



Pesach

The Essence of Our Passover Seder

What is the essence of the Passover Seder?

Within the Haggadah, we read the words of Rabban Gamliel, who teaches: *“Kol shelo amar sheloshah devarim ellu bapesach, lo yatza yedei chovato.”* This means that in order to fulfill one's obligation in the Maggid section—the central part of the Haggadah—you need only mention three things: *Pesach, Matzah, and Marror.*

The word *Le'hagid* means: ‘to utter, ‘to say’, or ‘to impart’. Just by saying these three items, you have fulfilled your obligation.

But what do we actually do at the Seder? We say, *“Matzot haochlim, al shum mah.”* Why do we eat Matzah? Why do we eat Marror? Why did we eat the Pesach?

While it's sufficient to merely mention these items, we add the phrase *“Al shum mah”*—“Why is this so?” for each one. Why do we do this?

The reason is that in our tradition, it's not enough to simply refer mechanically to an element of our faith or practice. We are encouraged to be inquisitive. We need to demand to know: “Why are we doing these things? What is the reason behind it?”

The Hebrew word *ta'am* means both “reason” and “taste.” Once you understand the reason

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for something, you have a *taste* for it. This is why the Passover Seder is such an important experience for us.

We don't just go through the motions of our religious rituals. We are provided with a mega taste—both intellectually through our learning and sensorially through the beautiful foods we eat.

At the heart of our Jewish experience, we must always maintain an inquisitive mindset, seeking not only to understand what we do, but why we do it.

Chag Sameach!