From my earliest youth, I remember that the children would ask each other on the first morning of Pesach, "How long did your Seder last?"

This was true in my youth, and it is still the case today.

If the children were to ask me this now, I would answer them, "I made sure to eat the afikoman before chatzos (midnight)." According to some poskim, even the recitation of Hallel should be completed before chatzos. I must point out that the present-day practice in which all the children read from their prepared sheets which they received in school is not exactly in accordance with the mitzvah of שִׁלַּחְתָּנוּ הָעָם לֵבָנָן, וְנִנְצַּרְאָנִים, and you shall tell to your children, etc. (Shemos 13:8) The children have started a new mitzvah of חֲזֵקָנָונִי לֶבָנָן יִנְצַּרְאָנִים, you shall teach your father and mother, which makes it extremely difficult to reach the mitzvah of achilas matzah — and certainly the afikoman — before chatzos.

Rather than discourage the children from actively participating, they should keep their remarks brief, so the father, or other leader of the Seder, can read the text of the Haggadah and explain the nissim of yetzias Mitzrayim. However, the children should be encouraged to say their mesoriot Toras during the meal if there is time or, otherwise, during the daytime meals of Yom Tov.

The Haggadah shel leil Pesach is probably the most popular sefer, after the siddur, in the Jewish home. There are at least a thousand commentaries on the Haggadah, each with different explanations and interpretations. It is not the purpose of this shiur to add another one, but rather to share a few thoughts on various parts of the Haggadah.

On Seder night, it is a mitzvah asei d'Oraisa to retell to one's children the events surrounding yetzias Mitzrayim. If one has the zechus to have children or grandchildren, it is a mitzvah for the father or grandfather to hand down to them the details of yetzias Mitzrayim. The saying of so-called "gute vertlach," good, short pieces of Torah, is very nice, but if these are not details of the narrative of yetzias Mitzrayim — or its meaning and message — they are not a part of this mitzvah. On Seder night, the children are encouraged to ask any question relevant to yetzias Mitzrayim, and the father has a special...
mitzvah d’Oraisa to respond to these questions, and tell his children about the miracles HaKadosh Baruch Hu did for us. This is based on the pasuk: דִּבְרֵי יָהָ֣והָ שֶׁלֹּא נִשְׁתָּנָה כְּלֶלֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵ֣ל לְאַמּוֹרוֹן בְּעַד הָֽאָדָ֣מִים לֹ֣א נִשְׁתָּנָ֔ה כְּלֶלֶת מַגִּירִים And you shall tell your son on that day, saying, “It is because of this that Hashem acted on my behalf when I left Egypt” (Shemos 13:8).

The Gemara says:_creation of miracles for us, This is based on the pasuk: הַקּוֹדֵשׁ בָּרָךְ Hu נֶפֶר וְהַרְוָא מִנְחָתָהוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא נִשְׁתָּנָה כְּלֶלֶת שֶׁלֹּא נִשְׁתָּנָה כְּלֶלֶת מַגִּירִים It is stated in a Baraisa that Rabbi Eliezer said: One is "chotef" the matzah on Pesach nights for the benefit of the small children, lest they fall asleep (Pesachim 109a). The phrase secondo Rashi and Rashbam, which has the literal meaning of “snatching” the matzahs, is explained by Rashi and Rashbam as having either of the following meanings:

It could mean: the ke’arah (Seder plate containing the matzah) is raised (snatched away) to arouse the children’s interest in the matzah and the other objects on the Seder plate.

The other explanation, which Rashi calls יָעָרָה, the main explanation, is that in the evening (literally: one grabs the matzos) so that the children, with their short attention span, will be awake when the matzah and maror are eaten. They will not be too tired when they see the father holding the matzah and hear him explain: “This is the kind of bread that our forefathers ate while they were slaves in Mitzrayim and also soon after they were redeemed.” They will also hear the father explain that the maror reminds us of the bitterness of the lives of our forefathers while they were enslaved in Egypt.

In practice, we follow both explanations: We raise the ke’arah while saying עֶרֶב עָרֶב וּלְיַעֲרָה נֶפֶר וְהַרְוָא מִנְחָתָהוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל and the matzah is eaten early in the evening (literally: one grabs the matzos) so that the children, with their short attention span, will be awake when the matzah and maror are eaten. They will not be too tired when they see the father holding the matzah and hear him explain: “This is the kind of bread that our forefathers ate while they were slaves in Mitzrayim and also soon after they were redeemed.” They will also hear the father explain that the maror reminds us of the bitterness of the lives of our forefathers while they were enslaved in Egypt.

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There is another explanation for the чотеf, which takes it to mean, literally: the matzos are snatched from one another (see Rambam, Hil. Chametz U’Matzah 7:3). While this is not our minhag, the reason for it is the same: to arouse the children’s curiosity.

A related, and quite universal, form of the чотеf is the minhag that the children take the matzah that will be used for the afikoman while the father is distracted — and are offered a reward for its return. This little game keeps the children awake and interested until the reward is offered at the end of the meal.

I, personally, do not care for the term “stealing the matzah.” It is un-Jewish to steal — even the afikoman! אֶלָּא נָחֲנוּ, the prohibition against theft, includes אֶלָּא נָחֲנוּ, even if it is done as a prank (see BavaMatza 5:8, which is not saying it is not a חוטה, but that it is not a חוטה שדא. The reason is שדא. The reason is that the matzah is שדא, the prohibited object.

For instance, Chazam an aliya (Dec. 3:12) fact that the matzah is שדא.

The custom incorporates that the children would be blind, a street game to were at “game.”

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The father’s term repres the Shabbos piece. The锡 lives in one is obtain Torah. afik — HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

The baal veshem...
Metzia 61b). Notwithstanding the fact that the children taking the afikoman is not stealing, because it is not removed from the premises, it would still be the wrong chinuch to call it “stealing.” Rather, I would call it “hiding” the matzah, to be used later as the afikoman, which is called hidden.

There is an oft-quoted saying, although not found in any original halachic source, K'iJ Mlin 7~lO/' liJ~Y,l, that all Jewish minhagim have a deep meaning. For instance, the wearing of masks on Purim is an allusion to the words of Chazal: "Where do we find an allusion to Esther in the Torah? ... But I will surely have concealed My face (Devarim 31:18; Chullin 139b). The wearing of masks on Purim alludes to the fact that Hashem's “face was hidden” during the miracle of Purim. It was a neis nistar: ... But I will surely have concealed My face (Devarim 31:18).

