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קדש

מוזגין לו כוס ראשון ונטולו בידו ומקדשים עליו. וימוזג לו איש אחר דרך חרות. ויכון ליצאת מצות קידוש ומצות כוס ראשון. בשבת מוסיף של שבת.

וְיִהְיֶה עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בִקְרֵי יוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי: וַיְכַלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל צְבָאָם: וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלֹאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְכַל מְלֹאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה: וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ, כִּי בּו שָׁבַת מְכַל מְלֹאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:

סְבָרֵי מְרַנֵּן וּרְבִנֵּן וּרְבֹתֵי:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מְכַל עָם, וְרוֹמְמָנוּ מְכַל לְשׁוֹן, וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וַתִּתֵּן לָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה (שְׁבִתוֹת לְמַנוּחָה 1) מוֹעֲדִים לְשִׂמְחָה, חַגִּים וְזִמְנִים לְשִׂשׁוֹן (אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִת הַזֶּה 1) אֶת יוֹם חַג הַמִּצּוֹת הַזֶּה זְמַן חֲרוּתֵנוּ (בְּאַהֲבָה) מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ, וְזָכַר לְיִצְיָאֵת מִצְרָיִם. כִּי בָנוּ בְּחִרְתָּ וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ מְכַל הָעַמִּים, (וְשִׁבַּת) וּמוֹעֲדֵי קֹדֶשׁ (בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרִצּוֹן) בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְשִׂשׁוֹן הַנִּחְלָתָנוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מִקְדֵּשׁ (הַשְּׁבִת 1) יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַזִּמְנִים:

במוצאי שבת מוסיפין:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מְאוֹרֵי הָאֵשׁ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמְבָדִיל בֵּין קוֹדֶשׁ לְחֹל, בֵּין אֹר לְחוֹשֶׁק, בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַמִּים, בֵּין יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי לְשִׁשֶׁת יָמֵי הַמַּעֲשֵׂה, בֵּין קְדוּשַׁת שְׁבִת לְקְדוּשַׁת יוֹם טוֹב הַבְּדִלָתָה, וְאֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִשִּׁשֶׁת יָמֵי הַמַּעֲשֵׂה קְדוּשַׁת הַבְּדִלָתָה וְקְדוּשַׁת אֶת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקְדוּשַׁתְךָ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַמְבָדִיל בֵּין קוֹדֶשׁ לְקוֹדֶשׁ:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁחִיָּנוּ וְקִיָּמָנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזְמַן הַזֶּה:

ושותה כל הכוס (ולכל הפחות רובה) בהסיבת שמאל ואינו מברך ברכה אחרונה ואינו שותה עוד יין עד כוס שני.

ורחץ

נוטל את ידיו ואינו מברך 'על נטילת ידים'.

כרפס

ישול מן הכרפס פחות מכזית שלא יתחייב בברכה אחרונה באכילתו, וישבלנו במי מלח, ויברך 'בורא פרי האדמה' ויכוין לפטור בברכה זו גם את המרור והכורך כדי שלא לגרום לברכה שלא לצורך, ויאכלנו אף שלא בהסיבה.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה:

יחץ

ברצעים את המצה האמצעית לשני חלקים שאינם שווים. את חלקה הקטן יניח במקומו, ואת הגדול ישמור בתוך מפה תחת שלש המצות לאפיקומן.



יחץ

Tonight is indeed different from all other nights. While a father has a constant obligation to teach his children Torah, this night is different. The constant mitzvah is derived from the *pasuk* of "ולמדתם אותם את" ⁵ which refers to transmitting the information and facts of Torah. For this night, however, there is a different *pasuk*: "והגדת לבנך" ⁶ which contains two new components.

The first is "והגדת." Unlike "ולמדתם," this is accomplished not by teaching, but through the art of *sippur*, storytelling. This is a very different method than teaching. Teaching allows one to know; storytelling allows one to experience.

5 Devarim 11:19; see Rambam, *Mishneh Torah*, *Talmud Torah* 1:1.

6 Shemos 13:8

The second is “בעבוד זֶה,” which introduces a tool for the art of storytelling: acting. Acting the part, with props and artifacts, is a potent ingredient in turning the story that is being told from an event that is history (as in his-story) into one that is your story. You are living it. You are experiencing it. Whereas “ולמדתם” is informative, “והגדת” is formative, and that is its power.

