

Give Me a Sign

A supplement for the Pesach Seder
A fitting addition for all times



TZO HAR

Rabbinic Leadership in the Corona Crisis



By reciting Kiddush we are injecting additional holiness and meaning into the setting, introducing us into a special and unique experience. With every Kiddush - whether on Shabbat or Chag - we are acknowledging that these days serve to remember the Exodus. That was the moment we transformed from a family to a nation and began our journey through Jewish history that continues today.

The Kiddush on Seder night is unique as the entire night is dedicated to the Exodus. It is the first of the Four Cups we drink at the Seder, where every cup symbolizes a different aspect on the path to redemption. The first cup represents being taken out of Egypt.

“And I took you out from beneath the suffering of Egypt” Shemot 6:6
 (וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מִתַּחַת סִבְלַת מִצְרַיִם) (שמות ו, ו.)



Time



Kiddush teaches us that we have the power to give meaning to time. This is the opportunity to give thought and reassess our connection to time: Where do we allocate most of our time (Work/ Sports/ Family/ Relaxing/ Friends)? What would I do if I had more time? What do I waste time on and regret it afterwards?

♥ What is my favorite time of the day and why?



Choni the Circle-Drawer was once walking and saw someone planting a Cherub Tree. Choni asked him *“How many years will it be until the tree gives fruit?”* The man answered that it would be seventy years.

Choni asked *“Is it realistic that you’ll still be around to enjoy the fruit?”*

The man responded: *“Just like my ancestors planted for me, I am doing the same for my children.”*

Choni sat down to eat and soon felt tired and fell into a deep sleep that lasted for seventy years. When he woke up he saw a man picking the fruit off the tree.

Choni asked: *Are you the one who planted this tree?*

The man answered that it was his grandfather.

♥ Discuss something you’ve done even though you knew you wouldn’t directly benefit from it.

♥ Imagine how the world might look in 70 years.



Challenge everyone to complete a task in a limited amount of time. For example, ask everyone to build a pyramid out of blocks or paper cups; list as many Pesach-related words as you can in thirty seconds or any other fun game that is based on time and related to the Chag.



Wash your hands without making a blessing. Before eating vegetables that are being dipped in liquid, many say one must wash their hands. We therefore wash our hands before eating the Karpas (which is dipped in salt water)

Because there is a dispute over whether this washing is necessary in our days, we do so without a blessing.



Integrity



♥ Why is the concept of integrity linked to clean hands?

♥ And what are the prices people are willing to pay to retain their integrity?

♥ Is there ever a time when the price is too high and it is no longer worth it?



An accountant at a company was known as a particularly esteemed and respected worker. One day he uncovered something suspicious in the financial reports. But he knew that if he exposed the issue it would likely cost him his job.

What would you do? Is it worth risking losing your job based on suspicions alone?

In this case, the accountant went ahead and reported the issue to the authorities who immediately opened an investigation.

Within a short amount of time, the company discovered it was the accountant who had reported the issue and had him fired.

But the story doesn’t end there. The worker appealed the case and it resulted in a new decision where the company CEO was removed from his position for trying to cover up the corruption.

♥ Discuss something you’ve done even though you knew you wouldn’t directly benefit from it.



Everyone at the table (or whoever wants to play) is asked to tell two stories - one is true and one false. Everyone else has to guess which is the true story and which one is not.

Everyone is presented with a series of facts about Pesach and everyone has to say whether they are facts or fiction.

For example:

- Moshe was an only child (False)
- In the past we didn’t read the Hagaddah as part of the Seder Night (True - In the past we would bring the Korban Pesach and eat it. The Hagaddah was only introduced after the Beit Hamikdash was destroyed.)



We eat Karpas dipped in saltwater. In reality, there is no great importance as to which vegetable is used. People have different customs including potatoes and turnips.

Exactly why do we eat Karpas? According to Mah Nishtana (the Four Questions) it's to provoke the children's curiosity so they may begin asking questions throughout the night.



Existence



♥ What is our ethical responsibility when it comes to benefitting from nature and protecting it?

The Torah makes it very clear that we are not allowed to destroy living things, including trees that give life. The Torah makes a direct comparison between trees and humanity.

