

בעזרה שי"ת

Preface to Pesach

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Transcribed from tape #214

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לזכות הצלחת שרגא צבי בן מינקא גיטל וכל משפחתו

Preface to Pesach

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"THE BREAD OF AFFLICTION" MEANS THAT THEY SUFFERED AFFLICTION

In our homes on Pesach night we make a great declaration, not only to our children, but to everybody in the world. And we say **הא לחמא עניא** - this is the bread of affliction which our forefathers ate in *Mitzrayim*. Now, when we say that they ate "bread of affliction" we actually mean that they ate affliction. And eating affliction is an exceptionally good diet. Now, that may need some explaining, but certainly it's a diet that is very good. Like the *gemara* says on the pasuk **יחלץ עני בעניו** - *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* extricates a poor man, He saves him, because of his poverty. The *gemara* says that **בעניו** means **בשכר עניו** - in reward for his poverty. In reward for affliction, people attain success.

SUFFERING BRINGS ALL TYPES OF SUCCESS

What type of success? Every form of success! We get success in *gashmius*, in physical ways, and we get success in *ruchnius*, in the spiritual arena. Whatever it is - **חבניבין ייסורים!** Suffering is a very great benefit! *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* would give more of it, only that He suffers from it as well *k'viyochal*. **בזמן שאדם מצטער** - When a man is in distress, **שכינה מה לשון אומרת** - what does the *shechina* say? "I'm in distress!" But otherwise *Hakadosh*

Baruch Hu would give us more of this good thing. Because there's nothing that's *mechaper* on a man, nothing that purifies him and makes him good, nothing that elevates him - like suffering.

UTILIZING HAPPINESS TO BECOME GREAT

Actually there is one thing that's greater than suffering, but that's a very difficult thing. And that is utilizing happiness to become great. Utilizing happiness to gain purity of character and to get *kapara*. That's even better. That's the *madreiga* called *kedusha*, like the *Mesillas Yesharim* explains: If you're able to eat and to become closer to Hashem through enjoying this world, then that's the biggest of all things. If you're able to breathe deeply and to look at a blue sky and your heart sings within you, and you thank *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, then you're following the pattern of שירי דוד עבדיך. You're walking in the footsteps of Dovid Hamelech, who grew great through happiness.

Dovid had the other kind too. When Dovid was hiding in a מערה, in a cave, the fear of death was upon him. A number of times he was in peril of his life. And he grew great there too. But Dovid's true greatness was בנאות דשא ירביצני על מי מנוחות ינהלני when he was lying down with his sheep in the green meadows by the still waters. It was then, when he had no enemies that he became Dovid Hamelech. He was a boy and nobody was jealous of him, and so he had nothing to worry about. And he took out his harp and he sang to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. And his soul ascended on the notes of his harp to heaven and he became great - there, behind his sheep, is where Dovid became great.

IT'S EASIER TO BECOME GREAT THROUGH SUFFERING

But that you have to know is extremely difficult. It's much easier to become good from suffering. Suffering is a great benefit!

And our forefathers, when they ate the bread of affliction they gained weight - spiritual weight. They became better and better. Because all the virtues that we acquired as a nation we gained in the affliction of *Mitzrayim*. And now we'll mention just two examples out of thousands.

DIFFICULT EXPERIENCES HELPS YOU SYMPATHIZE WITH OTHERS

וּזְכַרְתָּ כִּי עַבְדְּ הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם - "Remember you were a slave in *Mitzrayim*." So what do we see? That the experience in *Mitzrayim* taught us how to have sympathy with those who are suffering. The Jewish nation from then on, was always on the side of the downtrodden - because they went through it themselves. They knew what it meant. If you never were in a hospital - and you shouldn't have to go except when your wife is in the maternity ward - if you were never a patient in a hospital, then you can't appreciate what the sick people feel. When a person undergoes that experience, then he sympathizes the next time he passes by a hospital. He knows that there are a lot of suffering people inside. And therefore, הֲאֵלֶּיךָ לֶחֶם עֲנִיָּה, this is the bread of affliction that our forefathers ate. It was a "bread" that they ate. Bread is healthy for a person. It was good for them. Only, what do we do? We try to substitute for what they did, for how they lived; we try to substitute it by eating. That's why we eat matzoh.

You're able to breathe deeply and to look at a blue sky and your heart sings within you.

THE MATZOH SYMBOLIZES OUR SUFFERING AND PURIFICATION IN MITZRAYIM

Now, matzoh is a pleasure to eat. Whether it's machine-made 18 minute matzos, or whether it's handmade matzoh, it's always good to eat matzos. The change from bread to matzos is always welcome. But as your teeth are crunching into the matzo,

don't waste the opportunity. Try to gain at least a small measure of what our forefathers gained by eating a different kind of matzos.

Our forefathers ate a matzo that was bitter; it was affliction that brought tears to their eyes. When children were snatched from them and they were taken away to destruction, Jewish fathers and Jewish mothers wept. They broke down. I don't doubt that some went insane from *tzoros*. But the total, the sum total result was, that they became a new people. They went through fire! But they were purified in that furnace.

And that's why *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* called *Mitzrayim* the כור הברזל - it was a furnace of iron. Now, there were some furnaces in ancient times that were made of clay, clay furnaces. And that was good enough to bake bread. However, if you want to melt precious metals, and to remove the impurities, it wasn't enough to have a clay oven. You needed an iron oven, a כור הברזל. And *Mitzrayim* was an iron furnace for the Am Yisroel. And our fathers were melted, and they became liquid. And *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* removed all of their impurities, and they became pure gold in *Mitzrayim*.

EATING MATZAH IS RECAPTURING A LITTLE BIT OF THAT PURIFICATION

Now for us, we don't want that, we don't want an iron furnace. We prefer to gain just a little bit of this; and we'll never come to the stage that they attained. We'll never be as good as they were, but a little bit we want to gain by eating the matzos.

So as you sit home with your family in a peaceful country, where you're more or less secure against the outside, and you don't have many worries. As you lean back and relax - you have

to lean on your left hand when you're eating matzos, you know. You have to recline when you're eating the *kezayis* matzoh. So as you're leaning and eating, and you think - while you're eating the matzoh you think - that by this means I want to gain some of the perfection that our forefathers gained by עינוי, by affliction. And that's what we say הא לחמא עניא - this is the bread of affliction that our forefathers ate. They ate something much worse! But we're trying to recapture it a little bit.

Jewish fathers and Jewish mothers wept. They broke down. I don't doubt that some went insane from *tzoros*.

"COME EAT THE KORBAN PESACH" - ONLY FOR THOSE IN THE CLUB

And then we make an announcement. כל דכפין ייתי ויכול - "Anybody who's hungry, let him come and eat." Now, Jews always made this announcement; the children of Avraham always made room for the hungry. It wasn't only the night of Pesach. So what is special about tonight? On the night of Pesach we have to say a second thing: כל דצריך ייתי ויפסח - "Anybody who needs, should come and eat the *korban Pesach*." Because the *korban Pesach* is an obligation, and every Jew has to come and eat. Now you can't invite him from the street, because if he didn't count himself in at the beginning, he can't come. So this announcement is made only to those who belong to the club, all those who chipped in and bought this lamb together. So we're announcing: "Hurry up! It's ready; come and get it. Let everybody who belongs come in."

