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5784

FEATURING:

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A message from

REBBETZIN DR. ADINA SHMIDMAN

Founding Director, OU Women's Initiative



Dear Friend,

Our Sages exhibited remarkable ingenuity in creating the unique format of the Pesach Seder. One of the many eye-catching features of the Seder is the open invitation to all who wish to partake in the elaborate and festive meal. The deliberate departure from the exclusivity one might expect at such an upscale event underscores the Seder as not just a commemoration of a pivotal historical moment, but a communal celebration of freedom through inclusivity.

The heart of this message lies in the opening of the *Maggid* section which begins with “הא לחמא עניא.” Within its concise lines, we find a narrative arc that traverses the spectrum of our national experience — from enslavement to redemption, from suffering to celebration. The “הא לחמא עניא” passage serves not merely as a recitation of the Egyptian Exodus, but as a poignant reminder of our eternal quest for liberation and communal solidarity.

Central to “הא לחמא עניא” are the dual invitations it extends: In the first, “כל דכפין ייתי ויכל” — All those who are hungry, let them enter and eat,” we welcome those who are physically hungry to partake in the feast. In the second, “כל דצריך ייתי ויפסח” — All who are in need, let them come and partake in Pesach,” we invite those who are spiritually needy to join in the Pesach celebration. This two-faceted invitation reflects a profound understanding of the human condition, as we experience not just physical hunger for sustenance but also spiritual hunger for connection to the Divine.

In extending these invitations, we echo the precedent set forth by Hashem during *Yetziat Mitzrayim*. Not only did Hashem liberate Bnei Yisrael from physical bondage in Egypt, He provided for their spirituality as well. As the Jewish people were preparing to embrace their freedom, Hashem commanded them to bring the *korban Pesach*. In embracing both the physical and spiritual dimensions of liberation, we recognize this Divine act and express our commitment to all in need. By opening our doors to the hungry and the lonely, we emulate Hashem’s compassion that guided our ancestors through the wilderness and affirm our collective responsibility towards one another in these two realms.

I invite you to partake in the eternal messages of Haggadah through this compilation of thoughts and ideas to enhance your Seder experience. More so than ever, we pray for liberation and redemption both physically and spiritually. May this Pesach culminate in a rebuilt Beit HaMikdash, “לשנה הבאה בירושלם” — Next year in the land of Israel.”

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חג כשר ושמח!



Thievery & Theology: Leaving Egypt with the Ultimate Riches

By Mrs. Tal Attia

As a child at my family Pesach Seder, I so desperately hoped that I would land the “Brit Bein HaBetarim” in our rotation of Haggadah reading. My 4th grade class had memorized the covenant by song (with hand motions, no less!), and I could not wait to zoom through the reading, impressing everyone with my fluency.

At the end of the *Brit*, after describing Am Yisrael’s enslavement in a foreign land, Hashem promises Avraham, “יֵצְאוּ בְרִכְשׁ גָּדוֹל” - they will leave with great wealth” (*Bereishit* 15:14). This is conventionally understood as the fortune Am Yisrael amassed as they left Egypt by asking their enslavers for utensils and clothing. Requesting this wealth was a directive given by G-d as He prepared them for the Exodus (*Shemot* 11:2-3), and it was indeed carried out (*Shemot* 12:36). The request for Egyptian wealth was expressed two additional times (*Shemot* 3:18-22 & 11: 1-3) for a total of four mentions – and the Torah uses surprising diction: “וְנִצַּלְתֶּם אֶת־מִצְרַיִם” -You shall take advantage of Egypt” (*Shemot* 3:22), and, “וַיִּנְצְלוּ אֶת־מִצְרַיִם” - And they took advantage of Egypt” (*Shemot* 12:36).

In exploring the “רִכְשׁ גָּדוֹל” great wealth, two critical questions emerge:

1. Why does the Torah emphasize taking Egyptian wealth on the way out?
2. Might we understand this “exploitation” as justified, or perhaps even lauded?

