



PESACH COMPANION

A Practical Guide to Diving Beneath
the Surface and Experiencing Faith and
Freedom on Pesach



לזכות רפואה שלימה
עלקא דבורה בת מרים רבקה חנה
מלכה בת קריינדל

 **Thank You!**

Thank You Hashem!

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Thank you Yakov Josephy for everything

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לשנה הבאה בירושלים

PESACH COMPANION

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FOREWARD

Beyond Matzah and Maror: Experiencing Transformation on Pesach

Harav Yussie Zakutinsky Shlita

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The Chidushei Ha'rim as well as other tzadikim teach, that the world was created through the Asara Ma'amaros, the ten utterances of Hashem, and that there is a fundamental shift that occurred when we received the Aseres Hadibros, the Ten Commandments on Har Sinai. The transition period from the original world order to the new one is accomplished through the Eser Makkos, The Ten Plagues during the exodus from Egypt.

What is the difference between a world of ten utterances and a world of ten commandments?

The world of Asara Ma'amaros is a world where we acknowledge the fact that everything is from a creator, but ultimately there is separation between the Creator and the gifts that he gives us. We can recognize Hashem as the ultimate giver and we thank Him for all the things that He gave us but what we are receiving are just things from Hashem and nothing more.

With the Aseres Hadibros, we enter a new reality. We are now living with the truth that everything that we have is not just something that comes from Hashem, it's literally a vehicle through which Hashem is interacting with us and embracing us.

This idea is reflected at its deepest level in the difference between the name Elokim and the four letter name of Hashem. Elokim means the one who is the source of and in charge of all the things that we have, but ultimately this reality is not indicative of any relationship between the giver and the receiver.

In contrast, the Aseres Hadibros begin with the commandment "Anochi Yud Key Vav Kei" Elokeicha." This name expresses a deep connection. Even the air that we breathe isn't just a physiological function; it's like a hug from Hashem, enveloping us in His warm, life giving embrace. It's the difference between a regular piece of cake and a birthday cake – the former very nice but the latter evidence of love and relationship. Everything we receive can now be experienced as Hashem expressing His love for us.

Yetzias Mitzrayim prepared the world for this shift. The work of Pesach, especially the Seder night, is to reorient ourselves. We begin to see all the things of our lives as, not only coming from Hashem, but as an expression of His love for us and His connection to us. He is not merely supporting us and taking care of us, giving us things over the shoulder, so to speak, but each thing we receive is like a direct embrace.

Therefore, on Seder night, it's especially important to nurture within ourselves (our Neshama) the ability to see our lives this way. The entirety of our existence is not merely from Hashem, but an expression of His love and attention to us.

Katnus	Feeling spiritually disconnected, literally meaning "smallness"
Kli	A spiritual vessel which can absorb and share spiritual energy, plural: keilim
Korech	Sandwich of bitter herbs and Matzah which the sage Hillel instituted as part of the Seder
Maror	Bitter Herbs
Matzah	The unleavened "bread" we eat at the Seder
Mayim Achronim	Washing of the hands before grace after meal, literally meaning "last waters"
Mesiras Nefesh	Self sacrifice, to push yourself very hard to do something good
Mitzrayim	Egypt
Mitzvah / Mitzvos	Commandment(s)
Mochin	Consciousness, or receiving G-d's light, literally meaning "brains"
Motzi Matzah	Literally meaning "Taking out the Matzah"
Neshamah/ Neshamos	Soul(s)
Seder	The unique meal / service combination of Passover eve, literally meaning "order"
Shaliach	Messenger, plural: Sheluchim
Tikkun	Fixing or rectification
Torah	The five books of Moses, or the entire body of Jewish wisdom
Tzafun	Hidden
Yesh	A sense of our own being and existence, literally "is"
Yeshus	Derivative of Yesh with a more negative spin, as in haughtiness
Yetzer Hara	Evil inclination
Yetzias Mitzrayim	The Exodus from Egypt
Yichud	Oneness, unification
Zohar	Primary literary source of Kabbalistic wisdom

GLOSSARY Of Hebrew Terms And Concepts

Afkoman	The last piece of matzah eaten at the Seder, often a source of great fun for children as they hide it and negotiate its return to the Seder participant to whom it belongs.
Avodas perech	Futile work
Bentching	Yiddish word for saying Grace after Meals
Binah	Understanding, the second of the ten Kabbalistic Sefirot (G-dly emanations)
Birkas Hamazon	Grace after the Meal
Bittul	Ego nullification
Brachos	Jewish blessings
Charoset	Sweet mixture made of apples, wine, and nuts
Chessed	Acts of kindness
Chochmah	Wisdom, the first of the ten Kabbalistic Sefirot (G-dly emanations)
Chometz	Leavened bread, forbidden on Passover
Daas	Knowledge, the third of the ten Kabbalistic Sefirot (G-dly emanations)
Daven	Pray
Ein Od Milvado	Phrase meaning "There is nothing other than Hashem"
Emunah	Faith, or a sense of relationship with Hashem
Gadlus	Greatness, sometimes used as being spiritually connected
Gadlus Mochin	Expanded Consciousness, a heightened spiritual awareness
Hallel	A series of prayers of praise to Hashem recited on holidays
Hashem	G-d, literally meaning "The Name"
Hishtadlus	The efforts we put in to accomplish something, which makes it look like we bring about our successes, which conceals the truth - only Hashem is the Source of success.
Karpas	Vegetable used in the Seder, commonly radish, greens, or roots of parsley

INTRODUCTION

Rachmana Liba Ba'ei, Hashem desires our heart. Hashem gave us *mitzvos* and special times of the year to be a joyous duty of the heart, an experience of feeling the attachment of our neshamah to its Source. This companion is intended to help you develop that inner connection by providing practical and actionable ideas to help you connect with the *pnimiyus*, (inner dimension), of the *mitzvos* of Pesach.

Our sages teach us that on Pesach one is obligated to see himself as experiencing the Exodus from Egypt. An integral part of Pesach, and particularly Seder night, is building a bridge between the miracles Hashem performed for our ancestors and the miracles Hashem is constantly doing for us now. By discussing the open miracles Hashem performed in Mitzrayim (Egypt) we will come to open our eyes to the hidden miracles He is constantly performing for us. The Seder is a powerful time to identify these hidden miracles, discuss them, and thank Hashem for them.

The goal of this companion is to offer practical Torah ideas and exercises to help you reveal Hashem's presence in your life today.

The **Outer Action** is a brief description of the *mitzvah* we are about to do. The **Inner Intention** section contains Torah ideas rooted in Chassidus and Kabbalah, and is largely inspired by the *sefer, B'yam Darkecha*. *B'yam Darkecha* was written by a student of Rav Yitzchok Meir Morgenstern, and is an incredible work that takes deep ideas and presents them in a down to earth and practical way, paving a pathway to an inner world of depth and beauty that is accessible to anyone.

The **Moment of Mindfulness** section contains a practical exercise to guide you to incorporate the Torah concepts into the *mitzvah* you are about to do, so you can do it with intention and inner meaning.

The **Spark of Holiness** at the bottom of each page is a meditation or prayer you can think about before or while you do the *mitzvah*.

If you are new to this kind of inner work it may feel uncomfortable to engage in it, but give it a shot and see where it takes you! Take these ideas and find your own way to connect to them in whatever environment you will be in. On Seder night particularly, we all have plenty of distractions and responsibilities that will pull us away from this kind of inner work. Try to find the space to engage in these ideas, and invite others at your Seder to join you. This year, let's turn Pesach into a transformative experience of letting go of everything that holds back our inner connection and unleash the fire of our *neshamos* to become one with our Creator.

Rabbi Menashe Uhr
and the TVH Family

Birchas Ha'llanos / Blessing on the Trees

👑 The Outer Action

During the Hebrew month of Nissan one recites the following brachah when seeing a fruit tree blossoming.

ברוך אתה ד' אלוקינו מלך העולם שלא חיסר בעולמו כלום וברא בו בריות טובות ואילנות טובות ליהנות בהם בני אדם

Blessed are You, Hashem, King of the world, for there is nothing lacking in His universe, and He created in it good creatures and good trees, to cause mankind pleasure in them.

👑 The Inner Intention

We go out into the physical world and declare publicly that everything in this world is the handiwork of Hashem. We make this *brachah* on fruit trees, which represent the essence of the world of nature, as we “call it out” – there is no “nature”!