♥ What do you see as similar between humans and trees (or other elements of nature)?



The Sages teach us that a person should not throw rocks from his property into the public domain.

A story is told in the Talmud of someone who throws stones into the public domain. A Chassid approaches him and asks why he's throwing stones into an area that doesn't belong to him. The man didn't understand the problem - he was standing on his own property! Soon thereafter the man was forced to sell his land and he would then walk in the public domain where he tripped over the rocks he had thrown. "What a smart man that Chassid was," the man said.

This story is meant to teach us about our responsibility to public space and the relationship between the private and public places in our lives.



THE KARPAS CHALLENGE

Try to eat a potato dipped in saltwater without using your hands.

BIRKAT ILANOT

Birkat Ilanot (the blessing of the trees) is a blessing made just once a year in the month of Nissan, when we begin to see the trees blossom. The concept behind the blessing is to thank God for the beauty He created in the world.

(Even if you don't have any trees nearby, you should try to say the bracha at some point during the month as it's a beautiful concept.)

ברוך אתה ה' אלוהינו מלך העולם שלא חסר בעולמו כלום וברא בו בריות טובות ואילנות טובות ונאות להנות בהן בני אדם."

"Blessed are You, Adonai, King of the World, who did not neglect anything in His world and created pleasant creations and lovely trees for people to benefit from."



In the middle of the Seder Plate (or next to it), there should be three pieces of matzah. They are symbolic of the three segments of the Jewish people. Kohen, Levi and Yisrael.

At this point, take the middle matzah and break it into two unequal pieces. The smaller piece is returned to its place and the larger piece is the Afikoman that is hidden and will be eaten later at the meal.



Inequality



When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not wrong them. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love the stranger as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I the LORD am your God. Vayikra 19: 33-34

♥ Why is the fact that we were slaves in Egypt connected to the fact that we should love the stranger?

♥ Which groups in modern society are victims of inequality? (The Disabled/ Women/Children/Foreigners/Others?)



INEQUALITY IN THE NEWS

"Storm Erupts in the Political World Following a YNet Expose that MK Penina Tamno Shata (Now of the Blue and White Party) was denied the ability to donate blood in a Knesset blood drive.

The MK arrived in the afternoon to the mobile blood unit that had been set up in the Knesset and was informed by the staff that she wouldn't be allowed to donate because of the unique blood type that is carried within the Ethiopian community.

The Knesset Director General instructed the Blood Drive coordinators to leave the Knesset. Professor Ayelet Shinar, Director of Blood Services for Magen David Adom explained "According to the Health Ministry regulations that they are prohibited from using blood taken from people who lived in a country after 1977 that had a high incidence of AIDS." (YNET, December of 2013)

♥ You Decide - Is this a case of discrimination or a legitimate health concern?



WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE DISABLED?

Try a basic task with your eyes closed or blindfolded (like pouring water into a cup). Or one person is asked to direct a blindfolded person to another area of the room using only words but without touching them.



Maggid is the central part of the Seder with its focus on telling the story of the Exodus. The role of the Seder night is to take a national story and turn it into a personal one; We are asked to feel as if we personally are going from bondage to freedom and that on this night we are experiencing something remarkable.

The Scholar, the Ari called Pesach "Peh Sach," the mouth speaks. This is a holiday where the central ideas are performed with our mouths - reading the Haggadah. This is not just saying words, but speaking with meaning that encourages others to listen and also speak from their hearts.



An Invitation to Speak and Share



The Haggadah doesn't simply retell the story of the Exodus; it also tells us how the story is meant to be told, how we speak to our children and how we are encouraged to enter into a dialogue with others. The Haggadah has examples of different types of communication (Questions and Answers, Song, Recollections of events in history, among other forms).

One of the greatest strengths of humans is our ability to speak and convey emotion.

"The greatest power that we have to do for our families is perhaps the simplest thing of all: To retell family stories of strength and meaning." Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks.

♡ You're all invited to tell a meaningful story of family - or something that means something to you personally.

♡ The children should share a lesson that they learned from their parents.