Thoughtful Jewish parents of old, in playing with their children, always incorporated a Torah lesson into their children's games. The story is told that the Chazon Ish, while walking with his young nephews through the streets of Bnei Brak (he never had children of his own), told the boys that he would like to play a game where he would close his eyes, pretending to be blind, and they would have to lead him. The purported object of this little game would be to see how many times he could guess which street they were on. When these boys matured, they realized that the real object of this “game” was that the Chazon Ish avoid seeing immodestly dressed women.

Similarly, the minhag of Yi~L, whereby we break the matzah into a larger and smaller piece, with each being used for its special purpose, is also deeply symbolic. The smaller piece, the K;~17 K)?r;t7, the poor man's bread, is left in the Seder plate along with the maror and the charoses. However, the larger piece is hidden away during the Seder, to be eaten after the meal as the afikoman by the children, who will ask for a reward for its return, and it is then eaten at the end of the meal, יֵלֶדְתָּוּבֵּי.

I heard a beautiful explanation for the symbolism of this minhag from my father יֵצֶר. He explained that the smaller piece of matzah, the K;~17 K)?r;t7, represents Olam Hazeh, with all its trials and tribulations. This piece is left in the Seder plate along with the maror and charoses, reflecting life in this world, with all its sweet and bitter experiences. However, the larger, main piece, which is hidden away during the Seder, to be eaten after the meal as the afikoman, represents Olam Haba, which is hidden from us during our lives in this world. The eating of this piece יֵלֶדְתָּוּבֵּי, after the meal, when one is satiated, is symbolic of our reward in Olam Haba, which can be obtained only if we have first satiated ourselves in this world with a life of Torah and mitzvos. The children's request for a reward before giving up the afikoman is symbolic of our reward in Olam Haba, which is granted to us by HaKadosh Baruch Hu if we have earned it.

The Haggadah was put into its present, universally accepted form by the baal Haggadah — his name is not known — who lived at the time of the
Geonim. The Rambam follows this order, with some slight variations. My father suggested that the baal Haggadah, in formulating the order of the Haggadah, followed the pasuk, "And you shall tell your son on that day, saying, “It is because of this that Hashem acted on my behalf when I left Egypt" (Shemos 13:8). The sections therefore follow this order:

- דoins the letters: לָכֵן אַל תָּנֵךְ לְךָ, And you shall tell your son on that day, saying, “It is because of this that Hashem acted on my behalf when I left Egypt" (Shemos 13:8). The letters therefore follow this order:
- קדש יהיה כֵּן אַל תָּנֵךְ לְךָ, I shall sanctify to Myself this day, because you were redeemed from Egypt, Leviticus 23:4.
- קדש יהיה כֵּן אַל תָּנֵךְ לְךָ, I shall sanctify to Myself this day, because you were redeemed from Egypt, Leviticus 23:4.

The first part of the Haggadah begins with the child asking, כֵּן אַל תָּנֵךְ לְךָ, And you shall tell your son on that day, saying, “It is because of this that Hashem acted on my behalf when I left Egypt" (Shemos 13:8). The letters therefore follow this order:

- ינ \ו \ו \ו \ו, The unusual order of things at the Seder is designed to pique the curiosity of the child. He has observed the father making Kiddush as he does every Yom Tov. But then, instead of making hamotzi and beginning the meal, he washes his hands — without a berachah — and eats the karpas vegetable, which he has dipped in saltwater. Then, finally, the father reaches for the matzah and, instead of making hamotzi and eating it, he breaks it in half and does not eat it! Then, lo and behold, the second cup is poured! By this time, the child is totally confused. And, as Chazal tell us, Why ask, כֵּן אַל תָּנֵךְ לְךָ, This is the complete opposite of any other order! He then proceeds to detail his questions: כֵּן אַל תָּנֵךְ לְךָ...
- רַעְיָה יַרְאֵה, The series of questions, the ינ \ו \ו \ו \ו, is a quotation from the Mishnah (Pesachim 116a), and is usually the first mishnayos be'al peh that the child learns. If there is no child present, a grownup asks the questions. Even talmidei chachamim are required to ask these questions in the absence of children. And even if one finds himself all alone, it is a mitzvah to ask himself these questions (see Baraisa ibid.).

The number “four” plays a very prominent role in this Seder night. We have the four cups of wine, the four questions of the ינ \ו \ו \ו \ו, and the four sons. And we also have four regulations regarding the achilas korban Pesach: ינ \ו \ו \ו \ו, The korban Pesach is not eaten except at night and it is eaten only till chatzos, and it is eaten only by those who registered for it and it is eaten only roasted (Zevachim 56b).
redeem you . . . I shall take you . . . (Shemos 6:6) — is especially important in our commemoration of Yetzias Mitzrayim, in that it corresponds to the four letters of the Ineffable Name: ה¬ו¬יה¬ו which is contained in the pasuk: וְרָאָ֣ינִי וּ֥בְגֻֽרְבּ֖י נִכְרָ֣א לְךָ מִ֔כְרָא מַצָּוָ֖ה plea, it is a

The baal Haggadah divides this pasuk into four declarations of God's personal intervention at Yetzias Mitzrayim:

The questions of the order are asked by the child who is a chacham. This is evidenced by the answer given, which the baal Haggadah gives as the general response to the chacham: This is the answer found in the Torah to the question of the chacham: יִשְׁמַעְתָּ חָכָם פָּקָד לְךָ הַשָּׁמֵעָה, אָמַר אָדָם, אָמַר חָכָם, אָמַר חָכָם, אָמַר חָכָם. The word is to be understood as a rhetorical question which makes the statement: "How different is this night from all other nights?" One could ask the same question on Succos — or any other event in the Jewish calendar. Furthermore, the child does not ask, "Why do we eat matzah, or maror?" etc. Rather, he is stressing that there is something different about this night.

It is therefore clear that the question is not simply the question, "Why is this night different from all other nights?" One could ask the same question on Succos — or any other event in the Jewish calendar. Furthermore, the child does not ask, "Why do we eat matzah, or maror?" etc. Rather, he is stressing that there is something different about this night.

The wisdom of the chacham is evidenced by the fact that he recognizes that, on this night, the most trivial things assume enormous importance. After all, on any other night, one does not care if he eats bread or matzah, sweet vegetables or bitter ones, whether one dips or not, or whether one leans or sits straight. It is totally irrelevant.