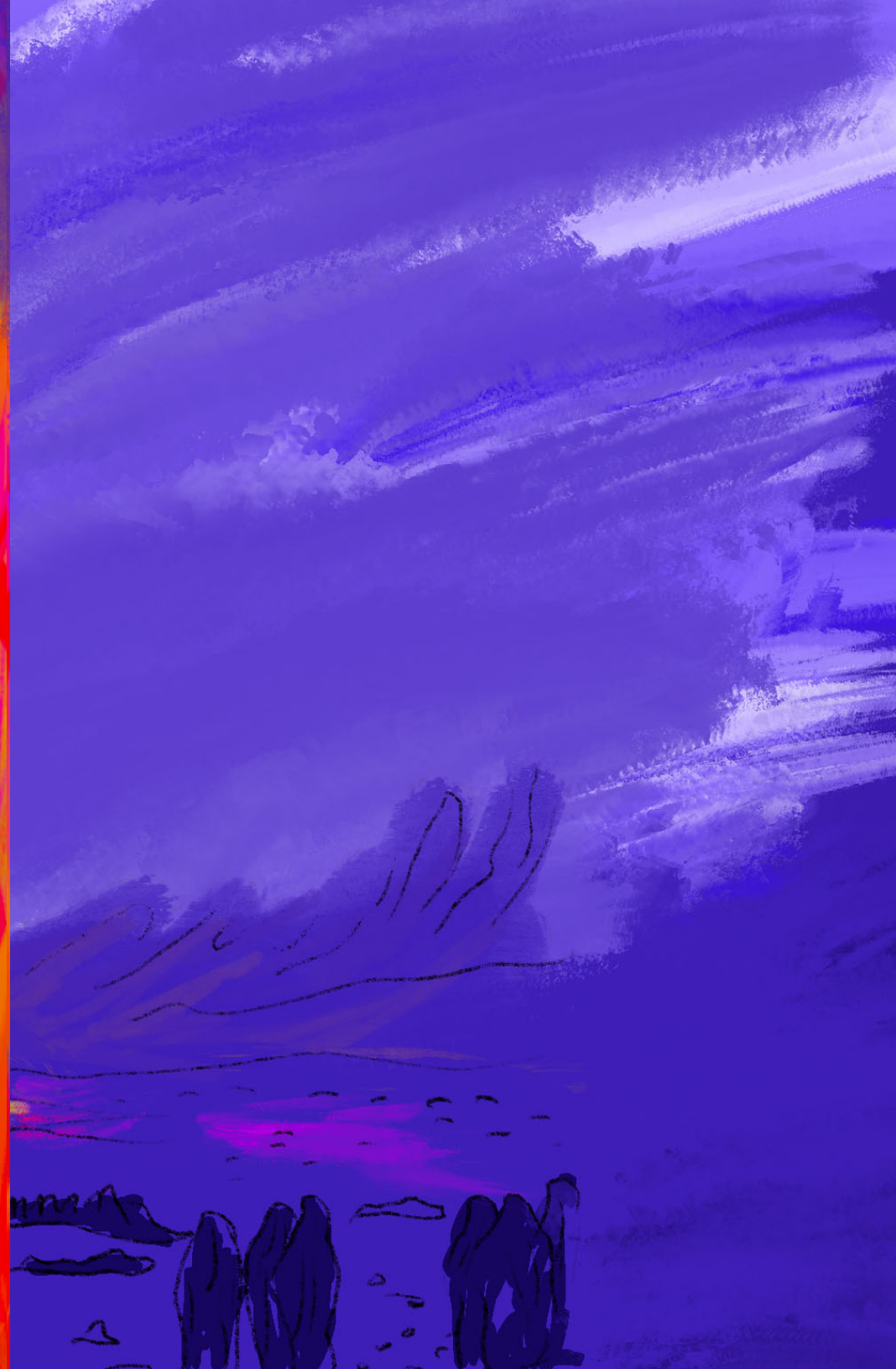
It is brought down in *Kabbalah* that reciting this *brachah* brings a *tikkun* (rectification) to neshamos (Jewish souls) that have been reincarnated into the tree or fruits of the tree. The primary mistake that a person can make is thinking that there is such a thing as a world of nature that maintains an independent existence outside the realm of Hashem. This is the root cause of sin, leading the person to pursue worldly pleasures instead of pursuing the only real pleasure in this world – a relationship with Hashem.

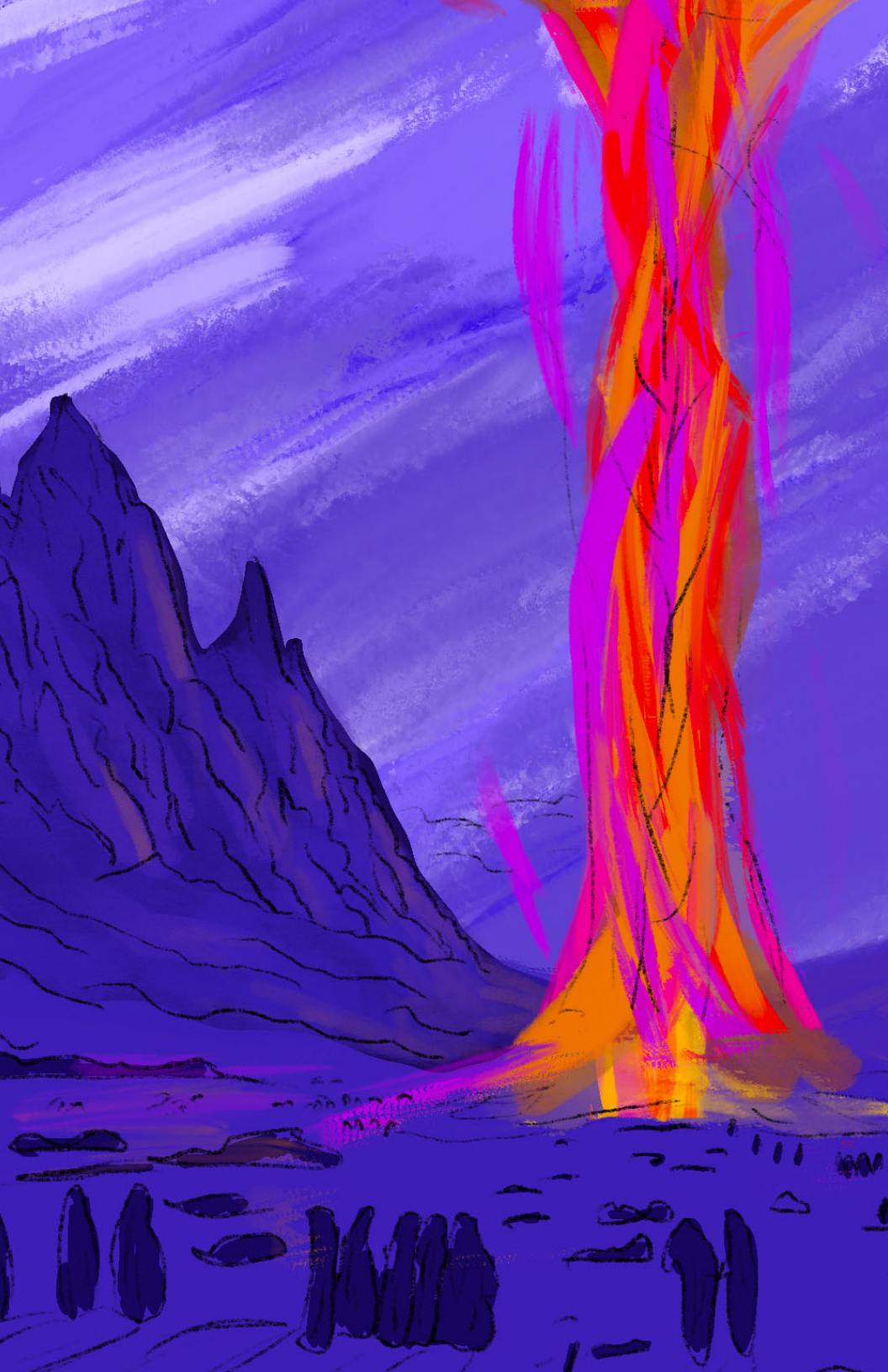
When we declare that the very tree that these souls are reincarnated into is a creation of Hashem, connecting nature to its Source, we've just allowed these souls to be the ultimate vessel to reveal G-dliness to the world. This gives them the *tikkun* they require, freeing them from their confinement.