"COME AND EAT" - EVEN THOSE NOT IN THE CLUB

But while we're talking about that, while we're making announcements, here is a man, a poor man in the street who came late. He didn't have the opportunity to be *nimneh*, to count himself in on the *korban Pesach*. And he hears us inviting in, from the street, all of our comrades who belong to our club. Since we don't

want to leave anybody out, so we say you can come in too. Now, the *korban Pesach*, we're sorry you can't eat, but we'll give you other things. There's plenty of meat and plenty of fish and plenty of matzos, so we invite him in to eat anyhow. Tonight we're inviting people in, we're calling from the house so that the stragglers - those who belong to our club - shouldn't be left out. But while you're announcing, don't hurt the feelings of the people who are homeless, the travelers, or visitors. Even though it's too late for them to eat the *korbon Pesach*, but we invite them to eat whatever they can. Because no matter what, everyone has to make use of this sacred night. It's so important to gain all the attitudes of the *seder* night.

THE SEDER IS A PLAY - WE ARE REENACTING A DRAMA

And so, we're sitting there and we're about to begin this great drama of the *seder*. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* is the playwright and He wants the Jewish people to be the actors. Excuse me for the *mashal* - it's not a proper *mashal* - but it helps us to explain this. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* arranged the *seder*. And the *seder* is actually a play. We're reenacting a drama.

YOU MIGHT BE COMFORTABLE HERE, BUT IT'S NOT YOUR FINAL DESTINATION

And we say there, right at the beginning of the script, the first thing you have to know **השנה הזאת** - this year we're here. Wherever you Jews are, remember that this is not your final destination. It may be very comfortable and you may be settled in some beautiful neighborhood. You may be prosperous and satisfied, but you have to know that the Jew in this world has a function. And it's true that in *galus* too, this function can be carried out. But it's only a preparation for the future. We are all preparing for the great future.

THE FUTURE GENERATIONS WILL READ ABOUT US

Because, like our forefathers in *Mitzrayim*, they didn't live for the moment. They were also enacting a drama that was to be re-enacted throughout the generations. They understood that they had a function to fulfill when they lived out these great scenes of history in *Mitzrayim*. And therefore we also understand that while we're here, we're also preparing for the future. You have to know that you're here to prepare. **השנה הבאה** - this year we are here. But remember! We are preparing for the future generations to read our history.

No matter what, everyone has to make use of this sacred night. It's so important to gain all the attitudes of the *seder* night.

They'll read someday the history of the Jews of America. And they're going to read about how the Jews in America staged a great comeback. There was a great rising of the youth, a leavening, a rebellion against the old generations who came to America to get lost - the generation who made it their purpose to mingle with the people of the land and to throw away the Torah. And then the youth arose with a mighty and a violent revolt, and all over America *baalei teshuva* began to appear! Torah institutions began to sprout and grow everywhere! And we are the ones writing this great book. Someday it will be read in the world - the history of the Jews of America.

GALUS IS A PREPARATION FOR GEULAH

But that's a preparation. Because we're all getting ready **לשנה הבאה בארץ ישראל** - in the year to come - whether it's next year or not, but it's going to happen, it's inevitable! And the *galus* is a preparation for the *geulah*. Because, when our descendants, let's hope that we ourselves will be there, but our descendants will be sitting in *Eretz Yisroel* and they'll be telling about what

happened to their forefathers in exile; we are the ones who are writing that book now. So therefore **השתא**, remember this year you're here, but you're getting ready **לשנה הבא**, for the year to come, when you're going to be in *Eretz Yisroel*. And the way to go to *Eretz Yisroel*, and to make that final *geulah* more perfect is by living according to these great ideals this very moment.

THE NIGHT OF PESACH IS A GLORIOUS OPPORTUNITY

And one of the biggest preparations that you can do is to remember the subject of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, and to enact those scenes in our lives. And the night of *Pesach* is the glorious opportunity - more than any other occasion - to impress upon your minds the great lessons, some of which we'll speak about tonight.

"WE'RE SLAVES" TO OUTSIDE INFLUENCE

And therefore the first thing we say **השתא עבדי** - now we are slaves. It means; we recognize that we cannot exercise our free will entirely. Because there are laws of the land, and there are gentile practices. Even the best Jews are subject to the influence of the environment. Of course, it doesn't mean that you have to have a television and you have to sit and swallow the stupid propaganda of gentile actors for two hours a day. No, we're not talking about that. But even let's say Satmar Jew who's sitting in Williamsburg. He doesn't have any television and he doesn't have a radio. He doesn't even have any English books in his house; and still he cannot avoid the influence of the environment.

And so we are slaves now - that's what the *hagaddah* is saying. **השתא עבדי**. You have to realize that this situation now is not the full opportunity. **לשנה הבא בני חורין** - The time will come

when we will be free to live perfectly, בשלימות, according to our ideals.

Now that's very important. Because, when people think that now is it - they're living for the now - then they are making the biggest error possible. Because they don't adjust their lives for their true function.

DO YOU LOOK FORWARD FOR MOSHIACH?

Our function is to prepare for the *geulah*. And that's why the *Chofetz Chaim* made a sefer called *ציפית לישועה*. It's a question that's going to be asked of everybody. When the great day comes when we appear before the tribunal of heaven, the question is going to be: *ציפית לישועה*? Did you look forward to the salvation? Did you look forward for *moshiach*? Because, every day three times we say it. But the question is: How sincere are we? You have to feel that we are hampered now in our *galus*. Because if you don't know what is hampering you, you won't be able to succeed.

DON'T NEGLECT YOUR OPPORTUNITY FOR SUCCESS

Now of course, when a person has opportunities that he neglects even now, it's a terrible loss. Let's say, summertime is coming. There's nice weather and the roads are beckoning, and so every Sunday he climbs into his car with his family and they're off for another day of suicide.

He has a free day. Wouldn't it be fine to sit home in your backyard and learn? Learn with your children! Or if he's in camp, let him learn with his children in camp. Wherever they are, try to devote your day for learning.

Even a Satmar Jew who's sitting in Williamsburg cannot avoid the influence of the environment.

THE TRAGEDY OF WASTING TIME

But some people go to bungalow colonies and they have to “visit” on Sundays. All Sunday they're sitting at the steering wheel bumping up and down the country roads. All Sunday! This is instead of sitting with his children and examining them on what they learned during the week, and teaching them to make up what they missed during the winter time. So if people live for the moment, if they don't realize that **השתא עבדי**, then they won't utilize their lives. They don't realize what they're here to accomplish. And that's a tragedy. That's the great tragedy of wasting time, wasting your life.

TZIPISAH L'YESHUA? IT'S A QUESTION YOU'RE GOING TO BE ASKED

But when he knows he's living for the future then he can become a success. **ציפית לישועה** - it's a question that's going to be asked. Did you expect *moshiach* to come momentarily? Everyday we say **ומצפים לישועה** in *nusach sefard*. And *nusach ashkenaz* say **כי לישועתך קיינו כל היום**. It doesn't mean every day, it means *all day long*. And it means that you're always aware of what your purpose here is. So as a Jew walks through the streets of Paris, he's not a Parisian, he's in exile. A Jew is walking through the streets of Rome, he's in *golus*. Our fathers walked through the streets of the great city of Babylon. They weren't Babylonians. They were tourists. A Jew is a tourist in this world. **כגרים ותושבים אתם** - we're tourists all over the world, wherever we are. Of course we pay taxes. Of course, we keep the laws. And by the way, you should even put out a flag on the fourth of July. Certainly you should be loyal to your country. We're just as loyal as everyone else - we should be even more loyal than others. A Jew should be grateful to America. We should kiss the earth of America for all that it gave to us.