During the War of Attrition (1970) during aerial combat, Gideon Magen, a pilot, and Pini Nachamni, the navigator were shot down into Syrian territory. They were captured alongside another pilot, Boaz Eitan who had also been shot down. The three were kept imprisoned for three very tough years. Nachmani described his first Seder night in captivity: "Those were really tough times. I would think about home knowing how my kids were just waiting for me to come back. When Boaz, the youngest of the three of us, almost still a child, sang the four questions, tears welled up in my eyes. The setting was just so strange. We were in enemy territory, a highly guarded jail cell, three Israeli captives having fallen while defending the Jewish State and we were singing a songs of freedom and our story of generations past.

As we were in the middle of the Seder, the guards came and demanded that we stop. In the adjacent cell was the deposed president of Syria. Our singing was bothering him and he was asking that we stop. We finished the Seder with Chad Gadya and continued singing modern Israeli songs like Yerushalayim Shel Zahav and others- whatever we could do to keep that feeling alive for a little while longer and gain that tiny sense of personal victory and revenge over our situation. That was the longest Seder I ever participated in. It took being thrust into captivity in a Syrian jail to finally fulfill what's written in the Hagaddah 'And they would tell the story of the Exodus well into the night'".

♡ Have you ever felt a sense a real freedom in a wholly unexpected place?



BROKEN TELEPHONE

Select a word from the Hagaddah and pass it along to the person next to you and see if it makes it all the way to the end of the table.



We wash our hands and recite a blessing Soon we'll get to eat. But first we again encounter water, except this time we say a blessing.

In the times of the Beit Hamikdash, the Kohanim would eat the Terumah portion in a purified state. To remember that, the Sages ordained that we wash our hands before eating bread (which is considered a central food item.)

This also creates a short break before eating, which trains us to approach eating with patience and to do so slowly and respectfully.



Water



"Would you like to know why the sea was split? Hashem saw the Jews standing on the shore after 210 years as slaves and now they had left Egypt out of a sense of true faith and strength. Hashem looked at them and said 'If they could have made such a remarkable change, so will I. In the Talmud it teaches that to get married is like splitting the sea. Finding someone who is our soulmate is similar to splitting the waters... My blessing is that we will always be willing to change for the people we love.'" Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach

♡ All the couples at the table are invited to tell how they met.



For so many of us water is a constant in our lives. We turn on the tap and there it is. We are able to drive short distances and see endless expanses of oceans and rivers. We know what it's like to dance and sing in spring rains. Drought is hopefully something we need not worry about.

So take a moment and think about what water means to you and how life might be different if you didn't have access to it.



SMART WATER

Think of as many popular phrases or concepts as you can that include the word water...

Water under the bridge... Waterfall of emotions... Through Hell or High Water...

Those are just a few.

Now try and think of how a phrase involving water relates to something you've experienced in life.



We eat the Matzah.

Eating Matzah on Seder night is a mitzvah from the Torah. Matzah is known as the simplest of foods. It's just flour and water with nothing added and no chance to rise.



Dedication



The world is sustained by three things; Torah, Hard Work and Kindness to Others (Avot 1.2)

♥ **Why is hard work one of the three things the world needs to function?**

Work is traditionally viewed as a punishment but the question is whether we view work in our lives as a punishment or an opportunity.

One of the things asked of a parent is to teach their child to work. In fact, the Talmud teaches that anyone who doesn't teach their child a craft is teaching them to steal.

♥ **What do you think of this statement and why do you think it's so important for parents to teach their children to work?**



The youngest person to ever win the lottery in Britain sued the lottery commission alleging that winning had "ruined her life." Jane Park won 17 million pounds at just 21 years old. "I thought the money would make my life better, but it destroyed it completely." Park complained that she longed for the days when she could work hard to earn her money. Until she won, Park had worked as an executive assistant and earned 8 pounds an hour. She lived together with her mother in a small apartment in Scotland. Now she owns two apartments and a Range Rover. She hangs out in expensive restaurants and travels the world. Yet, she decided to hire a lawyer and sue the commission saying they should ban anyone under 18 from being able to play the lottery. (NRG)

♥ **If you could do any job in the world what would it be? (And ask the children around the table what they'd like to do when they get older.)**



EYES UP

Anyone around the table who has a magic trick to share, now's the time.