👑 A Moment of Mindfulness

As I head out to find a blossoming fruit tree, I remember what I am really doing here – revealing Hashem as the Master Designer of His beautiful world. I declare that “There is nothing lacking in His world,” and that even the smallest intricate detail of nature was custom-designed to perfection with infinite wisdom.

“HASHEM, PLEASE ALLOW ME TO SEE YOU AND CONNECT TO YOU IN EVERY MITZVAH I DO.”





Bedikas Chometz / Searching for Chometz

👑 The Outer Action

The night before Pesach we search our house using the light of a candle to make sure there is no chometz anywhere.

👑 The Inner Intention

Chometz, which is leavened, risen, inflated, represents our sense of ego and haughtiness. Before we enter Pesach, the holiday of *Emunah* and *bittul* (faith and nullification), we need to cleanse ourselves of this *chometz* so we can start to see that we are vessels to bring G-dliness to the world and that without Hashem we have no existence. We search for *chometz* by the light of a candle. The flame of the candle represents the light of Hashem and the reality that everything happens by His will. The knowledge that all of our success is from Hashem is the antidote to haughtiness.

👑 A Moment of Mindfulness

As I clean my house of *chometz* by the light of a candle, I clean my heart of ego by the light of Hashem. I shine the light of *Emunah* on my accomplishments, seeing that Hashem was the One that enabled them. I shine the light of *Emunah* on my failures, knowing that even when I fall He is always right there with me, waiting for me to get back up again, welcoming my return to Him with pure love.

“HASHEM, PLEASE HELP ME SEARCH AND FIND EVERY AREA OF MY LIFE THAT I LEFT YOU OUT OF, AND ALLOW ME TO FILL IT WITH EMUNAH.”

Recite this brachah before searching for Chometz

Recite this before the brachah

הריני מוכן ומזומן לקיים מצות עשה ולא תעשה של בדיקת חמץ לשם יחוד קודשא
ברוך הוא ושכינתיה על ידי ההוא טמיר ונעלם בשם כל ישראל. ויהי נועם ד' אלקינו
עלינו ומעשה ידינו כוננה עלינו ומעשה ידינו כוננהו

ברוך אתה ד' אלוקינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על ביעור חמץ

Blessed are You, Hashem, our God, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and has commanded us concerning the removal of chometz.

After the search, the *chometz* is wrapped and put aside in a safe place to be burned in the morning. Then the following declaration is made

כל חמיצא וחמיצא דאיכא ברשותי, דלא חמתיה, ודלא בערתיה, ודלא ידענא ליה,
לבטל ולחרי הקשר בעפרא דארצא

Any *chometz* or leaven that is in my possession which I have not seen, have not removed and do not know about, should be annulled and become ownerless, like dust of the earth.

Talk To Hashem

One of the most powerful ways to navigate *Katnus* is by talking openly to Hashem in your own words. Even if you are not accustomed to doing this, now is the time to speak directly to your Father in Heaven. Pour out your heart and tell Him everything you feel. Tell Him about your pain, what you did, what you want to do, what you don't want to do, and anything else that is on your mind. Tell Hashem that you know He is there even though you feel darkness and concealment, and that you know that He loves you and is right there with you during *Katnus*. Try to cry out to him with expressions of yearning, directing your feelings of *Katnus* upwards. *Abba, I want You, I want to be close to You and attached to You. Help me be loyal to You. Make me feel passion and warmth towards my Judaism and help me break out of this Katnus and feel close to You again.*

The Silent Cry

Sometimes *Katnus* can be so intense that we open our mouth to talk to Hashem and the words won't come out. Don't give up! There is an even deeper way to cry out to Hashem, the silent cry. Even if your heart feels cold and the connection is blocked, in the depth of your heart you can reach out to Hashem, cry out to Him, tell Him you miss Him and you want Him back! No matter what you are feeling, the *neshamah* is always yearning for closeness to Hashem, we need to just dig down and try to connect with these yearnings.

Awaken the Heart

During times of *Katnus* it is good to engage in anything you can do to reignite that flame within. Try listening to and singing holy songs and tunes that speak to your *neshamah*. Read stories of *tzaddikim*, engage in *chessed*, or any other spiritual activity that you connect with deeply and makes you feel better and more connected.

Dear Reader,

We hope you've enjoyed this Pesach Companion and found it to be meaningful! May you always feel Hashem's love and closeness and merit to reveal Him in every aspect of life!

Until next time!
The TVH Nation Team

👑 You Are Building Greatness

This kind of unwavering determination is not easy, particularly during a time of *Katnus*. We tend to be properly motivated when we know that our actions will lead to results and success. This is why it is so important to remind yourself when you are feeling *Katnus* of the significance of what you are accomplishing through your *mesirus nefesh* – you are literally laying the foundation for the next level of greatness that you are creating for yourself! Every little bit more you can push forward during *Katnus* is an investment toward the reward you will reap on the next level you are climbing to!

👑 Hashem Is With You

Katnus comes when we feel that Hashem is far away from us. *Katnus* goes away when we realize that Hashem is with us right now as He always is, even though we don't *feel* it. There is no such thing as a scenario in life where Hashem is not with us. At every moment Hashem gives us life, which means that nothing can sever the intrinsic attachment we have to Him (this is called *Dveikus Etzem*). Remind yourself of this again and again, or even say it out loud. *“Hashem gave me this challenge and is cheering me on, anticipating that I will persevere and come out on top. This is my chance to show Him my loyalty, to cling to Him through challenge, to earn a new level of closeness.”*

Even when you feel no inner connection, and it seems like the work you are doing has no purpose, the truth is the complete opposite. Specifically now is when you are building your relationship with Hashem more than any other time, by attaching yourself to Him when it is hardest to do so. There is no greater spiritual accomplishment than finding Hashem when we feel so uninterested and uninspired, and the opportunity to achieve this is part of the gift of *Katnus*; your personal invitation to search for and find Hashem where He is most concealed.

Bi'ur Chometz / Burning the Chometz

👑 The Outer Action

The morning before Pesach starts we burn all the remaining *chometz* in our possession, and then state that any other *chometz* that may be in our possession is null and ownerless.

👑 The Inner Intention

The inner dimension of burning the *chometz* is an extension of the search it. Now that we have found the *chometz*, it's time to destroy it in fire. As we burn the *chometz*, we burn the *chometz* we have inside us as well. We use the fire of *Emunah* to burn away the belief that we control our lives, which leads to haughtiness when we succeed and sadness when we fail. After burning the *chometz*, we recite a statement of *bittul*, nullifying any remaining *chometz* we may have anywhere in our possession, along with any other “*chometz*” that may be left in our hearts and minds.

👑 A Moment of Mindfulness

As you throw the *chometz* into the fire, envision yourself throwing the *chometz* from your heart into the fire as well. If you want to concretize this action even more, write down some of the beliefs you hold or habits you have that are making you feel distant from Hashem. Ask Hashem for help getting rid of them as you toss the papers into the flames and watch them turn into ashes in a powerful moment of *teshuva*.

See page 9 for the brocha recited before burning the chometz

“HASHEM, PLEASE HELP ME BURN AWAY ANY CHOMETZ THAT KEEPS ME AWAY FROM YOU, SO I CAN ENTER INTO SEDER NIGHT READY TO ABSORB THE FIRE OF EMUNAH.”



Hold Your Place!

The goal during *Katnus* is **מקומך אל תנח (קהלת)** – “Do not give up your place.” Now may not be the best time to take on any new commitments – but hold onto the level you’ve achieved as hard as you can. Try to do the *mitzvos* and follow the good habits that you usually do, based on your level, even though they will be done completely externally with no feeling or passion. Stubbornly engage in Judaism, even though it won’t be with the same quality or quantity as it is in better times. Even if your heart is closed, push yourself to daven and learn Torah, even if you aren’t able to have the proper understanding or intent. Even if it’s just lip service – gaze at the holy letters of Torah, and read the words of prayer as much as you can push yourself to do. Even if you are not in the mood of dealing with people, interact with others with external pleasantness, particularly with your family and those you are responsible for.

The main idea is to push yourself with determination and mesirus nefesh to engage in your service of Hashem even if it is only surface level and you feel empty and emotionless in your heart.

