

## Avadim Hayinu

Lesson Objectives	Big Ideas	Essential Questions
Students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify this section of text.</li> <li>2. Explain how history can become memory.</li> <li>3. Share a personal connection to our ancient Israelite ancestors.</li> <li>4. Share an idea for how we can carry on the legacy of our ancient Israelite ancestors.</li> </ol>	“Pesach is where the past does not die, but lives in the chapter we write in our own lives, and in the story we tell our children.”	How does turning history into memory impact the power of our people’s story?  What does continuing on the memory of our people by writing our own chapter mean for how we live our lives?

Activity	Goal	Description	Time
Concentric Circles - students make an inner and outer circle to share responses. Only one circle moves each round.	Set Induction	What is a memory that you have that you don’t actually remember, but you feel like you do because you’ve heard the story a million times?  Example: My daughter “remembers” her trip to Paris when she was two years old.	5-10 minutes (2-5 to answer, 3-5 for sharing)
Deep Dive	Content Acquisition	Read the Deep Dive section	5 minutes
Video Clip	Brainstorming Ideas	Watch <a href="#">There Will Be Miracles</a> from the Prince of Egypt.  Identify the different emotions that you see and feel	5 minutes
Journal	Personalization	We are the ancestors of the ancient Israelites who had the courage and perseverance to achieve freedom. Does their legacy leave an impact on you? If so, how?	10 minutes

Read Avadim Hayinu	Skill Building	Read this section of the text from the Haggadah in Chevrotah.	5 minutes
Question about Further Thoughts	Deeper Thinking	<p>Pair 2 chevrotah groups together.</p> <p>Have them read the Further Thoughts section.</p> <p>Answer the question: What does Rabbi Sacks mean when he says that the past lives on in the chapter we write in our own lives? Provide 3 examples to explain your idea.</p> <p>Give each student in the group a number. Pick a number to present they group's ideas.</p>	10 minutes
Illustrations	Personalization Check for Understanding	Students can create illustrations of the chapters they will write, based on the ideas generated from their small group work.	15 minutes +
Possible Extension		Avadim Hayinu starts by identifying our ancestors as slaves. How can we emphasize the heroic nature of our oppressed ancestors and use that as the place from which we will build onto the story each year? Consider Gilad Segev's Project Heroes.	






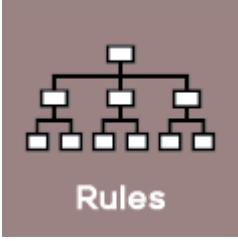
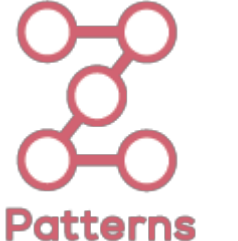



## Dayenu

Lesson Objectives	Big Ideas	Essential Questions
<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain that Dayenu outlines the 15 steps between the exodus and the building of the Beit HaMikdash.</li> <li>2. Students will be able to identify a time when it was challenging for them to focus on gratitude.</li> <li>3. Students will be able to express their gratitude by making a list of things for which they can be grateful.</li> </ol>	<p>“Each stage was a miracle.”</p>	<p>Why is it hard for us to focus on gratitude?</p> <p>What are the things in our life that we should highlight to be grateful for, that will help us channel gratitude when we are tempted to complain?</p>

Activity	Goal	Description	Time
<p>Map Making Read Dayenu</p>	<p>Overview Skill Building</p>	<p>These two activities go together. As the students read Dayenu, they should create a map for each of the 15 stages between leaving Egypt and building the Beit HaMikdash.</p>	<p>30 minutes</p>
<p>In A Nutshell Journal</p>	<p>Deeper Thinking Personalization</p>	<p>Read the In A Nutshell section.</p> <p>In your journal, respond to the following question:</p> <p>When is a time that you complained about something when you should have been grateful for what you have? Why do you think we complain, even when we know we are blessed with so much?</p>	<p>10 minutes</p>
<p>Personal Dayenu</p>	<p>Personalization Check for Understanding</p>	<p>Students should go back to their Dayenu maps. This time, they should think of 15 things in their own lives to be grateful for. They should put these things</p>	<p>30 minutes</p>

		next to the 15 stages from Dayenu on their maps.	
A Story for the Night of Stories	Deeper Thinking	While not entirely related to our Big Idea, the story about Natan Sharansky gives us an opportunity to connect the students with another time in Jewish history where we rose up as heroes from oppression. The question at the end about how they can connect to seder this year could be a good opportunity for a class discussion or a journal entry.	



<p>Choose 3 questions to answer in 3-5 sentences.</p>	 <p><b>Big Idea</b></p> <p>What general statement summarizes the Pesach seder?</p>	 <p><b>Details</b></p> <p>Describe how questions affect the experience at the Pesach seder.</p>
 <p><b>Language of the Discipline</b></p> <p>Describe the Pesach seder using the words a sixth grader might use.</p>	 <p><b>Multiple Perspectives</b></p> <p>How do different people see the Pesach seder?</p>	 <p><b>Over Time</b></p> <p>How has time affected the Pesach seder?</p>
 <p><b>Rules</b></p> <p>How is the Pesach seder structured?</p>	 <p><b>Patterns</b></p> <p>What elements, events or ideas are repeated in the Pesach seder?</p>	 <p><b>Ethics</b></p> <p>What different conflicting opinions have been expressed in the Pesach seder?</p>
 <p><b>Trends</b></p> <p>Relate contemporary trends to the events of the Pesach seder.</p>	 <p><b>Unanswered Questions</b></p> <p>What ideas remain unclear or incomplete about the Pesach seder?</p>	 <p><b>Across Disciplines</b></p> <p>Describe the Pesach seder the perspective of an historian, anthropologist and rabbi.</p>



# Pesah



## PESAḤ IN A NUTSHELL

Seder night is a highlight of the Jewish calendar for parents and children alike. It is the night that revolves around children, and parents are reminded of the importance of their role as educators. (Thankfully, the Haggada gives them lots of tools and tips!)

Rabbi Sacks explains that on the eve of the original Pesah, at the very moment when a new chapter in the life of the Jewish people began, we found out what it means to be a Jew: “About to gain their freedom, the Israelites were told that they had to become a nation of educators” (*A Letter in the Scroll*, 34). Being a Jew means being both a student and an educator, and Seder night is our opportunity to focus on both these roles.

This section serves as an educational companion to Seder night and will give you some ideas and thoughts on several of the core pages from the Haggada and how Rabbi Sacks understands them. As well as offering educational insights, like the other sections of this book, this Seder night companion also includes activities, stories, and reflection questions, designed to engage all the participants around your Seder table, young and old alike.

You will notice many extracts from Rabbi Sacks’s writings, all sourced from *The Jonathan Sacks Haggada* (Koren). This guide is designed to be used in conjunction with a Haggada; it is not a replacement for one.

## HA LAHMA ANYA הָא לַחְמָא אֵינֵיא



### IN A NUTSHELL

We start the Haggada, and with it the core of the Seder night, with the mitzva of *Maggid* (the telling of the story of the Exodus), which begins with this invitation to join the Seder. The language of this paragraph is Aramaic, because this was the vernacular (spoken language) at the time the Haggada was written. If this invitation is to be genuine, it is important that it is stated in a language that is understood.



### DEEP DIVE

This is a strange invitation: “This is the bread of oppression our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come in and eat.” What hospitality is it to offer the hungry the taste of suffering? In fact, though, this is a profound insight into the nature of slavery and freedom. Matza represents two things: it is the food of slaves, and also the bread eaten by the Israelites as they left Egypt in liberty. What transforms the bread of oppression into the bread of freedom is *the willingness to share it with others*.

Sharing food is the first act through which slaves become free human beings. One who fears tomorrow does not offer his bread to others. But one who is willing to divide his food with a stranger has already shown himself capable of fellowship and faith, the two things from which hope is born. That is why we begin the Seder by inviting others to join us. Bread shared is no longer the bread of oppression. Reaching out to others, giving help to the needy and companionship to those who are alone, we bring freedom into the world, and with freedom, God.

### REFLECT

*What can you share in your life to show you are truly free?*

**“Sharing food is the first act through which slaves become free human beings.”**



## FURTHER THOUGHTS

This is the beginning of the Seder narrative, known as *Maggid*, from the word “*haggada*,” “relate,” “recount,” “declare,” “proclaim.” The story of the Exodus is known as the Haggada because of the verse “You shall tell (*vehigadeta*) your child on that day, [I do this] because of what the Lord did for me when I went out of Egypt” (Shemot 13:8). However, the word “*haggada*” derives from a verb that also means “bind,” “join,” “connect.” The story of the Exodus is more than a recounting (*sipur*) of things that happened long ago. It binds the present to the past and future. It connects one generation to the next. It joins us to our children. Jewish continuity means that each successive generation commits itself to continuing the story. Our past lives on in us.

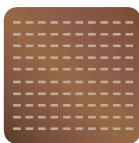


## REFLECT

*Do you feel more connected to your parents and grandparents when you sit at the Seder table? Why do you think that is?*

## QUESTIONS TO ASK AT YOUR SEDER

1. *Why is it important to share your Seder table with people from outside your close family?*
2. *Does matza represent freedom or slavery to you?*
3. *How does Seder night connect you to other Jews?*



## EXPERIENCING THE SEDER

If you have guests at your Seder table who are not from your immediate family, turn to them now and make sure they feel welcome.



## A STORY FOR THE NIGHT OF STORIES

Primo Levi survived Auschwitz. In his book *If This Is a Man*, he describes his experiences there. According to Levi, the worst time of all was when the Nazis left in January 1945, fearing the Russian advance. All prisoners who could walk were taken on the brutal death



marches. The only people left in the camp were those too ill to move. For ten days, they were left alone with only scraps of food and fuel. Levi describes how he worked to light a fire and bring some warmth to his fellow prisoners, many of them dying. He then writes:

*When the broken window was repaired and the stove began to spread its heat, something seemed to relax in everyone, and at that moment Towarowski (a Franco-Pole of twenty-three, typhus) proposed to the others that each of them offer a slice of bread to us three who had been working. And so it was agreed.*

*Only a day before, a similar event would have been inconceivable. The law of the Lager [concentration camps] said: “eat your own bread, and if you can, that of your neighbor,” and left no room for gratitude. It really meant that the law of the Lager was dead.*

*It was the first human gesture that occurred among us. I believe that that moment can be dated as the beginning of the change by which we who had not died slowly changed from Haftlinge [prisoners] to men again.*

## MA NISHTANA מַה נִּשְׁתַּנָּה



### IN A NUTSHELL

There are four places in the Torah where it speaks of children asking questions about Pesah – and each of these four verses are the sources for the four children’s questions (see below). This inspired a tradition that the story of the Exodus from Egypt must be told, wherever possible, in response to the questions asked by children, and this is where the idea for the four questions in *Ma Nishtana* comes from. The origin of the text is the Mishna (Pesahim 10:4), although the words have changed slightly over time to reflect our changing practices (for instance, since the destruction of the Temple, we can no longer bring the *korban*, so the fifth question, on serving roast meat, is no longer included in *Ma Nishtana*).

“The story of the Exodus from Egypt must be told...in response to the questions asked by children.”



### DEEP DIVE

The Torah has two words for inheritance, *yerusha* and *nahala*, and they represent the two different ways in which a heritage is passed on across the generations. The word *nahala* comes from the root *nahal*, which also means “river.” It represents an inheritance that is merely handed down, without any work on the part of the recipient, as water flows in a river. *Yerusha*, by contrast, means active inheritance. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch pointed out that *lareshet*, the verbal form of *yerusha*, sometimes means “to conquer”

or “to capture.” It means actively taking hold of what one has been promised. An inheritance for which one has worked is always more secure than one for which one has not. That is why Judaism encourages children to ask questions. When a child asks, they have already begun the work of preparing to receive. Torah is a *yerusha*, not a *nahala*. It needs work on behalf of the child if it is to be passed on across the generations.

**Commentary on *Ma Nishtana*, *The Jonathan Sacks Haggada***

## REFLECT

*How does *Ma Nishtana* and the role of children asking questions affect your experience of the Seder?*



## FURTHER THOUGHTS

Religious faith has often been seen as naive, blind, accepting. That is not the Jewish way. Judaism is not the suspension of critical intelligence. To the contrary: asking a question is itself a profound expression of faith in the intelligibility of the universe and the meaningfulness of human life. To ask is to believe that somewhere there is an answer. The fact that throughout history people have devoted their lives to extending the frontiers of knowledge is a compelling testimony to the restlessness of the human spirit and its constant desire to go further, higher, deeper. Far from faith excluding questions, questions testify to faith – that history is not random, that the universe is not impervious to our understanding, that what happens to us is not blind chance. We ask not because we doubt, but because we believe.

**“The Art of Asking Questions,” *The Jonathan Sacks Haggada***



## REFLECT

*How is asking questions “an expression of faith”? Doesn’t it show a lack of faith?*

## QUESTIONS TO ASK AT YOUR SEDER

1. *Why do you think we encourage children to ask questions on Seder night?*
2. *Are there any bad questions?*
3. *Do all questions have answers? What do we do if no one we know has the answer to a question?*



## A STORY FOR THE NIGHT OF STORIES

Isidor Rabi won the Nobel Prize in physics in 1944. When he was asked why he became a scientist, he replied: “My mother made me a scientist without ever intending to. Every other Jewish mother in Brooklyn would ask her child after school: ‘So? Did you learn anything today?’ But not my mother. ‘Izzy,’ she would say, ‘did you ask a good question today?’ Asking good questions made me a scientist.”

### REFLECT

*Are you more invested in your learning when you are encouraged to ask questions?*

## AVADIM HAYINU

עבדים היינו



### IN A NUTSHELL

*Avadim Hayinu* is our response to the questions asked in the *Ma Nishtana*, and with this we begin the telling of the Exodus story, the main theme of the *Maggid* section of the Haggada. Before we delve into the depths of the story of the Exodus itself, the Haggada makes sure we realise how we are personally affected by this historical event. It reminds us that if not for the Exodus, we would still be slaves in Egypt! This passage also explains that the mitzva of telling the story of the Exodus is for everybody (even the old and wise), and the story should be told at length to make it impactful.



### DEEP DIVE

One of the rules of telling the story on Pesah is that each person must feel as if they had personally left Egypt. History becomes memory. The past becomes the present. At this stage, therefore, we speak of the continuing consequences of the past. Had the Exodus not happened, and the Israelites stayed in Egypt, none of the subsequent events of Jewish history would have occurred. What and where we are now is the result of what happened then.

There is a fundamental difference between knowing and telling the story. We do not tell the narrative of the Exodus to know what happened in the past. We do so because each telling engraves that event more thoroughly in our memories, and because each year adds its own insights and interpretations. Judaism is a constant dialogue

**“History becomes memory. The past becomes the present.”**

between past and present, and since the present always changes, there is always a new juxtaposition, a new facet of the story. The Sages said, “There is no house of study without *hiddush*, some new interpretation.” The story of Pesah never grows old, because the struggle for freedom never ends, and therefore each generation adds its own commentary to the old-new story.

**Commentary on Avadim Hayinu, The Jonathan Sacks Haggada**

## REFLECT

*What new aspect of the story, or the Haggada, have you discovered this year? Share it with everyone at your Seder.*



## FURTHER THOUGHTS

To be a Jew is to know that over and above history is the task of memory. As Jacob Neusner eloquently wrote: “Civilisation hangs suspended, from generation to generation, by the gossamer strand of memory. If only one cohort of mothers and fathers fails to convey to its children what it has learnt from its parents, then the great chain of learning and wisdom snaps. If the guardians of human knowledge stumble only one time, in their fall collapses the whole edifice of knowledge and understanding” (*Neusner on Judaism: Religion and Theology*). More than any other faith, Judaism made this a matter of religious obligation. Pesah is where the past does not die, but lives in the chapter we write in our own lives, and in the story we tell our children.

**“History and Memory,” The Jonathan Sacks Haggada**



Screenshot from the animated video **Being Jewish** at rabbisacks.org

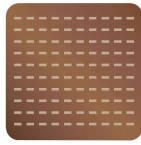
## REFLECT

*Why do you think education has become so important in Judaism, and what impact has that had on Jewish history?*

## QUESTIONS TO ASK AT YOUR SEDER

- 1.** *Why does the Haggada say, “We were slaves in Egypt”? Were you a slave in Egypt?*
- 2.** *Do you like long stories? Why do you think the Haggada tells us that the longer we make this story, the better?*
- 3.** *Why does the Haggada have to point out that old and wise people still have to do this mitzva?*





## EXPERIENCING THE SEDER

On Seder night we try to feel as if we ourselves are being freed from slavery in Egypt. During a point in the evening when the younger people seem less engaged (perhaps after we read of the Four Children, until it's time for the Ten Plagues), send them away from the table to find costumes and prepare their own play of the Exodus from Egypt.

They'll have to work quickly! To make it more challenging, you could ask the adults to choose a new genre for the play, such as adventure, science fiction, or fantasy. The play can then be performed later on, during the meal.



## THE FOUR CHILDREN אַרְבַּעַה בָּנִים



### IN A NUTSHELL

The section of the Four Children in the Haggada is based on the four different verses in the Torah which describe children asking their parents about the story of the Exodus. Rather than seeing these as just four examples of asking the same question, the Rabbis noticed four distinctive personalities from the different ways the verses are phrased – and this inspired the idea for four kinds of children.





## DEEP DIVE

The Four Children are a vignette of the Jewish people. One asks because he wants to hear the answer. A second asks because he does not want to hear the answer. A third asks because he does not understand. The fourth does not ask because he doesn't understand that he doesn't understand. Ours has never been a monolithic people.

Yet there is a message of hope in this family portrait. Though they disagree, they sit around the same table, telling the same story. Though they differ, they stay together. They are part of a single family. Even the rebel is there, although part of him does not want to be. This, too, is who we are.

The Jewish people is an extended family. We argue, we differ, there are times when we are deeply divided. Yet we are part of the same story. We share the same memories. At difficult times we can count on one another. We feel one another's pain. Out of this multiplicity of voices comes something none of us could achieve alone. Sitting next to the wise child, the rebel is not fated to remain a rebel. Sitting next to the rebel, the wise child may share his wisdom rather than keep it to himself. The one who cannot ask will, in time, learn how. The simple child will learn complexity. The wise child will learn simplicity. Each draws strength from the others, as we all draw strength from belonging to a people.

**Commentary on the Four Children,**  
*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

## REFLECT

*Why do you think Jews argue so much with each other? Is this a strength or a weakness?*

**“Though [the four children] disagree, they sit around the same table, telling the same story.”**



## FURTHER THOUGHTS

Through the Haggada, more than a hundred generations of Jews have handed on their story to their children. The word “*haggada*” means “relate,” “tell,” “expound.” But it comes from another Hebrew root [*a-g-d*] that means “bind,” “join,” “connect.” By reciting the Haggada, Jews give their children a sense of connectedness to Jews throughout the world and to the Jewish people through time. It joins them to a past and future, a history and destiny, and makes them characters in its drama. Every other nation known to humankind has been united because its members lived in the same place, spoke the same language, were part of the same culture. Jews alone, dispersed across continents, speaking

different languages and participating in different cultures, have been bound together by a narrative, the Pesah narrative, which they tell in the same way on the same night. More than the Haggada is the story of a people, Jews are the people of a story.

*“The Story of Stories,” The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

### QUESTIONS TO ASK AT YOUR SEDER

1. Which of the Four Children are you most like (it can be more than one)?
2. What do you see as the message of including four different children in

*the Haggada? What advice would you give to a teacher or parent who has many different types of children to teach?*

3. Why do you think that children are the central focus of such an important event as Seder night?

### REFLECT

*How can a story link us to Jews across generations and across geography?*



### A STORY FOR THE NIGHT OF STORIES

When I was a baby, I wouldn't talk. I was the youngest of five children, so I was surrounded by people who doted on me and gave me whatever I wanted. All I had to do was make a noise and point to get what I wanted. So it took me much longer to learn to talk. It worried my parents, and they took me to specialist doctors to make sure there was no deeper cause behind my late development.

When I started going to school, I couldn't sit still and focus for a minute. My mind would wander and then my body would wander, and next thing I knew, I was being told off, or worse, I would be sent to the headteacher's office. I wasn't trying to be mischievous or rude. I just couldn't sit in one place for long.

When I was a teenager, I got angry. Angry about all the injustices in the world, about the way the government didn't care enough about the environment, and angry that the school administration didn't do enough to make everyone feel valued and included in our school. I organised all sorts of demonstrations and one day I even led the



students in a strike. The school didn't like that one bit, and I almost got expelled for it!

Then I went to university, and I took my passion for making a difference in the world and channelled it into my studies. Today I am a lawyer who represents the underprivileged and disadvantaged in society, and my dream is to one day become a judge.

## REFLECT

*Do you see any of the Four Children in this story? Do you see any of them in your own story?*

## THE TEN PLAGUES עֲשָׂרַת מַכּוֹת



### IN A NUTSHELL

One of the most exciting and colourful parts of the story of the Exodus is the Ten Plagues. There is a custom to spill a drop of wine as we say the name of each plague. There are many reasons given for this, but the most beautiful is that of Abudraham (a fourteenth-century rabbi from Spain who is best known for his commentary on the Siddur), who interprets it in accordance with the verse "Do not rejoice when your enemy falls" (Mishlei 24:17). We give thanks for the miraculous plagues which brought our ancestors out of Egypt and granted them freedom, but at the same time, we also shed a symbolic tear for those who suffered.

**"We give thanks...but we also shed a symbolic tear."**



### DEEP DIVE

The plagues occupy the borderline, so common to the Torah, between the natural and the supernatural. Commentators have been divided between those who emphasise their miraculous character and others who have sought to provide a scientific account of the disasters in terms of a series of chain reactions to an initial ecological disaster, possibly the appearance of algae in the Nile, which turned the water red and caused the fish to die. Which view speaks more compellingly to us will depend on whether we understand the word "miracle" as a suspension of the laws of nature, or an event that occurs within nature but that, by happening when and to whom it does, reveals a providential pattern in history.

**Commentary on the Ten Plagues, The Jonathan Sacks Haggada**

## REFLECT

*Do you think that the plagues were from natural causes or supernatural intervention? Are they any less impressive if God performed them through nature?*





## FURTHER THOUGHTS

The plague of lice is a sardonic comment on the monumental scale of Egyptian architecture. The Egyptians believed the gods were to be found in things that are big. God shows them His Presence in something so small as to be almost invisible. The irony recurs in the division of the Red Sea, where Pharaoh's greatest military asset, the chariots, prove to be his undoing, as their wheels sink into the mud. The key to the plagues – as in God's covenant with Noah – is the principle of reciprocity: “As you do, so shall you be done to.” Those who harm others will themselves be harmed. Nations that begin by depriving others of their liberty in the end destroy themselves. Historically, this was so. Egypt never again recovered the greatness it had enjoyed in the earlier part of Ramesses II's rule.

**Commentary on The Ten Plagues, The Jonathan Sacks Haggada**



## REFLECT

*What is the message behind the plague of lice? How can we apply this lesson to our own lives?*

## QUESTIONS TO ASK AT YOUR SEDER

1. *Why do you think God chose these particular plagues?*
2. *In your opinion, which was the worst of the Ten Plagues?*
3. *Who were the plagues really for?*



## EXPERIENCING THE SEDER

How many of the plagues can you simulate at your Seder table?

Here are a few ideas (some may require preparation in the days before Seder night):

1. **Blood:** Spill a little wine or grape juice onto everyone's plate, and/or (temporarily) confiscate all the bottles and jugs of water from the table.
2. **Frogs:** Get the children to jump around the table making frog noises.
3. **Lice:** Ask the children to check everyone's hair for lice. (If you plan this ahead of time, you could even plant some fake lice to find.)
4. **Wild animals:** Collect all the stuffed animals in the house and place them around the table.
5. **Pestilence:** Throw all of the stuffed animals on the floor and then bury them under the table.
6. **Boils:** Using forks, give all your guests boils (be gentle!).
7. **Hail:** Have a snowball/hail fight with cotton balls, pillows, pre-prepared hail made from paper, or other soft materials.
8. **Locusts:** Have the children lead everyone in making a humming, buzzing noise, and then increase the volume, like a swarm of locusts about to descend.
9. **Darkness:** Blindfold your guests (using scarves) and then try to play a game or continue with a section of the Haggada.
10. **The striking down of the firstborn:** Gather all the firstborn children together and take them outside.