We eat bitter herbs. The maror (lettuce or another bitter leafy green) is eaten twice on Seder night, in two different ways: the first time it is eaten alone (or with some haroset), and the second time it is eaten as a "sandwich" between matzah.

The maror seeks to make struggle tangible. It is insufficient for us to talk about it; we must also taste the bitterness.



Challenges



"We were all there. Mitzrayim (Egypt) includes all the types of meitzarim (narrow straits) we experience, from the greatest to the most trivial. When we speak of Mitzrayim, it is worthwhile to have in mind ones personal struggles and battles."

(Rabbi Tzvi Meir Zilberberg)

♥ **What struggles have you overcome in the last year?**

♥ **What struggles do you face at the moment?**



Rabbi Nachman of Breslav tells the story of two business partners who were travelling together. The trip did not go well and they quickly began to lose all their money.

Knowing the generosity of the Jewish community, they decided they would go to the local shul and hope to get invited for a meal.

The night they arrived was the first night of Pesach and soon after services the men were quickly invited to two different homes.

The first man, who wasn't familiar with the Jewish traditions, sat down at the table hungry and ready to eat. But of course it was the seder and first came the Karpas, then the Matzoh. The hungry man quickly wolfed it all down and then he was served a vegetable he didn't recognize but also shoved it into his mouth. It was Maror! Overwhelmed by the bitter taste, the man ran out of the home with tears streaming down his face.

Later that night he met up again with his friend and told him what had happened. The friend burst out laughing. And as R' Nachman tells the story the man explained to his friend 'Everything in life has some bitterness before the good comes along...'



Split participants into 2 teams and come up with challenges for each other. Whatever challenge one team comes up with, both teams must perform.

Some ideas: who can list the Ten Plagues while jumping on one foot the quickest, to learn and recite a passage from the Haggadah, to close your eyes and list the names of those seated at the table, etc.



We eat *maror* with *haroset* as a sandwich with *matzah*. This way of eating recalls the practice of Hillel the Elder, to fulfill the verse “roast and matzah you shall eat with bitter herbs.”

This “sandwich” embodies two things: 1. Things that appear to be different can come together. 2. Life is made up of contrasts, a mix of bitter and sweet, happy and sad, sometimes even all at once.

“Korech” calls on us to integrate contrasts and to make space for differences.



Connection



“No man is an island all unto his own. Every man is a slice of the land, part of a greater country.” Johan Dunne

- ♥ Which people do you feel connected with?
- ♥ What things in life have you disconnected from over the past year?



“The very basis of freedom is our ability to share experiences with others. A slave can only care for himself, while the free man can extend himself to others. The Seder night is symbolic of the birth of community where people were taken out of bondage and isolation where they were focused on only their individual needs and became part of a collective that thrives on charity and caring.”

Rabbi Joseph Dov Soleveitchik

- ♥ Describe something a friend has done for you that brought you closer.



PASS IT ON

Everyone looks at the person next to them and talks about something they have in common or an experience they’ve shared.



We eat the holiday meal. There are many customs related to eating (like matzoh on Seder night) and then there are specific meals that are mitzvot at specific times. During those meals, everyone is required to eat at least a kazayit of bread. The message here is that we can take something basic and give it meaning beyond just the physical. This exists in many aspects of eating where food is served to remind us of something from our past: Maror of our enslavement. The charoset of the cement and matzoh of the dough which didn’t have time to rise when we were leaving Egypt.



Meaningful Nutrition



”ויאמר אלהים הנה נתתי לכם את כל עשב... ואת כל העץ אשר בו פרי עץ... לכם יהיה לאכלה” (בראשית א. כט).

“And Elohim said: I have given to you all the grass... and every fruit tree... shall be yours to eat” (Bereishit 1:29)

The very first time that God spoke in the Torah it was related to eating. The first commandment of man was also about food where the Torah describes how every fruit was permitted to be eaten other than that from the Tree of Knowledge. As we know, the first sin was similarly related to eating as Adam and Chava ate from the tree and were expelled from Gan Eden.