Stay on Guard

When a person feels *Katnus*, the *Yetzer Hara* jumps at the opportunity to entice him or her with all the pleasures of the world. Since he isn’t feeling pleasure and satisfaction from spirituality, the *Yetzer Hara* tries to sell him other pleasures, convincing him that this is what he needs right now to fill that void. Mock this *Yetzer Hara* and tell him you know from experience that the exact opposite is true – forbidden pleasures always lead to feeling even worse, and spiritual determination and coming closer to Hashem always lead to true and lasting happiness and satisfaction.

👑 The Stairwell of Life

Experiencing *Katnus* doesn't mean we are on a lower spiritual level than we were before. When you climb stairs, the stairwell between the 1st and 2nd floor, 2nd and 3rd floor, and 30th and 31st floor all look the same. When you get to the top and walk out of the stairwell, you realize you are on a higher level. Climbing stairs can be difficult, but every time you find yourself at the stairwell you can quietly celebrate that you've merited to be invited to the next level up!

Not only is *Katnus* an indicator that we are approaching the next level, navigating *Katnus* effectively is the way to earn the next level. The more difficult the *Katnus* is, and the more we push ourselves to utilize it properly, the greater the next level will be. If we choose to wait for *Katnus* to pass instead of climbing the stairs, we can get stuck in the stairwell. Let's learn how to climb those stairs!

👑 How to Climb the Stairs

During times of *Katnus* the work is to operate with a mindset of stubborn loyalty to Hashem. We aren't currently able to serve Him with emotion and passion, but we can serve Him with the intellectual knowledge that Hashem is here right now, and commit ourselves to Him even if we don't feel it. The *Yetzer Hara* attacks with thoughts of, "You are a spiritual failure, you'll never reach high levels, you already fell and have no interest, this work isn't for you, you always mess up, etc." Fight back with strength and stubbornness, *"I don't care what level I am on, or how many times I fall! Even if your argument is right, and I'm not on the level I could be at, I will remain a servant of Hashem, regardless of how I feel or whether I succeed. I will continue to push myself to serve my Creator."*



Before burning the chometz some recite the following:

הריני מוכן ומזומן לקגם מצות עשה ולא תעשה של שרפת חמץ לשם יחוד קודשא
ברוך הוא ושכינתיה על ידי ההוא טמיר ונעלם בשם כל ישראל. ויהי נועם ד' אלקינו
עלינו ומעשה ידינו כוננה עלינו ומעשה ידינו כוננהו

After the chometz has been burned the following declaration is made:

כל חמירא וחמיעא דאכא ברשותי דחזתה ודלא חזתה בחמתה ודלא חמתה דבערתה
ודלא בערתה לבטל ולאווי הפקר כעפרא דארעא

Any chometz or leaven that is in my possession which I have not seen, have not removed and do not know about, should be annulled and become ownerless, like dust of the earth.

יהי רצון מלפניך, ד' אלוקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שתרחם עלינו ותצילנו מאסור חמץ,
אפילו מכל שהוא, לנו ולכל בני ביתנו ולכל ישראל, בשנה זו ובכל שנה ושנה כל ימי
חיינו. וכשם שביעורנו החמץ מבתינו ושרפנוהו, כך תזכנו לבער היצר מקרבנו תמיד כל
חיינו, ותזכנו לדבק כך ובתורתך ואהבתך ולדבק ביצר הטוב תמיד, אנחנו וזרענו וזרע
זרענו מעתה ועד עולם. כן יהי רצון, אמן

May it be Your will, Hashem, our God and the God of our forefathers, that You be merciful with us and rescue us from transgressing the prohibition of *chometz* even in the slightest degree – us, our entire household, and all of Israel – this year and every year, for all the days of our lives. **And just as we have removed the *chometz* from our houses and burnt it, so may you enable us to remove the Evil Inclination from within us eternally, all the days of our lives;** may You enable us to cleave to You, to Your Torah, and to Your love, and to cleave to the Good Inclination eternally – us, our children, and our children's children – from now and forever. So may it be. Amen.

THE AVODAH OF KATNUS

What To Do When You Feel Spiritually Disconnected

Adapted from the *Sefer Beyam Darkecha*

What Katnus Is

Katnus is the experience of feeling distant from Hashem. It's when we feel unmotivated and uninterested in engaging in spirituality. We all go through *Katnus*, although not everyone is affected by it in the same way. For some this may be a minor spiritual setback, with more difficulty davening or learning Torah. For others it could feel like a complete spiritual disconnect, having no interest in doing anything Jewish and feeling total sadness and despair. Our *Yetzer Hara* tells us to just wait until it passes. Or worse, he tells us that there is no point in trying again, because we always end up messing up again anyway, so we clearly are not cut out for the service of Hashem. That being the case, says our *Yetzer Hara*, I've got plenty of "good" stuff for you which will bring you the happiness you crave...

What Katnus Really Is

Regardless of who or what triggered this *Katnus*, the reality is that it was sent from Hashem. Anytime a person experiences *Katnus* it is a sign that he merited to complete the spiritual level he is on, and is now entering a higher level. Every level starts with *Katnus*, and the secret to climbing and achieving that level is knowing how to navigate the *Katnus* that paves the way to it. It is the exact opposite of what the *Yetzer Hara* tells you – it is your spiritual success, not failure, that brought you here, to the next spiritual level, which begins with the test of *Katnus*.

Continued on next page

SHVI'I SHEL PESACH / Second Days of Pesach

👑 The Outer Action

The second half of Pesach is celebrated, and we commemorate Krias Yam Suf (the Splitting of the Sea).

👑 The Inner Intention

A week after the Jews left Egypt, they found themselves on the bank of the Red Sea with the Egyptians in hot pursuit and they had nowhere to go. Even though they had witnessed the miraculous salvation of Hashem just days prior, their spiritual high faded and they started to despair, feeling distant from Hashem (*Katnus*). At the last moment Nachshon jumped into the sea in a powerful demonstration of faith that Hashem is here even though we don't see Him. Hashem split the sea, saving the Jewish people and drowning their enemies. The Jewish people then reached an even higher level of *Emunah*, and burst forth with song and gratitude.

By jumping into the sea with unwavering trust in Hashem (*mesirus nefesh*), Nachshon taught us the key to navigating through times when we feel distant from Hashem and uninterested in engaging in Judaism; an experience called *Katnus*. *Katnus* is not a feeling that we should just wait and let it pass by. If we can understand why Hashem makes us experience it and what to do when we feel it, we can utilize *Katnus* to elevate us to levels of closeness to Hashem we never thought we could attain. Nachshon left this incredible life hack imbedded within the spiritual energy of the last days of Pesach.

👑 A Moment of Mindfulness

Every single thing that happens to us is divinely orchestrated with great love by Hashem and for our benefit, even the most challenging times when we feel uninterested in pursuing spirituality. Now is the time to discover the secret gift of *Katnus*. Take a few minutes to read the next chapter.

בתוך ההסתרה בוודאי גם שם נמצא השם יתברך
 “EVEN WHEN HE IS CONCEALED HASHEM IS CERTAINLY THERE.”

Maariv Seder night

👑 The Outer Action

We daven (*pray*) *Maariv* on Pesach night before the Seder.

👑 The Inner Intention

This *Maariv* is the holiest and most significant *Maariv* of the entire year. On every other Yom Tov (holiday), we can reach limited levels of holiness in the evening, and the higher levels only the next day. On Pesach, we are given the ability to reach the highest levels immediately once Yom Tov begins, and this happens during *Maariv*. This is why many people have the custom to recite *Hallel* after *Maariv*. You can feel a special energy in shul on Pesach night, an aura of joy and holiness, as we are awakened with a passionate desire to elevate ourselves and utilize Seder night to the fullest. During this *Maariv* we can create the inner capacity to truly feel Hashem's presence in all of the *mitzvos* we will do later tonight at the Seder.

👑 A Moment of Mindfulness

Prepare yourself spiritually for the Seder by taking your time with *Maariv*. The *yetzer hara* (evil inclination) is likely to try to prevent this with all kinds of reasons to rush it along, which itself is a sign of its holy potential. *Daven* slowly with passion and joy, and ask Hashem for you and your family to have a powerful and holy Seder. *Daven* that you merit to build a bridge between the miracles Hashem performed for our ancestors and the miracles that Hashem is constantly doing for you now.

ברכנו אבינו באור פניך – BLESS US, FATHER, WITH THE LIGHT OF
 YOUR COUNTENANCE. PLEASE ALLOW US TO EXPERIENCE YOUR
 PRESENCE TONIGHT.”

קדש

KADESH / First Cup

👑 The Outer Action

The first cup of wine is poured. We lift the cup and sanctify the day by reciting *Kiddush*.