However, on Seder night he recognizes that these normally insignificant objects — and actions — take on a special meaning. Tonight's observance is totally unlike other mitzvos such as succah, esrog, lulav, and shofar which require specific objects for their fulfillment. And it is about this which the
chacham remarks: הוהי והיה, “How different is this night, when usually trivial matters take on such major significance.”

And the father responds to his son’s very intelligent observation: “You know why all these normally trivial matters are so important tonight? It is because tonight, we have a special guest at our table: The guest is the Ribbeno Shel Olam Himself! Tonight is the night of Hashem; tonight Hashem pays special attention to us.”

י all שומרים את היל לราומים выводים אותו ואת כל שומרים על כל בני שומרים מקו, It is a night of anticipation for Hashem to take them out of the land of Egypt, this was the night for Hashem, a protection for all the Children of Israel for their generations (Shemos 12:42).

The father explains, “From the beginning of our creation as a nation, HaKadosh Baruch Hu paid special attention to us on this night. He appeared to our forefathers on this night when He redeemed them from Egypt. And every year, on this night, He comes to you, the ensuing generations. It is only on one night a year (or two in chutz la’aretz) that we have this experience, and that is why it is so special.”

This way of explaining it is borne out by the wording of the paragraph We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and Hashem took us out of Egypt with a strong hand (Devarim 6:21), with which the baal Haggadah begins the father’s response. However, upon reaching the words ilK1i1, he adds his own words: ilK1i1, to complete the narrative.

This is so, because having reached the word ilK1i1, the baal Haggadah interrupts and expresses the thought: “Before we go any further, let us know that at the core of our emunah lies the fact that our redemption was effected by HaKadosh Baruch Hu Himself, as הוהי; He personally redeemed us — bichvodo u’vatamo — He, Himself, Personally, from Egypt. Tonight we are to remember that it is ilK1i1. Tonight is God’s night.

So the father tells his son, “You rightfully pointed out that tonight everything is different. And how is it different? Tonight is dedicated toΙιא לא מנרכה, בא לא שובח, בא לא שירוה. ואהוהו לא אוכלי. Tonight is ilK1i1: ilK1i1 שלמרות והיה הלילה ... ilK1i1 שלמרות והיה הלילה it is the night when we transmit the basic elements of our emunah to you, the next generation.”

We then continue, את לא מנה ובחזרה למעה והיה אוכלי ובחזרה ومعה ובחזרה מעיון. This means that if yetzias Mitzrayim had not been done by HaKadosh Baruch Hu bichvodo u’vatamo, through the personal involvement of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, the entire concept of human freedom would never have been implanted in the mind of mankind, and Bnei Yisrael would have been permanently enslaved to the Egyptian Pharaohs, or to any subsequent governing power. The accepted norm would have been for the Jews to be slaves.
This is a remarkable statement. It means that without *yetzias Mitzrayim al yedei HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, the event of the Exodus from Egypt as an act of God’s personal intervention, there would never have been a notion of human rights, whereby the Egyptians and other civilized peoples would eventually have freed their slaves. The now commonly accepted principle that all human beings have an inherent right to freedom had its birth at *yetzias Mitzrayim al yedei HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. Without the personal intervention of *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* in *yetzias Mitzrayim*, it never would have occurred to anyone that there is any evil in one group of people subjugating or exploiting another. Therefore *yetzias Mitzrayim* was a world-historic event, not only for *Bnei Yisrael*, but also for all of mankind.

The acceptance of this basic human right of freedom from bondage, which modern civilized society now takes for granted, has taken thousands of years to be accepted in the world. Indeed, the entire Greek culture was based on slavery. The middle class relied on slaves to do all of their work, which allowed the Greek masters to pursue intellectual and physical pleasures. There was a similar situation in the Middle Ages in Europe. And without *yetzias Mitzrayim* at *yedei HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, there never would have been an abolitionist movement here in America, which resulted in President Abraham Lincoln freeing the slaves only some 125 years ago. In fact, even in our time, slavery has not been totally abolished; it still exists in certain parts of the world.

Therefore, the *baal Haggadah* continues, since we are talking about the miraculous personal involvement of *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* in *yetzias Mitzrayim*, it makes no difference if we already know the entire story, and we are redeemed even if we are not knowledgeable — even if we are not very intelligent, all elders who are thoroughly familiar with the Torah... it is still a mitzvah, to tell all the details of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, and, therefore, The more one tells... the more he is praiseworthy. Just as *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* is Infinite, so is there never an end to talking about the *nissim v’niflaos* that He brought about in connection with *yetzias Mitzrayim*.

This is further illustrated by the next paragraph:

"If *yetzias Mitzrayim* is a wonderful miracle, and we know the entire story, it still means that if *yetzias Mitzrayim* is a wonderful miracle, then the *baal Haggadah* uses the term *pikdu v’u’atzmo*, rather than *bni v’u’atzmo*, to emphasize that these great *Chachamim* — among the greatest of our sages after the *churban* — who were gathered in Bnei Brak instead of Yerushalayim, in the absence of the *korbren Pesach*, delved into each and every detail of the events surrounding *yetzias Mitzrayim* during that entire night. I am sure they had eaten the matzah and said *Hallel* before *chatzos*, and later, these all-night discussions centered around the details of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, and the many *hilchos Pesach*. All the discussions of *yetzias Mitzrayim* — and even *hilchos..."
Pesach — have one goal: to see ever more clearly that yetzias Mitzrayim occurred through the personal involvement of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and not through any intermediaries, be they malach, saraf, or hashaliach, “the messenger” (Moshe Rabbeinu). Consequently, these discussions on this night can be limitless, in accordance with the wisdom of the participants.

Then, at the end of the night, as these great Torah sages had reached the pinnacle of their perception of HaKadosh Baruch Hu’s personal intervention in the events of yetzias Mitzrayim, their talmidim arrived and announced: “Now is the time for Krias Shema shel Shacharis.” What could be a more natural culmination of these lofty discussions than for them to reaffirm, in their heightened state of awareness: שמע ישראל, I am Hashem, your God, Who has taken you out of the land of Egypt (Devarim 5:6), and not on הביא משה את בני ישראל ואת השמים והארץ, In the beginning of God’s creating the heavens and the earth (Bereishis 1:1). Although the creation of the world by HaKadosh Baruch Hu, ex nihilo, is one of the basic elements of our emunah, however, we cannot relate to it because we were not there when it occurred. But yetzias Mitzrayim is something to which we can relate, because we, as a nation, actually experienced how HaKadosh Baruch Hu personally redeemed us from Mitzrayim. This is the focal point of the entire Seder night.