## DAYEINU דַּיְנוּ



### IN A NUTSHELL

*Dayeinu* is a song that explores the kindnesses of God to His people on the long journey from slavery to freedom. There are fifteen stages described between leaving Egypt, reaching the Promised Land, and building the Temple in Jerusalem. This song is a *tikkun*, a “putting-right,” for the ingratitude of the Israelites in the wilderness. At almost every stage of their journey, they complained: about the water, the food, the difficulties of travelling, the challenge of conquering the land. It is as if we are saying: where they complained, let us give thanks. Each stage was a miracle. And each miracle would have been enough to convince us that Hashem is behind all the events in our history.



## DEEP DIVE

Why is Shabbat specifically mentioned in *Dayeinu*?

Shabbat is the ultimate expression of a free society, the antithesis of slavery in Egypt. On this day, all relationships of dominance and subordination are suspended. We may not work, or command others to work, “so that your manservant and maidservant may rest as you do” (Devarim 5:15). At many times in history, people have dreamed of an ideal world. The name given to such visions is “utopia,” meaning “no place,” because at no time or place have these dreams been realised on a society-wide basis. Shabbat is the sole successful utopian experiment in history. It is based on the simple idea that utopia (in Judaism, the Messianic Age) is not solely in the future. It is something we can experience in the midst of time, one day in seven. Shabbat became the weekly rehearsal of an ideal world, one not yet reached but still lived as a goal, of a world at peace with itself, recognising the createdness, and thus the integrity, of all people and all forms of life. If Egypt meant slavery, Shabbat is collective freedom, a “foretaste of the World to Come.”

**Commentary on *Dayeinu*, *The Jonathan Sacks Haggada***

## REFLECT

*Seder night is when we experience the Exodus, and Shabbat is when we experience freedom and utopia. Why do you think we need regular reminders of what freedom and utopia feel like?*



## FURTHER THOUGHTS

The Exodus was more than an event in the past. It was a precursor of redemption in the future. Israel, as Moshe warned, would not dwell securely in its land. It would forget its moral and spiritual vocation. It would be attracted to the pagan culture of its neighbours. By so doing it would lose its reason for existence and find itself unable, at times of crisis, to summon the shared vision and collective energy needed to prevail against neighbouring imperial powers. It would suffer defeat and exile. But despair would never prevail. In the past, God had brought His people from slavery to freedom and from exile to the land, and therefore He would do so again. The Jewish people never completely lost faith in God, because its prophets knew that God would never completely lose faith in His people. History intimated destiny. What happened once would happen again. That is what lies behind the words with which the Haggada begins: “Now we are here; next year in the land of Israel. Now – slaves; next year we shall be free.” The Jewish people

**“The Exodus was more than an event in the past. It was a precursor of redemption in the future.”**

kept the vision alive. It is not too much to say that the vision kept the Jewish people alive....

That is what Pesah was during more than eighteen centuries of exile and dispersion: a seed planted in Jewish memory, waiting to be activated, to grow. Without it, Jews would certainly have disappeared. Lacking hope of return – hope tempered by faith into a certainty-like steel – they would have made their peace with their condition, merged into their surrounding societies and ambient cultures, and vanished, like every other culture deprived of a home. Pesah, like a seed frozen in suspended animation, contained the latent energy that led Jews in the twentieth century to create the single most remarkable accomplishment in the modern world, the rebirth of Israel, the land, the state, the nation, and the people. Mikha's vision, and Yehezkel's, and Moshe's, came true.

**“Pesah and the Rebirth of Israel,” *The Jonathan Sacks Haggada***



## REFLECT

*Rabbi Sacks connects the Exodus to the modern return to Zion. How is this also connected to the poem Dayeinu?*

## QUESTIONS TO ASK AT YOUR SEDER

1. *Would it really have been “enough” if God had stopped at any of these stages?*
2. *What do you see as the message behind listing these fifteen stages in Dayeinu?*
3. *Where do you think the story of the Exodus actually ends?*



## A STORY FOR THE NIGHT OF STORIES

Natan Sharansky is a hero of the Jewish people. Growing up in the Soviet Union, when it was almost impossible to live a Jewish life, he knew the term “Jew” only as something to hide. But then in 1967, following Israel's dramatic victory in the Six-Day War, Jews began to reconnect to their ancestral faith with pride. Many began to dream of returning to their homeland but were prevented by the Soviet authorities. They became known as Refuseniks. Sharansky, who was arrested at the age of twenty-nine for his Zionist activities, was arguably the most famous Refusenik, with thousands of people campaigning for his release from the Soviet gulag prison system in Siberia. He gained his freedom in 1986 and realized his lifelong dream to immigrate to the State of Israel.

At the beginning of the Coronavirus global pandemic, when many Jews around the world were facing the notion of a Pesah Seder without their family around the table for the first time, he was interviewed about



his experience of Pesah in the gulag. The Soviet authorities knew the importance of Seder night, and cruelly ensured that Sharansky was in solitary confinement, where he was served nothing but three pieces of dry bread and three cups of water per day.

“I decided my three cups of water would be my wine and my three pieces of dry bread would be my matza,” Sharansky recalled. “And my salt would be my *maror*. I found out that this is the great place to feel the unique struggle of the Jewish people – to be connected with every Jew in the world, and to enjoy thinking that this year we are slaves and next year we [will be] free people in Jerusalem.”

Sharansky concluded his interview by emphasising that even if we are not with our family on Seder night, we are still connected, for we are one big family, a people with a shared history, a shared future, and a very special role in this world.

## REFLECT

*Natan Sharansky found meaning in the Pesah story for his situation, both in the gulag and during the Covid pandemic. What meaning for this year can you find in the Pesah story?*

## PESAḤ, MATZA, MAROR

## פֶּסַח מַצָּה וּמָרוֹר



### IN A NUTSHELL

These are the three mitzvot of the night that involve eating (we no longer eat the *korban Pesah*, but while there was a Temple this was a biblical command).

Normally, mitzvot are fulfilled by performing the required act with the intention of observing the commandment. To fulfil the duty of sukka, for example, we do not have to tell the story of the wandering of the Israelites in the desert. However, in the case of Pesah two commands coincide: the first, to eat the festive meal, and the second, to tell the story. Rabban Gamliel argues that the two are connected. The story explains the food; the food allows us to relive the story.

The Torah states: “When you enter the land which the Lord shall give you as He promised, you shall observe this rite. And if your children should ask you, ‘What is this service you observe?’ you shall say, ‘It is a Pesah offering to the Lord, for He passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt while He struck down the Egyptians, but saved those in our homes’” (Shemot 12:25–27). Thus, from the very outset, eating, asking, and explaining were connected, and it is this connection on which Rabban Gamliel bases his view that all three elements of the Pesah meal must be explained.

“The story explains the food; the food allows us to relive the story.”



## DEEP DIVE

The Pesah lamb symbolises freedom. The bitter herbs represent slavery. Matza combines both. It was the bread the Israelites ate in Egypt as slaves. It was also the bread they ate when leaving Egypt as free people. Why do the symbols of freedom precede the bitter herbs of slavery? Surely slavery preceded freedom? The hasidic masters answered: only to a free human being does slavery taste bitter. Had the Israelites forgotten freedom, they would have grown used to slavery. “The worst exile is to forget you are in exile.”

## REFLECT

*Why is it important to remember and experience both slavery and freedom on this night?*



## FURTHER THOUGHTS

In the Torah, the festival we call *Pesah* is consistently described as *Hag HaMatzot*, the festival of unleavened bread (*Hag HaPesah*, in the Torah, is confined to the fourteenth of Nisan, the day prior to the Seder, when the Paschal sacrifice was brought). Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev gave a beautiful explanation for this dual terminology. The name *Pesah* signifies the greatness of God, who “passed over” the houses of the Israelites. The name *Hag HaMatzot* suggests the greatness of the Israelites, who followed God into the desert without any provisions. In the Torah, God calls the festival *Hag HaMatzot* in praise of Israel. The Jewish people, though, call the festival *Pesah* in praise of God.

## REFLECT

*Was the story of Exodus a triumph for God or for the Israelites?*

## QUESTIONS TO ASK AT YOUR SEDER

- 1. What is special about the educational methods used at the Seder table?*
- 2. Do any other hagim have a similar aspect to them?*
- 3. Do you think our educational institutions can learn anything from the educational methods of Seder night?*





## EXPERIENCING THE SEDER

At this point in the Seder, when we eat the matza and *maror* (and remember the Pesah offering), we are experiencing the story we have been learning about. When you eat the matza and *maror*, close your eyes and be mindful about what your senses are feeling and experiencing. What do these foods smell and taste like? What emotions and feelings do they create in you when you eat them? Take a moment to imagine what the generation that left Egypt on the very first Pesah must have felt as they ate these foods.



## A STORY FOR THE NIGHT OF STORIES

A Jew was sent to Siberia by the Communist government for illegally maintaining a network of Jewish education during the years when it was against the law to practise Judaism openly. When he was finally let free he told his friends, “It was difficult to observe Pesah in the labour camp. One year, we had no *matzot*. Another year, we had no wine. But of bitter herbs, we were never short!”

## HALLEL הלל



## IN A NUTSHELL

Now that we have finished telling the story of the Exodus, we feel an overwhelming need to thank and praise Hashem, just like the Israelites 3,300 years ago. So we begin to say Hallel (split into two sections, before and after the meal). This is one of the transitional moments of the Haggada, when we move from story to song, from prose to poetry, from recitation (*Maggid*) to praise (Hallel).

“We move  
from story to  
song... from  
recitation to  
praise.”



## DEEP DIVE

Song plays a vital part in Judaism. At the end of his life Moshe gave the Israelites the last of the commands – that in every generation we should write a new *sefer Torah*. On that occasion he used an unusual word. He called the Torah a “song” (Devarim 31:19). Words are the language of the mind. Music is the language of the soul. Whenever speech is invested with deep

emotion it aspires to the condition of song. Thus we do not say our prayers; we sing them. We do not read the Torah; we chant it. We do not study Talmud; we intone it. Each kind of text, and each period of the Jewish year, has its own melody. Thus Moshe was saying: to transmit Torah across the generations as a living faith, it must be not just a code of law, but also the song of the Jewish people.

## REFLECT

*How does song change the experience of our prayers and the way we praise God?*



## FURTHER THOUGHTS

Hallel (Tehillim 113–118) is the great song of deliverance that, according to the Talmud, was sung at all the great triumphs of Jewish history. In our day we have added two new occasions when we say it: on Yom HaAtzma'ut, Israel's Independence Day, and Yom Yerushalayim, Jerusalem Day.

The late Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik asked an interesting question about the recitation of Hallel at the Seder table. The Talmud states that we do not say Hallel on Purim because “the reading of the Megilla is equivalent to saying Hallel” (Megilla 14a). Why do we not apply the same reasoning to Seder night? We have recited the Haggada, the counterpart of the Megilla on Purim. Surely, then, the recital of Hallel is superfluous.

The answer I would give is that there are two different commands to say Hallel. The first is at the time of a miracle. The second is as a form of remembrance on the anniversary of the miracle. Thus, at the time of Hanukka, the Maccabees said Hallel at the moment of victory. The next year they established it as an annual obligation. The two forms of Hallel arise from different psychological states. The first is expressive, the second evocative. The first gives voice to an emotion we already feel. The second creates that emotion through an act of memory, recalling an event that occurred in the past.

Telling the story of a miracle, as we do on Purim, is equivalent to the second form of Hallel. It is an act of memory. On Pesah, however, we do not merely tell the story. We relive it. We eat the bread of oppression and the bitter herbs. We taste the wine of freedom. We recline as free people. “Generation by generation, each person must see himself as if he himself had come out of Egypt.” The Hallel we say on Seder night is therefore of the first kind, not the second. It arises out of the emotions we feel having lived through the event again. It is a “new song.” This kind of Hallel is not cancelled by telling the story.

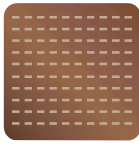
## REFLECT

*What is the difference in emotion between the two types of Hallel? Do you connect emotionally to the Hallel said on Seder night being the first type?*

## QUESTIONS TO ASK AT YOUR SEDER

- 1. What do we have to praise and thank God for on Pesah?*
- 2. Is it better to use our own words to do this or the words of someone else (like King David's Tehillim)?*
- 3. Do you connect more to words or song as a medium for expressing emotions?*





## EXPERIENCING THE SEDER

Ask the guests around your Seder table to share as many tunes for the different parts of Hallel as they know. Spend a moment reflecting (either privately or in a conversation with the Seder participants) on how it feels to sing as opposed to saying or reading the words.



## A STORY FOR THE NIGHT OF STORIES

Following the splitting of the Sea of Reeds when the Israelites were finally safe from the pursuing Egyptians, Miriam the prophetess took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women followed her, singing and dancing with their own timbrels, in praise and thanks to Hashem. The Rabbis in the Midrash ask why the women had musical instruments at all. (Was this really a priority to take with them when they left Egypt in haste?) They answer their own question by praising the women's faith in Hashem. They had deep faith that Hashem would perform miracles in the desert, to protect them and ensure their safe passage, and so they ensured that they had instruments and dances prepared so that they would be able to express their gratitude and praise of Hashem.



## NIRTZA נִרְצָה



### IN A NUTSHELL

*Nirtza* means “parting,” and with this passage we reach the concluding section. We pray that next year we may be able to celebrate Pesah in a rebuilt Temple according to the original biblical rituals (which we can no longer fulfil). This passage is taken from a liturgical poem (*kerova*) composed by Rabbi Joseph Tov Elem in the eleventh century CE. Originally, it was said in the synagogue on *Shabbat HaGadol*, the Shabbat preceding Pesah, to conclude a detailing of the laws of Pesah. It was transferred to the Haggada in the fourteenth century.



The Exodus by Jacob Wexler



## DEEP DIVE

As at the conclusion of Yom Kippur, so here – at the two supreme moments of the Jewish year – we pray “*Leshana habaa biYerushalayim habenuya*,” “Next year in Jerusalem rebuilt.” For eighteen centuries, Jews were scattered across the world, but they never forgot Jerusalem. They prayed toward it. They mourned it even during their celebrations. Each year, on the ninth of Av, the anniversary of the destruction, they sat and wept as if they had just been bereaved. Like the survivors of an earlier catastrophe, they said, “If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill. May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy” (Tehillim 137:5–6).

The French historian Chateaubriand, visiting Jerusalem in the early nineteenth century, was overcome with emotion as he saw for the first time the small Jewish community there, waiting patiently for the Messiah. Noting how this “small nation” had survived while the great empires who sought its destruction had vanished, he added, “If there is anything among the nations of the world marked with the stamp of the miraculous, this, in our opinion, is that miracle.”



## FURTHER THOUGHTS

Jerusalem is a place, but it is more than a place. It became a metaphor for the collective destination of the Jewish people. A city is what we build together, individually through our homes, collectively through our public spaces. So Jerusalem became a symbol of what the Jews were summoned to build, a city of righteousness worthy of being a home for the Divine Presence. Its stones would be good deeds, and its mortar, relationships of generosity and trust. Its houses would be families; its defensive walls, schools and houses of study. Shabbat and the festivals would be its public parks and gardens. For Jews believed that, even in a violent and destructive world, heaven could be built on earth. It was their most daring vision. The architect of the city would be God. The builders would be ordinary men and women. It would be a Jewish city, but it would be open to all, and people from all faiths would come and be moved by its beauty.

So Jerusalem, the “faithful city” (Yeshayahu 1:27), became the destination of the Jewish journey, which began with Avraham and Sara

## REFLECT

*Why do you think the conclusion to these two important days in the Jewish calendar (Yom Kippur and Seder Night) end with these words?*

“Jerusalem became a symbol of what Jews were summoned to build... a city of righteousness.”

and will be complete only at the end of days. This is how the prophet Yeshayahu envisioned it, in words that for millennia have captured the human imagination:

*In the last days  
The mountain of the Lord's Temple will be established  
As chief among the mountains;  
It will be raised above the hills,  
And all the nations will stream to it.  
Many peoples will come and say,  
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,  
To the house of the God of Yaakov.  
He will teach us His ways,  
So that we may walk in His path."  
For the Torah shall come forth from Zion,  
And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.  
He will judge between the nations  
And settle disputes for many peoples.  
They will beat their swords into ploughshares  
And their spears into pruning hooks.  
Nation will not take up sword against nation,  
Nor will they train for war anymore. (Yeshayahu 2:2-4)*

These words, among the most influential ever written, sum up much of Jewish faith. They epitomise what it might be like to “perfect the world under the sovereignty of God” (as described in the *Aleinu* prayer). And as they journeyed through the centuries and continents, Jews carried this vision with them, believing that their task was to be true to their faith, to be loyal to God, to exemplify His ways to humankind, and to build a world at peace with itself by learning and teaching how to respect the freedom and dignity of others.

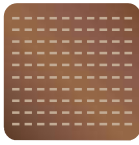
## REFLECT

*What must the Jewish people do when they reach their final destination, Jerusalem?*

## QUESTIONS TO ASK AT YOUR SEDER

- 1.** *Do you think Jews in Israel should still say this at the end of their Seder?*
- 2.** *What does Jerusalem have to do with the Exodus story and Seder night?*
- 3.** *Has anyone around your Seder table celebrated Pesah in Israel? Was it special or different?*





## EXPERIENCING THE SEDER

Close your eyes and imagine what celebrating the Pesah Seder in Jerusalem would be like with a rebuilt Temple.



## A STORY FOR THE NIGHT OF STORIES

It happened in Jerusalem, one Shabbat afternoon towards the end of the Gulf War. Our family had gone to the Holy City to find peace. Instead we found ourselves in the midst of war. Within weeks of our arrival it became clear that the Middle East was yet again about to be engulfed in conflict. Yet as we stepped out into the Jerusalem sunlight there was peace. The city breathed the stillness of Shabbat. The late afternoon sun was turning the houses of Jerusalem stone into burnished gold. As we looked across the valley to the walls of the Old City, we could understand why, long ago, people had called this the city of peace and why, even when it lay in ruins, Jews were convinced that the Divine Presence had never left Jerusalem.

We had been invited by our neighbours to *seuda shelishit*, the third Shabbat meal. When we arrived we discovered that they had also invited a group of Rumanian Jews who had recently come to make their home in Israel. They had made the journey as a group because they were a choir. In Rumania they had sung the songs of Jewish hope and longing. Now, in Jerusalem, they began to sing again, this time for all of us around the Shabbat table.

Then a rather moving thing happened. As the sounds of the choir reverberated around the alleyways of our quiet corner of Jerusalem, people from the neighbouring houses began to appear, drawn by the music. One by one they slipped in through the open door and stood around and, hesitantly at first, then with growing confidence, joined the singing. Here was an Israeli artist, there a new arrival from Russia, here an American investment banker, there a family from South Africa, and in the doorway a group of tourists who happened to be walking by

and had stopped to see what was happening and then found themselves caught up by the embrace of the atmosphere. No one spoke; no one wanted to break the mood. We continued to sing the songs of Shabbat afternoon. As the sun began to set behind the hills, I could feel the Divine Presence among us, joining our words to those of a hundred generations of Jews, uniting them in a vast choral symphony, the love song of a people for God, and I sensed something of the mystery and majesty of the Jewish people, and I knew that it was this that I had come to Jerusalem to find.

We had come together, each of us as the result of a long journey, in some cases physical, in others spiritual, and in many, both. We each had stories to tell of how we came to be in Jerusalem that afternoon. But just as our individual voices had united to sing the words of our ancestors' songs, so our stories were part of a larger story. Our personal routes were stages on the most remarkable journey ever undertaken by a people, spanning almost every country on the face of the earth, and four thousand years of time. If we had been able, then and there, to trace back the history of our parents and theirs across the generations, we would have been awestruck at its drama and scope. Was there anything that could remotely compare to the long Jewish journey to Jerusalem? Was this, I thought, not the most vivid testimony imaginable to the power and endurance of faith?

As the singing ended, and Shabbat drew to a close, I understood that to be a Jew is to join the journey of our people, the story of Pesah, and the long walk across centuries and continents from exile to homecoming. There is no story like it, and the journey is not yet complete.



## ḤAD GADYA חַד גַּדְיָא



### IN A NUTSHELL

This strange and haunting song seems simple on the surface but has hidden depths. Concluding one of Judaism's most important evenings of the year with a children's song tells us a lot about how important children are, especially on this night. The Jewish love of, and focus on, children means that we look forward to the future even more than we look back to the past. Just as we began the Seder with the questions of a child, so we end it with a nursery rhyme, reminding ourselves that what sustains a faith is not strength or power, but its ability to inspire successive generations of children to add their voices to their people's song.



### DEEP DIVE

The theme of *Ḥad Gadya* is the destructive cycle of vengeance and retaliation. In one interpretation, the young goat represents Israel. The "father" who bought it for two coins is God, who redeemed Israel from Egypt through His two representatives, Moshe and Aharon. The cat is Assyria, which conquered the northern kingdom of Israel. The dog is Babylonia, which defeated the southern kingdom of Yehuda. The stick is Persia, which replaced Babylonia as the imperial power in the sixth century BCE. The fire is the Greeks, who defeated the Persians in the days of Alexander the Great. The water is Rome, which superseded ancient Greece. The ox is Islam, which defeated the Romans in Palestine in the seventh century. The slaughterer is Christianity – specifically the Crusaders, who fought Islam in Palestine and elsewhere, murdering Jews on the way. The Angel of Death is the Ottoman Empire, which controlled Palestine until the First World War. The song concludes with an expression of faith that "this too shall pass" and the Jewish people will return to their land. So it has been in our days.

*"One Little Goat," The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

**"The theme of *Ḥad Gadya* is the destructive cycle of vengeance and retaliation."**

The song, disarming in its simplicity, teaches the great truth of Jewish hope: that though many nations (symbolised by the cat, the dog, and so on) attacked Israel (the goat), each in turn has vanished into oblivion. At the end of days God will vanquish the Angel of Death and inaugurate a world of life and peace, the two great Jewish loves. *Had Gadya* expresses the Jewish refusal to give up hope. Though history is full of man's inhumanity to man – dog bites cat, stick hits dog – that is not the final verse. The Haggada ends with the death of death in eternal life, a fitting end for the story of a people dedicated to Moshe's great command, "Choose life" (Devarim 30:19).

**Commentary on *Had Gadya*, *The Jonathan Sacks Haggada***

## REFLECT

*Living in the twenty-first century, do you feel this song and the message behind it are still relevant?*



## FURTHER THOUGHTS

Having earlier expressed the Jewish hope, "Next year in Jerusalem," we end our Seder night with the universal hope that the Angel of Death will one day be defeated by the long-overdue realisation that God is life; that worshipping God means sanctifying life; that God's greatest command is "Choose life" (Devarim 30:19); that we bring God into the world by reciting a blessing over life.

I find it almost unbearably moving that a people that has known so much suffering can summon the moral courage to end this evening of Jewish history on a supreme note of hope, and write it into the hearts of its children in the form of a nursery rhyme, a song. For what we give our children on this night of nights is something more and greater than the bread of oppression and the taste of Jewish tears. It is a faith that in this world, with all its violence and cruelty, we can create moments of redemption, signals of transcendence, acts of transfiguring grace. No people has risked and suffered more for a more slender hope, but no hope has lifted a people higher and led it, time and again, to greatness. So we end the night with a prayer and a conviction. The prayer: "God of life, help us win a victory over the forces of death." And the conviction? That by refusing to accept the world that is, together we can start to make the world that ought to be.

**"One Little Goat," *The Jonathan Sacks Haggada***

## REFLECT

*What is the main focus at the end of the Haggada, and how is it different from the beginning of the Haggada?*

## QUESTIONS TO ASK AT YOUR SEDER

- 1. Why do you think we end the Seder with a song for children?*
- 2. How do you think the message of the song is connected to Seder night?*
- 3. How does this song connect to our lives today?*



## EXPERIENCING THE SEDER

Ask every person at your Seder table in turn to share what their hopes for the next year are: hopes for themselves, for the Jewish people, and for the world.

