallelujah therefore is a linguistic formula describing the connection between prophecy, the lowest manifestation of God-consciousness and the highest, most hidden protrusion into this world of God and His creativity, *Yod* - י and *Heh* - ה.

The text in English:

Psalm 113

**Hallelujah! Give thanks! Servants of God praise the name of God. May the name of God be Blessed from now and forever. Whence the sun rises to where it sets, God's name is praised. High above all nations, God, His glory upon the heavens; who is there like God, enthroned on high who**

## הַלְלוּיָהּ

הַלְלוּיָהּ. הַלְלוּ עַבְדֵי יְיָ. הַלְלוּ אֶת־שֵׁם יְיָ יְהוִי  
שֵׁם יְיָ מְבֹרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם: מִמְּזוּרַח שֶׁמֶשׁ  
עַד מְבוֹאוֹ. מִהֶלֶל שֵׁם יְיָ רַם עַל־כָּל־גּוֹיִם יְיָ.  
עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ: מִי כִּי אֱלֹהֵינוּ. הַמְגַבִּיחַ  
לְשֵׁבֶת: הַמְשַׁפֵּילִי לְרֵאוֹת בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבְאָרֶץ:  
מִקִּמֵי מַעְפָּר דָּל. מֵאֲשַׁפֵּת יָרִים אֲבִיוֹן:  
לְהוֹשִׁיבֵי עַם־נְדִיבִים. עִם נְדִיבֵי עַמּוֹ: מוֹשִׁיבֵי  
עֲקָרֹת הַבַּיִת אִם הַבָּנִים שְׂמֵחָה. הַלְלוּיָהּ:

בְּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם. בַּיַּת יַעֲקֹב מֵעַם לַעֲזוֹ:  
הַיְתָה יְהוּדָה לְקָדְשׁוֹ. יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמְשֻׁלוֹתָיו: הַיָּם  
רָאָה וַיִּנָּס. הַיַּרְדֵּן יָסַב לְאַחֲרֵי: הַהָרִים רָקְדוּ  
כְּאֵילִים. גְּבָעוֹת כְּבָנִי־צֹאן: מֵהֶלֶךְ הַיָּם כִּי  
תָנוּס. הַיַּרְדֵּן תָּסַב לְאַחֲרֵי: הַהָרִים תִּרְקְדוּ  
כְּאֵילִים. גְּבָעוֹת כְּבָנִי־צֹאן: מִלִּפְנֵי אֲדוֹן הוֹלִי  
אֲרֶץ. מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב: הַהֹפְכֵי הַצּוּר  
אֲנָם־מֵיָם. תִּלְמִישׁ לְמַעֲיֹנוֹ־מֵיָם.

yet bends to look through heaven and earth.. Who raises; from dust, the poor; from dirt, the beggar to seat him among nobles, between the nation's princes.. Who turns the barren housewife into a joyous mother of children. Hallelujah!

Psalms 114

When Israel came out of Egypt, House of Jacob from among the foreign speakers, then Judah became His consecrated, Israel His empire. The sea looked and fled, the Jordan turned to flow back. Mountains skipped like rams, peaks like lambs. What is it with you, O sea, that you flee, Jordan why turn you to flow back, mountains skipping like rams,

peaks like lambs? In the presence of the Master the earth trembles, before the God of Jacob, Who turns rocks into pools and flint-stones into waterwells.

## THE CLOSING BENEDICTION - ASHER GO'OLONU

Here we see clearly spelled out the proper order of thanksgiving. It should never be a simple expression of thanks for favors granted but an open acknowledgment that every spiritual, physical and emotional awakening is itself a call to prayer. While it is proper to say thank you, it is crucial to ask for further blessings, for more strength and greater inspiration. Even when giving thanks upon receiving physical abundance it is vital to ask for more. For if it comes from the heart, it must be a prayer, it could be nothing else, for the heart knows nothing else but prayer. If it is truly from the heart then thanksgiving is also prayer.

Because this closing paragraph of the *Magid* - Tell The Story section of the Seder is a prayer for further revelation it takes the form of a benediction, ending with a blessing, lauding God for being the Redeemer of Israel.

The text in English:

**Blessed are you Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the universe Who redeemed us and redeemed our ancestors from Egypt, bringing us to this night to eat Matzah and Marror. Please, Adonai our God, God of our ancestors, bring us similarly to other festivals and other occasions that come our way in peace. May they be a rejoicing in the rebuilding of Your city, a delight**

in Your worship, and may we partake there of the festival and paschal sacrifices whose blood will be sprinkled on the wall of your altar for acceptance. Then will we thank You, singing a new song upon our deliverance and spiritual salvation. Blessed are You, Adonai, Redeemer of Israel.

**DRINKING THE SECOND CUP OF WINE**

Before drinking the second cup of wine a moment is taken to meditate upon the *Shechinah* - Divine Presence.

*To receive the gift of the Shechinah I must first internalize the lesson of Magid. I was created to be known. I will be known totally, intimately and still be accepted.*

The text in English:

**Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.**

**אֲשֶׁר גָּאֲלָנוּ**

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר גאלנו וגאל את אבותינו ממצרים, והגיענו ללילה הזה, לאכל בו מצה ומרור. כן, יי אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, יגיענו למועדים וקדגלים אחרים, הבאים לקראתנו לשלום. שמחים בבנין עירך, וששים בעבודתך, ונאכל שם מן הזבחים ומן הפסחים (במוצאי שבת אומרים מן הפסחים ומן הזבחים). אשר יגיע המם, על קוד מובחר לקצון, ונודה לך שיר חנש על גאלתנו, ועל פדות נפשנו: ברוך אתה יי גאל ישראל:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן:

Drink the cup of wine while seated, reclining to the left.





## **6. *ROCHTZAH* WASH HANDS**



### The Miraculous in Everyday Life The letter *Samech*

The Hebrew letter/word ס - *Samech* translates as 'support,' and 'closeness.' Most specifically *Samech* supports the preceding letter י - *Nun*: The Hebrew letter, ס - *Samech*, is the perfect circle. ס - *Samech* incorporates past and future, represented by the sisters Rachel and Leah, whose only hope is the fusion of end and beginning. The end of history is thrust into its beginning like the serpent swallowing its own tail.

ס - *Samech* is the wedding ring symbolizing the everyday miracle of infinite unpredictable possibilities.

To walk the path of ס - *Samech*, whose *Gematria* - Numerical Value 60, is to be conscious of the disappearance of myself in the presence of mySelf where the ratio of selfish to Self is 1:60. Here dreams are unripe Prophecies - 1:60, and sleep is an unripe version of death - 1:60. To walk this path is remain aware of flowing abundance long after the priests have ended their blessing, comprised of 60 Hebrew letters, to be attuned to the everflowing divine essence that is the miracle of everyday life.



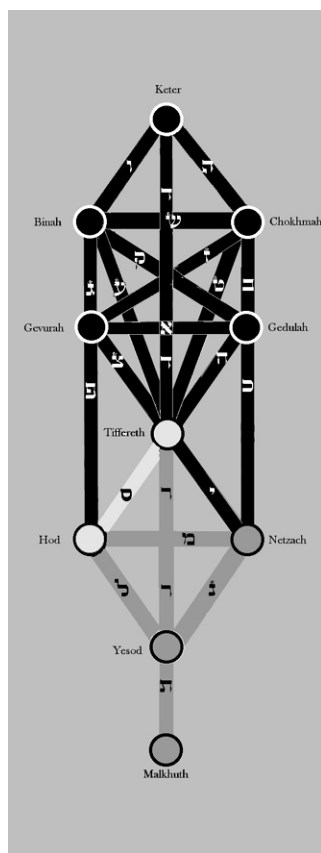
## 6. ROCHTZAH - WASH HANDS

### THE PATH THROUGH SAMECH -ו BETWEEN *TIFFERETH*- GLORY AND *HOD*-BEAUTY

Whereas the second symbol of the Seder, *Urchatz* - Wash Hands, required no benediction and was solely the duty of the *Ba'al HaSeder* - Leader of the Seder, this sixth symbol, *Rochtzah* - Wash Hands is a ritual performed by all participants at the Seder.

In the first instance washing hands was a preparation before dipping food into water, and was accompanied by a silent meditation on the phrase, 'I wash my hands of...'

This time we are meditating on the phrase, 'I wash my hands for...' this time the washing of hands requires a deeper level of consciousness, greater awareness of our hands; where they've been, what they've touched and how they've held things. Washing hands before eating bread is a uniquely Jewish ritual. But though the text of the benediction contains the phrase, 'Blessed are you, God, ... who commanded us to wash our hands', it is a rabbinical commandment of relatively late origin. It is not Biblical but Rabbinical, and that is the key to understanding its significance. The journey from *Tifereth* - Glory to *Hod* - Beauty is the journey from the heart to the kidney. According to the Kabbalah, the left kidney represents Moses who was unwilling; unwilling to act as God's messenger to Egypt, unwilling to speak, then unwilling to accept the outcome. Moses was unwilling to accept gifts, to accept no for an answer or to accept the Torah for himself. Moses never accepted anything in his life for himself. He only took what he might give away to someone else, and that is the true meaning of the *Sephirah* of *Hod* - Beauty. Although Moses is the first rabbi in recorded history, he was not the first in fact. Our kidneys are, according to tradition, our first rabbis. Many genera-



tions of rabbis tried to implement the commandment to wash hands before eating bread but we Jews, refused to accept it as an obligation. Somehow in spite of ourselves, in spite of our resistance we have integrated the hand washing ritual into our culture as a part of our heritage, as an obligation and privilege. Even our propensity for non-acceptance has to be accepted before we move on, before we can heal. The Hebrew letter **ס** - *Samech* brings us full circle to where even non acceptance is acceptable, because the circle contains everything, even diametric opposites.

A flat rimmed jug of water is poured, first over the right then over the left hand. The hands are raised and the blessing is recited.

The text in English:

**Blessed are you, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the universe Who sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to wash hands.**

Hands should be thoroughly dried on a towel before proceeding.

### רְחִצָּה

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר  
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל גְּטִילַת יָדֵינוּ:



## ***7. MOTZI - BREAD***



The Explosion of Life  
The letters *Chaf* and *Peh*

The Hebrew letter/word כף - *Chaf* translates as ‘palm of the hand.’ The most primary definition of a living organism is that it gives birth in its own image and likeness again and again. The Hebrew letter pointing to this fact of life is the letter *Chaf* - כף. It has two forms - the rounded form - כ when it appears at the beginning or middle of the word, and an elongated form - ך when it appears to end the word. According to tradition, Adam was created by God in the shape of the palms of God’s hands. This can be understood to mean that the helical shape of DNA corresponds to the lines on palms of God’s hands. If you might read the palms of God, Adam would be written there. Adam is endowed with the power to procreate in likeness of himself. The Hebrew word כף - *Chaf* has two other meanings growing out of the first. כף - *Chaf* is a crown or cap. It covers us when we are in God’s hands. כף - *Chaf* is also an imperative force, an urge we cannot ignore, an impulse we have to obey. When I am in walking the path of the *Chaf* I cannot refrain from acting as a force in the universe.

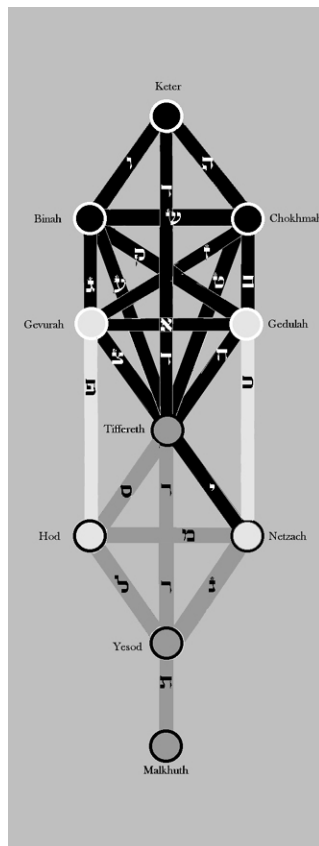
The Hebrew letter/word פה - *Peh* translates as ‘mouth.’ Passage, transition and change all come through the *Sephirah* of *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty represented by the mouth, Everything having existence has had to change to come into being. פה - *Peh* has two forms – the rounded form - פ when it appears at the beginning or middle of the word, and an elongated form - ף when it appears to end the word. In fact the *Peh* - ף is a *Chaf* - כף into which a protrusion has grown like a tooth extruded from an upper jaw. If the *Chaf* - כף represents the written word, the human genome written in nucleic acids, the Torah written in black fire upon white fire, the letter פה - *Peh* represents the spoken word. As such פה - *Peh* is the final word, the oral Torah, the human species. When I am walking the path of פה - *Peh*, I allow only the most divinely human and benign forces to flow and act through me.



## 7. MOTZI - BREAD

THE PATH THROUGH *CHAF*- כף  
 BETWEEN *CHESED* - LOVING-KINDNESS AND *NETZACH* - VICTORY  
 AND THROUGH *PEH*- פה  
 BETWEEN *GEVURAH*- JUDGEMENT AND *HOD*- BEAUTY

At first glance the benediction over bread appears to be a paradoxical one. It



contains the phrase, '... Who brings bread out of the ground.' But it does not grow out of the ground; for bread to appear on our table it has to go through many processes. It has to go from grain berries on the stalk of a grass-like plant, through harvesting, threshing, winnowing, grinding, kneading, rolling and baking to become bread. Hardly bread out of the ground! But it is the very fact that the blessing does not mention any of the processes between ground and bread that draws our attention to the underlying truth.

Lifting the bread up in the palms, the *Chaf* of our hands, we utter this blessing with our mouth, our *Peh*, because bread is the 'Staff of Life.' Bread is what makes civilization as we know it possible.

As mentioned in the preface to this Haggadah, bread is almost the 'Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.' The agriculture that goes into the cultivation of grains for bread, the chemistry which goes into the preparation of bread from flour, the technology that goes into all these processes comprise the story, the very history of humankind. Bread-making is a defining human endeavor. But bread-making is also a metaphor for the creation of Adam. The creation of man is often described as a gathering, winnowing, kneading, rolling and baking process in clay.

It exemplifies the meaning on the Hebrew letter/word *Chaf* as outlined above. When, therefore, we

lift the bread in the palms of our hands and utter the benediction with our mouths, *Pe'h*, we are meditating on the verse, (Deut 8:3)

For it is not by bread alone that man lives, but by that which comes out of God's mouth that man lives.

Picking up the top and bottom Matzah, with the broken half Matzah between them, this blessing is recited.

The text in English:

**Blessed are you, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the universe Who brings bread out of the ground.**

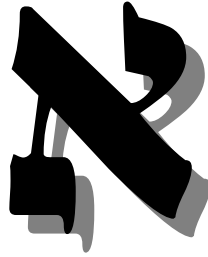
### מוציא

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם. המוציא לחם מן הארץ:





**8. *MATZAH*  
UNLEAVENED BREAD**



### The balancing act - The letter *Alef*

The Hebrew letter/word אָלֵף - *Alef* translates as ‘teaching,’ or ‘lord,’ or ‘thousand’ or ‘cattle.’ The Hebrew letter א - *Alef*, symbolizes the element of air dividing and connecting the other two elements - those of fire and water - the way the thorax in the human body separates the head from the abdomen. In its shape, the letter א - *Alef* has a main dividing line resembling the Hebrew letter, ו - *Vav* running diagonally from top to bottom, on either side of which depend two small figures made of the Hebrew letter, י - *Yod*. The essence of spirituality is a balance of priorities, which at times it may be summed up as, more other less self. At other times it may be, more self less other. The Hebrew word, א - *Alef* can be translated a number of ways. It can mean master, teacher or beast of burden. Each depends on balance for effect.

In walking the path of א - *Alef* we must balance the demands of stomach - water against the imperatives of head - fire. It is in the path of א - *Alef* that the voice of the heart can be heard loud above the plaintive voice of stomach or the shrill demands of head. א - *Alef* describes the cardiovascular system. Aerobics are also the domain of א - *Alef*. The most important lesson of א - *Alef* is the awareness that it is neither in our thoughts nor in our emotions that the heart has its seat.



## 8. MATZAH - UNLEAVENED BREAD

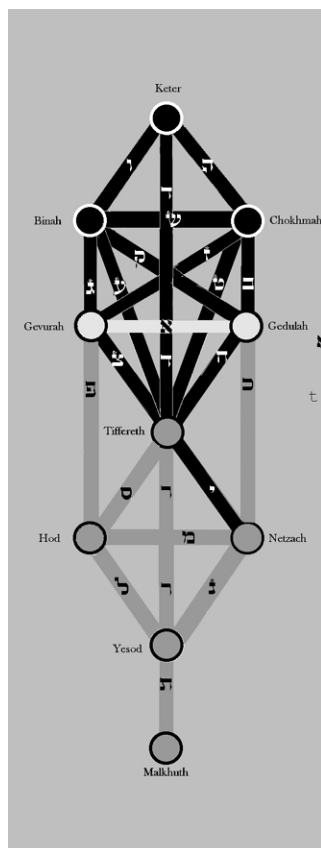
### THE PATH THROUGH ALEF - א BETWEEN CHESED - LOVING - KINDNESS AND GEVURAH - JUDGEMENT

A tremendous effort has gone into balancing the exigencies of baking the Matzah you hold in your hands. Through kneading, rolling and docking processes from dough to Matzah, against the clock dictating the onset of leavening, the Matzah has

not been left alone for a moment. It has been guarded at every stage in its existence from the moment the wheat was harvested until its shipping to the store where you purchased it. From the moment water was poured upon the flour until it went into the fire of the oven, this Matzah was in 'air'. It is in air that dough can become leavened. It is the action of air on the chemicals released by the water that will precipitate *Chimutz* - leavening. The difference between Matzah - Unleavened Bread and *Chometz* - Leavened Bread is the balance of time between kneading and baking, between water and fire. Timing is everything. The *Alef* representing the element of air expresses this balance.

As the benediction is made over the Matzah, particularly the broken piece of Poor Man's Bread, the middle Matzah, it is the time to meditate upon the following. 'This is the bread of faith...' We have waited faithfully to eat this bread at the appropriate time and not a moment before. It is a symbol of our faith in our own redemption, our faith that things happen as promised by God through His prophets. We have faith that eating this bread is an act of faith, that it is unleavened. And finally, eating this Matzah declares our belief that God has faith in us.

The Talmud compares someone who eats Matzah before the Seder, during the day on the eve of Pass-over to someone who cannot wait but has sexual relations with his betrothed in her father's house



before their wedding. Presumably then, eating Matzah at this, the designated moment is as someone who has sexual relations with his married wife on their wedding night after all the ceremonies are over. Needless to say marriage is a very public declaration of a very private intention. The Seder to this point has been a very public ceremony. But the piece of Matzah I put in my mouth is a very private thing.

Nonetheless, if I choose to open myself to see it, there is *Giluy Shechinah* - Divine Revelation upon this very piece of Matzah that I am about to swallow.

Allow the lower Matzah to drop and remain holding only the broken middle and upper Matzah while saying the blessing. Bear in mind that the broken piece of Matzah over which this special blessing is recited is the  $\daleth$  - *Daleth* - Bread of Poverty.  $\daleth$  - *Daleth* is one of the Hebrew letters that cannot stand on its own. Its balance is poor and it tends to topple on its face if unsupported. That's why one of the meanings of the Hebrew word  $\daleth$  - *Daleth* is poverty.

The text in English:

**Blessed are you Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the universe Who sanctified with His commandments and commanded us to eat Matzah.**

### מִצָּה

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על אכילת מצה:

The Matzah should be eaten while leaning to the left. It should be eaten quickly and without interruption. (Before swallowing Matzah the first time, as much Matzah as can be comfortably contained in the mouth should be chewed so that the first gulp passes as large a quantity as is required under the obligation to eat Matzah through the gullet. The requirement is to eat the equivalent of the size of an olive in biblical times, which is about 1/3 of a large egg at this time, or 1oz. of Matzah. The time within which it should be eaten completely is 2 minutes. This is the equivalent of a whole machine made Matzah, or a half a hand baked Matzah.)

It is worth bearing in mind that this is the Matzah of Brokenness, the Matzah of Faith. Few things we will eat in during the whole course of our lives hold such promise of joy as this mouthful of Matzah. Even in the most broken heart there is an unshakeable foundation of faith. Sometimes it is only by exercising our faith that we get to feel it at all. In eating this Matzah we awaken and nourish the faith buried deep in our soul.



9. *MARROR*  
BITTER HERBS



### The infinite smallness - The letter *Yod*

The Hebrew letter/word י - *Yod* translates as 'hand.' The י - *Yod* hangs suspended in midair and is comprised of three main features: 1) the comma at the bottom where the body tapers off; 2) the main body of the letter resembling a simple point in space; and 3) the crown, a thorn-like protrusion on top of the body. The entire Hebrew alphabet is constructed of various permutations of these three features of the י - *Yod*. The writing of any letter in the Hebrew alphabet begins and ends with the letter י - *Yod*. The person most representative of the י - *Yod* is the Jew. Any Jew, every Jew. In Kabbalistic literature it has been noted that of all the features in the Kabbalah of the Hebrew alphabet, it is only this crown on the letter י - *Yod* whose secrets may not be probed by mortal. It is the paradigm of a classic paradox. 'There is no place devoid of Him [God] nor is there any way to think about Him [God] at all.' This is precisely because it represents the infinitesimally small point where 'something from nothing' comes into being. The letter י - *Yod* is also known as the Hand of God. In the Kabbalah it symbolizes something from nothing.

To walk the path of the י - *Yod* is to become conscious of one's divinity. When I realize I am nothing less than a projection of God in the world I am filled with joy. When I realize how few moments I spend cognizant of this fact I am filled with bitter regret. When I realize how great I am I am filled with humility, trepidation and desire to be of service to God.



במלח

## 9. MARROR - BITTER HERBS

### THE PATH THROUGH YOD - ך BETWEEN TIFFERETH - GLORY AND NETZACH - VICTORY .

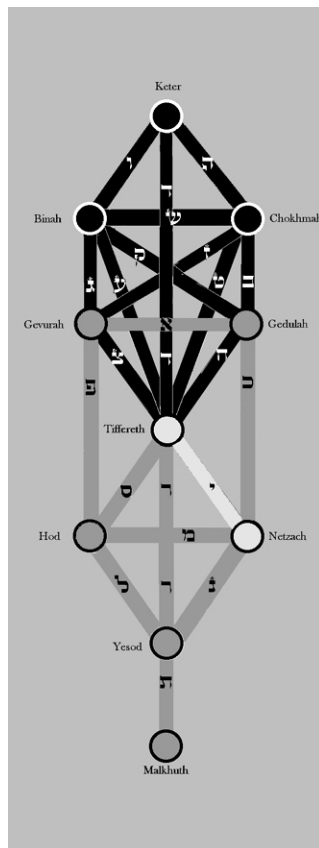
Of all the many, many commandments a Jew must fulfill and the thousands of laws, customs and usages to which he or she must adapt, this, the eating of *Marror* is the only one designed to be unpleasant or bitter. Even such strictures and constraints as fast days and prohibitions against this or that, all can be enjoyed given the right

frame of mind. Quoting the verse, (Proverbs 3:17): 'Her ways are sweet ways' the Talmud often emphasizes the absence of Torah commandments requiring distasteful, wounding or harmful practices. *Marror* is the obvious exception. Even the customary blessing before eating vegetables is omitted because eating *Marror* is unhealthy.

This then is the secret of *Marror*, the secret of the letter ך - *Yod* the secret of being a Jew. Some things, sometimes the smallest of things are infinitely huge. Sometimes the lowest, coarsest most alienated Jew is the brightest, shining vehicle for the divine. Sometimes the bitterest vegetable has the sweetest taste. If you chew on a piece of horseradish, if you persevere beyond the tears and the violated sinuses, if you continue chewing it will eventually turn sweet in your mouth. And that is the secret of this spiritual path, the *Yod* - ך between *Tiffereth* - Glory and *Netzach* - Victory.

Patience and perseverance, fortitude and courage, endless faith and the appreciation that the I, *Yod* - ך the Jew, the 'Hand of God' I am an infinite being and it is through me that God's power and governance are visible in the world.

Though negligible in size and bereft of any power of my own, at my head is the crown connecting this whole world with the infinite, unknowable, unimaginable Creator. I am bitter, but I am all sweetness. I am



the smallest ם - *Yod*, but I am connected above to God and below to all of creation.

Approximately three-quarters of an ounce of *Marror* should be dipped into the *Charoseth* and eaten as quickly as possible after making the following benediction.

The text in English:

**Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who sanctifies us with His commandments and commanded us to eat Marror.**

### מָרּוֹר

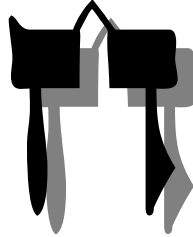
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מָרּוֹר:

The Marror is eaten without reclining to the left.





# 10. *KORAICH* SANDWICH



### Mistakes are Human Rights - The letter *Cheth*

The Hebrew letter, ח - *Cheth* is shaped like a gateway for that is what it is. The two Hebrew words which come naturally to mind when thinking about this letter are, חטא - *Chet*, which translates as 'sin' and חסד - *Chesed*, which translates as 'loving-kindness'. Strictly speaking a חטא - *Chet* is an arrow that misses the mark, a mistake, an accident. Why is it a sin? Perhaps it is because sins can be a whole variety of acts on a broad spectrum from mistakes through negligence, through criminal negligence, through malicious intent. We may remain unaware consciously of the subconscious and unconscious motives for our behaviors. It is often only upon seeing the results of our actions that we are made aware of our imperfections, our mistakes. If there is one feature defining the person walking the path of the ח - *Cheth* it is a broken heart. The gate to all spirituality is a broken heart, not in response to some tragedy or event, but a permanent state of brokenness. *Chesed* - Loving-kindness is not an act of charity in response to some pitiful sight that touches the viewer. *Chesed* is total compassion, a permanent openness of heart. A master of *Chesed* is always looking for the opportunity to perform an act of *Chesed*. The person walking the path of ח - *Cheth* is always mindful of all the people around him, of the pain and loss and brokenness that abounds. Compassion and brokenness are mirror images of the letter ח - *Cheth*.



## 10. KORAICH - SANDWICH

### THE PATH THROUGH *CHETH*-ן BETWEEN *TIFFERETH*- GLORY AND *CHESED*- LOVING-KINDNESS

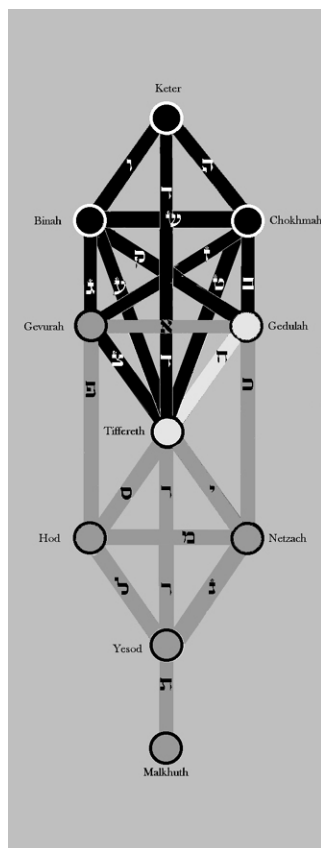
In the Torah when the commandment to eat the Paschal Lamb is spelled out in detail it is made clear that the lamb is to be eaten together with Matzah and bitter herbs. Now that there is no temple in Jerusalem, the duty to offer the Paschal sacrifice no longer obtains. Today we are only able to eat Matzah and *Marrow*. Nevertheless we wrap them together as though the lamb were also present and eat them thus in memory of ancient days.

More specifically we recall one man, Hillel, a rabbi of the first century B.C.E. who instituted the practice of wrapping the three ingredients together before eating them.

There are two unusual features of this ritual. First, it is done in memory, in that food is eaten in a certain symbolic way as a reminder of times past. Second, the ritual is specifically the design of one man, Hillel. It stems from another debate recorded in the Talmud, concerning the debate: Does the taste of one commandment nullify the taste of another commandment. If we are commanded to eat both Matzah and *Marrow*, doesn't the overpowering taste of the *Marrow* completely nullify the taste of the Matzah? If we agree that the taste of a particular food is the main ingredient of the food, how can we fulfill our obligation to eat Matzah if it is wrapped in *Marrow*, doesn't the taste of the *Marrow* in effect cancel our Matzah eating experience altogether?

Hillel's answer to that question is an emphatic, no! Tastes may indeed overwhelm one another as experience shows, but commandments don't.

We are about to embark upon the third stage of our process, the festival meal where symbolically we have all our needs met, which will only be finished when we drink the third cup of wine. This is the moment



to reflect on the major reason why we are still in exile.

The Second Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed because we had focused on our differences over our similarities. We grew to be incapable of identifying ourselves with our own neighbors, our friends, and even with our families. Jerusalem was torn apart by schism. Everyone was afraid that their tastes could not survive in a world where tastes have to mingle, coexist or adapt. No one had sufficient faith in their own experience to risk accommodating the experiences of others. Everyone felt threatened by the opinions, beliefs and practices of others.

The unwillingness of Jews in Jerusalem to surmount their own prejudices and hatreds kept them arguing with each other even as the Romans were sacking the city and burning the Temple.

Hillel is famous, among other things, for his refusal to take a literal and fundamentalist approach to any reading of the Bible text. It is all the more unusual therefore to find him doing precisely that with regard to the obligations of Passover. None of his colleagues felt it necessary to make a sandwich of lamb, Matzah and *Marror* in order to fulfill a commandment implicit in the following phrase: (Numbers 9:11)

‘He shall prepare it the afternoon of the 14th of the second month and eat it with Matzah and bitter herbs.’

The key to understanding Hillel and this *Koraich* - Sandwich ritual lies in Hillel’s choice of text. The text he quotes to prove his point comes from the book of Numbers, Chapter 9. Beginning at verse 1, the text reads thus:

God spoke to Moses in the Sinai Desert in the second year of the Exodus from Egypt, in the first month, saying, The Children of Israel shall prepare the Paschal sacrifice at its proper time. The proper time for its preparation shall be on the 14th day of this month in the afternoon. They must prepare it in accordance with all its decrees and laws.

Moses told the Children of Israel to prepare the Paschal sacrifice. They prepared the Paschal sacrifice in the Sinai Desert on the 14th of the first, in the afternoon. The Children of Israel did exactly as God had commanded Moses.

There were, however, men who had come in contact with the dead and were therefore *Tamay*, and therefore, unable to prepare the Paschal sacrifice on that day. During the course of the day they approached Moses and Aaron.

“We are *Tamay* as a result of contact with the dead,” the men said. “But why should we lose out and not be able to offer God’s sacrifice at the right time together with all other Children of Israel?”

“Wait here,” replied Moses, “and I will hear what God commands regarding your case.”

God spoke to Moses, telling him to speak to the Children of Israel saying: ‘If anybody be *Tamay* through contact with the dead, or traveling on a distant road, whether now or in future generations, he shall still have the opportunity to prepare God’s Paschal sacrifice. He shall prepare it the

afternoon of the 14th of the second month, and eat it with Matzah and bitter herbs.'

Now, had Hillel's intention simply been to prove a point, he would have been just as well served using the text of the original commandment to make the Paschal sacrifice, the text from Exodus 12:8. The text reads:

Eat the [Paschal sacrifice] meat during the night, roasted over fire. Eat it with Matzah and bitter herbs.

Hillel chose the quote from the book of Numbers, the text quoted in our Haggadah for a particular reason. The Paschal sacrifice described in the book of Numbers is the *Pesach Sheni* - Passover of the Second Chance. Nowhere else in Jewish law is there an example of an enactment whose purpose is solely to help make up a festival commandment in the case where something prevented its celebration on-time. In the normal course of events once an opportunity has been missed it cannot be made up. If someone did not celebrate Yom Kippur with fasting or could not hear the Shofar blown on Rosh Hashana, or could not sit in a *Sukkah* on *Sukkot* or light the Menorah on Chanukah, once the festival is over and done there is no way to make up the loss.

The Paschal sacrifice is a unique exception to the rule. It came about because the men mentioned in the text had absolute faith that there is nothing that cannot be fixed. The universe is not mechanistic. Commandments, even time-bound festivals are not events on a fixed cosmic timetable. Being prevented from celebrating the Exodus at the proper time, at Passover, does not mean some cosmic train has left the platform and cannot be recalled.

There is no such thing as too late.

There cannot be any wound in the universe for which God has no balm. Most people understand that the mistakes of the past can be fixed, for that, after all, is what *T'shuvah* - Penitence is about. But what these men with their faith brought about was the ability to change the future. They said to Moses, 'We see the festival approaching while we are still *Tamay* as a result of contact with the dead. We understand that no blame will be attached to our inability to make the Paschal sacrifice. Still, we feel we will be scarred nonetheless by our inability to participate in the national celebrations of the Passover festival. Our wives, children and neighbors will make Passover while we can only watch? God must surely have a way, a mechanism by which to fix this imminent threat to our spiritual equilibrium.'

Hillel, as chief rabbi of the Sanhedrin in the Temple, saw the schism and rifts that would eventually destroy the Jewish civilization in the Land of Israel. His life's work is summed up in the phrase attributed to him, 'What is hateful to you, do not unto your friend.' He was not alarmed at the way we treated our enemies, he was terrified because of the way we treated friends. He himself never tired of giving people the benefit of the doubt. He never lost his patience or his compassion or his good humor. But Hillel knew a time would come when the very existence of the Jewish people would hang in the balance, a time when our *Sinat Chinam* - Hatred of

Nothing, of pointless, petty trivialities would jeopardize not only Jews but Judaism. He foresaw a time when the traitorous thought passing through our mind might suggest; it's too late to start again, the chance has been missed, I'm too old for recovery, I've been left behind by events, history has moved onwards, I might as well accept that I'm scared for life.