It is these thoughts that the father conveys to his son — if he is a chacham — in response to his keen observation that tonight is how very different, from any other night!
Vehigadeta Levincha Bayom Hahu

We now proceed to the וְהָגָדְתָּה לְבִינָךְ בֵּיוֹמָה הַהָוָא section of the Haggadah. This details the methods that a father is to use in dealing with the אָרַגְאִית הַבּוֹן, the four different kinds of children envisioned by the Torah.

However, before beginning this section, the baal Haggadah introduces it with: ברוך שני תפוקות ברוך הוא ברוך שנינו תפוקות והultimo בלעדיי ברוך הוא. Blessed is HaMakom (Hashem), blessed is He; blessed is the One Who gave the Torah to His nation Yisrael, blessed is He. It is important for us to understand the significance of this introduction.

The Name used here for HaKadosh Baruch Hu is קְדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הָאֱלֹהִים, which really means place. This Name is usually reserved for sad occasions, as in עֲלֵי הוֹקֵם יִתְחַדֵּשׁ, תִּקְוֵהוּ רָעִים לְמַעַן, may HaMakom comfort you, or עֲלֵי הוֹקֵם יִתְחַדֵּשׁ, may HaMakom have mercy on them, where it is meant to convey the thought that in times of trouble and difficulties it may appear to those affected by such difficulties that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is absent. So we give them encouragement and hope by reaffirming our faith in the Omnipresence of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and telling them that there is no empty place: HaKadosh Baruch Hu is the מקום, the "Place" of the world. He is והוקם יתחלש על עולמ, even in times of difficulty and sadness, just as surely as "place" is here with us.

Before beginning the section dealing with the ארבעה בנים, the baal Haggadah, too, envisions people who may be sitting at their Seder tables in circumstances that are less than happy. This may be because HaKadosh Baruch Hu has not blessed them with children, and they are there without a child to ask what now, and no one with whom to bemekayeim the mitzvah of מצוות. In such circumstances, one is to be בָּרֹךְ שֵׁם חַכָּם, accepting of God's judgment, when he says the words קְדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הָאֱלֹהִים, the "Place." He is with us here, the "Place." He is with us here, accepting ofGod's judgment, when he says the words קְדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הָאֱלֹהִים, the "Place." He is with us here, accepting of God's judgment, when he says the words קְדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הָאֱלֹהִים, with which he accepts the will of HaKadosh Baruch Hu in not granting him children.

Or, one may have children, but either one or more have not followed in the parents' way, and ridicule their parents as "old fashioned" or superstitious in their "rigid" observance of Torah u'mitzvos. For this case, the baal Haggadah prescribes the words: וְהָגָדְתָּה לְבִינָךְ בֵּיוֹמָה הַהָוָא, God gave the Torah for all of Yisrael; it has an answer even for the rasha, and a method that may bring him back on the proper path.

The Torah has answers for any person, regardless of whether he is a
chacham, rasha, tam, or she'eino yodei'a lishol. Rav Samson R. Hirsch translates: Torah is all-encompassing; it answers the questions asked by the soul (Tehillim 19:8). Here is used in the sense of she'elat ha'shavah, answers to questions. If questions of religion torment one's soul, it will be satisfied and refreshed by the answers found in a proper understanding of the Torah, which directs man in every aspect of his existence.

What does the wise child say? (He says:) What are the testimonial laws, and the statutes, and the civil laws which Hashem has commanded you? This question, utilizing the words of Devanim 6:20, is attributed to the chacham, not only because he categorizes the mitzvos of Pesach into groups — eidos, chukim, and mishpatim — but also because he wonders why the halachos connected with korban Pesach and issur chametz are so stringent that one violates them at the peril of the worst of all punishments, kares. Anyone who eats leavening — that soul shall be cut off from the assembly of Israel (Shemos 12:19); ... And he refrained from making the pesach-offering, that soul shall be cut off from its people (Bamidbar 9:13).

The chacham is the first to understand the necessity for hakaras hatov and of remembering the great kindness that HaKadosh Baruch Hu showed to His people by redeeming them from slavery with great miracles. He knows that it is very fitting and proper for the people to thank HaKadosh Baruch Hu on this day and remember it by eating matzah and maror, and the korban pesach. However, he is puzzled by the zemi, demand, by HaKadosh Baruch Hu that yetzias Mitzrayim be remembered, and that it be remembered precisely the way it is detailed in the Torah, and why the failure to adhere to these exacting demands would result in the severest of all punishments, kares. His question, therefore, is: What is the underlying reason for the exacting demands by HaKadosh Baruch Hu in connection with Pesach? This same question could likewise be asked concerning other mitzvos of the Torah, as well.

It is to this insightful question that the father is to give the answer found in the Torah: You shall say to your child, "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt..." (Devanim 6:21). The father tells his son that our origin as avadim to Pharaoh served as the training for our national destiny. When HaKadosh Baruch Hu redeemed us from Egyptian slavery by force, Baruch hu me'vorach be yira, Hashem took us out of Egypt with a strong hand, it was with the intention that we become His avadim.
This basic truth lies at the heart of the answer (ibid. 6:22-24), which continues: "And Hashem commanded us to fear Hashem, our God. This is not an explanation of the mitzvos, but rather, it is the reason for the commandment to perform them. We became free of the domination of Pharaoh to become avadim to HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and He has commanded us to fulfill His will. And if we fulfill His will solely because He commanded us ... that we will obtain the ultimate and everlasting goodness in Olam Haba. This will be in addition to keeping us alive, with a satisfying life, in this world.

The concluding sentence of the answer (ibid. 6:25) summarizes its essence: "And it will be a merit for us if we are careful to perform this entire commandment before Hashem, our God, as He commanded us. This means that it will be considered especially righteous on our part if we keep the mitzvos only because HaKadosh Baruch Hu commanded us to do so. This is the ultimate reason for all mitzvos. We may understand a most beautiful explanation for the mitzvah of tefillin that satisfies our intellectual curiosity, but at the moment we put them on, we are told here to do so solely for the purpose of fulfilling the commandment of Hashem. This thought is expressed in all of our birchos hamitzvos, when we say: "This is analogous to the laws of nature. Gravity, for instance, is the force that draws matter to the earth. While there have been many attempts by physicists to explain the reason for this phenomenon, in the final analysis, the reason for it is because it is a law of nature. It exists because the One Who created the world wants this law to exist. Very tellingly, we refer to the laws of nature as 'mitzvot' (Yirmiyahu 33:25). The words 'mitzvot' are to be taken in the same sense. The laws of Torah exist just as the laws of nature do — because that is what HaKadosh Baruch Hu wants.