## EDUCATIONAL COMPANION TO THE QUESTIONS

### HA LAḤMA ANYA

1. As Rabbi Sacks explains in his Haggada, the root of the word “*haggada*” means not only “to tell” but also “to bind,” and the Seder evening binds us together as a people. Jews from all walks of life and religious backgrounds will find themselves at a Seder table, and should be welcomed. In fact, the biblical command to sacrifice the Pesah lamb had to be done in a *havura*, which is more than one family coming together. The Exodus freedom is not just about leaving slavery, but also about journeying to the Promised Land and building a society based on the values of the Torah, where kindness to strangers will be a core value. This starts tonight.

2. The beauty of matza is that it can represent both. In fact, without slavery we would not appreciate our freedom, so both concepts can exist in this experience at the same time.

3. Although some families choose to have Seder night on their own (especially if they have young children, so the parents can focus on them) and this is perfectly okay, most people will find themselves at a Seder night with others from outside of their immediate family. People come together for this ritual. But more than this, it is a powerful thought that the entire Jewish people find themselves at a Seder table at the same time, and with some imagination, we can also feel connected to the generations that went before us who celebrated this festival in exactly the same way.

### MA NISHTANA

1. Learning through questions makes the educational process engaging and empowering for the learner.

2. Any question asked out of a desire for knowledge, without a secondary agenda, is a good question. There are no bad questions in this case.

3. Not all questions have answers, or at least answers that humans with finite and limited understanding can arrive at. Some questions only the infinite God can answer. But we don’t stop asking the questions. The questions are more important than the answers.

### AVADIM HAYINU

1. As a nation, we have a national memory and identity. So when the Haggada speaks of our experience in Egypt as slaves, while this refers to a specific generation and historical time period, as a nation we have that experience implanted in our national memory and identity. The Haggada encourages us to re-experience this every year on Seder night, and *Avadim Hayinu* reminds us that the experience does impact us directly, for if God had not redeemed us, we would be slaves ourselves to this day.

2. A good story told well can have a big impact. Stories can be powerful when they are experiential, in that the listener can imagine that they are living the

story, or at least empathise and identify with the characters and their experiences. The longer and more detailed the story is, the better the chances are that this will happen. So the Haggada encourages us to tell the story at length, and deeply engage with it, so we can experience the story as fully as possible.

3. Because Seder night is not about “learning” or “reading” or “understanding” but rather about experiencing and living the story, the Haggada tells us that even wise and experienced people who have done this many times before still have to retell the story. Each year it is a new experience.

### THE FOUR CHILDREN

1. Obviously all answers are legitimate, but in the ensuing discussion it is worth encouraging everyone to realise that each of us is all of the four children at different times in our lives (or even at different times of the day!).

2. All children are different and have different educational needs. Insightful parents and teachers realise this and try their hardest to cater to those individual needs.

3. Children are the main focus of the evening because this night more than any other is when we pass on our national heritage to the next generation. Even though the process of learning about and re-experiencing the Exodus is a task which takes a lifetime, it begins when we are children, laying the foundation of our Jewish identity and allowing the national narrative to become part of our very core. We take our cue from the Torah itself, which focuses on the questions children will ask about the Exodus.

### THE TEN PLAGUES

1. Each plague attacked a different aspect of the physical and spiritual needs of Egyptian society. The Egyptians could probably have managed without one or two or even more of the elements that were attacked, but all ten plagues together was a systematic destruction of their way of life.

2. Every plague was terrible and designed to attack a different aspect of Egyptian society and cause problems for the Egyptians. If you have to choose one ... it doesn't get more terrible than the final plague.

3. God could have taken the Israelites out of Egypt without any miracles or drama. But He chose to take the Egyptians on an educational journey, because the process was important. And even more important than the direct impact on the Egyptians was the impact on the world that was watching (or at least hearing reports) and the effect on the Israelites themselves. The plagues were as much for these other groups as they were for Pharaoh and the Egyptians, if not more so.

### DAYEINU

1. Full redemption from Egypt was the establishing of a sovereign nation in the Promised Land, with the Temple at the centre of its religious and political life. If God had stopped short of this at any of the previous stages, then it would not have been complete redemption.

2. The message behind *Dayeinu* is that each individual stage was miraculous and magnificent, and worthy of praise and gratitude.

3. While the physical redemption ended with the liberation from slavery and leaving the geographical boundaries of Egypt, and the spiritual redemption took place at the Giving of the Torah on Sinai, the full religio-social redemption was only achieved once the Jews entered the land of Israel and built a society there based on the Torah.

### PESAḤ, MATZA, MAROR

1. It is experiential. We don't just talk or learn or read about the story, we experience it through food and other rituals (such as leaning, pouring for each other, etc.) in order to relive the story.

2. Yes, all the *hagim* in Judaism do, although to a lesser extent than Pesah. For example, we sit in the sukka, and we stay up all night learning to prepare to receive the Torah on Shavuot.



3. While some of our educational institutions do practise experiential education (camp is the best example) and some of our schools find opportunities to also do so (such as by having *shabbatonim*), perhaps institutions of formal Jewish education could find more creative ways to incorporate the methodology of experiential education.

### HALLEL

1. It is hard to know where to start. But it is important to articulate all the things God did for the Israelites and how we benefit from these acts until this day. In the words of the Haggada itself, “And if the Holy One, blessed be He, had not brought our fathers out of Egypt – then we, and our children, and the children of our children, would still be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt.”

2. If one is comfortable finding words that articulate genuine emotion, then there is room for that in our prayers. But for many this is a challenge, and so we fall back on the exquisite words of our greatest poets and spiritual leaders, to give us the words we need. Our challenge is then to channel our emotions through these words.

3. For some, words capture the feelings and emotions that we need to express. But for others, only music can connect to our soul to do this sufficiently. While Rabbi Sacks was a masterful wordsmith and orator, he acknowledged that music can take us further along when it comes to expressing what is in our soul.

### NIRTZA

1. They should (and do) because this section refers to a rebuilt Jerusalem in Messianic times, when the Temple will exist (allowing us to celebrate Pesah as originally described in the Torah) in a redeemed world of peace. This has clearly not been achieved yet, and so it is appropriate to pray for this at the end of the Seder night, even while sitting in the beautiful rebuilt modern city of Jerusalem.

2. The Exodus is the beginning of a journey that we are still on. The destination of this journey is rebuilt Jerusalem in a redeemed world of peace. We hope that this can be achieved in time for next year’s Seder.

3. All the *hagim* are special and unique in Israel. There is something very powerful about celebrating a Jewish festival in a Jewish state. It is also easier to remember that we are closer to the final destination of the Jewish journey now than at any point in history, when sitting in the ancient Jewish homeland, rebuilt in modern times.

### ḤAD GADYA

1. The whole of the Seder is focused on children, and on transmitting our heritage to the next generation. Like the other songs at the conclusion of the Seder, this song is fun to sing, and it also contains a strong educational message. This is a great way to end the Seder night journey.

2. The message of *Ḥad Gadya* is that while it may seem during our history that there are powerful forces who will dominate and even destroy us, these forces come and go, and only God decides who survives in the long term. And if you consider Jewish history, it is clear that He has decided that the Jewish people have a destiny to fulfil, and therefore we have outlasted all these powerful nations (represented in the song by the animals, etc.) that have tried to destroy us.

3. Modern Jewish history reflects this same message. In the twentieth century, an enemy of the Jewish people came closer than ever before to wiping them out, yet not only did the Jewish people survive, but in fact just three years later returned to their ancestral homeland, re-established sovereignty there, and are now thriving like never before. We are part of a generation that is living the fulfilment of the message of this song.

## Ha Lachman Anya

Lesson Objectives	Big Ideas	Essential Questions
<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify this section in the Haggadah.</li> <li>2. Explain the connection between sharing and freedom.</li> <li>3. Explain how the matzah can be both the bread of slavery and of freedom.</li> </ol>	<p>“Sharing food is the first act through which slaves become free human beings.”</p> <p>We are truly free when we have the freedom to help others.</p>	<p>How are sharing and freedom connected?</p> <p>What does it mean to be “free”?</p> <p>How do items change and evolve over time to mean different things? In their groups, students will come up with a question about the quote using “who, what, why, where, when”</p>

Activity	Goal	Description	Time
Map Making	Set Induction Knowledge Retention	Students will begin their journey through the materials by creating a Seder Map on canva. The map will be a place to put pictures and/or notes, to help them remember their take-aways from each section.	30 minutes (or use a <a href="#">pre-made map</a> )
Announcement	Opening Question to be used for the Exit Ticket  Preparing to Check for Understanding	On the board, write an announcement to your class, asking them whether matzah is the bread of slavery or the bread of freedom. Have the students do a turn and talk to share their idea with a partner. Each student must have one reason for their answer.	5 minutes
Seder Text	Skill Building	Read the text from the Haggdah in chevrotah. Each chevrotah should raise at least one question about the text: “It surprises me that...” “I wonder about...” “It is strange that...”	5 minutes

Deep Dive	Content Acquisition	As a class, read the Deep Dive section. Use the “Say, Mean, Matter” protocol (what does the text say, what does that mean (translate it into kid language), why does it matter (how does it help us).	10 minutes
Small Group Discussion	Deeper Thinking	<p>Each group needs to focus on the quote “Sharing food is the first act through which slaves become free human beings.”</p> <p>Examples: Who should we share with when we are free? What does the act of sharing do for the person who has shared? Why does sharing make us free? Etc</p> <p>Students then trade papers. Each group answers another group’s questions, making sure to include 1 reason and 1 example.</p> <p>Give each group member a number. Choose a number randomly for who will present the group’s question and argument.</p>	15-20 minutes
Journal Activity	Personalization Check for Understanding	<p>What is an item that has transformed for you over time from meaning one thing to meaning another thing?</p> <p>OR</p> <p>When was a time that you shared something with someone because you had enough to give some away? How did you feel? How did the person you shared with feel?</p>	10 minutes

Exit Ticket	Check for Understanding	Before leaving, each student needs to answer the Opening Question on an index card, giving at least 1 reason for his or her opinion.	5 minutes
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## Had Gadya

Lesson Objectives	Big Ideas	Essential Questions
Students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain the historical timeline of Had Gadya.</li> <li>2. Explain the theological message in the ending of Had Gadya.</li> <li>3. Connect the relevance of Had Gadya to their lives.</li> </ol>	“God of life, help us win a victory over the forces of death’... by refusing to accept the world that is, together we can start to make the world that ought to be.”	How do we win a victory over the forces of death and create the world that ought to be?  How can we gather strength from the history preserved in Had Gadya  How does the theme of heroes connect to this section of the seder?

Activity	Goal	Description	Time
Where are the children?  In A Nutshell	Set Induction	Have students create a list of all of the different ways that the seder is designed to engage children.  Then, read the In A Nutshell section.	5 minutes
Timeline	Knowledge Acquisition	Have the students read the Deep Dive section. Create a visual timeline with an image and dates for each of the empires represented in Had Gadya. Add the corresponding image from the song so that each student has a timeline that also serves as “lyrics” for the song!	20 minutes
Post October 7	Personal Connection	The Big Idea for this section connects intimately with our post October 7 world. I can imagine an extremely powerful conversation around the reflection question: Living in the 21st century, do you feel this song and the message behind it are still relevant?	

		<p>I could also imagine an extremely poignant discussion around what it means to fight for life and to work to create the world as it ought to be in such dark and frustrating times.</p> <p>Themes from <i>Dignity of Difference</i> and <i>Not In God's Name</i> could help facilitate the conversation, should the students begin to wrestle with questions around how to go forward when winning a victory over the forces of death and creating a world that "ought to be" seem to be in conflict with one another. In other words, the balance between defending ourselves, supporting others and preserving life whenever possible, even when it is the life of our enemy</p>	
Depth & Complexity Frame	Check for Understanding	<a href="#">Depth &amp; Complexity Frame</a>	40 minutes
Depth & Complexity Choice Board	Check for Understanding	<a href="#">Depth &amp; Complexity Choice Board</a>	40 minutes

## Hallel

Lesson Objectives	Big Ideas	Essential Questions
Students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain Hallel.</li> <li>2. Explain how songs can enhance someone's connection to an experience.</li> <li>3. Express their personal connection to seder through a playlist or custom instrument.</li> </ol>	"Music is the language of the soul."	Why do we praise HaShem by singing Hallel during our seder?  How can music enhance our connection to the seder?

Activity	Goal	Description	Time
Read Hallel	Skill Building	Read the Hallel text. What are the themes in how Hallel is praising HaShem?	10 minutes
Chevrutah - Deep Dive and Further Thoughts	Deeper Thinking	Put the students into Chevrutah. Have one partner read Deep Dive and one partner read Further Thoughts. Each partner needs to teach the other the main points of the section.  Note: You could also put students into chevrutah where they are both reading the same text, and then split those chevrutot up and form new chevrutot where one student reads one text and the other student reads the other text. This method allows you to support the students' learning if understanding Deep Dive and Further Thoughts independently is too challenging.	10-15 minutes
A Story for the Night of Stories	Personalization	Read the A Story for the Night of Stories section. Using craft supplies, have students make musical instruments for their own sedarim. Depending on the	30 minutes

		observance customs of the students, they could also create seder playlists to bring music to their seder experience. This could be a good opportunity to bring in a music or art teacher!	
Exit Ticket	Check for Understanding	Have the students answer the following question before they leave the classroom: Do you connect more to an experience when you are using words/reading or when you are singing/listening to music? Why - give 1 reason and 1 example to support your answer.	10 minutes

## Ma Nishtanah

Lesson Objectives	Big Ideas	Essential Questions
Students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify this section of the Hagaddah.</li> <li>2. Give examples of different types of new questions that we can ask about the Pesach Seder.</li> <li>3. Explain what makes a “good” question.</li> </ol>	“We ask not because we doubt, but because we believe.”	How does asking questions connect us to what we are learning or doing?  How do questions change and evolve over time?

Activity	Goal	Description	Time
Ada Twist Scientist	Set Induction	Watch a YouTube read aloud of Ada Twist Scientist	7 minutes
Opening Question	Set Induction	If Ada Twist was at a Pesach Seder, what are 3 questions she might ask?	5 minutes
Read the Four Questions	Skill Building	Read through the four questions. Ask the students, are these four questions or 1 question with 4 answers?  A key idea here is that while each of the 4 questions answers Ma Nishtanah, the answers are incomplete without the explanation that we will receive.	10 minutes
Further Thoughts	Deeper Thinking	Read the “Further Thoughts” section.	5 minutes
Types of Questions	Skill Building	Hang anchor charts up around the room with the different types of questions listed below (or ones of your choosing). Make sure to include examples.	10 minutes



		Have kids do a gallery walk, where they ask questions about Pesach. They have to write their question in the format listed on the anchor chart.	
Good Questions vs. Bad Questions	Skill Building Deeper Thinking	<p>What makes a good question?</p> <p>You could do this as a class discussion, or break into small groups/chevrutah and have the students imagine that an alien comes to school and doesn't know what a question is.</p> <p>The goal is to define characteristics of a good question.</p> <p>Either at the end of the discussion, or at the end of sharing, pose the question "are there any bad questions?"</p>	10 minutes
Journal	Personalization Check for Understanding	Go back and Read the In A Nutshell section. If you could add one question to the Ma Nishtanah that is relevant today, but would not have been relevant 100 years ago, what would you ask?	10 minutes

## Types of Questions

### 1. Yes/No Questions

- \* Are you excited for summer vacation?
- \* Do penguins live in the Arctic?

### 2. Multiple Choice Questions

- \* What is the capital of France?
  - a) London
  - b) Berlin
  - c) Paris
  - d) Rome

### **3. Open-Ended Questions**

- \* What do you think will happen in the next chapter of the book?
- \* How would you solve the problem of plastic pollution in oceans?

### **4. "Wh" Questions**

- \* Who was the first president of the United States?
- \* What causes earthquakes?
- \* When did World War II end?
- \* Where is the Great Barrier Reef located?
- \* Why do leaves change color in autumn?
- \* How do plants make their own food?

### **5. Comparison Questions**

- \* What are the differences between a frog and a toad?
- \* How is middle school different from elementary school?

### **6. Hypothetical Questions**

- \* What would you do if you found a magic wand?
- \* How might life be different if humans could fly?

### **7. Clarifying Questions**

- \* Can you explain what you mean by "photosynthesis"?
- \* Could you give an example of a mammal that lays eggs?

### **8. Sequencing Questions**

- \* What are the steps to solve this math problem?

\* In what order do the planets appear as you move away from the sun?

Remember, asking different types of questions can help you learn and understand things better!

## Nirtzah

Lesson Objectives	Big Ideas	Essential Questions
<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain the physical and metaphorical connection to Jerusalem as the final destination to our Pesach seder.</li> <li>2. Students will be able to explain how they can be partners with God in creating "Jerusalem" in its metaphorical sense.</li> </ol>	<p>"So Jerusalem became a symbol of what the Jews were summoned to build, a city of righteousness worthy of being a home for the Divine Presence."</p>	<p>Is Jerusalem a physical place, or a metaphorical place as well?</p> <p>Can you be physically in Jerusalem, but not metaphorically?</p> <p>Why do we end our seder journey with the desire for another journey?</p> <p>How is journeying essential to the Jewish people? Are we on a never ending journey?</p>

Activity	Goal	Description	Time
Opening Question	Set Induction	<p>Have the students answer the following question on a notecard. Pull the notecards out of a "hat" until you get a correct answer. That student gets a prize.</p> <p>When are the two times a year that we say "Leshana habaa biYerushalayim"?</p>	5 minutes
Further Thoughts	Deeper Thinking	Read the Further Thoughts section.	5 minutes
Building a City	Personalization Check for Understanding	<p>Put students into teams to build their "Jerusalem" based off of the message in the Further Thoughts section: Its stones would be good deeds, and its mortar, relationships of generosity and trust."</p> <p>What buildings need to be in "Jerusalem" to uphold these</p>	30 minutes

		<p>ideals? What values need to be a part of the city to ensure these ideals?</p> <p>Consider bringing in legos or other building material so that students can create 3D cities that demonstrate their understanding of what is needed to build a city in partnership with God.</p>	
Journal	Check for Understanding	<p>Have students respond to the following question in their journals. For both questions, encourage the students to wrestle with the idea of whether or not Jerusalem is just a physical place, or if it is metaphorical as well. Can you be physically in Jerusalem, but not metaphorically?</p> <p>Do you think Jews in Israel should still say this at the end of their seder? Why or why not?</p> <p>What must the Jewish people do when they reach their final destination, Jerusalem?</p>	15 minutes



Objective: Create classroom resources for middle school students (primarily supplemental school).

Focus: Essential Questions as opposed to skills acquisition

10 Units, lesson plans, slides

Rabbi Rose will send the book format PDF for Pesach - can start using what he sent already

# CEREMONY & CELEBRATION FAMILY EDITION

Based on the teachings and writings of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks זצ"ל



## PESACH

## Seder Night Companion

Seder night is a highlight of the Jewish calendar for parents and children alike. It is the night that revolves around children, and parents are reminded of the importance of their role as educators. (Thankfully the Haggadah gives them lots of tools and tips!)

Rabbi Sacks זצ"ל explains that on the eve of the original Pesach, at the very moment when a new chapter in the life of the Jewish people began, we found out what it means to be a Jew: "About to gain their freedom, the Israelites were told that they had to become a nation of educators" (*Radical Then, Radical Now*, p. 32).

Being a Jew means being both a student and an educator, and Seder night is our opportunity to focus on both these roles.

This educational companion to Seder night will give you some ideas and thoughts on several of the core pages from the Haggadah and how Rabbi Sacks understands them. As well as educational insights, like all *Ceremony & Celebration: Family Editions*, this Pesach instalment also includes activities, stories, and reflection questions in each section, designed to engage all the participants around your Seder table, young and old alike.

You will notice many extracts from Rabbi Sacks' writings, all sourced from *The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*, published by Koren. This guide is designed to be used in conjunction with a Haggadah; it is not a replacement for one.



## HA LACHMA ANYA



### IN A NUTSHELL

It is a mitzvah to tell the story of the Exodus on Seder night. We call this mitzvah *maggid*, and it is the key to Seder night. This is why the Haggadah begins with *Ha Lachma Anya*, which is an invitation to others to join our Seder and tell the story with us. This paragraph is written in Aramaic (instead of Hebrew) because this was the spoken language at the time the Haggadah was written. To make it a genuine invitation, it is important that it is stated in a language that is understood.



### DEEP DIVE

If we examine the wording of the invitation, we notice something strange: “This is the bread of

oppression our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come in and eat.”

What sort of hosts offer the hungry a taste of suffering? This may seem odd, but in fact it is a profound insight into the nature of slavery and freedom. Matzah represents **two** things: it is both the food of slaves, and also the bread eaten by the Israelites as they left Egypt in liberty. What transforms the bread of oppression into the bread of freedom is *the willingness to share it with others*.

Sharing food is the first act through which slaves become free human beings. Someone who fears tomorrow does not offer their bread to others. But those who are willing to divide their food with others have already shown themselves capable of fellowship and faith, the two things from which hope is born. That is why we begin the

Seder by inviting guests to join us. Bread shared is no longer the bread of oppression. By reaching out to others, by giving help to the needy and companionship to those who are alone, we bring freedom into the world, and with freedom, God.

Commentary on ‘This is the Bread of Affliction’,

*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

**What can you share in your life to show you are truly free?**



### FURTHER THOUGHTS

*Ha Lachma Anya* is the beginning of the Seder narrative, known as *Maggid*. The word *maggid* has the same root letters as the word *haggadah*, meaning relate, recount, declare, or proclaim. The story of the Exodus is known as the Haggadah because of the verse “You shall







tell (*vehigadeta*) your child on that day, ‘[I do this] because of what the Lord did for me when I went out of Egypt’” (Shemot 13:8). However, the word *haggadah* derives from a verb that also means bind, join, connect. The story of the Exodus is more than a recounting (*sipur*) of things that happened long ago. It binds the present to the past and future. It connects one generation to the next. It joins us to our children. Jewish continuity means that each successive generation commits itself to continuing the story. Our past lives on in us.

Commentary on ‘This is the Bread of Affliction’,  
*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

**Do you feel more connected to your parents and grandparents when you sit at the Seder table? If so, why?**



### QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT AND ASK AT YOUR SEDER

1. Why is it important to share your Seder table with others from outside of your close family?
2. Does matzah represent freedom or slavery to you?
3. How does the Seder night connect you to other Jews?



### EXPERIENCING THE SEDER

If you have guests at your Seder table who are not from your immediate family, turn to them now and make sure they feel comfortable and welcome. Are they sitting comfortably? Do they know the names of everyone around the table?



### A STORY FOR THE NIGHT OF STORIES

Primo Levi survived the horrors of Auschwitz. In his book, *If This is a Man*, he describes his experiences there. According to Levi, the worst time of all was when the Nazis left the concentration camp in January 1945, fearing the Russian advance. All prisoners who could walk were taken with them on the brutal “Death Marches.” The only people left in the camp were those too ill to move. For ten days they were left alone with only scraps of food and fuel. Levi describes how he worked to light a fire and bring some warmth to his fellow prisoners, many of them dying. He then writes:

When the broken window was repaired and the stove began to spread its heat, something

seemed to relax in everyone, and at that moment Towarowski (a Franco-Pole of twenty-three, typhus) proposed to the others that each of them offer a slice of bread to us three who had been working. And so it was agreed.

Only a day before, a similar event would have been inconceivable. The law of the Lager [concentration camps] said: “eat your own bread, and if you can, that of your neighbour,” and left no room for gratitude. It really meant that the law of the Lager was dead.

It was the first human gesture that occurred among us. I believe that that moment can be dated as the beginning of the change by which we who had not died slowly changed from *Haftlinge* [prisoners] to men again.



### A QUIZ FOR THE NIGHT OF QUESTIONS

#### PEOPLE

1. Who is the first person to be mentioned in the Haggadah (in the *Maggid* section)?
2. Who is the second?
3. Who is not mentioned anywhere in the Haggadah (even though he is a key part of the story)?
4. Who was at the famous Seder night in B’nei Brak?
5. Who grouped the Ten Plagues into groups of three?
6. Can you name the three Rabbis who argued about how many plagues there really were?
7. Who gave us the minimalistic way to fulfil the mitzvah of telling the story of Pesach?
8. Whose sandwich do we eat on Seder night?
9. Who is the surprise guest at the Seder?
10. Who bought the little goat?

