



### Question

#### 1. Our Haggadah

עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים ויוציאנו ד' אלקינו משם ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה. ואלו לא הוציא הקב"ה את אבותינו ממצרים, הרי אנו ובנינו ובני בנינו משועבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים.

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and Hashem our Gd took us out of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. And had Gd not taken our ancestors out of Egypt, we, our children and our children's children would have been enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt.

#### 2. Devarim 6:21, 26:8

...עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים ויציאנו ד' ממצרים ביד חזקה ויוציאנו ד' ממצרים ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה ובמרא גדל...

...We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and Hashem took us out of Egypt, with a strong hand.

And Hashem took us out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm and great awe...

### Two initial answers

3. Answer #1: We would be indebted to someone for our liberation

4. Answer #2: Rabbi Joseph Dov Soloveitchik, *An Exalted Evening*, pg. 35 (citing *Festival of Freedom*)

Contemporary man is an unfree being because he is insecure; he is tied to the moment, never knowing whether disaster will strike the next second. There is only one way for man to free himself from all his restrictions, from all his fears, from all his phobias. Surrender to God frees man from his serfdom to his fellow man. Man rids himself of his fright by faith in G-d and surrender to Him. It is a great price, of course. One must fear G-d. This surrender to G-d is very hard; the biological pressures push, and nature summons action – often an action that has been prohibited by the law...

If we had been taken out of Egypt without *Elokeinu*, without accepting His code... then we would have been in bondage again. Instead of bondage to Pharaoh, it would have been bondage to our own fears, to our own phobias, to nature, to society, to slogans. On Passover, we celebrate our freedom.

### Answer #3

5. Egyptian self-reliance and arrogance Devarim 11:10-11; Yehoshua 11:6; Yechezkel 29:3

6. Yehoshua 24:14

ועתה יראו את-ד' ועבדו אתו בתמים ובאמת וחסירו את-אלהים [חול] אשר עבדו אבותיכם בעבר הנָהָר ובמצרים ועבדו את-ד':

Now, revere Gd and serve Him completely and faithfully, and remove the gods that your ancestors served by the side of the [Euphrates] river and in Egypt, and serve Gd.

7. Radak to Yehoshua 11:9

וצוה הקב"ה לאבד הסוסים והרכב שהיו הגוים נלחמים בהם ובטחו ברכבם כי רב ולא ידעו כי שקר הסוס לתשועה, וישראל בלא רכב וסוס נצחום והפילום חללים כי לד' התשועה. לפיכך לא רצה הקל ית' שיבוזו ישראל להם הסוסים והמרכבות, כדי שלא יבטחו בהם גם הם ויחשבו בלבם כי עם הסוסים יעשו המלחמות.

Gd instructed them to destroy the horses and chariots with which the nations had fought, trusting their great number of chariots and not knowing that the horses provide false hope of salvation. Israel defeated them without chariots and horses, and cast them down as corpses, for salvation is with Gd. Gd did not want Israel to take the horses and chariots as spoils, lest they also trust in them, thinking in their hearts to wage war using the horses.

## 8. Devarim 8:11-20

(יא) השמר לך פן תשכח את ד' אלקיך לבלתי שמר מצותיו ומשפטיו וחקתיו אשר אנכי מצוה היום: (יב) פן תאכל ושבעת ובתים טובים תבנה וישבת: (יג) ובקרה וצאנה ורבו ונסה ונהב ורבה לך וכל אשר לך ורם לבבך ושכחת את ד' אלקיך המוציאך מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים: (טו) המוליכה במדבר הגדל והנורא נחש שרף ועקרב וצמאון אשר אין מים המוציא לך מים מצור החלמיש: (טז) המאכלה מן במדבר אשר לא ידעו אבותיה למען ענתה ולמען נסתה להיטבה באחריה: (יז) ואמרת בלבבך פחי ועצם ידי עשה לי את החיל הזה: (יח) וזכרת את ד' אלקיך כי הוא הגתן לך פס לעשות חיל למען הקים את בריתו אשר נשבע לאבותיה פיום הזה: פ (יט) והיה אם שכח תשכח את ד' אלקיך והלקת אחרי אלהים [חול] אחרים ועבדתם והשפתוית להם העדתי בכם היום פי אבד תאבדו: (כ) פגזים אשר ד' מאביד מפניכם פן תאבדו עקב לא תשמעו בקול ד' אלקיכם:

## 9. Real estate Bereishit 15:18

### 10. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Melachim 5:7

ומותר לשכון בכל העולם חוץ מארץ מצרים, מן הים הגדול ועד המערב ארבע מאות פרסה על ארבע מאות פרסה כנגד ארץ כוש וכנגד המדבר, הכל אסור להתישב בה. בשלשה מקומות הזהירה תורה שלא לשוב למצרים, שנאמר 'לא תוסיפון לשוב בדרך הזה עוד', 'לא תוסיף עוד לראותה', 'לא תוסיפו לראותם עוד עד עולם'. ואלכסנדריאה בכלל האיסור.

One may dwell anywhere in the world, other than Egypt – west from the Mediterranean, 400 parasangs by 400 parasangs opposite Cush and the desert. One may not dwell in any of it. In three places the Torah warned not to return to Egypt, as Devarim 17:16 says, "Never again shall you return by this path," Devarim 28:68 says, "You would never again see her," and Shemot 14:13 says, "You shall not see them again, ever." And this prohibition includes Alexandria.

### Summary

#### Questions:

- Why does the Haggadah say אלקינו, unlike the two verses it draws upon?
- Why does the Haggadah think we would still have been slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt?

Answer #1: We would have been indebted to Pharaoh for our freedom.

Question: But what about "our Gd"?

Answer #2: Having Hashem as our Gd and Boss would prevent us from being slaves to our instincts and insecurities

Question: But then why does it say we would have been slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt?

Answer #3: Gd didn't just take us out; Gd taught us humility, unlike Egyptian arrogance.



# How did Bnei Yisrael Feel Leaving Egypt?



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## 1. Haggadah Shel Pesach (Mishnah Pesachim 10:5)

בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיֵּב אָדָם לְרַאוֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יָצָא מִמִּצְרַיִם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר, בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם.

In every generation, a person is required to view themselves as if they left Egypt, as it says (Exodus 13:8) "And you shall explain to your son on that day, 'It is because of what Hashem did for me when I left Egypt.'"

## 2. Haggadah Maggid

מִתְחִלָּה עוֹבְדֵי עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה הָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וְעַכְשָׁיו קָרְבָנוּ הַמְּקוֹם לְעִבְדוֹתוֹ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (יהושע כד:ב-ד) : וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶל־כָּל־הָעָם, כֹּה אָמַר ה' אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: בְּעֵבֶר הַנְּהַר יָשְׁבוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם מֵעוֹלָם, תָּרַח אָבִי אַבְרָהָם וְאָבִי נָחוֹר, וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ אֱלֹהִים (חול) אֲחֵרִים. וְאָקַח אֶת־אֲבִיכֶם אֶת־אַבְרָהָם מֵעֵבֶר הַנְּהַר וְאוֹלַךְ אוֹתוֹ בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן, וְאַרְבֵּה אֶת־זָרְעוֹ וְאֶתָּן לוֹ אֶת־יִצְחָק, וְאֶתָּן לְיִצְחָק אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וְאֶת־עִשָׂו. וְאֶתָּן לְעִשָׂו אֶת־הַר שְׁעִיר לְרִשְׁתּוֹ, וְיַעֲקֹב וּבָנָיו יָרְדוּ מִצְרַיִם.

Initially, our ancestors were idolaters and now G-d brought us close serve Him, as it is stated (Joshua 24:2-4), "Yehoshua said to the whole nation, so said the Lord, G-d of Israel. 'On the other side of the river your ancestors used to dwell from always, Terach the father of Avraham and the father of Nachor, and they worshiped other gods. I took your ancestor, Avraham, from the other side of the river and brought him to the land of Canaan, and I increased his descendants and gave him Yitzchak, Yaakov, and Esav. I gave Esav Mount Seir to inherit and Yaakov and his children went down to Egypt.