- ♥ Do you think people should avoid eating in establishments that mistreat their workers or is there no connection between the food that is served and employment practices?
- ♥ Is food just to keep us satisfied when we’re hungry or does eating serve other functions?



Much of the meat that is sold in Israel comes from animals that are transported from other parts of the world. This voyage often begins when the animals are only weeks old. They are then packed into trucks and endure hours-long rides to the seaport where they are loaded onto ships to be sent across the world. There have been many times where people have recorded extreme overcrowding on these ships. The young calves are scared to board the ships but are whipped from behind to get them moving ahead of their long trips over oceans. The whole trip they are stuck in packed pens that are overflowing with their own waste. Many don’t survive the trip. Exhausted, those who survived arrive at their destination. Here they have been witnessed being shocked and kicked as they are again loaded onto trucks that will take them to new holding centers before going to industrial processing plants. The only time they are allowed to leave their pens is when they are taken to the slaughterhouse. (From the website Animals)

Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, the author of the Mishna, suffered for many years from pain in his teeth as a result of the following incident: A calf that was on its way to be slaughtered ran towards Rabbi Yehuda. When it reached him the calf laid his head on the rabbi and started to cry. Rabbi Yehuda said to calf: ‘Go to be slaughtered because you were created so that people could eat your meat.’ A call came out from heaven: Since you aren’t acting with compassion, you will now be afflicted. (Bava Metzia 85:1)

- ♥ Have you ever avoided eating food for ideological reasons?



Identify foods with your eyes closed, either by using your sense of touch or by tasting them.



We take out the Afikoman and break off a piece for every person. After that point, we don't eat anything else so that this is the last flavor we will have in our mouths for the night. This Matzah is a symbol of the Korban Pesach that was eaten at the end of the meal. The Afikoman should be eaten before Chatzot. The word Afikoman is said to mean "desert" in Greek.

The idea of "Tzafun" is to reveal the hidden and to find treasures in our world that might otherwise go undiscovered.



Fulfilling Our Potential



"According to statistics from the Ministry of Education, Israeli youth at age 17 are all a bunch of idiots and those very same people, when they reach the age of 24 have suddenly become geniuses. At 17 they're in last place in the Western world in math, English, computers and physics. And at 24 - those very same people- are founding start-ups, developing scientific models, obtaining advanced degrees, making massive exits, discovering algorithms and winning more prizes than any comparable demographic anywhere on earth" (Yair Lapid)

♥ What allows people to realize their potential at specific times in life?



"The author Chaim Baer once met Rabbi Aryeh Levine (who was known as the 'Rabbi of the Prisoners' for his relationship with the prisoners in the underground movements) and asked him: Are you one of the 36 hidden righteous ones? The rabbi answered: It's not a lifetime position. Each one of us is at some point one of the truly righteous."

On October 23, 2012, before dawn, Sergeant Ziv Shilon approached the border gate with Gaza to open it and allow IDF forces to cross. In order to protect his soldiers he told them all to stay back 250 meters.

Shilon opened the fence and crossed through before a massive explosion erupted. Despite being seriously injured with injuries that included losing both his hands, Shilon continued to direct his troops and his evacuation from the field. He would need to undergo 14 operations and very extensive rehabilitation. As a result of his remarkable tenacity and hard work, Shilon was able to achieve things that many thought impossible – even for a fully healthy person. He successfully completed the Berlin Marathon accompanied by his fellow officers from the army with the flag of Israel on his shoulders. Ziv Shilon proved that hidden deep within all of us is a spirit that allows us to overcome even the greatest of challenges.

♥ Describe a time when you didn't think you would succeed but in the end it all worked out.



At the beginning of the Seder, every child is given a small object to hide. Over the course of the Seder, everyone needs to find not just the Afikoman but as many of the hidden items as possible.



We pour the third cup, say Birkat Hamazon and then drink the third cup while leaning. Birkat Hamazon is recited at the end of every meal where we've eaten at least a kezayit of bread.

The concept of the prayer is to acknowledge that we've received something (food) and to give thanks for it.