To be sure, the understanding of the meaning of the mitzvos is an important aspect of talmud Torah — as is evident in many parts of the Mishnah.
and Gemara, and Rambam and Chinuch, as well as many other Rishonim and Acharonim, especially Rav Samson R. Hirsch. Very tellingly, however, the literal meaning of taamei hamitzvos is “the taste of the mitzvos,” but it is not its essence. One could make an analogy with the taste of food. HaKadosh Baruch Hu made the taste of food appealing and pleasurable to our taste buds, so that we would eat it and by eating it, our bodies would benefit from the nutrients therein, and that is its ultimate purpose. The body gains these nutrients even if the food is eaten because it tastes good and one enjoys it, and not because it keeps him alive. And if one were to eat without tasting the food, the body would still derive the same benefits from it. Similarly, the taamei hamitzvos are the “tastes” of the mitzvos, which appeal to our intellectual and emotional “taste buds” — which HaKadosh Baruch Hu gave us, so that we will derive pleasure from the understanding and performance of the mitzvos. However, the real essence of the mitzvah is, literally, what the word means, the fulfillment of God’s commandment: יְנַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמַה. Philosophically, it is important to understand that a human being and his will are totally separate. If a person has no will, he still exists. However, with regard to HaKadosh Baruch Hu, He and His will are one and the same. His will is a revelation of Himself. Therefore, if a person — with his free will — subjects his will to that of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, he has made direct contact with HaKadosh Baruch Hu. One cannot come closer to HaKadosh Baruch Hu than this.

The day before Matan Torah on Har Sinai, the Jewish people voluntarily accepted the Torah when they said יִנְשָׂא בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מַעֲמַרְךָ. However, on the very next day, the Torah describes (Shemos 19:16) the awesome scene at the actual lawgiving, of thunder and lightning, fire and smoke, accompanied by loud shofar sounds. The Torah tells us there that Moshe Rabbeinu brought the nation, trembling with fear, to the foot of the mountain: קָאֹר וְצַעַר אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל חָבֵר (ibid. v.17). And Chazal see in these words an indication that the Jewish nation was forced to accept the Torah, שָׁמָּא עַל אוֹלֵם אֶת כִּלּוֹן אֱלֹהִים HaKadosh Baruch Hu held the mountain over them as if it were a huge vat (Shabbos 88a).

Nevertheless, these two forms of kabbalas HaTorah are not contradictory. The frightful events accompanying the actual Matan Torah were intended to instill a sense of yirah, fear of the supremacy of God’s commandments, into the hearts of our people. The previous declaration of “Ha’aseh venishma,” when the Jewish people voluntarily agreed to fulfill the mitzvos of the Torah, was done out of their love for HaKadosh Baruch Hu, but this was only the first step of kabbalas haTorah. However, the highest form of fulfilling the mitzvos of the Torah is to do so out of yirah, simply because God commanded us to do so. This was impressed upon the minds of the awe-struck people at the time of the actual lawgiving. It was with fear and trepidation that the Torah
was presented by HaKadosh Baruch Hu to the Jewish people at Har Sinai. Their descendants were to be — forever after — in fear of violating it. The purpose of the lawgiving was for the Jewish people to fear HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

The Gemara comments on the pasuk, What does Hashem, your God, ask of you? Only to fear Hashem, your God (Devarim 10:12): Everything is in the hands of Heaven except for the fear of Heaven (Berachos 33b). Since human beings have free will, their fear of heaven is not in God’s hands. The frightful events accompanying Matan Torah were intended to impress upon our hearts a sense of yirah, fear of God, to teach us that the ultimate purpose of Torah is yiras Shamayim.

[Ed. note: The thought developed by the Rav in this section — that the ultimate and ideal form of performing the mitzvos of the Torah is on the level of yirah — is not in conflict with Yoma 86b, where the statement is made that teshuvah mei’ahavah is on a higher level than teshuvah mi’yirah. The reference in the Gemara there is to yiras ha’onesh, the pragmatic fear of punishment for the aveirah. This is quite different than yiras haRomemus, which is meant by la’elavat kol ha’onesh. The awe-inspiring awareness that we, as Bnei Yisrael, have been chosen by HaKadosh Baruch Hu, the All-Powerful Creator, to fulfill His commandments, and we do so because He has commanded us to do so (see Maayan Beis HaSho’evah, Acharei 16:30, Sforno, Devarim 30:1-2: la’elavat kol ha’onesh, or in our days, the matzah, must be eaten at the end of the meal. No sweet or dessert may be eaten afterward, so that the taste of the matzah may linger on in our mouths throughout the night. The lesson that the father gives his son

\textbf{HAGGADAH SHEL PESACH}
here is that the dessert of a mitzvah is the mitzvah itself. There is nothing sweeter than the mitzvah itself. The true answer to the question is that the keeping of Torah and mitzvos is the will of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and its ultimate meaning is to do so only because He commanded us to fulfill His will.

The next son is the rasha:

What does the rasha say? What does this service mean to you? This service was received by Bnei Yisrael as very good tidings, besorah tovah, which is evident from the end of the pasuk: "when they bowed down in gratitude to HaKadosh Baruch Hu. And Rashi comments, in the name of the Mechilta, that they were grateful to HaKadosh Baruch Hu because inherent in this message were His promises to redeem them, to bring them to their land, and to give them offspring:

However, notwithstanding its basic and simple meaning, our Chachamim find in the words besorah tovah inherent circumstances whereby this question could be asked sarcastically by a hostile and rebellious child who does not accept the validity of the historic reason given by the Torah for this avodah. He sees it merely as an old-fashioned, superstitious ritual which is nothing but a burden. To him it is just “work.”

The basis for this way of understanding the question is found in its introduction: “when you come to the land that Hashem will give you, as He has spoken, you shall observe this service. And it shall be that when your children say to you, “What is this service to you?” You shall say, “It is a pesach feast-offering to Hashem”... and the people bowed (their heads) and prostrated themselves (Shemos 12:25-28).