But we should never forget, we don't belong here. We don't belong in *Eretz Yisroel* either until it becomes *Eretz Yisroel*. It's a country where they have a law permitting abortion, anyone could get an abortion and a million babies were already killed since they established the State of Israel. A million babies! Jewish children! They wouldn't have to worry about Arabs. If you have some place to settle them, you wouldn't have to make proclamations, pathetic proclamations, "Come *Gush Emunim*, let's settle in occupied territories". The force of population would have caused you to have settlements everywhere. But they went into this terrible business of murder, of abortions, instead. And so they're killing Jewish babies in the State of Israel! They're worse than Hitler! Hitler only killed a million Jewish children, and they've already killed a million. And now they're starting on the second million.

They're killing Jewish babies in the State of Israel! They're worse than Hitler!

WE'RE WAITING FOR THE "TRUE" ERETZ YISROEL

So that's not *Eretz Yisroel* either! But we're waiting for that great day when we'll come to the true *Eretz Yisroel* and then we'll fulfill our mission. But right now we're waiting. Wherever you are, if you're in Tel Aviv or if you're in Brooklyn, you're preparing for *moshiach*. That's what we're reminding ourselves. הַשָּׂמַיִם עֹבְדֵי.

"THIS YEAR WE'RE SLAVES" - DO YOU FEEL IT?

Now, here's a rich man, perhaps he's sitting on West End Avenue. Not today; West End Avenue today is not such a great thing anymore because on all sides you have Puerto Ricans. If you walk out, it's dangerous. But I remember West End Avenue when it was West End Avenue. There wasn't a house without a flank in the doorway. It looked like an admiral. Every house! And only millionaires lived there. So let's imagine a millionaire Jew, an Orthodox Jew on West End Avenue, and he's packed with money.

When he sits down with his nice family, he has *nachas* from his family, and he's saying **השתא עבדי** - "This year we're slaves." He doesn't even begin to feel the truth of these words! It's just words.

RUN AWAY TO THE TORAH - IT'S YOUR HOME

And therefore it's important for him to realize that this is not his place. He's not a US citizen - he is a citizen of the Torah! The Torah is our country. Like the Jews once asked *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*: Where should we run? There's no place to run to. We ask the same question today: Where should you run? You run to Long island? There are some communities in Long Island that have already become so black that the synagogues were sold to Negroes. In Long Island! There's no place to run. So *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* answers **ברחו לתורה** - "Run away to the Torah." That's your home. So whether you live here, or in Williamsburg, or even if you live in Brownsville! Wherever you live, the Torah is your home. And that home nobody can take from you. Nobody can take it from you and in the end you'll take it with you.

HASHEM LOVES THOSE WHO ANSWER THEIR CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS

Now we move on to a new subject, and the subject is that beautiful scene in the **הגדה של פסח** that the painters have tried to recapture on canvas. A little boy is asking his father the historic question **מה נשתנה**. Now we have to realize what a central place this occupies - not only at the *seder*. It occupies a central place in the destiny of the Jewish people. I'll explain that.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu told us why He loved our father Avraham. It's important to listen. Why do I love this man? **כי ידעתי** - I know this man. It means; My mind is on him. Now Hashem knows everybody. Why does it say that He knew Avraham? It means: I'm thinking about him all the time. **כביכול**,

Hakadosh Baruch Hu's mind is always on Avraham. Why? Why do I love this man so? למען אשר יצוה את בניו ואת ביתו אחריו - "Because I know he's going to command his children and his household after him." He'll see to it that it's handed over to his descendants. That's why I love him. ושמרו דרך השם - "They're going to keep the way of Hashem." That's why *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* loved Avraham. He knew He could trust him.

Avraham did a good job on his son too. Avraham and Sarah together. Sarah was there behind the scenes in everything. Sarah raised up Yitzchak. Don't think it was Avraham alone. When Sarah passed away Yitzchak was inconsolable, he was disconsolate. וינחם יצחק אחרי אמו it says. But at first he was disconsolate. Because his mother had raised him up.

Wherever you live,
the Torah is your
home. And that home
nobody can take from
you.

So Avraham and Sarah dedicated their lives, like the Rambam says in *Moreh Nevuchim*, להעמיד אומה עובדת השם - "To raise up a nation that will serve Hashem." That's what the Rambam says about the *Avos*. They were dedicated to that one purpose of raising up a nation, generations and generations forever, that would serve Hashem.

THE SON ASKING IS A LINK IN THE CHAIN OF OUR MESORAH

And therefore the Torah insists again and again כי ישאלך - "When your son will ask of you." It's so important that the son should ask. That's the link in the chain of the generations. The son has to be an asker, he must ask from the generations before him.

IS THE CHACHAM REALLY A CHACHAM?

Now the Malbim asks a *kasha*. Later in the *haggadah*, we learn about the four sons. One of them is a *chacham*. *Chacham*

means a learned man. In some old *Hagaddahs* he's depicted as a sage with a long beard wearing a long robe and a turban. And he's holding under one arm a big tome, a big volume. That's a *chacham*. So what does this old sage of a son, this great sage, ask of you?

He's asking: מה העדות והחוקים והמשפטים. "What are these laws that G-d commanded us?" Now, is that a question for a sage to ask?! He's a *chacham* after all - didn't he learn all the things *chukim* and *mishpatim*? But that's the question! And more than that - you must say that when מה נשתנה is asked, when we ask the מה נשתנה, we're asking the *chacham's* questions. We wouldn't pick something from the אינו יודע לשאול, and you wouldn't pick something from the *rasha*. Most likely, it's a שאלת חכם - the question of the wise son. So the wise son is four years old, this big *chacham*. And you say: "Son, take your finger out of your mouth and ask the four *kashas*." So he pulls his thumb out of his mouth and he starts stammering, "Why is this night different from all other nights?" And that's the question of a great sage! That's the example of a wise son!? The Malbim asks this *kasha*.

CHOCHMA MEANS THAT YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE

And the Malbim says that it's a mistake to think that wisdom means to know information. Wisdom doesn't mean you know. Wisdom means you *want* to know. That's a wise son! That little boy is a great *chacham* if he *wants* to know.

And therefore בני ישאלך בנך, *Mah Nishtana* - it's a prerequisite in the *gemara*. You must have somebody who will ask. If you're too young to have a son, you just married, so your wife, she'll ask you. Suppose you're a bachelor sitting alone someplace and making a *seder*, so you have to ask yourself. But somebody has to put a question. The question is vital to the *seder*. Because,

it's such a big *chochma* when the young generation turns to the old generation and asks for information. That's the great *chochma*.

WE BASE EVERYTHING ON OUR TRADITION FROM FATHER TO SON

All of Judaism stands on tradition. Our entire history stands as evidence to all our teachings. If somebody asks a question "How do I know that there is Hashem?" we can prove Hashem to him, it's not difficult. Just take out an orange and ask him: "How does it happen that the color outside is beautiful whereas on the underside of the peel there's no color?" There's no answer to that except - Hashem! Don't let go of him. He'll argue with you. He'll twist himself. He'll contort himself into ten stitches, ten knots, but don't let go of him. You have to force him against the wall. There's no way out of that question. And the only answer is Hashem.

"Son, take your finger out of your mouth and ask the four *kashas*." So he pulls his thumb out of his mouth and he starts stammering...