Why is it so necessary that we and our children experience the process of going free? Why isn't knowing it sufficient? The answer lies in the existential difference between servility and service. One who is servile is one who is irrelevant. He or she does not matter, does not count for anything at all. Their lives are deemed replaceable, and their value is only proportional to their output.

The Torah, however, proclaims, “You **do** matter!” Every aspect of your life has meaning and offers opportunity. Everything you think, everything you feel, is of the utmost importance to the *Borei* and has consequences for you yourself and for the world that was created as a reflection of the will of its Creator. A Torah cannot be given to a nation that does not recognize just how much they actually matter. There cannot even be a nation altogether. And so, an exodus from servility is an absolute prerequisite for a person and a people chosen for service.

But awareness of mattering is something that must be experienced. It's not enough to only be told that you're conjoined (*kadosh*), valued (*segulah*), or loved (*chaviv*); you need to be made to feel joined, valued, and loved. And that's why we must experience the statement *yetzias Mitzrayim* is making, and freedom must be felt in the very essence of our being. Whereas knowing is informative, experiencing is formative, and that makes the whole difference.

The components of the Seder can be divided into two main categories: storytelling and acting. *U'rechatz* and *Karpas* are acting out a role in a play. The play is *cheirus*, and they are the “conduct of the free.” *Yachatx* is an artifact, the prop in the play: plain and broken bread. Half a slice. The sustenance of the afflicted slave. Hold it up, describe what it is, and sense the state of one who has this to eat.

מגיד

מגלה המצות ואומר בקול רם:

הָא לַחֲמַא עֲנִיא דִּי אֶכְלוּ אַבְהַתְנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם. כָּל דְּכַפִּין יִיתִי
וַיְכוּל. כָּל דְּעָרִיד יִיתִי וַיִּפְסַח. הַשְׁתָּא הָכָא, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּאַרְעָא
דִּישְׂרָאֵל. הַשְׁתָּא עֲבָדִי, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּנֵי חוּרִין:



הא לחמא עניא

Although the sad opening of “הא לחמא עניא” is at the beginning of *Maggid*, in truth, it is part of *Yachatz*. The poverty, terror, and pressures are visual and become tangible. The father tells his child, “We ate *this*,” and the child can relate to the suffering endured.

כל דכפין

This invitation isn’t actual. Those already present don’t need it, and those not present can’t possibly hear it. The invitation is extending verbally the activity of *Yachatz* by describing the low status of this bread. It is so devalued and simple that we just give it away. If it were a delicacy, an expensive dish, it would not be offered as easily, and neither would one have the audacity to ask.

השתא הכא

As indicated by its title, the *Maggid* segment is primarily storytelling. And what could be more captivating than a story that is told by the characters themselves? A tale⁷ of war told by the soldier is far more enthralling than a history textbook, and the story of a real-life person is more exciting than of a fictional one. When telling the story of slavery, one can point

7 A brief account of something interesting that happened *especially to one personally* (emphasis mine).

מכסים את המצות ומוזגים לו כוס שני. וכאן הבן שואל, ואחר כך שב ושואל ראש המסובים:

מַה נְשַׁתְנָה הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַלֵּילוֹת:
שֶׁבְכָל הַלֵּילוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֶמֶץ וּמֵצָה, הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה כֵּלּוּ מֵצָה:
שֶׁבְכָל הַלֵּילוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שְׂאֵר יִרְקוֹת, הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה מְרוֹר:
שֶׁבְכָל הַלֵּילוֹת אֵין אָנוּ מְטַבְּלִין אֶפְסֵינוּ פְּעַם אַחַת,
הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה שְׁתֵּי פְּעָמִים:
שֶׁבְכָל הַלֵּילוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבֵין וּבֵין מְסוּבֵין,
הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה כָּלְנוּ מְסוּבֵין:



to a real slave and say, “Let me tell you their story,”⁸ or better yet, one can say, “I want to tell you my own tale of slavery.” Here, as we start to tell the story, not only do we point at a real slave, but the slave we point at is—ourselves! Currently, we are not in our own land, and we are under the dominion of others. When seen this way, this simple statement profoundly changes the setting of the story. We become the cast in the play.