These questions can be addressed through various prisms:

1. Reparations - *Sanhedrin* (91a) describes an accusation made by Egyptians against the Jewish People in the period of Alexander the Great. They claimed that the nation had stolen their property. A defender of Israel responded that the Egyptians owed wages for years of slavery.

אמר גביהא בן פסיסא... אמר להן... תנו לנו שכר עבודה של
ששים ריבוא, ששיעבודתם במצרים שלשים שנה וארבע
מאות שנה.
אמר להן אלכסנדרוס מוקדון: החזירו לו תשובה!
אמרו לו: תנו לנו זמן שלשה ימים. נתן להם זמן, בדקו ולא
מצאו תשובה.

Geviha ben Pesisa ... went to debate them... “Give us our wages for six hundred thousand [people] whom you enslaved in Egypt for four hundred and thirty years.”

Alexander of Macedonia said to them, “Answer him!” They said to him, “Give us three days’ time.” He gave them time; they looked and did not find an answer.

2. Property Exchange - The Hizkuni (*Shemot* 11:2) points to a negotiation. In leaving Egypt, Bnei Yisrael would leave immovable assets behind, and thus struck a deal to be compensated for their property.

כלי כסף וכלי זהב במקום שהניחו ישראל בתיהם
ושדותיהם וכליהם שלא יכלו לשאת עמהם שהרי היו
להם לישראל נחלות במצרים כדכתיב ויאחזו בה.

Silver vessels and golden vessels were no more than a fair exchange, seeing that Am Yisrael left behind their houses and their fields which they could not carry with them. We read [in Genesis 47:27] that the sons of Yaakov were landowners in Egypt.

3. All’s Fair in Love & War - Some commentators understand Moshe’s request of a 3 day hiatus from Pharaoh as a strategic escape attempt, and the request for riches a duplicitous one, and as a request to borrow that which would never be returned. Why? Citing the *Chumash Rav Peninim* (*Shemot* 3:18), Rabbi Elchanan Samet infers a diversionary war tactic: Upon realizing their wealth had been stolen, the Egyptians would have undoubtedly chased down Bnei Yisrael, leading to their ultimate defeat at the Yam Suf.



'And now let us go on a journey of three days...' In a war it is permissible to engage in every type of deceit and wiliness against the enemy... This falls under the category of 'If someone comes to kill you, get up and kill him first.'... 'Each woman will ask of her neighbor'... that they should... [deceitfully] ask the Egyptians for vessels of silver and gold, because...they desired the silver and gold that Israel had taken from them, and therefore they pursued them into the sea and drowned.

4. Retroactive Spoils of War - In the reverse, the Sforno (*Shemot* 3:22) suggests that Bnei Yisrael asked for the Egyptians' property with the intention to return it, and only acquired it as triumphant spoils of war after the Egyptians attacked them.

“ונצלחתם את מצרים” – אף על פי שתקבלו הכל מהם דרך השאלה, ותהיו חייבים להחזיר, הנה תקנו אחר כך הכל בדין, ברדפם אחריכם להלחם בכם ולשולל את שללכם... כי שלל הרודפים לנרדפים, כמנהג בכל מלחמה.

“And you shall take advantage of Egypt” – Although you will be given everything as a loan, and you will be obligated to return it, you will possess everything legally when they chase after you to make war against you and take spoils from you... for the spoils of the pursuer belong to the pursued, so it is in all wars.

5. Severance Pay - In perhaps one of the most creative approaches, the Hizkuni (*Shemot* 3:21) likens Bnei Yisrael's liberation from Egypt to the laws of freeing an indentured slave.