But we're not talking about that right now. What we're saying now is that we base everything on our tradition. We don't need any arguments. Because our forefathers were present and everybody saw. Everybody was a witness. And so all of Judaism stands on the great process of *mesorah*, handing over from father to son. And therefore it's very important that the son should receive directly from a father. Like the *gemara* says; anybody who teaches Torah to his son or to a grandson, כל המלמד תורה לבנו או לבן בנו כאילו קיבלה מהר סיני - it's like he accepted it from Sinai. We have a powerful tradition.

ASK OR YOU'LL REMAIN IGNORANT FOREVER

We have a sober tradition. There's nothing in the entire *Tanach* of superstition. The entire *Tanach* is so clear. The clear and

true waters of our tradition flow like a river, from the beginning of the world down until today. It's so clear and so convincing, but it all depends on your willingness to bend over and drink. טעמו וראו - you have to bend over and taste it. Then you'll see. If you don't want to taste - a person who's ignorant and is not willing to ask, to go to those who are willing to teach - so he'll never know. He'll remain ignorant forever. And that's why it's of the utmost importance that the son should ask.

דור לדור ישבח מעשיך - "One generation must praise Your deeds to the other generation." You know, when a child has to do things on his own it's a big thing. It's a big achievement if a child will go to the library and find Hashem in the library. Let's say he has no home, he has no father and he has no mother; in his home there's nothing. He goes to the library and he discovers, let's say, a Bible, a Cambridge Bible. It's a Bible, it's a *Tanach*. It says וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר - but there are notes on the bottom of bible critics and *apikorsim*. That boy has no instruction except in the library, so he reads it. And that boy gets something. He looks in the text on top. He never heard such great things before. He had a forefather Avraham! And now he's hearing what Avraham did to sacrifice himself for the will of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. He loved *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. So the flame is kindled in this boy. It's a great thing. A lot of boys became *frum* on their own; it's a great thing. But it's even a greater thing when the father hands it over. Because then it's part of your nature, it's part of your blood. It's in the family tradition.

MESORAH: THE MOST POWERFUL INGREDIENT FOR LOYALTY TO TORAH

A person has to be dedicated to the Torah because that's his natural way. It's in his bones. That's so important. Now a lot of you people here will think that it's not so important. You'll think:

if we do things rationally by argument, by conviction - that's all that's important. No! It's a wonderful thing to do things out of conviction. But if you're committed to the Torah because that's your family's way; my father was like that and his father was like that and all the way back, then you're walking on a bridge that's built by the generations. Psychologically, it's one of the most powerful ingredients in making a Jew eternally loyal to the Torah.

THE TRUTH OF OUR HISTORY STANDS ON SOLID FOUNDATIONS

Of course, there are people who had good families but broke away, and people who had no families who became very good. Still, if an idealist has a family behind him then it's דור לדור יושבה מעשיך. It has a tremendous impact when you hear it from your father - because you realize that *he* heard it from *his* father. And all the way back - across the ocean, in Europe, fathers were telling their sons. In Germany before they came to Poland, and in Spain before they came to Germany. And in Bavel before they came to Spain, and in *Eretz Yisroel* before they came to Bavel, and in *Mitzrayim* before they came to *Eretz Yisroel*! And you understand that the truth of our history stands on solid foundations, and it becomes part of your being - and you don't have to be convinced.

A lot of boys became *frum* on their own; it's a great thing. But it's even a greater thing when the father hands it over.

CHILDREN ASKING MA NISHTANA ARE ACTORS IN A VITAL SCENE

And that's why והגדת לבך - The whole *hagadah* is given that name because of והגדת לבך, you have to tell it to your son. And this sacred scene where the son turns to the father - of course it's been rehearsed - the son has been saying it in his *yeshiva ketana* for months already. Or the little girl. And they don't understand what's taking place, but they are actors in a vital scene.

THE IRRELIGIOUS UNDERSTAND THE HOLINESS OF THE SEDER NIGHT

It's so vital that even the *apikorsim*, *nebach* the Jews who strayed away and got lost, they still feel the importance, the vitality of that moment. And writers have written about it and many people come back home just for the *seder* alone because they understand the holiness of that night.

I was standing once on Utica Avenue and Eastern Parkway, way back when it was all white, many years ago. It was *erev Pesach*, by accident I was there *erev Pesach*. And it looked - it was remarkable. It looked like an exodus. Everybody was coming to Brooklyn. Subways, with people unloading. And it was still early.

That's how it was in those days - before the Jews became very much Americanized. Now already the new generation is *nebach* lost, of course, but in the old times, thirty years ago, people poured out of Manhattan and came to Brooklyn. They came for the *sedorim*, and they were going home, back to the old folks. Back to East New York, back to Brownsville, back to Crown Heights, from all over people were streaming. Because the call of the *seder* was felt in their bones!

Of course it doesn't pay to postpone too long, to wait just for the Pesach seder, and the generation after that already has lost contact with *mesorah*. And that's a tragedy. It's one of the great tragedies of America. Of course a lot came back, a lot of people have surprised us. A lot of people came over from Reform homes, but still there's nothing like an unbroken chain of tradition. That's why the Torah insists that the son has to ask; in order to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *hagadah* you need somebody to ask.

THE ANSWER TO THE MA NISHTANA: AVADIM HA'YINU

So now we've heard the questions from the *chacham*, and so we start out. The father says: "You asked me four good *kashas*

my son, איז דער תירוץ אזוי. Now listen to the answer. עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים - it all started when the time was when we were all slaves to Pharaoh." My friends you have to know what "Pharaoh" means.

You should know, that once there was a school of thought among Jews that said: Everything in the Torah is allegory, and nothing is כפשוטו. And they caused a lot of trouble and finally they were kicked out and we got rid of them. It was mostly the Greek Jews, Alexandrian Jews, who got hooked by this idea that it's all *mashal*. Avraham stands for a certain principle and Yitzchak stands for another principle and some of them started thinking that there never was an Avraham.

The worst obstacle for a man's progress in this world is "you're too busy".

PHARAOH IS A SYMBOL FOR THE YETZER HARAH

However, you have to know that not for nothing did such an idea develop. Actually it's true. The Torah is a lot of allegory. I won't go into it now, but Pharaoh was also an allegory - we know that from the Rambam. The Rambam tells us that פרעה הוא יצר הרע, that's what the Rambam says. Pharaoh is a symbol of the evil inclination. If we are enslaved to anybody, to anything, in this world, then we are enslaved to the *yetzer hara*.

BEING TOO BUSY IS THE YETZER HARAH OF PHARAOH

Now don't say you heard *drush* here because I won't tell you any *drush*. I'm just going to tell you what the Mesillas Yesharim says. The Mesillas Yesharim says that one of the worst obstacles, actually *the* worst obstacle for a man's progress in this world is הטיפול והטרדה - you're too busy. If you're too busy then you're enslaved to too many things. You have no time to live. Now listen to what he says. When Pharaoh heard that the *bnei*

Yisroel were talking about לאלוקינו לנלכה ונזבחה - let's go and we'll bring offerings to Hashem, so Pharaoh said: "How can I deal with this? How can I stamp this out?" So Pharaoh said: תכבד העבודה על האנשים - "Let them get busier!" So instead of giving them straw and them having an easy time - only working 20 hours a day making bricks - I won't give them any straw. So in the few hours they used to have to rest from making bricks, now they'll spend that time looking for straw.