👑 The Inner Intention

During the drinking of the four cups, Hashem gives us the opportunity to connect with Him. In drinking the four cups we ignite in our hearts a passionate flame of desire to be close to Hashem and to feel His presence in every aspect of our life. Each of the four cups provides a new way to achieve this.

During this first cup, we connect to Hashem through *Chochmah*, which is the foundational belief that Hashem is the source of my life, and that He alone sustains me.

👑 A Moment of Mindfulness

Think about a burning flame, or look at one if there is a candle nearby. Notice how the flame gives the appearance that it maintains its own existence. But that is an illusion. A flame only exists when it is given fuel to burn. The moment that fuel runs out, the fire ceases to exist. The fire is 100% dependent on a constant supply of fuel to maintain its existence.

We are the flame, and Hashem is the fuel. Every single moment of our existence is dependent on Hashem renewing us with another moment of life. Close your eyes and contemplate this truth for a moment.

“HASHEM, YOU ARE THE FUEL OF MY EXISTENCE.”

SEFIRAS HAOMER ספירת העומר / Counting of the Omer

👑 The Outer Action

There is a *mitzvah* to count the 49 days from the second night of Pesach until Shavuos.

👑 The Inner Intention

After the miraculous Exodus from Egypt, the Jewish people spent 49 days purifying and elevating themselves, step by step, from the impurities they had absorbed in Egypt. They then reached a point where they were worthy of receiving the Torah and becoming the nation of Hashem. We too, spend these weeks refining our character and ridding ourselves of the impurities that hold us back from closeness to Hashem, as we prepare ourselves to accept the Torah this coming Shavuos.

The high level of *emunah* we experienced on Seder night was a gift from Hashem, in order to give us a taste of the spiritual bliss of a life of closeness to Him. It was given to help us feel that all our *neshamah* really craves is the deeply satisfying and joyful life of attachment to our Creator. The only way to truly acquire this for ourselves, in a lasting way, is through effort and work. Therefore Hashem allows the inspiration of Seder night to wear off, leaving us motivated to work hard, step by step, to earn that exalted level of closeness. This is the work of *Sefiras HaOmer*.

👑 A Moment of Mindfulness

Before you count the *Omer* each night, create for yourself a moment of self-reflection. Think about what your *neshamah* wants, and what you need to do in order to get there. What actions can you do today to bring you closer to Hashem, or what actions can you avoid doing today in order to purify yourself? Make a small commitment that brings you in the right direction that is attainable but that also pushes you a bit out of your comfort zone.

“HASHEM, PLEASE HELP ME PURIFY MYSELF
AND COME CLOSER TO YOU.”

HOLY EATING

There is a mitzvah to eat a festive meal every day and night of Yom Tov. Even if you don't generally eat with holiness, these meals, and particularly the Seder meals at Shulchan Aruch, are a powerful time to try it out and see where it brings you!

With a little bit of mindfulness, you can transform eating from a mundane physical activity to a profoundly spiritual one. Hashem created us with a need to eat, not only to sustain our bodies but to sustain our souls. Each time we are hungry we have the opportunity to renew our connection to Hashem, the Source of our existence. Our job in this world is to reveal Hashem where He is hidden. The Yetzer Hara works hard to blind us from seeing Hashem while we eat.

The goal is to be “eating with Hashem” by experiencing His Presence while eating. This may seem overly lofty, but even trying this once a day or once a week is a very powerful way to connect to Hashem and bring more blessing into your life. The key to eating with holiness is in the power of your thoughts. Try thinking about one of these ideas before or during your meal, or while making a brachah on your food.

- 👑 Thank you Hashem for this delicious food and the feeling of becoming satiated.
- 👑 My soul is hungry for connection with Hashem.
- 👑 I am ingesting the light of Hashem which is concealed in this food, renewing my soul with connection to its Source.
- 👑 I am eating in order to have the strength to serve Hashem.
- 👑 The pleasure I feel from the taste of this food and from becoming satiated is really an experience of receiving the pleasure of Hashem, consumed through physical forms.
- 👑 If one tiny spark of G-dliness within this food can bring me so much delicious satisfaction and joy, imagine the joy of connecting directly to the Source of all pleasure.
- 👑 I am pulling off the mask and revealing Hashem in this world. By finding holiness in this food I am revealing the presence of Hashem precisely where He is most hidden.

Pro tip: It can be easier to eat with holiness when you really enjoy and savor your food. Try this when you are truly hungry, with your favorite food, while exercising self-control by chewing slowly or by pausing and thinking before you eat or between bites.

URCHATZ / First Handwashing

ורחץ

👑 The Outer Action

We wash our hands but do not say a blessing.

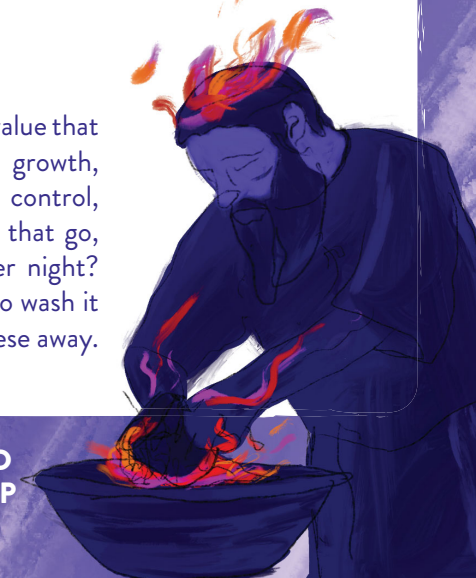
👑 The Inner Intention

There are three times that we wash our hands during the Seder: before dipping the *Karpas* vegetables; before eating the *Matzah*, and before we recite *Birkas Hamazon (Mayim Achronim)*. On the surface, we are just washing our hands. But beneath the surface we are washing off something much deeper than the dirt on our hands. We are washing our *Kli*, the vessel that we use to receive the light of spirituality from Hashem. Hashem is always giving this light, but we need to create within ourselves the capacity to receive it.

During *Urchatz* we are cleansing our innermost vessel, our minds, of the impurities within them. The modern form of the idols of Egypt are the improper values we hold. We want to realign our values with the values of Hashem and the Torah. This will give us a pure, clean vessel, ready to receive the spiritual bounty of Seder night. By washing away the impurities, we bring ourselves to the point where we can “see” the messages that Hashem is constantly sending us, which we may never have noticed before.

👑 A Moment of Mindfulness

Bring to your mind one thing that you value that may be a distraction to your spiritual growth, (examples: money, status, respect, control, looks, attention, “likes”). Can you let that go, even if only for a few hours of Seder night? Close your eyes, and take a moment to wash it away. Ask Hashem for help to wash these away.



“HASHEM, PLEASE WASH MY MIND OUT FROM ANY VALUES THAT KEEP ME AWAY FROM YOU.”

KARPAS / Vegetable in Salt Water

כרפס

👑 The Outer Action

A small quantity of a vegetable is dipped in salt water. We eat without reclining.

👑 The Inner Intention

Karpas represents *avodas perech*, futile work. Chasing honor, money, “likes” or any worldly or ego pleasure is futile – you keep building upon it but it is like building on quicksand – the happiness bucket remains empty.

We take a lowly vegetable rooted in the dirt, symbolizing these unfulfilling pursuits, and dip it into salt water, symbolizing tears, to show that chasing after them will end in tears of futility. When we are feeling spiritually disconnected (*Katnus*), we often chase after these pursuits. The Jews were forced to do meaningless, backbreaking labor in Egypt, building cities on soft mud which then sank into the ground. This was *avodas perech*, futile work.

Often, when we feel spiritually disconnected (*Katnus*), the *Yetzer Hara* (Evil Inclination) tries to entice us with alternative ways to find fulfillment and happiness. But this can lead us into quicksand, as we chase more and more of the empty temptations and pleasures of this world, only to turn around and realize that our happiness bucket cannot be filled by anything other than a connection with Hashem.

👑 A Moment of Mindfulness

What is your *avodas perech*? Identify what you sink your time and energy into that gives you no real lasting joy. Pick up the *karpas* vegetable, symbolizing this pursuit, and as you dip it into salt water, symbolizing tears, reflect on the message that the endless pursuit of temptation won’t bring us the happiness it promises. Only genuine, spiritual work will bring us the meaning and joy our soul is craving. Ask Hashem to help you turn your mind and your energies away from meaningless pursuits and redirect it to a deep, satisfying relationship with Hashem.



