

BRINGING SEDER to CHAOS



Freedom in Quarantine

INTRODUCTION



History is taking place before our eyes. A generation's worth of news is unfolding within days and weeks. The memory of how we spent these days will remain with us forever. We can sit at home and commiserate, or like so many Jews in difficult times before us, we can rise to the occasion and maximize the moment.

In just a few short weeks we will open up the most well-read history book of the Jewish people - the *Haggadah*. The name - הגדה - is rooted in the verse in the Torah which commands every father to teach his son the story of leaving Egypt, as it is written (*Shemot 13:8*):

וְהַגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ, בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: בְּעִבּוֹר זֶה, עָשָׂה ה' לִי, בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם

And you should tell your son on that day, saying. Because of this Hashem did this for me when I left Egypt.

Why in this context did Hashem specifically choose to use the language of הגדה, as opposed to the many other verbs we have for communication in the Hebrew language (ספר, אמר, דבר)? Is there something unique about the language of הגדה that correlates with this specific *mitzvah*?

Rabbi Meir Leibush Wisser zt"l, better known as the Malbim (*Bereishit 37:5*), explains that the verb הגדה is used to reflect a speech that is relevant to the personal life story of the speaker. There is much we communicate, but when we talk about our personal lives we use the word *haggadah*. This is the distinguishing factor of a הגדה from the other "synonymous" words used in the Torah for speaking. A דיבור, אמירה, or סיפור are not strong enough to convey that personal connection.

On the first night of Pesach, parents are commanded to teach their children about יציאת מצרים. It is not intended to be an intellectual activity or an interesting story, rather it is intended to transmit our fundamental tradition and faith in Hashem to the next generation. If one wants to have any success in effectively transmitting that tradition and faith, it must be communicated that the story is relevant and personal to the speaker. It cannot be something you simply tell another (דיבור or אמירה) or even a nice story (סיפור), it needs to be something infused with personal passion and commitment – a הגדה.

This year will be a Pesach like none other. **Join us daily in connecting the feelings and emotions of Pesach 2020 with the classical text of the Haggadah.** We look forward to you joining the conversation.

Join the Conversation

In the spirit of making our collective history of leaving Egypt more meaningful and current, what name would you give to the *Haggadah* of 2020?

Submit Your Answers

Email: sedertochoas@ncsy.org | Twitter/ FB: #sedertochoas

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