



## TOWARDS MEANINGFUL PARENTING

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# בני חורין: The Power of Seder Night

Seder night is not only a time to remember Yetziat Mitzrayim; it is a night imbued with intrinsic spiritual power in its very essence. Hashem established ט"ו בניסן as a time that contains within it a built-in *koach* (potential) of חירות - freedom. From the very beginning of creation, Nissan was designated as a זמן המסוגל לחירות, a time uniquely suited for redemption. It is precisely because of that embedded spiritual potential that Hashem chose this moment to redeem Bnei Yisrael. This means that the night itself carries the capacity for transformation.

We are not merely retelling a story of the past, but seeking to access that very same *koach* in the present. As we relive Yetziat Mitzrayim, we are meant to awaken within ourselves the capacity for freedom that was implanted at that time. Each year, we are given the opportunity to renew our identity as אנשי חירות. And this process of inculcating the middah of חירות is not meant to remain with us alone; Leil HaSeder is the night of Mesorah, where we intentionally transmit these values to our children, shaping how they understand freedom and who they are meant to be.

Each of us carries our own forms of "slavery," whether distractions, bad

habits, difficult middot, or a lack of clarity about our direction. On this night, we are given the *koach* to break free by connecting to our ancestors, who underwent the ultimate transformation from slavery to freedom under the guidance of HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

**Rav Yosef Tzvi Rimon** explains that the opening sections of Maggid are carefully structured to define what it means to be a בן חורין. They are not just introductory—they are foundational. They guide us step by step into understanding freedom. As we walk our children through these sections of the Haggadah, our role is to help them internalize these ideas in a way that is real and lasting.

הא לחמא עניא –

### FREEDOM BEGINS WITH OTHERS

We begin the Seder with a surprising declaration: כל דכפין ייתי ויכול, כל דצריך ייתי - *everyone is hungry, come join our Seder*. At first glance, this is puzzling, as we are inviting guests at a moment when no one is realistically going to walk in. **Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik** explains that this is not a practical invitation, but a powerful declaration. עיקרה של החירות היא השותפות עם. האחר - *the foundation of חירות is the ability to share with others*. A slave is consumed with

survival and focused only on himself, while a free person has the capacity to notice others and give.

This becomes one of the first messages our children absorb at the Seder table—not only through what we say, but through the tone we set and the way we speak about others and giving. Rav Soloveitchik describes Yetziat Mitzrayim as the creation of a קהילת החסד, a community built on giving, and the Seder night as its reenactment. We therefore begin with a fundamental statement: if you want to become free, you must first learn to look beyond yourself, because the ability to give is not just a noble trait—it is a defining feature of חירות.

### מה נשתנה –

#### FREEDOM MEANS THE ABILITY TO CHANGE

We then move to the Ma Nishtana, the four questions that form the next stage of the Seder. This structure is striking, as the Seder is built around questioning rather than simple narration. While on a basic level this engages children, the Gemara teaches that even someone who is making the seder alone must still ask these questions. This teaches that questioning is not a tool for others - it is an essential part of the process itself. A defining trait of a חורין בן is the ability to question, to not passively accept reality.

Even more than that, the formulation of the questions carries a deeper message. We do not simply ask what we are doing, but why this night is different from all others - מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות. Rav Rimmon explains that this reflects a mindset: a free person believes that things can be different. A slave cannot imagine change and does not dare to dream of a different reality, while a חורין בן lives with the awareness

that change is possible, both in the world and within himself.

Asking מה נשתנה is therefore a declaration that growth and transformation are within reach. This becomes a powerful message to give over to our children: by encouraging them to ask and explore, we instill within them the belief that they are never stuck—that they can grow, and that their future can look different from their present.

### עבדים היינו –

#### FREEDOM IS SERVING HASHEM

We then arrive at the section of עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים... ויוציאנו ה' אלקינו משם - ביד חזקה - *We were slaves to Paroh in Egypt and Hashem took us out with a strong Hand.* Here we introduce the principle of מתחיל בשבח, beginning with the negative and concluding with the positive. This structure raises an important question: why begin by focusing on the hard times of persecution? One approach, as explained by **Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook**, is that the very experience of slavery shaped us in a meaningful way. It cultivated within us the qualities of שראוי למי שהשתעבד לה, *subservience to the One who is worthy of being served.*

These qualities, when redirected, become the foundation for עבודת ה'. The ability to set aside one's own will in order to accept עול מלכות שמים is rooted in that earlier experience. This reveals a deeper dimension of חירות - true freedom is choosing to serve Hashem. One of the most important messages we transmit on this night is how to understand עבדות, not as limitation, but as the highest form of freedom, shaping how our children define what it means to live a meaningful life.

## AN INNER FREEDOM THAT CANNOT BE TAKEN AWAY

We conclude with the powerful statement: אילו לא הוציא הקב"ה את אבותינו ממצרים... הרי אנו ובנינו ובני בנינו משועבדים היינו - *If Hashem hadn't take our forefathers out of Egypt, we would still be slaves today.* This seems difficult to understand, as it is hard to imagine that we would really still be enslaved today. The **Maharal** sharpens the question further, noting that throughout history we have experienced many forms of suffering and subjugation. What, then, did Yetziat Mitzrayim ultimately accomplish? His answer is that it fundamentally transformed our essence.

כאשר יצאנו ממצרים זכינו למדרגת החירות - *When we left Egypt we merited the madreiga (level) of freedom and we turned into Bnei Chorin is our very bones.* Even if we later experienced external forms of oppression, our inner identity remained one of freedom. Because Hashem Himself redeemed us, He implanted within us a permanent identity of בני חורין. No matter the circumstances, that inner freedom can never be taken away. Part of our role on Seder night is helping our children see this not just as history,

but as their identity—that no matter what they face, they carry within themselves an unbreakable core of חירות.

## THE JOURNEY OF THE SEDER

These opening sections of Maggid are not simply a recounting of history, but a structured journey toward becoming *bnei chorin*. *אניא* teaches us to look beyond ourselves and develop the capacity to give. *מה* teaches us to question, to challenge, and to believe in the possibility of change. *עבדים היינו* teaches us that true freedom is found in choosing to serve Hashem. Together, they form a clear and powerful progression. This is also the journey we are meant to guide our children through, using the Seder as a once-a-year opportunity to shape their understanding of themselves and their relationship with Hashem.

On this night, each year, we are given access to that same koach of חירות. It is an opportunity to break free from whatever holds us back and to step into who we are meant to become. The Seder invites us not only to remember redemption, but to experience it. And ultimately, the success of the night is not only what we experience ourselves, but what our children carry with them long after the Seder ends. ■

As we prepare for Pesach, we give Maos Chitim to the poor.  
When Seder night arrives we can enjoy the special Yom Tov atmosphere  
knowing that we have provided for the less fortunate than us.



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