

Hei Lachma Anya — This is the Bread

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This is the bread of affliction eaten by our ancestors in the land of Egypt. Whoever is hungry, let them come and eat. Whoever is needy, let them come and join in the observance of Passover. This year we are here. Next year, may we be in Eretz Yisrael. Now we are slaves. Next year, may we be free.

We begin the Hagadah with speaking of the hungry and the invitation to come eat. Simply we are speaking to the people who are already congregated around the table.

On a deeper level we need to desire, and hunger for our freedom for freedom to occur.

Why in Aramaic?

Perhaps the reason for the Aramaic is so that the Hagadah is said for all to understand. (Kol-Bo) R. Kalonymos of 12th century London would recite the Haggadah to his family in (ancient) English.

Other parts of the Hagadah are much older, and were composed when the Jews still lived in Israel.

Hei Lachmah Anya is in Aramaic the concluding words are in Hebrew, why? -- R. Saddiah Goan's version the entire passage is in Aramaic.

The Kol-Bo writes reason, call to arms.

The question is how would the authorities hear these words? What is the deeper significance that the passage concludes in the Hebrew?

We begin by saying, "This is the bread of affliction, that our father ate in Egypt"

Yet, we eat the Matzah because in haste our ancestors left Egypt and there was no time for the dough to rise, so Matzah is the "bread of our freedom" as we are leaving Egypt, so why do we call it "bread of affliction"?

Why is Matzah called "Bread of Affliction" "Poor Man's Bread" says the Ibn Ezra food of slaves.

Yet, the Maharal writes precisely because its "poor" bread it is also a bread of freedom.

Little time, as we left Egypt in a rush, this also shows that the Matzah comes from a "space" that is beyond the flow of time. (Maharal. Gevuras Hashem pp. 52-54) Time is of the 'world of confluence' of many, deposited from a past into a future.

This answer why we call Matzah "bread of affliction" but the question remains, why do we say that this is the bread of affliction, poor mans bread that we ate in Egypt, not as we left Egypt?

In R. Moshe Cordevero's Siddur, *Tefilah Le'Moshe*, bread means "the meal" — consisting of Matzah, raw vegetables, an egg.

The Rambam in his Hagadah begins this passage with the words; "In haste we left Egypt, this is the bread our fathers ate in Egypt..."

Matzah embodies both these qualities; it is a "poor" mans bread yet, as explained, it is the ultimate bread of freedom. Matzah, as Rashi and the Ramban (Devarim 16:3) tells us is a bread of freedom, yet, subtly reminds us of affliction.

We begin by saying, "this is the bread of affliction...who is hungry" we are stressing that there is still affliction in the world, acknowledging that there are still people who are hungry and in dire need for help. Yet, aspire for "freedom" beyond opposites.

Hebrew the language of redemption, tool of freedom. Targum / translation, as in Aramaic is "exile", Shalah (Meseches Pesachim. pp 202-204)

Individual Commentary

Hei/this

We begin the Hagadah with the letter Hei, as in Hei Lachmah Anya, as the letter Hei is what differentiates between Chametz/ Ego, constriction, exile and Matzah. Hei Lechem Zerah- Tikkun

Hei Lachmah/this bread

The two opening words of the Hagadah are "Hei (others begin with the word Ha) Lachma / this is the bread" the words Hei Lachmah is in numeric value Eighty (Pei) –Five (Hei) Pei Hei together spell the word Peh/ mouth.

Maase b'Reb Eliezer

Story of the Five Sages

Once Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Akiva, and Rabbi Tarfon dined (reclined) together in Bnei Brak. They discussed the Exodus from Egypt throughout the entire night until their students came and told them: "Teachers, the time for reciting the Shema in the morning has arrived."

Overall Structure

This is a very puzzling story why, Rabbi Eliezer, who was older than Rabbi Akiva, who lived in Lud be in Bnei Brak for Pesach? Rabbi Eliezer says, that he likes the lazy people that do not leave their home for the holidays. (Sukka 27b)

And where are their families on Pesach, and where are their students?

The Abarbenal (Zevach Pesach) offers an interpretation –thought then he rejects the interpretation – that Bnei Brak is not a "city" rather Bnei means sons, as in students, and Brak means the city Brak.

R. Reuvein Marglious suggests that perhaps these five sages were just getting back from Rome by ship, — (Mishnah Ma'aser Sheni 5:9) --arriving to the port city of Jaffa late Erev Pesach went to the home of Rabbi Akiva in Bnei Brak.

The Sefas Emes writes that this story did not occur on Pesach.

During the Bar Kochva revolt. R. Akivah supported Bar Kochvah.

Future of Yidishkeit. In new exile, can learn from past exile/redemption.

Pairing Teacher/Night/Story/Past- Student/Day/ Mitzvah/Future. That night revealed the Torah of Ben Zomah. Even in the times of Moshiach.

R. Eliezer... R. Torfon

Four of the sages mentioned, were from the Tribe of Levi, and Rabbi Akiva was the child of a Ger/convert.

R. Elizer Ha'Gadol was the Gilgul of Reuvein, the eldest son of Yaakov, thus called Gadol –old, as in the oldest.

R. Yehoshua was the Gilgul of..

R. Eliezer Ben Azarya was the Gilgul of Shmeul the prophet (thus when he was 18 he said he was like 70, (as the next passage in the Hagadah says) as Shmuel died at 52 so together is 70.)

R. Akiva was the Gilgul of Yaakov (The name Akiva has the same letters as the Name Yaakov, with an additional letter Hei).

R. Torfon in numerical value is 345 as the word Moshe, as he was an incarnation of Moshe.

R. Torfon is the "fifth" Sage seating at the table, it is also the opinion of Rav Torfon that we need to drink a "fifth" cup on Pesach night.

Maase/once (upon a time)

The word *Maase* is *Mah* — "what *Shin Ayin*" — the *Shin Ayin* is in numeric value 370, this refers to the *Shin-Ayin* lights that are revealed through the telling of a story.

Shema - The letters of the word Shema is *Shin Ayin*-270 plus the letter Mem. The word *Ma'ase* itself has also the Mem, the first three letters as the word *Ma'ase* is exactly like the letters of the word Shema.

The Sin Ayin Lights are Higher Mochin

The word *Mah* is the least numerical value of the full spelling of the name of Hashem (there is Av-72, Sag-63, Mah-45 and Ban-52. *Mah* is the least...). "Lower Mind" Story is to draw down from Higher mind to Lower Mind. The numeric value of the words Bnei Brak, with its six letters add up to 270.

Osa/that night

Why does it say "that" night, why not simply all night? It is a special night.

The word *Osa/that* also means him. Which is a masculine term, *Layla/night* is a feminine term. So *Osa Layla* is masculine joined with feminine. The past/ masculine, (*Zachor/male* also means to "remember") and future/ feminine, as the word *Nukvah/feminine* means penetrating, as in the present penetrating the future.

Tonight is *Ha'Layla Ha'ze/ this night*, male/past and female/future are united. Inwardly, *Osa* means him, thus the sages themselves, they were speaking about their own personal journey to freedom.

Until their students came and said:

On a Peshat level this could mean a code word that the Roman's are approaching.

On a deeper spiritual level these five sages were sitting and telling the story, the idea being to illuminate their exile. *Sipur/telling* a story is related to the word *Sapir*, as the English derived term sapphire, which refers to light, a stone of light.