תכבד העבודה על האנשים - "Let the work become even heavier on them." ואל ישעו בדברי שקר - "And they shouldn't have time to look for trouble." So the Mesillas Yesharim says: That's the *eitza*, that's the counsel, of the *yetzer hara*. The *yetzer hara* sees, here's a young man, there's something already developing in him. He's on the right path already. He's thinking noble thoughts. He thinks about Hashem as much as he can. There's a big danger. He might become something! So the *yetzer hara* finds something to make him more busy than he ever was before, in order that there shouldn't be any opportunity now to think at all. That's the עצת היצר, that's Pharaoh, the Mesilas Yesharim says. So what do we learn from this? It's not just fanciful words, I'm telling you now. What the Rambam said about Pharaoh is a tremendous object lesson for us.

THE WORST PART OF SLAVERY IS HAVING NO TIME TO OURSELVES

עבדים היינו, we were slaves to Pharaoh in *Mitzrayim*. You know, it's true that we were slaves. It wasn't a figure of speech. But what was worst of all was that we didn't have time for ourselves. That's what we're bemoaning. When a man is so enslaved that he can't fulfill the purpose of his life, that's the tragedy of tragedies.

PESACH IS NOT OUR JULY FOURTH

וּיִצְיָאֵנִי ה' אֶלְקֵינוּ מִשָּׁם - Hashem took us out of that slavery and He gave us "liberty." And now when you read let's say a pamphlet published by some temple of some Jewish community council. And they speak about the lesson of Passover, the lesson of freedom, that we raise the banner of freedom for all the peoples.

So you have to know it's hokey, it's baloney. *Pesach* has nothing to do with the idea of liberty of independence. *Pesach* is not a rehashing of the revolutionary war. *Pesach* is the liberation of man from his slavery to the *yetzer hara!* And in that aspect the world is not liberated, not at all.

Pesach has nothing to do with the idea of liberty of independence. *Pesach* is not a rehashing of the revolutionary war.

ERETZ YISROEL WAS LITERALLY FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY

אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם. Why did I take you out of Egypt? So that you should be free to lean back in your garden in *Eretz Yisroel* and eat figs and dates? They had beautiful figs and dates that fell from the trees in *Eretz Yisroel*. They were so big that they had to watch out when they fell down. Heavy fruit, like pumpkins! It was a *sakanah*, a danger, to sit under the trees when the fruits were ripe. And when it fell down and it squashed on the ground, the honey spattered all around, and pools of honey were formed. And that's why it became an אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֵלֶב וְדָבָשׁ. It was a land flowing with milk and honey! And the goats were all over *Eretz Yisroel*, and these goats were so full of milk. There weren't enough hands to milk them. And the milk flowed from the goats' udders into these pools where there was already the honey from the dates and the figs. And anybody who wanted could lean over and scoop up a delectable mixture of date honey and milk or fig honey and milk. It's a pleasure; try it someday if you can get the right kind of honey. I'm not talking

about bee's honey, no! I'm talking about the honey of dates. These dates were so fat that they were dripping with the heaviest sweet juice that came out, the heaviest sweet syrup. Not like a date that you get from California that's covered with some kind of preservative. It says "No preservatives added, except, and except, and except" because they don't tell you everything. And even if they were free of preservatives, can you compare those dates, those poor skimpy, skinny examples of fruits to what was in *Eretz Yisroel* when Yehoshua entered the land?

THE PURPOSE OF YETZIAS MITZRAYIM: SO THAT "I SHOULD BE YOUR ELOKIM"

But that wasn't the purpose! אני ה' אלקיכם אשר הוצאתי אתכם מארץ מצרים, why did I take you out of Egypt? - להיות לכם לאלקים - I should be your *Elokim*. All the work, all the efforts that you devoted to Pharaoh, should now go into serving Me. That's what liberty is for. אין לך בן חורין אלא מי שעוסק בתורה - I took you out of Egypt to become a nation that studies *gemara*. That's why you're here for. You're here to study *gemara*.

HASHEM SAYS: "SERVE ME INSTEAD OF LABORING WITH THE BRICKS"

Now some people will say, *gemara*? I'll study *bakashot*, I'll study *Pirkei Avot*, I'll study *Tehilim*, I'll study *Chumash*. *Gemara*, my friends. It's *gemara* that a Jew is created for. לא כרת הקדוש ברוך - הוא ברית את ישראל אלא בשביל תורה שבעל פה - *gemara* is not easy. Sometimes *gemara* causes a person to gnash his teeth in despair. And it's bitter. But he has to remind himself that under Pharaoh he gnashed his teeth over other things. And it's better over a *sugya*, it's better when the *shas* is hard and frustrating, than what happened in *mitzrayim*. And that's the purpose why He took us out.

THE SUBJECT OF THE SEDER-THE WAY HASHEM TOOK US OUT

But we have to understand that we have to study a subject tonight. And the subject is the way *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* took us out of *mitzrayim*. And that's *the* subject of the *seder*. The manner in which he delivered us from *mitzrayim*, that's what's important right now.

WITH A MIGHTY HAND

וּיֹצֵאֵנוּ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִשָּׁם - He took us out of there. Now, He could have taken us out easily. He could have sent a dream to Pharaoh like He sent a dream to *Lavan Ha'arami* or to the old Pharaoh when Avraham was there. Or He could have sent a dream like He sent to the king of the *Plishtim*. And Pharaoh would've gotten up in the morning and he would have called together his counselors and he would have said: "Look people, I decided to let the *bnei Yisroel* go." And they would have marched out and finished. But *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* made Pharaoh's heart hard, He took away his free will, it's an unusual case! And He didn't let Pharaoh send them out.

These dates were so fat that they were dripping with the heaviest sweet juice that came out, the heaviest sweet syrup. Not like a date that you get from California.

And He states that over and over again. לַמַּעַן שִׁיתִי אוֹתוֹתַי - "In order that I should make My miracles, My signs there". Because, לַמַּעַן תִּסְפָּר בְּאָזְנֵי בְנֶיךָ - "In order that you'll have something to talk about in the ears of your children". So had we been delivered from *mitzrayim* because Pharaoh had a dream and we would have marched out in an ordinary way, what would there be to talk about? We sit down at the table with a dream. Now, did we see the dream? Pharaoh had a dream at night. He came out and told people that he had a dream. And that's the end of it, nothing to talk about. But וּיֹצֵאֵנוּ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִשָּׁם בִּיד חֲזָקָה וּבְרוּעַ

נטויה - "Hashem took us out of there with a Mighty Hand and an Outstretched Arm" and therefore that's what we talk about tonight. We talk about what happened. The phenomena that took place that night. And that's something to talk about, not only on this night but all of our nights and all our days.

IT'S IMPERATIVE TO TALK ABOUT THE NISSIM

This is so important that it's a foundation stone of the Torah. And when *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* decided to give a Torah to His people, and once in history He spoke to a nation - Only once in all of history did Hashem speak to a nation - And He started talking, you have to listen to His words. He introduced Himself. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* introduced Himself: He said אנכי ה' אלקיך, He didn't say "who created heaven and earth". He didn't say "who took your father Avraham out of *Ur Kasdim*". No! אנכי ה' אלקיך - "I am the one who took you out of *mitzrayim*." And the *Kuzari* explains, the taking out of *mitzrayim*, that was the most startling and open demonstration! And when *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* said I'm the One, everybody knew who was talking. So the *nisim* of *mitzrayim* are paramount to talk about. It's imperative to talk about them. The way we went out of *mitzrayim*, that makes *pesach*. And that we have to stud

MANY JEWS REMAINED IN MITZRAYIM

But let's go on, maybe we'll come to that again. And then he puts in a note to urge us not to be lax in this. We have to devote ourselves to this job with all that we have. Because, there were once some fellow Jews of ours that didn't. And they lost out thereby. - ואילו לא הוציא הקדוש ברוך הוא את אבותינו ממצרים "If He hadn't taken us out of *mitzrayim*, then we and our children would've remained there forever." Because there were some people who remained there. There were a lot of people who

remained in *mitzrayim* because they didn't devote themselves to utilize the opportunity.