## MA NISHTANAH



### IN A NUTSHELL

There are four places in the Torah where it speaks of children asking questions about Pesach – and each of these four verses are the sources for the four children’s questions (see section on The Four Children). This inspired a tradition that the story of the Exodus from Egypt must be told, wherever possible, in response to the questions asked by children, and this is where the idea for the four questions in *Ma Nishtanah* comes from. The origin of the text is the Mishnah (Pesachim 10:4) although the words have changed slightly over time to reflect our changing practices (for instance, since the destruction of the Temple, we can no longer bring the Korban, so the fifth question (on serving roast meat) is no longer included in *Ma Nishtanah*).



### DEEP DIVE

The Torah has two words for inheritance, *yerushah* and *nachalah*, and they represent the two different ways in which a heritage is passed on across the generations. The word *nachalah* comes from the root *nachal*, which also means ‘river’. It represents an inheritance that is merely handed down, without any work on the part of the recipient, as water flows in a river. *Yerushah*, by contrast, means active inheritance. R. Shimshon Raphael Hirsch pointed out that *lareshet*, the verbal form of *yerushah*, sometimes means ‘to conquer’ or ‘to capture’. It means actively taking hold of what one has been promised. An inheritance for which one has worked is always more secure than one for which one has not. That is why Judaism encourages children to ask questions. When a

child asks, they have already begun the work of preparing to receive. Torah is a *yerushah*, not a *nachalah*. It needs work on behalf of the child if it is to be passed on across the generations.

Commentary on Ma Nishtanah,  
*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

**How does *Ma Nishtanah* and the role of children asking questions affect your experience of the Seder?**



### FURTHER THOUGHTS

Religious faith has often been seen as naive, blind, accepting. That is not the Jewish way. Judaism is not the suspension of critical intelligence. To the contrary: asking a question is itself a profound expression of faith in the intelligibility of the universe and the meaningfulness of human life. To ask is to believe that somewhere there is an answer. The fact that throughout history people have devoted their lives to extending the frontiers of knowledge is a compel-

ling testimony to the restlessness of the human spirit and its constant desire to go further, higher, deeper. Far from faith excluding questions, questions testify to faith – that history is not random, that the universe is not impervious to our understanding, that what happens to us is not blind chance. We ask not because we doubt, but because we believe.

The Art of Asking Questions,  
*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

**How is asking questions “an expression of faith”? Doesn’t it show a lack of faith?**



### QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT AND ASK AT YOUR SEDER

1. Why do you think we encourage children to ask questions on Seder night?
2. Are there any bad questions?
3. Do all questions have answers? What do we do if no one we know has the answer to a question?



### A STORY FOR THE NIGHT OF STORIES

Isidor Rabi won the Nobel Prize in physics in 1944. When he was asked why he became a scientist, he replied: “My mother made me a scientist without ever intending to. Every other Jewish mother in Brooklyn would ask her child after school: ‘So? Did you learn anything today?’ But not my mother. ‘Izzy,’ she would say, ‘Did you ask a good question today?’ Asking good questions made me a scientist.”

**Do you get more invested in learning when you are encouraged to ask questions?**





### IN A NUTSHELL

This is the start of the act of *Maggid* – the actual telling of the story of the Exodus. It is also the start of the response to the questions asked in the *Ma Nishtanah*. Before we delve into the depths of the story of the Exodus itself, the Haggadah makes sure we realise how we are personally affected by this historical event. It reminds us that if not for the Exodus, we would still be slaves in Egypt! This passage also explains that the mitzvah of telling the story of Exodus is for everybody, (even the old and wise) and the story should be told at length to make it impactful.



### DEEP DIVE

One of the rules of telling the story on Pesach is that each person must feel as if they had personally left Egypt. History becomes memory. The past becomes the present. At this stage, therefore, we speak of the continuing consequences of the past. Had the Exodus not happened, and the Israelites stayed in Egypt, none of the subsequent

events of Jewish history would have occurred. What and where we are now is the result of what happened then.

There is a fundamental difference between *knowing* and *telling* the story. We do not tell the narrative of the Exodus to know what happened in the past. We do so because each telling engraves that event more thoroughly in our memories, and because each year adds its own insights and interpretations. Judaism is a constant dialogue between past and present, and since the present always changes, there is always a new juxtaposition, a new facet of the story. The Sages said, ‘There is no house of study without *chiddush*, some new interpretation.’ The story of Pesach never grows old, because the struggle for freedom never ends, and therefore each generation adds its own commentary to the old–new story.

Commentary on Avadim Hayinu,  
*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

**What new aspect of the story, or the Haggadah, have you discovered this year? Share it with everyone at your Seder.**



### FURTHER THOUGHTS

To be a Jew is to know that over and above history is the task of memory. As Jacob Neusner eloquently wrote: “Civilisation hangs suspended, from generation to generation, by the gossamer strand of memory. If only one cohort of mothers and fathers fails to convey to its children what it has learnt from its parents, then the great chain of learning and wisdom snaps. If the guardians of human knowledge stumble only one time, in their fall collapses the whole edifice of knowledge and understanding” (Neusner on Judaism: Religion and Theology). More than

any other faith, Judaism made this a matter of religious obligation. Pesach is where the past does not die, but lives in the chapter we write in our own lives, and in the story we tell our children.

History and Memory,  
*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

**Why do you think education has become so important in Judaism, and what impact has that had on Jewish history?**



### QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT AND ASK AT YOUR SEDER

1. Why does the Haggadah say, “We were slaves in Egypt”? Were you a slave in Egypt?
2. Do you like long stories? Why do you think the Haggadah tells us that the longer we make this story, the better?
3. Why does the Haggadah have to point out that old and wise people still have to do this mitzvah?



### EXPERIENCING THE SEDER

On Seder night we try to feel as if we ourselves are being freed from slavery in Egypt. During a point in the evening when the younger people seem less engaged (perhaps after we read of the Four Children, until it’s time for the Ten Plagues) send them away from the table to find costumes and prepare their own play of the Exodus from Egypt.

They’ll have to work quickly! To make it more challenging, you could ask the adults to choose a new genre for the play, such as adventure, science-fiction, or fantasy. The play can then be performed later on, during the meal.



## THE FOUR CHILDREN



### IN A NUTSHELL

The section of the Four Children in the Haggadah is based on the four different verses in the Torah which describe children asking their parents about the story of the Exodus. Rather than seeing these as just four examples of asking the same question, the Rabbis noticed four distinctive personalities from the different ways the verses are phrased – and this inspired the idea for four kinds of children.



### DEEP DIVE

The four children are a vignette of the Jewish people.

One asks because he wants to hear the answer. A second asks because he does *not* want to hear the answer. A third asks because he does not understand. The fourth does not ask because he doesn't understand that he doesn't

understand. Ours has never been a monolithic people.

Yet there is a message of hope in this family portrait. Though they disagree, they sit around the same table, telling the same story. Though they differ, they stay together. They are part of a single family. Even the rebel is there, although part of him does not want to be. This, too, is who we are.

The Jewish people is an extended family. We argue, we differ, there are times when we are deeply divided. Yet we are part of the same story. We share the same memories. At difficult times we can count on one another. We feel one another's pain. Out of this multiplicity of voices comes something none of us could achieve alone.

Sitting next to the wise child, the rebel is not fated to remain a rebel. Sitting next to the rebel, the wise child may share his wisdom rather than keep it to himself. The one who cannot ask will, in time, learn how. The simple child will learn complexity. The wise child

will learn simplicity. Each draws strength from the others, as we all draw strength from belonging to a people.

Commentary on The Four Children, *The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

**Why do you think Jews argue so much with each other? Is this a strength or a weakness?**



### FURTHER THOUGHTS

Through the Haggadah, more than a hundred generations of Jews have handed on their story to their children.

The word “*haggadah*” means “relate,” “tell,” “expound.” But it comes from another Hebrew root, [a-g-d] that means “bind”, “join”, “connect”. By reciting the Haggadah, Jews give their children a sense of connectedness to Jews throughout the world and to the Jewish people through time. It joins them to a past and future, a history and destiny, and makes them





characters in its drama. Every other nation known to humankind has been united because its members lived in the same place, spoke the same language, were part of the same culture. Jews alone, dispersed across continents, speaking different languages and participating in different cultures, have been bound together by a narrative, the Pesach narrative, which they tell in the same way on the same night. More than the Haggadah is the story of a people, Jews are the people of a story.

The Story of Stories,  
*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

**How can a story link us to Jews across generations and across geography?**



### QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT AND ASK AT YOUR SEDER

1. Which of the four children are you most like (you can answer more than one)?
2. What do you see as the message of including four different

children in the Haggadah? What advice would you give to a teacher or parent who has many different types of children to teach?

3. Why do you think that children are the central focus of such an important event as Seder night?



### A STORY FOR THE NIGHT OF STORIES

When I was a baby I wouldn't talk. I was the youngest of five children, so I was surrounded by people who doted on me and gave me whatever I wanted. All I had to do was make a noise and point to get what I wanted. So it took me much longer to learn to talk. It worried my parents, and they took me to specialist doctors to make sure there was no deeper cause behind my late development.

When I started going to school, I couldn't sit still and focus for a minute. My mind would wander and then my body would wander,

and next thing I knew I was being told off, or worse, I would be sent to the Headteacher's office. I wasn't trying to be mischievous or rude. I just couldn't sit in one place for long.

When I was a teenager I got angry. Angry about all the injustices in the world, about the way the government didn't care enough about the environment, and angry that the school administration didn't do enough to make everyone feel valued and included in our school. I organised all sorts of demonstrations and one day I even led the students in a strike. The school didn't like that one bit, and I almost got expelled for it!

Then I went to university, and I took my passion for making a difference in the world and channelled it into my studies. Today I am a lawyer who represents the under-privileged and disadvantaged in society, and my dream is to one day become a judge.

**Do you see any of the four children in my story? Do you see any of them in your own story?**



## THE TEN PLAGUES



## IN A NUTSHELL

One of the most exciting and colourful parts of the story of the Exodus is the Ten Plagues. There is a custom to spill a drop of wine as we say the name of each plague. There are many reasons given for this, but the most beautiful is that of Abudraham, (a 14th century Rabbi from Spain who is best known for his commentary on the siddur), who interprets it in accordance with the verse, “Do not rejoice when your enemy falls” (Proverbs 24:17). We give thanks for the miraculous plagues which brought our ancestors out of Egypt and granted them freedom, but at the same time, we also shed a symbolic tear for those who suffered.



## DEEP DIVE

The plagues occupy the borderline, so common to the Torah, between the natural and the supernatural. Commentators have been divided between those who emphasise their miraculous character and others who have sought to provide a scientific account of the disasters in terms of a series of chain reactions to an initial ecological disaster, possibly the appearance of algae in the Nile, which turned the water red and caused the fish to die. Which view speaks more compellingly to us will depend on whether we understand the word “miracle” as a suspension of the laws of nature, or an event that occurs within nature but that, by happening when and to whom it does, reveals a providential pattern in history.

Commentary to The Ten Plagues,  
*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

**Do you think the plagues were from natural causes or supernatural intervention? Do you think they are any less impressive if God performed them through nature?**



## FURTHER THOUGHTS

The plague of lice is a sardonic comment on the monumental scale of Egyptian architecture. The Egyptians believed the gods were to be found in things that are big. God shows them His Presence in something so small as to be almost invisible. The irony recurs in the division of the Red Sea, where Pharaoh’s greatest military asset, the chariots, prove to be his undoing, as their wheels sink into the mud. The key to the plagues – as in God’s covenant with Noach – is the principle of reciprocity: ‘As you do, so shall you be done to.’ Those who harm others will themselves be harmed. Nations that begin by depriving others of their liberty in the end destroy themselves. Historically, this was so. Egypt never again recovered the greatness it had enjoyed in the earlier part of Ramses II’s rule.

Commentary on The Ten Plagues,  
*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

**What is the message behind the plague of lice? How can we apply this lesson to our own lives?**



## QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT AND ASK AT YOUR SEDER

1. Why do you think God chose these particular plagues?
2. Which do you think was the worst of the Ten Plagues?
3. Who were the plagues really for?



## EXPERIENCING THE SEDER

How many of the plagues can you simulate at your Seder night?

Here are a few ideas (some may require preparation in the days before Seder night):

1. Blood: Spill a little ‘blood’ onto everyone’s plate, and /or (temporarily) confiscate all the bottles/ jugs of water from the table.
2. Frogs: Get the children to jump around the table making “ribbit” frog noises.
3. Lice: Ask the children to check everyone’s hair for lice. (If you plan this ahead of time, you could even plant some fake lice to find).
4. Wild animals: Collect all the stuffed animals in the house and place them around the table.
5. Pestilence: Throw all of the stuffed animals on the floor and then bury them under the table.
6. Boils: Using forks, give all your guests boils (be gentle!).
7. Hail: Have a snowball/hail fight with cotton balls, pillows, pre-prepared hail made from paper, or other soft materials.
8. Locusts: Have the children lead everyone in making a humming, buzzing noise, and then grow louder, like a swarm of locusts about to descend.
9. Darkness: Blindfold your guests (using scarves) and then try to play a game or continue with a section of the Haggadah.
10. The striking down of the firstborn: Gather all the first-born children together and take them away.



## DAYEINU



### IN A NUTSHELL

*Dayeinu* is a song which explores the kindnesses of God to His people on the long journey from slavery to freedom. There are fifteen stages described between leaving Egypt, reaching the Promised Land, and building the Temple in Jerusalem. This song is a *tikkun*, a “putting-right”, for the ingratitude of the Israelites in the Wilderness. At almost every stage of their journey they complained: about the water, the food, the difficulties of travelling, the challenge of conquering the land. It is as if we are saying where they complained, let us give thanks. Each stage was a miracle. And each miracle would have been enough to convince us that Hashem is behind all the events in our history.



### DEEP DIVE

Why is Shabbat specifically mentioned in *Dayeinu*?

Shabbat is the ultimate expression of a free society, the antithesis of slavery in Egypt. On this day, all relationships of dominance and subordination are suspended. We may not work, or command others to work, “so that your manservant and maidservant may rest as you do” (Devarim 5:15). At many times in history, people have dreamed of an ideal world. The name given to such visions is “utopia” meaning “no place”, because at no time or place have these dreams been realised on a society-wide basis. Shabbat is the sole successful utopian experiment in history. It is based on the simple idea that utopia (in Judaism, the messianic age) is not solely in the future. It is something we can experience in the midst of time, one day in seven. Shabbat became the weekly rehearsal of an ideal world, one

not yet reached but still lived as a goal, of a world at peace with itself, recognising the createdness, and thus the integrity, of all people and all forms of life. If Egypt meant slavery, Shabbat is collective freedom, a “foretaste of the World to Come.”

Commentary on *Dayeinu*,  
*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

**Seder night is when we experience the Exodus, and Shabbat is when we experience freedom and utopia. Why do you think we need regular reminders of what freedom and utopia feel like?**



### FURTHER THOUGHTS

The Exodus was more than an event in the past. It was a precursor of redemption in the future. Israel, as Moshe warned, would not dwell securely in its land. It would forget its moral and spiritual vocation. It would be attracted to the pagan culture of its neighbours. By so doing it would lose its reason for existence and find itself unable, at times of crisis, to summon the shared vision and collective energy needed to prevail against neighbouring imperial powers. It would



Illustration by Rinat Gilboa, taken from *The Koren Youth Haggada*  
(USED WITH PERMISSION OF KOREN PUBLISHERS JERUSALEM LTD.)

suffer defeat and exile. But despair would never prevail. In the past, God had brought His people from slavery to freedom and from exile to the land, and therefore He would do so again. The Jewish people never completely lost faith in God, because its Prophets knew that God would never completely lose faith in His people. History intimated destiny. What happened once would happen again. That is what lies behind the words with which the Haggadah begins: “Now we are here; next year in the land of Israel. Now – slaves; next year we shall be free.” The Jewish people kept the vision alive. It is not too much to say that the vision kept the Jewish people alive...

That is what Pesach was during more than eighteen centuries of exile and dispersion: a seed planted in Jewish memory, waiting to be activated, to grow. Without it, Jews would certainly have disappeared. Lacking hope of return – hope tempered by faith into a certainty-like steel – they would have made their peace with their condition, merged into their surrounding societies and ambient cultures, and vanished, like every other culture deprived of a home. Pesach, like a seed frozen in suspended animation, contained the latent energy that led Jews in the twentieth century to create the

single most remarkable accomplishment in the modern world, the rebirth of Israel, the land, the state, the nation, and the people. Michah’s vision, and Yechezkel’s, and Moshe’s, came true.

Pesach and the Rebirth of Israel,  
*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

**Rabbi Sacks connects the Exodus to the modern return to Zion. How is this also connected to the poem *Dayeinu*?**



### QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT AND ASK AT YOUR SEDER

1. Would it really have been “enough” if God had stopped at any of these stages?
2. What do you see as the message behind listing the 15 stages in *Dayeinu*?
3. Where do you think the story of the Exodus actually ends?



### A STORY FOR THE NIGHT OF STORIES

Natan Sharansky is a hero of the Jewish people. Growing up in the Soviet Union, when it was almost impossible to live a Jewish life, he knew the term “Jew” only as

something to hide. But then in 1967, following Israel’s dramatic victory in the Six-Day War, Jews began to reconnect to their ancestral faith with pride. Many began to dream of returning to their homeland but were prevented by the Soviet authorities. They became known as *refuseniks*. Sharansky, who was arrested at the age of 29 for his Zionist activities, was arguably the most famous *refusenik*, with thousands of people campaigning for his release from the Soviet Gulag prison system in Siberia. He gained his freedom in 1986 and realised his lifelong dream to immigrate to the State of Israel.

At the beginning of the coronavirus global pandemic, when many Jews around the world were facing the notion of a Pesach Seder without their family around the table for the first time, he was interviewed about his experience of Pesach in the Gulag. The Soviet authorities knew the importance of Seder night, and cruelly ensured that Sharansky was in solitary confinement, where he was served nothing but three pieces of dry bread and three cups of water per day.

“I decided my three cups of water would be my wine and my three pieces of dry bread would be my matzah,” Sharansky recalled. “And my salt would be my maror. I found out that this is the great place to feel the unique struggle of the Jewish people – to be connected with every Jew in the world, and to enjoy thinking that this year we are slaves and next year we [will be] free people in Jerusalem.”

Sharansky concluded his interview by emphasising that even if we are not with our family on Seder night, we are still connected, for we are one big family, a people with a shared history, a shared future and a very special role in this world.

**Will it be easier or harder for you to relate to the themes of Pesach during this year’s Seder, compared to other years?**

Prime Minister Shimon Peres welcomes Natan Sharansky at Ben-Gurion Airport following his release in 1986  
(PHOTO: NATI HARNIK, GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE)





## PESACH, MATZAH, AND MAROR



### IN A NUTSHELL

These are the three mitzvot on Seder night which involve eating. Although we no longer eat the *Korban Pesach*, back when there was a Beit HaMikdash this was a biblical command. Normally, mitzvot are fulfilled by performing the required act with *kavanah*, with the intention of observing the commandment. To fulfil the duty of succah, for example, we do not have to tell the story of the wandering of the Israelite in the desert. We just have to plan to sit in the succah, and then we sit and say the *brachah* there. However, in the case of Pesach two commands

coincide: the first, to eat the festive meal; the second, to tell the story. Rabban Gamliel argues that the two are connected. The story explains the food; the food allows us to relive the story.

The Torah states: “When you enter the land which the Lord shall give you as He promised, you shall observe this rite. And if your children should ask you, ‘What is this service you observe?’ you shall say, ‘It is a Pesach offering to the Lord, for He passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt while He struck down the Egyptians, but saved those in our homes’” (Ex. 12:25–27). Thus, from the very outset there is an

intrinsic link between eating, asking, and explaining, and it is this connection on which Rabban Gamliel bases his view that all three elements of the Pesach meal must be explained.

Commentary on Pesach, Matzah, and Bitter Herbs,  
*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*



### DEEP DIVE

The Pesach lamb symbolises freedom. The bitter herbs (*maror*) represent slavery. And the matzah combines both. This was the bread the Israelites ate in Egypt as slaves. It was also the bread they ate when

leaving Egypt as free people. Why do the symbols of freedom precede the bitter herbs of slavery? Surely slavery preceded freedom? The chassidic masters explained the answer: only to a free human being does slavery taste bitter. Had the Israelites forgotten freedom, they would have grown used to slavery. "The worst exile is to forget you are in exile."

Commentary on Pesach, Matzah, and Bitter Herbs,  
*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

**Why is it important to remember and experience both slavery and freedom on this night?**



### FURTHER THOUGHTS

In the Torah, the festival of Pesach is more often called by different names.

It is consistently described as *Chag haMatzot*, which translates as "The Festival of Unleavened Bread". The name *Chag haPesach*, in the Torah, applies specifically to the fourteenth of Nissan, the day prior to the Seder, when the Paschal sacrifice was brought.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev gave a beautiful explanation for this dual terminology. The name Pesach signifies the greatness of God, who "passed over" the houses

of the Israelites. The name *Chag haMatzot* suggests the greatness of the Israelites, who followed God into the desert without any provisions.

In the Torah, God calls the festival *Chag haMatzot* in praise of Israel. The Jewish people, though, calls the festival Pesach in praise of God.

Commentary on Matzah,  
*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

**Was the story of Exodus a triumph for God or for the Israelites?**



### QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT AND ASK AT YOUR SEDER

1. What is special about the educational methods used at the Seder table?
2. Do any other *chaggim* have a similar aspect to them?
3. Do you think our schools and other educational institutions can learn anything from the way we learn and teach on Seder night?



### EXPERIENCING THE SEDER

At this point in the Seder, when we eat the matzah and maror (and remember the Pesach offering), we

are experiencing the story we have been learning about.

When you eat the matzah and maror, close your eyes and be mindful about what your senses are feeling and experiencing. What do these foods smell and taste like? What emotions and feelings do they create in you when you eat them? Take a moment to imagine what the generation who experienced slavery and left Egypt on the very first Pesach must have felt as they ate these.



### A STORY FOR THE NIGHT OF STORIES

Under the communist government in Russia, it used to be illegal to practice Judaism. There was once a Jew who was caught maintaining a whole network of Jewish education during these years, and in punishment he was sent to the harsh prison in Siberia. When he was finally released, he returned and told his friends, "It was difficult to observe Pesach in the labour camp. One year we had no matzot. Another year we had no wine. But of bitter herbs, we were never short!"



### A QUIZ FOR THE NIGHT OF QUESTIONS

#### FOOD

Fill in the blanks for these foods eaten on Seder night:

1. W \_ \_ e
2. P \_ \_ \_ \_ h
3. K \_ \_ \_ \_ s
4. S \_ \_ \_ W \_ \_ \_ r
5. A \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ n
6. M \_ \_ \_ r
7. C \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ t
8. K \_ \_ \_ \_ h
9. M \_ \_ \_ \_ h
10. S \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ O \_ \_ \_ h





### IN A NUTSHELL

At this stage in the Seder, we have finished telling the story of the Exodus, and just like the Israelites 3,300 years ago, we feel an overwhelming need to thank and praise Hashem for bringing us out of Egypt. So we begin to say Hallel (which is split into two sections, half before the meal and half after). This is one of the transitional moments of the Haggadah, when we move from story to song, from prose to poetry, from recitation (*Maggid*) to praise (*Hallel*).



### DEEP DIVE

Song plays a vital part in Judaism. At the end of his life, Moshe gave the Israelites the 613th mitzvah – that in every generation we should

write a new *Sefer Torah*. On that occasion he used an unusual word. He called the Torah a “song” (Deut. 31:19).

Words are the language of the mind. Music is the language of the soul. Whenever speech is invested with deep emotion it aspires to the condition of song. This is why we do not merely say our prayers; we sing them. We do not read the Torah; we chant it. We do not study Talmud; we intone it. Each kind of text, and each period of the Jewish year, has its own melody. We learned this from Moshe, who called the Torah a song, to teach us this important message: if we want to transmit Torah across the generations as a living faith, it must be not just a code of law, but also the song of the Jewish people.