לא תלכו ריקם. כי הם יעניקו לכם מג' מינים כסף וזהב ושמלות לקיים "יצאו ברכוש גדול", דוגמת הענקת עבד "צאן גרן ויקב" (דברים טו, יד):
 וְכִי־תִשְׁלַחְנֶנּוּ תַפְשִׁי מֵעֲמֹד לֹא תִשְׁלַחְנֶנּוּ רִיקָם:

You will not go out empty-handed. The Egyptians will supply you with three different kinds of parting gifts - silver, gold, and garments - all in order to keep My promise: “And at the end they will depart with great material wealth.”

A similar example is the legislation for the owner of a Jewish slave, at the end of his term of service, to grant him as severance pay, some livestock, some grain, and some grapes or wine. (Deuteronomy 15,14): When you set [your hebrew slave] free, do not let him go empty-handed.

On the basis of this approach, Rabbanit Sharon Rimon teaches that the wealth itself was less important than the act of asking for it. Requesting payment from their enslavers was a psychological turning point for the Israelites. A slave would never dream of asking his master for anything. Daring to ask, and feeling indignation for what is rightfully yours - that is the ultimate expression of freedom.

This great wealth is the “*rechush*” promised to Avraham's descendants in the Brit Bein HaBetarim. It is the individuation, the sense of agency needed for them to truly break out of slavery. Ultimately, this sublime shift was the stepping stone to becoming *ovdei Hashem* and a great nation.

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KORECH

By Mrs. Slovie Jungreis-Wolff

זָכַר לְמִקְדָּשׁ כְּהֵלֵל. כֵּן עָשָׂה הֵלֵל בְּזִמְנוֹ שֶׁבֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הָיָה קֵיָם: הָיָה כּוֹרֵךְ מַצָּה וּמְרוֹר וְאוֹכֵל בְּיַחַד, לְקַיֵּם מֵה שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: עַל מִצּוֹת וּמְרוֹרִים יֹאכְלֶהוּ.

In remembrance of the Beis HaMikdash, we do as Hillel did in times of the Beis HaMikdash: He would combine [the Pesach offering], matzah and marror in a sandwich and eat them together, to fulfill what it says in the Torah: 'They shall eat it with matzos and bitter herbs.'

The Seder night is filled with hidden meanings, and a sandwich of matzah and *marror* dipped into *charoses* is not simply an interesting combo to eat. Hillel HaZaken, *zt"l*, derived his teaching of purposefully eating foods that represent opposing concepts from the Torah - but there's a deeper message to what he was trying to convey. Especially now, after suffering the devastation of the October 7th massacre, Hillel's direction provides fortitude and strength, and gives us a new perspective on how we must approach life.

The *korban Pesach* and matzah are symbols of freedom and faith. Matzah allows us to taste the *cheirus*, the freedom, and the speed with which our nation needed to leave the country that had enslaved them. HaKadosh Baruch Hu took us out of Mitzrayim with His great hand.

Marror is a reminder of the bitterness that our nation endured. Even our babies were born with *marror* on their lips. *Charoses*, while reminding us of the bricks and cement that depleted our energy, is also a symbol of our steadfast trust in Hashem. The women who gave birth under the trees in the apple orchards grasped mightily onto their *emunah* and refused to allow their nation to die.

Through *Korech*, we hold in our hands a paradox of the Seder night. We are the children of Hashem discovering the taste of freedom and faith. And yet, at the very same time, we are the children of pain and suffering. How can we make peace with the darkness in our lives? How can we overcome the pain that living in 'Mitzrayim' brings?

Each generation must grapple with their own 'Mitzrayim.' "שָׁבַקְל דּוֹר וְדוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ" - In every generation they will rise against us and try to annihilate us." This is the *marror*, the bitterness.

How will we survive? How will we persevere, hold onto our faith today - and not lose hope for tomorrow? We eat the matzah and remember, "וְהִקְדוּשׁ כְּרוּךְ הוּא מְצִילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם" - and Hashem saves us from their hands."