THEY TRIED TO ADOPT TO EGYPTIAN WAYS

When they were being persecuted by Pharaoh, there were some people who reacted by trying to curry favor with the Egyptians. And they tried to adopt Egyptian ways. It's like a *bachur* who comes home from the Yeshiva at night, but he's afraid that the *shekotzim*, the bums, will pick on him so he doesn't wear a black hat. He tries to get a cap so that he should look like a bum himself, he wants to dress in such a way - with a baseball jacket with "Mets" on it so people will think that it's an ordinary boy. That's his camouflage.

He wants to dress in such a way - with a baseball jacket with "Mets" on it.

In *mitzrayim* there were two kinds of Jews. One kind of Jew said "No", we're going to demonstrate who we are, even if that means a stone in the head. When you walked through the streets at night, the Egyptians gave you a stone in the head. Because the Jews were already hated. But there were Jews who insisted on dressing like Jews, they dressed like Jews. And they spoke only the Jewish language. And they called themselves only Jewish names. And they looked down on the persecutors and they were proud. They knew who they were and they despised the people of the land.

But there were many weaklings who tried to curry favor and to look like the people around them so that they should escape persecution. And those people remained in Egypt. They didn't leave Egypt. Like it says later, אֵילֹוֹ הַיְי שָׁם לֹא הָיָה נִגְאָל. Only those who gladly suffered the disability of being a Jew, they're the ones who went out. And therefore he tells us that we have to

apply ourselves to this job of talking about what happened that night.

AMONG THE SAGES, \$ OR LACK OF IT MADE NO DIFFERENCE

Now there's a *maysa*. "It happened that Rebbe Elazar and Rebbe Yehoshua and Reb Elazar ben Azarya and Rebbe Akiva and Rebbe Tarfon **שהיו מסובים בבני ברק** – all of these people were reclining that night in Bnei Brak." They were keeping the *seder* in Bnei Brak. Now it's good to know who they were: There are five persons here and four of them were millionaires while one of them was a very big pauper, a very poor man.

But among the sages, money or lack of it didn't make any difference. If you were a talmid chacham you had exactly the same status as a millionaire. So Rebbe Yehoshua ben Chananya who made a living by producing needles in his home over a fire of charcoal, was just as important as the millionaire Rebbe Eliezer ben Horkenus, or the millionaire Reb Elazar ben Azarya, or the millionaire Rebbe Akiva, or the millionaire Rebbe Tarfon. And these five sages were sitting all night in Bnei Brak and they had something to talk about.

PROVIDING A NACHAS RUACH TO HASHEM AT THE SEDER

Now these people had already gone through *yetzias mitzrayim* with a fine-toothed comb. They had studied it in the previous years. This wasn't the first night they were up all night. But what did they do that night? That night they were serving *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. Like the Zohar says: Tonight you'll provide a *nachas ruach* for *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. And the more you talk, your words are brought up to heaven, to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, by the melachim and it causes so to speak, a happiness to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*.

Now, that night they were busy producing nachas ruach to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. And they were working hard. It's not easy to be *mechadesh chiddushim* on a subject that you went through thoroughly. But that's what they did! And they did it all night long! Which means that these people weren't inebriated, and they weren't sleeping, they were working. They were busy with a night of great opportunity. "This is not the night to waste", they said.

Now of course, we people, if we do the *seder* and then we go to sleep, so *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* will give you a reward. But anybody who puts in more effort, כל המרבה לספר הרי זה משובה. And that's what we're learning here, that these great sages were able to spend the entire night in being מחדש חידושים. And they didn't stop. They didn't want to stop. It's only when the *talmidim* came and said "You can't go on any longer", otherwise they would have continued.

I WAS LIKE 70 YEARS OLD THROUGH MY LABORING IN TORAH

And now with this introduction we listen to Rebbe Elazar ben Azarya. Reb Elazar ben Azarya was a young man and he says הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה - "I am like a man of seventy years". Now, he wasn't seventy years. He was far from 70 years. He was around 18 years old but he was like a man of seventy years old. It means that he had labored in the Torah to such an extent, he listened to the sages, to such an extent that he gained the status of his *chaverim* who were somewhere around 70 years.

Now, people will tell you that this refers to the fact that his beard had turned white. That's true, his beard turned white. That's in the *gemara*. But that's not enough. A white beard doesn't make you הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה that you should talk about it. ולא זכיתי - so

The Zohar says:
Tonight you'll provide a *nachas ruach* for *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*.
And the more you talk, your words are brought up to heaven.

what *z'chus* is there in a white beard? A lot of people turn white when they're 30, it doesn't mean a thing. But he means that he utilized the opportunity.

Because when he was 18 he was fit to be chosen as the **רִישׁ מַתִּיבְתָא** instead of *Rabban Gamliel*. It's only that he had a black beard, so his wife said how can a black bearded young man like you accept such a position? So **מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם** they caused his beard to turn white. But he had prepared himself. Now, he said, after all these years that I labored in the Torah; he said that he never learned a proof, a *remez* from the Torah, that you must speak about *yetzias mitzrayim* at night. Until ben Zoma came along and he found a *remez*.

GOOD FOR A MAN: THANK HASHEM FROM MORNING TILL NIGHT

Now, we won't go into the details but the principle that's involved here is as follows. Dovid *hamelech* said **טוֹב לַהֲדוֹת לַה'**, it's good to praise Hashem. **לְהַגִּיד בְּבֹקֶר חֶסֶד** - to relate in the morning Your kindness **וְאִמּוּנַתְךָ בַּלַּיִל** - and Your steadfastness at night. But we have to know what's the *p'shat* in this *pasuk*. Dovid is really saying this: Only at night you talk about the steadfastness of Hashem and in the morning you don't talk about His steadfastness? And the *chesed* of Hashem is only in the morning and not at night? So *p'shat* in the *pasuk* is this. **טוֹב לַהֲדוֹת לַה'** - **וְלַהֲגִיד אִמּוּנַתְךָ בְּבֹקֶר וּבַלַּיִל** and **לַה', לְהַגִּיד בְּבֹקֶר חֶסֶד וּבַלַּיִל** - that's the plain meaning of the *pasuk*. And if you learn tonight that way you'll understand very many places in Tanach. That's what it means.

What's good for a man? That in the morning he should speak about the kindness of Hashem and His steadfastness. And in the evening he should talk about the same thing. What about in between? In between, certainly! It means you start out in the

morning talking about it and you finish off at night talking about it, and in between that's what you do, all day long! That's your job. So now if you want to know what your job is, you start out in the morning when you open up your eyes and you start thanking *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* that you're alive. And you have to keep busy all day long until you close your eyes at night. So now you know the program of a Jew.

And now Rebbe Elazar ben Azarya said, "I know that there's a duty to mention *yetzias mitzrayim* by day and by night but I could never prove it." Because this means that a Jew has two minimum requirements. Every morning you must talk about *yetzias mitzrayim* and every night. And by the way, when you're saying the *parsha* of *tzizis* you have to think about this. Why do you say the *parsha* of *tzitzis* every day? Because, you want to mention *yetzias mitzrayim*, not because of *tzitzis*.

The *chesed* of Hashem is only in the morning and not at night?