Commentary on ‘Therefore it is Our Duty to Thank’,  
*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

**How does music change the experience of our prayers and the way we praise God?**



### FURTHER THOUGHTS

Hallel (Psalms 113–118) is the great song of deliverance that, according to the Talmud, was sung at all the great triumphs of Jewish history. In more recent years we have added two new occasions when we say Hallel: on Yom Ha’atzmaut, Israel’s Independence Day, and Yom Yerushalayim, Jerusalem Day.

The late Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik asked an interesting question about the recitation of Hallel at the Seder table. The Talmud states that we do not say Hallel on Purim because “the reading of the Megillah is equivalent to saying Hallel” (Megillah 14a). Why do we not apply



the same reasoning to Seder night? We have recited the Haggadah, the counterpart of the Megillah on Purim. Surely, then, the recital of Hallel is superfluous.

The answer I would give is that there are two different commands to say Hallel. The first is at the time of a miracle. The second is as a form of remembrance on the anniversary of the miracle. Thus, at the time of Chanukah the Maccabees said Hallel at the moment of victory. The next year they established it as an annual obligation. The two forms of Hallel arise from different psychological states. The first is expressive, the second evocative. The first gives voice to an emotion we already feel. The second creates that emotion by an act of memory, recalling an event that occurred in the past.

Telling the story of a miracle, as we do on Purim, is equivalent to the second form of Hallel. It is an act of memory. On Pesach, however, we do not merely tell the story. We relive it. We eat the bread of oppression and the bitter herbs. We taste the wine of freedom. We recline as free people. "Generation by generation, each person must feel as if they themselves had come out of Egypt." The Hallel we say on

the Seder night is therefore of the first kind, not the second. It arises out of the emotions we feel having lived through the event again. It is a "new song." This kind of Hallel is not cancelled by telling the story.

Commentary on Hallel,  
*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

**What is the difference in emotion between the two types of Hallel? Do you connect emotionally to Hallel on Seder night being the first type?**



### QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT AND ASK AT YOUR SEDER

1. What do we have to praise and thank God for on Pesach?
2. Is it better to use our own words to do this, or using the words of someone else (like by reciting King David's *Tehillim*)?
3. Do you connect more to words or song as a medium for expressing emotions?



### EXPERIENCING THE SEDER

Ask the guests around your Seder table to share as many tunes for

the different parts of Hallel as they know. Spend a moment reflecting (either privately or in a conversation with the Seder participants) how it feels to sing as opposed to saying or reading the words.



### A STORY FOR THE NIGHT OF STORIES

Following the splitting of the Reed Sea, when the Israelites were finally safe from the pursuing Egyptians, Miriam the Prophetess took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women followed her song and dance with their own timbrels, in praise and thanks to Hashem.

The Rabbis in the Midrash ask why the women had musical instruments to hand (was this really a priority to take with them when they left Egypt in haste?) They answer their own question by praising their faith in Hashem. The women had deep faith that Hashem would perform miracles in the desert, to protect them and pave the way for their safe passage, and so they ensured they had instruments ready and dances prepared, so they could express their gratitude and praise Hashem.





**IN A NUTSHELL**

*Nirtzah* means parting, and with this passage we reach the concluding section of the Haggadah. We pray that next year we may be able to celebrate it in a rebuilt Temple according to the original biblical rituals (which we can no longer fulfil). This passage is taken from a liturgical poem (*kerova*) composed by Rabbi Joseph Tov Elem in the eleventh century CE. Originally it was said in the synagogue on *Shabbat haGadol*, the Shabbat preceding Pesach, to conclude a detailing of the laws of Pesach, and it was transferred to the Haggadah in the fourteenth century.

Commentary on ‘The Pesach Service is Finished’,  
*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*



**DEEP DIVE**

As at the conclusion of Yom Kippur, so here – at the two supreme moments of the Jewish year – we pray *Leshanah haba’a biYerushalayim habenuya*, “Next year in Jerusalem rebuilt.” Nothing in the imaginative life of peoples throughout the world quite compares to the Jewish love for, and attachment to, Jerusalem. A Psalm records, in unforgettable words, the feelings of the Jewish exiles in Babylonia two and a half thousand years ago: “By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept as we remembered Zion... How can we sing the Lord’s song on foreign soil? If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill. May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy” (Tehilim 137:1–6).

Wherever Jews were, they preserved the memory of Jerusalem. They prayed toward it. They spoke

of it continually. At weddings they broke a glass in its memory. On Tisha B’Av they sat and mourned its destruction as if it were a recent tragedy. They longed for it with an everlasting love.

The French historian Chateaubriand, visiting Jerusalem in the early nineteenth century, was overcome with emotion as he saw for the first time the small Jewish community there, waiting patiently for the Messiah. “This people,” he wrote, “has seen Jerusalem destroyed seventeen times, yet there exists nothing in the world which can discourage it or prevent it from raising its eyes to Zion. He who beholds the Jews dispersed over the face of the earth, in keeping with the Word of God, lingers and marvels. But he will be struck with amazement, as at a miracle, who finds them still in Jerusalem and perceives even, who in law and justice are the masters of Judea, to exist as slaves and strangers in their own land; how despite all abuses they await the King who is to deliver them.” Noting how this “small nation” had survived while the great empires who sought its destruction had vanished, he added, “If there is anything among the nations of the world marked with the stamp of the miraculous, this, in our opinion, is that miracle.”

Next Year in Jerusalem,  
*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

**Why do you think that both of these important days in the Jewish calendar (Yom Kippur and Seder night) finish with these words about Jerusalem?**



**FURTHER THOUGHTS**

Jerusalem is a place, but it is more than a place. It became a metaphor for the collective destination of the Jewish people. A city is what we build together, individually

through our homes, collectively through our public spaces. So Jerusalem became a symbol of what Jews were summoned to build by creating a city of righteousness worthy of being a home for the Divine Presence. Its stones would be good deeds, and its mortar, relationships of generosity and trust. Its houses would be families; its defensive walls, schools and houses of study. Shabbat and the festivals would be its public parks and gardens. For Jews believed that, even in a violent and destructive world, heaven could be built on earth. It was their most daring vision. The architect of the city would be God. The builders would be ordinary men and women. It would be a Jewish city, but it would be open to all, and people from all faiths would come and be moved by its beauty.

So Jerusalem, the “faithful city” (Yishayahu 1:27), became the destination of the Jewish journey, which began with Avraham and Sarah and will be complete only at the end of days. This is how the prophet Yishayahu envisioned it, in words that for millennia have captured the human imagination:

In the last days

The mountain of the Lord’s Temple will be established

As chief among the mountains;

It will be raised above the hills,

And all the nations will stream to it.

Many peoples will come and say,

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,

To the house of the God of Jacob.

He will teach us His ways,

So that we may walk in His path.”

For the Torah shall come forth from Zion,



And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

He will judge between the nations

And settle disputes for many peoples.

They will beat their swords into plowshares

And their spears into pruning hooks.

Nation will not take up sword against nation,

Nor will they train for war anymore. (Yishayahu 2:2-4)

These words, among the most influential ever written, sum up much of Jewish faith. They epitomise what it might be like to “perfect the world under the sovereignty of God” (*Aleinu*). And as they journeyed through the centuries and continents, Jews carried this vision with them, believing that their task was to be true to their faith, to be loyal to God, to exemplify His ways to humankind, and to build a world at peace with itself by learning and teaching how to respect the freedom and dignity of others.

An Afternoon in Jerusalem,  
*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

**What must the Jewish people do when they reach their final destination, Jerusalem?**



### QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT AND ASK AT YOUR SEDER

1. Do you think Jews in Israel should still say this at the end of their Seder?
2. What does Jerusalem have to do with the Exodus story and Seder night?
3. Has anyone around your Seder table celebrated Pesach in Israel? Was it special or different?



### EXPERIENCING THE SEDER

Take a moment. Close your eyes and imagine what celebrating the Pesach Seder in Jerusalem would be like with a rebuilt Temple.



### A STORY FOR THE NIGHT OF STORIES

Rabbi Sacks: “It happened in Jerusalem, one Shabbat afternoon toward the end of the Gulf War. Our family had gone to the Holy City to find peace. Instead we found ourselves living in the midst of war. Within weeks of our arrival it became clear that the Middle East was yet again about to be engulfed in conflict. Yet as we stepped out into the Jerusalem sunlight that day, there was peace. The city breathed the stillness of Shabbat. The late afternoon sun was turning the houses of Jerusalem stone into burnished gold. As we looked across the valley to the walls of the Old City we could understand why, long ago, people had called this the city of peace and why, even when it lay in ruins, Jews were convinced that the Divine Presence had never left Jerusalem.

“We had been invited by our neighbours to *Se’udah Shelishit*, the third Shabbat meal. When we arrived we discovered that they had also invited a group of Romanian Jews who had recently come to make their home in Israel. They had made the journey together, as a group, because they were a choir. In Romania they had sung the songs of Jewish hope and longing. Now, in Jerusalem, they began to sing again for us around the Shabbat table.

“Then a rather moving thing happened. As the sounds of the choir reverberated around the alleyways of our quiet corner of Jerusalem, people from the neighbouring houses began to appear, drawn by the music. One by one they slipped in through the open door and stood around as, hesitantly at first, then

with growing confidence, they joined the singing. Here was an Israeli artist, there a new arrival from Russia, here an American investment banker, there a family from South Africa, and in the doorway a group of tourists who happened to be walking by and had stopped to see what was happening and then found themselves drawn in by the warm atmosphere. No one spoke; no one wanted to break the mood. We continued to sing the songs of Shabbat afternoon. As the sun began to set behind the hills, I could feel the Divine Presence among us, joining our words to those of a hundred generations of Jews, uniting them into a vast choral symphony, the love song of a people for God, and I sensed something of the mystery and majesty of the Jewish people, and I knew that it was this that I had come to Jerusalem to find.

“We had come together, each of us as the result of a long journey, in some cases physical, in others spiritual, and in many, both. We each had stories to tell of how we came to be in Jerusalem that afternoon. But just as our individual voices had united to sing the words of our ancestors’ songs, so our stories were part of a larger story. Our personal routes were stages on the most remarkable journey ever undertaken by a people, spanning almost every country on the face of the earth, and four thousand years of time. If we had been able, then and there, to trace back the history of our parents and theirs across the generations, we would have been awestruck at its drama and scope. Was there anything that could remotely compare to the long Jewish journey to Jerusalem? Was this, I thought, not the most vivid testimony imaginable to the power and endurance of faith?”

“As the singing ended, and Shabbat drew to a close, I understood that to be a Jew is to join the journey of our people, the story of Pesach and the long walk across centuries and continents from exile to homecoming. There is no story like it, and the journey is not yet complete.”



## CHAD GADYA



### IN A NUTSHELL

This strange and haunting song seems simple on the surface but has hidden depths. Concluding one of Judaism's most important evenings of the year with a children's song tells us a lot about how important children are, especially on this night. The Jewish love of, and focus on, children means that we look forward to the future even more than we look back to the past. Just as we began the Seder with the questions of a child, so we end it with a nursery rhyme, reminding ourselves that what sustains a faith is not strength or power, but its ability to inspire successive generations of children to add their voices to their people's song.



### DEEP DIVE

The theme of *Chad Gadya* is the destructive cycle of vengeance and retaliation. In one interpretation, the young goat represents Israel. The "father" who bought it for two coins is God, who redeemed Israel from Egypt through His two representatives, Moshe and Aharon. The cat is Assyria, which conquered the northern kingdom of Israel. The dog is Babylonia, which defeated the southern kingdom of Judah. The stick is Persia, which replaced Babylonia as the imperial power in the sixth century BCE. The fire is the Greeks, who defeated the Persians in the days of Alexander the Great. The water is Rome, which superseded ancient Greece. The ox is Islam, which defeated the Romans in Palestine in the seventh century. The slaughterer is Christianity – specifically the Crusaders, who fought Islam in Palestine and elsewhere, murdering Jews on the way. The Angel of Death is the Ottoman Empire, which controlled Palestine until the First World War. The song concludes with an

expression of faith that "this too shall pass" and the Jewish people will return to their land. So it has been in our days.

One Little Goat,  
*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

The song, disarming in its simplicity, teaches the great truth of Jewish hope: that though many nations (symbolised by the cat, the dog, and so on) attacked Israel (the goat), each in turn has vanished into oblivion. At the end of days God will vanquish the Angel of Death and inaugurate a world of life and peace, the two great Jewish loves. *Chad Gadya* expresses the Jewish refusal to give up hope. Though history is full of man's inhumanity to man – dog bites cat, stick hits dog – that is not the final verse. The Haggadah ends with the death of death in eternal life, a fitting end for the story of a people dedicated to Moshe's great command, "Choose life" (Devarim 30:19).

Commentary on Chad Gadya,  
*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

**Living at the turn of the 21st century, do you feel this song and the message behind it is still relevant to Jewish history?**



### FURTHER THOUGHTS

So, having earlier expressed the Jewish hope, "Next year in Jerusalem," we end our Seder night with the *universal* hope that the Angel of Death will one day be defeated by the long-overdue realisation that God is life; that worshipping God means sanctifying life; that God's greatest command is "Choose life" (Devarim 30:19); that we bring God into the world by reciting a blessing over life.

I find it almost unbearably moving that a people that has known so much suffering can summon the

moral courage to end this evening of Jewish history on a supreme note of hope, and write it into the hearts of its children in the form of a nursery rhyme, a song. For what we give our children on this night of nights is something more and greater than the bread of oppression and the taste of Jewish tears. It is a faith that in this world, with all its violence and cruelty, we can create moments of redemption, signals of transcendence, acts of transfiguring grace. No people has risked and suffered more for a more slender hope, but no hope has lifted a people higher and led it, time and again, to greatness. So we end the night with a prayer and a conviction. The prayer: "God of life, help us win a victory over the forces of death." And the conviction? That by refusing to accept the world that is, together we can start to make the world that ought to be."

One Little Goat,  
*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*

**What is the main focus at the end of the Haggadah, and how is it different from the beginning of the Haggadah?**



### QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT AND ASK AT YOUR SEDER

1. Why do you think we end the Seder with a song for children?
2. How do you think the message of the song is connected to the Seder night?
3. How does this song connect to our lives today?



### EXPERIENCING THE SEDER

Ask every person at your Seder table in turn to share what their hopes for the next year are: hopes for themselves, for the Jewish people, and for the world.

## EDUCATIONAL COMPANION TO THE QUESTIONS

### HA LACHMA ANYA

1. As Rabbi Sacks explains in his Haggadah, the root of the word “*haggadah*” means not only ‘to tell’ but also ‘to bind’ and the Seder evening binds us together as a people. Jews from all walks of life and religious backgrounds will find themselves at a Seder table and should be made to feel welcome. In fact, the biblical command to sacrifice the Pesach lamb had to be done in a *chaburah*, which is more than one family coming together. The freedom we celebrate on this night is not just about leaving Egypt where we were slaves, but also about journeying to the Promised Land and building a society based on the values of the Torah, where kindness to strangers is a core value. This starts tonight.
2. The beauty of matzah is that it can represent both. In fact, without slavery we would not appreciate our freedom, so both concepts can co-exist in this experience.
3. Although some families choose to have Seder night on their own (especially if they have young children, to allow the parents to focus on them) many people will find themselves at a Seder night with others from outside of their immediate family. It has always been a tradition that people come together for this ritual. But more than this, it is a powerful thought that the entire Jewish People find themselves at a Seder table at the same time, and if we take a moment to extend that thought, we can also visualise and feel connected to the many generations who came before us who also celebrated this festival in exactly the same way.

**QUIZ ANSWERS:** 1. Pharaoh; 2. Hashem; 3. Moshe; 4. Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Akiva, and Rabbi Tarfon; 5. Rabbi Yehudah; 6. Rabbi Yossi HaGelili, Rabbi Eliezer, and Rabbi Akiva; 7. Rabban Gamliel; 8. Hillel; 9. Eliyahu HaNavi; 10. My father.

### MA NISHTANAH

1. Learning through questions makes the educational process engaging and empowering for the learner.
2. Any question asked from a desire for knowledge without secondary agenda is a good question. There are no bad questions in this case.
3. Not all questions have answers, or at least answers that we as finite humans can find or understand. Some questions only the infinite God can answer. But we don’t stop asking the questions. The questions are more important than the answers.

### AVADIM HAYINU

1. As a nation, we have a national memory and identity. So when the Haggadah speaks of our experience in Egypt as slaves, while this refers to a specific generation and historical time period, as a nation we have that experience implanted in our memory and identity. The Haggadah encourages us to re-experience this every year on Seder

night, and *Avadim Hayinu* reminds us that the experience does impact us directly, for if God had not redeemed us, we would be slaves ourselves to this day.

2. A good story told well can have a big impact. A powerful story is experiential, in that the listener can imagine they are living the story, or at least empathise and identify with the characters. The longer and more detailed the story is, the more chance this will happen. So the Haggadah encourages us to tell the story at length, and engage with it, so we can experience the story as fully as possible.
3. Because Seder night is not about “learning” or “reading” or “understanding” but rather about experiencing and living the story, the Haggadah tells us that even wise and experienced people who have done this many times before still have to tell the story. Because each year it is a new experience.

### THE FOUR CHILDREN

1. Obviously all answers are legitimate, but in the ensuing discussion it is worth encouraging everyone to realise that each of us is all of the four children at different times in our lives (or even at different times of the day!)
2. All children are different and have different educational needs. Insightful parents and teachers realise this and try their hardest to cater to those individual needs.
3. Children are the main focus of the evening because this night more than any other is when we pass on our national heritage to the next generation. Even though the process of learning about and re-experiencing the Exodus is a task which takes a lifetime, it begins when we are children, laying the foundation of our Jewish identity and allowing the national narrative to become part of our very core. We take our cue from the Torah itself, which focuses on the questions children will ask about the Exodus.

### THE TEN PLAGUES

1. Each plague attacked a different aspect of the Egyptian society’s physical and spiritual needs. The Egyptians could probably have managed without one or two or even more of the elements that were attacked, but this was a systematic destruction of their way of life.
2. Every plague was terrible and designed to attack a different aspect of Egyptian society and cause problems. If you have to choose one... it doesn’t get more terrible than the final plague.
3. God could have taken the Israelites out of Egypt without any miracles or fuss. But He chose to take the Egyptians on an educational journey, because the process was important. And even more important than the direct impact on the Egyptians was the impact on the rest of the world as they watched (or at least heard reports) and the effect on the Israelites themselves. The plagues were as much for these other groups as they were for Pharaoh and the Egyptians, if not more so.

## DAYEINU

1. Full redemption from Egypt was the establishing of a sovereign nation in the Promised Land, with the Temple at the centre of its religious life. If God had stopped short of this at any of the previous stages, then it would not have been complete redemption.
2. The message behind *Dayeinu* is that each individual stage was miraculous and magnificent, and worthy of praise and gratitude.
3. While the physical redemption ended with the liberation from slavery and leaving the geographical boundaries of Egypt, and the spiritual redemption took place at the Giving of the Torah on Sinai, the full religio-social redemption was only achieved once the Jews entered the Land of Israel and built a society there based on the Torah.

## PESACH, MATZAH, AND MAROR

1. They are experiential. We don't just talk or learn or read about the story, but we experience it through food and other rituals (such as leaning, pouring for each other, etc.) in order to fully immerse in the story.
2. Yes, all the *chaggim* in Judaism do, although to a lesser extent than Pesach. For example, we sit in the succah, and we stay up all night learning to prepare to receive the Torah.
3. While some of our educational institutions do practice experiential education (camp is an excellent example) and some of our schools find opportunities to do this as well (e.g. by having *shabbatonim*), perhaps institutions of formal Jewish education could find more creative ways to incorporate the methodology of experiential education.

**QUIZ ANSWERS:** 1. Wine; 2. Pesach; 3. *Karpas*; 4. Salt Water; 5. *Afikoman*; 6. *Maror*; 7. *Charoset*; 8. *Korech*; 9. *Matzah*; 10. *Shulchan Orech*.

## HALLEL

1. It is hard to know where to start. But it is important to articulate all the things God did for the Israelites and how we benefit from these acts until this day. In the words of the Haggadah itself, "And if the Holy One, blessed be He, had not brought our fathers out of Egypt – then we, and our children, and the children of our children, would still be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt."
2. If one is comfortable finding words that articulate genuine emotion, then there is room for that in our prayers. But for many this is a challenge, and so we fall back on the exquisite words of our greatest poets and spiritual

leaders, to give us the words we need. Our challenge is then to channel our emotions into these words.

3. For some, words capture the feelings and emotions that we need to express. But for others, only music can connect to our soul to do this sufficiently. While Rabbi Sacks was a masterful wordsmith and orator, he acknowledged that music has a spiritual power far beyond words to allow us to feel, and express, what is in our soul.

## NIRTZAH

1. They should (and do) because this section refers to a rebuilt Jerusalem in Messianic times when the Temple exists (allowing us to celebrate Pesach as originally described in the Torah) in a redeemed world of peace. This has clearly not been achieved yet, and so to pray for this at the end of the Seder night, even while sitting in the beautiful rebuilt modern city of Jerusalem, is appropriate.
2. The Exodus is the beginning of a journey that we are still on. The destination of this journey is a rebuilt Jerusalem in a redeemed world of peace. We hope that this can be achieved in time for next year's Seder.
3. All the *chaggim* are special and unique in Israel. There is something very powerful about celebrating a Jewish festival in a Jewish state. It is also easier to remember that we are closer to the final destination of the Jewish journey now than at any point in history, when sitting in the ancient Jewish homeland, rebuilt in modern times.

## CHAD GADYA

1. The whole of the Seder is focused on children, and on transmitting our heritage to the next generation. This song (and the others at the conclusion of the Seder) are fun to sing, and also contain a strong educational message. A great way to end the Seder night journey.
2. The message of *Chad Gadya* is that while it may seem during our history that there are powerful forces who will dominate and even destroy us, these forces come and go, and only God decides who survives in the long term. And if you consider Jewish history, it is clear that He has decided that the Jewish people have a destiny to fulfil, and therefore we have outlasted all these powerful nations who have tried to destroy us.
3. Modern Jewish history reflects this same message. In the 20th century, an enemy of the Jewish people came closer than ever before to wiping them out, yet not only did the Jewish people survive, but in fact just three years later returned to their ancestral homeland, and re-established sovereignty there, and are now thriving like never before. We are part of a generation that is living the fulfilment of the message of this song.

THIS FAMILY EDITION HAS BEEN GENEROUSLY AND ANONYMOUSLY SPONSORED

## Pesach, Matzah, Maror

Lesson Objectives	Big Ideas	Essential Questions
<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain the significance behind Pesach, Matzah and Maror.</li> <li>2. Students will be able to explain how symbols that represent a personal journey can enhance our understanding of that journey.</li> <li>3. Students will be able to explain how the process from slavery to freedom was done in partnership with HaShem and the Israelites.</li> </ol>	<p>“The story explains the food; the food allows us to relive the story.”</p>	<p>How does the act of eating the food enhance the retelling of the story?</p> <p>Why is experiential education so powerful?</p> <p>How is Pesach an example of our partnership with HaShem?</p>

Activity	Goal	Description	Time
In a Nutshell	Knowledge Acquisition	Read the In A Nutshell section.	5 minutes
Our Own Food Stories	Personalization	<p>Perhaps assign this ahead of time: Talk to your parents about a food tradition in your family (could be a family recipe, could be something that you eat at the same time every year, could be something you eat every time you do something). What is the story connected with that food item? Do you tell the story every time you eat the food?</p> <p>Example: In my family, my grandfather always made chopped liver in his PJs for</p>	10 minutes

		<p>Rosh HaShanah dinner. Whenever we had the chopped liver, we would tell the story of how he made it in his PJs.</p> <p>Extra: Make or bring in the foods to share with the stories!</p>	
Deep Dive	Deeper Thinking	<p>Read the Deep Dive Section.</p> <p>How would you explain the quote, "The worst exile is forgetting you are in exile."</p> <p>Can you come up with any modern day example?</p>	
My Own Seder Plate	Personalization	<p>One way to connect to the Pesach Seder is to connect with the idea that we are all trapped in our own "narrow places" (self doubt, jealousy, fear, etc). Students can design their own seder plates with 1 item to symbolize what it would look like to be free from what is holding them back, 1 item that is "transformed" when they are freed from being held back, and 1 item that symbolizes what is holding them back.</p>	15 minutes
Further Thoughts Debate	Deeper Thinking	<p>Read the Further Thoughts section.</p> <p>Divide the class into two teams. One team should make an argument for why the chag should be called Chag HaMatzot and one team should make the argument for why the chag should be called Chag HaPesach. Invite a guest judge to choose a winner!</p>	20 minutes
Exit Ticket	Check for Understanding	<p>Have the students respond to the following question before leaving class:</p> <p>How does this part of the seder</p>	5 minutes

		help us fulfill the commandment to see ourselves as slaves in Egypt?	
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## The Four Children

Lesson Objectives	Big Ideas	Essential Questions
Students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the four different types of children.</li> <li>2. Explain what makes each type of child different.</li> <li>3. Explain how he or she can be each of the different children at different times.</li> <li>4. Explain why different viewpoints can be helpful in a community.</li> </ol>	“Though [the four children] disagree, they sit around the same table, telling the same story.”	How do we each embody the four different types of children?  Why is it important to include different approaches to answering essentially the same question in our seder?  Why is it important to have different viewpoints in a community?