Even as Hillel was eating his Paschal lamb, on time, on Passover in the first month, he instituted this ritual. Even in his own day, while the Temple was still standing it was eaten 'In Memory of the Temple,' because Hillel knew that the real temple had already been destroyed. The real temple is the one that brings us together to help meet each other's needs in the presence of God. That was already a memory in Hillel's time.

The Hebrew word for a commandment is מצוה - *Mitzvah*. The word has more than a single meaning, for besides being a commandment, a way of obeying and worshipping God, a *Mitzvah* is also something that brings people together, binding them to one another in interdependence and mutuality. When Mitzvahs come together, claims Hillel, they could never cancel one another out as other rabbis proposed. This was no more possible that the possibility of Jews who come together canceling one another out. The whole purpose of the Mitzvah is to bring Jews together, how could commingling one Mitzvah with another negate either Mitzvah? Even if one is much tastier, more sharply flavored, more pungent than the other, both maintain integrity.

Hillel goes a step further. Rather than using horseradish as Marror he used leafy Romaine Lettuce, so that he might take the Matzah and wrap it completely in a leaf of Marror. The Aramaic word for lettuce is חסא - *Chasa*, which also means compassion.

'Take your Matzah,' he said. 'The very bottom Matzah of the three on the Seder Plate, the one called Israel, the Matzah holding up the whole Seder, and wrap it in your broken heart, fold it into your compassion and connect inside to the tiny *Yod* - ך whose spark lights the whole world. Don't look for balance or insist on equality. Bite into it and chew on it and you will see that all tastes are clearly present. Tastes may cancel each other in the cooking pot, but nothing cancels anything in the mouth. For in the mouth is *Gilyu Shechinah* - Divine Presence. In the presence of God nothing is greater, nothing smaller.

Hillel goes still a step further, saying: Remember that you are never too late. Even as you see this Holy Temple in the early throes of destruction, even if the writing is clearly written on the wall, even if you know you will not succeed, you can still find the trust inside you, the faith that God can heal even the future. Even as you mess up right now, you may be sure that there is another chance, that being a Jew is not an all or nothing, do or die, make or break proposition. Acknowledge only the power of your broken heart.

Take a piece of the bottom Matzah, approx 1 oz. of the one called Israel and wrap it in a piece of Lettuce leaf. A whole lettuce leaf is about an ounce. The *Koraich* - Sandwich is not dipped in *Charoseth* as was the Marror previously. The Marror in Marror was sweetened in the memory of the Field of Holy Apples etc, an

amazing story from our past. The Marror in this Koraich is sweetened in the memory of the future, the next chance.

The text in English:

**In memory of the Temple, according to Hillel. This is what Hillel did at the time the Temple still stood. He would wrap Matzah in Marror and eat them together to fulfill the words of the text. As it is written: Eat it with Matzah and bitter herbs.**

## כֹּרַיִךְ

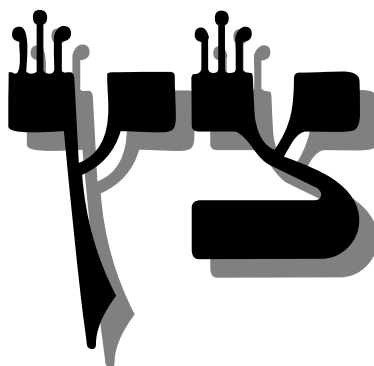
זָכַר לְמִקְדָּשׁ כְּהִלֵּל: כֵּן עָשָׂה הַלֵּל בְּזִמְנוֹ שְׁבִיט  
הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הָיָה קַיָּם. הָיָה כֹּרַיִךְ פֶּסַח מַצָּה  
וּמְרוֹר וְאוֹכֵל בְּיַחַד. לְקַיֵּם מֵה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר:  
עַל-מִצּוֹת וּמְרוֹרִים יֹאכְלֶהוּ:

Two ounces of The *Koraich* - Sandwich is eaten while leaning to the left.



11. *SHULCHAN ORAICH*  
WE ALLOW OUR-  
SELVES EXPANSIVE  
RELAXATION





### Hunched over and carrying someone on its back The letter *Tzadik*

The Hebrew letter/word צדיק - *Tzadik*, translates as ‘righteous person.’ The letter צ - *Tzadik* has two forms: the closed form - צ when it appears at the beginning or in the middle of a word, and the open expansive form - צ when it appears at the end of a word.

The letter צ is comprised of two Hebrew letters, נ - *Nun* and י - *Yod*. If the letters נ - *Nun* represents those fundamental vessels containing creation, the matriarchs, Rachel in the microcosmic and Leah in the macrocosmic universe, (*Siman 6, Urchatz*) the letter י - *Yod* represents Joseph, child of the former, and Jacob, husband of the latter.

If the צ - *Tzadik* has a purpose it is to represent both *Knesseth Israel* - Community of Israel and its leader, as one and the same person and entity. Moses, as *Tzadik* - צ of his generation was the י - *Yod* sitting on the נ - *Nun*. Together, Moses and the Children of Israel comprise the lower, closed *Tzadik*, while God and Children of Israel comprise the upper, open *Tzadik* - צ.

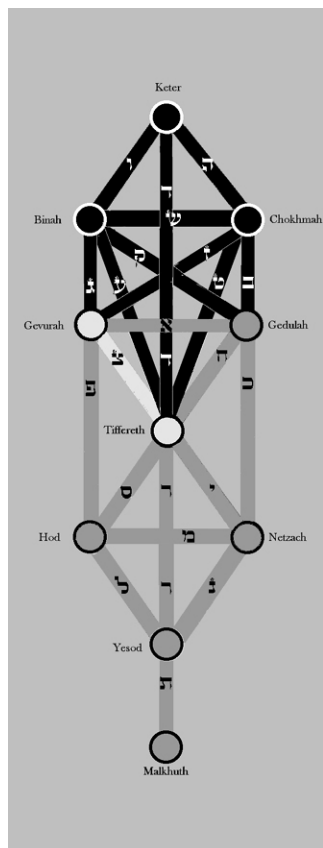
To walk the path of the *Tzadik*, I must first carry another Jew, whether on my back or in my heart. Next, I must be carried by another Jew, on his back or in his heart.. To carry a Jew on your back you must be ready to live for him. To carry him in your heart you must be ready to die for him.



## 11. SHULCHAN-ORAICH - WE ALLOW OURSELVES EXPANSIVE RELAXATION

### THE PATH THROUGH TZADIK - צ BETWEEN TIFFERETH - GLORY AND GEVURAH - JUDGMENT

The Hebrew letter, צ - *Tzadik* is associated with eating, more specifically with swallowing. Most particularly it refers to the kind of eating where one person directly feeds the other. And that, in a nutshell, is the secret of this station in the Seder.



Unless you are lost in a wilderness, castaway on a desert island, incarcerated in jail or confined to a hospital bed, you are celebrating the Seder with others. When we pray that God meet our needs we ask not only that we be given clothes to wear, but that God clothe us. Not that God simply provide us with sustenance but that God feed us.

When God asked Adam whether he had eaten of the forbidden tree, Adam's response was, (Genesis 3:12): 'The woman You gave to me, she fed me of it and I ate.' Adam was answering the question, why if he wanted to be fed by God did he eat what Eve gave him? His reply, 'the woman You gave to me,' is understood in the Kabbalah to signify Adam's appreciation for Eve as God's proxy. Adam understood Eve to be his rabbi, his advisor and counselor. If she gave it him to eat it was as though it were being fed to him by God, or so Adam insinuated.

Adam's argument though, was specious. He knew of the serpent's role in 'advising' Eve. He knew it was not God feeding him the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. He knew exactly who the serpent was, for it was Adam himself who named it *Nachash* - נחש - Sorcery.

In one Hasidic story, the Hasid asks his Rebbe for a glimpse of the world to come. He is shown a room with people starving to death amidst an abundance of food. The food cooking in a cauldron can only be

reached with the long spoon each person in the room has attached to their arm. The spoon and arm both are too long to be brought to the mouth. People try every which way to pour, spill and throw the food into their mouths, in vain. 'This is Hell,' the Rebbe tells his Hasid. The Rebbe then takes his Hasid into an identical room where every person feeds another with the long arm and spoon he has attached to it. 'This is Heaven.'

Now that we have opened ourselves to being seen, to being heard in our attempt at intimacy, to letting others see the parts we had so desperately hidden for fear of rejection - inside of who we are - now we are ready to replace the third great delusion, that we can never have our needs met by others. We had told ourselves that because we are unacceptable as we are, because we are basically flawed and worthless we will never find others to meet our needs. We thought that we would have to grab what we could and steal what we could not obtain righteously. This was a re-enactment of Adam and Eve's original sin. They had attempted to fill needs they thought they would not have met any other way.

The meal during the Seder is like no other in the Jewish calendar. As you can see it is listed with the other 14 *Simanim* - Stations of the Seder. Its place in the order of things is official, without in itself comprising any Passover *Mitzvah* - Commandment. Having fulfilled the obligation to eat Matzah and *Marror* individually and together, there is nothing to prevent a person finishing the meal at this juncture without eating anything else. Nevertheless the Seder prescribes a meal here. It has a *Siman* - Station all its own.

The proper *Kavanah* - Intent of this meal is expressed in the phrase, *Derech Eretz Kodma L'Torah* - The Proper Way Preceding Torah. Here we have to stop and take a look at ourselves. The next step of the Seder is going to rocket us right out of this world into the world of *Mochin* - Mentalities, where mind replaces matter, where *Gilyu Shechinah* - Divine Revelation begins to sound less like a concept and more like an experience. It behooves us to prepare ourselves by examining our interactions with the world of people sitting around us at the Seder table.

It is customary to begin this meal with a simple hard boiled egg dipped in saltwater. The egg has neither stem nor roots nor joints nor stalk. It has no mouth, no beginning and no apparent end. If we contemplate the spiritual journey we have made this far, we see we have come from just such a place. We began without words, without a leg to stand on, we began as though without a mouth to speak. We have read the story of the Exodus, how we were given the tools to process the experiences of Exile and how the Seder represents the gift of recollection, identification and transmission. Now we sit at the meal and must prepare for further revelation.

The message of *Shulchan Oraich* - Passover Meal is that we can receive, we may be given things we need, we can enjoy them, we can be loved and we can be cared for. Those of us who have - at one time or another - experienced the rejection of the self know how difficult it can be to internalize this truth.

It has been said that there are three types of exile:

1. The exile of the Jew among gentiles, the Jewish People

- among the Nations of the World.
2. The exile of a Jew among friends and family, the alienation of the individual among friends.
  3. The exile of the Jew from himself, the person severed from connection with the Self within.

The first sort of exile is dealt with in the Haggadah and the Seder to this point. The second is what we deal with here, at the meal. The third will be treated when we eat the Afikomen, (*Siman 12. Tzafon*).

**Historically the Exodus also came in three stages.**

First came the Exodus from Egypt culminating in the splitting of the Red Sea. The second stage came with the merging of the Children of Israel into one body. A description of their arrival at Mount Sinai in the verse, (Exodus 19:2) reads:

They traveled from Refidim and came to the Sinai Desert; they camped there in the wilderness, and Israel made camp there opposite the mountain.

Commentators point out the significant uses of the word, they, in the beginning of the verse and its obvious avoidance at the end. (*Rashi* *ibid.* and *Tana D'Vay Eliyahu*) This is telling us something of importance, they note: When they made camp at the foot of Sinai, the Jewish People were as one man with one heart. It is only when we are already as one man with one heart that it is possible to receive the Torah. Receiving the Torah is the third stage of Exodus for it requires acceptance and integration of the self. (*Mishna, Avoth 6:2*) Among the quotes from rabbis, authors of the Mishna, Talmud and Midrash concerning the freedoms bestowed at Sinai, are the following: Freedom from bondage, freedom from pain and freedom from self.

So, now during the meal our task is to come out of exile among family, and escape any alienation we feel among our friends. If, sitting at the Seder, we do no more than become aware of how many secrets we keep from our friends, how much of ourselves we feel we need to hide, how afraid we are of being seen totally revealed, we may at least develop a readiness to move beyond our current exile and become open to the possibility for redemption from our exile in society.



12. *TZAFON*  
WE EAT THE  
*AFIKOMEN*



### Humblest of the humble - The letter *Daleth*

The Hebrew letter/word דלת - *Daleth* translates as 'neediness,' 'poverty' and 'want.' But it also has the opposite meaning; it may be translated as 'elevation,' 'being drawn upward,' and it also translates as 'door'.

Humility is not a state of despair, destitution or depravation. Humility is the full awareness of my own humanity and my appreciation for my dependence on others. Moses is the most humble of the humble. He thinks he is chosen because God wants to show the world how even the least-gifted, least-special and least-deserving human may be the vessel for all divinity.

Humility requires that I accept myself as I was created with all my character flaws and defects. That I accept I am placed on earth to fulfill God's purpose and that I fit in with the divine plan in every tiny detail. I am not a mistake, an oversight or the result of God's poor quality control. I am in all my manifold frailties a masterpiece of God's creativity.

To walk the path of the ד - *Daleth*, I must accept that no matter how uncomfortable it is betimes, being me, I am the ד - *Daleth*.

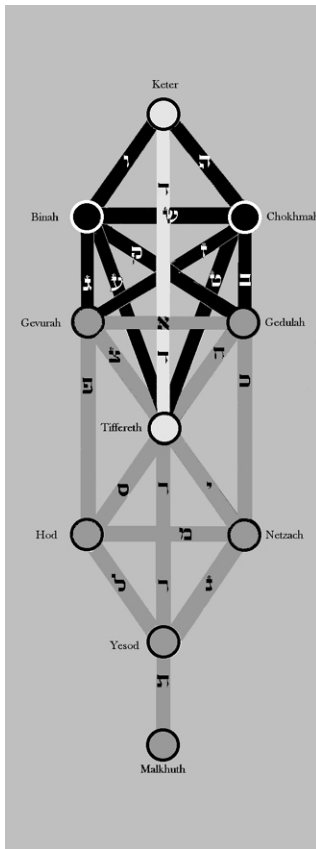
I know I cannot stand alone or, like a ד - *Daleth* I will topple. I am bent to bear the will of my Creator. I face forward to accept what the future brings and I put out my hand behind me to accept help from those who would give it.



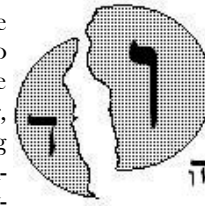
## 12. TZAFON - WE EAT THE AFIKOMEN

### THE PATH THROUGH DALETH-ד BETWEEN TIFFERETH-GLORY AND KETER - CROWN

The Hebrew word תַּצֹּפוֹן - *Tzafon*, translates as 'hidden'. Indeed it is customary to put the *Afikomen* in a hiding place allowing children the excitement of looking for it. Hiding and finding the *Afikomen* reminds us of the ways in which we hid to escape intimacy, and how our journey required finding ourselves. Originally we took the middle Matzah, the one called Levi and broke it into two parts. The Matzah called Levi symbolized the second of the *Sephiroth* of Opposites, *Binah* - Understanding.



The letter in the Tetragrammaton, the four-letter name of God, *YHVH* corresponding to the *Sephirah* of *Binah* - Understanding is the first of its letters ה - *Heh*. The Letter ה - *Heh* is comprised of a ד - *Daleth* with a ו - *Vav* tucked inside it. When we originally broke the Matzah we formed these two letters. As was stated previously, the letter ד - *Daleth* means poverty, and in fact, the smaller piece representing ד - *Daleth* was eaten as Poor Man's Bread in the eighth *Siman* - Station, to fulfill the commandment to eat Matzah as Bread of Poverty. Now we are eating the piece that has been *Tzafon* - 'hidden away,' the piece of Matzah shaped to resemble a letter ו - *Vav*. The act of hiding, as we said earlier, was the way we tried surviving in a world we could not control. The ו - *Vav* is the connecting letter for the Hebrew language, the way the word 'and' is for the English language. In this instance it is going to connect the *Daleth* - ד to its source.



By putting the ו - *Vav*, the *Afikomen*, and the ד - *Daleth*, the path connecting *Tiffereth* - Glory and *Keter* - Crown together, we are putting the broken middle Matzah together again. We are fixing the

original rupture within ourselves which caused us to break and split; which caused us to live our lives as spiritual and emotional paupers, hiding and hoarding and withholding.

Eating of the *Afikomen* represents a massive leap of faith and an equivalent boost on our spiritual journey. We go, in one single leap, from *Tiffereth* - The Heart, to *Keter* - Crown, the highest most exalted and awesome place in the universe. To be granted access to the *Sephirah* of *Keter* - Crown is to be given immediate and tangible *Giluy Shechinah* - Divine Revelation. The eating of the *Afikomen* takes the place of the traditional Paschal Sacrifice. It would have been here, at this juncture of the Seder, that we would be eating the Lamb of the Pesach Offering in times when the Temple in Jerusalem still stood. That ritual mirrored the Paschal Lamb we ate in Egypt on the night of the Exodus. It was the cause and vehicle for the *Giluy Shechinah* - Divine Revelation we experienced that night. The *Afikomen* we are about to eat signals that the moment is about to repeat itself. We are being invited to open ourselves to *Giluy Shechinah* - Divine Revelation.

To take the journey between *Tiffereth* - Glory and *Keter* - Crown is to understand the form and function of one's own will and desire. The two *Sephiroth* of *Tiffereth* - Glory and *Keter* - Crown are essentially comprised of the same component — desire. The heart, the symbolic embodiment of the *Sephirah* of *Tiffereth* - Glory speaks but a single word during its whole life. The heart prays, "Please!"

The *Sephirah* of *Keter* - Crown is best understood as a symbol for God's desire. God's desire is also known as *Ratzon Hapashut* - The Simple Will. In order for human will to mirror the Divine Will in any way at all it must be free-will. God's will is free, so ours must also be free-will, in order to resemble His. Free-will is centered and housed in the *Sephirah* of *Tiffereth* - Glory, that is, in fact, its glory. The ultimate, most glorious, divine gift is the bestowal of free-will on humans. But in order to access it, humans have to be centered. If we are too focused on the aspects of *Chesed* - Loving-kindness in our interactions with the world we will become very willing but not at all discerning. *Chesed* - Loving-kindness does not discriminate or distinguish among the deserving and undeserving. It has poor or few boundaries or none at all.

If we are too focused on the aspects of *Gevurah* - Judgment in our interactions with the world we will become most unwilling and not at all available. *Gevurah* - Judgment does not discriminate or distinguish among the deserving and undeserving, either. It makes no allowances for the dictates or demands of humanity. *Gevurah* - Judgment responds with overwhelming force in every situation. Unbridled *Chesed* - Loving-kindness can justify adultery. Unbridled *Gevurah* - Judgment can justify murder.

*Tiffereth* - Glory is the bridle and synthesis of the other two *Sephiroth*. To be focused in the aspects of *Tiffereth* - Glory is to be in control, to display free-will and responsiveness, to act without constraint, without compulsion and without reactivity. In order to access our free-will we must be free of addictions and compulsive obsessive behavior. In order for that to happen we have to be integrated as individuals. Every part of us has to be given an equal voice, no part of us may be oppressed. The



decision making process can only be overseen by the heart if the heart is at liberty, unfettered by exile, unconstrained by crippling disabilities and free of anguish. In finding and eating the *Afikomen* we re-enact the revelation at Sinai, the bestowal of freedom upon humankind, freedom from death and fear of death, freedom from pain and fear of pain, and freedom from compulsion.

In moving from *Tiffereth* - Glory into *Keter* - Crown through  $\daleth$  - *Daleth* we may catch a glimpse of ourselves as whole and undamaged people. A glimpse into *Keter* - Crown allows us knowledge of ourselves. *Tiffereth* - Glory is an open heart, which is the physical manifestation of *Da'at* - Knowing. The exile of *Da'at* - Knowing meant the closing of our hearts. We became incapable of intimacy because our hearts were closed off and blocked by shame. *Da'at* - Knowing is the inside of *Keter* - Crown. It is the place where our knowledge becomes desire for God and where God's knowledge of us becomes His desire for us.

Absolute and total self acceptance is crucial to this step. There can be no part of us left out. We must be whole before we are granted this wholeness, this totality of vision. We don't necessarily have to like ourselves but we must love ourselves. Loving is caring.

Taking a piece of the *Afikomen* about 1 oz. in size we meditate upon the following.

The text in English:

**I am about to fulfill the commandment to eat the Afikomen, in order to unify The Holy, blessed One and His divine presence, with awe and in love, bringing together the Name letters  $\daleth$  - *Yod*  $\hebrew{ה}$  - *Heh* with  $\varepsilon$  - *Vav* and  $\hebrew{ה}$  - *Heh*, in the name of All Israel, through the mystery hidden and concealed in the name of All Israel.**

The Afikomen should be eaten quickly while leaning to the left side. No food or flavored beverages may be taken after the *Afikomen* until morning, other than the last two of the four cups of wine. Plain water may be taken at any time.



## 13. *BAIRACH* GRACE AFTER MEALS

שִׁינ



### Black fire on white fire - The letter *Shin*

The Hebrew letter/word שִׁינ - *Shin*, translates variously as 'change,' 'tooth,' 'year,' 'two,' 'sharp,' 'scarlet' and 'sleep.' It is the richest in meaning, and all its meanings grow out of the profound appreciation of changes happening in world round us. The Hebrew letter ש - *Shin* represents the element Fire, the vector of change. The number two epitomizes all change in the universe. God is one. Everything not God is more than one, so the translations of the word שִׁינ - *Shin* mentioned above, are all connected in some way to the concept of change and secondary nature.

To walk the path of ש - *Shin* is to be aware of the underlying symmetry in the letters themselves. Letters are symbols written in black on a blank, white page. If the page is pure whiteness, pure light, it has only the potential to carry information. Looking at the white page will tell me nothing useful. In order to use the light to convey meaning or information I have to obscure the light in certain ways. By writing, using letter symbols, shapes written in black ink while obscuring the light coming from the white paper I convey information to you, the reader.

Paradoxically, the more I am prepared to obscure the light with these dark symbols the more I can teach you about the light itself.



## 13. *BAIRACH* - GRACE AFTER MEALS

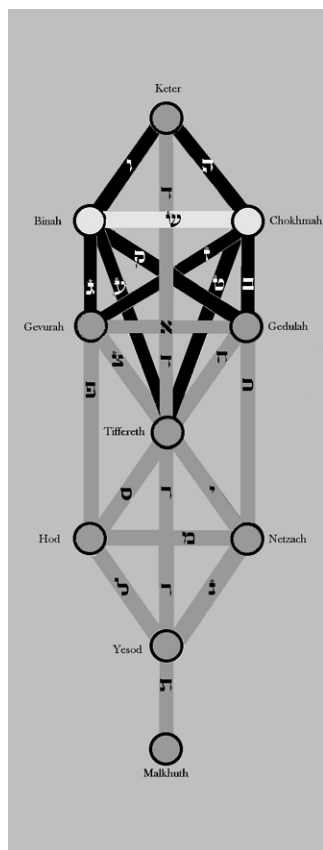
THE PATH THROUGH *SHIN* - ש  
BETWEEN *CHOKHMA* - WISDOM AND *BINAH* - UNDERSTANDING,

The Third of the Four Cups

Grace after meals comprises four blessings corresponding to the four letters in the Tetragrammaton, the four-letter name of God, *YHVH*. The first letter, the י - *Yod* corresponds to the first blessing and to the *Sephirah* of *Chokhma* - Wisdom. The second letter, the ה - *Heh* corresponds to the *Sephirah* of *Binah* and the second blessing. The first blessing refers to sustenance, satisfaction and abundance rather than the physical aspects of eating, and is attributed to Moses. The second blessing refers to the land, the earth and the food we take from its bounty, and is attributed to Joshua, Moses' successor. These two approaches to the subject of eating and food reflect the very different aspects of blessing emanating from the *Sephiroth* of *Chokhma* - Wisdom and *Binah* - Understanding.

The Hebrew word for blessing בְּרַכָּה - *Bracha*, has as its root the word for pool or reservoir or spring. The *Sephirah* of *Binah* - Understanding is the archetypal feminine and acts as the pool holding the water that flows from the *Sephirah* of *Chokhma* - Wisdom, the archetypal masculine. These two *Sephiroth* are also referred to as *Abba* and *Imma* - Father and Mother.

To walk the path of the ש - *Shin* is to give voice to both sides of the brain, to the *Sephiroth* of *Chokhma* - Wisdom and *Binah* - Understanding, right brain and left brain respectively, to allow for the flow of blessings into and through the world. Most importantly, walking this path requires that we feel integrated in the blessings, that we are part and parcel of



שיר המעלות בשוגב יי אַת שׁיבַת צִיּוֹן הַיְיִנוּ  
 כְּחֻלְמִים: אִו יִמְלֵא שְׂחֹק פִּינוּ וּלְשׁוֹנֵנוּ רִנָּה  
 אִו יֵאמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם הַגְּדִיל יִי לַעֲשׂוֹת עִם אֱלֹהֵי:  
 הַגְּדִיל יִי לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּנוּ הַיְיִנוּ שְׂמֵחִים: שׁוּבָה יִי  
 אֶת שְׁבִיתֵנוּ כְּאֶפְיָקִים בְּנֻגְבֵי: הַזְרָעִים בְּדַמְעָה  
 בְּרִנָּה יִקְצְרוּ: הַלֶּוֹף יִלָּךְ וּבִכְהָ נִשְׂא מִשְׁךָ  
 הַזָּרַע בֹּא יָבֵא בְרִנָּה נִשְׂא אֱלֹמֵתֵינוּ:

המזמן: רבותי נברך!  
 המסובין: יהי שם יי מברך מעתה ועד עולם.  
 המזמן: יהי שם יי מברך מעתה ועד עולם.  
 ברשות מרנן ורבנן ורבתי נברך (אלהינו)  
 שאכלנו משלו.  
 המסובין: ברוך (אלהינו) שאכלנו משלו  
 ובטובו תיינו.  
 המזמן: ברוך (אלהינו) שאכלנו משלו  
 ובטובו תיינו.  
 ברוך הוא וברוך שמו:

If there are ten participants the leader begins: **Colleagues, let us say Grace!**

The others respond: **May the name, Adonai be blessed from now and forever.**

The Leader, after repeating the response, continues: **With the permission of Masters, Teachers and my Colleagues, let us give blessings to our God, of whose bounty we have eaten.**

The others respond: **Blessed is our God, of whose bounty we have eaten.**

[The leader repeats this response.]

and with the flow of abundance into this world. We ourselves are part of the abundance, we are God's gift to the world. We are Earth's treasures.

Now is the time to wash one's hands with *Mayim Acharonim* - Final Waters. The ends of the fingers are washed with plain water, which is then removed from the table.

The text in English:

When the Grace after Meal is said with a quorum of three or more participants, the leader begins:

**Colleagues, let us say Grace!**

The others respond:

**May the name, Adonai, be blessed from now and forever.**

The Leader, after repeating the response, continues:

**With the permission of Masters, Teachers and my Colleagues let us bless Him of whose bounty we have eaten.**

The others respond:

**Blessed is He of whose bounty we have eaten.**

[The leader repeats this response.]

The First Blessing

**Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the universe, who feeds the whole world with His goodness, grace, loving-kindness and mercy. He feeds all flesh, for His loving-kindness extends to the whole world. For the sake of His**

great Name, and with His great, consistent goodness we lack nothing, nor will we lack food forever. For He is God the Sustainer, who feeds all, does good to all and prepares food for all creatures, His creations.

**Blessed are You, Adonai, who sustains everything.**

The Second Blessing

**We thank You, Adonai, our God, for bestowing upon our ancestors a desirable, good and spacious land as an inheritance; for having, Adonai our God, brought us out of the land of Egypt and redeemed us from the house of bondage; for Your covenant which You sealed in our flesh; for Your Torah which You taught us; for Your statutes with which You informed us; for the life, favor and loving-kindness that You have so graciously bestowed upon us; and for the food we eat with which You feed and sustain us constantly, every day, at all times, and in every hour.**

**For all this, Adonai our God, we thank You and bless You. May Your Name be blessed in the mouth of every living creature, constantly and forever. As it is written: Eat, be satisfied and bless Adonai your God, for the good land He has given you.**

**Blessed are You, Adonai, for the land and the food.**

The Third Blessing

**Have mercy, Adonai our God, on Israel Your people, on Jerusalem Your city, on Zion the dwelling place of Your glory, upon the Royal House of David Your anointed, and upon the great, sacred temple named in Your Name. Our God, our Father, shepherd us, feed us, sustain us, nourish us and give us ease. Speedily, Adonai our**

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, הן את העולם כלו בטובו בהן בהסד וברחמים הוא נותן להם לכל בשר פי לעולם חסדו. ובטובו הגדול תמיד לא חסר לנו, ואל יחסר לנו מזון לעולם ועד. בעבור שמו הגדול, כי הוא אל זן ומפרנס לכל ומטיב לכל, ומכין מזון לכל ברייתיו אשר ברא. ברוך אתה יי הן את הכל:

נודה לך יי אלהינו על שהנחת לאבותינו, ארץ חמדה טובה ורחבה, ועל שהוצאתנו יי אלהינו מארץ מצרים ופדיתנו, מבית עבדים, ועל ברייתך שחתמת בבשרנו, ועל תורתך שלמדתנו, ועל חקך שהודעתנו ועל חיים חן וחסד שהונתנו, ועל אכילת מזון שאתה זן ומפרנס אותנו תמיד, בכל יום ובכל עת ובכל שעה:

ועל הכל יי אלהינו אנחנו מודים לך, ומברכים אותך, ותברך שמך בפי כל חי תמיד לעולם ועד. פכתוב, ואכלת ושבעת, וברכת את יי אלהיך על הארץ הטובה אשר נתן לך. ברוך אתה יי על הארץ ועל המזון:

רחם נא יי אלהינו, על ישראל עמך, ועל ירושלים עירך, ועל ציון משכן כבודך, ועל מלכות בית דוד משיחך, ועל הבית הגדול והקדוש שנקרא שמך עליו. אלהינו, אבינו, רענו, וזננו, פרנסנו, וכלכלנו, והרויחנו, והרנונו לנו יי אלהינו מהרה מכל צרותינו, ונא, אל תצריקנו יי אלהינו, לא לידי מתנת בשר ודם ולא לידי הלואתם. כי אם לידך המלאה, הפתוחה, הקדושה והרחבה, שלא נבוש ולא נפלים לעולם ועד:

(לשבת: רצה והחליצנו יי אלהינו במצותיך ובמצות יום השביעי השבת הגדול והקדוש הזה. כי יום זה גדול וקדוש הוא לפניך, לשבת בו ולנוח בו באהבה כמצות רצונך וברצונך הגיח לנו יי אלהינו, שלא תהא צרה ויגון ואנחה ביום מנוחתנו, והראנו יי אלהינו בנחמת ציון עירך, ובבנין ירושלים עיר קדשך, כי אתה הוא בעל השועות ובעל הנחמות:)

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, יַעֲלֶה וְיִנָּע,  
 וְיִרְאֶה, וְיִרְצֶה, וְיִשְׁמַע, וְיִפְקֹד, וְיִזְכֹּר זְכוּרֵינוּ  
 וּפְקֻדֵינוּ, וְיִזְכֹּר אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וְיִזְכֹּר מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן  
 דָּוִד עֲבִידְךָ, וְיִזְכֹּר יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר קֹדֶשְׁךָ, וְיִזְכֹּר  
 כָּל עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפָנֶיךָ, לְפִלִיטָה לְטוֹבָה  
 לְחַן וְלְחַסֵּד וְלִרְחֻמִּים, לְחַיִּים וְלִשְׁלוֹם בְּיוֹם  
 חַג הַמַּצּוֹת הַזֶּה, זְכַרְנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ בּוֹ לְטוֹבָה,  
 וּפְקֻדָּנוּ בּוֹ לְבִרְכָה, וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנו בּוֹ לְחַיִּים,  
 וּבְדַבַּר שְׁמוֹעַ וְרַחֲמִים, חוֹס וְחַנּוּן, וְרַחֵם  
 עָלֵינוּ וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנו, כִּי אֵלֶיךָ עֵינֵינוּ, כִּי אֵל מְלֹךְ  
 חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם אַתָּה:

וּבְנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּמַחֲבֵה בְּיָמֵינוּ,  
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, בּוֹנֵה בְּרַחֲמֵיךָ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, אָמֵן

God, grant us relief from all our afflictions. Adonai, our God, please let us not have need of the gifts of mortals of flesh and blood, nor for loans. Let us depend only upon Your full, open, holy and generous hand, that we may not be shamed nor disgraced forever and ever.

On the Sabbath add:

[May it please You, Adonai, our God, to strengthen us with Your commandments, and with the precept of the Seventh Day, this great

and holy Sabbath. For this day is great and holy before You, to rest and take ease thereon with love, in accordance with the dictate of Your desire. In Your desire, Adonai our God, bestow upon us tranquility, that there be neither trouble, sadness nor grief on this day of our rest. Show us, Adonai, our God, the comforting of Zion Your city, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem Your holy city, for You are Him, Lord of salvations and the Lord of consolations.]

Our God and God of our fathers, let there arise, reach and touch You, let there be seen and welcomed by You, let there be heard, recalled and remembered before You, memories and recollection of us, memories of our ancestors, memories of Messiah son of David Your servant, memories of Jerusalem Your holy city, and memories of Your entire nation the House of Israel, for liberation, well-being, grace, loving-kindness, mercy, good life and peace, on this Festival of Matzah day. Evoke us today, Adonai, our God, to help us; recall us today to bless us; deliver us today into a good life. With the promise of liberation and compassion, rescue us and be gracious to us; have mercy upon us and deliver us; for we look to You, because You, God, are a gracious and merciful King.

Rebuild Jerusalem the holy city swiftly in our time.