SAYING WITHOUT THINKING IS MISSING THE OPPORTUNITY

Now, if a person would say it without thinking what he's saying, so he missed an opportunity. So while you're saying **אמת ויציב** in the morning and you were taking a tour let's say of Europe, and when you come back and you see it's all over, you were completely tuned out while you were saying **ויאמר ה' אל משה** and then when you start saying **לאמר** - the *parsha* of *Tzitzis*, and then when you start saying **אמת ויציב** you come back to yourself. You must use that opportunity and at least there say **ממצרים גאלתנו ה' אלוקיננו ומבית עבדים פדיתנו**. That's important. So if you fell asleep during **אני ה' אלקיכם אשר** **הוצאתי אתכם מארץ מצרים** then you should think what you're saying.

The same is in the evening. If you weren't thinking when you said *יציא מצרים*, so at *אמת ואמונה* you have to say *הפורינו מיד מלכים*, and you have to think what you're saying.

Now, Rebbe Elazar ben Azaryah learned this principle already from tradition. He knew long ago that you must say it twice a day, but he was looking for a *remez*. Where do you find a *remez* that you have to say it at night? And ben Zoma brought the *remez*. But in the meantime we see that the Jewish nation knew about it. They all practiced it. They spoke about *yetzias mitzrayim* constantly.

We have no idea how frequently *yetzias mitzrayim* was in the mouth of old Jews. *ירמי' הנביא* says a day will come he said when Jews will stop swearing *מארץ* *בני ישראל* *את אשר הוציא את בני ישראל מארץ מצרים* and they'll start swearing *ה' חי' ה'* who took us out of the exile and brought us back to Eretz Yisroel. Because in *Yirmiya's* time when a Jew swore, that's how he swore *ה' חי' ה'* who took us out of *mitzrayim*. Because that was on their tongues all the time. Not only in the morning and the evening. The morning and the evening are only requirements to remind us.

THINK ABOUT YETZIAS MITZRAYIM ON TISH'A B'AV TOO

But let's say you're sitting in your office in Manhattan or you're standing in your grocery store in Boro Park in the middle of the day, and you remind yourself that you went out of *mitzrayim*. It's not *pesach*, let's say it's, *תשעה באב* or it's a day before Purim and you'll think about *yetzias mitzrayim*. That's what you're supposed to do. The *מצוות עשה* is in the morning and in the evening but the purpose is, you should always think about it. *למען תזכור את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חיך*.

CHOFETZ CHAIM REVIEWING THE MAKKOS!

I'll give you a picture of a Jew who used to live that way. Once a *talmid* in the Radin Yeshiva peeked in through the keyhole. It wasn't nice to do it. He wanted to see what the *Chofetz Chaim* was doing. The Chofetz Chaim had a little room in yeshiva, so he peeked through the keyhole and he saw the Chofetz Chaim sitting on the edge of his bed holding a Chumash. Now, it wasn't the week when they were reading that *sedra*. It wasn't Bo or Beshalach, it wasn't pesach, it was in middle of the year! But, the *Chofetz Chaim* was a Jew who lived Judaism. He wasn't a stereotype who just followed - because it's a *mitzvah* in the morning, so I'm finished my obligation and now I'm done. I discharged my obligation, I'm finished with *yetzias mitzrayim* for the rest of the day until at night, and then I'll perfunctorily mention it again and forget about it. No, he lived *yetzias mitzrayim*. This talmid saw the Chofetz Chaim sitting at the edge of a bed holding a Chumash and he was reading the story of the *makos* that befell Pharaoh. And he was saying as follows, "A *maka* came on Pharaoh, **אִי גוֹט אוֹיף עֵדָה**" he said.

We have no idea how frequently yetzias mitzrayim was in the mouth of old Jews!

The *Chofetz Chaim* was an old sage. He had been through this years. He was an old man. He studied it with all the *meforshim*, you could be sure. But the *Chofetz Chaim* wanted to relive - to reenact those things. He lived *yetzias mitzrayim*. And as he sat on his bed he was picturing exactly what happened. Pharaoh was sitting, let's say also on his bed, his royal couch, and he was scratching on all sides. He couldn't escape it in his royal chambers. **וְהָיוּ הַכִּינִים בְּכָל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם** - and he was picturing under the purple, under the ermine, under the velvet, under the satin - it was crawling. And Pharaoh was cursing and stamping his feet and calling exterminators. But nothing would help. And the

Chofetz Chaim was picturing that and he was saying א"י גוט אויף - "good for him!"

Now that's the briefest kind of report because that boy didn't have the nerve to look long. He felt he was eavesdropping on the *shechina* when he looked at the *Chofetz Chaim* through the keyhole. But we can be sure that the *Chofetz Chaim* spent more time on the subject than the boy saw.

And that's what we're expected to be. To remember *yetzias mitzrayim* all the days of your life. So as you're driving down the speedway, of course keep your eye on traffic, but keep your mind on *yetzias mitzrayim* and know that you came out of *mitzrayim* for a purpose. And the purpose is not to get in your car and drive around in this world. The purpose is not merely to chase after a *parnasa*. And the purpose is not merely to live for good times. We're here in this world in order: אני ה' אלוקיכם אשר הוצאתי אתכם - מארץ מצרים להיות לכם לאלוקים - to serve Hashem. Now that's the big responsibility of *yetzias mitzrayim*, all the days of your life.

WHATEVER WE DO ,WE'RE THANKING FOR YETZIYAS MITZRAYIM

Now, we're going on to a couple of more points. ברוך המקום - which means as a result of studying this subject, what are we going to do all our lives? That's what we're going to say. We're always going to say these words ברוך המקום הוא. Whatever we do we're thanking *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* for *yetzias mitzrayim*. Whether you say ברוך אתה ה' אלוקינו מלך העולם שהכל נהי' or ברוך ה' אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וציונו להניח תפילין or בדברו whatever you're doing in this world to serve *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* it's gratitude because He took you out of *mitzrayim*.

THERE'S NOTHING COMPARED TO INGRATITUDE

Now you remember the case of the מסית ומדיח - the false prophet who came to persuade you to forsake Hashem and

worship an idol? So the Torah says you should have no pity on him. You should give him a punishment; put him to death. Now what's the terrible thing he wanted to do, this *מסית ומדיח? כי ביקש* - להדיחך מה' אלקיך המוציאך מארץ מצרים - he wanted to dissuade you from serving Hashem who took you out of Egypt. Don't say because he wanted to make you serve idols to do wicked things. That's nothing compared to ingratitude of forgetting that you went out of *mitzrayim*, that's what counts. That's why his sin is so terrible. And so we see that that's what counts in everything we do as Jews. We do it because of *yetzias mitzrayim* and that's why you say now *ברוך המקום ברוך הוא*. All our lives we say these words.

Now the *haggada* starts enumerating some things. And he enumerates so that the first and the biggest thing is *ברוך שנתן תורה* - the Torah is the greatest of all the gifts He gave to us. Then, he starts out with the sons, ah, that's our problem the sons. *עמלינו אלו הבנים* - "all of our toil- that's the sons". Our entire labor as a nation and our labor as individuals is to raise up our sons to Torah. *עמלינו* it says later *אלו הבנים*. And therefore the problem of the sons comes to the surface immediately at the beginning of the *hagadah*.

Nobody should have an error and think that the rasha is a hippy boy who ran away from home and he lives in Greenwich Village.