Activity	Goal	Description	Time
Article	Background Info	Read about where the four children come from: <a href="#">What Is the Biblical Source for the Four Sons Mentioned in the Haggadah?</a>	10 minutes
Read Deep Dive	Deeper Thinking	Put students into groups of 3 or 4.  Read the Deep Dive section.  Each group needs to create a fictional family sitting around a dinner table (they can illustrate, use canva, just write, Scratch project, family website).  Each family member needs a bio or speech bubbles. Something to “snapshot” who they are.  Classmates will guess which person in the family is which of the 4 children based on the bios.	30 minutes

Journal	Personalization Check for Understanding	<p>Write about a situation where you are each of the 4 children.</p> <p>When are you the wise child?</p> <p>When are you the wicked child?</p> <p>When are you the simple child?</p> <p>When are you the child who does not know how to ask?</p>	10 minutes
Gallery Walk	Personalization Check for Understanding	<p>You can do this instead of journaling, or after journaling.</p> <p>Put up anchor charts for each of the 4 children and have students answer those questions on the anchor charts, or on post-it notes to put on the anchor charts.</p> <p>Students can then read their classmates' responses.</p>	10 minutes
Class Discussion? Journal?	Deeper Thinking Check for Understanding	<p>Imagine a soccer team. Some teammates are really good at defence. Others are aggressive on offense. Some teammates use great reflexes to succeed as a goalkeeper.</p> <p>Why is it important to have lots of different skills on a team?</p> <p>Why is it important to have lots of different ways of thinking as a people?</p> <p>Do you think that each of the four children serves a purpose? Why or why not? If yes, how?</p> <p>For some communities this could be an interesting time to look at different Jewish populations/sects/communities around the world (political, religious observance, customs, countries of origin) and find a</p>	15 minutes

		<p>way (maybe artistically?) to see us as all on the same “team.”</p> <p>Watch a <a href="#">video clip</a> of teammates disagreeing. How does it help us to have a different way of looking at things? When does it hurt us (possible tie into sinat chinam)?</p>	
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## The Ten Plagues

Lesson Objectives	Big Ideas	Essential Questions
Students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the plague that he or she feels is the worst.</li> <li>2. Explain how we can apply the lesson of not rejoicing in our enemies' suffering to our lives.</li> <li>3. (Possibly) Connect this part of the seder with the war.</li> </ol>	"We give thanks for the miraculous plagues which brought our ancestors out of Egypt and granted them freedom, but at the same time, we also shed a symbolic tear for those who suffered."	How do we respond in situations where we are happy for the outcome, but in which our enemies suffer?  Why are we commanded not to rejoice in our enemies' suffering?

Activity	Goal	Description	Time
Documentary	Set Induction	There have been lots of documentaries made on the scientific possibility of the 10 Plagues. Playing part of one could peak the students' interest.  <a href="#">Example</a>	
Read the 10 Plagues	Skill Building	Read this section of the Haggadah.	5 minutes
Class Vote	Set Induction	Which of the 10 plagues do you think was the worst?	5 minutes
Reading & Activity	Deep Thinking	Put students into small groups.  Read the In A Nutshell Section.  Consider: What does it mean to not rejoice in the suffering of our enemies?  Create a skit where two students are "enemies" (there	30 minutes

		needs to be some conflict). Present two endings, one where there is rejoicing in an enemies suffering and one where there isn't.	
Journal	Personalization Check for Understanding	Imagine a time when your enemy was suffering. How did you respond? After today's lesson would you respond differently, why or why not?	
		There could be a powerful conversation here about the war.  I would incorporate Golda Meir's quote, "We can forgive the Arabs for killing our children. We cannot forgive them for forcing us to kill their children" and the idea that we take the suffering of our enemies very seriously.  Possible B'tzelem Elokim connection here.	





This is the bread of oppression our fathers ate in Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all in need join us for Pesach. Now we are here; next year in Israel. Now we are slaves; next year we will be free. What does this text mean to you?





This is the bread of oppression our fathers ate in Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all in need join us for Pesach. Now we are here; next year in Israel. Now we are slaves; next year we will be free. What does this text mean to you?





Ha Lachma Anya  
The Bread of Affliction and Freedom





Welcome Wonderful Educators!

Today we will begin our exploration journey of the Pesach seder through the eyes of Rabbi Sacks.

Our first stop on our journey will be Ha Lachma Anya.

Throughout the seder, matza is referred to as both the bread of affliction (slavery), and the bread of freedom.

Which one do you think it is?

Turn to a table partner and discuss!





# Chevrutah

- Read the text on the next slide with a partner
- Create at least one question about the text
  - You can use these sentence starters:
    - "It surprises me that..."
    - "I wonder about..."
    - "It's strange that..."
- Be ready to share your questions!







הללויה Jewish Soul Art  
Ha Lachma Anya Blessing

follow zebra toys  
[in](#) [E](#) [f](#) [t](#) [p](#) [o](#) [y](#)



This is the bread of oppression our fathers ate in Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all in need join us for Pesach. Now we are here; next year in Israel. Now we are slaves; next year we will be free. What does this text mean to you?





## DEEP DIVE

This is a strange invitation: “This is the bread of oppression our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come in and eat.” What hospitality is it to offer the hungry the taste of suffering? In fact, though, this is a profound insight into the nature of slavery and freedom. Matza represents two things: it is the food of slaves, and also the bread eaten by the Israelites as they left Egypt in liberty. What transforms the bread of oppression into the bread of freedom is *the willingness to share it with others*.

Sharing food is the first act through which slaves become free human beings. One who fears tomorrow does not offer his bread to others. But one who is willing to divide his food with a stranger has already shown himself capable of fellowship and faith, the two things from which hope is born. That is why we begin the Seder by inviting others to join us. Bread shared is no longer the bread of oppression. Reaching out to others, giving help to the needy and companionship to those who are alone, we bring freedom into the world, and with freedom, God.

## REFLECT

*What can you share in your life to show you are truly free?*

**“Sharing food is the first act through which slaves become free human beings.”**





# Rewrite and Explain

- Rewrite Ha Lachma Anya in grade level language
- Discussion Questions:
  - Why is this text important?
  - For the seder?
  - For our lives?

Be prepared to share your thoughts!







"Sharing food is the first act through which slaves become free human beings."



In small groups, create 3 questions about this quote.

- Use question words:
  - Who
  - What
  - Where
  - When
  - Why
  - How

We'll share these questions with other groups





# Question Time!



- Trade 1 question with another group.
- Answer each other's questions with 1 example and 1 reason.
- Listen carefully to others' ideas.
- How does this discussion change or add to the way you understand Ha Lachma Anya?





# Bread of Affliction or Freedom?



Remember our opening question:

- Is matza the bread of slavery or freedom?

Has your answer changed?

- Why or why not?
- Write your thoughts in 2-3 sentences





# Highlights from the Lesson Plans



The map as a way to frame the learning.

The “Building a City” activity to show more active learning.

The Depth & Complexity activities to summarize the unit



00:00 - 00:20 Introductions, Overview, Video

- Kate Milgrom: I am currently a sixth grade Judaics teacher at Donna Klein Jewish Academy in Boca Raton, FL. Prior to this, I was the Education Director at a synagogue in Cleveland, OH, where I oversaw a K-12 supplementary school program. I had the privilege of beginning my work with the Rabbi Sacks Legacy Foundation by participating in the inaugural cohort of the Torah v'Chochmah program, where we crafted curriculum based in Rabbi Sacks' ideas and teachings. I currently teach middot through Parshat HaShavuah, guided by Rabbi Sacks' Covenant & Conversation essays to my sixth graders.

00:20 - 00:25 [Ha Lachma Anya](#)

- Announcement: Welcome Wonderful Educators! Today we will begin our exploration journey of the Pesach seder through the eyes of Rabbi Sacks. Our first stop on our journey will be Ha Lachma Anya. Throughout the seder, matza is referred to as both the bread of affliction (slavery), and the bread of freedom. Which one do you think it is? Turn to a table partner and discuss!

00:25 - 00:30

- In those same table partners, read the text from the Haggadah. Create at least one question about the text with your partner. Use the sentence stems: "It surprises me that...", "I wonder about...". "It is strange that..."

הא לחמא עניא די אכלו אבהתנא בארעא דמצרים. כל דכפין ייתי ויכל, כל דצריך ייתי ויפסח. השתא הכא, לשנה הבאה בארעא דישראל. השתא עבדי, לשנה הבאה בני חורין.

THIS

IS THE BREAD OF OPPRESSION

our fathers ate

in the land of Egypt.

Let all who are hungry

come in and eat;

let all who are in need

come and join us for the Pesah.

Now we are here;

next year in the land of Israel.

Now – slaves;

next year we shall be free.

00:30 - 00:40

- Ask for volunteers to read the Deep Dive section.
- Individually, have each person rewrite the text, changing the language so that it is at their reading level of his or her students.
  - Then have everyone write an explanation of why this text is important for us (could be in the context of the seder, could be in the context of our lives).

- Share out.

00:40 - 00:45

- In small groups, focus on the quote: “Sharing food is the first act through which slaves become free human beings.”
  - Groups should come up with 3 questions about the quote for other groups to answer.
    - Prompt the kids by having them remember question words “who, what, where, when, why and how”
- 00:45 - 00:50 Share questions and have other groups answer with 1 example and 1 reason.

00:50 Exit Ticket - Go back to the Opening Question. Would you change your answer? Explain why or why not.

00:50 - 00:60 Questions?

Extra Ideas:

- Highlight the [map](#) as a way to frame the learning.
- Highlight the “[Building a City](#)” activity to show more active learning
- Highlight the [Depth & Complexity](#) activities to summarize the unit



# Hanukka



## HANUKKA IN A NUTSHELL

Hanukka is the festival on which Jews celebrate their victory in the fight for religious freedom more than two thousand years ago. In 165 BCE Antiochus IV, ruler of the Syrian branch of the Alexandrian empire, began to impose Greek culture on the Jews of the land of Israel. He placed a statue of Zeus in Jerusalem and banned Jewish religious rituals such as circumcision and Shabbat. Those who continued to observe them were persecuted. This was an existential threat to Judaism as a religious civilisation.

A group of Jewish warriors rose in rebellion. Led by a priest, Matityahu of Modi'in, and his son Yehuda the Maccabee, they began the fight for liberty. Outnumbered, they suffered heavy initial casualties, but within three years they had secured a momentous victory. Jerusalem was restored to Jewish hands and the *Beit HaMikdash* was rededicated. The Rabbis tell us there was only one cruse of pure oil found in the wreckage of the Temple, enough to light the Menora for one day. But the oil miraculously lasted for eight, enough time to make more. Hanukka (which means "rededication") is the eight-day festival established to celebrate the miracles of those days.





## A HANUKKA MESSAGE FOR THE FIRST NIGHT

### INSPIRED BY FAITH, WE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

Twenty-two centuries ago, when Israel was under the rule of the empire of Alexander the Great, one particular leader, Antiochus IV, decided to force the pace of Hellenisation. He forbade Jews from practising their religion and even set up a statue of Zeus Olympus in the *Beit HaMikdash* in Jerusalem.

This was too much to bear, and a group of Jews, the Maccabees, fought for their religious freedom, winning a stunning victory against the most powerful army of the ancient world. After three years of conflict, they reconquered Jerusalem, rededicated the *Beit HaMikdash*, and relit the Menora with the one cruse of undefiled oil they found among the wreckage.

It was one of the most spectacular military achievements of the ancient world. It was, as we say in our prayers, a victory of the few over the many, the weak over the strong. It is summed up in a wonderful line from the prophet Zekharya: “Not by might nor by strength but by My spirit,’ says the Lord” (Zekharya 4:6).

The Maccabees had neither might nor strength, neither weapons nor numbers. But they had a double portion of the Jewish spirit that longs for freedom and is prepared to fight for it.

Never believe that a handful of dedicated people can’t change the world. Inspired by faith, they can. The Maccabees did then. So can we today.

### POINTS TO PONDER

1. *Why do you think the Greeks were against Jews keeping their religion?*
2. *What life lessons can you learn from the victory of the Maccabees over the ancient Greek army?*
3. *Can you give other examples from Jewish history of the “Jewish spirit”?*





## FROM THE THOUGHT OF RABBI SACKS

Why did God choose this tiny people for so great a task, to be His witnesses in the world, the people who fought against the idols of the age in every age, the carriers of His message to humanity? Why are we so few? ... Where did Jewish strength lie if not in numbers?

The Torah gives an answer of surpassing beauty. God tells Moshe: Do not count Jews. Ask them to give, and then count the contributions.

In terms of numbers we are small. But in terms of our contributions, we are vast. In almost every age, Jews have given something special to the world ...

When it comes to making a contribution, numbers do not count. What matters is commitment, passion, dedication to a cause. Precisely because we are so small as a people, every one of us counts. We each make a difference to the fate of Judaism and the Jewish people.

*Ten Paths to God – Responsibility: The Jewish Future, 3–4*

### POINTS TO PONDER

1. *Can you think of a reason why Hashem chose a small group of people for a great task?*
2. *What is the connection between this quote and “Inspired by Faith, We Can Change the World” (p. 56)?*



## IT ONCE HAPPENED...

*The Chanukka story as told in the Al HaNissim prayer in the siddur:*

In the days of Mattityahu, son of Yoḥanan, the high priest, the Hasmonean, and his sons, the wicked Greek kingdom rose up against Your people Israel to make them forget Your Torah and to force them to transgress the laws of Your will. It was then that You in Your great compassion stood by them in the time of their distress.

You championed their cause, judged their claim, and avenged their wrong. You delivered the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, the impure into the hands of the pure, the wicked into the hands of the righteous, and the arrogant into the hands of those who were engaged in the study of Your Torah. You made for Yourself a great and holy reputation in Your world, and for Your people Israel You performed a great salvation and redemption as of this very day. Your children then entered the holiest part of Your House, cleansed Your Temple, purified Your Sanctuary, kindled lights in Your holy courts, and designated these eight days of Chanukka for giving thanks and praise to Your great name.

*The Chanukka story continued, as told in the Talmud (Shabbat 21b):*

When the Greeks entered the Sanctuary they ruined all the cruses of oil that were in the Sanctuary by touching them, which made them unfit. When the Hasmoneans overcame them and emerged victorious over them, they searched everywhere for oil to relight the Menora in the Temple, but could only find one cruse of oil that had the seal of the high priest unbroken, untouched by the Greeks. This cruse of oil was only enough to light the Menora for one day. A miracle occurred and the Menora was lit by this oil for eight days. The next year, the Sages instituted a festival to remember and celebrate those days, by singing Hallel and saying special prayers of thanksgiving.

### POINT TO PONDER

*Which do you think is more impressive, the military victory or the miracle of the oil?*



## HANUKKA CHALLENGE!

### AMUSING ANAGRAMS

Rearrange the letters used in each anagram to find the Hanukka-related word.

1. At Elk
2. Ole Violi
3. Deer Lid
4. Became Sac
5. Yea Duh
6. Mash Ash
7. That Yat Imu
8. Reclaims



## FUN FACT!

In Judaism, the number eight represents miracles. Why? Because it is beyond seven, which represents nature, as in the seven days of Creation.

## EDUCATIONAL COMPANION TO THE QUESTIONS

### INSPIRED BY FAITH, WE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

1. Throughout their history, the Jewish people have faced both physical and spiritual threats. The Purim story represents a physical existential attack on the Jewish people, and the Hanukka story portrays a spiritual existential threat. These are two parallel paths to achieve the same goal: the destruction of Judaism and the Jewish people. We can never be sure about the motivation for these attacks, but we can speculate that there were those in Greek society who perceived the values of the Torah as a threat, as they were often diametrically opposed to the values of Greek culture.

2. Size and power are not what is important in life to achieve our goals. Might does not make right. Even a single individual can change the world. We have to put our faith in God that there is a plan for us as individuals and for the Jewish people.

3. Jewish history is brimming with examples of the Jewish spirit triumphing over adversity, inspired by faith in God. Examples include the survival of Jews and Judaism after the expulsion from Spain; the influx of millions of Russian and Eastern European Jews to the United States of America in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century, and how they established themselves there; and the significant contributions that Jews have made to wider society in areas such as science, culture, and economics. But perhaps the most powerful example is the return of Jewish sovereignty to the land of Israel just three years after the Holocaust, despite the devastating destruction of the majority of European Jewry.

### FROM THE THOUGHT OF RABBI SACKS

1. Our very history as a people is a testament to the existence of God, who has protected us and

ensured our survival against all the odds through thousands of years of persecution and wandering. The very existence and survival of the Jewish people transmits core Jewish messages to the world, among them: might does not make right, the dignity of difference, and faith in God.

2. The quote refers to the size of the Jewish people in relation to the importance of their task and national mission, and Hanukka is an example of a small people achieving great things, demonstrating core Jewish values and the Jewish destiny.

### IT ONCE HAPPENED...

God can perform miracles through supernatural means, and through nature. The military victory represents a natural miracle, as the Maccabees fought hard, but they achieved an unlikely triumph that must have benefitted from God's help. This is no less impressive than the supernatural miracle of the oil that burned for eight days, when it should only have burned for one day. Both types of miracles come from God, but they are achieved by different means.

### AMUSING ANAGRAMS

1. Latke
2. Olive oil
3. Dreidel
4. Maccabees
5. Yehuda
6. Shamash
7. Mattityahu
8. Miracles





## A HANUKKA MESSAGE FOR THE SECOND NIGHT

### THE LIGHT OF WAR AND THE LIGHT OF PEACE

There is a law about Hanukka I find moving and profound. Rambam writes that “the command of Hanukka lights is very precious. One who lacks the money to buy lights should sell something, or if necessary borrow money, so as to be able to fulfil the mitzva.”

The question then arises: What if, on a Friday afternoon, you find yourself with only one candle? Should you light it as a Shabbat candle or a Hanukka one? It can't be both. Logic suggests that you should light it as a Hanukka candle. After all, there is no law that you have to sell or borrow to light the Shabbat lights. Yet the law is, surprisingly, that when faced with such a choice, you light your only candle as a Shabbat light. Why?

Listen to Rambam: “The Shabbat light takes priority because it symbolises *shalom bayit*, domestic peace. And great is peace because the entire Torah was given in order to make peace in the world.”

Consider: Hanukka commemorates one of the greatest military victories in Jewish history. Yet Jewish law rules that if we can only light one candle, the Shabbat light takes precedence, because in Judaism the greatest military victory takes second place to peace in the home.

Why did Judaism, alone among the civilisations of the ancient world, survive? Because it valued the home more than the battlefield, marriage more than military grandeur, and children more than generals. Peace in the home mattered to our ancestors more than the greatest military victory.

So as we celebrate Hanukka, spare a thought for the real victory, which was not military but spiritual. Jews were the people who valued marriage, the home, and peace between husband and wife, above the highest glory on the battlefield. In Judaism, the light of peace takes precedence over the light of war.

### POINTS TO PONDER

1. Does Judaism think war is wrong (i.e., is Judaism a pacifist religion)?

2. How can *shalom bayit* (peace in the home) also help bring *shalom* (peace) into the wider world?

3. How will you contribute to *shalom bayit* in your home this Hanukka?

“In Judaism,  
the light of peace takes precedence  
over the light of war.”





## FROM THE THOUGHT OF RABBI SACKS

The family...is the best means we have yet discovered for nurturing future generations and enabling children to grow in a matrix of stability and love. It is where we learn the delicate choreography of relationship and how to handle the inevitable conflicts within any human group. It is where we first take the risk of giving and receiving love. It is where one generation passes on its values to the next, ensuring the continuity of a civilisation. For any society, the family is the crucible of its future, and for the sake of our children's future, we must be its defenders.

*Morality, 74*

**“For any society, the family is the crucible of its future.”**

### POINTS TO PONDER

1. *Why is the family unit so important according to Rabbi Sacks?*
2. *What is the connection between this quote and the message from Rabbi Sacks in “The Light of War and the Light of Peace” (p. 60)?*



## IT ONCE HAPPENED...

General Holofernes commanded a huge Syrian-Greek army. As part of his campaign to stamp out the Jewish revolt, his forces besieged the town of Bethulia, in the land of Judea. The people of the town soon found themselves in a desperate situation, critically lacking in food and water, and facing a far superior military force.

Living in the town was a widow named Yehudit, who was the sister of Mattityahu and the aunt of Yehuda the Maccabee. She courageously hatched and executed a plan to save her town. She sneaked out of the city and requested an audience with Holofernes, the enemy commander. She convinced him that she had intelligence that would help him conquer the town, in exchange for his guarantee to deal compassionately with the inhabitants. She brought food and wine to celebrate their arrangement, including very salty goat cheese and especially strong wine. The cheese made the general thirsty, and he drank so much wine that he became drunk and fell asleep. She seized her opportunity and killed him with his own sword.

When she brought news of his death back to the town, the Jews were inspired by the daring heroism of Yehudit, and they attacked the Greek forces. Without their commander, the Greeks retreated, and the town was freed. This proved to be a key turning point in the Jewish revolt against the Greeks.

### POINT TO PONDER

*How is Yehudit similar to her nephew Yehuda the Maccabee?*



## ḤANUKKA CHALLENGE!

### RHYMING RIDDLES

1. I'm sweet and round, coming to a boil, in a pot of bubbling oil.
2. I'm a small town near Jerusalem. The Has-moneans lived here – Mattityahu and his five sons, who fought the Greeks with no fear!
3. I have eight plus one, to remember the battle that we won.
4. I'm made from olives. I come out when they are pressed. You can burn me for light. Who am I? Have you guessed?
5. I get dizzy when you give me a spin. It's all about the Ḥanukka *gelt* you're trying to win.
6. I'm here to serve others. Eight friends get light from me. You'll see me every night of Ḥanukka. Can you guess who I might be?
7. I'm fried in oil and very yummy. With sour cream or applesauce, I'll fill your tummy.
8. Our brave soldiers fought without glamour. Our fearless leader was nicknamed "Hammer"!



### FUN FACT!

The Maccabees were a group of Jewish Hasmonean warriors from Modi'in who rebelled against the Seleucid Greeks and defeated them, rededicating the Temple. The name "Maccabee" was the nickname of their leader, Yehuda, and means "Hammer" in Aramaic, in recognition of his strength as a warrior (although some say it was because he had a flat head like a hammer).



## EDUCATIONAL COMPANION TO THE QUESTIONS

### THE LIGHT OF WAR AND THE LIGHT OF PEACE

1. Judaism is not a pacifist religion. It believes firmly in the moral justification for war under certain circumstances, such as a war in spiritual or physical self-defence, or a war that has been commanded by God. However, peace is an ultimate value in Judaism, and whenever possible, the peaceful course should be taken.
2. When we are inevitably faced with challenging situations within the family structure, we learn skills such as negotiation, conflict resolution, and other interpersonal skills that help ensure *shalom bayit*. All these skills are also essential for ensuring *shalom* in the wider world when we will undoubtedly face similar situations of conflict.
3. Perhaps you can offer to help your parents with Hanukka preparations, or spend some time thinking about how you can show love to your siblings or other family members (e.g., buying or making presents, or preparing fun activities to do together).

### FROM THE THOUGHT OF RABBI SACKS

1. The family unit is where we learn how to be good people and members of society and how to form relationships with others. It is where we learn to love and be loved. This gives us the skills to love and be loved by others outside of our families. It is where

our values are received from the previous generation and transmitted to the next generation, and represents the future of our civilisation. The family unit is the foundation for a healthy society.