Blessed are You, Adonai, who in His mercy rebuilds Jerusalem.

Amen.

#### The Fourth Blessing

Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the universe, Gentle God, our Father, King, Champion, Creator, Redeemer, Maker,

our Holy One, Holy One of Jacob, our Shepherd, Shepherd of Israel, the benevolent King who is kind to everyone. For, each and every day He has been kind, still is kind and will always be kind to us. He has bestowed, bestows, and will forever bestow grace upon us, loving-kindness and mercy, relief, salvation and success, blessings and rescue, consolation, sustenance and nourishment, compassion, life, peace and all good things; and may He never cause us to lack anything good.

May the Merciful One reign over us forever and ever.

May the Merciful One be blessed in heaven and on earth.

May the Merciful One be praised for all generations, and be glorified in us forever and all eternity, and honored in us forever and ever.

May the Merciful One sustain us honorably.

May the Merciful One break the yoke of exile from our neck and lead us proudly to our land.

May the Merciful One bless abundance upon this house and upon the table at which we have eaten.

May the Merciful One send us Elijah the Prophet, of blessed memory, to bring us good news, salvation and consolation.

May the Merciful One bless my father and teacher, (master of this house,) and my mother and

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, האל  
אבינו, מלכנו, אדירנו בוראנו, גואלנו, יוצרנו,  
קדושנו קדוש יעקב, רוענו רועה ישראל.  
המלך הטוב, והמטיב לכל, שבכל יום ויום  
הוא הטיב, הוא מטיב, הוא יטיב לנו. הוא  
גמלנו, הוא גומלנו, הוא יגמלנו לעד לחן  
וילחסד וילרחמים וילרחם הצלה והצלתה  
ברכה וישועה נחמה, פרנסה וכלכלה,  
ורחמים וחסדים ושלום וכל טוב, ומפל טוב  
לעולם אל תסרגנו:

הרחמן, הוא ימלוך עלינו לעולם ועד.  
הרחמן, הוא יתברך בשמים ובארץ.  
הרחמן, הוא ישתבח לדור דורים, ויתפאר  
בנו לעד ולנצח נצחים, ויתחדר בנו לעד  
ולעולמי עולמים.

הרחמן, הוא יפרנסנו בכבוד.  
הרחמן, הוא ישבור עלנו מעל צנארגנו והוא  
יוליכנו קוממיות לארצנו.  
הרחמן, הוא ישלח לנו ברכה מרבה בבית  
הזה, ועל שלחן זה שאכלנו עליו.  
הרחמן, הוא ישלח לנו את אליהו הנביא  
זכור לטוב, ויבשר לנו בשורות טובות  
ישועות ונחמות.

הרחמן, הוא יברך את (אבי מורי) בעל הבית  
הזה, ואת (אמי מורת) בעלת הבית הזה.

הרחמן, הוא יברך אותי (ואבי ואמי ואשתי  
והועי ואת כל אשר לי)

הרחמן, הוא יברך את בעל הבית הזה, ואת  
אשתו בעלת הבית הזה.

אותם ואת ביתם ואת זרעם ואת כל אשר  
להם אותנו ואת כל אשר לנו, כמו  
שנתברכו אבותינו, אברהם יצחק ויעקב:  
בכל, מכל, כל, כן יברך אותנו כלנו יחד.  
בברכה שלמה, ונאמר אמן:

במרום ילמדו עליהם ועלינו וכות, שתהא  
למשמרת שלום, ונשא ברכה מאת יי וצדקה  
מאלהי ישענו, ונמצא חן ושכל טוב בעיני  
אלהים ואדם:



(לשבת: הרחמן, הוא יגחילנו יום שכלו שבת ומנוחה לחיי העולמים.)

הרחמן, הוא יגחילנו יום שכלו טוב.

הרחמן, הוא יגבנו לימות המשיח ולחיי העולם הבא.

מגדול ישועות מלכו, ועשה חסד למשיחו לרוד ולזרעו עד עולם: עשה שלום במרומי, הוא יעשה שלום, עלינו ועל כל ישראל, ואמרו אמן:

יראו את יי קדשיו, כי אין מחסור ליראיו: כפירים רשו ורעבו, ודורשי יי לא יחסרו כל טוב: הודו ליי כי טוב, כי לעולם חסדו: פותח את ידו, ומשביע לכל חי רצון: פרוד הגבר אשר יבטח ביי, ותיה יי מבטחו: גער הייתי גם זמנתי ולא ראיתי צדיק נעזב, וזרעו מבקש לחם: יי עז לעמו יתן, יי יבדד את עמו בשלום:

teacher, (mistress of this house); them, their household, their offspring, and everything they own; us, and all we own, just as He blessed our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, completely, entirely and altogether, so may He bless all of us, as one, with the perfect blessing, and let us say, Amen. Let there be advocates on our behalf in heaven who secure a guarantee of peace. May we bear the blessings of Adonai and the charity of God our Redeemer, and may we find favor and understanding in the eyes of God and human. (On Sabbath add: May the Merciful One give us that day which is all Sabbath and calm for life everlasting.)

ing.)

May the Merciful One give us the day that is completely good.

May the Merciful One grant us the privilege of living in messianic times and to life in the world to come. A citadel for His king, [God] bestows loving-kindness upon His anointed, for David and his descendants forever. Who makes peace in heaven, may He grant peace to us and all Israel; and say, Amen.

Fear Adonai, you, His saints, for those who fear Him suffer no want. Young lions may want and go hungry, but those who seek Adonai lack nothing. Give thanks to Adonai for He is good, His loving-kindness is universal. Open Your hand and satisfy every living thing with desire. Blessed is the man with faith in Adonai. Adonai will be his hope. I have been young, now I am old but I have never seen the righteous abandoned nor their offspring looking for bread. God gives strength to His people, He blesses his nation with peace.



### DRINKING THE THIRD CUP OF WINE

Before drinking the third cup of wine a moment is taken to meditate upon the *Shechinah* - Divine Presence.

*To receive the gift of the Shechinah I must first internalize the lesson of the meal I have eaten.* I was created to have my needs met. I can have my needs met by others. I do not have to grab or steal or pretend.

The text in English:

**Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.**

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן:

Drink the wine while seated and reclining to the left.



14. *HALLEL*  
SINGING PRAISES



### Divine Breath and And - The letters *Heh* and *Vav*

The Hebrew letter/word ה -*Heh* means an ‘opening’, an ‘opportunity’, a ‘beginning’. If Hebrew had a hierarchy of letters, ה -*Heh* would surely be sovereign. This is the letter requiring the least manipulation of the mouth, throat or lips . Its sound is the sound of breath issuing from the chest - the simplest sound. ה -*Heh* is the breath issuing from the mouth of God as it forms the universe and everything in it. ה -*Heh* is the first gift.

The person most representative of the letter, ה -*Heh* is Judah, patriarch of the Royal tribe of Israel, the first and most gifted of all. To walk the path of ה -*Heh* is to remain open to possibilities no matter how closed things seem.

The Hebrew letter/word ו -*Vav* - means ‘hook’. Although in the Hebrew language ו -*Vav* is the most commonly used letter, the fewest Hebrew words begin with the letter ו -*Vav*. It’s use is almost primarily conjunctive. As the word ‘and’ is to the English language, the letter ו -*Vav* is to Hebrew. It hooks letters, words and sentences to each other. Because it connects things it is also the letter representing the spine and central nervous system in humans. It alludes to the connection between the mind and the sexual organ in men.

The person most representative of the letter ו -*Vav* is Issachar, patriarch of the scholar tribe of Israel. To walk the path of the ו -*Vav* is to be diligent, available and to know which time is the right time. To master time requires skill on the path of the ו -*Vav*; it means always living in the ‘here and now’. In order to master time one must become adept at ‘knowing’, which is to say one must be on the road to fixing the *Sephirah* of דעת - *Da’at* - Knowing.

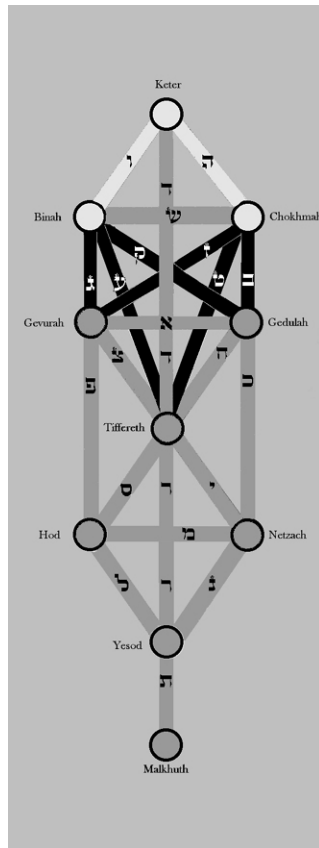
The Hebrew word, דעת - *Da’at* comprises two shorter words, דע עת - Know Time. Someone who has mastered the art of living in the now, will have mastered their sexual self too.



## 14 - HALLEL - SINGING PRAISES

THE PATH THROUGH *HEH* ך  
 BETWEEN *KETER*-CROWN AND *CHOKHMA* - WISDOM  
 AND THROUGH *VAV* ך  
 BETWEEN *KETER*-CROWN AND *BINAH*-UNDERSTANDING

The Fourth of the Four Cups



*Hallel* - Praises begins where it left off at the end of *Magid* - Tell the Story in the fifth *Siman* - Station of the Seder. We had sung the Egyptian *Hallel*, Psalms 113 and 114. Now it is time to sing the whole of *Hallel*, Psalms 115, 116, 117 and 118.

First, though, the fourth cup of wine is poured, and the doors to the street are opened in honor of Elijah the Prophet, *Baal Hahaggadah* - author or master of the Haggadah. According to our tradition, Elijah visits every home to check whether the Seder is being celebrated, to partake of the cup prepared in his honor and to return to heaven to tell of what he has witnessed.

Wherever Jews gather there are stories told about Elijah the Prophet. He is the herald of the final redemption. He is the messenger and the witness. Throughout the interminable exile which is now two thousand years long, Jews have reported meeting him, seeing him and listening to him whisper through the cracks in the cosmic wall separating heaven from earth. In his youth he made the mistake of telling God that Jews had abandoned the covenant, now he spends eternity telling God how the are Jews keeping their faiths, their promises and their traditions. He is the *Baal Hahaggadah* – author of the Haggadah - Master of Telling.

*Hallel* is preceded with a number of seemingly out of

context phrases quoted from Psalms, 79:6-7, 69:25 and Lamentations 3:66, inviting God to pour out His divine wrath against the nations of the world who do not acknowledge Him. No reason is given for the insertion of this short and violent prayer here at this time.

This is the path between *Keter* - Crown and *Binah* - Understanding through  $\aleph$  - *Vav*. The letter,  $\aleph$  - *Vav*, the hook, is used in the place of the English word 'and'. The Kabbalistic rule states that whenever the Tetragrammaton, *YHWH* is preceded by the letter  $\aleph$  - *Vav* indicating 'and God', it refers to the *Sephiroth* of *Binah* - Understanding and all six lower *Sephiroth* known as *Midoth*. "And God" means God and His *Beth Din* - Court of Law.

We are about to drink the fourth cup of wine. As has been discussed, the fourth cup dispels the fourth painful myth and underscores the core truth that what we need now and always, what we only, ever needed is unconditional love. At this point in the Seder we move beyond the Exodus from Egypt to the ultimate Exodus, from singing the Egyptian *Hallel* to the Great *Hallel*. The redemption henceforth referred to in the text is the future, final redemption, the redemption of the individual, and of the whole world and the redemption of the *Shechinah* - Divine Presence. All these aspects depend on one another because the ultimate redemption is all-inclusive. But no sooner does the redemption - the revelation of unconditional love - start to make itself felt, than the reservoirs of hatred and resentment in the world awake to the imminence of their demise. In the world of love and serenity, New York, Paris and Tokyo are merely large cities. In the world of Shabbes and Shalom, Jerusalem is the capital of the world. When divine revelation starts resonating in the universe, something is bound to happen - the world built around the denial of unconditional love is bound to react violently.

There are many example of this in the Torah, but here is the one most germane to our Seder. (Genesis 27:22-34)

22. Jacob drew closer to his father Isaac and Isaac touched him. He said, 'The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are Esau's hands.'

23. He did not recognize him because his arms were (hairy) like Esau his brother's. He blessed him.

24. 'But are you really my son Esau?'

'I am.'

25. 'Then serve me. I will eat the game my son has hunted, so that my soul may bless you.'

Jacob served it and Isaac ate. He then brought Isaac some wine and he drank it.

26. Isaac his father said to him, 'Come closer and kiss me, my son.'

27. Jacob approached and kissed him. Isaac smelled the fragrance of his clothing and blessed him.

He said. 'See, my son's fragrance is the fragrance of a meadow blessed by God.'

28. And, may God grant you the dew of heaven and the fat of the earth, much grain and wine.
29. Nations will serve you and sovereigns will bow before you. You will be lord to your brother, and your mother's children will prostrate themselves at your feet. They who curse you are cursed and those who bless you are blessed.'
30. Isaac had just finished blessing Jacob and Jacob was just about to leave his father Isaac when his brother Esau came back from his hunt.
31. He had also prepared a delicacy and brought it to his father. 'Let my father get up and eat his son's venison,' he said, 'so that your soul may bless me.'
32. 'Who are you?' asked his father Isaac. 'I am your firstborn, Esau,' he replied.
33. Isaac was seized with fits of violent trembling. 'Who... where... is the one who trapped game and just served it to me? I ate it all before you came and I blessed him. The blessing will remain his.'
34. When Esau heard his father's words he shrieked a most loud and bitter scream. 'Bless me too, father.' he pleaded.

According to our tradition this event happened on Passover. To this day the Prayers for Dew commence on the first day of Passover, with a liturgical introduction reflecting Isaac's blessing of Jacob with dew of heaven. The tradition maintains that the meal served to Isaac was the Passover Seder. According to this tradition, Jacob went to open the door at his father's behest so that Isaac could sing the *Hallel* - Praises to God for the ultimate redemption, with the door wide open to the world, as we do today.

Instead of the redeemer, Jacob sees Esau coming towards him bearing arms, ready to kill him. Jacob throws the door wide open and hides behind it until his brother Esau leaves in search of him.

Up to the middle of the Twentieth Century there have been Jews all over the world who opened their doors on Passover night only to find Esau coming towards them bearing arms, ready to kill. All the Jews of Paris, men women and children were rounded up from their Seder tables on the Night of Passover 1941 and murdered.

The suicide bomber who came to the Seder table in the Park Hotel, Netanya, Israel, killing 29 and wounding 140 Jews in the year 2002, merely reminds us of the arrival of Esau bearing arms. It can only be otherwise if God puts an end to it.

Interestingly, in the text from Genesis above, verse number 28 begins with the word 'And', a letter ו - *Vav* where none was necessary. Many commentaries have been written about the superfluous ו - *Vav*. Here it is being suggested that Isaac and Jacob had reached this place in their Seder, they were walking the path of the ו - *Vav* - attempting to make all the connections which need making before the world is fixed - and all that remained was for Jacob to open the door, as we have said.

There are those who translate the first line of the prayer somewhat differently. Instead of 'heat' or 'wrath' being the translation of the Hebrew word, חמה - *Chama*, in the text, the word is translated as, warmth. Perhaps, God pouring out his warmth upon the nations who deny Him would solve the problem. Until that day, we will translate it in the traditional form.

### שִׁפּוּךְ חֲמַתְךָ

שִׁפּוּךְ חֲמַתְךָ אֶל־הַגּוֹיִם, אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִדְעוּךָ  
וְעַל־מַמְלָכוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּשִׁמְךָ לֹא קָרְאוּ: כִּי אָכַל  
אֶת־יַעֲקֹב. וְאֶת־נְדָוֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם: שִׁפּוּךְ־עַל־יָהֵם  
וְעַמְּךָ, וְחַרוֹן אַפֶּיךָ יִשְׁיָגֵם: תִּהְרַדְךָ בְּאֵף  
וְתִשְׁמִידָם, מִתַּחַת שָׁמַיִ יי:

The fourth cup of wine is poured. For those whose custom dictates, here is the appropriate time to pour the cup for Elijah the Prophet in its place of honor in the middle of the Seder table. The front door is opened and Elijah is welcomed.

The cup is held but not lifted as the text is recited.

Calling wrath down upon the world is no small matter. At this juncture we take a moment to meditate upon the letter ו - *Vav*: Here, between *Keter* - Crown and *Binah* - Understanding is where the letter ו - *Vav* invokes *Din* - Judgment. We acknowledge the source of all Judgment, all violence and punishment and turn it back over to the One in whom violence and unconditional love have a single existence.

The text in English:

**Pour out Your wrath upon the nations that do not acknowledge You and upon those sovereigns who call not upon Your name. For they have devoured Jacob and laid waste his sanctuary. Pour Your anger upon them and let Your rage overtake them. Chase them in Your rage and obliterate them from beneath the heavens of Adonai.**

The door is closed without being locked and it remains so all night, a symbol of our faith that tonight God guards His people with special providence and love.



*Hallel* - Praises should be recited joyfully and tunefully. Though we have prayed out loud that God strike and obliterate our enemies, it was never for ourselves, on behalf of ourselves and with our interests in mind that we uttered such a thought. Thus begins the Hallel text: Not for our sakes, but for God's sake.

The text in English:

Psalm 115:1-11

**Not for our sakes, Adonai, not for our sakes. Honor Your name for the sake of Your loving-kindness and truth. Why should the nations say, 'Where, pray, is this people's God,' when our God is in heaven and**



## הַלֵּל

לא לנו יי לא לנו כי לשמך תן כבוד, על  
חסדך על אמתך. למה יאמרו הגוים, איה נא  
אלהיהם. ואלהינו בשמים כל אשר חפץ  
עשה, עצביהם כסף וזהב, מעשה ידי אדם.  
פה להם ולא ידברו, עינים להם ולא יראו.  
אזנים להם ולא ישמעו, אף להם ולא ידעו.  
ידיהם ולא ימשיחו, רגליהם ולא יתלכו, לא  
יהגו בגרונם. כמוהם יהיו עשירם, כל אשר  
בטח בהם: ישראל בטח בני עזרם ומגנם  
הוא. בית אהרן בטחו בני עזרם ומגנם הוא.  
יראי יי בטחו בני עזרם ומגנם הוא:

יי זכרנו יברך, יברך את בית ישראל, יברך  
את בית אהרן. יברך יראי יי הקטנים עם  
הגדלים. יסף יי עליכם, עליכם ועל בניכם.  
ברוכים אתם ליי עשה שמים וארץ. השמים  
שמים ליי והארץ נתן לבני אדם. לא המתים  
יהללו יי, ולא כל ידרי דומה. ואנחנו נברך  
יי, מעתה ועד עולם. הללויה:

will bless the House of Aaron; will bless those who fear Adonai, young  
and old. Adonai will bestow increase upon you, upon you and upon your  
children. You are blessed of Adonai, Maker of heaven and earth. The  
heavens are Adonai's heavens, and the earth He gave to the children of  
man. The dead cannot praise God, nor those that plunge in silence. But  
we bless God from now to eternity, Hallelujah!

In the first half of this psalm, David the psalmist talks of his experience  
with powerlessness. How he loves it that God is the answer to impotence. How  
being a fool is no obstacle to the enjoyment of God's providence. Of how little  
importance it is to be in charge of the details of one's life. How unimportant it is  
to be capable of walking alone. That adulthood is only really fun when you can  
still be a child in the family of God. The psalmist tells his soul to relax, that its  
need for hyper-vigilance was exaggerated. God is in charge of the world and  
that's enough.

Psalm 116:1-11

I have loved that Adonai hears my voice, my plea. He turns His ear  
to me those days I call. When huddled death surrounds me and the con-  
fines of the crypt reach for me, when I encounter trouble and sorrow I  
call upon the Name, Adonai: Please, Adonai, rescue my soul! Adonai is  
gracious and kind, our God is merciful. Adonai watches over fools; I was

works His every will? Their fetishes  
are silver and gold, human artifacts  
with mouths that cannot speak; they  
have eyes but see nothing; ears that  
hear nothing; a nose but that cannot  
smell. They have hands with which  
they cannot touch; feet with which  
they cannot walk; they utter nothing  
with their throats. Their artisans  
should be like them and everyone  
who has faith in them. Israel, trust  
in Adonai! He is their salvation and  
protector. House of Aaron, trust in  
Adonai! He is their salvation and  
protector. You who fear Adonai,  
trust in Adonai! He is their salva-  
tion and protector.

Ibid 12-18

Adonai, Who remembered us, will  
bless; will bless the House of Israel;

destitute and He saved me. Return, my soul, relax again for Adonai is nursing you. You protected my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my legs from faltering. I will walk before Adonai in the countries of Life. I had faith even when I said, 'I am really miserable,' when I said in my haste, 'All men are deceitful.'

אֶהְבֵּתִי כִּי יִשְׁמַע יי אֶת קוֹלִי תַחֲנוּנָיִךְ כִּי הִטָּה אֶזְנוֹ לִי וּבִימֵי אֶקְרָא: אֶפְפוּנֵי חֲבֻלֵי מוֹת, וּמִצָּרֵי שְׂאוּל מִצְאוּנֵי צָרָה וְיָגוֹן אֶמְצֵא וּבִשְׁם יי אֶקְרָא, אֲנִי יי מִלִּטֵּה נַפְשִׁי חַנוּן יי וְצַדִּיק, וְאֵלֶיךָ יִתְחַנֵּן מִרְחֹם, שְׁמֵר פִּתְאִים יי דְלוֹתַי וְלִי יְהוֹשִׁיעַ. שׁוּבֵי נַפְשִׁי לְמַנוּחֶיךָ, כִּי יי גָּמַל עֲלֶיךָ, כִּי חִלַּצְתָּ נַפְשִׁי מִמָּוֶת אֶת עֵינַי מִן דְּמָעָה, אֶת רַגְלֵי מִרְחֹם אֶתְחַלֵּף לִפְנֵי יי, בְּאַרְצוֹת הַחַיִּים הָאֲמֻנָתִי כִּי אֲדַבֵּר, אֲנִי עֲגִיתִי מְאֹד, אֲנִי אֶמְרָתִי בְּחַפְזוֹ כָּל הָאָדָם כַּזֶּב.

In the second half of this psalm, King David, the author states explicitly that his desire for closeness with God expresses itself in the declaration of his slavery to God. 'You have sculpted my shackles,' he says. Chains and manacles around wrist, ankles and neck can be precious jewelry or the violation of deepest humanity, depending, not on the material of their manufacture but upon the sentiment of the wearer. David's genius is his creative surrender. Only those individuals who practice total submission, who surrender their self, without reservation, absolutely, daily and consistently in their lives know the joys of this state. It is the highest spiritual path.

מָה אֲשִׁיב לַיי, כָּל תַּגְמוּלוֹתַי עָלַי. כּוֹס יְשׁוּעוֹת אֵשׁ, וּבִשְׁם יי אֶקְרָא, נְדָרֵי לַיי אֲשַׁלֵּם, נִגְדָה נָא לְכָל עַמּוֹ, יָקָר בְּעֵינַי יי הַמְּוֹתָה לְחַסִּדֶיךָ, אֲנִי יי כִּי אֲנִי עֲבָדְךָ אֲנִי עֲבָדְךָ, בְּךָ אֶמְתָּךְ פִּתְחַת לְמוֹסְרֵיךָ, לֵךְ אֲזַבֵּחַ זֶבַח תּוֹרָה וּבִשְׁם יי אֶקְרָא, נְדָרֵי לַיי אֲשַׁלֵּם, נִגְדָה נָא לְכָל עַמּוֹ, בְּחַצְרוֹת בַּיִת יי בְּתוֹכֵכִי יְרוּשָׁלַיִם תִּלְלוּיָהּ.

הִלְלוּ אֶת יי, כָּל גּוֹיִם, שִׁבְחוּהוּ כָּל הָאֲמִים, כִּי גִבֹר עֲלֵינוּ חֶסֶד, וְאֶמֶת יי לְעוֹלָם הִלְלוּיָהּ:

הוֹדוּ לַיי כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד; יֹאמֶר נָא יִשְׂרָאֵל, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד; יֹאמְרוּ נָא בֵּית אֱהֲרֹן, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד; יֹאמְרוּ נָא יִרְאִי יי, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד:

Ibid. 12-19

How can I respond to Adonai for all His nurturing to me? I will raise a cup of salvation and call upon the name, Adonai. I will pay my vows to Adonai, if you please, in front of all His people. Costly in the eyes of Adonai is the killing of His pious ones. I thank you, Adonai, for I am Your slave, Your slave, son of Your handmaid, You have sculpted my shackles. I will bring an offering of thanksgiving to You, and call on the name, Adonai. I will pay my vows to Adonai, if you please, in front of all His people, in the courtyards of the House of Adonai, in your midst O Jerusalem, Hallelujah!

Psalm 117

Praise Adonai, all nations! Extol Him, all folk! His loving-kindness overwhelms us, and Adonai is true for ever. Hallelujah.

Psalm 118

מן המצר קראתי יה, ענני במרחב יה. יי לי  
 לא אידא, מה יעשה לי אדם. יי לי בעזרי,  
 ואני אראה בשנאי. טוב לחסות ביי מבטח  
 באדם. טוב לחסות ביי מבטח בגדיבים כל  
 גוים סבבני בשם יי כי אמילם. סבבני גם  
 סבבני בשם יי כי אמילם. סבבני כדברים  
 העכו כאשר קוצים, בשם יי כי אמילם. דחה  
 דחיתני לנפל, ויי עזרני. עזי וזמרת יה, ויהי לי  
 לישועה. קול רנה וישועה באהלי צדיקים.  
 ימין יי עשה תיל. ימין יי רוממה, ימין יי עשה  
 תיל. לא אמות כי אחיה, ואספר מעשי יה.  
 יסר יסרני יה, ולמות לא נתנני. פתחו לי  
 שערי צדק, אבא בם אודה יה. זה השער ליי  
 צדיקים באו בו. אודך כי עניתני, ותהי לי  
 לישועה. אודך כי עניתני ותהי לי לישועה.  
 אבן מאסו הבונים, היתה לראש פנה. אבן  
 מאסו הבונים, היתה לראש פנה. מאת יי  
 היתה זאת, היא נפלאות בעינינו: מאת יי  
 היתה זאת, היא נפלאות בעינינו. זה היום  
 עשה יי נגילה ונשמחה בו. זה היום עשה יי  
 נגילה ונשמחה בו.

אָנָּה יי הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא:  
 אָנָּה יי הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא:  
 אָנָּה יי הַצְּלִיחָה נָּא:  
 אָנָּה יי הַצְּלִיחָה נָּא:

I trust in the name, Adonai, they will be cut down. You may push me again, and again to make me fall, but Adonai rescues me. Singing the saga of God has been my salvation. There is the jubilant sound of song and salvation in the homes of the righteous: Adonai's right hand makes power, Adonai's right hand is raised high, Adonai's right hand makes power. I will not die, but live and relate the stories of God. God has sorely punished me but I was not put to death. Open the gates of righteousness for me; I will enter and give thanks to God. This is the gate to Adonai, the righteous enter here.

I thank You for answering me, You were my salvation.  
 I thank You for answering me, You were my salvation.  
 The builders scorned this rock but it has become the keystone.  
 The builders scorned this rock but it has become the keystone.  
 Adonai made it happen, though it is too miraculous to see how.  
 Adonai made it happen, though it is too miraculous to see how.  
 Adonai made the day, so we can really rejoice in it.

Thank Adonai, for He is good, His loving-kindness is universal.

Say it, Israel; His loving-kindness is universal.

Say it, Aaron's House, His loving-kindness is universal.

Say it, those who fear Adonai, His loving-kindness is universal.

From my straits I call upon God; God answer me with relief. Adonai is with me, I fear not, what can man do to me? Adonai is with me, helping my helpers, I face down my enemies. It is better to trust Adonai, than to rely on man. It is better to trust Adonai, than to rely on nobles. All nations besiege me, but I trust in the name, Adonai, they will be cut down. They besiege me, they envelope me, but I trust in the name, Adonai, they will be cut down. They besiege me like bees, surging like a thorn-bush fire, but I

Adonai made the day, so we can really rejoice in it.

O please, Adonai, please help us now!

O please, Adonai, please help us now!

O Adonai, please triumph now!

O Adonai, please triumph now!

ברוך הַבּא בְּשֵׁם יי בְּרַכְנוּכֶם מִבֵּית יי בְּרוּךְ  
הַבּא בְּשֵׁם יי בְּרַכְנוּכֶם מִבֵּית יי אֵל יי וַיֵּאָר  
לָנוּ, אֶסְרוּ חַג בְּעֵבְתֵימָּם עַד קִרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ.  
אֵל יי וַיֵּאָר לָנוּ, אֶסְרוּ חַג בְּעֵבְתֵימָּם, עַד קִרְנוֹת  
הַמִּזְבֵּחַ. אֵלֵי אֲתָהּ וְאוֹרְךָ אֱלֹהֵי אֲרוּמְמָהּ. אֵלֵי  
אֲתָהּ וְאוֹרְךָ אֱלֹהֵי אֲרוּמְמָהּ: הוֹדוּ לִי כִי טוֹב,  
כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ: הוֹדוּ לִי כִי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם  
חֲסִדוֹ.

Blessed is the one who comes in Adonai's name; we give you blessings of Adonai's house.

Blessed is the one who comes in Adonai's name; we give you blessings of Adonai's house.

Almighty Adonai gives us radiance; bind the festival with coils to the horns of the altar.

Almighty Adonai gives us radiance; bind the festival with coils to the horns of the altar.

You are my God and I thank You; my God, and I will laud You.

You are my God and I thank You; my God, and I will laud You.

Thank Adonai, for He is good, His loving-kindness is universal.

Thank Adonai, for He is good, His loving-kindness is universal.

Psalm 136, the Great *Hallel* has 26 verses. The Tetragrammaton, *YHVH*, the name of God comprised of the four letters י - *Yod*, ה - *Heh*, ו - *Vav* and ה - *Heh* hints at the timeless essence of God. It comprises three Hebrew words, *HAYA* - היה - Past, *HOVEH* - הוה - Present, and *YIHIYEH* - יהיה - Future. At its most basic level its total *Gematria* - numerical value equals 26. י - *Yod* = 10, ה - *Heh* = 5, ו - *Vav* = 6, ה - *Heh* = 5. This sacred name of God is associated with infinite loving-kindness. The connection between the passage of time, past, present and future and God's infinite loving-kindness springs from our understanding of the way in which time was supposed to operate as opposed to the way we currently experience time. The original blueprints for the universe contained provisions for time that flows in a circle, where all events take place on a seamless circle of time that exists simultaneously everywhere. In such a universe the basic unit of time is defined by the progression of human consciousness. One thousand generations of humankind moving towards appreciation of God and the universe He created would perfect themselves to the point of being ready for revelation, the giving of the Torah. These blueprints for the universe were scrapped and discarded when humans ate of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. God had to intervene to protect humans from destroying themselves and the world a number of times - first with the Deluge in Noah's age and then

הודו לַי כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 הודו לֵאלֹהֵי הַאֱלֹהִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 הודו לְאֲדֹנָי הָאֲדֹנִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 לַעֲשֵׂה נִפְלְאוֹת גְּדֹלוֹת לְבָדוֹ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 לַעֲשֵׂה הַשְּׁמַיִם בְּתַבְנִיחַ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 לְרוֹקַע הָאָרֶץ עַל הַמַּיִם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 לַעֲשֵׂה אוֹרִים גְּדֹלִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 אֵת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לְמַשְׁלַת בַּיּוֹם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 אֵת הַיָּרֵחַ וְכּוֹכְבֵי הַלַּיְלָה, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 לְמַכּוּהַ מִצְרַיִם בְּכּוֹרֵיהֶם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 וְיֹצֵא יִשְׂרָאֵל מִתּוֹכָם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 בְּיַד תּוֹקֵה וּבְרוּחַ גְּטוּיָהּ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 לְגֹזֵר יָם סוּף לַגִּזְרִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 וְהַעֲבִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתוֹכוֹ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 וְנָעַר פְּרַעֲהַ וְחִלּוֹ בַיָּם סוּף, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 לְמוֹלִיד עַמּוֹ בַמִּדְבָּר, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 לְמַכּוּהַ מַלְכִים גְּדֹלִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 וְיַהַרְגַּ מַלְכִים אֲדִירִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 לְסִיחוּן מִלְּךָ הָאֱמֹרִי, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 וְלַעֲוֹג מִלְּךָ הַבְּשָׁן, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 וְנִתֵּן אֲרָצָם לְנַחֲלָה, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 נַחֲלָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַבְדּוֹ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 שְׁבַשְׁפִּלְנוּ זִכְרֵנוּ לָנוּ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 וַיִּפְרְקֵנוּ מִצְרֵינוּ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 נוֹתַן לָהֶם לְכֹל בֶּשֶׂר, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:

with the Dispersal after the attempt to build the Great Tower of Babel in Abraham's day. The Exodus from Egypt was another such intervention. It culminated in the revelation at Sinai 49 days after the revelation at Sinai 49 days after the Exodus. The plan to reveal the Torah after one thousand generations had to be replaced with an unripe version of the Torah revealed after only twenty six generations. Ten generations from Adam to Noah. Ten generations from Noah to Abraham. Six generations from Abraham to Moses. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Levi, Amram, Moses. In an emergency measure designed to provide a patch to hold the universe together, God gave the Torah to the twenty sixth generation. The name of God associated with time has the numerical value of twenty six. The Great *Hallel* has twenty six verses.