On the face of it, this son seems to be asking a nonhostile and legitimate question. He is asking his father: “What is the meaning of this service which you are performing?” Avodah, meaning “service to HaKadosh Baruch Hu,” is the word generally used in connection with korbanos, and specifically for the korban pesach, as in Shemos 13:5. Furthermore, the Torah prescribes a proper answer to this normal question by this inquisitive child: “It shall be that when you come to the land that Hashem will give you, as He has spoken, you shall observe this service. And it shall be that when your children say to you, “What is this service to you?” You shall say, “It is a pesach feast-offering to Hashem”... and the people bowed (their heads) and prostrated themselves (Shemos 12:25-28).

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there is nothing
question worthy of Baruch Hu, whom I commanded to tell you.

The rasha say What

The rasha say: What you do, you do to yourself.

It shall be that

It shall be that Baruch Hu will say to you, that the rasha say to

The answer to the rasha prescribed in the Haggadah is: And you shall also blunt his teeth by quoting the pasuk, “Because of this did Hashem act on my behalf when I left Egypt” (Shemos 13:8). This means “for me (on my behalf) — but not for him.” Had he been there, he would, indeed, not have been redeemed. Simply, this could mean that since the rasha has asked a sarcastic question, in which he has excluded himself from K'roh Yisrael, and does not really seek an explanation, he deserves this sarcastic response.

However, the meaning of this question goes much farther. It could be asked also by a person who does not really want to cut himself off from his people, one who still wants to be “Jewish,” albeit not a religious Jew; even one who associates himself with Jewish charitable causes, and sincerely feels the pain of Jews who are oppressed in the world, but just refuses to accept the mizvos as binding on him. Nevertheless, this person is still referred to as a rasha. By his refusal to accept the mandatory nature of the entire Torah and its mizvos, he has, in effect, excluded himself from the essence (ikkar) of Judaism. If a son, or even a grandson, rejects the mizvos, he is no part of Klal Yisrael. The father tells him that there can be no “Judaism” or “Jewishness” without the acceptance of the Torah u’mitzvos as binding. If he is to be considered part of the body of the Jewish nation, he must accept the Torah and all of its mizvos.

Rambam, in his peirush on the Mishnah (Sanhedrin, Perek Chelek), in detailing the thirteen essential principles of Judaism, the first, unequivocally states the following:

This means found in its context. This and the korban Pesach as having been brought annually far many generations...
faith, even if he does aveiros — he may even be a mechallel Shabbos — while he is called a poshei'a Yisrael, and will be punished for his aveiros, he, nevertheless, is still considered a part of the Jewish people in every respect, and is entitled to be rewarded for his mitzvos and maasim tovim in Olam Haba. However, if he does not accept all of the thirteen essential elements of Judaism, he has effectively removed himself from the body of the Jewish people.

To illustrate this concept, I would like to relate a brief personal story. When I was a child, approximately 5 years of age, I contracted whooping cough, which made my breathing very difficult. The doctor, not having the benefit of today’s antibiotics, prescribed hot steam vapor to help me breathe easier. Unfortunately, the boiling hot kettle on the stove which provided the steam inadvertently tipped over and scalded my left arm, causing me to scream in pain. The scar remained visible for almost one year, at first red, then brownish, until it finally disappeared. This was due to the fact that the cells of the living body constantly renew themselves; the old ones die and are replaced by new ones. Despite the fact that the scar has completely healed, and my arm has, in the meantime, grown to about three times the size it was at the time of the burn, and consists of completely new tissue, I can still point to a spot on my left arm, and say, in all honesty, "Here is where I was severely burned as a child."

The analogy is clear. The body of the Jewish people, Klal Yisrael, personally experienced yetzias Mitzrayim. And, for all future generations, when a descendant of the Jewish people relates the story of the miraculous events connected with it, he is doing so as a part of the "body" of the Jewish people. Although he was not personally there, and neither was his father or grandfather, nevertheless, he, as a part of the body of the Jewish people, was there. This is conveyed by the statement later in the Haggadah: In every generation a person is obligated to consider himself as having experienced the Exodus from Egypt.

Therefore, the father tells his son, "If you don't accept the korban pesach, or the other mitzvos connected with our commemoration of yetzias Mitzrayim, or, for that matter, any other mitzvah mandated by the Torah, as binding on you, you are not Jewish. You are not a part of the Jewish people." There is no "ethnic Judaism." This son is therefore told: "There were people like you in Mitzrayim, and, indeed, they were not redeemed."

The father tells his son that which the son does not want to hear: "My dear son, I want you to be Jewish, but I also want you to know that you cannot be a Jew without a firm commitment to uphold all of the mitzvos of the Torah. And if you do not accept this basic tenet of Judaism, then I must tell you you are not a part of our nation and its history. Make up your mind:
either you are Jewish in the full sense of the word, or you are not at all Jewish."

The advice given by the Torah to a father who wants to see his son become a baal teshuva is not to countenance in him some watered-down, "ethnic" form of Judaism without the acceptance of the mitzvos, but rather, he must make it absolutely clear to him that there can be no "klal" of Yisrael without a full and unconditional commitment to Torah and mitzvos.

However, once one admits that there is a Judaism without a full commitment to Torah, he has effectively closed the door to potential baalei teshuva. Why should such a person want to accept the full weight of Torah and mitzvos if he can be a Jew without it? Furthermore, a form of Judaism that is not fully committed to Torah and mitzvos could lead to one marrying a non-Jew, and having children who consequently are not Jewish, but still be buried with a tallis on Har HaZeisim, with a "rabbi" offering a hesped, because "after all, he was a good Jew."

This method of unequivocally and clearly defining the nature of the Jewish people was practiced by Yehoshua before his death, in his fiery speech (Yehoshua 24:2,15), part of which is quoted later in the Haggadah:

... You, Your forefathers historically dwelt beyond the river... But as for me and my house, we will serve Hashem."

It was also practiced by Eliyahu HaNavi when he said: "How long will you dance between two opinions? If Hashem is the God, go after Him! And if the Baal, go after it" (Melachim 118:21).