2. The family is a core value in Judaism, and this is seen in the halakha that Rabbi Sacks shared in the first message, where if one only has enough money for one candle, and is faced with the dilemma of using it either for Hanukka or as a Shabbat candle, one must light it as a Shabbat candle, because this brings *shalom bayit* to the family home.

### IT ONCE HAPPENED...

They both demonstrated courage and self-sacrifice for their people. They put themselves in harm's way in order to triumph over the enemies of Israel. Yehudit is a particularly important character for us, as a strong female role model whose dedication to her people ranks alongside her nephew and the other heroic leaders of Israel.

### RHYMING RIDDLES

1. *Sufganiyot* (doughnuts)
2. *Modi'in*
3. *Hanukkiya* (menora)
4. *Shemen zayit* (olive oil)
5. *Sevivon* (*dreidel*)
6. *Shamash*
7. *Latkes*
8. *Maccabees*



## A HANUKKA MESSAGE FOR THE THIRD NIGHT

### INSIDE/OUTSIDE

There is more than one command in Judaism to kindle lights. There are three. There are the Shabbat candles. There is the Havdala candle. And there are the Hanukka candles.

What is the difference between them? Shabbat candles represent *shalom bayit*, peace in the home. They are lit indoors. They can be thought of as Judaism's inner light, the light of the sanctity of marriage and the holiness of the home.

The Hanukka candles used to be lit outside – outside the front door. It was only fear of persecution that took the Hanukka candles back inside, and in recent times the Lubavitcher Rebbe introduced the custom of lighting giant *hanukkiyot* in public places to bring back the original spirit of the day.

Hanukka candles are the light Judaism brings to the world when we are unafraid to announce our identity in public, live by our principles, and fight, if necessary, for our freedom.

As for the Havdala candle, which is always made up of several wicks woven together, it represents the fusion of the two, the inner light of Shabbat, joined to the outer light we make during the six days of the week when we go out into the world and live our faith in public.

When we live as Jews in private, filling our homes with the light of the *Shekhina*, when we live as Jews in public, bringing the light of hope to others, and when we live both together, then we bring light to the world.

There always were two ways to live in a world that is often dark and full of tears. We can curse the darkness or we can light a light, and as the Hasidim say, a little light drives out much darkness. May we all help light up the world.

### POINTS TO PONDER

1. *What parts of Judaism bring light into our homes, represented by the Shabbat candles?*
2. *What parts of Judaism bring light to the outside world?*
3. *How can we be Havdala candles, and fuse the two, bringing the Judaism from our homes into the outside world?*

“Hanukka candles are the light Judaism brings to the world.”





## FROM THE THOUGHT OF RABBI SACKS

I admire other civilisations and traditions, and believe each has brought something special into the world, “*aval zeh shelanu*,” “but this is ours.” This is my people, my heritage, my faith. In our uniqueness lies our universality. Through being what we alone are, we give to humanity what only we can give. This, then, is our story, our gift to the next generation. I received it from my parents, and they from theirs, across great expanses of space and time. There is nothing quite like it. It changed, and still challenges, the moral imagination of humankind.

*A Letter in the Scroll, 229*

## POINTS TO PONDER

1. *What unique contribution can the Jewish people give to humanity?*

2. *What is the connection between this quote and the “Inside/Outside” message from Rabbi Sacks (p. 64)?*







## IT ONCE HAPPENED...

It was a frigid Saturday night during Hanukka of 1974 when Rabbi Abraham Shemtov had the unusual idea of lighting a big *hanukkiya* right in front of Independence Hall in Philadelphia, which houses the Liberty Bell, the icon of American freedom.

The *hanukkiya* was crude and made of wood; he had fashioned it with the help of some visiting yeshiva students. Almost no one was there that night to witness the actual lighting, but that simple four-foot *hanukkiya* was the seed from which thousands of public *hanukkiyot* have sprouted up in public and private places throughout the United States and around the world.

Over the next few years, *hanukkiyot* began springing up in cities and towns all across America. The next major development was in 1979, when Shemtov collaborated with Stuart Eizenstat – President Jimmy Carter’s chief domestic policy adviser and executive director of the White House domestic policy staff – to arrange for a *hanukkiya* to be placed on the White House lawn. Despite the fact that Carter was otherwise preoccupied during the opening weeks of the Iranian hostage crisis, he pointedly walked from the White House to the *hanukkiya*, where he lit the *shamash* – the helper candle from which the others are kindled – and shared greetings with the assembled crowd.

Throughout the following decades, the number of *hanukkiyot* and the scope of their reach has continued to blossom. It is estimated that as many as 15,000 Chabad-Lubavitch *hanukkiyot* are publicly lit worldwide.

One of the largest lightings is the one near the Eiffel Tower in central Paris, which has attracted as many as 20,000 French Jews. And in 1991, in the presence of approximately 6,000 Jews, longtime Chabad underground activist Avraham Genin kindled a giant *hanukkiya* inside the Kremlin Palace of Congresses.

In 2013, the tallest *hanukkiya* in Europe (more than thirty feet tall!) was constructed and lit on the first night of Hanukka at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, Germany, once a symbol of Nazi Party racism and hatred. Thousands of people attended the public ceremony, including local dignitaries. “Bringing light to places of darkness is the message of Hanukka,” said Chabad-Lubavitch of Berlin’s director, Rabbi Yehuda Teichtal. “There is no greater contrast than lighting a menorah here – in the place that was once the epitome of darkness – and now flooding it with the essence of light.”

## POINT TO PONDER

*Does the lighting of giant hanukkiyot throughout the world make you uncomfortable or proud?*



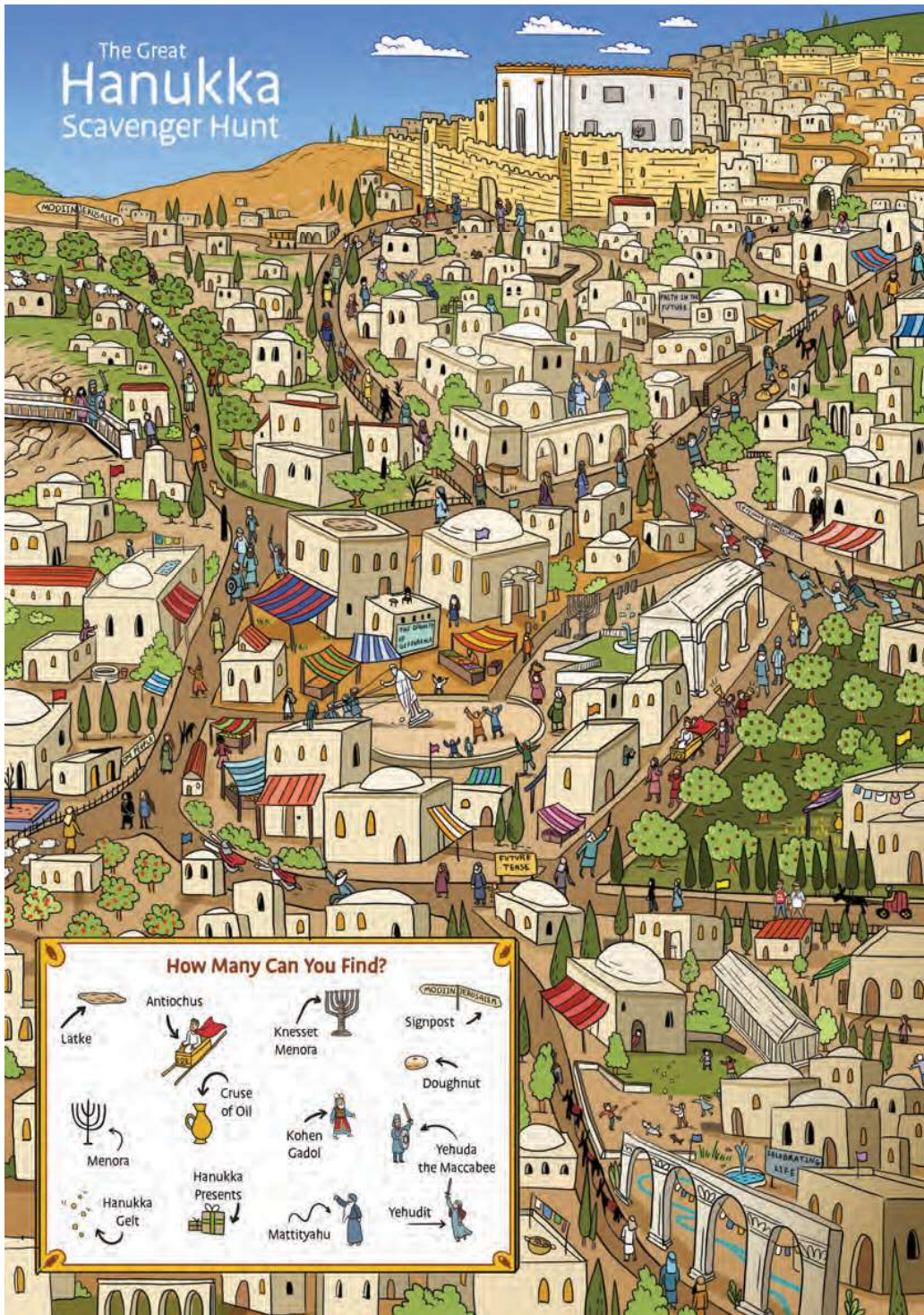


Illustration by Naama Lahav





### FUN FACT!

Every year the US president and first lady host an annual Hanukkah party for hundreds of American Jewish politicians and leaders of the Jewish community, but this wasn't always the case. Hanukkah was first celebrated at the White House after Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion gave Harry Truman a *hanukkiya* as a gift in 1951. George H. W. Bush

attended a Hanukkah party for staff in the Executive Office Building in 1991 and two years later, Bill Clinton hosted a candle-lighting ceremony in the White House for the first time with his staff. The first official White House Hanukkah party was held on December 10, 2001. President George W. Bush borrowed a hundred-year-old *hanukkiya* from the Jewish Museum in New York for the event.

## EDUCATIONAL COMPANION TO THE QUESTIONS

### INSIDE/OUTSIDE

1. Mitzvot that regulate our relationships, especially relationships within families, such as a child's obligations to their parents and a parent's obligations to their child. The mitzvot of Shabbat, festivals, and learning and teaching Torah are all mitzvot that bring light into a Jewish home.
2. The mitzvot that regulate society, that contribute to *tikkun olam* (the redeeming of, or fixing, the world) bring light to the outside world. These are the civil laws, such as *tzedaka*, environmental laws, and the laws of returning of lost articles.
3. There is a core principle in Judaism called "*kidush Hashem*" that expects a Jew to live their life so that it is a credit to God, and thus model the values of the Torah. We do this by keeping mitzvot for all to see, but also in all other areas of our lives, such as how we treat people. When Jews live their lives as ambassadors of God, they bring light to the outside world.

### FROM THE THOUGHT OF RABBI SACKS

1. Judaism has a unique message for humanity that it transmits through modelling as a nation how to

build communities and societies based on the moral and ethical values found in the Torah. This is the national mission of the Jewish people.

2. The Hanukkah lights, which must face a window or be lit outside, illuminating the public square, represent the light that Judaism can and must shine on the outside world.

### IT ONCE HAPPENED...

Rabbi Sacks often said that non-Jews respect Jews who respect their Judaism, and non-Jews are uncomfortable around Jews who are embarrassed by their Judaism. Hanukkah is a time when we are proud to take our Judaism into the public space. We are not trying to impose our ideas on the non-Jewish world. We only hope to expose the world to the beauty of Judaism, so that everyone can benefit from its light.



## A CHANUKKA MESSAGE FOR THE FOURTH NIGHT

### THE FIRST CLASH OF CIVILISATIONS

One of the key phrases of our time is “the clash of civilisations.” And Chanukka is about one of the first great clashes of civilisation, between the Greeks and Jews of antiquity, Athens and Jerusalem.

The ancient Greeks produced one of the most remarkable civilisations of all time: philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, historians like Herodotus and Thucydides, dramatists like Sophocles and Aeschylus. They produced art and architecture of a beauty that has never been surpassed. Yet in the second century BCE they were defeated by the group of Jewish fighters known as the Maccabees, and from then on Greece as a world power went into rapid decline, while the tiny Jewish people survived every exile and persecution and are still alive and well today.

What was the key difference between the two groups? The Greeks, who did not believe in a single, loving God, gave the world the concept of tragedy: we strive, we struggle, at times we achieve greatness, but life has no ultimate purpose. The universe neither knows nor cares that we are here.

In stark contrast, ancient Israel gave the world the idea of hope. We are here because God created us in love, and through love we discover the meaning and purpose of life.

Tragic cultures eventually disintegrate and die. Lacking any sense of ultimate meaning, they lose the moral beliefs and habits on which continuity depends. They sacrifice happiness for pleasure. They sell the future for the present. They lose the passion and energy that brought them greatness in the first place. That’s what happened to ancient Greece.

Judaism and its culture of hope survived, and the Chanukka lights are the ultimate symbol of that survival, of Judaism’s refusal to abandon its values for the glamour and prestige of a secular culture, then or now.

A candle of hope may seem a small thing, but on it the very survival of a civilisation may depend.

### POINTS TO PONDER

1. *What were the values of ancient Greek society, and how did they differ from the values of the Torah?*
2. *Where do we see that the Torah gave us the idea of hope?*
3. *How is this hope represented in the Chanukka candles?*





## FROM THE THOUGHT OF RABBI SACKS

The military victory [of Hanukka] was short-lived. Within a century Israel was again under foreign rule, this time by the Romans. It was the spiritual victory that survived. Realising that the real battle was not against an empire but a culture, Jews set about constructing the world's first system of universal education. The effect was astonishing. Although they were later to suffer devastating defeats at the hands of the Romans, they had created an identity so strong that it was able to survive 2,000 years of exile and dispersion.

What history taught them was that to defend a country you need an army, but to defend a civilisation you need schools. In the short run, battles are won by weapons, but in the long run they are won by ideas and the way they are handed on from generation to generation. Oddly but appropriately, Hanukka comes from the same Hebrew root as the word “*hinnukh*,” meaning “education.”

*Credo, The Times (December 7, 2007)*

### POINTS TO PONDER

1. What was the real triumph of the Hanukka story?
2. What is the connection between this passage and the message from Rabbi Sacks in “The First Clash of Civilisations” (p. 69)?

“To defend a country you need an army, but to defend a civilisation you need schools.”



## IT ONCE HAPPENED...

When Rav Kook was a young man he studied in yeshiva in a small town called Lutzen. At the end of the year he returned home with a present for his parents – a bundle of poems. But this did not please his father, who was concerned his son was being influenced by the secular world of the *Haskala*. The following year, Rav Kook instead brought home a notebook full of original insights into complex halakhic topics. But the urge to read and write poetry was still strong in his heart. Later in his life, Rav Kook found a way to bring these two passions together, by writing a long poem that incorporated all the laws of Hanukka, utilising his mastery of the Hebrew language and halakha while also fulfilling his desire to express himself poetically.

### POINT TO PONDER

*Why was Rav Kook's father concerned about him being exposed to secular culture? How did Rav Kook respond to this?*





## CHANUKKA CHALLENGE!

### HIDON ON THE HAG (A QUICK QUIZ)

1. In total, how many candles are lit over the eight nights of Chanukka?
2. What does the word “Chanukka” mean?
3. What does the word “Maccabee” mean?
4. What is the name of the leader of the ancient Greeks who decreed laws against Judaism?
5. What is the name of the courageous Jewish woman who defied the Greeks and killed one of their generals?
6. What is another name for the festival of Chanukka?
7. What were the miracles of Chanukka?
8. What is the name of the town in Israel where the Maccabees lived?



## FUN FACT!

Many have the custom to give children “Chanukka gelt” (Yiddish for “Chanukka money”). It is believed that this custom began in Poland in the seventeenth century, initially so that the children could then give coins to their teachers as a gift of gratitude. Later on, money was also given to the children to keep (this may be the source of the

custom to give children Chanukka gifts). Chanukka gelt is also connected to the festival, as the Has-moneans minted national coins to celebrate the victory of the Maccabees over the ancient Greeks. In the twentieth century, chocolate Chanukka gelt coins became a popular gift on Chanukka, with many families using them for playing dreidel.

## EDUCATIONAL COMPANION TO THE QUESTIONS

### THE FIRST CLASH OF CIVILISATIONS

1. The Greeks supremely valued the aesthetic – physical beauty and strength – rather than moral and spiritual beauty. They did not believe in a single, loving God, but rather in destiny, and they gave the world the concept of tragedy. They believed that it doesn't matter how hard we strive and work to achieve our own goals; destiny determines our end. Life has no ultimate purpose. The universe neither knows nor cares that we are here. In stark contrast, Judaism believes we are here because God created us in love, and He acts in history for our benefit, and through this love we discover the meaning and purpose of life.

2. Judaism tells us that the world can and will become better than it is today (and gives us the responsibility of partnering with God in making this a reality). The concept of *tikkun olam* (redeeming or fixing the world) and the anticipation of a Messianic time that has not yet arrived gives humanity hope in the future.

3. The Hanukkah lights are the symbol of the survival of the Jewish people and Jewish culture. They represent hope and faith in the future, because even when the situation looked impossibly bleak, the Maccabees refused to give up hope for the future, and fought to triumph over the darkness (and continued to look for the cruses of oil despite the fact that the chances of finding any were very small).

### FROM THE THOUGHT OF RABBI SACKS

1. While the military victory was also very impressive, the real victory was the spiritual triumph. This spiritual victory that we celebrate, how the Jews refused to give in to the seduction of Greek culture,

which was the antithesis of the Torah's values, has had the longest-lasting impact on Jewish history. They fought to hold on to Torah values, and today, thousands of years later, while the ancient Greeks are long gone, the Jewish people continue to thrive.

2. Rabbi Sacks speaks of the clash of civilisations found in the Hanukkah story. This passage demonstrates that the spiritual triumph of the Maccabees was everlasting. The Jewish people and Jewish civilisation have survived through the generations not by building armies, but by caring about the education of each generation.

### IT ONCE HAPPENED...

Aspects of secular culture may have values that are antithetical to Jewish values contained in the Torah. Secular culture may also lead Jews astray from their own culture and the values of their religion. Rav Kook's response was to show how the good in secular culture can enrich Jewish culture and Jewish thought.

### HANUKKA QUIZ

- Forty-four.
- "Dedication." (Bonus answer: "They rested on the twenty-fifth.")
- Hammer. This was the nickname of Yehuda, the leader of the revolt against the Greeks.
- Antiochus Epiphanes.
- Yehudit.
- Hag Urim* (Festival of Lights).
- The military miracle, that the small Maccabee forces defeated the mighty Greek army, and the miracle of the oil that burned for eight days.
- Modi'in.



## A HANUKKA MESSAGE FOR THE FIFTH NIGHT

### HANUKKA FOR OUR TIME

Back in 1991, I lit Chanukka candles with Mikhail Gorbachev, who had, until earlier that year, been president of the Soviet Union.

For seventy years, the practice of Judaism had been effectively banned in Communist Russia. It was one of the two great assaults on our people and our faith in the twentieth century. The Germans sought to kill Jews; the Russians tried to kill Judaism.

Under Stalin the assault became brutal. In 1967, after Israel's victory in the Six-Day War, many Soviet Jews sought to leave Russia and go to Israel. Not only was permission refused, but often the Jews concerned lost their jobs and were imprisoned.

Around the world, Jews campaigned for the prisoners, called Refuseniks, to be released and permitted to leave the country.

Eventually Gorbachev realised that the whole Soviet system was unworkable. Communism had brought repression, a police state, and a new hierarchy of power, not freedom and equality. In the end it collapsed, and Jews regained the freedom to practise Judaism and go to Israel.

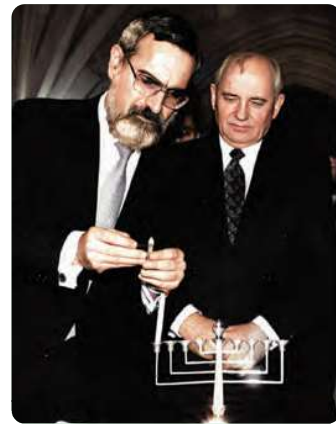
That day in 1991, after we had lit candles together, Gorbachev asked me, through his interpreter, what we had just done. I told him that twenty-two centuries ago in Israel, after the public practice of Judaism had been banned, Jews fought for and won their freedom, and these lights were the symbol of that victory. And I continued: "Seventy years ago, Jews suffered the same loss of freedom in Russia, and you have now helped them to regain it. So you have become part of the Chanukka story."

And as the interpreter translated those words into Russian, Mikhail Gorbachev blushed.

The Chanukka story still lives, still inspires, telling not just us but the world that though tyranny exists, freedom, with God's help, will always win the final battle.

### POINTS TO PONDER

1. *What similarities are there between the Chanukka story and the story of Soviet Jewry under Communism?*
2. *How can we be sure that ultimately, we will always win the battle?*
3. *Rabbi Sacks applies the messages of the Chanukka story to contemporary times. What can we learn from Chanukka to help us in our generation?*







## FROM THE THOUGHT OF RABBI SACKS

The symbol of Hanukka is the *chanukiah* we light for eight days in memory of the Temple Menora, purified and rededicated by the Maccabees all those centuries ago. Faith is like a flame. Properly tended, it gives light and warmth, but let loose, it can burn and destroy. We need, in the 21st century, a global Hanukka: a festival of freedom for all the world's faiths. For though my faith is not yours and your faith is not mine, if we are each free to light our own flame, together we can banish some of the darkness of the world.

**“Why Hanukka Is the Perfect Festival for Religious Freedom,” *The Washington Post* (December 7, 2015)**

## POINTS TO PONDER

1. *Why is Hanukka considered a festival of religious freedom?*
2. *What is the connection between this passage and the message from Rabbi Sacks on “Hanukka for Our Time” (p. 73)?*







## IT ONCE HAPPENED...

On Chanukka 1932, just one month before Hitler came to power, Rachel Posner, wife of Rabbi Dr. Akiva Posner, took this photo of the family *hanukkiya* from the window ledge of the family home looking out onto the building across the road decorated with Nazi flags.

On the back of the photograph, Rachel Posner wrote in German:

*Chanukka 5692 (1932)  
 "Death to Judah"  
 So the flag says  
 "Judah will live forever"  
 So the light answers*

Rabbi Dr. Akiva Posner, doctor of philosophy from Halle-Wittenberg University, served from 1924 to 1933 as the last rabbi of the community of Kiel, Germany. After he wrote a protest letter in the local newspaper expressing indignation at the posters that had appeared in the city, "Entrance to Jews Forbidden," he was summoned by the chairman of the local branch of the Nazi party to participate in a public debate. The event took place under heavy police guard and was reported by the local press.

When the tension and violence in the city intensified, the rabbi, his wife Rachel, and their three children were forced to flee their home and make their way to *Eretz Yisrael*. Before their departure, Rabbi Posner was able to convince many of his congregants to leave as well and indeed most managed to leave for *Eretz Yisrael* or the United States. The Posner family left Germany in 1933 and arrived in *Eretz Yisrael* in 1934.

Some eighty years later, Akiva and Rachel Posner's descendants continue to light Chanukka candles using the same *hanukkiya* that was brought to Israel from Kiel. On Chanukka 5770 (2009), Akiva Mansbach, dressed in the uniform of the Israel Defense Forces, saluted and read out a poem he had written in Hebrew, inspired by the poem written by his great-grandmother Rachel Posner in 1932.

Translated it reads:

*In 5692 the hanukkiya is in exile, it stands in the window / It challenges the party flag that doesn't yet rule / "Judah die!" it says / And Grandma's rhyme responds / In its own tongue, without despair: So the flag says, but our candle answers and declares / "Judah will live forever."*

*In 5770 the hanukkiya stands in the window once again / Facing the flag of the ruling State / The descendant Akiva, named for his great-grandfather / Salutes through the window and lights the hanukkiya / Grandmother, give thanks above and say a prayer / That "the Redeemer will come to Zion" and not delay.*

YadVashem.org

## POINT TO PONDER

*Why do you think this photograph has brought so many people comfort?*





## HANUKKA CHALLENGE!

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE





### FUN FACT!

In December of 1993, Space Shuttle Endeavour was sent into space to service the Hubble Space Telescope. One of the astronauts who bravely performed a spacewalk to repair the telescope was Jeffrey Hoffman. Knowing that he would be stuck in space over Chanukka, Hoffman made sure to bring along a *dreidel* and a travel-sized *chanukkiya* so that he'd be able to celebrate the *hag* (although, because of lack of gravity and safety concerns, there was no way to actually light candles). Via live satellite communication, he presented his Chanukka supplies, gave his *dreidel* a twirl in the air, and wished Jews everywhere a happy Chanukka.