Psalm 136

1. Thank Adonai, for He is good, His loving-kindness is universal.
2. Thank the Lord of lords, His loving-kindness is universal.
3. Thank the Master of masters, His loving-kindness is universal.
4. Who alone does great miracles, His loving-kindness is universal.
5. Who fixed the heaven with understanding His loving-kindness is universal.
6. Who arrayed earth over water, His loving-kindness is universal.
7. Who established great luminaries, His loving-kindness is universal.
8. The sun, to rule the day, His loving-kindness is universal.
9. The moon and stars, to rule the night, His loving-kindness is universal.
10. Who struck Egypt with their first-born, His loving-kindness is universal.
11. Who brought Israel out of their midst, His loving-kindness is universal.

הודו לאל השמים, כי לעולם חסדו:

12. With a strong hand and outstretched arm, His loving-kindness is universal.
13. Who slashed the Red Sea into pieces, His loving-kindness is universal.
14. Who led Israel through it, His loving-kindness is universal.
15. Who drowned Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, His loving-kindness is universal.
16. Who led His people in the desert, His loving-kindness is universal.
17. Who destroyed great kingdoms, His loving-kindness is universal.
18. And slew powerful kings, His loving-kindness is universal.
19. Sichon, King of the Emorites, His loving-kindness is universal.
20. And Og, King of Bashan, His loving-kindness is universal.
21. Who gave us their land to inherit, His loving-kindness is universal.
22. A legacy for His servant, Israel, His loving-kindness is universal.
23. Who remembers us in our poverty, His loving-kindness is universal.
24. And delivers us from our oppressors, His loving-kindness is universal.
25. Who feeds all flesh, His loving-kindness is universal.
26. Thank the God of heaven, His loving-kindness is everlasting.



The following passage in the text is ancient. Its provenance is uncertain. We cannot be sure exactly when it was composed or by whom. While it may appear to have more than one theme — a multifaceted approach to the whole subject of praising God, a summary of the causes for our appreciation and a comprehensive annunciation of our desire to thank God — in fact it has but a single theme. The human body is a metaphor. It is a microcosm of the universe and a symbol for the indescribable magnificence of God. By using every part of our microcosmic bodies to sing God's praises we are doing no more than imitating the macrocosmic universe as it sings God's praises. The human body is not an obstacle in the worship of God. To the contrary it is the ultimate vehicle. Designed by God as a miniature universe, it can do everything the universe can. The fact that each of us owns such an incredible microcosm is sufficient in itself to make us burst into song. It is important to note that Jewish worship, even those forms considered rapturous and euphoric, such as singing and dancing,

## נשמת

נשמת כל חי, תברך את שמך יי אלהינו.  
 ורוח כל בשר, תפארו ותרומום זכרך מלכנו  
 תמיד, מן העולם ועד העולם אתה אל.  
 ומבלעדיך אין לנו מלך גואל ומושיע, פודה  
 ומציל ומפרנס ומרחם, בכל עת צרה וצוקה.  
 אין לנו מלך אלא אתה: אלהי הראשונים  
 והאחרונים, אלוה כל בריות, ארון כל  
 תולדות, המהלל ברב התשבחות, המנהג  
 עולמו בחסד, ובריותיו ברחמים. וי לא ינום  
 ולא ישן, המעורר ישנים והפקיץ נרדמים.  
 והמשיח אלמים, והמתיר אסורים, והסומך  
 נופלים, והזקף כפופים, לך לבדך אנחנו  
 מודים אלו פינו מלא שירה פים, ולשוננו  
 רנה כחמון גליו, ושפתותינו שבו כמרחבי  
 רקיע, ועינינו מאירות כשמש וכיורת, וירינו  
 פרושות כנשרי שמים, ורגלנו קלות כאילות,  
 אין אנחנו מספיקים, להודות לך יי אלהינו  
 ואלהי אבותינו, ולברך את שמך על אחת  
 מאלף אלף אלפי אלפים ורבי רבבות פעמים,  
 הטובות שעשית עם אבותינו ועמנו.  
 ממצרים גאלתנו יי אלהינו, ומבית עבדים  
 פדיתנו, ברעב ונתנו, ובשבע כלכלתנו, מרחב  
 הצלתנו, ומדבר מלשתנו, ומחלים רעים  
 ונאמנים דליתנו: עד הנה צורנו רחמך, ולא

nothing from nothing. Our physical bodies as our physical world spring from the Infinite Nothing in a never-ending, never repeating miracle of creation. How could we not feel the compulsion to sing and dance?

**The breath of every living thing will bless Your name, Adonai, our God. The spirit of all flesh glorifies and exalts every recollection of You, Your Majesty. From this world to the next and forever, You are Almighty God. Without You we have no sovereign, helper and rescuer to redeem, save, support, respond and sympathize at every instance of trouble and distress. We have no monarch but You, God of beginnings and endings, God of all creation, Master of all history, extolled with every tribute, Who controls His world with loving-kindness and His creatures with compassion. Adonai neither slumbers nor sleeps. He rouses the sleeper and wakens the drowsy, revives the dead, heals the sick, gives sight to the blind, speech to the mute, unties the bound, carries the failing, straightens the stooped and recovers the vanished. We thank You, alone.**

Even if our mouths were packed with melody as the ocean, our

chanting and fervent prolonged prayer, even fasting and self denial, all of them are designed to avoid ecstasy. Ex - stasis, to stand outside the self, is not the way of the Jewish mystic. When I stand outside my body, my body is not a vehicle for the divine. True worship demands I stay with my body, to worship with my body. That every bone and fiber in my body shout, 'God! There is no one like You!'

This then is the path between *Keter* - Crown and *Chokhma* - Wisdom through ה *-Heh*. This universe was created with the ה *-Heh*. It is as though God breathed out of Himself to create everything we see in the world. The sound of the letter ה *-Heh* is the sound of breathing outwards from the heart. According to the Kabbalah, the World to Come was created with the letter י *-Yod*, while this physical world in which we live was created with the letter ה *-Heh*. To walk this path is to remain utterly attuned to the physical, to the body we inhabit, while being acutely conscious that it is some-

tongues with song as its crowded waves, if our lips chanted like the galaxies of heaven, with eyes blazing like sun and moon; if our hands could spread like the eagles of skies, and our feet tripped light as the antelope, we could not thank You Adonai, our God, God of our ancestors, or bless Your name, for even one of the thousands of millions and billions and trillions of favors, miracles and wonders that You have done for our ancestors and us.

Earlier, Adonai, our God, You saved us from Egypt, redeemed us from the house of slavery, fed us through famine and nourished us with abundance. You protected us from the sword and delivered us from plague, snatched us out of evil and harm's way. Your compassion still safeguards us, Your loving-kindnesses, Adonai our God, have never forsaken us. Please, don't ever abandon us!

And that is why all the organs You apportioned within us, the soul and breath You breathed into our nostrils, the tongue You planted in our mouths, all of them thank, bless, praise, glorify, exalt, adore, sanctify and proclaim the sovereignty of Your name, Your Majesty. Every mouth thanks You, every tongue swears by You, every eye looks to You, every knee bends to You, and all who stand erect, bend before You. Every hearts fears You, and all entrails and kidneys rhapsodize to Your name, as it is written: All my bones say, 'Adonai, there is no one like You.'

You protect the poor from the powerful, the indigent and the pauper from exploiters. You hear the pleas of the destitute. You are the One who listens and responds to the cries of the impoverished. Who compares to You, who matches You, who equals You, God, great, mighty and awesome, Towering God, Controller of heaven and earth!

We laud You, praise You and glorify You. We bless Your holy

עֲבוֹנוֹתֵינוּ תְּסַדֵּיק וְאֵל תִּטְשֵׁנוּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְנִצְחָת.  
 עַל כֵּן אֲבָרִים שֶׁפִּלְגֵת בְּגוֹ, וְרוּחַ וּנְשָׁמָה  
 שֶׁנִּפְתַּח בְּאַפֵּינוּ, וְלִשׁוֹן אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַת בְּפִינוּ, הֵן  
 הֵם יוֹדוּ וַיְבָרְכוּ וַיִּשְׁבְּחוּ וַיִּפְאֲרוּ וַיְרַמְמוּ  
 וַיְעָרִיצוּ וַיְקַדְּשׁוּ וַיְמַלִּיכוּ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ מִלְּכֹנֵנוּ, כִּי  
 כָל פֶּה לֹד יִזְדָּה, וְכָל לִשׁוֹן לֹד תִּשְׁבַּע, וְכָל  
 בְּרֶךְ לֹד תִּכְרַע, וְכָל קוֹמָה לִפְנֵיךָ תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה,  
 וְכָל לֵבבוֹת יִירָאוּךָ, וְכָל קָרֵב וְכִלְיוֹת יִזְמְרוּ  
 לְשִׁמְךָ. כִּדְבַר שְׁכֵתוֹב, כָּל עֲצָמוֹתַי תִּאֲמַרְנָה  
 יי מִי כִמּוֹךָ. מִצִּיל עֲנִי מִחַיִּי מִמָּוֶה, וְעֲנִי  
 וְאֲבִיוֹן מִגְּלוֹ: מִי יִדְמָה לָךְ, וּמִי יִשְׁוֶה לָךְ וּמִי  
 יִעֲרָךְ לָךְ: הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵל  
 עֲלִיוֹן קֹנֵה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ: נִהְלָךְ וַיִּשְׁבַּחְךָ  
 וַיִּנְפְּאֲרֶךְ וַיִּבְרַח אֶת־שֵׁם קִדְשֶׁךָ. כְּאֹמְרוֹ, לְדוֹר,  
 בְּרָכִי נַפְשִׁי אֶת יי וְכָל קֶרְבִי אֶת שֵׁם קִדְשׁוֹ:

הָאֵל בְּתַעֲצוּמוֹת עֲזָךְ, הַגָּדוֹל בְּכִבוֹד שְׁמֶךָ.  
 הַגִּבּוֹר לְנִצְחָת וְהַנּוֹרָא בְּנוֹרְאוֹתֶיךָ. הַמְּלִיךְ  
 הַיּוֹשֵׁב עַל כִּסֵּא רַם וְנִשְׂא:

שׁוֹכֵן עַד, מְרוֹם וְקָדוֹשׁ שְׁמוֹ: וְכַתּוּב, רַנְּנוּ  
 צְדִיקִים בַּיי, לַיִּשְׂרָאֵל נְאֻה תְּהִלָּה.

בְּפִי יִשְׂרָאֵל	תְּתַרְוּ וּמִם.
וּבִרְבֵּי צְדִיקִים	תְּתַבְּרֶה.
וּבְלִשׁוֹן הַיִּסְדִּים	תְּתַקְדֵּשׁ
וּבְקֶרֶב קְדוֹשִׁים	תְּתַהַלֵּל:



ובמקהלות רבבות עמך בית ישראל, בְּרַנָּה  
 יתפאֵר שְׁמֶךָ מְלֻכְנוּ, בְּכֹל יוֹר וְיוֹר, שֶׁכֶּן  
 חֹבֵת כָּל הַיְצוּרִים, לְפָנֶיךָ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְאֱלֹהֵי  
 אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, לְהוֹדוֹת לְהַלֵּל לְשַׁבַּח לְפָאֵר לְרַמֵּם  
 לְהַנְדִּיר לְבָרֵךְ לְעַלָּה וּלְקַלֵּס, עַל כָּל הַבְּרִי  
 שִׁירוֹת וְתַשְׁבְּחוֹת יוֹד בְּךָ יְשִׁי עֲבָדֶךָ מְשִׁיחֶךָ:

ישתבח שְׁמֶךָ לְעַד מְלֻכְנוּ, הָאֵל הַמְּלִיךְ הַגָּדוֹל  
 וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ, כִּי לֶךָ נָאָה, יי  
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ: שִׁיר וְשִׁבְחָה, הַלֵּל  
 וְהַמְרָה, עֹז וּמְשֻׁלָּה, נִצְחָה, גְּדֻלָּה וּגְבוּרָה,  
 תְּהִלָּה וְתַפְאֵרָה, קִדְשָׁה וּמְלֻכוֹת, בְּרִכּוֹת  
 וְהוֹדָאוֹת מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.

יהללךָ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיךָ, וְחֲסִידֶיךָ  
 צְדִיקִים עוֹשֵׂי רְצוֹנְךָ, וְכָל עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 בְּרַנָּה יוֹדוּ וַיְבָרְכוּ וַיִּשְׁבְּחוּ וַיִּפְאֲרוּ וַיְרַמְּמוּ  
 וַיְצַרְצְצוּ וַיְקַדְּשׁוּ וַיְמַלִּיכוּ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ מְלֻכְנוּ, כִּי  
 לֶךָ טוֹב לְהוֹדוֹת וּלְשַׁבַּח נָאָה לְזַמֵּר, כִּי  
 מֵעוֹלָם וְעַד עוֹלָם אַתָּה אֵל, בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,  
 מְלִיךְ מְהֻלָּל בַּתַּשְׁבְּחוֹת.

**And praised among the holiest.**

**Your name, Your Majesty, is glorified with song in all congregations of the myriads of Your people, the House of Israel, in every generation. It is the obligation of all creation to You, Adonai, our God and God of our ancestors, to thank, laud, praise, glorify, exalt, adore, bless, elevate and to honor You, beyond all words of song and praise, those of David son of Jesse, Your anointed slave.**

The following wraps the Hallel in a final coda. A short prayer; it is known as *Yishtabach* - Future Praise. It summarizes our fervent hope and wish to see the Messiah, God's anointed, lead the world once in again in praise and song. A new, joyous rhapsody, one that will continue, ever new, for all eternity.

**So, may Your name be praised forever, Your Majesty, great and holy God, sovereign in heaven and earth. It befits only You, Adonai, our God, God of our ancestors; the song, praise, applause, acclaim, cheer and victory; the magnificence and power, the glory and splendor, the holiness and sovereignty. Blessings and tributes belong to Your great and holy name. From this world to the next, You are Almighty God.**

The following is a summation, a promise, as it were, for the future; for us and for God. We believe God will save us and save the whole world. We believe

**Name. It says: Unto David; Bless Adonai, O my soul, and all my innards His holy name.**

**You, Almighty God, Intense in Power; Great, Glorious in name; Omnipotent forever, Awesome in Terrifying Splendor; Majesty seated upon soaring and noble throne. Who dwells eternal; Towering and Holy in name. It is written: Rhapsodize upon Adonai, you blameless. The saints had properly praise Him.**

**You are exalted in the mouth of saints, Blessed by the lips of the righteous, Sanctified on the tongue of the pious**

in the coming of the Messiah. The psalms of David we have just sung resonate with the promise of future redemption. Now we say it in our own, somewhat less poetic words. We spell it out plainly. This is what we believe we will do when the final redemption comes.

**All Your works will sing Your praises, Adonai, our God; Your saints, the righteous who do Your will, and all Your people, the House of Israel, will thank and bless with joyous song, laud and glorify, exalt and adore, sanctify and proclaim the sovereignty of Your name, our Sovereign. It is so good to thank You, and so right to sing Your name, because, from the world's beginning to eternity You are Almighty God. Blessed are You, Adonai, Sovereign lauded in praises.**

#### **DRINKING THE FOURTH CUP OF WINE**

Before drinking the fourth cup of wine a moment is taken to meditate upon the *Shechinah* - Divine Presence.

*To receive the gift of the Shechinah I must first internalize the lesson of the Hallel I have just sung. I am receiving God's unconditional love. I am God's unconditional love. I must feel it in every movement of my body and pulse of my blood. I am something from nothing. I am God's breath. I am God's presence in the universe.*

The text in English:

**Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.**

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

Drink the wine while seated, and reclining to the left.



#### **Concluding Grace for the Wine**

The text in English:

**Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe for the vine and fruit of the vine, for the abundance of crops, and for the earth, prized, bountiful and generous that You approved and gave our ancestors to inherit; to enjoy its fruit and be happy with its bounty. Have mercy, Adonai our God; on Israel Your people, on Jerusalem Your city,**

on Zion the Temple of Your glory; on Your altar and on Your sanctuary. Rebuild Jerusalem, the holy city, soon, in our time, raise us inside it and delight us with its reconstruction, that we may eat of its fruits and enjoy its bounty. Then will we bless You for it in holiness and purity. (On the Sabbath, add: May it please You to strengthen us on this Sabbath day and) Cheer us this Festival of Matzah day. For You, Adonai, are good and kind to all, and we thank You for the earth and for the fruit of the vine. Blessed are You, Adonai, for the earth and for the fruit of the vine.

## עַל הַגֶּפֶן

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם על הגפן ועל פרי הגפן.  
ועל תגובת השדה ועל ארץ חמדה טובה ורחבה שרצית והנחלת לאבותינו לאכול מפריה ולשבוע מטובה. רחם נא יי אלהינו על ישראל עמך ועל ירושלים עירך ועל ציון משכן כבודך ועל מזבחך ועל היכלך ובנה ירושלים עיר הקודש במהרה בימינו והעלנו לתוכה ושמחנו בבנינה ונאכל מפריה ונשבוע מטובה ונברכה עליה בקדשה ובטהרה  
(בשבת: ורצה והחליצנו ביום השבת הזה) ושמחנו ביום חג המצות הזה כי אתה יי טוב ומטיב לכל ונודה לך על הארץ ועל פרי הגפן. ברוך אתה יי על הארץ ועל פרי הגפן:



**15 - *NIRTZAH***  
**IT HAS ALL**  
**BEEN DESIRED**



### Something for nothing - The letter *Beth*

The Hebrew letter/word, בית - *Beth* or *Bayit* translates as 'inside' and 'house'. When it appears at the beginning of a word, the letter ב - *Beth* constitutes the prefix 'in the.' Hence the Torah beginning with the letter, *Beth* - ב, begins with the words 'In the beginning'.

*Beth* forms the bridge between the *Sephiroth* of *Chokhma* - Wisdom and *Chesed* - Loving-kindness. Loving-kindness manifests itself in the world when we are prepared to give something without expecting recompense, and if we give even when the recipient is undeserving. The highest level of this attribute is *Chokhma* - Wisdom, representing something from nothing.

Between receiving something from nothing and giving something for nothing there is the letter ב - *Beth*, representing the humble awareness that I am both something and nothing.

### Something from something - The letter *Gimel*

The Hebrew letter/word גמל - *Gimel* or *Gamal*, translates as 'giving', 'weaning', and 'camel'. The letter ג - *Gimel* is shaped like a letter ו - *Vav* with a special foot to help it walk. The animal with the most specialized walking foot is the camel. The ג - *Gimel* is understood to need the foot in order to fulfill its specialized role, to give to the needy. To walk, to run if necessary, to give to those in need.

ג - *Gimel* forms the bridge between the *Sephiroth* of *Binah* - Understanding and *Gevurah* - Judgment. Judgment manifests itself in the world when we are prepared to withhold something until all debts have been paid, if we withhold even when the recipient is deserving. The highest level of this attribute is *Binah* - Understanding, representing something from something. Between receiving something for something and giving something for something there is the letter ג - *Gimel*, representing calculating awareness that there is no such thing as a free lunch and I am it.

### Inside the inside - The letter *Zayin*

The Hebrew letter/word, זין - *Zayin* translates as 'weapon'. As the seventh letter of the Hebrew alphabet, ז - *Zayin* also represents everything most feminine. The Sabbath, the seventh day is known as 'the queen'. The seventh of the lower *Sephiroth* is known as *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty and is considered the ultimate and most feminine *Sephirah*. The seventh point in space is the innermost within the six points of three-dimensional space. A cube has six sides. The seventh point in the cube is exactly in the center of everything.

ז - *Zayin* straddles the path between the *Sephiroth* of *Chokhma* - Wisdom and *Gevurah* - Judgment. It represents the necessity of taking one's gifts and hiding them inside as though in the womb, instead of using them outright.

Walking the path of ז - *Zayin*, I allow the energy to store and build inside me, to burst forth in its own time when its power is at its peak.

### Nurturing the goodness - The letter *Teth*

The Hebrew letter ט - *Teth* is one of the few letters without any translation or use as a word. טית - *Teth* is not a Hebrew word. ט - *Teth* the letter is simply the source, the headquarters of everything good. The first time the Hebrew letter, ט - *Teth* appears in the Torah is at the beginning of the Hebrew word, טוב - *Tov*, meaning, good. 'God saw the light was טוב - *Tov*, good.'

The shape of the letter ט - *Teth*, represents something essential held in the heart, the goodness hidden inside, the promise of a brighter future unfolding. Its position on the Tree of Life between the *Sephiroth* of *Chokhma* - Wisdom and *Tifereth* - Glory is identical to the in-folding of the shape of the letter *Teth* - ט itself.

To walk the path of ט - *Teth*, is to nurture the goodness inside allowing it to flow between heart and mind as one might nurture an idea, the way Jacob held Rachel in his heart and mind during the seven years he worked to pay for her before being allowed to marry her.

### I of the beholder - The letter *Ayin*

The Hebrew letter/word עין - *Ayin* translates as 'eye' and 'fountain'. Every spring of water welling up from the ground has an 'eye'. The eye in the human body is understood also to be a source and not merely an organ of vision. Hence the concept of Good Eye and Evil Eye. עין - *Ayin* is the letter representing the path between the *Sephiroth* of *Binah* - Understanding and *Tifereth* - Glory, Walking this path requires the profoundest understanding of the need to fix and be fixed. Our actions in this world may open wounds or destroy harmonies or create chaos and destruction, and while we may not always be capable of repairing the things we have broken we nevertheless continue to believe that fixing is possible. 'The heart understands and returns.' *Tifereth* is the heart while *Binah* is understanding. When the Heart

### נִרְצָה

Understands, the two *Sephiroth* of *Binah* and *Tiffereth* unite and a fixing of the body, mind and soul may occur. This is the path of *Teshuvah* - Repentance and fixing.

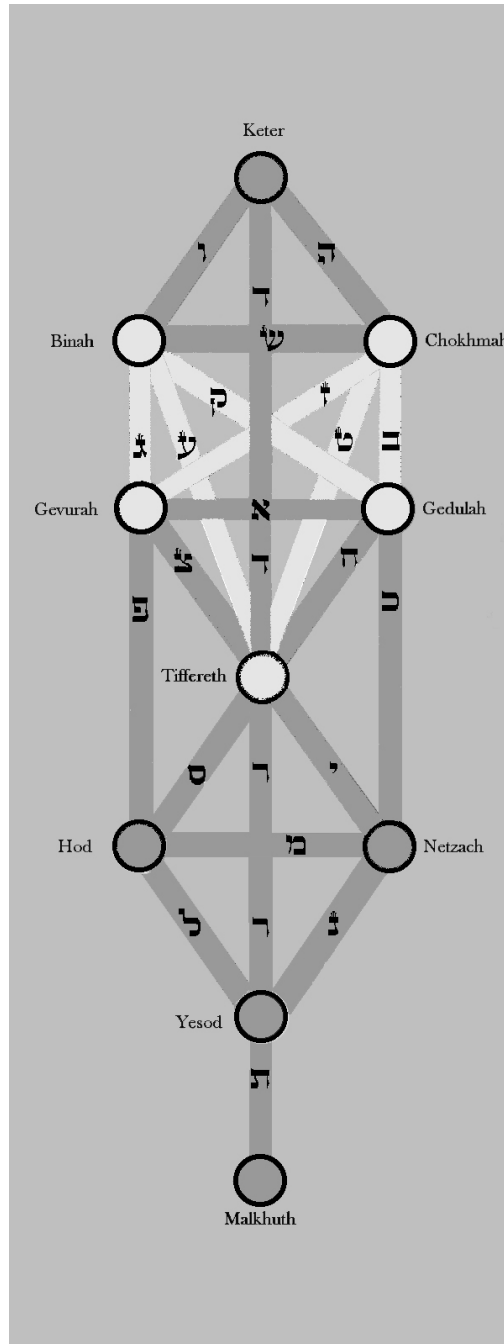
### Penetrating to below - The letter *Kof*

The Hebrew letter/word קוף -*Kof* translates as 'ape'. No matter how human an action appears, if it is performed by an ape it is not a human act. The very word 'ape' is a verb whose meaning is, to imitate or copy. And, vice-versa, no matter how thoughtless or inhumane, no human act is simply an event in the animal world.

In its shape, the ק -*Kof* is the only normative Hebrew letter to penetrate into the world below the line. The concept of a lower world reflects the reality that the human mind is housed in a brain, shaped like the Hebrew letter, ר -*Raish*, connected to the lower body by a spine shaped like the Hebrew letter, ז -*Zayin*. The letter, ק -*Kof*, is constructed using these two Hebrew letters, the ז -*Zayin* and ר -*Raish*. In the letter ק -*Kof*, the ז -*Zayin* has the potential to transmit the heavenly message down to earth or transmit the earthly message upward.

To walk the path of the ק -*Kof* requires constant awareness of this difference.







## 15 - *NIRTZAH* IT HAS ALL BEEN DESIRED

THE PATH THROUGH *BETH* - ב  
BETWEEN *CHOKHMA* -WISDOM AND *CHESED* -LOVING-KINDNESS

AND THROUGH *TETH* - ט  
BETWEEN *CHOKHMA* -WISDOM AND *TIFFERETH* - GLORY

AND THROUGH *ZAYIN* - ז  
BETWEEN *CHOKHMA* - WISDOM AND *GEVURAH* - JUDGMENT

AND THROUGH *GIMEL* - ג  
BETWEEN *BINAH* -UNDERSTANDING AND *GEVURAH* -JUDGMENT

AND THROUGH *AYN* - א  
BETWEEN *BINAH* - UNDERSTANDING AND *TIFFERETH* - GLORY

AND THROUGH *KOF* - פ  
BETWEEN *BINAH* - UNDERSTANDING AND *CHESED* - LOVING-  
KINDNESS

### *CHASAL SIDUR PESACH - A POEM*

*Nirtzah* in its present form is a relatively late addition to the Haggadah. It is not referred to or included in the texts of authoritative Haggadahs, such as that of Maimonides, as late as the 13th century. *Nirtzah* begins with a short poem taken from a longer liturgical piece written for the service of the Sabbath before Passover in the 11th century. The poem ends with a prayer that we be granted the merit of performing this Seder next year in Jerusalem. The song contains an interesting mnemonic. The first three words in the Hebrew begin with the letters כ - *Cheth*, ט - *Samech* and פ - *Peh* respectively. They spell the Hebrew word, פסח - *Pesach* - Passover, backwards. The secret of all the *Sephiroth* is the same: Their end is embedded in the beginning, and their beginning in the end.

As we stand at the point in time and space where the end is in sight, we must be reminded that the end is merely another starting point. That the journey will be familiar even if the terrain is not. That no matter how far we travel we travel in a cir-

cle. Time is circular, history is circular. Even life itself is circular.

The text in English:

Passover Seder is made and soon ended  
we have walked it to the end of every line  
absorbed every detail and feature depended  
on every tiny instruction and every design.

Just as we have successfully brought it here  
this ordered this completely, devotedly done  
so may we succeed in the forthcoming year  
to make it and do it and fix it and some.

God of crystal clarity , first, the purest sensation  
dwell serene in the highest in Your holiest room  
nurture Your community Your only congregation  
stars without number, myriads, uncounted by whom.

Close bring them, high lead them, love them their choices  
sweet coax them, soft train them, gently and strong  
redeem them and save them and liberate their voices  
to Zion, in freedom, in joy, in dance and in song.

Next year in Jerusalem!  
Next year in Jerusalem!  
Next year in Jerusalem!

## חֶסֶל סְדוּר פֶּסַח

חֶסֶל סְדוּר פֶּסַח כְּהִלְכֵתוֹ, כְּכֹל מִשְׁפָּטוֹ וְחֻקָּתוֹ.  
כְּאֲשֶׁר נִכְיָנוּ לְסִדֵּר אוֹתוֹ, כִּן נִזְכֶּה לְעִשׂוֹתוֹ.  
זֶה שׁוֹכֵן מְעוֹנָה, קוֹמֵם קוֹחַ עֲדַת מִי מְנָה.  
בְּקִרְוֹב נִחַל גִּטְעֵי כִנָּה, פְּדוּיִם לְצִיּוֹן בְּרִנָּה.  
לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם:  
לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם:  
לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם:



*Nirtzah - It Has All Been Desired*, reflects a higher truth, one revealed only at those special times when the *Giluy Shechinah* - Divine Revelation is unopposed. At this point in the Seder all the gates of abundance and radiance - all the gates of divine flow - are wide open. Everything can be fixed. Nothing is irredeemable. It is a time of such positive approval, of such open giving, of such clear and precious revelation, it is a time when even original blunders, primal mistakes and cosmic sins can be healed and forgiven. In essence, this last *Siman* - Station of the Seder is a fixing of the Eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil - the very act which led to the rupturing of the intimacy between Adam and Eve, and subsequently, the whole of humankind. The Exile of *Da'at* - Knowing began there. The ends are all embedded in their beginnings. The end of the Seder is embedded in the beginning of all history. Essentially a thing is fixed when God says, 'This is act you did, the one you thought was so bad, well, it's what I wanted to happen in the first place. Thank you.'

This is meaning of the final *Siman* - Station of the Seder. God says, 'It has all been desired. It was my will and desire that you eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. I thank you.'



### VAYHI BACHATZI HALAYLAH IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

*Nirtzah* has six components. The first, a liturgical poem dating back to the 5th century is embellished with acrostics and filled with erudite Midrashic and Aggadic references in the style common to most of these exquisite compositions. As a genre, the *Qerovot*, of which this is an example, deserve an overview beyond the scope of this Haggadah. We will have to make do with a cursory introduction.

The poem has a refrain: 'It was in the middle of the night.' This refrain or chorus introduces the piece and is repeated at the end of each verse. The first six verses each have three lines beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. But, because there are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet, the seventh and final verse has four lines to accommodate the final, 22nd letter. The fifth verse uses a *v* - *Shin* instead of a *v* - *Samech*, for the same reason that it is often used as a substitute in other acrostic, Kabbalistic poetry. *v* - *Samech*, is the first letter in the name of the archangel/serpent mentioned in the Genesis story who led Eve astray and talked her into eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. On this night of Passover even the most destructive forces may find a place in God's universe. That's the meaning of this *Siman* - Station, *Nirtzah - It Has All Been Desired*. Even the serpent has its moment of acceptance. Now as we approach that moment of fixing we refrain from drawing attention to the serpent, we don't even refer to it by name. We avoid the Hebrew letter *v* - *Samech* altogether. The seven verses parallel the seven lower *Sephiroth*, using hints and allusions rather than direct references to the *Sephiroth*. The first verse mentions Abraham whose chief characteristic is the attribute of *Che-*

*sed* - Loving-kindness, the first of the seven lower *Sephiroth* in the downward flow. He is referred to as the holy convert. He waged war against four armies in his bid to rescue his nephew Lot. Lot fathered Moab, from whose line descended our ancestress Ruth, great grandmother of King David. So this verse also alludes to the *Sephirah* of *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty, the last of the seven *Sephiroth*, the first in the upward flow.

The second verse begins with a reference to Abimelech, King of Grar - Philistia who took our mother Sarah captive when he was smitten with her beauty. That night God revealed Himself to the king, ordering him to restore the woman to her husband. The trauma of being forced to spend a night separated from her husband Abraham is what completed the circle in Sarah's life. On being reunited, Sarah and Abraham immediately conceived their son, Isaac, who, in his personality and spiritual qualities represents the embodiment of the second of the seven *Sephiroth*, *Gevurah* - Judgment in the downward flow. The middle of the verse evokes Laban whose sister Isaac marries and whose daughters Jacob marries. The end of the verse evokes Jacob in the struggle with the angel in the night. Laban and the angel are both adversaries of Jacob in his role as the embodiment of the second to last *Sephirah* of *Yesod* - Fundament. The *Sephirah* associated with sexuality, second in the upward flow.

The third verse mentions the slaying of the firstborn of Egypt. As has been said earlier in the Haggadah, *Gilyu Shechinah*—Divine Revelation is associated with the *Sephirah* of *Tifereth* - Glory, the third of the seven lower *Sephiroth* in the downward flow. The slaying of the firstborn was associated with the revelation of God's heart, which is *Tifereth* - Glory. We the Jewish People are God's heart. When God opens His heart to reveal us there, the enemies of God simply die. They find themselves bereft of power. The end of the verse refers to Sisera who was defeated by the prophetess Deborah and killed by Yael with a stake through his temple. The stars themselves came down out of the sky to engage Sisera's army in the night. Deborah wrote a song after the victory from which we learn all the laws of the blowing of the Shofar for Rosh Hashana. Songs, sounds and Shofar all belong in the realm of the *Sephirah* of *Hod* - Beauty, third *Sephirah* in the upward flow.

The fourth verse is where the fourth of the *Sephiroth* flowing downward and the fourth of the *Sephiroth* flowing upward are identical. This verse is given over entirely to the *Sephirah* of *Netzach* - Victory. The first line refers to Sennacherib, King of Assyria, the blasphemer, who sent a letter to Hezekiah King of Judah challenging God Almighty to prevent him laying waste to the City of Jerusalem and the Holy Temple in it. *Netzach* - Victory in this context is a victory for God over a boastful soldier. The second line conjures King Nebuchadnezzar and the Empire of Babylon with its much vaunted pagan idol worship. Isaiah describes the scene in Babylon as Bel, the greatest of the Babylonian gods fell off its pedestal and squatted on the ground like a man caught with unstoppable diarrhea. Instead of dominating the Babylonian skyline, the massive unmovable cast-iron idol became the laughingstock of the market place. This manifestation of *Netzach* - Victory is a victory for God over the pagan world. The final line of the verse recalls Daniel, gentlest and most beloved

of the prophets. He was given the prophecies concerning the ultimate victory, the end of days and the revelation of eternity. Eternity is another translation of the word, *Netzach*.