While these words won’t be said after our final *geulah*, perhaps that is because they won’t be necessary. After all, it will be a real-time experience of *cheirus*. But as long as we have the opportunity, we seize it.

מה נשתנה

Imagine you’re a child who has gone up to Yerushalayim with your parents and family. The entire afternoon has been a carnival. Thousands, nay, millions of people have converged on the city with innumerable *korbanos*. Three massive rotations are being processed by an army of Kohanim, and *Hallel* is being sung repetitively by a majestic choir of Leviim. It is a sight of pomp and pageantry on a colossal scale. As the afternoon

8 Rambam, *Mishneh Torah, Chametz U'Matzah* 7:2.

המצות תהיינה מגולות בשעת אמירת ההגדה דלכן נקראת המצה "לחם עוני"
שעונן עליו דברים הרבה.

עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם, וַיֹּצִיאֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִשָּׁם בְּיַד
חֲזָקָה וּבְזֹרֹעַ נְטוּיָה. וְאֵילֹוֹ לֹא הוֹצִיא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, הֲרִי אָנוּ וּבְנֵינוּ וּבְנֵי בְנֵינוּ מִשְׁעָבָדִים הָיִינוּ
לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם: וְאִפְּלוּ כָלֵנוּ חֲכָמִים, כָּלֵנוּ נְבוֹנִים, כָּלֵנוּ זְקֵנִים,
כָּלֵנוּ יוֹדְעִים אֶת הַתּוֹרָה, מִצָּהָה עָלֵינוּ לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם. וְכָל
הַמְרָבָה לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם, הֲרִי זֶה מְשׁוּבָח:



wanes, makeshift rotisseries and bakeries are springing up everywhere as far as the eye can see, with strange bread and funny vegetables being passed around.

Imagine you're a child who comes home from shul and finds the table set with similar pomp and pageantry; same strange bread and funny vegetables with interesting condiments. The furniture has been upgraded with extra padding, and your father is acting eccentric.

The Seder, due to its annual recurrence, has conditioned us to these sights. But they are, undeniably, a curiosity—curious being the operative word. Without the preconditioning, these sights would have inevitably elicited an exclamation of curiosity: “why”? And that “why” is the objective. We're even willing to add to the eccentricities, to randomly remove the iconic *ke'arah* from the table, to induce it. It's the objective because expressing wonderment about the extraordinary is the drive that has led to all the great discoveries. In seeking to resolve a curiosity, one is forced to advance from the surficial to the comprehensive, leading to understanding in place of just knowing and observing instead of merely seeing. Even without the child asking, or without a child to ask, we are still obligated to ask ourselves if need be. By prompting an investigative dialogue, we will appreciate the answer as far more than informative; it will be a “Eureka moment” that leads to experiential clarity.

עבדים היינו

Mah Nishtanah is most commonly titled “The Four Questions.” This is a grave misnomer, because, in fact, it is but one question strengthened by four examples, essentially the question being: “why are we acting so differently this night?” The examples are all those eccentricities the child is noticing. If it were four separate questions, then we have to wonder why the answers are not provided. *Avadim Hayinu* might indirectly answer for matzah and maror, but it doesn’t address dipping twice, which is done solely so that the child will ask, or why we recline in our chairs. Those quirks are not answered by *Avadim Hayinu*. But it is all only one question: “Why is this mitzvah different from all others in that it is a performance to be acted out with costumes and stage props?” And the answer is: “*Avadim Hayinu*.” Here is the explanation for why we do the strange things mentioned in the question. It is because we were slaves and were made free. It is because we were taken from low servility and lifted high to sublime service. It is because we understand the need to experience that very process in as actual a way as possible, and the eccentricities facilitate that.

ואילו לא הוציא

Before his death, Yosef gathered his brothers and allayed their concerns about his impending death by reminding them of the promise given of eventual redemption.⁹ Using the same words Yaakov used,¹⁰ he tells them “ואלוקים יפקד אתכם”—Hashem will surely consider¹¹ you.” He then continues and imposes an oath on them. A discerning reading of this oath shows that it actually consists of two distinct parts: first, a repetition of Hashem’s promise of redemption—“פקד יפקד אלוקים אתכם”—and second, that when remembered, they will take his body out with them.