“HASHEM, HELP ME DIRECT MY ENERGIES TO PURSUE ONLY A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU.”

YACHATZ / Break Middle Matzah



👑 The Outer Action

The middle matzah is broken in two. The bigger portion is hidden away to serve as the Afikoman with which the meal is later concluded. The smaller portion is placed between the two whole matzos.

👑 The Inner Intention

The middle matzah symbolizes our personal power — our actions, and our ability to do and accomplish things with passion. This is not a bad thing at all. It is Hashem's desire that we partner with Him in perfecting Creation. But there is a risk of us falling into haughtiness and thinking it is all about us; believing that we are the true power (*Yeshus*). So we break the matzah and show that our actions are just the smaller part. We then take the smaller part and put it back into the other matzos to show that our actions are small and insignificant in relation to the other matzos which represent Hashem's part (*Bittul Yeshus*).

👑 A Moment of Mindfulness

Take a moment to recognize that the efforts you make (*hishtadlus*) are the smaller part, and tuck it between the two whole matzos that represent Hashem's part in running the world and your life. Welcome the inner peace that comes from knowing that your actions are only a small part of the equation and that we are all in Hashem's hands. This is the foundation of *Emunah* which brings us wholeness and happiness.

**“MY GREATEST JOY COMES FROM KNOWING THAT
HASHEM IS RUNNING THE WORLD, NOT ME.”**

NIRTZAH – PARTING / The Seder Service Is Complete

נרצה

👑 The Outer Action

We conclude the Seder with a declaration that we have performed the service correctly and pray that we merit to fulfill the service in the holy Temple in Jerusalem next year.

👑 The Inner Intention

This is the final moment of the *Seder* where all of our inner work of the evening comes together into the powerful light of *Yichud* (Oneness). All of the separateness we felt in the creation melts away as we see that everything is really One, and there is nothing that exists outside of Hashem. Now is the time to allow ourselves to experience *Bittul* (Full Ego Nullification). All of existence melts into Hashem's light and everything in this world is but vessels to bring out His will.
אין עוד מלבדו – Ein Od Milvado, There is Nothing Outside of Hashem.

👑 A Moment of Mindfulness

Now is the time to pray and ask Hashem for what you really, really want: to feel His closeness in your life **all year long**. Ask Hashem for the ability to see Him in every situation that arises in your life, particularly the difficult ones. *Nirtzah* is when we ask Hashem to allow us to take some of the expanded spiritual consciousness He gifted us with tonight into the year ahead, so that even when tonight's spiritual high fades away, we are left with a heightened awareness of Hashem at all times.

“THANK YOU HASHEM FOR ALLOWING ME TO INTERNALIZE THE PNIMIYUS (INNER DIMENSION) OF THIS HOLY SEDER!”

HALLEL – PRAISE / The Fourth Cup

הלל

The Outer Action

The fourth cup of wine is poured and Hallel is completed. Drink the fourth cup while reclining to the left.

The Inner Intention

Now that we have merited to have our minds and hearts opened to Hashem's light during the *Seder*, we are experiencing clear *Emunah*. We can see clearly that there is no reality outside of Hashem (*Ein Od Milvado*). As a continuation of the *Daas* that we are developing, we cannot help ourselves and spring into *Hallel* (praise) for Hashem and His greatness. It is only natural that when a person achieves a new level of understanding of Hashem's presence and greatness, that he will begin singing words of praise and gratitude.

While in *Birkas Hamazon* we praised Hashem for all the good that He does for us, now we praise Him for something even deeper. **We praise Him for our ability to have a relationship with Him.** Hashem gave us the ability to find Him where He is concealed, and to reveal Him to others. Hashem allows us to speak to Him, to cling to Him, and to emulate His ways. What a gift we were given! What a merit we have to be able to attach ourselves to the Creator of the world! What a privilege we have to be able to praise Him!

A Moment of Mindfulness

Take a moment to appreciate how fortunate you are that you have been given the tools to have a direct relationship with the Creator of the Universe. Thank Hashem now in your own words for this incredible gift. Know that there is nothing in this world more precious or valuable (no amount of money, power, private jets, etc.) that could possibly provide a human being with more happiness, joy, and inner peace than what you have: the ability to connect with Hashem anytime and anywhere through the tools that He provided us – Torah learning, personal prayer, *mitzvos*, and *Emunah*. Hold this special gratitude in your mind as you say *Hallel*.



“THANK YOU HASHEM FOR GIVING ME A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU. THERE IS NOTHING IN THE WORLD THAT IS MORE PRECIOUS THAN THIS.”

MAGGID / Tell the Story

מגיד

👑 The Outer Action

We tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt. Stories of Hashem's miracles are shared. The Haggadah is read and discussed.

👑 The Inner Intention

The source of our *Emanah* in Hashem, our belief that He is intimately involved in our personal lives, is the story of the Exodus from Egypt. What the Jews experienced during the Exodus was so spiritually mind-blowing that it left us with a wellspring of *Emanah* that will last for all generations. In order for us to experience this *Emanah* we tell the story of the Exodus with great happiness and joy. Hashem then gifts us with an expanded consciousness (*Gadlus Mochin*) to see and feel how involved He is in our lives today.

We begin speaking about the miracles we have personally experienced over the past year with gratitude and joy. The Zohar says that at this point Hashem gathers the angels around Him and says, "Listen to my children speaking My praise." Then Hashem gives us the ability to see the hidden miracles in our lives for the rest of the year.

👑 A Moment of Mindfulness

Think about times in the past year when you experienced hidden or even open miracles. Bring to mind Hashem and the angels listening with great joy as you talk about the miracles He has done for you and your family.

"HASHEM, OPEN MY EYES TO SEE THE MIRACLES YOU DO FOR ME EVERY DAY."

BARECH / The Third Cup

ברך

👑 The Outer Action

The third cup is poured. Grace after the meal is recited. A blessing is said on the wine. We drink while reclining to the left.

👑 The Inner Intention

During the third cup we connect to Hashem through *Daas*. *Daas* is contemplation that inspires us to action. During *Birkas Hamazon* this inspiration leads to sincere gratitude as we declare that everything in our lives is from Hashem: food, livelihood, family, health, and all our physical and spiritual blessings. We reflect on the kindness that Hashem has showered on us and reflect on how He takes care of our needs. Hashem not only feeds our bodies, but provides for us spiritually by providing us pathways to connect with Him through Torah study, prayer, and kindness to our fellow man (*chessed*). He provides us with a Holy *Neshamah* that propels us to be like our Creator by being givers. He gives us a desire to live our lives with purpose and the tools to discover what that purpose is. He provides us with the ability to speak to Him in our own words whenever we want to and waits for us to reach out to Him. He provides us with the ability to ask Him for anything we want and responds to our requests through His actions. Perhaps during the year, we have not fully taken the opportunity to thank Hashem for all that He provides us. This *Birkas Hamazon* is an opportunity to rectify all the times in the past year that we have not properly thanked Hashem for the physical and spiritual sustenance He provides us with.

👑 A Moment of Mindfulness

"Thank You Hashem from the bottom of my heart for all the physical and spiritual blessings You have showered upon me and my loved ones during the past year. Please allow this expression of gratitude to serve as a *tikkun* (rectification) for all of the times over the past year that I failed to thank You properly."

"THANK YOU HASHEM!!"

MAYIM ACHRONIM / Third Handwashing



👑 The Outer Action

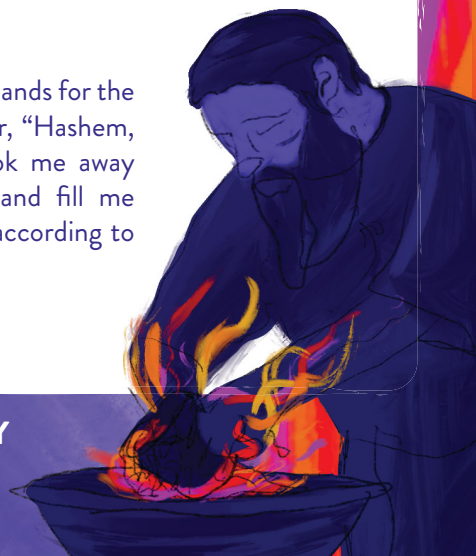
We wash our hands for a third time, this time in preparation for *Birkas Hamazon* (Grace after meal).