ALL THE JEWS KEPT EVERYTHING-EVEN THE "RASHA"

Now the four kinds of sons, nobody should have an error and think that the rasha is a hippy boy who ran away from home and he lives in Greenwich Village. No. the rasha is a *frum* boy and he learns Torah, and he's sitting at his father's *seder*. That's a Jewish *rasha*. And he's eating *matzo* and *maror* and doing whatever is required of him. That's what he's going to do with his children too!

You have no idea what the ancient Jewish people were. Even the thieves were loyal Jews who kept everything. But, they weren't lucky in business so they sought another *parnasa* and became hold-up men. But the hold-up men ate matzo and *maror*, no question about it. And so the *rasha* here doesn't mean a *rasha chas v'sholom* who has forsaken the Torah. It's such a silly idea. If you think that's the case then you don't know Jewish history. All the Jews kept everything, always. So what's the *rasha* about here?

THE RASHA FEELS SERVING HASHEM IS BURDENSOME

The *rasha* is something that's very hidden, and only the father is smart enough to sense it. Now, רשע מה הוא אומר - the world says a joke. It's not the *p'shat*, but the joke is: *rasha* מה הוא "whatever he is", אומר "he says". It means: he reveals what he is. But that's not the plain *p'shat*. What does the *rasha* say? מה העבודה הזאת לכם - "What is this service for you?" So the Yerushalmi says why did he have to mention *avodah*? There are so many things he could've mentioned החוקים, המשפטים. Now, *avodah* is a great thing. *Avodas Hashem*, to serve Hashem, it's a wonderful thing to say that. But when a man chooses a certain word, it's a giveaway. It shows what's in his heart. And because it's "work" to him, that's why he used that word.

Aha, serving Hashem comes difficult to you, it's a little burdensome to you, that's a Jewish *rasha*! He sits at the *seder* and after the *seder* he takes out a *gemara*, a *gemara pesachim*. He sits and learns. Everybody in his house learns late at night, even after the *seder*, until the effect of the wine wears off we learn and learn. But he doesn't have the happiness of his brother. His brother is happy, while he does it like a job, like it's a difficult chore. That's an old time Jewish *rasha*. It's *avodah*, that's what it is.

So the father understands that this is not the son he was hoping for. So the father says, "If you don't love it, if your heart's not in it בלב שלם, then you have to know; had you been in *mitzrayim* you wouldn't have gone out." אילו הי' שם לא הי' נגאל.

Now the Jews in *mitzrayim* who didn't go out, they weren't as wicked as we try to make them. We like to make them as wicked as we could in order to have some justification for ourselves. But the truth is that they weren't that bad because they suffered a

Even after the *seder*, until the effect of the wine wears off we learn and learn.

great deal. What people can undergo such difficulties without yielding, without giving a little bit? Such difficulties and they shouldn't yield a little bit? But that wasn't the blame. The blame was that their heart wasn't in it like the other Jews. Only the choicest ones went out, because their heart was in it.

THE JEW WHO THIRSTED TO SERVE HASHEM WENT OUT

The Jews who *thirsted* to serve *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, they went out. And the ones who did it perfunctorily, they were *frum* Jews, today they would've stood in the shul like all of us, shaking themselves by *davenen*. מצוות אנשים מלומדה, these Jews would've remained in *mitzrayim*. It's only the Jews who are full of fire; they're the ones who are going to survive. And that's the difference between the ancient *rasha* and the *chacham*. And don't make any mistake about it.

WE WERE TAKEN OUT OF MITZRAYIM TO DO MITZVOS

And one more point and then we'll conclude. It says בעבור – זה לא אמרתי אלא בשעה שיש מצה ומרור מונחים לפניך – It states because of "this", Hashem took us out of *mitzrayim*. So we say these words only when the matzo and *maror* are lying before you. יכול מראש חודש, I might think you start the *seder* from *Rosh Chodesh*, because

on that day you were commanded all these laws. So he says no. **בַּעֲבוּר זֶה**, only when the matzo and *maror* are there.

Now what does that mean? Briefly we'll say that it means this: We were taken out of *mitzrayim* in order that we should eat matzo and *maror*. We were taken out of *mitzrayim* in order we should do mitzvahs. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* didn't take us out of *mitzrayim* because He couldn't look; He couldn't tolerate people being oppressed. That wasn't the reason.

He didn't take us out of *mitzrayim* because He wanted to give us freedom like He promised Avraham our forefather, no. He didn't take us out of *mitzrayim* because we cried out and He heard our prayers. All these things were necessary. But He took us out of *mitzrayim* that we should be His people. And His people means, only to do *mitzvos*. If you don't do *mitzvos* then you're not the *am Hashem*. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* has no interest in Jews who stop doing *mitzvos*. You could be a Zionist, you can be a patriot for Israel, if you're a man who doesn't do all the *mitzvos* then you don't belong to the Jewish people. And you deserve to get lost in the maelstrom of history. It's only **בַּעֲבוּר זֶה** because of matzo and *maror*, because of *mitzvos*, that we were taken out of *mitzrayim*.

And therefore when a Jew performs *mitzvos* he is fulfilling *yetzias mitzrayim*. That's the purpose. If a Jew will speak about going out of *mitzrayim* and not do anything, it's nothing at all. It's only **דְּבָרִים בְּעִלְמָא**. So *yetzias mitzrayim* requires a Jew to devote himself. Every man and every woman, every boy and every girl should live lives of *yetzias mitzrayim*. Which means; "Do you think it's hard to do this?" You have to think; "Was it easier when we were under Pharaoh?" Or "It costs too much money to do this". Well, did we have any money under Pharaoh? We have to sacrifice certain conveniences to be Jews. What conveniences did

we have under Pharaoh? And therefore nothing should be too difficult for a Jew, because that's his way of *yetzias mitzrayim*.

Now when a Jew says I want to live in a comfortable neighborhood - far away where there are no blacks, I want to live where there are a lot of trees, in suburbs. So we say, did the Jews live where they wanted under Pharaoh in *mitzrayim*? The Jews would have been happy to live in Brownsville if they could leave Egypt.

He didn't take you out of Egypt to run away from the Jewish people and to get lost among *apikorsim* or among gentiles. So therefore a Jew has no excuse. We're not in this world to become citizens of Edison, New Jersey. We're not in this world to become citizens of some rural community in the South or in Florida. We're in this world to serve *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. And the way to serve *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* is to get close to Him.

WE SHOULDN'T SETTLE FOR BEING 75% HASHEM'S

And if a Jew wants to demonstrate that he understands *yetzias mitzrayim* he's not going to sacrifice his accomplishments for the sake for some superficial material conveniences. A Jew has to dedicate his life just to the one goal, to show that he remembers *yetzias mitzrayim*. ה'י' who took us out of *eretz mitzrayim*. And by living that way, he will live successfully because that's the purpose of going out - that we should utilize this great phenomenon. The way He took us out of *mitzrayim* באותות ובמופתים - we never forget it. And nothing should be too difficult for us. We shouldn't try to settle for 50% or 75%, we are all His, like we were all the possession of Pharaoh.

You could be a Zionist, you can be a patriot for Israel, if you're a man who doesn't do all the *mitzvos* then you don't belong to the Jewish people.

And just like Pharaoh took our children and threw them into the *yam* to destroy them or he immured them in the wall, we take our children and give them to the Roshei *yeshivos*. It's a little bit better. We say "Take our children, they're yours!" We don't want any *nachas* except Torah *nachas*. We want nothing from our children except they should be devoted to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. That's our way of appreciating *yetzias mitzrayim*.

TAPE #214 - Preface to Pesach