Giving to Others



God blessed Avraham saying "And you shall be blessed" (Bereishit, 12:2). God is not just a source of blessing but also grants humans the ability to bestow greatness on others, to instill others with hope and inspire happiness in others. When someone blesses someone else, they give the other something which albeit intangible, is certainly something that can be internalized and deeply appreciated.

"A man meets his friend and says to him 'Good Morning.' We don't realize that in fact this is a great blessing. But why? Certainly, the person doesn't decide whether his friend will in fact have a good or bad morning. But the act of blessing someone else is in itself a wonderful act. When a person wants to thank God, the best way to do so is to give thanks to others for what we have in our lives." Rabbi Avigdor Nevenzahl

♥ What blessing would you want to receive?

♥ And from whom?

♥ Are blessings only for what is missing in our lives or is there more to it?



The Talmud in Berachot tells the story of a man who blessed God saying "Rabbi Yishamel Ben Elisha who was the Kohen Gadol said: One Yom Kippur I went into the Holy of Holies and I saw the Almighty God sitting on his throne and He arose and said, 'Yishmael my son, Bless me! And I blessed him saying, May it be your will that your compassion will stifle your anger... and you will treat your children with the measure of compassion and they will be treated by you with justice. And He responded with the nod of His head.'"

♥ Tell a story of an unexpected blessing that you've received from someone.



LITTLE GIFTS (To be prepared in advance)

A few days before the Seder, everyone receives the name of someone else who will be attending and has to bring a small gift that relates to your connection to that person. At this point you present it to them with a short but meaningful blessing.

L'CHAIM!

Everyone at the table chooses someone or something that they want to toast.



We pour the fourth cup and if you haven't yet also the cup of Eliyahu. (According to our tradition, the prophet Eliyahu takes our people out of distress and visits every Jewish home on Pesach.) We then recite the Hallel- portions of Tehilim that offer praise to Hashem and thank him for his charity. At the end of Hallel we drink the fourth cup.



Gratitude



The word "Thanks," when said with proper intent, contains the understanding that we appreciate that everything we have in life is really only a gift that has been bestowed to us. A person who lives their life with the appreciation of gratitude achieves the trait of humility.

Being grateful is a trait which can be honed over time. Rather than saying "thanks" quickly and without thought, take the time to think about what you're thankful for. The Sages teach that one day all the sacrifices will be eliminated except for the Korban Todah, the Gratitude Sacrifice.

♡ Do you think that giving thanks is an obligation or just a nice thing to do?



In the last days of his life, Rabbi Yaakov Edelstein zt"l, the rabbi of Ramat Hasharon, lost his ability to speak and would communicate via written notes. When he was asked which words he would want to have most available he answered "Thanks" and "Amen." From the Column of Yedidya Meir, B'Sheva

♡ Talk about someone for whom you feel grateful.



One person describes a situation where someone else at the table helped them in some way and thanks them. They tell the story without saying who it was and everyone has to guess who it is.



As we approach the conclusion of the Seder, we are encouraged to sing songs and poems. The Sephardic tradition is to read Shir HaShirim.

Nirtzah comes from the language of fulfilled and accepted. Our prayer is that our seder will be warmly accepted by Hashem. We too feel fulfilled with what we have experienced together with our close family.

And with that the Seder comes to an end.



Satisfaction with What We Have



"I am always happy but I am never satisfied."

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

♡ Is this a positive or negative statement?



There once was a stonemason who was never satisfied with his life. One day he was passing the home of a rich merchant and he saw his beautiful house and wealthy guests. The mason thought to himself "That merchant is so blessed. I wish I could be a merchant." And poof, just like that, his wish came true, and he had become a rich merchant with a large house and all the wealth that comes with it.

One day the man saw a Government Minister pass by followed by an entourage of servants. The man thought to himself, "I wish I was a Minister." And next thing you know he became an important minister flanked by advisors. But it just happened that day was a hot day and the men was sweltering under his heavy cloak. He looked up at the sun and said. "Wow, the sun is so strong. I wish I was the sun." And so he became the sun and his heat and light was radiated down to the world. But just then a dark cloud came along and blocked the sun. And so... he said I wish to be a cloud. And he became a cloud... But then he looked behind him and he saw that the wind was pushing him away... And so he said he wished to become a strong wind... And so it happened... Until he came upon a large rock and as much as the wind blew it could not move the boulder.... And so, he wished and his wish came true. And he felt like the strongest thing in the world.