The fifth verse begins with downfall of Nebuchadnezzar's successor, his grandson Balthasar, who calculated the seventy years after which the prophets had predicted the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. Once the seventy years had passed without the Temple being rebuilt, Balthasar reckoned there was nothing to fear from the God of the Jews. He assembled a great multitude of revelers to a bacchanal feast at which vessels, previously plundered from the Holy Temple in Jerusalem were used as drinking goblets. His calculations were erroneous. During the feast a divine hand was seen writing on the wall. '*Mene Mene Tekel Ufarsin*' Once again it was Daniel the prophet who was brought in to explain the meaning of the writing on the wall. His prediction that Balthasar would be murdered at midnight and that Babylon would fall to the Persians came to pass. This is Daniel of lion's den fame as mentioned in the second verse. The *Sephirah* of *Hod* - Beauty through which these miracles came about is the fifth of the *Sephiroth* on the downward flow. The fifth of the upward flowing *Sephiroth* is *Tiffereth* - Glory. Haman the great hater of the Jews is busy writing books at night. Text books and how-to-do-it manuals on the destruction of the Jews, manuals to be copied and disseminated among all the many lands in the Persian-Median empire. But we are Jews and we are written into books each and every Rosh Hashana. The Books of Life and Death are all in the same place. We are all written in the same place. We are written together in the heart of God, the *Sephirah* of *Tiffereth* - Glory.

The sixth verse is concerns Ahasuerus and his role in the drama of Haman, Mordechai and Esther. Ahasuerus has married Esther who is the embodiment of the *Sephirah* of *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty. In his attempts to be intimate with Esther, Ahasuerus, the Emperor who brings together in his person the conglomeration of all the countries under his dominion, is the paradigm of the unholy consort attempting to seduce the *Shechinah*. As such he is representative of the sixth of the *Sephiroth* in the downward flow, the *Sephirah* of *Yesod* - Fundament. The latter part of this verse describes God treading His enemies, our enemies like grapes in the winepress. In the end it will be obvious that God was awake and watching all through the night of exile. The references are directly connected to the sixth of the upward flowing *Sephiroth*, the *Sephirah* of *Gevurah* - Judgment.

The seventh and final verse has two couplets. The first two lines describe the Messianic era, the last of the seven downward flowing *Sephiroth*, the *Sephirah* of *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty. The Messiah is a king, and represents God's majesty and sovereignty on earth. The second two verses connected to the last of the upward flowing *Sephiroth*, the *Sephirah* of *Chesed* - Loving-kindness talk of the eternal peace and serenity which will prevail in Jerusalem. Thus are the ends embedded in their beginnings. The fifty gates of wisdom are flung open wide. Of the twenty paths of the Hebrew letters, each has a large signpost, each is connected to one of the ten *Sephiroth*. Now is the time to connect heart and mind for now are the gifts of *Mochin D'Gadlut* - Large Mindedness, freely dispensed. We may live our whole lives

during the year in *Mochin D'Katnut* - Small Mindedness, but tonight, on Pass-over, there is no excuse for this. This is the path of the Hebrew letter, ע - *Ayin*. The fountain is flowing abundant. It is up to us to lean over and drink. No one can force us to drink.

The text in English:

**And so it was the middle of the night.**

1.

**Then with a thousand miracles did**

**You astound in the night**

**At the top of the hour as the watch  
unwound in the night**

**The holy convert prevailed as victory  
was found in the night**

**And it was in the middle of the night.**

2.

**You indicted Philistines' king it was  
in a dream in the night**

**Laban the Aramean was frightened to  
scream in the night**

**Israel vanquished the angel crossing  
the stream in the night**

**And it was in the middle of the night.**

3.

**The seed of Egypt's firstborn You  
halved quartered in the night**

**Their power was vanished when they  
woke thwarted in the night**

**Elite troops of Prince Sisera star-struck and slaughtered in the night**

**And it was in the middle of the night.**

4.

**The corpse of the warmongering blasphemer putrefying in the night**

**Proud pagan Bel humiliated into squatting no denying in the night**

**To beloved Daniel You gave a secrets-laden prophecy satisfying in the night**

**And it was in the middle of the night.**

5.

**Drunken usurper from holy goblets Balthazar dead in the night**

**Daniel from the lions' den interpreting dreams of dread in the night**

**Spiteful heart of sleepless Haman writing books instead in the night**

## וַיְהִי בַחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה

וּבְכֹן "וַיְהִי בַחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה".  
אִז רֹב נְסִים הִפְלִאתָ בַּלַּיְלָה, בְּרֵאשׁ  
אֲשֶׁמִּוּרוֹת זֶה הַלַּיְלָה, גַּר צָדֵק נִצְחָתוֹ כְּנִחְלָק  
לוֹ לַיְלָה, וַיְהִי בַחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה.

דָּגַת מְלֶכֶה גָּרָר בַּחֲלוּם הַלַּיְלָה, הַפְחַתָּ אֲרָמִי  
בְּאֶמֶשׁ לַיְלָה, וַיֵּשֶׁר יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִלְאָךְ וַיִּוֹכַל לוֹ  
לַיְלָה, וַיְהִי בַחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה.

זָרַע בְּכוּרֵי פִתְרוֹס מִחֻצָּת בַּחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה, חֵילֶם  
לֹא מִצָּאוּ בְּקוּמָם בַּלַּיְלָה, טִיסַת נְגִיד חֲרָשֶׁת  
סִלִּית בְּכוּכְבֵי לַיְלָה, וַיְהִי בַחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה.

יַעֲזַב מַהֲרָף לְנוֹפֵף אוֹוֵי הוֹבֶשֶׁת פְּגָרֵי בַּלַּיְלָה,  
פָּרַע בַּל וּמִצָּבוֹ בְּאִישׁוֹן לַיְלָה, לְאִישׁ חֲמוּדוֹת  
נִגְלָה רַז חַוֹּת לַיְלָה, וַיְהִי בַחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה.

מִשְׁתַּפֵּר בְּכָלֵי קֹדֶשׁ נִהְרַג בּוֹ בַּלַּיְלָה, נוֹשַׁע  
מִבוּר אֲרִיזוֹת פּוֹחֵר בַּעֲתוּתֵי לַיְלָה, שְׁנֹאָה נִטַּר  
אֲנִגִּי וְכֹתֵב סִפְרִים לַיְלָה, וַיְהִי בַחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה.

עוֹרֶרֶת נִצְחָף עֲלָיו בְּנֶדֶר שְׁנַת לַיְלָה, פּוֹרָה  
תִּדְרוֹף לְשׁוּמֵר מֵהַ מְלִיָּה, צָרַח פֶּשֶׁמֶר וְשָׁח  
אֶתָּא בְּקֶר וְגַם לַיְלָה, וַיְהִי בַחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה.

קָרַב יוֹם אֲשֶׁר הוּא לֹא יוֹם וְלֹא לַיְלָה, כֶּם  
הוֹדַע כִּי לֶךְ הַיּוֹם אֶף לֶךְ הַלַּיְלָה, שׁוּמְרִים  
הַפְּקֹד לַעֲיֹדָךְ כָּל הַיּוֹם וְכָל הַלַּיְלָה, תֵּאִיר  
כְּאוֹר יוֹם חֲשַׁפְתָּ לַיְלָה, וַיְהִי בַחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה:

And it was in the middle of the night.

6.

You awakened eternity when you disturbed Ahasuerus' sleep in the night  
Crushing the enemies of those whose guard the watch keep in the night  
Loud like watchman crying: Day's a coming, no longer so deep in the night  
And it was in the middle of the night

7.

Bring close the day of days a time neither in the day nor in the night  
Most High let them see you as Creator of all days  
and even more in the night  
Appoint guardians for your city all the day and protect it  
to be sure in the night  
Let the sun shine forever brilliant remove all its veils  
let daylight pour in the night  
And it was in the middle of the night.



**VA'AMARTEM ZEVACH PESACH  
AND SO TELL THEM IT IS THE PASSOVER OFFERING**

The second night of Passover has a slightly different focus, and traditionally, this second hymn was said on the second night. The second Seder is unique to the Diaspora. It is not celebrated in the Land of Israel at all. Interestingly this second liturgical poem uses as its refrain a reference to the Paschal lamb, an offering which could only be brought in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, which is probably the reason the custom these days is to recite both hymns on both night. The author, R. Eleazar the Kalir is a somewhat mysterious figure. He probably lived sometime between the 6th and 10th centuries, probably in Palestine and was an extremely prolific writer. Older authorities consider him to have been a Tanna/teacher of the Mishnah and identify him either with Eleazar b. Arakh of the 1st century, or with Eleazar b. Simeon of the 2nd century. While some of his hymns have been lost, more than 200 of them have been embodied in the prayer-books for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Kalir's hymns early became an object of study and of Kabbalistic exegesis. His personality was a mystery. It is related that heavenly fire surrounded him when he wrote the '*Kedushtah*'; that he himself ascended to heaven and there learned from the angels the secret of writing alphabetical hymns; and that his teacher Yannai, author of the previously discussed poem, 'And It Was In The Middle Of The Night,' jealous of his superior knowledge, placed a scorpion in his shoe, and caused his death.

This poem from the Festival liturgy for the second day of Passover is introduced with the words from Exodus 12:26-27:

And when your children ask you, what is this service you are performing? Tell them, It is a Passover Offering for God who passed over our Jewish houses in Egypt when he slew the Egyptians and spared our homes.

This poem, similar in construction to the one discussed above, also has seven stanzas with three Hebrew acrostic lines in each of the first six and four in the final, seventh verse, to accommodate the 22nd letter of the alphabet. As in the previous poem, the fifth verse uses a *Shin* instead of a *Samech*, and for the same reason. There is, though, at least one radical difference. Where Yannai's verses are laden with meaning, the Kalir's individual syllables are laden with double, treble and more layers of meaning. Assuming its allusions were all penetrable and we were in possession of all the Aggadic material around which the Kalir wove his compositions; and assuming we were able to assemble all the fifteen centuries of scholarship accruing to this hymn, it would still require a Kabbalist of a different order than this writer to edit, translate and then condense it for reading here.

A cursory example of its complexity will have to suffice. I have chosen to provide an overview of the first stanza and an in-depth exegesis of the first two words in the second stanza. It is no exaggeration to say that a proper treatment of the hymn would require a whole book of its own.

The first stanza deals with the supernal, upper *Sephiroth* of *Keter* - Crown, *Chokhma* - Wisdom, *Binah* - Understanding and *Da'at* - Knowledge. The first three words of the first line translate as, 'You wondrously juxtapose the intensity of Your might'. At the most obvious, *P'shat* - Literal level of meaning, the poet is acknowledging the wondrous way in which God contrasts His use of power with the Egyptians' use of their power on the night of Passover. Pharaoh considered himself a very powerful man. But ultimately his power was only in the commands he gave. God, unlike Pharaoh or any mortal king, is free to act. Pharaoh's power diminished with the degree of his removal from the scene of the action. God's power is undiminished whether it is expressed through a messenger or through direct action. The juxtaposition of God's power against Pharaoh's power climaxed on the night of Passover.

The three Hebrew words chosen by the Kalir to describe this contrast, however, have more suggested meanings. The three Hebrew words are:

*Ometz* - אִמְץ - Intensity,

*Gevurotecha* - גְּבוּרַתְךָ - Your might,

*Hillaita* - הִפַּלְאֵת - You did wondrously display.

The Hebrew word, *Ometz* - אִמְץ - 'Intensity', appears but once in Scripture, in Job 17:9. There is a discussion in the *Pesikta D'Rav Kahana, Piska 25:1*, as to whether the *Ometz* - אִמְץ - Intensity, mentioned in this verse, is the power God imbues in His worshippers enabling them to serve Him, or whether it refers to the power God's worshippers give Him with their worship. Either way, *Ometz* - אִמְץ - Intensity, refers to the sort of power one receives from God or one gives God. This type of flowing energy, the sort calculated to enhance some-



one's power, to strengthen and empower them, always flows from the *Sephirah* of *Binah* - Understanding. All channeling of primal energies is done through this *Sephirah*.

The Hebrew word, *Gevurotecha* - גבורתך - 'Your might', refers to the Five *Gevuroth* - Powers associated with the *Sephirah* of *Binah* - Understanding. The five drops of *Gevurah* - Power, alluded to are the five droplets of Longing, Desire, Prayer, Hope and Faith flowing from God into the world through the five *Sephiroth* of:

1. *Binah* - Understanding - Longing
2. *Gevurah* - Judgment - Desire
3. *Hod* - Beauty - Prayer
4. *Yesod* - Fundament - Hope
5. *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty - Faith

The concept of God's Prayers to us, God's Faith in us, God's Longing for us and other, similar, attributes associated with the *Sephirah* of *Binah* - Understanding may at first seem alien. But the Midrash and Aggadah are replete with references to these ideas.

*Hillaita* - הפלאות - 'You did wondrously display'. The root of the Hebrew word, פלא - *Peleh* - Wonder, consists of three Hebrew letters א - *Alef*, ל - *Lamed* and פ - *Peh*. Together they spell אלה - *Alef*. Both *Alef* and *Peleh* are associated with the *Sephirah* of *Chokhma* - Wisdom.

(Incidentally, the previous poem, written by R. Yannai, also has the word, *Hillaita* - הפלאות - 'You did wondrously display', in the identical spot on the first line of the composition. If the Kalir was indeed in some sort of competition with his teacher, R Yannai, he could have found no more flamboyant way of underscoring it than by using the word, *Hillaita* - הפלאות - You did wondrously display, to juxtapose his own composition against that of his mentor.)

It now becomes evident that the first line invokes God's miraculous relationship with us, and celebrates the way God made his relationship with us undeniable to the world on Passover. How we were empowered to face the Egyptians and sacrifice the Paschal Lamb, painting its blood on our doorposts without fear of reprisal for breaking the Egyptian taboo against slaughtering the lamb. To circumcise ourselves without fear, to walk into the desert, homeless and unprepared without fear. How we empowered God to come down out of the heavens to interfere in Pharaoh's life down to its minutest detail. How God made a mockery of Egypt in order to teach us and all of humankind a salutary lesson through *Chokhma* - Wisdom and *Binah* - Understanding.

The second line of the poem concentrates on different forms of the *Sephirah* of *Keter* - Crown and *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty. The month of *Nisan* is the new year for *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty because of Passover which occurs during this month. The month is governed by the Hebrew letter ה - *Heh*, the letter of *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty and belongs to the Tribe of Judah for the same reason. The three Hebrew words of the line, in the poem, *Rosh* - Head, *Moed* - Holy-

day and *Nisaita* - You Ennobled, all allude directly to the *Sephiroth* of *Keter* - Crown and *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty.

The third line of the poem introduces Abraham, calling him the *Ezrach* - 'Citizen'. *Ezrach* - may also translate as 'Easterner', or 'The one for whom the sun shines', alluding to the revelation of secrets and mysteries. Here we also find an allusion to the virtual *Sephirah* of *Da'at* - Knowing is alluded to. As the five droplets of *Hasadim* - Loving-kindnesses flow upward, as reflected light, thorough the *Sephiroth* of *Netzach* - Victory, *Tiffereth* - Glory, *Chesed* - Loving-kindness, *Chokhma* - Wisdom through *Keter* - Crown, they unite all the upper *Sephiroth* to pour light into the worlds below, light that reveals the secret essences of things. This is light that reveals things as they are supposed to look.

It was Abraham who made the first covenant in the flesh of his body with God; at the point of the connection of *Da'at* - Knowing where male and female join in intimate knowing. It is therefore to Abraham that the first revelation of the mysteries is freely given. Abraham is given the *Sefer Yetzirah* - Book of Formation. He was the first real citizen, because he was the first to be given all the paperwork, so to speak, the blueprints for the world.

The second verse continues with the theme of Abraham. It refers to God knocking at Abraham's door on the third day after his circumcision. The second line describes Abraham's treatment of the three strangers/angels upon whom he waited. The poet uses the word, 'sparks' as a euphemism for angels. The third line alludes to the bullock he slaughtered in honor of the guests, whose sacrifice was mirrored in the Temple sacrifice later initiated for the first day of Passover.

The first word in the stanza translates as 'his door'. Now, considering how the text of Genesis has Abraham living in a tent, the poet's use of a door as a metaphor begs the question, why?

The second word on the line translates as 'You knocked at'. The use of the word, knocked at, solves the riddle posed by the previous use of the word, door as will be explained.

In Hebrew the word for 'door', is דלת - *Deleth*. As was discussed earlier before we ate the *Afikomen*, in *Tzafon*, the twelfth *Siman* - Station, the Hebrew letter דלת - *Daleth* translates as 'neediness', 'poverty' and 'want', it also has the opposite meaning; it may be translated as 'elevation', 'being drawn upward' and 'raised'. It also translates as 'door'. The 'door' explains and encompasses all of the other meanings. A door swings this way and that. It may be open or shut. It may be a strong barrier or a weak one.

Abraham was 99 years old when he circumcised himself. On the third day after the circumcision he was quite sick. Sickness is an example of the Hebrew letter דלת - *Daleth* translating as 'neediness', 'poverty' and 'want'; swinging this way and that, sickness is all of those things.

There is yet another layer of meaning to the Hebrew word for 'his door', דלת - *D'latav*. According to the kabbalistic reading of the text, God's visit to Abraham is meant to teach all the mysteries surrounding the *Mitzvah* - Commandment to visit the sick. Sickness comes about through damage to the Hebrew letter ך - *Yod*, in the

Tetragrammatron, the four lettered name of God, *YHVH* directly associated with the soul of the sick person.

Written out in full, the Hebrew letter/word יוד consist of three letters, י - *Yod*, ו - *Vav* and ד - *Daleth*. When a person is sick the three letters of the יוד - *Yod*, are overturned. The new word now reads, דוי - *D'voy*- Sickness.

## דלתיו דלת~יו יו~דלת יוד~לת

A look at the first word of the stanza, דלתיו - *D'latai*, shows how the poet integrated the kabbalistic understanding of Abraham's sickness in the word. There is the דלת - *Daleth* - 'Door', at which God knocked. Then there are the two Hebrew letters, ו - *Vav* and יוד - *Yod*, used as a suffix to make the word read, 'His door'. In fact the word, דלתיו - *D'latai*, has a damaged י - *Yod* in it. The דלת - *Daleth* should be placed after the letters, ו - *Vav* and יוד - *Yod*, to read a healthy יוד - *Yod*, ו - *Vav* and *Daleth*. Instead it reads backwards, with the דלת - *Daleth* coming at the beginning of the word and the ו - *Vav* and יוד - *Yod* at the end. No wonder Abraham is feeling poorly.

Then, says the poet, God knocked at his door. The Hebrew word for knocking is, דפק - *Defek*. All the mysteries of healing are hidden in the letters and vowels of the word, Knock - דפק - *Defek*, because the דפק - *Defek* is the pulse. A healthy person's pulse is different from a sick person's pulse. Almost the first thing the doctor will check is the pulse of his patient. The vowels in the word for knocking, דפק - *Defek*, chosen by the poet in this stanza are the vowels *OO*, *AA*, *OO*, in the word, דפקת - *Dofakto*. Abraham, by performing the circumcision in a completely self-sacrificing manner generated an imbalance in the *Sephiroth of Keter*- Crown and *Chokhma* - Wisdom. The vowels, *Komatz* - *OO* and *Patach* - *AA* represent the *Sephiroth of Keter* - Crown and *Chokhma* - Wisdom, respectively. The damage to *Keter*- Crown refers to the revelation brought about by the circumcision itself exposing the *Keter* - Crown of the flesh. The disturbance, the inundation of divine light spread to disturb *Chokhma* - Wisdom, because that is where Life force in the pulse is contained. The message among others, is that a *Mitzvah* - Commandment performed in a totally dedicated way may result in sickness, just as a misdeed may cause sickness. A fuller exposition of these ideas can be found in the Writings of the Ari - Lurianic Kabbalah. (*Ta'amei Hamitzvot*, *Likutei Torah - Vayera*) Feeling the pulse and becoming sensitive to the pattern of the pulse informs the doctor which vowels - pulses require healing or alignment. By knocking on Abraham's door; realigning the דפק - *Defek* - Pulse, God healed the דלת - *Deleth* - Door in Abraham.

The third stanza describes the destruction of Sodom and the cities occupying the land where the Dead Sea is now. This includes the rescue of Abraham's nephew Lot who carries the seed of the Messiah.

The fourth stanza is devoted in its entirety to the Slaying of the Firstborn.

The fifth stanza discusses the Jews and their relationship with the Land of Israel.

The sixth stanza examines the destruction of the Jewish Kingdoms and their

subsequent exile into Babylon.

The seventh, final stanza introduces Queen Esther as *Hadassah* - Myrtle, the personification of *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty, and her struggle to bring down Amalek the *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty of the dark side, the side of the *Klippoth* - Husks, representing the Original Serpent in the story of Adam and Eve.

The Roman Empire - Western Civilization - Christianity receive fair warning in the third line of the final stanza. The last line invokes the *Gilyu Shechinah* - Divine Revelation of the original Passover night, and the end of things is once again embedded firmly in their beginning.

The text in English:

**And so tell them it is an Offering  
for Passover**

**1.**

**You wondrously juxtapose the intensity of Your might against Passover**

**To preside over every festival and holiday You ennoble the rite of Passover**

**Revealing to the first citizen the secrets of midnight on Passover**

**And so tell them it's an offering for Passover**

**2.**

**In the heat of the day You knocked at his tent's door on Passover  
While to the angels sparking he fed Matzah cakes and more on Passover  
To cattle running as for a bullock of the Temple he sent for on Passover  
And so tell them it's an offering for Passover**

**וְאָמַרְתֶּם זִבְחַ פֶּסַח**

אִמְצָן גְּבוּרוֹתֶיךָ הַפְּלֵאתָ בְּפֶסַח, בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל מוֹעֲדוֹת נִשְׂאתָ פֶסַח, גְּלִיתָ לְאַזְרוּחֵי חַצוֹת לַיֵּל פֶּסַח, וְאָמַרְתֶּם זִבְחַ פֶּסַח.

דִּלְתִּיו דְּפַקְתָּ כּוֹחַ הַיּוֹם בְּפֶסַח, הִסְעִיד נּוֹצֵצִים עֲגוֹת מַצּוֹת בְּפֶסַח, וְאֵל הַבְּקָר רַץ יָזַכְרָה לְשׁוֹר עֶרְךָ פֶּסַח, וְאָמַרְתֶּם זִבְחַ פֶּסַח.

וְעַמּוֹ סְדוּמִים וְלִהְטוּ בְּאֵשׁ בְּפֶסַח, חֲלִץ לֹט מֵהֶם, וּמַצּוֹת אֶפֶה בְּקִץ פֶּסַח, טֹאטְאָתְךָ אֲדַמַּת מִיָּד וְנָף בְּעֶרְךָ בְּפֶסַח, וְאָמַרְתֶּם זִבְחַ פֶּסַח.

יְהִי, רֹאשׁ כָּל אוֹן מַחְצֵת בְּלֵיל שְׁמוֹר פֶּסַח, כְּבִיר, עַל בֶּן בְּכוֹר פֶּסַח בְּדָם פֶּסַח, לְבַלְתִּי תֵת מִשְׁחִית לְבֵא בַפֶּתַח בְּפֶסַח, וְאָמַרְתֶּם זִבְחַ פֶּסַח.

מִסְגֵּרַת סִגְרָה בְּעֵתוֹתֵי פֶסַח, נִשְׁמְדָה מִדִּין בְּצִלְלֵי שְׁעוֹרֵי עֲמֵר פֶּסַח, שְׂרָפוּ מִשְׁמַנֵּי פוֹל וְלֹד בִּיקֵד יָקוּד פֶּסַח, וְאָמַרְתֶּם זִבְחַ פֶּסַח.

עוֹד הַיּוֹם בְּנֹב לְעֲמוּד, עַד גְּעָה עוֹנֵת פֶּסַח, פֶּסַח יָד כְּתֻבָּה לְקַעֲקַע צוֹל בְּפֶסַח, צִפָּה הַצִּפִּית עֲרוּךְ הַשְּׁלֶחֶן, בְּפֶסַח, וְאָמַרְתֶּם זִבְחַ פֶּסַח.

קָהַל כְּנֶסֶה הִדְסָה צוּם לְשֵׁלֶשׁ בְּפֶסַח, רֹאשׁ מִבֵּית רָשָׁע מַחְצֵת בְּעֵץ חֲמִשִּׁים בְּפֶסַח, שְׁתֵּי אֵלֶּה רִגְעוּ, תְּבִיאָה לְעוֹצֵיט בְּפֶסַח, תַּעֲזוּ יָדָךְ וְתִרְוֹם יְמִינְךָ, כְּלִיל הַתְּקַדֵּשׁ חַג פֶּסַח, וְאָמַרְתֶּם זִבְחַ פֶּסַח.

3.

Consumed by wrath the Sodomites blazed in the fire-brand of Passover  
Lot saved from them baking Matzah during time's last stand on Passover  
Sweeping Moph and Noph in Your passing from the land on Passover  
And so tell them it's an offering for Passover

4.

Oh Lord! You crushed firstborn in the night you await for Passover  
Almighty, You skipped my firstborn during Your first great Passover  
Not to allow the destroyer to gain entry into my gate on Passover  
And so tell them it's an offering for Passover

5.

Jericho the city besieged, surrounded and razed on Passover  
Midian with a bushel of barley awed, smashed and dazed on Passover  
The Assyrians of Pul and Lud, routed, confused, and crazed on Passover  
And so tell them it's an offering for Passover

6.

Sennacherib's army overlooking Your Temple encamps at the incline of  
Passover  
The hand writes lines on the Babylonian wall to extirpate their line on  
Passover  
With guard, watches and lookouts alert at the banquet they recline all at  
Passover  
And so tell them it's an offering for Passover

7.

Assembled by the myrtle fasting three days the whole congregation on  
Passover  
The House of Evil's head on a fifty foot gallows hanging in celebration of  
Passover  
Two will You bring to pass in a flash upon Roman Empire nation on  
Passover  
Empower Your right hand let it be prevail in the night of sanctification  
on Passover  
And so tell them it's an offering for Passover



**KI LO NAEH KI LO YAEH - IT SUITS HIM, IT FITS HIM**

The authorship of this poem, together with the following two poems, is unknown. This poem first appears in the 13th century Siddur - Prayer Book - Etz Chaim, used by Yaacov b. Yehuda, Rabbi of Londres, (London), England. Its place in the Haggadah is attributable to the fact that its themes match those of *Nirtzah* - It Has All Been Desired. The connections, though, are not obvious or straightforward because the poem is filled with complexities. Unlike the earlier liturgical poems, this poet does use the Hebrew letter, ט - *Samech*.

The poem has three primary elements. The first, introductory element is its title: 'It suits Him, it fits Him.' The phrase reappears throughout the poem to close each refrain. Referring to God in the third person, the poet suggests that whatever character God dons, it suits Him like a well designed and appropriate suit of clothing. Of course, the poet's first assumption is that the reader understands the concept of God dressed in clothing. The poet's second assumption is that it is permissible to express an opinion as to whether God's clothing is well suited or ill. Both assumptions are based on Midrashic precedents as will be explained.

The second element of the poem is the acrostic triplet. The author of this poem solves the problem of Hebrew acrostics by dividing the Hebrew alphabet of 22 letters into 8 stanzas. The final letter, ט - *Tav*, is repeated three times to complete the rhythmic phrasing. The triplet refers first to a remarkable aspect of God's sovereignty; second, to a sympathetic aspect of God's essence; and third, to the fact that either God's angels or His Jewish People are always reminding Him of the third element of the poem

The third element of the poem is a chorus: 'To You and to You. To You for to You. To You only to You. To You, Adonai, belongs all Majesty.' The word 'You', referring to God repeats seven times.

To explain these apparently disparate elements it is first necessary to examine the idea of majesty or sovereignty in Kabbalah. The tenth, last and lowest of the *Sephiroth* is the *Sephirah* of *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty. It is last and lowest because it receives from all *Sephiroth* above it. In Kabbalistic terms, *Sephirah* of *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty is therefore feminine to all higher *Sephiroth*, precisely because it receives from them all. Even though all authority invested in an individual citizen derives from the authority invested by the people in their sovereign, nevertheless, in physical terms the king receives and gives nothing. In the Kabbalah, giving and receiving are usually designated masculine and feminine activities respectively. Hence, the most feminine or receptive or passive of the *Sephiroth* is the *Sephirah* of *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty. Why is the sovereign feminine or passive or receptive? Because, while sovereignty can be claimed on behalf of someone or something or somewhere, it can only be bestowed by someone other than the claimant. A king does not become king because he claims the

throne but because others crown him king and bow to him. Unless sovereignty is acknowledged by others, a person may claim and proclaim it in vain.

We, the Jewish People were the first to proclaim God King of the World, when we said, (Exodus 15:18) 'Adonai will reign forever'. The Midrash notes, (Leviticus Rabba 2:4)

R. Abin gave the example of a King who owned a favorite robe and was constantly reminding a servant to air it and fold it properly.

'Your majesty owns so many royal robes,' asked the servant one day.

'Why do you only remind me to care for this one?'

'Because this is the robe I wore to my coronation,' answered the king.

So, Moses asked of the Holy blessed One, 'Master of the universe, You have seventy authentic nations in your world, how come You command me only to convey Your instructions to one of them: 'Command the Jewish People': 'Tell the Jewish People?'

'They crowned me first at the Red Sea when they said to me, 'Adonai will reign forever'.'

The Midrashic idea expressed here is that without our proclaiming God King of the World there would be something missing in His sovereignty. That by donning the mantle of sovereignty God, as it were, makes Himself vulnerable. For, as has been stated, sovereignty cannot be claimed, it has to be bestowed. But what of the idea, often repeated in Jewish liturgy that God was King before the world came into being and needs nothing from us? The idea of God as sovereign regardless of human existence is also addressed in the Midrash. (Exodus Rabba 3:1):

(Psalms 93) Your throne was prepared from when, You have been forever.

R. Berachiah said in the name of R. Abuhu: Even though You are eternal, God, Your throne was not established and You were unknown in Your own world until Your children sang the Song of the Sea. That's why it says: 'Your throne was prepared from When'. Like a king who went to war and won the war. His subjects then proclaimed him emperor. 'Until now,' they said to him. 'You were a king, but now we have made you an emperor.'

What is the difference between the honor of a king and that of an emperor? The king is always depicted, in his royal portrait, standing, while the emperor is depicted seated. So do the Jewish People say to God: 'In truth You were You before You created Your world. Since creating the world You are You, nevertheless, You have been standing. But, since taking a stand at the Red Sea where we sang our Song to You, beginning with the word, When, Your sovereignty has been seated and Your throne is established.'

At this point in the Seder we are moving beyond any parochial aspects of worship. All the pathways are opened. It is the revelation of *Mochin D'Gadlut* -

Large Mindedness, a time for universal worship of God. How can we maintain our feelings of uniqueness as Jewish worshippers of God, though, when at any moment we anticipate the proclamation of God as Sovereign of the whole world? This tension, between our urge to see God reveal Himself and become the sole object of worship in the world and our need to remain special is the thread informing every word in this poem. The concept of God in clothing is tied to the concept of God king of all nations. All the poem's themes are thus born in the same vortex of ideas.

The prophet Jeremiah first introduced the concept that our God, King of Israel is also King of all nations. (Jer. 10:7) The verse reads:

Who is not afraid of You, King of Nations, and it suits You thus. For among all the sages of the nations and among all their kingdoms there is no one like You.

When Jeremiah's prophet friends reproached him for enfranchising the Jewish God, for internationalizing God this way, claiming, 'Have we not referred to Him as, Israel's King, since Moses' time'? Jeremiah retorted, 'Was it not God who appointed me 'prophet to the nations'? (ibid 1:5) Of course I am bound to call Him, King of Nations.'

The Midrash, (Yalkut, Psalms 847) picks up on the prophet's introduction of the concept of 'suitability' vis-à-vis God.

R. Hanina said: Sometimes a man looks good in his clothing but his clothing isn't appropriate to him. Or his clothing may be appropriate but doesn't suit him. God, however, suits His clothing and His clothing suits Him, as it is written, (Psalms 73:1) God rules, clothed in hauteur etc. God wears seven styles of clothing.

1. In the war at the Red Sea He wore Pride, as it is written, God rules, clothed in hauteur. We know this refers to the War at the Red Sea, since the Song of the Sea (Exodus 16:1) says: I will sing to God for He is Proud and Haughty.
2. He wore different clothing at Sinai, as it is written, (Psalms ibid) God dressed, girdled in Power. This refers to the power God gave His people at Sinai, as it is written, (ibid 29:11) God empowers His people.
3. He wore different clothing for Babylon, as it is written, (Isaiah 59:17) He dressed Himself in Revenge. It refers to Babylon, as it is written, (Jer. 51:11) God has plans for the destruction of Babylon, for God's revenge is vengeance for His Sanctuary.
4. He wore different clothing for Persia-Media, as it is written, (Isaiah ibid) He dressed in charity like Armor. This refers to Persia-Media, as it is written, (Esther 8:15) Mordechai walked out of the king's presence dressed in royal clothing, blue and white with a huge gold crown, wrapped in finest linen and purple.
5. He wore different clothing for Greece, as it is written, (Isaiah ibid) He is cloaked in a coat of Jealousy. This refers to the Hasmoneans who



- cloaked themselves in jealousy to war against the Greeks.
6. He will wear different clothing for Edom-Rome, as it is written, (Isaiah 63:1) Who is this coming from Edom in (bloody) red clothing from Botztra?
  7. And God will wear different clothing in Messianic times, as it is written, (Daniel 7:9) His clothing is snow white and the hair on His head like purest wool.

The final elements in the poem push the envelope still further.