Hillel lived in a most challenging time. The Romans tried to meddle with the Sanhedrin and compromise the spiritual life of the nation, so to combat the Romans' influence, the Sages decided to appoint Hillel as *Nasi* in 3728. While Hillel was known for his kindness, gentleness and concern for humanity, his friendly adversary, Shammai, was known for his stricter *halachic* views.

A prime example was that on Chanukah, *Beis Shammai* felt that we should kindle eight lights and then one less light each night. On the other hand, *Beis Hillel* was of the opinion that we kindle one light the first night and add one more each succeeding night.

With his view, Hillel was teaching us that it is our mission to create more light when faced with darkness. Never diminish; always add. Never lose hope. Bring light into this world, especially when confronting difficulty ...

... and it is with this spirit that we embrace *Korech* at our Seder.



Imagine what our nation went through in Mitzrayim. Babies were snatched from their mothers' arms and thrown into the Nile River. Men crumbled under the shackles of slavery. Women valiantly tried to keep their families together. Children wondered what would happen next. Am Yisrael were embittered, unable to hear the words of Moshe because of their קִצְרֵי רוּחַ, their crushed spirits. Years of fear and suffering made them wonder, "Will we ever get out of here?"

But then we learn of Miriam and all the women, singing and dancing at the Yam Suf, tambourines in their hands. Where did they find tambourines in the desert? These tambourines were instruments of *bitachon*, instinctively and purposely taken as they exited Mitzrayim. Miriam and the women of Klal Yisrael were confident that the moment of miracles will arrive. In the darkest anguish of *galus* their *emunah* never died. They never doubted *geulah*. From the *mar*; the bitterness, they sang of Hashem's ultimate *chesed* at the *yam*, the split sea. A sandwich of matzah and *marror*.

The Holocaust brought us back to Mitzrayim. I will forever hold onto an image I conjure in my mind of my great-grandmother for whom I was named, the Rebbetzin Slova Chanah. The last time she was ever seen on this earth was walking into the flames of Auschwitz, cradling her youngest grandchild in her arms. The last words she ever uttered were cries of, "*Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad.*"

My *Zayda*, whose mother's name I carry, would see me, bench me, and cry. I believe my *Zayda* was crying both for his tragic loss and for the incredible sight of seeing life again. My *Zayda's* mother now had a new name. A new generation was born after the world was ready to proclaim our nation dead. Faith amidst the flames. A sandwich of matzah and *marror*.

Hillel's teachings are the guiding force behind *Korech*. When dealing with moments of *marror*; be sure to discover the matzah as well. Our matzah is our symbol of *emunah*, and of knowing that Hashem never abandons us. Despite the *hester panim* that we may feel, be cognizant of the miracle of our nation, that has traveled to the four corners of this earth and survived every form of persecution. I, myself, was born upon the ashes of the Holocaust. A miracle! And yet here we are, still telling our story at our Seder. We are here only through the kindness of Hashem.

October 7th brought us once again to a place of bitter *marror*. We are still reeling from the pain, the anguish and the brutality our nation faced. We feel shattered and broken - and Hillel HaZaken is whispering to us, "My dear children ... though times may seem more difficult than you have ever imagined, remember that you have the power to dig deep and discover the *emunah* that you have within. Hashem has a master plan, and all is for the good. You come from greatness. Those who walked before you created footsteps of faith. Make a sandwich. Place your *marror* within your matzah. Sprinkle a bit of *charoses* and taste the sweetness of being a Yid. Hold on tight; You will endure. Bring light into this world."

Slovie Jungreis-Wolff is an author, lecturer, parenting instructor, teacher at Manhattan High School for Girls and columnist for Ami magazine and The Jewish Press.



Nirtzah: Who Knows One Why?

Mrs. Chana Meira Katz

Though I've participated in the Seder for many decades now, closing my eyes transports me back to my childhood, watching my grandfather lead Nirtzah. While most around me were sleepily fading away, Grandpa seemed to find renewed energy. He belted out every song in a booming voice, punctuating each stanza with a fist bang on the table. No melody was skipped, no note rushed.

