



REBBETZIN SHIRA

SMILES

Faculty, OU Israel Center

Wine's Whisper

Seder night is the incredible opportunity to share the fundamentals of faith with our children, “*Vehigadita levincha.*” It is the quintessential experience of “*Shema beni mussar avicha ve'al titosh torat imecha.*” Although, as Rav Schwab points out, we modify this mitzvah somewhat with children teaching their parents the *divrei* Torah they have learned in school, the focus of the evening is on transmitting *mesorah*.

The three matzahs can be corresponded to the three *Avot*, and the four cups of wine can be linked to the four *Imahot*. Rav Pincus explains that matzah represents *chochmah*, our intrinsic knowledge that the world has a Creator who is continuously involved in every aspect of this world. The four cups represent *binah*, internalizing what we know. Part of a woman's role is to create an emotional connection to Yiddishkeit, the passion and joy. Matzah is white, reflecting pure, intrinsic nature, while wine is red, reflecting energy and life force. We drink wine at different intervals during the seder to generate and connect to this emotional

charge throughout this special night.

Rav Baum in “*Layla Kayom Yair,*” explains the parallel between each of the four cups to each of the *Imahot*. The first cup of wine is for Sara *Imeinu*. We declare in the *kiddush* that Hashem chose us from all other nations, elevated us and made us holy. Likewise, Hashem chose Avraham and Sara, we don't know much about who they were, only that they were the ones especially chosen to start the Jewish people. Further, Avraham and Sara established the principle of

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maaseh avot siman labanim, as they went down to Egypt, effected *Paroh's* punishment, and left with great wealth.

The second cup corresponds to Rivka Imeinu. Rivka, as her name indicates, carried within her, *b'kirbah*, two sons that struggled with each other, one embracing the world of spirituality, and the other the world of pure physicality. Likewise, when the Jews left Egypt, they are described as one nation emerging from a larger nation, asserting their identity. The second cup of wine is linked to most of the Haggadah that expresses this process of becoming a nation upon the Exodus from Egypt.

Blessing rests upon a home in the merit of the wife. It is Rachel Imeinu who is considered the *akeret habayit*, the conduit to bring blessing into Yaakov Avinu's home. We recite *bircat hamazon* over the third cup of wine, the source of continued blessing in our home.

The second part of Hallel and the Hallel Hagadol is recited over the fourth cup. This corresponds to Leah Imeinu whose strength lay in her ability to give thanks and appreciate everything she had as a gift.

As we drink each cup of wine, we can remember the contribution of each of the *Imahot* to our nation. *Bezechut nashim tzidkaniot nigalu avoteinu miMitzrayim*. We were redeemed from Egypt in the merit of righteous women, and the future redemption will be in the merit of women. May it come speedily in our days. ■