First, according to R. Shmuel of Sochatshov, (*Haggadah - Shem Mishmuel*) the poet has here introduced one of the most obscure Midrashic ideas, obscure not least because it blurs the line between Midrash and Kabbalah. The names of the protagonists in the anecdote should alert the reader to the cross-over between Midrashic and Kabbalistic terrain. (Cant. Rabbah 3:2)

R. Yochanan retold the following. R. Shimon b. Yochai asked R. Elazar b. R. Yosi, he said, 'Is it possible you heard something from your father concerning the phrase, 'the crown with which his mother crowned him'? [The phrase is part of the verse, (Song of Songs 3:11) Go out and look, O daughters of Zion, upon King Solomon and upon the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding and his heart's delight. Tr.]

'Yes,' he answered.

'What was it?'

'There was a king who loved his only daughter more than enough. He used to call her 'my daughter'. But, he could not stop embracing her until he called her, 'my sister', and he still could not stop embracing her until he called her 'mother'. So it was, God loved the Jewish People more than enough, calling them 'My daughter', as it is written, (Psalms 45) 'Listen, daughter and look.'

But He did not stop loving them until He called them, 'My sister', as it is written, (Song of Songs 5:2) 'Open for me, my sister, my lover.'

He did not stop loving them until He called them, 'My mother' as it is written, (Isaiah 51:4) Listen to Me My people, pay attention to Me My nation... Don't read the word, *Oomi* - 'my nation', but *Eemi* - 'my mother'.

R. Shimon b. Yochai rose and kissed him on his head, saying, 'Had I only come to this world to hear this explanation from your mouth it would have sufficed.'

Basing his understanding of the poem on this Midrash, R. Shmuel of Sochatshov interprets the triple phrasing of the stanza, 'To You and to You. To You for to You. To You only to You. To You, Adonai, belongs all Majesty,' thus:

1. 'To You and to You' is said by Israel, God's daughter. If the *Se-*

*phirah* of *Malkhuth* - the King or Sovereignty is feminine and without power of its own, how much more so is the princess, daughter of the king is powerless and devoid of the ability to give. Thus, we say to God, 'While You may take pride in the fact that we, the Jewish People crowned You, we acknowledge that we are in fact devoid of any power of our own. To You and to You is thus understood to mean, That power was Yours alone.

2. 'To You for to You' is said by Israel, God's sister. Even when we are blessed by God and the *Sephirah* of *Chokhma* - Wisdom is opened to us, we do not own the *Chokhma* - Wisdom. Even though for a moment one might suppose that God gave us something and we now own it outright as a gift, nevertheless we still acknowledge God as its sole owner. To You for to You is thus understood to mean, because everything is Yours, God, even those gifts You shared with us are Yours alone.

3. 'To You only to You' is said by Israel, God's mother. The simplest way to explain this concept would be to examine this process in which we are currently engaged. The Seder has reached a point where God has opened all the gates for us. Anything we want to know about God is revealed. In return we open all our gates to God and reveal that all our deepest knowledge of Him is as nothing. 'But, it was you who described Me so brilliantly and lovingly,' says God. 'You, my people, made me such beautiful things, it is as though you were my mother.' The only answer we have to give is the phrase, 'To You only to You; even when it seems we have something to give You, God, it too is Yours.

This is the path of the Hebrew letter, ק - *Kof*. The serpent straddles this path in opposition. With this song we invite a rectification even for the sin of the serpent. In the Hebrew text of this song, interwoven with refrain are the seven repetitions of the word, You. When we ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil we chased, so to speak, God out of His abode on earth and forced Him to retreat into the seventh and highest of the heavens. Our process of Exodus from Egypt, our acceptance of the Torah at Sinai, our building of the Tabernacle in the wilderness and subsequently the Temple in Jerusalem, were each in their way, a preparation and invitation for God to come down out His lofty retreat and take up residence in this lowest and most physical world.

In talking of God's majesty we must also talk of its opposite. In mentioning God clothed in pride, we must acknowledge the existence of its opposite. Chapter 3 of the Book of Genesis begins thus:

Now, the serpent was more cunning than all the other wild creatures God had made. The serpent said to the woman, 'So what if God said not to eat from all the trees of the garden?'

In fact the opening words of the serpent display the most *chutzpah* of any statement in the whole of Scripture. The Hebrew words in the question asked by the serpent are the words, כִּי אָיִן - *Ai Ki*, they are part of the chorus in our poem.

To You for to You, contains the words, לְךָ כִּי לְךָ - *L'cha Ki L'cha*

To You only to You, contains the words, לְךָ אָיִן לְךָ - *L'cha Ai L'cha*

As was said at the outset, the meaning of *Nirtzah* - It Has All Been De-

sired, means precisely that even the serpent finds its fixing in the scheme of things tonight at the Seder.

The text in English:

**It suit Him, it fits Him!**  
**Mighty in Majesty, Choice in Es-**  
**sence, His Hosts say to Him,**  
**To You and to You. To You for to**  
**You. To You only to You. To You,**  
**Adonai, belongs all Majesty.**  
**It suit Him, it fits Him!**

**Heralded in Majesty, Beautiful in**  
**Essence, His Sweetest say to Him,**  
**To You and to You. To You for to**  
**You. To You only to You. To You,**  
**Adonai, belongs all Majesty.**  
**It suit Him, it fits Him!**

**Innocent in Majesty, Faithful in**  
**Essence, His Lords say to Him,**  
**To You and to You. To You for to**  
**You. To You only to You. To You,**  
**Adonai, belongs all Majesty.**  
**It suit Him, it fits Him!**

**Singular in Majesty, Powerful in**  
**Essence, His Students say to Him,**  
**To You and to You. To You for to**  
**You. To You only to You. To You,**  
**Adonai, belongs all Majesty.**  
**It suit Him, it fits Him!**

**Ruler in Majesty, Awesome in Es-**  
**sence, His Circle say to Him,**  
**To You and to You. To You for to**  
**You. To You only to You. To You,**  
**Adonai, belongs all Majesty.**  
**It suit Him, it fits Him!**

## פִּי לֹו נֵאָה, פִּי לֹו יֵאָה

אָדיר בַּמְלוּכָה, בְּחֹזֶר פְּהֻלָּה, גְּדוּדָיו יֹאמְרוּ  
 לֹו:  
 וְיֵלֶה, לֵךְ בִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אַף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמַּמְלָכָה.  
 לֵךְ  
 פִּי לֹו נֵאָה, פִּי לֹו יֵאָה.

קְגוּל בַּמְלוּכָה, הַדּוֹר פְּהֻלָּה, וְתִיקְוֵי יֹאמְרוּ  
 לֹו:  
 וְיֵלֶה, לֵךְ בִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אַף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמַּמְלָכָה.  
 לֵךְ  
 פִּי לֹו נֵאָה, פִּי לֹו יֵאָה.

זְכָאֵי בַמְלוּכָה, חֶסֶד פְּהֻלָּה, טַפְסְרֵי יֹאמְרוּ  
 לֹו:  
 וְיֵלֶה, לֵךְ בִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אַף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמַּמְלָכָה.  
 לֵךְ  
 פִּי לֹו נֵאָה, פִּי לֹו יֵאָה.

יְחִיד בַּמְלוּכָה, כְּבִיר פְּהֻלָּה, לְמוֹדָיו יֹאמְרוּ  
 לֹו:  
 וְיֵלֶה, לֵךְ בִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אַף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמַּמְלָכָה.  
 לֵךְ  
 פִּי לֹו נֵאָה, פִּי לֹו יֵאָה.

מוֹשֵׁל בַּמְלוּכָה, נוֹרָא פְּהֻלָּה, סְבִיבָיו יֹאמְרוּ  
 לֹו:  
 וְיֵלֶה, לֵךְ בִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אַף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמַּמְלָכָה.  
 לֵךְ  
 פִּי לֹו נֵאָה, פִּי לֹו יֵאָה.

עָנּוּ בַמְלוּכָה, פּוֹדֶה פְּהֻלָּה, צְדִיקָיו יֹאמְרוּ  
 לֹו:  
 וְיֵלֶה, לֵךְ בִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אַף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמַּמְלָכָה.  
 לֵךְ  
 פִּי לֹו נֵאָה, פִּי לֹו יֵאָה.

קְדוֹשׁ בַּמְלוּכָה, רְחוּם פְּהֻלָּה, שְׁנֵאָנָיו יֹאמְרוּ  
 לֹו:  
 וְיֵלֶה, לֵךְ בִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אַף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמַּמְלָכָה.  
 לֵךְ  
 פִּי לֹו נֵאָה, פִּי לֹו יֵאָה.

**Humble in Majesty, Redeemer in  
Essence, His Saints say to Him,  
To You and to You. To You for to  
You. To You only to You. To You,  
Adonai, belongs all Majesty.  
It suit Him, it fits Him!**

תְּקוּיָהּ בְּמַלְאָכָהּ, תּוֹמַדְךָ כְּהַלְלָהּ, תְּמַיְמִיו יֹאמְרוּ  
לוֹ:  
וְלָךְ, לָךְ, כִּי לָךְ, לָךְ אֵף לָךְ, לָךְ יְיָ הַמְּמַלְכָה.  
לָךְ  
כִּי לֹא נִצָּאת, כִּי לֹא יָאֵה.

**Holy in Majesty, Merciful in Essence, His Angels say to Him,  
To You and to You. To You for to You. To You only to You. To You,  
Adonai, belongs all Majesty.  
It suit Him, it fits Him!**

**Bold in Majesty, Supportive in Essence, His Faithful say to Him,  
To You and to You. To You for to You. To You only to You. To You,  
Adonai, belongs all Majesty.  
It suit Him, it fits Him!**



**ADIR HU - MIGHTY IS HE**

The author of this hymn is unknown. It has appeared in all Ashkenazic versions of the Haggadah since the 14th century and is part of the Festival liturgy according to the rites of the Avignon Siddur. It has long been the custom to read this hymn in the vernacular. A German - Yiddish version of this song which first appeared in print in the 17th century *Siddur Ha'Shlah*, was included in the Seder when I was growing up. The German - Yiddish version is slightly altered from the Hebrew original.

This is the path of the Hebrew letter ג - *Gimel*. The operative word here is hurry. Soon, swiftly, in our days, hurry, says the text of the poem. As has already been stated, the path of the Hebrew letter ג - *Gimel* is one that involves hurrying. That is why the letter ג - *Gimel* was given a specialized foot. The Jewish People can hardly be accused of impatience, but if they feel any need to hector God into bringing about the redemption, it is expressed in this poem.

This poem is similar in construction to the previous one. There are different versions. One has eight stanzas. The first, introductory line has only one Hebrew letter, while each of the other seven have three, thus accommodating the 22 letters of the alphabet. Unlike the earlier liturgical poems, our poet uses a ם - *Samech*.

Another version has one letter on the first line, three on the second line, four

## אָדיר הוּא

אָדיר הוּא, יבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקִרְוֹב, בְּמַהֲרָה  
בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקִרְוֹב, אֵל בְּנֵה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ  
בְּקִרְוֹב.

בְּחֹזֶר הוּא, גְּדוֹל הוּא, גָּבוֹל הוּא, יבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ  
בְּקִרְוֹב, בְּמַהֲרָה בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקִרְוֹב, אֵל  
בְּנֵה, אֵל בְּנֵה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקִרְוֹב.

הַדּוֹר הוּא, וְתִיק הוּא, וְכֹאֵי הוּא, חֲסִיד הוּא,  
יבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקִרְוֹב, בְּמַהֲרָה בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ  
בְּקִרְוֹב, אֵל בְּנֵה, אֵל בְּנֵה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקִרְוֹב.

טְהוֹר הוּא, יְחִיד הוּא, כְּבִיר הוּא, לְמוֹד הוּא,  
מְלֶךְ הוּא, נוֹרָא הוּא, סְגִיב הוּא, עֲזוֹז הוּא,  
פּוֹדֶה הוּא, צְדִיק הוּא, יבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקִרְוֹב,  
בְּמַהֲרָה בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקִרְוֹב, אֵל בְּנֵה, אֵל  
בְּנֵה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקִרְוֹב.

קְדוֹשׁ הוּא, רַחוּם הוּא, שְׂשׂוּי הוּא, תְּקוּף הוּא,  
יבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקִרְוֹב, בְּמַהֲרָה בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ  
בְּקִרְוֹב, אֵל בְּנֵה, אֵל בְּנֵה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקִרְוֹב.

on the third, ten on the fourth and four  
on the fifth. This seems to be the kabbal-  
istic version.

The text in English:

**Mighty is He and will build His  
house soon.**

**Swiftly, swiftly in our days and  
soon.**

**Build, O God, build, O God, build  
Your house soon.**

**Outstanding is He, Great is He,  
Heralded is He and will build His  
house soon.**

**Swiftly, swiftly in our days and  
soon.**

**Build, O God, build, O God, build  
Your house soon.**

**Beautiful is He, Sweet is He, Inno-  
cent is He, Sainly is He and will  
build His house soon.**

**Swiftly, swiftly in our days and  
soon.**

**Build, O God, build, O God, build Your house soon.**

**Pure is He, Singular is He, Powerful is He, Practiced is He, Sovereign is  
He, Awesome is He, Exalted is He, Bold is He, Redemptive is He,  
Sainly is He and will build His house soon.**

**Swiftly, swiftly in our days and soon.**

**Build, O God, build, O God, build Your house soon.**

**Holy is He, Merciful is He, Almighty is He, Strong is He and will build  
His house soon.**

**Swiftly, swiftly in our days and soon.**

**Build, O God, build, O God, build Your house soon.**



### ECHAD MI YODEYA - WHO KNOWS ONE?

While this poem and the next have a tradition of being old, they are not found in the Haggadah before the 15th century. It deals with the nature of reality and the meaning of truth. Because it deals primarily with the theory of numbers and sets, the path of this poem is The Hebrew letter, *Zayin* - ז, the seventh letter and the number seven.

What is true? R. Kalonymos Kalmish Shapira of Piacezna wrote the following in the Warsaw Ghetto, October 1941.

The Jewish people, say repeatedly in the liturgy of the High Holy Days, 'You, God, are true.' God, blessed be He, is true, and nothing else is true. Any truth that exists in the world is only true because God commanded it so, and wanted it so. Because God, blessed be He, is true, therefore it, also, is true. We are forbidden to steal because God, who is the Truth, so commanded. And because of God's commandment, it became the truth. And when God commands the opposite, and the Jewish court declares property owner-less, making it legally owner-less and removing a person's title to his own property, then this also becomes true. When He commanded our father Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, then the binding of Isaac became the truth, and if He had not later commanded Abraham not to harm him, then the truth would have been to slaughter him...

The will of God, blessed be He, is true and right, and even when we are God forbid, tortured, we do not deliberate, God forbid. What is happening may not meet our approval, but it does not depend upon our approval, and so we do not merely dismiss the problem as unanswerable, explaining that we cannot reconcile it because it is beyond our grasp. On the contrary, we know that nothing is true or right unless it is what God wants, and commands, and does.

The author of our poem takes the idea a step further. It is being proposed that the physical and mathematical rules governing the universe at large are merely projections into reality of a meta-reality, a greater truth. That numbers are concepts with metaphorical meaning whose existence is what creates the possibility for that number to exist in the universe. In cosmology this would be known as a super-dense anthropic principle.

The first stanza states: Who knows one? I know one! One is our God, Who is in heaven and on earth.

The song specifies God in heaven and earth to differentiate between God as God and God as Creator of heaven and earth. That this is an important distinction is clear from the introduction to the book, *Tikkunay Zohar*. This passage is attributed to the Prophet Elijah, which says something about its importance, conceptually.

### אֵתְךָ מִי יוֹדֵעַ

Elijah opens this discourse with: **Master of all the worlds, that You are One.**

The Aramaic *Ribon Almin* - Master of all the worlds - translates into Hebrew as *Adon Olam*. In *Gematria* - Numerical Equivalence, *Adon Olam* equals 207, which is the identical *Gematria* - Numerical Equivalence of the words *Ein Sof*, which is a mystical name, meaning 'Without End'. The word *Ein Sof* - Without End - doesn't have only one meaning. God is also *Ein*- the No Thing. God is also *Sof*- the End. And God is also *Ein Sof*- There Is No End.

Elijah the prophet says, **That You are One, and not a mathematical One.** When we say One in reference to God, we don't mean a mathematical One that is made up of an infinity of fractions. The Oneness of God precedes numbers.

Here in the Haggadah as opposed to the *Tikkunay Zohar*, we want to take Elijah's thought one step further and suggest that by allowing Himself to be number One in the world of our reality, in the world of mathematics and physics, God is allowing number to exist at all.

The second stanza states: Who knows two? I know two! Two are the tablets of the covenant. The distinction between the tablets as stone tablets, two in number, and the commandments inscribed on them, which are ten in number, is based on a Midrash. (*Pesikta Rabati* 11) It begs the question, why did the ten commandments need to be written on two separate stones? Obviously the two tablets form a set and that is what is important. Two is a set.

The final stanza states the meaning of the number thirteen, not because the theory ends at thirteen, but because there is a certain symmetry here. 13 is the *Gematria* -Numerical Value of the Hebrew word אֶחָד -*Echad*, which translates as the number 'one'. So we are back to one again. Also,  $13+12+11+10+9+8+7+6+5+4+3+2+1=91$ . 91 is the *Gematria* -Numerical value of the word, אָמֵן -Amen. It is also the *Gematria* -Numerical value of the two names of God, *YHVH* = 26 and *ADONAI* = 65. There is another symmetry in the number 13. It puts the number seven at the center. Seven is the number of the Hebrew letter, ז -*Zayin*, whose path this poem walks.

The text in English:

**Who knows one? I know one! One is our God, Who is in heaven and on earth.**

**Who knows two? I know two! Two are the tablets of the covenant. One is our God, Who is in heaven and on earth.**

**Who knows three? I know three! Three are the patriarchs. Two are the tablets of the covenant. One is our God, Who is in heaven and on earth.**

**Who knows four? I know four! Four are the matriarchs. Three are the patriarchs. Two are the tablets of the covenant. One is our God, Who is in heaven and on earth.**

**Who knows five? I know five! Five are the Books of the Torah. Four are the patriarchs. Three are the patriarchs. Two are the tablets of the covenant. One is our God, Who is in heaven and on earth.**

**Who knows six? I know six! Six are the Orders of the Mishna. Five are the Books of the Torah. Four are the patriarchs. Three are the patriarchs. Two are the tablets of the covenant. One is our God, Who is in heaven and on earth.**

**Who knows seven? I know seven! Seven are the days of the Sabbath. Six are the Orders of the Mishna. Five are the Books of the Torah. Four are the patriarchs. Three are the patriarchs. Two are the tablets of the covenant. One is our God, Who is in heaven and on earth.**

**Who knows eight? I know eight! Eight are the days of circumcision. Seven are the days of the Sabbath. Six are the Orders of the Mishna. Five are the Books of the Torah. Four are the patriarchs. Three are the patriarchs. Two are the tablets of the covenant. One is our God, Who is in heaven and on earth.**

**Who knows nine? I know nine! Nine are the months of birthing. Eight are the days of circumcision. Seven are the days of the Sabbath. Six are the Orders of the Mishna.**

### אָחַד מִי יוֹדֵעַ?

אָחַד מִי יוֹדֵעַ? אָחַד אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: אָחַד אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֲרָץ.  
שְׁנַיִם מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שְׁנַיִם אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת  
הַבְּרִית, אָחַד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֲרָץ.

שְׁלֹשָׁה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שְׁלֹשָׁה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: שְׁלֹשָׁה  
אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אָחַד אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֲרָץ.

אַרְבַּע מִי יוֹדֵעַ? אַרְבַּע אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: אַרְבַּע  
אִמְהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית,  
אָחַד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֲרָץ.

חֲמִשָּׁה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? חֲמִשָּׁה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: חֲמִשָּׁה  
חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אִמְהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת,  
שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אָחַד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים  
וּבְאֲרָץ.

שֵׁשָׁה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שֵׁשָׁה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: שֵׁשָׁה סִדְרֵי  
מִשְׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אִמְהוֹת,  
שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אָחַד  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֲרָץ.

שִׁבְעָה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שִׁבְעָה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: שִׁבְעָה יְמֵי  
שְׁפִתָּא, שֵׁשָׁה סִדְרֵי מִשְׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי  
תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אִמְהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי  
לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אָחַד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֲרָץ.

שְׁמוֹנֶה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שְׁמוֹנֶה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: שְׁמוֹנֶה  
יְמֵי מִילָה, שִׁבְעָה יְמֵי שְׁפִתָּא, שֵׁשָׁה סִדְרֵי  
מִשְׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אִמְהוֹת,  
שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אָחַד  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֲרָץ.

תְּשַׁעָה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? תְּשַׁעָה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: תְּשַׁעָה  
יְרֵחֵי לְלֵיל, שְׁמוֹנֶה יְמֵי מִילָה, שִׁבְעָה יְמֵי  
שְׁפִתָּא, שֵׁשָׁה סִדְרֵי מִשְׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי  
תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אִמְהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי  
לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אָחַד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֲרָץ.

עֶשְׂרֵה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? עֶשְׂרֵה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: עֶשְׂרֵה  
דְּבָרָא, תְּשַׁעָה יְרֵחֵי לְלֵיל, שְׁמוֹנֶה יְמֵי מִילָה,  
שִׁבְעָה יְמֵי שְׁפִתָּא, שֵׁשָׁה סִדְרֵי מִשְׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה



חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלשה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

אחד עשר מי יודע? אחד עשר אני יודע: אחד עשר כוכביא, עשרה דבריא, תשעה ירחי לנה, שמונה ימי מילה, שבעה ימי שפתיא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלשה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

שנים עשר מי יודע? שנים עשר אני יודע: שנים עשר שבטיא, אחד עשר כוכביא, עשרה דבריא, תשעה ירחי לנה, שמונה ימי מילה, שבעה ימי שפתיא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלשה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

שלשה עשר מי יודע? שלשה עשר אני יודע: שלשה עשר מדעיא, שנים עשר שבטיא, אחד עשר כוכביא, עשרה דבריא, תשעה ירחי לנה, שמונה ימי מילה, שבעה ימי שפתיא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלשה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

the Sabbath. Six are the Orders of the Mishna. Five are the Books of the Torah. Four are the matriarchs. Three are the patriarchs. Two are the tablets of the covenant. One is our God, Who is in heaven and on earth.

Who knows twelve? I know twelve! Twelve are the tribes. Eleven are the stars (in Joseph's dream). Ten are the Commandments. Nine are the months of birthing. Eight are the days of circumcision. Seven are the days of the Sabbath. Six are the Orders of the Mishna. Five are the Books of the Torah. Four are the matriarchs. Three are the patriarchs. Two are the tablets of the covenant. One is our God, Who is in heaven and on earth.

Who knows thirteen? I know thirteen! Thirteen are the Measures (of God's compassion). Twelve are the tribes. Eleven are the stars (in Joseph's dream). Ten are the Commandments. Nine are the months of birthing. Eight are the days of circumcision. Seven are the days of the

Five are the Books of the Torah. Four are the matriarchs. Three are the patriarchs. Two are the tablets of the covenant. One is our God, Who is in heaven and on earth.

Who knows ten? I know ten! Ten are the Commandments. Nine are the months of birthing. Eight are the days of circumcision. Seven are the days of the Sabbath. Six are the Orders of the Mishna. Five are the Books of the Torah. Four are the matriarchs. Three are the patriarchs. Two are the tablets of the covenant. One is our God, Who is in heaven and on earth.

Who knows eleven? I know eleven! Eleven are the stars (in Joseph's dream). Ten are the Commandments. Nine are the months of birthing. Eight are the days of circumcision. Seven are the days of

**Sabbath. Six are the Orders of the Mishna. Five are the Books of the Torah. Four are the matriarchs. Three are the patriarchs. Two are the tablets of the covenant. One is our God, Who is in heaven and on earth.**



### **CHAD GADYA CHAD GADYA - JUST ONE KID, JUST ONE KID**

There have been many commentaries written to this poem. That of the Vilna Gaon (1720-1797) interprets the song as a metaphor for Jewish history, while R. Jacob Emden (1697-1776) sees it as a metaphor for the various challenges and pitfalls in the life of every man. R. Chaim Yosef David Azulai, *The Chida* (1724-1806) reports (Chaim Shaul 1:28) seeing and hearing of many commentaries on this poem from some of the greatest Kabbalists of his and earlier generations. One particular Kabbalist, he does not mention by name, wrote more than ten different commentaries around it, involving the various levels of *Pardes* - Kabbalistic Exegesis.

#### **Just one kid my father bought for two Zuz.**

Who is the kid? I am the kid, of course.

Who is my father? In Kabbalistic parlance, Father always refers to the *Sephirah* of *Chokhma* - Wisdom. All blessings stem from the *Sephirah* of *Chokhma* - Wisdom, because this is the *Sephirah* of *Yesh Me'Ayin* - Something from Nothing.

What is it to bless and to be blessed? What is so special about blessing; why is it different from praying on that person's behalf? This Torah I heard from my Rebbe, R. Shlomo Carlebach. When I pray for someone I am asking God to bless that person. It may be with health, or with prosperity or to find their soul-mate or to succeed in some endeavor, etc. The prayer I utter is not conditional. I make my request to God and leave the result to Him. It is different when I give someone my blessing. When I bless someone I am saying to God, I cannot continue living like this unless the blessing I give this person is fulfilled. When I bless someone I am putting my life on the line for them. That is what my blessing means, it is a loud statement tying me to the person I am blessing in a bond of responsiveness. I cannot be happy with my prosperity unless the person I have blessed will also be prosperous. When I bless someone, I am willing to go to the end of the world for them.

The Talmud, (*Chagigah* 9b), records the following dialogue.

B. Heheh asked Hillel, 'Why is the following verse so repetitious? The verse, (Malachi 3:18) says:

'Then You will turn and distinguish among the saintly and the wicked, between those who worship God and those who do

not worship Him.'

Surely the saint is he who worships God and the wicked is he who does not; why repeat it?'

Hillel answered. 'No. The phrase, 'Those who worship God and those who do not worship Him,' in the verse above, both refer to saintly people. But you cannot compare someone who studies his chapter one hundred times to someone who does so one hundred and one times.'

B. Heheh said. 'Surely, for the sake of a single repetition the Torah is not going to include him among those who do not worship God?'

Hillel retorted, 'Absolutely! Go check it out for yourself in the donkey market. See what they charge you for carrying a package: Ten Parsangs - One Zuz. Eleven Parsangs - Two Zuz!'

That is the meaning of the metaphor used in the song: That my Father bought with two Zuz. The two Zuz represent the blessing, the selflessness my 'father' was happy to give me. Two Zuz, in Talmudic terms are an order of magnitude, a quantum leap beyond One Zuz. All the difference in the world. There's no comparison at all between them. They are the willingness to put the effort into the blessing to make it come true.

I am the kid purchased with Two Zuz.

#### **Now comes the cat and devours the kid.**

Who or what is the cat?

The Talmud (Berachoth 56b) has a section on the interpretation of dream symbols.

If someone dreams he has seen a cat, whether the dream is a good omen or bad one depends on the local vernacular word for cat. Some call cats, *Shunra*, others pronounce it *Shinra*. If he lives in a place where cats are called *Shunra*, it is a good dream, because the cat in the dream is merely a mnemonic of the word *Shunra*. The word, *Shunra* comprises two words, *Shirah Noeh* - Beautiful Song. So it is a good dream.

If the local slang for cat is, *Shinra*, it is a bad dream. *Shinra* comprises two words, *Shinui Ra* - Change for the Worse. So it is a bad dream.

Our Haggadah has the word *Shunra* to describe the cat that devoured our kid. How does a beautiful song devour the blessing in our *Chokhma* - Wisdom?

All singing stems from the *Sephirah* of *Binah* - Understanding. Let us think of these two components, then, the kid and the cat, the *Sephiroth* of *Chokhma* - Wisdom and *Binah* - Understanding as right brain hemisphere and left brain hemisphere. There is a tendency on the part of the left hemisphere to consume and subsume the creativity of the right hemisphere. The result may be, Beautiful Song, but the blessing and infinite creativity in our *Chokhma* - Wis-

dom consciousness may have been devoured.

Instead of acting as the conduit for the blessing of *Chokhma* -Wisdom to flow into the world of my soul, *Binah* -Understanding attempts to hang on to the blessing, to retain, to encompass, to enclose and constrain the infinite creative, life-force flowing into the world from *Chokhma* -Wisdom. Instead of balance, instead of my masculine and feminine sides flowing back and forth in sympathy, as and when necessary, instead there is an effort to dominate and supersede.

**Now comes the dog and bites the cat.**

What is the dog? According to the basic teachings of Lurianic Kabbalah (*Likutei Torah*, Psalms 18) the dog represents the essence of longing. To understand the importance of longing, a word must be said about the concept of *Tzimtzum* - Divine Constriction. (Of necessity it will be brief and therefore, probably insufficient.)

In order for there to be space in which the physical world we inhabit might exist, God, so to speak, constricted His Divine Self to the sides and created a space devoid of Him, a place of darkness in which the creation of a universe devoid of infinities might happen.

One way of understanding the *Tzimtzum* - Divine Constriction is with the proposal that God has a Desire. As we know from our experience, having desire is the same as feeling an empty space inside the self. Talking of the *Tzimtzum* - Divine Constriction of God, the Kabbalists propose that God had the desire to have a desire to have a desire to have a desire and so on ad infinitum. Depending on how you look at it, God's desire is infinitely large or infinitely small. That God allowed or desired His Divine Self to have any desire at all amounts to a cosmic constriction, almost a cosmic damage to the Divine Self. God allowed Himself to have a Need. This in itself is a concept that defies understanding or explanation.

The important bit of information we take from this Kabbalistic teaching is that the place devoid of God, so to speak, the empty space in which the physical universe was brought into existence - *Creatio-Ex-Nihilo* - Something Created Out Of Nothing, is the emptiness created of God's Desire.

All desire therefore is a reflection of God's Desire.

Now, according to the teachings of the Kabbalah, there are two aspects to God's Desire. There is the Divine Desire flowing downward, representing God's Desire for the world, His Desire for you and me. This is known in Kabbalistic parlance as *Mayin Duchrin* - Positive Desire. There is another aspect, the desire flowing upward, representing the desire in the universe for Divine Desire. This is known as *Mayin Nukvin* - Negative Desire. *Mayin Duchrin* - Positive Desire, as we said, is God's Desire for you and me, so it is the purest, most impeccable, irreducible and holiest desire. *Mayin Nukvin* - Negative Desire on the other hand is mundane desire for Divine Desire, and, as such, is vulnerable to corruption.

Now, to be human is to be connected at the very core of one's existence to God's Desire. If the desire I experience in my soul has its source in God's Desire for the world, I am human. If, on the other hand, the desire I experience at the very depths of my soul has as its source only desire for Desire, I am a dog.

When the kid has been devoured by the cat, when the *Sephirah* of *Binah* -Understanding has swallowed *Chokhma* -Wisdom and the balance between the creative, intuitive and the verbal dominant is skewed, then the desire for desire, *Mayin Nukvin* - Negative Desire starts nipping at the heels of holiness and unity. The dog will take a bite out of the cat if it can.

**Now comes the stick and beats the dog.**

What is the stick? Once desire for Desire is unleashed in a person, and the dog is biting the cat, then the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil provides the wooden stick with which to beat the dog. What is knowledge of evil? It is connection to evil. All connection is in the *Sephirah* of *Yesod* -Fundament. Sexuality is the stick. Think of the stick, here in this metaphoric representation of the *Sephirah* of *Yesod* -Fundament as the spine connecting the brain with the genitals. It does not take long before a desire for Desire becomes a desire for itself. Soon the desire is experienced as a vast cosmic emptiness that must be filled again and again. This is the road to slavery with which our descent into the Exile in Egypt began. Slavery to desire is the ultimate slavery.

**Now comes the fire and burns the stick.**

What is the fire? Fire is passion. What is passion? Passion is not lust. It is not rage. Passion is not cold, calculating imperious or jealous desire. Passion is the answer to the stick in this poem, because passion is a total, body-mind-soul-heart experience. Passion brings together all the functions of the endocrinal system, hormones and other components of the blood, together with the powers of the rational mind, decisions made in the brain and the heart in conjunction with the soul to do something. Passion is the answer to all the questions raised so far. Passion demands all the bodily systems be brought into alignment in a manner consistent with worship. In fact, worship is the yardstick against which a person's passion can be measured. Here the stick representing the connection between mind and genitals is set on fire. Setting the stick on fire means kindling the *Sephiroth* through which the stick passes on its way from mind to genitals. Those *Sephiroth* are the *Sephirah* of *Da'at* - Knowledge and *Tiffereth* -Glory.

The *Sephirah* of *Da'at* - Knowledge is a synthesis of the two supernal *Sephiroth*, *Chokhma* -Wisdom and *Binah* - Understanding, also known as *Aba* and *Ima*, Father and Mother. When they come together in a way that balances them, like two lovers who cannot be separated, then they represent the inside of the *Sephirah* of *Keter* - Crown, the unKnowable.

The *Sephirah* of *Tiffereth* - Glory represents the heart. It is a synthesis of

the two *Sephiroth*, *Chesed* - Loving-kindness and *Gevurah* - Judgment. When they are in harmony and balance, then *Tiffereth* - Glory rules everything like the Sun ruling the solar system. For then, *Yesod* - Fundament is merely the Moon reflecting the Sun's light. When the fire of true, honest passion burns the stick representing the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil it turns into the Tree of Life

**Now comes the water and quenches the fire**

What is water? In the Kabbalah, water is the lower third of the human body. Nothing destroys passion as fast as the exigencies of the human body, hunger, thirst and fatigue. Next to these sensations are the emotions often accompanying them, anger, loneliness, frustration and disappointment. Depression, despair, shame and other toxic conditions all destroy and prevent passion. If evil takes root in the heart of a human, passion is its worst nightmare. Because genuine passion is worshipful and worship is holy.