Today, I sit with my husband and children. We sing the same tunes, though over time, our children have incorporated their own innovations: charades for "Echad Mi Yodea," sound effects for "Chad Gadya." My grandfather is no longer with us, yet I carry his legacy forward - keeping the beat with a rhythmic thump on the table.

Nirtzah, the concluding step of the Seder, might initially seem out of place. After delving into the intricacies of the Exodus, meticulously observing all the mitzvot with their details, and singing Hallel HaGadol, the evening finishes with... whimsical children's rhymes. Why "Who Knows One?" and "Chad Gadya?"

Here's the truth: the Haggadah is a brilliant pedagogical guide, transmitting our beliefs through a multisensory experience. Its prime purpose is to instill in our children an understanding of their Jewish identity: who we are and what we believe. This is so fundamental that a man is obligated to recite the Haggadah aloud even when alone, ensuring the tradition persists¹.

The Haggadah is a multifaceted, experiential handbook catering to every child. There are customs and *halachot* for the detail-oriented, open-ended questions to spark discussions for the intellectual and interactive activities like dipping, spilling, covering and uncovering to engage the shy or uninspired.

Each step aims to nurture *emunah* (faith) in ourselves and our children. However, intellectual *emunah* has limits. While the *Chovot HaLevavot* encourages intellectual development of faith in Hashem², there will be times when understanding fails and intellectual *emunah* falters. For challenging moments of isolation and doubt, when everything familiar crumbles, we need something more primal and potent: emotional *emunah*. One of the most powerful ways to develop this *emunah* is through song.

Music, as we're taught, bypasses the intellect and touches the heart directly. This explains why music was used to inspire prophecy³. As Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks stated, "Words are the language of the heart; music is the language of the soul⁴."

¹ (See *Shulchan Aruch* in the discussion of who asks "Mah Nishtanah?" if there are no children ס' תע"ג סו)

² *Chovot HaLevavot* 1:3.

³ (Rambam on *Mishnah Sanhedrin* 10:1:24)

⁴ Sacks, J. (2022, February 21). *The Torah as G-d's Song: Vayelech: Covenant & Conversation*. The Rabbi Sacks Legacy.



The Seder's core involves speech: "וְכָל הַמְרִבָּה לְסַפֵּר בְּיַצִּיאת מִצְרַיִם הָרִי זֶה מְשֻׁבָּח" - The more one elaborates on the Exodus, the more praiseworthy." But late at night, after pouring the cup for Eliyahu HaNavi, reciting "שְׁפֹדֵי הַמְתָּדָה" and contemplating our long exile, we reach a chasm that intellectual *emunah* cannot bridge. Here, through songs and rhymes, we instill the deepest layer of *emunah* into the next generation.

Starting with the *piyut* of "Vayehi Bechatzi Halaylah," we sing of past redemptions at midnight. Recalling miracles like Avraham's victory, Gideon's triumph, and the annihilation of Sancheriv's army, we teach our children to hope for redemption even in darkness.

"Echad Mi Yodea" teaches the core elements of our faith and love for the Torah. Rabbi Yissocher Dov of Belz compares this song to a wealthy man who, after indulging in drink, boasts about his treasures. On the Seder night, after four cups of wine, we too "boast" about our riches: the *Luchot*, our *Avot* and *Imahot*, the five books of the Torah, the Mishnah, and so forth. We instill in our children the belief in the "13 Middot HaRachamim," allowing us to return to Hashem even after straying (Rabbi Eliyahu Safran).

"Adir Hu" expresses our deep yearning for Mashiach and the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash, a cornerstone of our faith.