👑 The Inner Intention

In the first two washings, we washed out our minds and hearts. In this third washing of the night, we wash out our actions. We ask Hashem to cleanse our actions that were not aligned with His Will and that were sourced in the idols of Egypt that we still worship. We sometimes feel that as long as our intentions are good it doesn't matter if we hurt other people's feelings. At other times, we become sloppy in our *mitzvah* observance, thinking, "Hashem doesn't really care about this, does He?" Perhaps, worst of all, we don't take care of ourselves because we don't feel deep down that we are worth treating ourselves with great respect, care, and compassion. At this time, we wash out all these actions that we have taken that are inconsistent with the Holy *Neshamah* that we really are. We wash ourselves with *Emunah* and reunite with our true identity – a Holy *Neshamah*.

👑 A Moment of Mindfulness

Take a moment before you wash your hands for the final time and say the following prayer, "Hashem, please wash out the *actions* that took me away from You and from my *Neshamah* and fill me with *Emunah* so that I can serve You according to Your Will."



“HASHEM, PLEASE WASH OUT ANY OF MY ACTIONS THAT KEEP ME AWAY FROM YOU.”

EMUNAH EXERCISES

An integral part of Seder night is building a bridge between the miracles Hashem performed for our ancestors and the miracles Hashem is constantly doing for us now. By discussing the open miracles Hashem performed in *Mitzrayim* (Egypt) we will come to open our eyes to the hidden miracles He is constantly performing for us. The Seder is a powerful time to identify these hidden miracles, discuss them, and thank Hashem for them.

Let's take advantage of the unique spiritual gift of an expanded awareness of Hashem's presence at the Seder! Below are some suggestions of *Emunah* exercises so we can all help each other with this holy task. This can be done alone or as an interactive group discussion.

👑 1: What Has Been Your Personal *Yetzias Mitzrayim*?

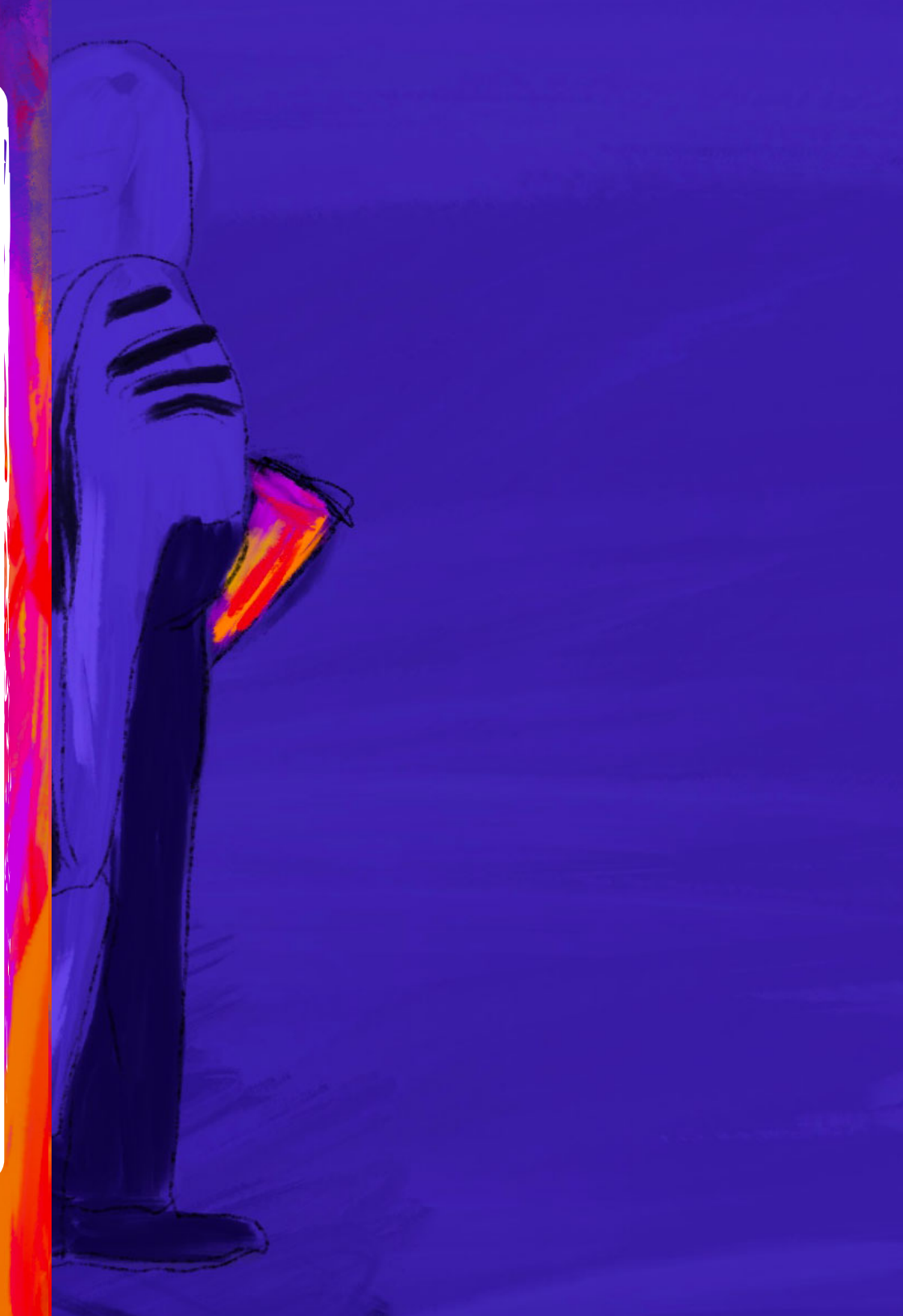
The Exodus from Egypt was a powerful experience for the Jewish people that has withstood the test of time as a foundation for our *Emunah*. Yet, it is not only a historical event. Each one of us has experienced the restraints of our own *Mitzrayim* at some point in the past year. The word *Mitzrayim* is actually rooted in the Hebrew word (*meitzar*) meaning "narrowness" or "constraint." Think about a personal *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, Exodus, that you have experienced in the past year. Identify an area you felt trapped and constrained in, which you were able to escape and break free from. If you wish, share this personal redemption with your Seder-mates. This is an opportunity to feel and express great gratitude towards Hashem.

👑 2: What Yetzias Mitzrayim Are You Still Waiting For?

Consider what aspects of personal Mitzrayim you are currently still dealing with that you would like to report at next year’s Seder that you have been able to break free from! Perhaps you will share this with others, or just with Hashem. Consider speaking to Hashem in your own words and asking Him to help you break free.

👑 3: Identify How Many Miracles Hashem Is Constantly Performing for You.

Even when we see Hashem’s guiding hand in our lives, we may be limiting ourselves by not recognizing the extent of these miracles. Identify a hidden miracle and then try to break down this Divine Providence into multiple parts, until you can see many different aspects of each miracle, and see how that expands your Emunah, gratitude, and feelings of closeness to Hashem. You could create your own Dayeinu, and break your gratitude down into many different parts. For example, “Thank you Hashem for my house” can become, “Thank you Hashem for the home I live in, and all that is within it. Thank you for the bed I have to sleep in so I can rest and recharge, the kitchen I have to store the delicious foods that You’ve created, the table I have to eat on, the washing machine I have so I can wear clean, fresh clothing, and so on.”



MAGGID CONT. / The Second Cup

מגיד

👑 The Outer Action

The second cup is raised. Drink while reclining to the left.

👑 The Inner Intention

During the second cup we connect to Hashem through *Binah*. In *Binah* (understanding) we see Hashem in the fine details of our lives. This comes after we have done the work of *Maggid*, and we can see in detail how Hashem is present in every aspect of our lives. We bless Hashem for all that we now understand that we did not understand before. Just as Hashem did miracles for the Jewish people then, He does them today – though in a more hidden manner. Hashem has not changed in any way since the Exodus took place. All the power that Hashem had then, He has now (אני השם לא שניתי).

👑 A Moment of Mindfulness

Think of a time in your past when you were struggling and Hashem took care of you. Bring to mind the awareness that just as He has taken care of you in the past, He is taking care of you now, and will take care of you in the future.

“I NOW SEE THAT HASHEM IS THERE WITH ME, IN EVERY SITUATION. I HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT. I AM IN HASHEM’S HANDS.”

RACHTZA / Second Handwashing

רחצה

👑 The Outer Action

In preparation for the meal, all participants wash their hands and recite the blessing.