Pouring water on the fire of passion is the very last resort of the self-destructive Self. It is a last resort because it may have the opposite effect. True passion, healthy human function, the ability to love and work can act as a healing medicine on all the most negative aspects of the sick personality. Instead of depression destroying passion, passion may heal depression. Instead of apathy damping and squashing enthusiasm, enthusiasm may eliminate apathy.

In our poem, though, water has quenched the fire. Passion had been extinguished. Puddles of water lie around. All the most negative aspects of the personality are exposed and untreated.

**Now comes the ox and drinks the water.**

What is the ox?

Esau represents the *Klippah* - Dark Side of Isaac, his father. Isaac represents the *Sephirah* of *Gevurah* - Judgment for his ability to restrain himself. Isaac is the holy manifestation of restraint and unwillingness - unwillingness to act contrary to the Will of God and the capacity for tremendous internal tension.

Esau manifests the same abilities in an unholy way, as rage without boundaries, mayhem and murder. Hating the saint as much as the wicked, Esau is unwilling to forgive the slightest slight.

Similarly, Ishmael represents the *Klippah* - Dark Side of Abraham, his father. He is love without boundaries, loving the perpetrator as much as the victim, and unable to withhold goodness even from the wicked. Ishmael represents the willingness to do anything, absolutely anything to fulfill one's desire.

In the *Mercava* - Celestial Chariot described by Ezekiel the prophet, (Ezekiel 1:1) the Throne of Glory is emblazoned with four faces: Lion, Eagle, Ox and Man.

Lion and Ox represent the Sephiroth of *Chesed* - Loving-kindness and

*Gevurah* - Judgment respectively. Love and Fear manifest the holy *Sephiroth*, while Lust and Rage manifest the unholy *Klippah* - Dark Side.

The ox drinking the water is the dark side of the soul stoking itself and feeding itself with more and greater toxicity, taking *Gevurah* - Judgment and dosing it with feelings of despair, depression and self-obsession and integrating them in the pursuit of rage-gratification. The result is murder, incest and rapine.

**Now comes the slaughterer and slaughters the ox.**

Who is the slaughterer? Abraham the patriarch is the first to pick up a knife to do an act of *Shechitah* - Slaughter, as it is written, (Gen 22:10) Abraham stretched out his hand and picked up the blade to slaughter his son. Slaughtering according to the Kabbalah is an act of fixing.

Abraham is the paradigm of *Chesed* - Loving-kindness. How could he bring himself to do such a thing? When loving-kindness picks up the knife to slaughter something it must be a positive act, a double negative, destroying the destroyer. Is Abraham ready to slaughter Isaac to prevent Esau coming into the world, Esau the Ox, the rage filled murderer?

Rage, says Abraham, has no place in the world of holiness, murder cannot, must not be made an act of worship, a holy act. The world has tried through the relaxation of the barriers against loving to deflect the power of rage and murder. It was thought for a time that free sex was the answer to war. Make Love not War, was a popular slogan throughout the world during the 1960s. It was an attempt by the slaughterer - *Chesed* - Loving-kindness, the paradigm of free-love, to slaughter the ox of rage.

He does not kill the ox, he slaughters it. When the slaughterer slaughters the ox he is attempting a *Tikkun* - Fixing. One way of fixing rage is to direct it at evil. Making sure that it is aimed solely at idolaters, for instance.

**Now comes the Angel of Death and slaughters the slaughterer.**

Who is the Angel of Death? The Angel of Death, Satan and the Evil Desire are one and the same thing.

Can rage be fixed, or will it turn on its fixer? In our poem we see the drama played out to its very last degree. As we observe in the world about us, murderous rage takes every kindness for weakness and every act of love as an opportunity for greater rage.

**Now comes the Holy Blessed One and slaughters the Angel of Death.**

The following quote from the *Zohar*, (Vol.I 128:b) essentially deals with issue of evil and the place it plays in our lives. The point it makes is that evil is tied to desire and desire is tied to life, thus it cannot and should not be eliminated.

R. Yitzchak b. R. Yosi, was coming from Capadocia to Lydda, when he encountered R. Yehuda. 'Assure me,' R. Yitzchak said. 'That our group, the sages of the oral law, have decided to address this matter of the Evil Desire, to rid the world of it other than the sexual desire needed for reproduction.'

'Upon your life!' replied R. Yehuda. 'The world needs the Evil Desire as much as it needs rain. For without Evil Desire there would be no joy of learning.'

When we talk of the promise to remove evil from the world, or as we do in this poem, depict God slaughtering the Angel of Death, we are asking for those elements of desire that corrupt us to be removed. The Zohar, thus continues:

What we want is to prevent it corrupting the world as it has till now, to stop it from distracting people. As it is written, (Isaiah 11:9) 'They will neither harm nor destroy anywhere on My holy mountain.'

R. Shimon said, 'My holy mountain, refers to the heart, because evil desire tends to dwell there.'

R. Eliezer said, 'A good heart is the structure of body and soul. Hence, it is written, (Deut 6:5) 'Love Adonai your God with all your heart,' because the heart is the most important thing.'

So, God slaughters the Angel of Death. Not to kill it, but to fix it. And now we have come full circle. Even the serpent is fixed. Adam and Eve may once again look at each other and be seen without fear of rejection, without loss of intimacy, without shame. They have only ever eaten from the Tree of Knowledge of Good, for this is the path of the Hebrew letter, ט - *Teth*, which is all טוב - *Tov*, Good.

The text in English:

**Just one kid, just one kid that my father bought for two Zuz.  
Just one kid, just one kid.**

**Then came the cat and devoured the kid my father bought for two Zuz.  
Just one kid, just one kid.**

**Then came the dog and bit the cat that devoured the kid my father bought for  
two Zuz.  
Just one kid, just one kid.**

**Then came the stick and beat the dog that bit the cat that devoured the kid my  
father bought for two Zuz.  
Just one kid, just one kid.**

**Then came the fire and burned the stick that beat the dog that bit the cat that**



## חַד גְּדִיָּא,

חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא  
דַּבְּרִין אַבָּא בְּתַרְי זַוּוּי, חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא

וְאַתָּא שׁוֹנְרָא, וְאַכְלָה לְגְדִיָּא, דַּבְּרִין אַבָּא  
בְּתַרְי זַוּוּי, חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא

וְאַתָּא כִּלְבָּא, וְנִשְׁפָּה לְשׁוֹנְרָא, דַּאֲכָלָה לְגְדִיָּא,  
דַּבְּרִין אַבָּא בְּתַרְי זַוּוּי, חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא

וְאַתָּא חוּטְרָא, וְהִכָּה לְכִלְבָּא, דַּנִּשְׁפָּה לְשׁוֹנְרָא,  
דַּאֲכָלָה לְגְדִיָּא, דַּבְּרִין אַבָּא בְּתַרְי זַוּוּי, חַד  
גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא

וְאַתָּא נוֹרָא, וְשָׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא, דַּהִכָּה לְכִלְבָּא,  
דַּנִּשְׁפָּה לְשׁוֹנְרָא, דַּאֲכָלָה לְגְדִיָּא, דַּבְּרִין אַבָּא  
בְּתַרְי זַוּוּי, חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא

וְאַתָּא מַיָּא, וְכַבָּה לְנוֹרָא, דַּשָּׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא,  
דַּהִכָּה לְכִלְבָּא, דַּנִּשְׁפָּה לְשׁוֹנְרָא, דַּאֲכָלָה  
לְגְדִיָּא, דַּבְּרִין אַבָּא בְּתַרְי זַוּוּי, חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד  
גְּדִיָּא

וְאַתָּא תּוֹרָא, וְשִׁתָּא לְמַיָּא, דַּכַּבָּה לְנוֹרָא,  
דַּשָּׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא, דַּהִכָּה לְכִלְבָּא, דַּנִּשְׁפָּה  
לְשׁוֹנְרָא, דַּאֲכָלָה לְגְדִיָּא, דַּבְּרִין אַבָּא בְּתַרְי  
זַוּוּי, חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא

וְאַתָּא הַשּׁוּחַט, וְשַׁחַט לְתוֹרָא, דַּשִּׁתָּא לְמַיָּא,  
דַּכַּבָּה לְנוֹרָא, דַּשָּׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא, דַּהִכָּה לְכִלְבָּא,  
דַּנִּשְׁפָּה לְשׁוֹנְרָא, דַּאֲכָלָה לְגְדִיָּא, דַּבְּרִין אַבָּא  
בְּתַרְי זַוּוּי, חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא

וְאַתָּא מַלְאָךְ הַמּוֹת, וְשַׁחַט לְשׁוּחַט, דַּשַּׁחַט  
לְתוֹרָא, דַּשִּׁתָּא לְמַיָּא, דַּכַּבָּה לְנוֹרָא, דַּשָּׂרְף  
לְחוּטְרָא, דַּהִכָּה לְכִלְבָּא, דַּנִּשְׁפָּה לְשׁוֹנְרָא,  
דַּאֲכָלָה לְגְדִיָּא, דַּבְּרִין אַבָּא בְּתַרְי זַוּוּי, חַד  
גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא

וְאַתָּא הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, וְשַׁחַט לְמַלְאָךְ  
הַמּוֹת, דַּשַּׁחַט לְשׁוּחַט, דַּשַּׁחַט לְתוֹרָא, דַּשִּׁתָּא  
לְמַיָּא, דַּכַּבָּה לְנוֹרָא, דַּשָּׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא, דַּהִכָּה  
לְכִלְבָּא, דַּנִּשְׁפָּה לְשׁוֹנְרָא, דַּאֲכָלָה לְגְדִיָּא, דַּבְּרִין  
אַבָּא בְּתַרְי זַוּוּי, חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא

devoured the kid my father bought for  
two Zuz.

Just one kid, just one kid.

Then came the water and quenched  
the fire which burned the stick that  
beat the dog that bit the cat that de-  
voured the kid my father bought for  
two Zuz.

Just one kid, just one kid.

Then came the ox and drank the water  
which quenched the fire which burned  
the stick that beat the dog that bit the  
cat that devoured the kid my father  
bought for two Zuz.

Just one kid, just one kid.

Then came the slaughterer who slaugh-  
tered the ox which drank the water  
which quenched the fire which burned  
the stick that beat the dog that bit the  
cat that devoured the kid my father  
bought for two Zuz.

Just one kid, just one kid.

Then came the Angel of Death and  
slaughtered the slaughterer who slaugh-  
tered the ox which drank the water  
which quenched the fire which burned  
the stick that beat the dog that bit the  
cat that devoured the kid my father  
bought for two Zuz.

Just one kid, just one kid.

Then came the Holy Blessed One and  
slaughtered the Angel of Death who  
slaughtered the slaughterer who slaugh-  
tered the ox which drank the water that  
quenched the fire which burned the  
stick that beat the dog that bit the cat  
that devoured the kid my father bought  
for two Zuz.

Just one kid, just one kid.

## Epilogue

### Reading the Song of Songs

This is the path of the Hebrew letter, ב -*Beth*, connecting the *Sephiroth* of *Chokhma* - Wisdom and *Chesed* - Loving-kindness.

The following is a synopsis from, 'Songs of the Soul' a commentary on the Song of Songs by R. Meir Leibish Malbin, (1809-1879) in translation by the author of the Kabbalist Haggadah.

### Song of Songs - An Overview.

The Song of Songs comprises five, clearly defined cantos, followed by a short coda. They take the form of an allegory, a riddle. It is the description of a woman, a girl who was already married to her lover, a shepherd in the wilderness. She is snatched from the bosom of her lover and dragged to the king's palace, to Solomon's domain. He tries to make her his queen, placing the royal crown upon her head. He commands an honor guard of maidens around her, the 'Daughters of Jerusalem' to wait upon her, to prevent her escaping to her lover in the wilderness. But the watch stood guard in vain, her heart is not seduced by Solomon's passion, her soul responds to his adulation with disgust, his loaf of bread and the taste of his wine nauseate her. She craves and yearns only for her shepherd. He too, cherishes the memory of their young love. He begins passing by the courtyard of the seraglio where his bride is held captive. Peering through windows, snatching a brief word with her from behind walls and lattices. She beseeches him to rescue her from that place, that prison. They leave each other signs; he marks the path for her to follow showing her how to escape and where to find him among the mountains crags. She succeeds in fleeing the king's palace to the wilderness where he is encamped. But she is always pursued by the 'Daughters of Jerusalem' her guards, who drag her, resisting spiritedly, back to Solomon's chambers.

Finally, she breaks out through the bronze gates, crashes through all barriers, smashes all the locks and severs all ties. She leaves with head held high, perfumed in musk and frankincense to join her faithful lover, on the mountain of spices.

### This is its interpretation.

This most beautiful woman whom Solomon craves and brings to his palace, is his divine soul, come down from the loftiest heights to dwell at God's command in the murkiest of depths, in Solomon's body, his 'house'. Her be-

loved, her cherished shepherd - to whom she had been married - is God, exalted lover, shepherd of all the celestial hosts, dwelling from all eternity in heaven above.

Her metaphorical imprisonment in the king's palace and his attempts at wooing her are a metaphor for the constant spiritual conflict between the soul and the emotions. They in their attempt to dominate the body, try to arrest the spirit, forcing it into compromises and covenants with the flesh, dragging the immortal soul with her attendant handmaidens, her close friends, i.e. the powers of the mind and intellect, to do its will. They try to vanquish her by conquest, forcing her to consort with him in his house, to meet his needs for sex and intimacy. They make her his partner, whether in ruling the kingdom, acquiring wealth or any of the other cravings that Solomon had.

The allegorical device of setting the daughters of Jerusalem to surround her and guard her reflects the reality of the physical body in which the various organs and glands are focused on preventing the soul escaping. They block her from metaphorically removing her shoes of clay, flex her limbs to fly away, or soar on the wings of purity and holiness to join her lover in heaven.

The description of her, like a bride bedecked, unrelentingly fervid for her shepherd lover, the companion of her youth - and he, like a bridegroom, splendid and magnificent - reflects the rejection of all corporeal cravings and material lusts that the soul of Solomon felt. She refused to accede to the emotional dictates of his urges and deeds. She was forever and only bound in total fidelity to her lover, her God, her fate and fortune. With courage, fortitude, initiative and diligence she strove to follow him, to attach herself to him.

References to the lover speaking with her from behind walls and doors, through windows and lattices, are references to the Supernal Lover who desires her, awaiting only an opportunity to pour His divine spirit upon her, longing to enlighten her with His truth. He sends her His providential word, whispering urgently through the wall i.e. the physical substance separating her from undifferentiated sanctity. Watching through the apertures and embrasures of the mind, he waits to elevate her from the lowland of mud-holes and clay pits, to heights of sanctity and divine inspiration, to transport her from straits of ugliness to the portals of hope.

When the allegory describes her escaping from the royal palace on a number of occasions, to be with her lover in the wild, it is telling us how Solomon achieved prophecy.

At those times she escaped from Solomon's palace - by which I mean, she shed her physical body, stripping away the clouds of fog and gloom, leaving the cloying attentions of the king far behind. The clouds of instinctual drives roll back, the shadows cast by the emotions disappear and we find her splendidly alone with the Great Light, amidst the glory of her lover's luminescence and its perfection pours over her.

When the metaphor describes her pursuit by the daughters of Jerusalem, who time and again chase her and drag her back to the king's chamber, it refers

to the inescapable reality of being tied to the physical bonds of life in a body. No connection with the lover can be indefinitely sustained so long as the connection with the human body has not been severed. Soon after they are united, the lovers are torn apart by the exigencies of the body and the wakening from their torpor of the daughters of Jerusalem. When God had finished speaking to Solomon, his soul was returned into captivity to the prison of its physical body, as before.

When the oracle describes her leaving Solomon's palace finally with her head held high, betrothed to her lover forever, never to return, it is referring to King Solomon's death. It is only when being gathered unto his people to lie with his fathers, that the bonds constraining her snap and the knots chafing her unravel. The trap is sprung and the soul escapes unto God, to the consort of her youth. The dust returns to the earth and the spirit unto God her giver - she is bound in a bond with the living, in eternal life and triumphant eternity.

The interpretations of the riddle reflect four historic moments in the life of King Solomon, when he achieved prophecy and G-d spoke to him, which explains the metaphor of the woman, his divine soul, escaping from his body. But after the prophetic moment was over she was returned to the flesh and once again imprisoned in it. The fifth time however, at the instant of King Solomon's death and separation, his soul fled the body forever, returning to her father's house as in her youth...

The first canto begins: (1:2) 'Let him kiss me kisses on the mouth,' ending: (2:7) 'I foreswore you O daughters of Jerusalem, not to disturb my love...'

The second canto begins: (2:8) 'The sound of my lover, He comes,' ending: (2:17) 'Til the day has blown over, turn round my love, be a gazelle...'

The third canto begins: (3:1) 'Upon my bed at night,' ending: (5:1) 'I came to my garden...'

The fourth canto begins: (5:2) 'I sleep,' ending: (5:16) 'This is my lover, this is my friend...'

The fifth canto begins: (6:1) 'Where has your lover gone?' ending: (8:7) 'Mighty waters cannot extinguish love...'

In addition there is a short coda beginning (8:8) 'We have a younger sister....' to the end of the text. The metaphor is that of a woman pleading on behalf of her younger sister. This is called the 'Song of Elef'

This explains why the text (I Kings 5:12) says of King Solomon that his songs were 'Five and one thousand,' i.e. that the Song of Songs, his composition contains five cantos and the 'Song of Elef/Thousand'

## שיר השירים

## פרק א

א שיר השירים אשר לשלמה: ב ישלני מנשיקות פיהו כי טובים דודי  
 מיני: ג לריח שמניך טובים שמן תורק שמך על-כן עלמות אהבוך:  
 ד משכני אחריך נרוצה הביאני המלך חדריו נגילה ונשמחה בך נופיכה  
 דודי מיין משרים אהבוך: ה שחורה אני ונאורה בנות ירושלם  
 כאהלי קדר פיריעות שלמה: ו אל-תראוני שאני שחרחרת ששופתני  
 השמש בניי אמי נחרו-בי שמני נטרה את-הכרמים פרמי שקי לא נטרתי:  
 ז הגידה לי שאהבה נפשי איכה תרעה איכה תרביץ בצעהרים שלמה  
 אהיה פעטיה על ערבי חבריך: ח אם-לא תדעי לך היפה בנשים צאי-לך  
 בעקבי הצאן ורעי את-גדיתיך על משכנות הרעים: ט לסתני ברכבי  
 פרעה המיתך רעיתי: י נאון לחיך בתרים צוארך בחרוזים: יא תורי זהב  
 נעשה-לך עם נקודות הכסף: יב עד-שהמלך במסבו נרדני נתן ריחו:  
 יג צרור המר | דודי לי בין שני יליו: יד אשכל הכפר | דודי לי בכרמי עין  
 גדי: טו הנך יפה רעיתי הנך יפה עיניך יונים: טז הנך יפה דודי אף  
 נעים אף-ערשנו רעננה: יז קרות בתינו ארזים רחיטנו [כהיטנו] ברותים:

## פרק ב

א אני חבצלת השרוץ שושנת העמקים: ב כשושנה בין החוחים כן רעיתי  
 בין הבנות: ג כתפוח בעצי היער כן דודי בין הבנים בצלו חמדותי וישבתי  
 ופריו מתוק לחכי: ד הביאני אל-בית היין ודגלן עלי אהבה: ה סמכוני  
 באשיות רפדוני בתפוחים כי-חולת אהבה אני: ו שמאלו תחת לראשי  
 וימינו תחבקני: ז השבעתי אתכם בנות ירושלם בצבאות או באילות  
 השדה אסתערו | ואסתעורו את-האהבה עד שתחפץ: ח קול  
 דודי הנהנה בא מדלג על-ההרים מקפץ על-הגבעות: ט דומה דודי  
 לצבי או לעפר האילים הנהנה עומד אחר פתלנו משגיה מזה-החלונות  
 מציצ מזה-החרקים: י ענה דודי ואמר לי קומי לך רעיתי יפתי ולכי-לך:  
 יא כיהנה הסתו [הסתיו] עבר הגשם חלף הלך לך: יב הנצנים נראו  
 בארץ עת הזמיר הגיע וקול התור נשמע בארצנו: יג התאנה הנטה פגיה  
 והגפנים | סמך נתנו ריח קומי לכי [לך] רעיתי יפתי ולכי-לך:  
 יד יונתי בחגגי הסלע בסתר המדרגה הראיני את-מראיך השמיעני  
 את-קולך כי-קולך ערב ומראיך נאה: טו אחו-לנו שועלים שועלים

קטנים מחבלים כרמים וכרמינו סמך: טז דודי לי ואני לו הרעה בשושנים: יז עד שיפוח היום ונסו הצללים סב המהלך דודי לצבי או לעפר האלים על-הרי בתר:

### פרק ג

א על-משכבי בלילות בקשתי את שאהבה נפשי בקשתי ולא מצאתי: ב אקומה נא ואסובבה בעיר בשוקים וברחבות אבקשה את שאהבה נפשי בקשתי ולא מצאתי: ג מצאוני השמלים הסבבים בעיר את שאהבה נפשי ראיתם: ד כמעט שעברתי מהם עד שמצאתי את שאהבה נפשי אחותי ולא ארפנו עד-שהביאתי אל-בית אמי ואל-חדר הורתי: ה השבעתי אתכם בנות ירושלם בצבאות או באילות השדה אסתערו | ואסתעורו את-האהבה עד שתחפין: ו מי זאת עלה מן-המדבר כתימרות עשן מקטרת מור ולבונה מכל אבקת רוקל: ז הנה מטתו שלשלמה ששים גברים סביב לה מגברי ישראל: ח כלם אחוזי חרב מלמדי מלחמה איש חרבו על-ירכו מפקד בלילות: ט אפריון עשה לו המלך שלמה מעצי הלבנון: י עמודיו עשה כסף רפידתו זהב מרפבו ארגמן תוכו רצוף אהבה מבנות ירושלם: יא צאינה | וראינה בנות ציון במלך שלמה בעטרה שעטרה-לו אמו ביום חתנתו וביום שמחת לבו:

### פרק ד

א הנה יפה רעיתי הנה יפה עיניך יונים מבעד לצמתך שערה כעדר העזים שגלשו מהר גלעד: ב שניך כעדר הקצובות שעלו מן-הרחצה שכלם מתאימות ושפלה אין בהם: ג כחוט השני שפתתיך ומדברך: נאווה כפלה הרמון קשתך מבעד לצמתך: ד כמגדל דויל צנארה בניו לתלפיות אלף המגן תלוי עליו כל שלטי הגבורים: ה שני שניך פשני עפרים תאומי צביה הרועים בשושנים: ו עד שיפוח היום ונסו הצללים אלך לי אל-הר המור ואל-גבעת הלבונה: ז בלך יפה רעיתי ומום אין בק: ח אתי מלבנון פלה אתי מלבנון תבואי תשורי | מראש אמנה מראש שניר וחרמון ממענות אריות מהררי גמרים: ט לבבתני אחתי כלה לבבתני באתך [באתך] מעיניך באתך ענק מצורניך: י מה-יפן דריך אחתי כלה מה-טבו דריך מיין וריח שמנה מכל-בשמים: יא נפת תטפנה שפתותיך כלה רבש וחלב תחת לשונך וריח שלמתך כריח לבנון: יב גן | נעיל אחתי כלה גל נעיל מעין חתום: יג שלתיך פרבס רמונים עם פרי מגדים כפרים עם-נרדים: יד גרד | וכרכם קנה וקנמון עם כל-עצי לבונה מך ואהלות עם כל-ראשי בשמים: טו מעין גנים באר מים חיים ונזלים מן-לבנון: טז עורי צפון ובואי תימן הפיחי גני ילן

בְּשִׁמּוֹ יבֹא דודי לִגְנוֹ וַיֹּאכַל פֶּרִי מִגְדֵּיָו:

### פרק ה

א בָּאתִי לִגְנֵי אַחֲתִי כִּלְהָ אֶרְתִּי מוֹרֵי עֵס־בְּשָׂמִי אֶכְלֹתִי יַעֲרִי עֵס־דְּבָשִׁי  
שָׁתִּיתִי יַיִנִי עִם־חֶלְבִי אֶכְלֶנּוּ רֵעִים שְׁתֵּנוּ וְשָׁכְרוּ דוֹדִים: ב אֲנִי יִשְׁנֶה וְלִבִּי  
עָר קוֹל | דוֹדִי דוֹפֵק פֶּתַח־לִי אַחֲתִי רַעִיתִי יוֹנְתִי תַמְתִּי שְׂרָאשִׁי נִמְלֵא־טָל  
קוֹצוֹתֵי רְסִיסֵי לֵילָה: ג פִּשְׁטָתִי אֶת־כִּתְנֹתַי אֵיכָכָה אֶלְבָּשָׁה רִחְצָתִי  
אֶת־רַגְלֵי אֵיכָכָה אֶטְנַפֵּם: ד דוֹדִי שֶׁלַח יָדוֹ מִן־הַחֹר וּמַעֲי הִמּוֹ עָלָיו:  
ה קִמְתִּי אֲנִי לִפְתָּח לְדוֹדִי וַיִּבֵּי נְטִפּוֹ־מֹר וְאַצְבָּעֵתִי מִזֶּר עֵבֶר עַל כַּפּוֹת  
הַמְנַעוּל: ו פִּתַחְתִּי אֲנִי לְדוֹדִי וְדוֹדִי תִמַּק עָבֶר נִפְשִׁי יֵצֵאָה בְּדַבְרוֹ  
בְּקִשְׁתִּיהוּ וְלֹא מִצָּאתִיהוּ קִרְאתִיו וְלֹא עָנָנִי: ז מִצָּאֵנִי הַשְּׂמָרִים הַסֹּבְבִים  
בְּעֵיר הַכּוֹנֵנִי פָּצְעוּנִי נִשְׂאוּ אֶת־רִדְדִי מִעֲלֵי שְׂמָרֵי הַחֲמוֹת: ח הַשְּׂבַעֲתִי  
אֲתַכֶּם בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם אִם־תִּמְצְאוּ אֶת־דוֹדִי מִה־תִּגְדוּ לוֹ שְׂחֹלֶת אֶהְבֶּה  
אֲנִי: ט מִה־דוֹדֶךָ מִלֹּד תִּיפֶה בְּנָשִׁים מִה־דוֹדֶךָ מִלֹּד שְׂכָכָה הַשְּׂבַעֲתָנוּ:  
י דוֹדִי צֵה וְאַדּוֹם דְּגוּל מִרְבֵּבָה: יא רֵאשׁוּן כְּתָם פִּזוֹ קוֹצוֹתָיו תִּלְתְּלִים  
שְׂחֹרוֹת כְּעוֹרֶב: יב עֵינָיו כִּיּוֹנִים עַל־אַפְיָקִי מִים רִחְצוֹת בְּחֶלֶב לְשׁוֹת  
עַל־מִלְּאָת: יג לְחִיו כְּעָרוּגַת הַבֶּשֶׂם מִגְדֵּלוֹת מְרַקְחִים שְׂפֹתָיו שׁוֹשְׁבִים  
נְטִפּוֹת מִזֶּר עֵבֶר: יד יָדָיו גְּלִילֵי זָהָב מִמְּלֵאִים בְּתַרְשִׁישׁ מַעֲוֵי עֲשֵׂת שֶׁן  
מִעֲלֶפֶת סִפְרִים: טו שׁוֹקִיו עֲמוּדֵי שֶׁשׁ מִיִּסְדִּים עַל־אֲדָנֶי־פֶן מֵרֵאשׁוּ  
כִּלְבָּנוֹן בְּחֹר כְּאַרְזִים: טז חֲפוֹ מִמְתָּקִים וְכֹל מִמְחֲדִים זֶה דוֹדִי וְזֶה רֵעִי  
בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם:

### פרק ו

א אֲנִי הִלַּךְ דוֹדֶךָ תִּיפֶה בְּנָשִׁים אֲנִי פָנָה דוֹדֶךָ וּנְבַקְשֶׁנוּ עִמָּךְ: ב דוֹדִי יָבֵר  
לִגְנוֹ לְעָרוּגוֹת הַבֶּשֶׂם לְרַעוֹת בְּגָזִים וְלִלְקֹט שׁוֹשְׁבִים: ג אֲנִי לְדוֹדִי וְדוֹדִי לִי  
הִרְעָה בְּשׁוֹשְׁבִים: ד יָפֶה אֶת רַעִיתִי כְּתַרְצָה נְאוּהָ כִּירוּשָׁלַם אֵימָה  
כְּנִדְגָלוֹת: ה הִסְבִּי עֵינָיו מִנְגְדֵי שֶׁהֵם הִרְהִיבֵנִי שְׂעָרְךָ כְּעֵדֶר הָעוֹזִים שְׂגֵלְשׁוּ  
מִן־הַגְּלֵעָד: ו שְׂנִיף כְּעֵדֶר הַרְחֵלִים שְׂעָלוּ מִן־הַרְחֵצָה שְׂכָלֶם מֵתֵאִמּוֹת  
וְשִׁכְלָה אֵין בָּהֶם: ז כְּפִלַח הַרְמוֹן רִקְתָּךְ מִבְּעַד לְצִמְתָּךְ: ח שְׂשִׁים הֵמָּה  
מְלָכוֹת וְשִׁמְנִים פִּילִגְשִׁים וְעֵלְמוֹת אֵין מִסְפָּר: ט אַחַת הִיא יוֹנְתִי תַמְתִּי  
אַחַת הִיא לְאֵמָה בְּרָה הִיא לְיֹלְדָתָהּ רְאוּהָ בְנוֹת וַיִּאֲשְׁרוּהָ מְלָכוֹת  
וּפִילִגְשִׁים וַיְהַלְלוּהָ: י מִי־זֹאת הַנְּשִׁקְפָה כְּמוֹ־שֶׁחַר יָפֶה כִּלְבָּנָה בְּרָה  
כְּחֵמָה אֵימָה כְּנִדְגָלוֹת: יא אֶל־גִּנַּת אֲגוֹז יָרְדְתִי לְרֵאוֹת בְּאִפֵּי הַנַּחַל  
לְרֵאוֹת הַפְּרִיחָה הַגֶּפֶן הַנְּצוּ הַרְמָנִים: יב לֹא יָדַעְתִּי נִפְשִׁי שְׂמֵתִנִי מִרְכַּבּוֹת  
עֲמִי־נְדִיב:

## פרק ז

א שובי שובי השולמית שובי שובי ונחזה-בה מהתחזו בשולמית  
 כמחלת המחנים: ב מה-יפו פעמיו בנעלים בת-נדיב חמוקי זרכיו כמו  
 חלאים מצשה ידי אמן: ג שרהו אגן הסחר אל-יחסר המזג בטנף ערמת  
 חטים סוגה בשושנים: ד שני שניך כשני עפרים תאמי צביה: ה צוארה  
 כמגדל השן עיניך ברכות בחשבון על-שער בת-רבים אפר כמגדל  
 הלכנון צופה פני דמשק: ו ראשו עליך כפרמל ודלת ראשו כארמון  
 מלך אסור ברהטים: ז מה-יפית ומה-נעמת אהבה בתענוגים: ח זאת  
 קומתך דמתה לתמר ושךך לאשכלות: ט אמרתי אעלה בתמר אחזה  
 בסנסנו ויהיו-נא שניך כאשכלות הגפן והים אפר פתפוחים: י וחקך  
 כנין הטוב חוקך לדודי למישרים דובב שפתי ישנים: יא אני לדודי ועלי  
 תשוקתו: יב לכה דודי נצא השלה נלינה בכפרים: יג נשכימה  
 לכרמים נראה אם פרחה הגפן פתח הסמדר הנצו הרמונים שם אתן  
 את-דני לך: יד הדודאים נתנו-ריח ועל-פתחינו כל-מגלים חדשים  
 גם-ישנים דודי צפנתי לך:

## פרק ח

א מי יתנך כאח לי יונק שני אמי אמצאך בחולך אשקוף גם לא-יבזו לך:  
 ב אנהגך אביאך אל-בית אמי תלמדני אשקוף מיין הרקח מעסיס המני:  
 ג שמאלו תחת ראשי ומיניו תחבקני: ד השבעתי אתכם בנות ירושלם  
 מהתעירו: ומהתעוררו את-האהבה עד שתחפין: ה מי זאת עלה  
 מן-המדבר מתרפקת על-דודה תחת התפוח עוררתך שמה חבלתך  
 אפר שמה חבלה לדתך: ו שימני כחותם על-לכך כחותם על-ורועך  
 כי-ענה כמות אהבה קשה כשאל קנאה רשפיה רשפי אש שלהבתיה:  
 ז מים רבים לא יוכלו לכבות את-האהבה ונהרות לא ישטפוה אם-יתן  
 אש את-כל-הון ביתו באהבה בוז יבזו לך: ח אחות לנו קטנה ושדים  
 אין לה מה-נעשה לאחתנו ביום שידבר-בה: ט אם-חומה היא נבנה  
 עליה טירת כסף ואם-דלת היא נצור עליה לוח ארז: י אני חומה ושדי  
 כמגדלות אז הייתי בעיניו כמוצאת שלום: יא כרם היה לשלמה  
 בבעל המון נתן את-הכרם לנטרים איש יבא בפרוץ אלף כסף: יב פרמי  
 שלי לפני האלף לך שלמה ומאתים לנטרים את-פריו: יג היושבת בגנים  
 חברים מקשיבים לקולך השמיעני: יד ברח | דודי ודמה-לך לצבי או  
 לעפר האילים על הרג בשמים:







סוד אצבע אלהי"ם  
Mystery of the Finger of  
God

By  
Rabbi Shimshon Ostropoli

## Preface to *Sod Etzba Elokim* Mystery of the Finger of God

The following Kabbalistic teaching first appeared in *Likutei Shoshanim* - A Bouquet of Roses, published with the *Sefer Hakamayim* - Book of Rays, printed in Zolkwa (Zulkiew) Eastern Galicia (Poland) in 1709.