The Torah does not want any child to be lost from the fold of our people, as is evident by the words of our Chachamim, Yaakov was a wholesome man, abiding in tents (Bereishis 25:27), on which Rashi says that הפ"ע הנקרא יאקווב איש מקהלת הבּות' was práctically the opposite of the tzaddik. However, he does not appear at all, and the next son listed is the tam. The word "tam" is used in the Gemara to denote a tame ox, tam (the word "tame" means the same as tam), as opposed to a wild ox, muad. The Torah tells us that the tam תָּם יָאָרָא לִקְרִי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל" was a wholesome man, abiding in tents (Bereishis 25:27), which is a wonderful name for a man who learned the Torah in order to make his son a baal teshuva.

The Torah speaks to all four categories of children. But the previously described method of bringing a child back to Torah—true Judaism is tried and proven, and will give a child who is now a rasha — or has the potential to become one — pause for thought, so that hope can exist that one day he will return to his people.

Following the rasha, we would have expected the next son to be the opposite: the tzaddik. However, he does not appear at all, and the next son listed is the tam. The word "tam" is used in the Gemara to denote a tame ox, tam (the word "tame" means the same as tam), as opposed to a wild ox, muad. The Torah tells us that the tam יָאָרָא לִקְרִי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל was a wholesome man, abiding in tents (Bereishis 25:27), on which Rashi says that הפ"ע הנקרא יאקווב איש מקהלת הבּות' was práctically the opposite of the tzaddik.
describes a person who is honest, and it is not within his nature to outsmart people.

The absence of the tzaddik from the listing of the children is a very significant lesson in the education of our children: One cannot be a tzaddik unless he is a chacham. One who attempts to be a tzaddik without Torah knowledge can be - at most - a tam, “a simple Jew.” We would call such a person “frum” (in German, “fromm”). He tries his best to do the right thing, and he does not purposely do anything wrong, but since he does not learn Torah, his activities are not guided by Torah knowledge.

Accordingly, the question of the tam is a simple one, as opposed to the chacham who has already, in his mind, subdivided the Torah into eidos, chukim, and mishpatim. He asks a very unsophisticated question: “What is this?” or “What are we commemorating by this Seder?” And the answer the father gives him is also a very general statement: With a strong hand Hashem took us out of Egypt from the house of bondage (Shemos 13:14).

Upon reflection, though, we must understand why our Chachamim have attributed this question, What is this? to a tam, a “simple-minded” person. On the surface, it seems to be a very legitimate question in the context in which it is framed in the Torah, which is the mitzvah of bechor. The Torah states: And it shall come to pass, when Hashem will bring you to the land of the Canaanites... then you shall set apart every first issue of the womb to Hashem... every first-issue donkey you shall redeem (ibid. vs. 11-14).

This paragraph continues: When, tomorrow, your child will ask you, “What is the meaning of this?”... With a strong hand Hashem removed us from Egypt from the house of bondage. This is the pasuk that is quoted in the Haggadah.

However, the quotation in the Haggadah is missing the notation after it, because this sentence is only the beginning of the answer. The answer continues, and explains the reason why the question was necessary: With this, the father tells his son that in commemoration of this miraculous event — in which Pharaoh was forced, by the sudden death of all male firstborn offspring of men and animals, to let us leave Mitzrayim — we were given the mitzvah of bechor.

Therefore, in its proper context, the question איה קא קמא קינא טעמא מיטראָומא in the Haggadah is only peripherally related to yetzias Mitzrayim. The same question could actually be asked of any mitzvah. But since the answer is connected with yetzias Mitzrayim it is included in the Haggadah.
It remains for us to understand what is so simple minded about the question, that it prompted our Chachamim to characterize the son who asks it as a tam. Furthermore, in the Talmud Yerushalmi (Pesachim 10:4), this son is actually called a tipeish, a fool! In its proper context, it is a perfectly intelligent question.

To explain this, I would like to offer an insight which I heard from my saintly Rebbe, Rav Yosef Leib Bloch, the Telzer Rav and Rosh Yeshivah. He illustrated the meaning of the pesukim, How great are Your deeds, Hashem, exceedingly profound are Your thoughts. A boor cannot know, nor can a fool understand this: When the wicked bloom like grass and all the doers of iniquity blossom, etc. (Tehillim 92:6-8). My Rebbe depicted a setting which I will update to reflect our modern-day world.

Imagine an uneducated person standing before the control panel of a spacecraft, with its many rows of lights, dials, switches, clocks, and counter clocks, of many sizes and shapes, illuminated by different colored lights. Noticing that one of the lights is flickering, the person asks the chief engineer, “Why is the light in the fourth row, seventh from the left, flickering?” Knowing that his visitor is totally unschooled in engineering, electronics, flight or space science, the engineer would tell him, “You are asking me about that one particular light while not being schooled in even the basic sciences needed to understand this. Without your knowledge of these sciences, I cannot begin to explain any of this to you.”

My Rebbe explained this pasuk in a similar way. An intelligent person who looks at nature and the vast cosmos, with all of its wonders, can only marvel and exclaim: And when he looks at the events of world history, and the development of human civilization, his mind cries out: And when a person is totally unschooled in these sciences, he cannot begin to explain any of this to you.

An unthinking person, the unlearned person, does not know. An unthinking person is not even aware of his marvelous surroundings.

But the fool, the tipeish, does not understand one thing. This unlearned person, who is devoid of knowledge, has only one question — only one thing, bores him: Why does HaKadosh Baruch Hu permit the reshimim to attain such success and to flourish? My Rebbe explained that he is called “a fool” because he picks out and expects to understand this one particular aspect of the overall plan of HaKadosh Baruch Hu in the management of the affairs of the world, when he has absolutely no concept at all of that master plan.

I would like to apply this same idea to the question of the tam. He looks at the Torah with its hundreds of mitzvos — sixty-two of which apply to korban pesach alone — and thousands of halachos, but he does not say, “I would like to start learning Torah and broaden my knowledge of it; there are...
so many things I don’t understand.” Instead, he picks out one mitzvah, and asks, ḥakavat ha-Ḥaṭam. “What is this particular law for?” And when he receives an answer for his very narrow inquiry, he is satisfied. That, indeed, is the sign of a tam, a simpleton, or as the Yerushalmi calls him, a tipeish, fool.

Nevertheless, if a father happens to have such a son, he is obligated to teach him on his level, one mitzvah at a time, and then, hopefully, he will ask another question, ḥakavat ha-Ḥaṭam, and another, until slowly but surely his interest in the broader spectrum of Torah will be awakened.

Our Chachamim tell us, a father must teach his son in accordance with his abilities and mindset (Pesachim 116a, in the Mishnah). Therefore, if a child is not too bright, the father, or teacher, must concentrate on teaching the subject matter to him in a form that is suitable to that particular child.