👑 The Inner Intention

In the last washing (*Urchatz*) we washed out the idols of Egypt that live in our minds still today. Now, during *Rachtza*, we take it a step further. We wash out our hearts with the cooling waters of *Emunah*. We wash away the non-kosher desires we have that pull us away from Hashem and we wash away our arrogance and ego. We wash away our irritation when life doesn't go our way or when others don't cooperate with our wishes.

👑 A Moment of Mindfulness

Emunah is the tool Hashem gave us to use to refine our character traits. The more I realize that Hashem orchestrates every single interaction I have, the less I will be annoyed at someone who bothers me. The more I realize that my superpower is that I am a messenger of Hashem, powered by Hashem, the less egoistic I will be about my accomplishments, and the less saddened I'll be by my failures. The more I experience the eternal spiritual bliss of closeness to Hashem, the less I will run after the shallow and temporary pleasures of the world.



“HASHEM, PLEASE WASH MY HEART OUT FROM ANYTHING THAT KEEPS ME AWAY FROM YOU.”

TZAFUN / The Hidden Matzah

צפון

👑 The Outer Action

At the end of the meal, the remaining piece of matzah, which had been hidden earlier (the *Afikoman*) is eaten.

👑 The Inner Intention

During *Tzafun*, which means hidden, we reveal that which was hidden from us. We find Hashem where we may have not noticed His presence. The experience of feeling distant from Hashem has a name, *Katnus*, literally meaning smallness. We feel small and insignificant. At these times, we don't want to engage Hashem and His *mitzvos* and we don't want to express our *neshamos* – we want to express our bodies, desires, and egos. Hashem sends us these times of *Katnus* to test our faith and to see if even then we will try to find Him. The Jewish *neshamah* constantly searches for Hashem, like the children search for the *afikoman* on Seder night. Now we reveal that although it was hidden, the *afikoman* was really here all along. This is how we get from *Katnus* to *Gadlus* (Greatness) – by always remembering that Hashem is still there and not being fooled into thinking that we have been abandoned. Hashem has been here, with you, all along.

👑 A Moment of Mindfulness

Just like a light shines brighter in the dark, revealing Hashem in the darkness of *Katnus* is the strongest expression of *Emunah* we can achieve. Bring to mind an experience of *Katnus*, when you felt distant and unmotivated in your Judaism. Elevate that moment by seeing **now** that Hashem was there **then**.

Learn more about navigating times of katnus on page 38.

“HASHEM, NO MATTER HOW WELL YOU HIDE, I WILL NEVER STOP SEARCHING FOR YOU.”

SHULCHAN ORECH **שלחן עורך** / The Meal Matzah

👑 The Outer Action

The festive meal is eaten.

👑 The Inner Intention

This meal is the Holy of Holies. During this meal, we can truly feel that all pleasure embedded in materialism is really the light of Hashem. Normally, feeling holiness in food is very difficult for us. We get caught up in the pleasure of the food and have a hard time feeling connected to Hashem as we eat. Yet, now, at the Seder, this level is accessible to all who wish to join. All who are spiritually hungry are welcome to join us in this holy eating as we use food to draw ourselves closer to Hashem. During this meal we can make a *tikkun*, or rectification, for all of the eating we have done during the past year, connecting everything to its source.

👑 A Moment of Mindfulness

On Seder night, holy eating is accessible to anyone who truly desires it.
Turn to page 35 and try some Holy Eating!

“MY GREATEST JOY COMES FROM KNOWING THAT
HASHEM IS RUNNING THE WORLD, NOT ME.”

MOTZI MATZAH **מוציא מצה** / Eating the Matzah

👑 The Outer Action

The leader holds all three matzos and says the brachos. Matzah is given to each member of the meal. All eat reclining to the left.

👑 The Inner Intention

Matzah is called the Bread of *Emunah*. As we fulfill this *mitzvah* we are given the opportunity to turn our faith into a tangible experience of humility before Hashem. We begin to see the world through the eyes of *Emunah*. The externals fade away, and the truth of reality comes into focus. There is nothing besides Hashem. I am only here because Hashem continues to “will me” into existence. The world is filled with His honor; everything I see is a vessel to reveal His Presence, and everything that happens is a means to carry out His will.

In Egypt, He showed us that nothing has its own existence outside of Hashem. The One who created nature can easily alter it. Just as *Ein Od Milvado* (there is nothing other than Hashem) was true then, it is true now. My existence is completely reliant on Hashem and as I eat the matzah – unleavened, unrisen and egoless, Hashem gives me the gift of *bittul*. This is the recognition that Hashem is everything and I have no true independent existence.

This is why we recline while eating during the Seder. We recline to our left which is Hashem’s “right” as He faces us. When we recline, we are leaning on something (pillow, armrest, etc.), and if someone would move that object we would fall. We lean into Hashem’s right, with complete reliance on Him, like a baby in his mother’s arms, allowing Him to hold us and internalizing that were He to “move,” we would fall.

👑 A Moment of Mindfulness

As you eat the matzah, ask Hashem to infuse you with real *Emunah*. Picture the humble spark of *Emunah* in the matzah entering you with each bite. Feel your absolute reliance on Hashem. Allow your sense of “self” to become nullified and enveloped in the Infinite light of Hashem. And with each bite ask Hashem to fill you with *Emunah*, more and more.

“אין עוד מלבדו – EIN OD MILVADO
THERE IS NOTHING OUTSIDE OF HASHEM.”

MAROR / Bitter Herbs

מרור

👑 The Outer Action

Lettuce and/or horseradish is dipped in charoses and eaten. We do not recline.

👑 The Inner Intention

The *Maror* is a reminder of the bitterness of slavery that our forefathers experienced in Egypt. But just as our forefathers were enslaved not only physically, but also spiritually, to Egyptian values, we too are enslaved to modern Western values. We picture the enjoyment we will receive from pursuing pleasure and temptations that take us away from Hashem. But in the end, instead of being left with the pleasure we imagined, we are left with the bitterness of disconnection from Hashem.

It is our nature to try to “gulp down” this bitterness and pretend it isn’t there. We want to convince ourselves we are unbothered by values, decisions, and a lifestyle that is disconnected from Hashem. The work here is to slow down and see the truth: That there is no lasting happiness here. The *Maror* reminds us of what awaits us at the end of the endless pursuit of temptation. We need to chew on this slowly and mindfully. To bring into our mind, heart, and body the bitterness that a path away from Hashem leads us to.

👑 A Moment of Mindfulness

As you pick up your *Maror*, think about a value or pleasure you enjoy that brings you farther from Hashem. When the real bitterness of the *Maror* hits you, embrace its harsh message, and think about the feeling of emptiness and regret we feel when we steer away from Hashem. If the sharpness makes your eyes teary, let that be a holy tear of *teshuvah* (repentance)! Take the opportunity to firmly resolve to avoid this bitterness by avoiding the actions that lead to it.

As the pain of the *Maror* fades away, feel the sweetness of Hashem fully welcoming you back to Him with joy.

“ANYTHING THAT TAKES ME AWAY FROM HASHEM ALWAYS LEADS TO BITTERNESS. THERE IS NO REAL PLEASURE OTHER THAN THE PLEASURE OF CLOSENESS TO HASHEM.”

KORECH / The Hillel Sandwich

כורח

👑 The Outer Action

Bitter herbs (*Maror*) are sandwiched between two pieces of matzah taken from the bottom matzah. Eat while reclining to the left.

👑 The Inner Intention

The *Maror* in the *Korech* sandwich represents a different type of bitterness than the *Maror* we just ate by itself. This is the bitterness we experience from everything that happens to us in our lives that we perceive as bad. We are all human, and it is natural for us to experience difficulties as bad. When we bring *Emunah* into our life, we realize that every experience we go through is tailor-made by Hashem for us to achieve our life mission – even the ones that don’t feel very good. *Korech* allows the “bad” (the *maror*) to be sandwiched by the good (the Matzah, the Bread of *Emunah*). Our *Emunah* surrounds our challenges until “good” and “bad” become one.

👑 A Moment of Mindfulness

As you pick up your *Korech* sandwich, bring to mind something that you experienced as painful or bad in the past year. Spend a moment thanking Hashem for this experience, with the knowledge that from a soul perspective, it is all good.

“EVEN WHEN IT IS HARD TO SEE IT, I BELIEVE WITH PERFECT FAITH THAT EVERYTHING HASHEM DOES IS FOR MY GOOD.”