## EDUCATIONAL COMPANION TO THE QUESTIONS

### CHANUKKA FOR OUR TIME

1. The Soviet regime also tried to destroy Judaism as a religion. Under Communist rule, the Soviet Union tried to limit the influence of all religions, believing them to be opposed to the political and social ideologies of Communism. It was almost impossible to practise Judaism in Soviet Russia, and those Jews who expressed an interest in leaving Russia and making *aliya* risked everything. Yet there were thousands of Jews determined that they would not allow these restrictions to stop them from being Jewish. Ultimately this was another case in Jewish history of a tiny but brave minority taking on a mighty empire and triumphing against all the odds.
2. We are only sure because of the faith we have in God to guide history, and the faith we have in ourselves to make this happen.
3. In recent years we have found ourselves facing challenging times (including a global pandemic). The Chanukka story shows us that with hope in our hearts that the future will be better, we can have faith that we will get through this together.

### FROM THE THOUGHT OF RABBI SACKS

1. On festivals such as Purim and Pesah, we celebrate deliverance from a physical threat to the Jewish people and the delivery of physical freedom, but Chanukka is about celebrating our deliverance from

a force that wished to destroy Judaism itself. The message of Chanukka is that all people deserve to be able to practise their religion in peace.

2. Soviet Russia was not a place and time in history where there was religious freedom. Chanukka's message is that freedom will always triumph.

### IT ONCE HAPPENED...

The photo (and the poem written on the back) is a reminder that no matter how dark times get, and how much it looks like our survival is at risk, the Jewish people will always survive and persevere. Taking it one step further, we can also note that the uniform of the Israel Defense Forces worn by the great-grandson of the original owners of this *chanukkiya* represents the modern-day Maccabees and a strengthened faith that the Jewish people will survive.

### SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

1. The number of lit candles.
2. A Hebrew letter on a *dreidel* has changed.
3. A present has changed colour from yellow to green.
4. The drizzled icing on the doughnut is missing.
5. The number of presents the man is holding.
6. The t-shirt of the person lighting the candles.
7. An oil jug has disappeared.
8. The colour of the sprinkles on a doughnut.



## A HANUKKA MESSAGE FOR THE SIXTH NIGHT

### THE THIRD MIRACLE

We all know the miracles of Hanukka: the military victory of the Maccabees against the Greeks and the miracle of the oil that should have lasted one day but kept the Menora lights burning for eight. But there was a third miracle not many people know about. It took place several centuries later.

After the destruction of the Second *Beit HaMikdash*, many Rabbis were convinced that the festival of Hanukka should be abolished. After all, it celebrated the rededication of the *Beit HaMikdash*. And the *Beit HaMikdash* was no more. It had been destroyed by the Romans under Titus. Without a *Beit HaMikdash*, what was there left to celebrate?

The Talmud tells us that in at least one town, Lod, Hanukka was abolished. Yet eventually the other view prevailed, which is why we continue to celebrate Hanukka to this day.

Why? Because although the *Beit HaMikdash* was destroyed, Jewish hope was not destroyed. We may have lost the building but we still have the story, and the memory, and the light. And what had happened once in the days of the Maccabees could happen again. It was those words, “*Od lo avda tikvateinu*,” “Our hope is not destroyed,” words that became part of the song *HaTikva*, that inspired Jews to return to Israel and rebuild their ancient state.

So as you light the Hanukka candles remember this: The Jewish people kept hope alive, and hope kept the Jewish people alive. We are the voice of hope in the conversation of humankind.

### POINTS TO PONDER

1. *Why do you think it is important to maintain festivals and remembrance days that commemorate historical events from generations ago?*
2. *How does Hanukka represent hope? Hope for what?*
3. *What connections are there between the Hanukka story and the modern State of Israel?*







## FROM THE THOUGHT OF RABBI SACKS

Something in the human spirit survives even the worst of tragedies, allowing us to rebuild shattered lives, broken institutions, and injured nations.

That, to me, is the Jewish story. Jews survived all the defeats, expulsions, persecutions, and pogroms, even the Holocaust itself, because they never gave up the faith that one day they would be free to live as Jews without fear.

Whenever I visit a Jewish school today, I see on the smiling faces of the children the ever-renewed power of that faith whose symbol is Hanukka and its light of inextinguishable hope.

*Credo, The Times (December 8, 2012)*

### POINTS TO PONDER

1. *What do Jewish school-children represent to Rabbi Sacks in this passage?*
2. *What is the connection between this passage and the message from Rabbi Sacks on "The Third Miracle" (p. 78)?*



## IT ONCE HAPPENED...

In the days of the wicked kingdom of Greece, it was decreed upon the Jews that whoever had a bolt on his door must engrave upon it the words "I have no portion or heritage in the God of Israel."

Immediately, all Jews went and pulled out all the bolts from their doors and discarded them.

It was also decreed that whoever had an ox must write on its horn the words "I have no portion or heritage in the God of Israel."

Immediately, all the Jews went and sold all their oxen.

*Midrash LeHanukka, 5*

### POINT TO PONDER

*How do these acts of defiance compare to the heroism of the Maccabees?*





## ḤANUKKA CHALLENGE!

### THE ḤANUKKA STORY IN EMOJIS

From the days of Alexander the 🏹 of 🇮🇹, 🇮🇸 was under the 🇬🇷 of the Alexandrian Empire of 🇬🇷. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, 🇮🇸 came 📉 the 🇬🇷 of the Seleucids who were based in 🇸🇾.

The Seleucid leader, Antiochus the 4<sup>th</sup>, who modestly called himself Epiphanes, meaning “God made manifest,” decided to 🏃 up the pace of Hellenisation on the 🌠s of the land of 🇮🇸. He made it illegal to publicly practise 🌠, erected a 🏛️ of Zeus in the 🏛️, and offered a 🐷 before it as a sacrifice.

An 🧐 priest called Mattityahu, and his 👤 👤 👤 👤 👤 and their supporters known to history as the 🛠️, 🗡️ back. 📈 the next 3 years, they scored a 🏹 🙌 📈 the Seleucids, reconquering Jerusalem and bringing it 🔄 📉 🌠 sovereignty. They cleansed the 🏛️ and rededicated it, 🔥 the 🏹 🕯️ that stood in the 🏛️, for a celebration lasting 8 days.



## FUN FACT!

There is a custom on Ḥanukka to play with special spinning tops called *dreidels* (in Yiddish) or *sevivonim* (in Hebrew). The Greeks forbade Jews to learn Torah and so Jews would meet in secret to learn, but if a Greek soldier walked past, they would pretend to be gambling with their *dreidels*. The words *dreidel* (Yiddish) and *sevivon* (Hebrew) both mean to turn or spin. The *dreidel* has four sides, each of which features a Hebrew letter. In Israel, the letters are *nun*, *gimel*, *heh*, and *peh*. Outside Israel, they're *nun*, *gimel*, *heh*, *shin*. The letters stand for the Hebrew phrase “*Nes gadol haya po/sham*,” meaning, “A great miracle happened here/there” (here for those in Israel, there for those outside of Israel).

## EDUCATIONAL COMPANION TO THE QUESTIONS

### THE THIRD MIRACLE

1. The festivals that commemorate historical events are the way that we transmit our heritage and our history. They are the most effective way to build our values and our identity in future generations, creating a national DNA that is passed from one generation to the next. For Jews, these festivals do not represent just history, but national memory, and are the basis for national identity.

2. Hope is a recurring theme in the Hanukka story. The Maccabees had hope that despite overwhelming odds, they could defeat the mightiest and largest army in the world. They had hope that they could find oil to light the Menora. And despite the later destruction of the *Beit HaMikdash*, we still celebrate Hanukka because we have hope that one day it will be rebuilt.

3. The story of the establishment of the modern State of Israel is also a story of hope and miracles, and the overcoming of immense odds. Just three years after the Jewish people experienced the greatest tragedy in human history, they re-established Jewish sovereignty in their ancestral homeland, and thereafter had to fight several wars against numerous enemies, triumphing, despite the odds, again and again.

### FROM THE THOUGHT OF RABBI SACKS

1. Children represent the future, and a society or community that invests in its children has hope for the future. Jewish children in Jewish schools prove that the Jewish people have overcome thousands of years of adversity and persecution, and today we continue to invest in our future, a hopeful future.

2. This message is the message of Hanukka, the story of inextinguishable hope.

### IT ONCE HAPPENED...

Heroism comes in small and large acts. The Maccabees were brave military fighters, but these acts from the wider populace were equally heroic and courageous. They were acts of defiance in the face of persecution, making a clear statement that their will and spirit could not be broken.

### THE HANUKKA STORY IN EMOJIS

From the days of Alexander the **Great** of **Macedonia**, **Israel** was under the **control** of the Alexandrian Empire of **Greece**. During the **second** century BCE, **Israel** came **under the control** of the Seleucids who were based in **Egypt**.

The Seleucid leader, Antiochus the **Fourth**, who modestly called himself Epiphanes, meaning “God made manifest,” decided to **speed** up the pace of Hellenisation on the **Jews** of the land of **Israel**. He made it illegal to publicly practise **Judaism**, erected a **statue** of Zeus in the **Temple**, and offered a **pig** before it as a sacrifice.

An **elderly** priest called Mattityahu, and his **sons** and their supporters known to history as the **Hammers (Maccabees)**, **fought** back. **Over** the next **three** years, they scored a **great victory** over the Seleucids, reconquering Jerusalem and bringing it **back under Jewish** sovereignty. They cleansed the **Temple** and rededicated it, **lighting** the **great Menora** that stood in the **Temple**, for a celebration lasting **eight** days.



## A HANUKKA MESSAGE FOR THE SEVENTH NIGHT

### THE LIGHT OF THE SPIRIT NEVER DIES

There is an interesting question the commentators ask about Hanukka.

For eight days we kindle lights, and each night we make the blessing over miracles: *She'asa nissim laavoteinu*. But what was the miracle of the first night? The oil that should have lasted one day lasted eight. But that means there was something miraculous about days two to eight; nothing was miraculous about the first day.

Perhaps the miracle was this: that the Maccabees found one cruse of oil with its seal intact, undefiled. There was no reason to suppose that anything would have survived the systematic desecration the Greeks and their supporters did to the *Beit HaMikdash*. Yet the Maccabees searched and found that one cruse.

Why did they search? Because they had faith that from the worst tragedy, something would survive. The miracle of the first night was that of faith itself, the faith that something would remain with which to begin again.

So it has always been in Jewish history. There were times when any other people would have given up in despair: after the destruction of the *Beit HaMikdash*, or the massacres of the Crusades, or the Spanish Expulsion, or the pogroms, or the *Shoah*. But somehow, Jews did not merely sit and weep. They gathered what remained, rebuilt our people, and lit a light like no other in history, a light that tells us, and the world, of the power of the human spirit to overcome every tragedy and refuse to accept defeat.

From the days of Moshe and the bush that burned and was not consumed, to the days of the Maccabees and the single cruse of oil, Judaism has been humanity's *ner tamid*, the everlasting light that no power on earth can extinguish.

### POINTS TO PONDER

1. *What did the Maccabees have faith in?*
2. *Why do you think Rabbi Sacks describes faith itself as a miracle?*
3. *Do you think having faith today is also a miracle?*

**“Judaism has been humanity’s *ner tamid*, the everlasting light that no power on earth can extinguish.”**





## FROM THE THOUGHT OF RABBI SACKS

When I stand today in Jerusalem, or in a Jewish school, or see a Jewish couple under the wedding canopy, or see parents at the Shabbat table blessing their children, there are times when I am overcome with tears, not in sadness nor in joy, but in awe at this people who came face to face with the Angel of Death and refused to give it a final victory.

The Jewish people lives, and still bears witness to the living God.

*A Letter in the Scroll, 192*

### POINTS TO PONDER

1. *What is it about Jerusalem, a Jewish school, a Jewish wedding, or a Jewish family around their Shabbat table that caused Rabbi Sacks to feel awe?*

2. *How does this passage expand on the ideas found in "The Light of the Spirit Never Dies" (p. 82)?*



## IT ONCE HAPPENED...

In the days when the Greeks had defiled the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, an elderly and respected *kohen* by the name of Mattityahu lived with his five sons in a town called Modi'in, near Jerusalem.

One day, the officers of Antiochus arrived in Modi'in and built an altar in the marketplace, demanding that Mattityahu offer sacrifices to the Greek gods.

Mattityahu replied to them, "I, my sons, and my brothers will always remain loyal to the covenant that our God made with our ancestors! We will not obey the king's orders or stray from our religion one inch!"

At this moment, a Hellenised Jew approached the altar to sacrifice to the Greek gods. Mattityahu was filled with righteous outrage, so he reached for his sword and killed him. Then, together with his sons, he also killed the king's officers and destroyed the altar that they had built.

Knowing that Antiochus would be furious when he heard about it, and knowing that he would send troops to kill them all, Mattityahu fled to the hills of Judaea, followed by his sons, calling out: "Whoever is for God and His Torah, follow me!" And so began the Hasmonean revolt against Antiochus and the Greeks.

### POINT TO PONDER

*Do you think Mattityahu's response was extreme? Is there a precedent for it in the Torah?*





## HANUKKA CHALLENGE!

### WACKY WORDSEARCH

1. Latkes

2. Sevivon

3. Mattityahu

4. Yehudah

5. Modi'in

6. Maccabees

7. Oil

8. Antiochus

M	A	M	F	Y	S	U	W	M	N
A	R	O	P	E	E	U	B	A	Y
C	W	D	L	H	V	Y	S	T	Y
C	I	I	A	U	I	I	I	T	A
A	R	I	T	D	V	D	N	I	T
B	A	N	K	A	O	Z	J	T	L
E	R	R	E	F	N	S	O	Y	R
E	O	Q	S	Y	R	Q	H	A	U
S	Q	O	I	L	I	W	R	H	S
I	A	N	T	I	O	C	H	U	S



## FUN FACTS!

We eat oily (and yummy!) food like potato latkes and *sufganiyot* (doughnuts) to remember the miracle of the cruse of oil that should have only lasted one night but burned for eight whole days and nights.



## EDUCATIONAL COMPANION TO THE QUESTIONS

### THE LIGHT OF THE SPIRIT NEVER DIES

1. The Maccabees had faith in God, and in the righteousness of their mission, and in their ability to achieve it (with the help of God). They had hope that they would be able to defeat the Greeks and re-institute the Temple service and sovereignty in Jerusalem. They demonstrated this by searching for the purified oil despite the improbability of finding any. The very act of searching for the oil amongst the destruction in the *Beit HaMikdash* demonstrated their faith in the future.

2. Despair is a natural response to tragedy and adversity. The Maccabees had every reason to despair. Their deep faith in themselves, in the future, and in God, was heroic and inspiring, and according to Rabbi Sacks it was miraculous because it was also so unlikely and took deep courage.

3. There are many reasons to despair in the face of the adversities before us today. Having faith in the future is always miraculous, but at the same time, it is something we can aspire to.

### FROM THE THOUGHT OF RABBI SACKS

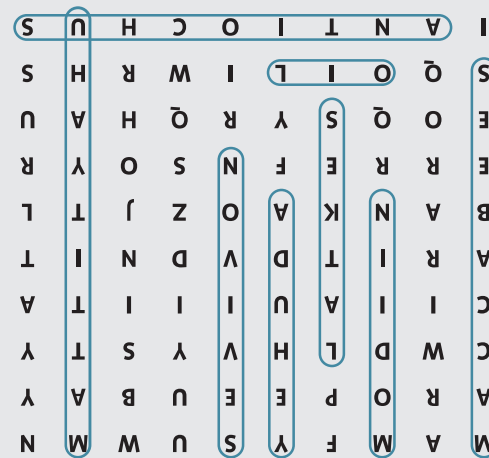
1. These things represent the courage of Jewish faith in the future. That we have returned to Jerusalem and it is now thriving, after thousands of years of exile and desolation, is reason to be in awe of the Jewish people. Jews investing in the future by getting married, raising families, and educating their children in their homes and schools left Rabbi Sacks feeling in awe of their courage and faith.

2. The faith in the future represented by these things is the same faith and courage seen in the Hanukka story, both when the Maccabees fought against a far superior army, against the odds, and when they searched for pure oil in Jerusalem. They, too, demonstrated courage and faith in the future.

### IT ONCE HAPPENED...

When the core values of your very existence are threatened, extreme measures are called for. Mattityahu was a spiritual leader at this time, and he had to take a stand to save Judaism and the Jewish people. His role model in the Torah was Pinhas, who took a similar stand in the face of immorality.

### WACKY WORDSEARCH





## A HANUKKA MESSAGE FOR THE EIGHTH NIGHT

### TO LIGHT ANOTHER LIGHT

There's a fascinating argument in the Talmud that debates the following question: Can you use one Hanukka light to light another? Usually, of course, we take an extra light, the *shamash*, and use it to light all the candles. But suppose we don't have one. Can we light the first candle and then use it to light the others?

Two great Sages of the third century, Rav and Shmuel, disagreed. Rav said no. Shmuel said yes. Normally we have a rule that when Rav and Shmuel disagree, the law follows Rav. There are only three exceptions, and this is one of them.

Why did Rav say that you may not use one Hanukka candle to light the others?

Because, says the Talmud, "*Mishum deka makhshish mitzva*," "You will diminish the first candle." Inevitably, you will spill some of the wax or oil. And Rav says: Don't do anything that would diminish the light of the first candle.

But Shmuel disagrees, and the law follows Shmuel. Why?

The best way of answering this is to think of two Jews: both religious, both committed, both living Jewish lives. One says: "I must not get involved with Jews who are less religious than me, because if I do, my own standards will fall. I'll keep less. My light will be diminished." That's the view of Rav.

The other says: "No. When I use the flame of my faith to light a candle in someone else's life, my Jewishness is not diminished. It grows, because there is now more Jewish light in the world. When it comes to spiritual goods as opposed to material goods, the more I share, the more I have. If I share my knowledge, or faith, or love with others, I won't have less; I may even have more." That's the view of Shmuel, and that is how the law was eventually decided.

So share your Judaism with others. Take the flame of your faith and help set other souls on fire.

### POINTS TO PONDER

1. How is sharing material goods similar to the position of Rav?
2. How is sharing spiritual or moral goods similar to the position of Shmuel?
3. How will you be like Shmuel today?

**"Take the flame of your faith  
and help set other souls on fire."**





## FROM THE THOUGHT OF RABBI SACKS

You can see religion as a battle, a holy war, in which you win a victory for your faith by force or fear. Or you can see it as a candle you light to drive away some of the darkness of the world.

The difference is that the first sees other religions as the enemy. The second sees them as other candles, not threatening mine, but adding to the light we share.

What Jews remembered from that victory over the Greeks twenty-two centuries ago was not a God of war but the God of light. And it's only the God of light who can defeat the darkness in the human soul.

*From Optimism to Hope, 96*

## POINTS TO PONDER

1. *Does Judaism see religion as a battle or as a candle?*

2. *What is the connection between this passage and the message from Rabbi Sacks in "To Light Another Light" (p. 86)?*





## IT ONCE HAPPENED...

The winter of 1777 was harsh, almost unbearable. The soldiers stationed in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, had no inkling of why they were there. In their midst was a lone Jewish soldier and it was the first night of Hanukka. When all of the soldiers in the tent were fast asleep, he took out his *hanukkiya*. He lit the first candle, recited the blessings, and sat down to watch the small flame dancing merrily.

It fired his imagination and brought back a host of memories. The general appeared by his side. He looked at him and said gently, “Why are you weeping? Are you cold, my friend?” The soldier jumped to his feet and saluted.

Then he answered quietly, “I am weeping before my Father in heaven, sir. Everyone’s fate lies in His hands; He controls the fate of millions, the world over. I was praying for your success, General Washington. I came to this country because I was fleeing the persecution of tyrants who have forever oppressed my family, my townspeople, and my nation. The despots will fall, sir, but you will be victorious!”

“Thank you, soldier!” the general replied heartily and sat himself on the ground before the *hanukkiya*. “And what have we here?” he asked, full of curiosity. “This is a candelabrum,” answered the soldier. “Jews all over the world are lighting the first candle of our festival, Hanukka, tonight. This serves to commemorate a great miracle that occurred to our ancestors. They were only a handful compared to the massive armies of their enemies, but they held out, thanks to their faith in God, and were granted a miracle.”

The bright flame ignited a flame of hope in the weary general’s eyes and he cried out joyfully, “You are a Jew? Then you are descended from a people of prophets! And you say that we will win the war?” “Yes, sir!” he replied confidently. The general rose, his face glowing with renewed hope. They shook hands heartily. Washington asked the soldier for his name and address and disappeared into the night.

On the first night of Hanukka, in 1778, one year later, our Jewish veteran was sitting in his home on Broome Street in New York. The first Hanukka light was burning brightly on his windowsill. Suddenly, there was a knock on the door. His wife rose to open it wide. To her astonishment, there stood President Washington.

“There is that fabulous light, the Hanukka light,” he cried out happily, spotting the candle by the window. “That flame, and your remarkable words, kindled a light in my heart on that dark and bitter night,” he reminisced. “We were in a tight situation then, and your words encouraged me so! They spurred me on with new hope.

“You will soon be awarded a Medal of Honor from the United States of America for your bravery in Valley Forge, but tonight you will receive a personal memento from me.” With these words he placed on the table a gold medal upon which was engraved a Hanukka menorah with one light burning. Upon this medal was inscribed: “As a sign of thanks for the light of your candle. George Washington.”

## POINT TO PONDER

*What did the Hanukka flames represent to Washington? What do they represent to you?*





## HANUKKA CHALLENGE!

### DEVIOUS DINGBATS

1. Ant, coffee cup, O, bus, ~~B~~ CH
2. Can, doll, graduate, ~~J~~ W
3. Smiling face with 3 hearts, leaf
4. D, sun, doll
5. Pot, ~~P~~ F, gun, hand, ~~H~~
6. Graduate, ~~J~~ M, A, bees
7. Beer mug, key, AH
8. Bears,  $1+2=3$ , coins, ~~H~~, arrow, ~~P~~ CH



### FUN FACT!

The Hanukkah lights need to be lit at night, facing the outside world, at a time when people are around, so that they bring light and tell the world the story of the miracle.



## EDUCATIONAL COMPANION TO THE QUESTIONS

### TO LIGHT ANOTHER LIGHT

1. When material goods such as money, food, and clothes are shared, they are diminished for the giver. The giver now has less. This is called a zero-sum game. It is you or me. We cannot share the entirety of material goods equally.
2. Spiritual goods are increased when they are shared. Love, laughter, kindness, and knowledge are all spiritual goods, and when they are shared, they are not diminished for the giver. Rather, they are increased for the giver (for example, making someone laugh will make you laugh also, loving someone will increase love for you in turn, and teaching someone will increase your own knowledge).
3. Think about what spiritual goods you can share today, in the spirit of Shmuel's approach to Hanukkah light.

### FROM THE THOUGHT OF RABBI SACKS

1. According to Rabbi Sacks, Judaism does not see religion as a battle. Rather, Judaism sees itself as a candle, spreading light to the world, and through joining with other candles (other religions) it will

increase light in the world. It wishes to shine its light on humanity, and makes space for receiving the light of other cultures and civilisations.

2. The sharing of light between Hanukkah candles, as a metaphor for the sharing of Judaism's light with the world, is expressed in this quote about the God of light, and Judaism as a candle that brightens the world, not a religion of war that causes destruction.

### IT ONCE HAPPENED...

Several possible answers are: Hope. Faith. Triumph over adversity. God's protection. History. Destiny. Freedom.

### DEVIOS DINGBATS

1. Antiochus
2. Candle wax
3. Kislev
4. Dreidel
5. Sufganiyot
6. Maccabees
7. Hanukkiya
8. Hag same'ah