Finally, "Chad Gadya," according to the Ya'avetz, is a Kabbalistic metaphor for the soul's journey on this earth. The kid represents the *neshamah*, the father is Hashem, and the two coins represent the parents. The poem continues describing life's tribulations until Hashem Himself redeems the soul. Other interpretations view it as the story of the Jewish people, from accepting the two *Luchot* to the final redemption.

This Seder step is called "*Nirtzah*," meaning, "acceptance." We ask Hashem to accept our Seder, praying that we merit to observe it again next year. Perhaps our deeper hope is that by sincerely educating our children through this experiential journey, they will accept our teachings, imbibe our *emunah* and lead us to Mashiach and the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash.

Sitting at the table with my family, singing the songs my grandfather taught me, I feel the same privilege and responsibility of the Seder night that parents throughout time have felt: May Hashem accept our Seder, may our children accept our Seder, and may we finally be in Jerusalem next year ... this time for good.

Chana Meira Katz teaches at Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy and hosts weekly shiurim for women in the local Los Angeles community.



Hallel: The Never-Ending Story of the Exodus ***Rebbetzin Racheli Taubes***

Many children's stories end with some version of, "...and they lived happily ever after," neatly illustrating the end of the story. While this may be standard in fairy tales, we know that in real life, this is not the case. Life is messier - and such endings are not always possible. What is the actual ending of *Yetziat Mitzrayim*, the Exodus, which we commemorate each year on the holiday of Pesach?

The *Maggid* section of the Pesach Haggadah details the story of the Exodus as well as the miracles Hashem performed for the Jewish people in Egypt, culminating with the splitting of the Yam Suf. The section concludes with the recitation of Psalms 113 and 114, which praise Hashem for the supernatural aspect of the redemption. Later in the Haggadah, we continue with Psalms 115-118 in the section of *Hallel* – which is also recited on the *Shalosh Regalim* and Chanukah throughout the year¹.

Praise of Hashem, the key theme of *Hallel*, is certainly appropriate at the Seder. But why is *Hallel* divided, such that we include some of it in *Maggid* and the rest recited so much later? If *Hallel* is supposed to conclude the narrative, then why not recite it all at the end of *Maggid*? Why, instead, does *Maggid* end with Psalm 114?

Generally, the poetic form of Psalms blurs the original historical context to provide meaning beyond a specific time. However, as Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner points out, Psalms 114 is unique in that it specifically refers to the Exodus from Egypt². Since Psalms 114 clearly includes this historical reference, it was included in the Pesach Haggadah as a conclusion for the *Maggid* section of the Seder because it creates a transition from narrative to praise. This *Hallel* is commonly referred to as "*Hallel HaMitzri*" because of Chapter 114, which begins with the phrase "בְּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם" - When Israel left Egypt."

This phrase implies both the immediate occurrence of Hashem taking them out of the land of Egypt as well as all the miraculous events that took place afterward in the Wilderness, such as the war against Amalek, providing water during drought, and the crossing of the Jordan River. As verse 2 states "Judah became His holy one, Israel His dominion," referring to the Land of Israel that the Jewish people entered after forty years in the Wilderness. The purpose of the Exodus from Egypt was to become Hashem's chosen nation in the chosen land. This echoes the theme of the five languages of redemption quoted at the Seder, specifically, "וְהוֹצֵאתִי - I took you [out of Egypt]" and "וְהִבֵּאתִי - I brought you [to the Land of Israel]."

Furthermore, the details of the miracles and praise in Psalm 114 illustrate Hashem's continued involvement in the Jewish people's redemption. The chapter summarizes three major events for the fledgling nation: the Exodus from Egypt, the splitting of the Red Sea, and the receiving of the Torah³. "הַיָּם - Sea" (verse 3) refers to the Red Sea, which Hashem split for the Jewish people as they miraculously traveled through it to escape the Egyptian enemy. "הַהָרִים - mountains" and "הַבְּצֻרֹת - hills" (verse 4) are references to Mount Sinai, where the Jewish people officially became Hashem's chosen nation and received the Torah.