**Q:** Why do we need mention at the Seder that we had idolatrous ancestors?

**A:** Because faith and belief in G-d isn't simple. People reach it at their own pace.

Try asking the following questions to the participants at your seder. Hopefully, these questions will spark meaningful discussion, and allow for each person to develop an appreciation for the feelings of the Jewish People as they left Egypt and ventured through the wilderness:

1. How do you think the Jews felt while they were in Egypt?
2. Why did the Jewish officers complain to Moshe that he was ruining their relationship with Pharaoh after the Jews' workload was increased (Shemot 5:20)? Why did the Jews say right before the Splitting of the Sea, "are there not enough graves in Egypt, that you took us to die in the desert?" (Shemot 14:11)?
3. How many stages would you say there were in the Exodus? Was the transition from "enslaved" to "free" the only change that happened to the Jewish People?
4. Were all of the Jewish People always enthusiastic about leaving Egypt?
5. Did anything bad happen to the Jews because of their attempts to leave Egypt?
  - a. Were the Jews affected by the plagues?
  - b. Some midrashim state that only  $\frac{1}{5}$  of the Jews left Egypt and the rest were killed during the plague of darkness. Why were these people killed? How would that affect the rest of the Jews' morale?

Here is one possible approach:

The Jews' first reaction when Moshe tells them they will be leaving Egypt is to believe in G-d and Moshe. But after that point, we are told very little about how the Jewish People felt. We are told that the Jewish officers complained after the slaves had to begin to gather their own straw and were required to complete the same building quota. The Jews perform the mitzvot of Korban Pesach and smearing the blood on the doorpost exactly as G-d commanded. Finally, right before Hashem splits the sea, we hear the nation complain "why did you take us out of Egypt to die in the desert?" The following table lists the different stages of the Exodus, and what the Jewish people may have felt at each stage:

	Timeframe	Reaction/Emotion
Stage 1	While they were enslaved with back-breaking labour	Many think there is no hope, but pray anyways
Stage 2	After they are told by Moshe that G-d has sent him to free them	They feel that their prayers have been answered and they will be freed by Hashem through Moshe
Stage 3	After Pharaoh refuses to let them go and their workload drastically increases	Their hopes are dashed when their workload increases and there is no obvious progress towards their redemption
Stage 4	During the first nine plagues, which affected the Egyptians and not the Jews	Things seem more positive, since Pharaoh and the Egyptians are punished. Jews have varied reactions: ~Some see this as Divine redemption ~Others are frightened by G-d's harsh punishments
Stage 5	After they are told to prepare the Korban Pesach and get ready to leave	Although everyone follows G-d's directives, some may be fearful or hesitant
Stage 6	During the night of Makkat Bechorot	They begin to anticipate the redemption, but may also feel nervous about their impending freedom
Stage 7	During the morning after Makkat Bechorot (15 Nissan), when they left Egypt	They all feel very positive
Stage 8	While they waited at the Yam Suf, Reed Sea, with Egyptians chasing them	They feel very scared, both of G-d and the Egyptians chasing them
Stage 9	While crossing through the Sea	They are in awe and fear of G-d
Stage 10	After seeing the Egyptians drown as they stood on dry land	They sing Az Yashir, now able to reflect and appreciate all that G-d has done for them



## The Missing Seder of Rabban Gamliel

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### The Question

1. Our Haggadah Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah, Rabbi Akiva, Rabbi Tarfon

2. Tosefta, Pesachim 10

מעשה ברבן גמליאל וזקנים שהיו מסובין בבית ביתוס בן זונין בלוד והיו עסוקין בהלכות הפסח כל הלילה עד קרות הגבר הגביהו מלפניהן ונועדו והלכו להן לבית המדרש.

Once, Rabban Gamliel and the sages were reclining in the house of Boethus, son of Zonin, in Lod, and they were involved in the laws of Pesach all night until the rooster's crowing. They removed that which was before them, gathered and went to the study hall.