Yosef, like his father before him, imposed on them an oath demanding that they carry up his bones with them when they leave Mitzrayim. Given his

9 *Bereishis* 50:24–25.

10 *Rashi, Shemos* 3:18.

11 To regard or treat in an attentive or kindly way.

position in Egypt, this would be necessary in order to guarantee that he is ultimately buried in Eretz Yisrael. But what is the oath inherent in the repeated “פקד יפקוד”? What about Hashem’s remembering them are they swearing to? Chazal explain that Yosef was imposing on them the responsibility to transmit these exact words, generation to generation, to act as a code.¹² Should one appear and announce “פקד,” that statement alone would identify him as the redeemer. And indeed, when Hashem speaks with Moshe at the *s’neh*, He gives him this codeword for identification.¹³

The question is obvious: The brothers all swore to Yosef that the phrase would be communicated to the following generations, but the transmission itself undermines its efficacy! If it is to be shared, then it can be usurped, and if it can be usurped, then it can no longer establish the veracity of the claimant. Yet, as defective a “secret” code it seems to have been, nonetheless, Hashem tells Moshe that based on it, “they will certainly heed you.”¹⁴ Seemingly, there is no fear of anyone falsely using it. But if so, then there wouldn’t be a need for the code in the first place!

Commonly translated as “redeemed,” “פקוד” means far more than that. *Onkelos* translates it as “remembering,” and elsewhere the word is used to mean “counting.” “Appointing” is also “פקידה,” as is “commanding.” A more accurate definition of “פקוד” would be “commissioned.” Commissioned has the connotation of being counted, set aside for a purpose, appointed to a position or project, or commanded to do something. Using this definition, “פקד” is not limited to mean the particular act of counting, appointing, or remembering. Instead, it connotes being charged with a specific, higher purpose. As such, “פקד יפקוד” is in fact an effective code. It isn’t the articulated word that identifies the redeemer, it is what it conveys that identifies him. One can’t simply walk in and announce “פקד” in an unhinged fashion, because one can’t fabricate the commission. Only one who *can* declare that you have been charged with a purpose will dare to do so. And therein is the power of the code. In order to claim that

12 *Midrash Tanchuma, Shemos 24.*

13 *Shemos 3:16.*

14 *Ibid., 3:18, Rashi.*

you are the true redeemer, you must be able to also purport that Hashem has enjoined us with a mission, namely to receive a Torah.

Note that before Hashem shared the code *words* with Moshe, He had already given him an entirely different sign:

וזה לך האות כי אנכי שלחתיך בהוציאך את העם ממצרים תעבדון את האלוקים על ההר הזה.

*And this shall be the sign that I have sent you: with the exodus from Egypt you shall serve Hashem on this mountain.*¹⁵

Not the words “פקד יפקוד,” but the service at this mountain. The implication being that “פקד יפקוד” would mean nothing at all if Moshe couldn’t state as fact that “with the exodus you shall serve on this mountain.” It is only because the promised and described commission complements “פקד יפקוד” that Moshe is proven to be the true redeemer.

It is this commission that we celebrate as freedom. Without it, we would still be enslaved. If Hashem had not taken us from Egypt, then we, forever, would still be servile. Perhaps not actual slaves, but then, *yetzias Mitzrayim* is not just emancipation from slavery; it is freedom from servility through being chosen for service. Actual and true *cheirus* is being commissioned to “serve Hashem on this mountain.”

But don’t imagine that this is only meant figuratively. The Haggadah also means to express a literal, historical fact. Renaissance always emerges out of freedom from the shackles of *avodah zarah*. As long as humanity is closed off to wondering about, questioning, or exploring its surroundings, it is neutered and will never advance forward. The Dark Ages were exactly that and lasted a millennium. Without mankind’s escape from the totalitarianism of *avodah zarah*, the Dark Ages would have lasted till today—primitiveness, feudalism, serfhood, and all. The high principles and ideals of the human condition that are the hallmark of the Renaissance were all an organic development that followed that escape. *Yetzias Mitzrayim* was that and greater. With *yetzias Mitzrayim*,

15 *Shemos* 3:12.