The story continues throughout the Wilderness where Hashem continued to sustain the Jewish people. The paragraph ends with the phrase, "turning a rock into a pool of water," (verse 8) as a reference to the episode of "*Mei Meriva*," when Hashem provided the thirsty nation with water from a rock. Psalm 114 therefore provides a closing to the narrative portion of the Bnei Yisrael's time in Egypt and alludes to the next steps in the journey of the Jewish people.

¹ Although *Hallel* is usually recited during the day, the Yalkut Shimoni on Tehillim 872 comments that since Hashem took the Jewish people out of Egypt at night (see Exodus 12:29, 12:42) *Hallel* is sung at night, the time of the redemption.

² *Pachad Yitzchak, Pesach* no. 5

³ See b. *Pesachim*, 118a



The Abarbanel suggests a different approach, noting that *Hallel* is comprised of two distinct themes: past and future⁴. The first two chapters of *Hallel* (Psalms 113, 114) refer to the Exodus from Egypt, while Psalms 115-118 describe future events and the coming of Mashiach. Distinct references to the Exodus are followed by general praise of Hashem's power and strength, which the Abarbanel understands as specifically referring to the time of Mashiach. This interpretation is reflected in our practice at the Seder when a cup of wine is drunk following the recitation of the first two chapters of *Hallel*. The blessing of redemption is made, and the second cup of wine drunk after Psalm 114 because only once we celebrate our past fully can we conclude with future miracles and redemption. The historical gap is therefore resolved with both text and ritual, highlighting the division and uniting the Psalms.

Another interpretation is provided by Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Rimon. He explains that the chapter opens with a description of Hashem taking the Jewish people out of exile, and then transitions to highlighting Hashem's great power. Hashem's redemption of the Jewish people was so monumental that it changed nature's natural course, with sea water swimming backward⁵. "The sea saw and fled," (verse 3) receding and turning into dry land. "The Jordan River flowed in the opposite direction and the mountains and hills danced" (verses 3-4)⁶.

The selection of the Jewish people as Hashem's chosen nation is thereby intertwined with nature. The sea, river, mountains and hills were then questioned about their actions: "What happened to you? Why did you turn backward?" (verses 5-6). They responded, "Before Hashem, God of Jacob ..." (verse 7) and screamed out, "We tremble before Hashem, the Master of the world, Who created us!"

Although inanimate objects, they responded emphatically. Hashem did not just stop after creating the rivers on the second day of creation and the mountains and hills on the third day! Nature exalts Hashem's constant involvement in this world. The response of the sea, river, mountains, and hills to the Exodus serves as witnesses to Hashem's omnipotence and sovereignty over the environment.

This chapter is recited as part of *Maggid* in the Haggadah because it is actually part of the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim. Psalm 114 does not simply describe the Exodus; it includes the reverberating effects found throughout nature that the Exodus caused - and that is the true ending of the story. The Haggadah pulls Psalm 114 from the beginning of *Hallel* to conclude *Maggid* because the story does not end when we crossed the Egyptian borders, but rather, when the world and nature itself reacted to the event.

As we sing about how nature reacted to the Exodus, we should examine our own reactions. How did the Exodus affect me? Will I swim backwards? Will I tremble and jump like cattle when I encounter the wonders of Hashem? It is through such introspection that we can fulfill the mitzvah of seeing ourselves as being redeemed from Egypt.

⁴ Abarbanel Haggadah: The Passover Haggadah with the Commentary of Don Isaac Abarbanel (Artscroll Mesorah Series, 1990), p103.

⁵ Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Rimon, *Pesach Haggadah Shirat Miriam Haggadah Mimekorah*, p259.

⁶ Rabbi Rimon offers multiple interpretations of the word "chuli" as to fashion, tremble, dance. These three definitions are not contradictory. Hashem fashioned the rivers and mountains and throughout history they tremble and dance in recognition of Hashem's ultimate power.

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