The next son is the ḥakavat ha-Ḥaṭam, the one who does not know enough to ask.

On the surface of it, the father is faced here with a child who is not even interested enough to ask any questions. And to deal with this child, the Chachamim tell the father, You must begin the conversation, in fulfillment of the pasuk: וּנְאַכֵּלֵן לְעֵבְרַהִיתָ הַנְּכָרֵי לָאָמָר בְּעָבְרַהַי הָעָבְרַהַי לְבַעְגָּהַי מַקְרֵיָה. And you shall tell your son on that day, saying “It is because of this that Hashem acted on my behalf when I left Egypt” (Shemos 13:8).

(By the way, the word ḥakavat ha-Ḥaṭam, in the language of the Mechilla, from which it comes, is the same as הָazioni, in standard lashon hakodesh, and, therefore, does not suggest that this child is best dealt with gently by the mother and not the father — as has erroneously been taught.)

An attempt should be made to prompt this child to ask questions by drawing his attention to the especially beautiful and unusual table setting. For instance: “Look at the table and how it is set. Don’t you see anything different here tonight?” And if, after piquing his interest by gifts of candy and nuts, he still does not ask anything, then simply begin by telling him, as the Torah prescribes: וּנְאַכֵּלֵן לְעֵבְרַהִיתָ הַנְּכָרֵי לָאָמָר בְּעָבְרַהַי הָעָבְרַהַי לְבַעְגָּהַי מַקְרֵיָה. The father is to tell his child that this night is dedicated to remembering and talking about yetzias Mitzrayim and the great nissim that HaKadosh Baruch Hu did for our forefathers to free them from Egyptian bondage.

And, as the Haggadah subsequently details, הָagnost הַגָּדוֹל הָגֹבַּהַת הַגָּדוֹל הָגֹבַּהַת הַגָּדוֹל הָגֹבַּהַת הַגָּדוֹל H, the father is to tell his son, “Because of this, did Hashem act for me when I left Egypt.” And further on in the Haggadah, Rabban Gamliel explains the specific meaning of each of these objects, based on our experiences before and during yetzias Mitzrayim.
However, in addition to its simple meaning, 'chezus' has a secondary and deeper meaning, which is borne out by the answer given: "He who does not know enough to ask," it also means, 'He who does not know enough to ask the right question.' And the unasked question to which we are referring is: "With what zechus did our forefathers merit their freedom from slavery and yetzias Mitzrayim?"

We know that Bnei Yisrael had become almost completely assimilated into Egyptian life. They had neglected the 'mishtos' (Tumah) levels of 'tumah', 'moser', and 'matzav', and had sunk deeply into the morass of Egyptian idolatry. Our Chachamim tell us that on the scale of the "forty-nine" possible levels of 'tumah', 'mishtos', and 'matzav', Bnei Yisrael had sunk almost to the lowest one. Yechezkel HaNavi, in his lengthy chastisement (Yechezkel 20:8), decries the condition of our forefathers in Egypt:

'They did not forsake the idols of Egypt, so I had thought to pour out My wrath upon them, to spend My anger on them, in the midst of the land of Egypt.'

And our Chachamim tell us that 'krias Yam Suf', the 'sar shelyam', the 'master of the sea', the spiritual force which Hashem empowered over the sea, argued against saving Bnei Yisrael, saying that they were no better than the Egyptians.

To be sure, they still kept their "old customs" of distinctive clothing, names, and language — and in this sense they were no better than the Egyptians. But they were just as much Egyptian as the American Indians are Americans, notwithstanding the Indians' particular ethnicity.

So the "unasked" question remains: "With what zechus were our forefathers redeemed from Egypt?"

The answer to this question is that our forefathers were redeemed from Egypt in the merit of their emunah that HaKadosh Baruch Hu would redeem them. This is evident from the following.

The Torah tells us: "The korban Pesach together with matzah and maror while they were yet in Mitzrayim. The obvious question here is: When our forefathers ate the first korban Pesach in Mitzrayim, during the night of the fifteenth of Nissan, together with matzah and maror, not a single bechor had yet died in Mitzrayim. The korban Pesach had to be eaten quickly, before chatzos, even though HaKadosh Baruch Hu had not yet "spared the Jewish houses.""
korban pesach and matzah, seemingly, in “commemoration” of something which was yet to happen!

And furthermore, astonishingly, while still in Mitzrayim they were commanded to eat the maror to remember their bitter lives:

They embittered their lives with hard work (Shemos 1:14). Does one have to eat maror while still in a concentration camp? At this point, they certainly did not need to refresh their bitter memories — they were still in Mitzrayim!

The answer to these questions is inherent in the father’s answer, which must be given in the presence of matzah and maror, and, if possible, korban pesach. And the meaning is that when HaKadosh Baruch Hu commanded our forefathers to eat the korban pesach with matzah and maror while still in Mitzrayim, they did so with absolute emunah that the promise of HaKadosh Baruch Hu to redeem them would occur. They ate the korban pesach and matzah as if the events that these symbols were to commemorate had already occurred; and the maror as if their redemption had occurred so long ago that they had to be reminded of the bitterness that they had experienced. And it was in the merit of this emunah — that Hashem acted on our behalf, I merited the redemption, because I kept the mitzvos of pesach, matzah, and maror as I was preparing to leave Mitzrayim. I kept these mitzvos before the events that they were to commemorate actually occurred. My emunah was so strong that I considered these events as if they had actually already occurred.

And this story has to be retold again every year, in the presence of pesach, matzah, and maror, on the night of the fifteenth of Nissan, to emphasize that we merited our redemption from Egypt because of our total emunah in HaKadosh Baruch Hu — that night in Egypt — that the geulas Mitzrayim would actually take place.

The power of emunah is such that it converts the future into the present.

We express this concept in our tefillah. The text of the berachah of techiyas hameisim is, You revive the dead, in the present tense, as if we have already witnessed the meisim (corpses) rising from their graves.

Similarly, in In the merkavim and although we are not yet redeemed, we end the berachah with You revive the dead, in the present tense, as if the redemption had already occurred.

Also, and the Shechinah were present there. It is in this sense that the answer given on Seder night to the “unasked question” of the Shechinah were present there.

However, it is one of the important basics of our faith in that it also serves to remind us that we merited our redemption only because of our emunah.