The *Sefer Hakamayim* - Book of Rays is attributed to R. Aaron of Cardena (12th -13th cent.). It is virtually impenetrable without the accompanying glosses, entitled, *Dan Yadin*, authored by R. Shimshon Ostropoli. At the back of the book are various Kabbalistic teachings attributed to his uncle, collected by a nephew of the R. Shimshon, and printed under the title *Likutei Shoshanim* - A Bouquet of Roses. *Sod Etzba Elokim*—The Mystery of the Finger of God first appears in a truncated version among those teachings.

The version I have included in translation here is somewhat longer and is comprised of readings from a variety of sources. In general I have relied upon the edition of the Mystery printed in *Nitzo'tzei Shimshon* - Sparks of Samson, a compendium of teaching attributed to R. Shimshon Ostropoli published by R. Abraham Jacob Bombach, Jerusalem, 1981.

R. Bombach refers the reader to an illuminating contribution from the commentary to the Passover Haggadah, *Gevurath Yisrael* - Might of Israel, by R. Israel the Magid of Koznitz (d. 1813) explaining one facet of this Mystery.

The Mystery specifies a number, the 3280, 'angels of destruction' who wrought havoc in Egypt and administered punishment to the Egyptians. The Magid of Koznitz explains it thus:

The three thousand 'angels of destruction' take their sustenance from the three Hebrew letters *Alef* at the beginning of the three Divine Names:

1. אהיה
2. אלהים
3. אדני

Each begins with the Hebrew letter א -*Alef*.

To understand the explanation of the Magid of Koznitz one must understand how as numerical units become tens, and tens become hundreds, which become thousands and so on, so too the Hebrew letters go from being numerical units to become tens and hundreds and eventually thousands. As has been said earlier in this Haggadah (p.67) the order of creation is formalized corre-

sponding to the four stages of thought into speech:

- 1) Unconscious thought, inspirational out of nothing.
- 2) Conscious creative thought out of ideas.
- 3) Rational, reflective, selective thought.
- 4) Speech, words and inflections.

These four stages correspond to the four worlds or stages of creation:

1. *Atziluth* - Archetypes,
2. *B'riyah* - Creation,
3. *Yetzira* - Formation, and
4. *Asiya* - Doing.

This is the equivalent to going from a single unit 1, to 10, and then to 100, and finally to 1000, and this is how א -Alef = 1, becomes אָלף -Alef = 1000. *Alef* the letter whose numerical value is 1, becomes *Alef* the word whose numerical value is 1000.

The Three Divine names are each associated with *Gevuroth* - Judgments in one way or another.

1. אֶהְיֶה This Divine Name translates as 'I will be' and is associated with the *Sephirah* of *Binah* - Understanding, which stands at the top of all *Sephiroth* on the left side. The left side of the Tree of Life is associated with the future in time. Our relationship to the future is the source of almost all our fears. Fear can therefore be said to have its source in this *Sephirah*, and because the Divine Name associated with this *Sephirah* translates as 'I will be' in the future, the Divine Name, אֶהְיֶה, is itself the source of the future and fear of the future.

2. אֱלֹהִים This Divine Name, pronounced "Elohim" translates as God, but it has a profane translation too. It can mean 'gods' and 'judges', and is associated with the *Sephirah* of *Gevurah* - Judgment. Though it is a Divine Name of God, grammatically it is a plural word. While God is One, this Divine Name is somehow understood as being responsible for the illusion of duality in the universe. This Divine Name is the only name of God used throughout the entire creation story in Genesis. It appears 32 times in the creation story - before the second creation description begins - corresponding to the 22 letters/paths and the 10 *Sephiroth* of the Kabbalah, which are treated at length in this Haggadah.

3. אֲדֹנָי This Divine name, pronounced "Adonai", translates as Lord, owner or master, and is associated with the *Sephirah* of *Malkhuth* - Sovereignty, the tenth and ultimate *Sephirah*. This Divine Name effectively represents a masking of the infinite Divine Name, *YHVH*, the Tetragrammaton which is never, ever under any circumstances pronounced as written. In essence *Adonai* reduces *YHVH* to a sound, because, when reading *YHVH* one utters the word *Adonai*. That is the equivalent of converting particles of light into a sound wave. If the ink used in writing the Divine Name *YHVH* you are reading at this moment were converted into sound waves using the formula  $e=mc^2$  the noise would blow the roof off your house. Saying *Adonai* in a speaking voice while actually meaning

*YHVH* is the ultimate act of constriction or *Gevurah* - Judgment.

In the Torah, (Exodus 34:7) when Moses was pleading on behalf of the Children of Israel after they had sinned and worshipped the Golden Calf, Moses used '13 expressions of mercy'. Among them is a reference to God 'remembering deeds of loving-kindness for thousands' - נצרך חסד לאלפים.

The thousands are usually understood to mean thousands of generations of humankind; that God nurtures love for thousands of generations. Kabbalists read it differently, however. 'Thousands' are read as *Alefs*. נצרך חסד לאלפים - God remembers loving-kindness to the *Alefs*, specifically, the three *Alefs* at the beginning of these three Divine Names, ensuring that the 'angels of destruction' who take sustenance there only use their power against enemies of the Jewish People.

The additional 280 'angels of destruction' take their sustenance from the 280 *Dimim* - Judgments arising out of the Final letters - מנצפ"ך. Final letters in the Hebrew alphabet have the effect of closing a word, preventing it from growing or expanding. There are five final letters. Together, their *Gematria*-Numerical value is כ=20 + מ=40 + נ=50 + פ=80 + צ=90 = 280. The *Gematria*-Numerical value of 'Bull' - פר, is 280, an allusion to the source of all judgments in the modern world, the worship of the Golden Calf - 'Bull' - פר, by the Children of Israel in the Wilderness.

The three thousand angels taking sustenance from the three *Alefs*, and the two hundred and eighty angels taking sustenance from the five final letters exist as manifestations of *Dimim* - *Gevuroth* - Judgments. The essence of judgment is the demand for absolute balance. Every action must be met with an equal and opposite reaction. It is the inescapable law of thermodynamics and must be enforced by the laws of nature. The *Din* - Law requires that every sin be met with the appropriate punishment, and every act of destruction be rectified before the perpetrator be allowed to move on. *Gevuroth* - Judgments demand that every sentence be carried out to the absolute last letter.

Judges are expected to temper their judgments with mercy, love and compassion, all attributes of the *Sephirah* of *Tiffereth* - Glory. *Tiffereth* - Glory operates as a synthesis of the *Sephiroth* of *Hesed* - Loving-kindness and *Gevurah* - Judgment, two *Sephiroth* in constant antithesis to one another.

א Alef=1	ב Beth=2	ג Gimel=3	ד Daleth=4	ה Heh=5	ו Vav=6	ז Zayin=7	ח Cheth=8	ט Teth=9
י Yod=10	כ Chaf=20	ל Lamed=30	מ Mem=40	נ Nun=50	ס Samech=60	ע Ayin=70	פ Peh=80	צ Tzadik=90
ק Kof=100	ר Raish=200	ש Shin=300	ת Tav=400	Five final letter Gematria in which Alef = 1 becomes Elef = 1000				
אף Elef=1000	אף Elef=1000	אף Elef=1000	אף Elef=1000	אף Elef=1000	אף Elef=1000	אף Elef=1000	אף Elef=1000	אף Elef=1000



## סוד אצבע אלהי"ם

### Mystery of the Finger of God

It is customary to study the following Kabbalistic teaching - by R. Shimshon Ostropoli (1600 - 1640) - on the Eve of Passover.

The text in English:

This was found written in the notebook of the holy Kabbalist, Rabbi Shimshon Ostropoli, of blessed memory:

Acronyms for the Ten Plagues		
דצ"ך	עד"ש	באח"ב
<i>D'TZaCH</i>	<i>ADaSH</i>	<i>B'ACHaV</i>
Blood - Frogs - Lice	Wild Beasts - Pestilence - Boils	Hailstones - Locusts - Darkness - Firstborns

This, with the utmost brevity is my reply to your request for an explanation of my reference to the symbols *D'TZaCH ADaSH B'ACHaV*. In your question to me you asked me to justify my assertion that the Exodus is alluded to in these *Simanim* - Symbols.

Now I will reveal the matter to you by way of hints and pointers. May his lightning strike like an arrow from before me. And may He have mercy and atone.

The Arizal of blessed memory, (R. Isaac Luria, 1534-1572) in section 15 of his book, *Plaot Rabot* - 'Many Wonders' in the chapter known as The Gate of Exodus - Chap. III p.p. 42, writes thus:

I have already informed you that Pharaoh suffered the Ten Plagues at the hands of three thousand two hundred and eighty appointed angels-of-destruction who surround the three heavens of *Tumah*. The first heaven is *SH'RA* - שר"ע, the second *T'MUCH* - תמו"ך and the third *BISH'HE* - בשהי"א. Presiding over them is the Prince called *DALFAKTL* - דלפקט"ל, and above them all the Prince *TKE*. - תק"א

To begin with, there is ten missing from the third plague, six

from the fourth plague, and six from the ninth plague as written in the Torah.

And the reference we find that the Egyptians suffered ten plagues in Egypt and another fifty at the Red Sea, is derived from the Divine Name - *SH'FU* - שפ"ו, to which David son of Jesse held fast. He called upon God who smote.

Also derived from the Divine Name *T'KAL* - תק"ל, the Egyptians suffered forty plagues in Egypt and two hundred at the sea, the Name spoke and God smote.

And also from the Divine Name *SH'TSA* - שצ"ה the Egyptians suffered fifty plagues in Egypt and two hundred and fifty at the sea. The name spoke and He smote.

With the very same thing God uses to strike, He heals the exile. How did they err, what was their sin and what wrong did our fathers commit to earn their stay in the iron blast furnace of Egypt, until their salvation with these divine names, *D'AV*, *TS'DA* and *K'SHCHV* - דעב צדא כשהב.

My beloved friend, my mentor, teacher and holy Jew, as has been noted, this excerpt from the writings of the Arizal is utterly mystifying. They are cryptic and obscure, and no one has penetrated their meaning. Many of the greatest Jewish scholars have asked me to explain the conundrum, to expound on the mystery of the Arizal's words, but I have demurred.

Out of my great love for you, however, I am moved to reveal the secrets here. I will share what was revealed to me in a dream, in a vision of the night, as a deep slumber fell upon the assembly. May He who atones sins absolve me etc.

This is what the Arizal was writing about, when he wrote:

I have already informed you that Pharaoh suffered the Ten Plagues at the hands of three thousand two hundred and eighty appointed angels-of-destruction...

The masters of practical Kabbalah have long noted that there are 3280 angels of destruction, appointed to torture the wicked, to punish them in Hell and cleanse them of sin.

(The practical Kabbalists see an allusion to this in the verse (Isaiah 58:4), 'To smite evil with the fist.' The Hebrew word for fist in the above verse is *Egrof* - אגרוף, which is a *Notariqon* - Acrostic of the Hebrew phrase *Gimel Alafim Reysh Peh* - Three thousand two hundred eighty, which is the number of angles who punish the wicked.)

Now, I say, and this is a profound secret, that if we calculate the *Gematria* - Numerical value of the Hebrew words - written exactly as I have written them - for the Ten Plagues: Blood, Frogs, Lice, Wild Beasts, Pestilence, Boils, Hailstones, Locusts, Darkness and Slaying of Firstborn, we will find that they amount to precisely 3280. The exact letters of these equal the exact amount of those 3280 angels of destruction mentioned above. This is a very wonderful explanation never before seen by the eye.

You will observe the calculations is precise only when we read the Hebrew word for Lice - *Kinim* - כנים without a י - *Yod*, Darkness - *Choshech* - חשך without a ו - *Vav*, and Wild Beasts - *Arov* - ערב without a ו - *Vav*. Then the sum is exact, neither more nor less than 3280. When we write the words *Kinim*, *Arov* and *Choshech* the way they are written in the Torah text at the beginning of Exodus, minus the *Yod* and *Vav* and not the way the author of the Passover Haggadah has spelled them. This explains the cryptic comment of the Arizal quoted above:

To begin with, there is ten missing from the third plague, six from the fourth plague, and six from the ninth plague as written in the Torah.

א Alef=1	ב Beth=2	ג Gimel=3	ד Daleth=4	ה Heh=5	ו Vav=6	ז Zayin=7	ח Cheth=8	ט Teth=9
י Yod=10	כ Chaf=20	ל Lamed=30	מ Mem=40	נ Nun=50	ס Samech=60	ע Ayin=70	פ Peh=80	צ Tzadik=90
ק Kof=100	ר Raish=200	ש Shin=300	ת Tav=400	<b>Standard Table of Gematria excluding Finals</b>				

Calculating the *Gematria* of the Ten Plagues

Daleth	ד	4	<i>Dam</i> - Blood - דם
<u>Mem</u>	ם	<u>40</u>	"
Tzadik	צ	90	<i>Tz'fardea</i> - Frogs - צפרדע
Peh	פ	80	"
Raish	ר	200	"
Daleth	ד	4	"
<u>Ayin</u>	ע	<u>70</u>	"
Chaf	כ	20	<i>Kinim</i> - Lice - כנים
Nun	נ	50	"
<u>Mem</u>	ם	<u>40</u>	"
Ayin	ע	70	<i>Arov</i> - Wild Beasts - ערב
Raish	ר	200	"
<u>Beth</u>	ב	<u>2</u>	"
Daleth	ד	4	<i>Dever</i> - Pestilence - דבר
Beth	ב	2	"
<u>Raish</u>	ר	<u>200</u>	"



Shin	ש	300	<i>Sh'chin</i> - Boils - שחין
Cheth	ח	8	"
Yod	י	10	"
Nun	ן	50	"
Beth	ב	2	<i>Barad</i> - Hailstones - ברד
Raish	ר	200	"
Daleth	ד	4	"
Alef	א	1	<i>Arbeh</i> - Locusts - ארבה
Raish	ר	200	"
Beth	ב	2	"
Heh	ה	5	"
Cheth	ח	8	<i>Choshech</i> - Darkness - חשך
Shin	ש	300	"
Chaf	ך	20	"
Mem	מ	40	<i>Makat</i> -Slaying of - מכת
Chaf	כ	20	"
Tav	ת	400	"
Beth	ב	2	<i>Be'Chorot</i> - Firstborn - בכורות
Chaf	כ	20	"
Vav	ו	6	"
Raish	ר	200	"
Vav	ו	6	"
Tav	ת	400	"
Total		3280	

Now, concerning the Arizal's statement that the three heavens are named, *SH'RA* - שר"ע, *T'MUCH* - תמו"ך and *BISH'HE* - בשהי"א, it seems that here too we have come upon a profound, awesome and wonderful secret buried in the text of the Haggadah by its author. At the introduction of the ten plagues, the Haggadah text says: These [Are] Ten Plagues [That He] Brought - *ILU ESER MAKOT SH'HAYVEE* - אלו עשר מכות שהביא.

It can be seen that the three heavens of *Tumah* are hinted at in the very words with which the author of the Haggadah opens this paragraph. They are simple anagrams.

Ten	Plagues	[That He] Brought
עשר	מכות	שהביא
שר"ע	תמו"ך	בשהי"א
SH'RA	T'MUCH	BISH'HE

The comment by the Arizal now fits the facts perfectly. The secret of the plagues lies with the 3280 appointed angels-of-destruction who punished Pharaoh exactly, according to the Gematria of the Ten Plagues that He brought, as above. They reside in the three heavens of *Tumah* alluded to in the anagrammatic words of the Haggadah.

ה	ך
מ	ל
צ	פ
ך	ק
י	ט
ם	ל

The Arizal's reference to the Prince *DALFAKTL* is explained thus. The root of this name is in the Hebrew letters preceding the letters of the Hebrew name of Egyptians - המצרים.



Now, referring to his comment that above all the heavens of *Tumah* is a prince named *TKA* - תק"א, his meaning is plain. The Gematria of *D'TZACH*, *ADASH* and *B'ACHAV* is exactly 501, the value of *TKA* - תק"א.

Total	ב	ח	א	ב	ש	ך	ע	ך	צ	ך
501	2	8	1	2	300	4	70	20	90	4

501 is also the value of the Hebrew word *ASHER* - 'That' - אשר. This explains the secret hidden in the phrase, (Ex. 4:17):

'Take this staff in your hand, that with it you perform the signs.'

The staff Moses held in his hand had the acronym *D'TZACH*, *ADASH* and *B'ACHAV* carved into it. When, therefore, God said to Moses, 'Take this staff in your hand, *Asher* - 'that' - אשר with it you perform the signs', God alludes to the number 501 which is the *Gematria* - Numerical value of both the inscription on the staff, and the superfluous word *ASHER* - 'That' - אשר in the verse.

Another secret is hidden in the phrase, (Exodus 10:2):

'In order that you may tell your children and your children's children about the mockery that I made of Egypt.'

There are thousands of sentences containing the same word 'that' in the Torah text whose *Gematria* - Numerical value is the acronym for the Ten Plagues. I have secrets to reveal about each of them but, as it is written, (Proverbs 25:2) 'The glory of God is in the hidden thing.'



The next general statement by the Arizal is this: The ten plagues suffered by Egyptians in Egypt and the additional fifty plagues at the Red Sea, all derived from the Divine Name - SH'FU - שפ"ו, to which David son of Jesse held fast. He called upon God who smote, etc. Also derived from the Divine Name T'KAL - תק"ל etc. and also from the Divine Name SH'TSA - שצ"ה etc.

ר	200	ד	4
ב	2	ו	6
י	10	ד	4
י	10	ב	2
ו	6	ג	50
ס	60	י	10
י	10	ש	300
ה	5	י	10
ג	3		
ל	30		
י	10		
ל	30		
י	10		
Total	386		386

It is explained thus. The reference is to an awesome and wonderful secret hidden in the argument between R. Yossi Haglili, R. Eliezer and R. Akiba mentioned in the Haggadah text.

R. Yossi says that the Egyptians suffered ten plagues in Egypt and another fifty at the Red Sea. The Divine Name SH'FU - שפ"ו has the exact Gematria - Numerical value of both Rabbi Yossi Haglili and David ben Jesse.

In the book 'Sodi-Razi' - 'Secrets & Mysteries' by R. Eliezer Rokeach of Worms (1140-1225) it is revealed that R. Yossi Haglili was a spark of David son of Jesse reincarnate. It is with the Divine Name SH'FU - שפ"ו, that the Messiah, son of Jesse will be revealed. And though we have knowledge of more secrets concerning this matter, I reveal no more than what is appropriate to this particular facet; that the Gematria - Numerical Value of both R. Yossi Haglili and David b. Jesse's names equal the value of the Divine name SH'FU - שפ"ו = 386.

ר	200	ר	200
ב	2	ב	2
י	10	י	10
א	1	ע	70
ל	30	ק	100
י	10	י	10
ע	70	ב	2
ז	7	א	1
ר	200		
Total	530		395

R. Eliezer argues that the Divine Name responsible for punishing the Egyptians was T'KAL - תק"ל, with it the Egyptians suffered forty plagues in Egypt and two hundred at the sea. Rabbi Akiba maintains the Divine Name responsible for punishing the Egyptians was SH'TSA - שצ"ה, and that the Egyptians suffered fifty plagues in Egypt and two hundred and fifty at the sea. It is clear once we understand that the Gematria of R. Eliezer's name equals T'KAL - תק"ל = 530, while the Gematria of R. Akiba's name equals SH'TSA

- שצ"ה = 395. The Haggadah text says that R. Eleizer 'says'. The word אומר - 'says' is chosen deliberately.

(Translator's note: Perhaps the author, R. Shimshon Ostropoli, is alluding to the fact that the *Gematria* - Numerical value of the Hebrew word אומר - 'says' is 247, which is identical to the *Gematria* - Numerical value of the word רמז - 'allusion'. It is therefore not merely R. Eliezer and R. Akiba, the individuals who are expressing an opinion, but their very names make allusions. The phrase, R. Eleizer 'says', now means that the name, R. Eleizer, alludes to something.)

These are awesome and wonderful mysteries in which hidden, secret secrets are buried in the very names of the *Tannaim* - Sages. May He, the Merciful atone etc.



Concerning the Arizal's reference above to the phrase:

'With the very same thing God uses to strike, He heals the exile.'

The Arizal is referring to the matter about which I have previously spoken to you. It is within the cryptic names of those very Ten Plagues that the causes of the exile into Egypt are hidden. The acronyms *D'TZACH ADASH B'ACHAV* reveal it all. They also reveal the means of redemption from exile, for it is with them that God redeemed and healed us while smiting them with the Finger of God. We have many more secrets to reveal about this matter but this will suffice.

The final comment by the Arizal,

'Until their salvation with these divine names, *D'AV*, *TS'DA* and *K'SHCHV* - דעב צדא כשהב.'

דצ"ך	ד	צ	כ
עד"ש	ע	ד	ש
באח"ב	ב	א	ח"ב
	דע"ב	צד"א	כשה"ב

Is simply explained as follows. *D'AV*, *TS'DA* and *K'SHCHV* - כשהב - דעב צדא are the acronyms *D'TZACH ADASH B'ACHAV* in different forms. *D'AV* consists of the first letters of each of the three words in the acronym *D'TZACH ADASH B'ACHAV*, *TS'DA* the second letters and *K'SHCHV*, the third.

So we see that with those very Names that God used to smite the Egyptians He manifested our salvation. The punishment of Egypt and the healing of Israel are together revealed in the same instrument. May be the will of the Almighty that He show us the advent of the Messiah together with the angles associated with the final redemption, speedily in our days, Amen.



Subsequently it has been revealed to me that all who immerse themselves in this open secret even if it is but once a year and on the eve of Passover may rest assured they are protected from all impediments in the year to come. They will not stumble nor will they encounter unusual forms of death or accident. Their enemies will have no dominion over them and all their detractors will fall before them. Everything they attempt will succeed and be achieved, Amen.





## General Index

- Abraham  
3-4, 16-18, 28, 38, 62,  
64, 66-69, 74, 141, 152-153,  
167, 173-175, 186, 194,
- Adam  
2, 16, 59, 74, 92, 106-107,  
126, 152,
- Adam & Eve  
8, 16-17, 27, 58-59, 66, 92,  
126-127, 166, 175, 196,
- Addictions/Compulsions  
8, 43, 52-54, 70, 75, 82,  
132-133,
- Alef*  
110-111, 173, 212,
- Ayin*  
162, 165, 170, 212,
- Awareness  
3-4, 19, 30, 48, 93, 97,  
103, 110, 130, 161, 163,
- B-Amylase  
7,
- Beth*  
161, 165, 198, 212, 213,
- Binah - Understanding*  
44, 50, 98, 131, 136, 145-148,  
165, 172-173, 191-193,
- Bread  
8, 10, 35, 42, 44, 48-49,  
92, 94, 96, 102-113,  
131, 141,
- Candles  
12-13,
- Chaf*  
106-107, 212-213,
- Change  
7, 25, 49, 58, 70, 80-86,  
91-92, 106, 121, 135, 191,
- Chesed - Loving-Kindness*  
78, 106-107, 111, 118-119,  
132, 161, 165, 167, 169, 173,  
193-195, 198,
- Cheth*  
118-119, 165, 213,
- Chokhma - Wisdom*  
50, 98, 136, 145, 155, 161-162,  
165, 172-173, 175, 182,  
190-193, 198,
- Chometz/Chimutz - Leavening*  
7-10, 51, 94, 111,
- Civilization  
8-9, 16, 27, 48, 62, 65, 107,  
121, 176,
- Confusion  
2-4, 8, 27,

- Cortex/Brain  
3, 18, 41, 50, 83, 136, 163,  
191-192,
- Crown see *Keter*
- Cups of Wine  
13, 26-30, 47, 68, 78,-79,  
85, 98, 100, 119, 133,136,  
142, 145-148, 158,
- Da'at - Knowing*  
confusion of -  
4,  
connecting to -  
172, 193,  
damage to -  
16,  
Exile of -  
2-3, 8, 16, 18, 43, 66, 72,  
75, 77, 133, 166,  
healing/fixing of -  
29, 65, 144,  
tree of -  
2-5, 27, 66, 107, 129, 152,  
166-167, 182, 192-193,
- Daleth*  
42, 112, 130, 131, 133,  
174, 175, 212-213
- Discernment  
4, 132,
- Divine, see God's
- Divine Revelation,  
see *Giluy Shechinah*
- Dough/Yeast  
7-8, 43-44, 94-95, 110,
- Eat/Eating  
2-5, 16-17, 28, 35, 38, 43-44,  
49-51, 56-57, 66, 70, 83,  
92-93, 95-96, 99, 103-104,  
111-112, 115-116, 119-123,  
126-127, 131-133, 136, 138,  
146, 159,
- Egypt  
exile in -  
2, 4, 8, 27-28, 43-44, 48,  
exodus from -  
2, 4, 28-30, 34-35, 42-44,  
52-65,  
Passover in -  
4, 47-48,
- Elijah  
13, 29, 140, 145, 148, 186-187,
- Evil  
2-5, 8, 27, 34, 72, 162, 177,  
192-196, 200, 213,
- Exile  
2-4, 8, 16-18, 28, 43, 48,  
51, 65-77, 120, 127-128,  
133, 141, 145, 167-168, 176,  
193, 210, 216,
- Existence  
2, 3, 9, 65, 94, 106, 110, 121,  
148, 179, 182, 186, 192-193,
- Fermentation  
7-8, 19, 94,
- Fixing  
4, 16, 18 27, 29-30, 44, 51,  
58-59, 65, 88, 92-93, 131,  
144, 162-163, 166-167, 182,  
194-195,



- Flour  
7, 107, 111,
- Free Will  
90,
- Future  
3, 28, 49, 51, 54, 79, 92,  
102, 120-123, 130, 146, 152,  
157-158, 162, 208,
- Garden of Eden  
2, 16, 67,
- Gedulah* - see *Chesed*
- Gevurah* - *Judgment*  
78-79, 107, 111, 126, 132,  
161-162, 165, 167, 169, 172,  
193-194,
- Giluy Shechinah*  
- Divine Revelation  
4-5, 50, 60, 66, 77, 92-97,  
112, 122, 127, 132, 168, 176,
- Gimel*  
161, 162, 165, 184, 212
- God  
aspects of -  
18, 77, 80, 86, 88, 98-99,  
106, 121, 132, 146-148,  
154-155, 169, 178-191,  
breath of -  
158,  
faith in -  
65, 74, 111, 122, 149, 158,  
172-173,  
finger of -  
81, 86, 210 - 217,  
hand of -  
114-115  
heart of -  
168-169  
in exile  
18, 28,  
in us  
46, 198  
intimacy with -  
16-17, 19, 59-60, 66, 68,  
74, 116, 150,  
mouth of  
144,  
Omnipresent -  
55, 114,  
students of -  
41, 50, 56,
- God's  
actions  
16, 30, 33, 55, 57-61, 66,  
68, 76, 78, 83, 86, 88, 92-94,  
148, 152, 167, 172, 175, 194,  
covenant  
18, 38, 57, 63, 67, 174,  
desire  
31, 33, 132-133, 139, 141,  
160, 164, 166-167, 172, 177,  
182, 191-192, 198,  
knowing  
2, 74-75,  
love  
29, 35, 48, 64-65, 71, 86,  
89, 93, 106, 126, 137, 158, 8,  
167, 181, 191, 19  
names  
18, 66, 70, 98, 131, 136, 146,  
152, 174, 186-187,

- oneness  
     4, 27-28, 135,  
 prayers  
     172-173,  
 people  
     4, 48, 03, 120, 168, 173, ,  
     180-182  
 presence  
     18, 59, 95, 122, 158, 186,  
 promises  
     28, 52, 63, 68, 85-86, 111,  
 purpose  
     35, 130, 191-192,  
 Good and Evil  
     2-5, 16, 18, 28, 67, 107, 126,  
     152, 167, 182, 193,  
 Grains  
     7, 107,  
 Heaven and Earth  
     3, 30, 46, 71, 78, 98-99, 127,  
     140-141, 145, 147-149,  
     153-154, 156-157, 163,  
     170-171, 173, 182, 186-190,  
     199, 210, 213-214,  
*Heh*  
     42, 98, 132-133, 136, 144-145,  
     152-154, 173, 213,  
*Hod - Beauty*  
     38, 42, 103, 107, 168-169, 172,  
 Human  
     anatomy  
         2-3, 41, 106, 110, 144, 149,  
         150, 154, 162-163, 194, 200,  
     mind  
         3, 9, 18-19, 107, 110, 152,  
         nature  
             4, 16, 43, 62, 83, 118, 130,  
             132-133, 166, 172, 179,  
             193,  
         primordial  
             27,  
 Inside  
     3, 10, 67, 93, 122, 127, 131,  
     133, 161-162, 192-193,  
 Intimacy  
     attempting -  
         17, 65, 67, 69, 75, 127,  
     craving -  
         18, 198,  
     loss of -  
         8, 66, 74, 92, 133, 166,  
     meaning of -  
         4-5, 8, 17, 27, 60, 65, 68-  
         69,  
     paradigms of -  
         16,  
     restoring -  
         5, 50, 60, 93-94, 127, 196,  
     rewards of -  
         77,  
     ultimate -  
         59,  
 Joseph  
     4, 27, 69, 125, 189,  
*Keter - Crown*  
     25, 29, 98, 131-133, 145-146,  
     148, 155, 172, 175, 192,  
 Knowing, see *Da'at*

- Knowledge**  
 2-5, 16, 18, 28, 41, 48, 50, 53,  
 64-65, 133, 171, 182, 193, 215,
- Kof***  
 163, 165, 182,
- Lamed***  
 41-42, 173,
- Malkhuth - Sovereignty***  
 16, 25-26, 29, 92, 95, 98,  
 106, 162, 167, 169, 172-173,  
 175, 178, 181,
- Mem***  
 37-38, 212-213,
- Metaphor**  
 7, 9-10, 19, 34, 43, 52, 76-77,  
 93-95, 107, 154, 174, 186,  
 190-193, 199-200,
- Mochin/Mindedness***  
***D'Gadhut/Large***  
 16, 23, 27, 29, 44, 50, 98, ,  
 127, 169, 179  
***D'Katnut/Petty***  
 23, 170,
- Moses**  
 4, 18, 49-50, 56, 64-66, 71,  
 81-87, 103, 120-121, 124, 130,  
 136, 153, 179-180, 209, 214,
- Netzach - Victory***  
 34, 38, 107, 115, 168, 173,
- Nun***  
 33-34, 46, 102, 125, 212-213,
- Paradox**  
 3, 43, 107, 114, 135,
- Passover**  
 eve  
 7,  
 foods  
 7,  
 night  
 4,  
 preparations for -  
 6-7,  
 meaning  
 92-94,
- Peh***  
 73, 93, 106-108, 165, 173,  
 211-212,
- Pharaoh**  
 4, 17, 52, 69-72, 80-87,  
 172-173, 210-211, 214,
- Predestination**  
 2,
- Prophet/Prophecy**  
 2-3, 19, 29, 79, 98, 102, 111,  
 145, 148, 168-170, 180,  
 186-187, 195, 199-200,
- Raish***  
 46-47, 163, 212-213,
- Recovery/12 Steps**  
 8, 44, 48, 50, 53, 56-57, 68,  
 122,
- Samech***  
 102-104, 165-167, 172,  
 178, 184,

- Self  
 16, 19, 25, 28, 35, 37, 43-44,  
 46, 55, 57-58, 65-67, 75, 82,  
 84, 86, 93-94, 102, 110,  
 127-128, 133, 144, 151, 154,  
 175, 192, 194-195,
- Sephirah/Sephiroth*  
 3, 15-16, 25-29, 34, 36, 38,  
 43-44, 47, 50, 78-79, 88, 92-93,  
 98, 102, 106, 131-132, 136,  
 144, 146, 161-165, 167-169,  
 172-175, 178, 182, 190-194,  
 198,
- Sexuality  
 4, 9, 18, 27, 34-35, 69, 74,  
 111-112, 144, 168, 193,  
 195-196, 198-199,
- Shechinah - Divine Presence*  
 4-5, 18, 31, 50, 59-60, 66,  
 77-78, 92-97, 100, 112, 122,  
 126, 132, 142, 146, 158, 166,  
 168-169, 176,
- Shin*  
 135-136, 167, 172, 213,
- Slave/Slavery  
 4, 8, 12, 18, 28, 34-35, 38, 46,  
 48-49, 52, 58, 60-61, 67-70,  
 75-77, 82, 84-86, 88-91,  
 94-98, 150, 156-157, 193,
- Tav*  
 25-26, 178, 213,
- Teth*  
 162, 165, 196,
- Tiffereth - Glory*  
 28, 46-48, 92, 98, 103, 115,  
 119, 126, 131-133, 162-165,  
 168-169, 173, 193,
- Tree of Knowledge  
 2-5, 27, 66, 107, 129, 152,  
 166-167, 182, 192-193,
- Tzadik*  
 125-127, 212-213,
- Utensils/Vessels  
 7, 33, 41, 46, 125, 130, 169,
- Vav*  
 16, 42, 98, 110, 131-133,  
 144-148, 152, 161, 175,  
 212-213
- Visions  
 5, 7, 74, 133, 162, 211,
- Water  
 7, 12-13, 18, 29, 34-35, 38,  
 66, 77-78, 80-82, 86, 99,  
 103-104, 110-111, 126, 133,  
 136-137, 153, 162, 194-197,  
 200,
- Yesod - Fundament*  
 25-27, 34, 42-43, 46-47, 69,  
 88, 168-169, 172, 192-193,
- Yod*  
 98, 110, 114-115,
- Zayin*  
 162-165, 186-187, 212,

SENA