But just then he started to feel a banging sensation in his side. He wondered what could be causing him so much pain, what could be stronger than a solid rock?

He looked over and there was a simple mason armed with a hammer going about his work.

♡ Tell us about a situation where you weren't happy about something and wanted to change it for the better.



SATISFACTION (This one requires advanced preparation)

Place several already wrapped (able to be opened) small gifts in the center of the table. The first player chooses a package and opens it and places it in front of him. The next person chooses a package but before opening it he/she is given the choice whether to open it or to exchange with the first person whose gift is already out. Continue this exercise around the table with each person given the choice to either open the gift or exchange with others. The objects should be simple but it's the lesson that counts, whether we are happy with what we have or we would rather take the chance of getting something else.

Jewish tradition is shaped by many dramatic events throughout our collective history;

However, throughout the Torah's narrative as well as its commandments, the most formative event in our people's history is the Exodus from Egypt. This singular event received the attention of no less than four books of the Torah and we have an obligation to remember the Exodus each and every day. This mitzvah is fulfilled through the recitation of Shema which includes mention of leaving Egypt as a foundation of faith and peoplehood. In addition there are several mitzvot that are directly linked to the Exodus – Shabbat, the main three holidays of Pesach, Sukkot and Shavuot, the Pidyon HaBen ritual, and others.

The holiday of Pesach is wholly focused on the story of the Exodus. While the Torah instructs us to “remember the Exodus from Egypt all the days of your life,” recounting the story on Seder Night expands and deepens this commandment. On Seder Night, all Jews, women and men, must not merely “remember” the events of history, but tell the story. Indeed, Seder Night invites each of us to take part in the story itself.

The remarkable part of the Seder night is its very existence: Each year, we sit for hours and talk about the Exodus. There is no such concept on other holidays. This is particularly interesting when we compare it to the giving of the Torah. Is that not an event worthy of such celebration? However, we do not spend Shavuot discussing in-depth the events of standing at Sinai.

What is it that makes this event the penultimate happening in our history that requires our collective commemoration in this way?

On Seder Night, we undergo transformation as we revisit the evolution of our people, a process set into motion by the Exodus. This event was the transformation of a group of slaves into a liberated nation. And everything we do until this day is a direct result of that Exodus. The events that followed including receiving the Torah and entrance into Eretz Yisrael only occurred because of that Exodus. We only needed a book of laws and a land of our own because we were now a nation.

With that understanding in mind, we can more deeply appreciate the importance of this tradition and why the story of the Exodus is so central to who we are as a nation and a people.

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A WINDOW INTO TZO HAR

SHAPING TOMORROW'S JEWISH FUTURE

JEWISH MARRIAGE



120,000

secular couples enjoyed meaningful halachic Jewish wedding ceremonies instead of civil ceremonies.

4,000

couples signed halakhic agreements to prevent agunot and promote values of mutual respect and dignity in Jewish families.

PRENUPTIAL AGREEMENT



SHORASHIM

60,000

immigrants proved their Jewish roots enabling them to preserve their Jewish identity.

100,000

Israelis enjoyed welcoming traditional Jewish holiday services, strengthening the bond with their Jewish heritage.



JEWISH HOLIDAYS

BNEI MITZVAH

1,500

Tzohar's trained mentors guide boys and girls in preparing for the milestones of Jewish adulthood, through empowering, personalized learning and rituals.



DYNAMIC RABBINIC CULTURE



Tzohar's council of 42 engaging Zionist rabbis research and innovate to reach halachic decisions on matters of national importance.

200+ eateries bear Tzohar certification, challenging the monopoly of Israel's Rabbinat over such services



KASHRUT TZO HAR

200

DEATH AND BEREAVEMENT

1,500

families have benefitted from Tzohar rabbis' sensitive guidance through each aspect of the burial and mourning processes.

OUR PROJECTS ARE POWERED BY OVER



DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS

WWW.TZO HAR.ORG.I L