### Approach 1: Leaning (Rabbi Reuven Margaliyot, *Be'er Miriam Haggadah*)

3. Mishnah, Maaser Sheni 5:9

מי שהיו פירותיו רחוקים ממנו צריך לקרוא להם שם. מעשה ברבן גמליאל והזקנים שהיו באין בספינה, אמר רבן גמליאל "עשור שאני עתיד למוד נתון ליהושע ומקומו מושכר לו, עשור אחר שאני עתיד למוד נתון לעקיבא בן יוסף שיזכה בו לעניים ומקומו מושכר לו." אמר רבי יהושע, "עשור שאני עתיד למוד נתון לאלעזר בן עזריה, ומקומו מושכר לו." ונתקבלו זה מזה שכר:

If one's produce is distant [when the time of eliminating tithes arrives], he must declare the tithes. Rabban Gamliel and the elders were once coming in by boat. Rabban Gamliel said, "The tenth I will measure [as *maaser rishon*] is given to Yehoshua, and its site is rented to him. Another tenth I will measure [as *maaser ani*] is given to Akiva ben Yosef, to acquire for the needy, and its site is rented to him." Rabbi Yehoshua then said, "The tenth I will measure [as *terumat maaser*] is given to Elazar ben Azaryah, and its site is rented to him." And each received payment from the other [for the rentals].

### Approach 2: Revolt (Rabbi Yehudah Leib Maimon, *Chagim uMoadim*)

4. Rabbi Yehudah Leib Maimon, Chagim uMoadim pp. 214-216

יש מקום לשער כי גם הסיפור על המסיבה בבני-ברק הוא קטע היסטורי מתוך איזה מדרש או ספר אגדה, על מה שדיברו והתייעצו גדולי החכמים מישראל בשעה שנתאספו למקום המרכז של הקנאות הלאומית, לבני ברק, מקומו של ר' עקיבא, בכדי לספר ביציאת מצרים זמן חרותו וגם לחוות דעה ולטכס עצה בדבר תנועת החרות שהקיפה אז את האומה כולה... כולם נענו להזמנתו של רבי עקיבא ובאו כל אחד ממקומו בכדי לחוג את חג החירות בבני ברק ולהתייעץ שם יחד במסיבה אחת ובחשאי, בלי השתתפות התלמידים, על היחס הראוי והצריך להיות מצד חכמי ישראל לתנועה הקנאית שהניפה את דגל המרד נגד רומא.

There is room to hypothesize that the account of the seder in Bnei Brak is also a historical anecdote from some work of midrash or work of aggadah regarding the discussions and counsel of the great sages of Israel when they gathered in the center of nationalist zeal, Bnei Brak, the residence of Rabbi Akiva, to speak of the exodus from Egypt, the time of our freedom, and also to express ideas and arrange counsel in the matter of the movement for freedom which then enveloped the nation... All of them responded to Rabbi Akiva's call, and each came from his place to celebrate the holiday of freedom in Bnei Brak and to take counsel together in one secret seder, without the participation of their students, regarding the appropriate and necessary role of the sages of Israel in the zealous movement which waved the flag of rebellion against Rome.

### Approach 3: The Korban Pesach (Rabbi Yehudah Zoldan, *Moadei Yehudah v'Yisrael*)

5. Mishnah Pesachim 7:2

אין צולין את הפסח לא על השפוד ולא על האסקלא. אמר רבי צדוק: מעשה ברבן גמליאל שאמר לטבי עבדו, "צא וצלה לנו את הפסח על האסקלא."

We do not roast the Pesach on a metal spit or an *askila*. Rabbi Tzadok said: Once Rabban Gamliel told his servant Tavi, "Go roast the Pesach for us on the *askila*."

## 6. Mishnah Beitzah 2:7

אף הוא אמר שלשה דברים להקל: מכבדין בין המטות, ומניחין את המוגמר ביום טוב, ועושין גדי מקולס בלילי פסחים. וחכמים אוסרין: [Rabban Gamliel] also took three lenient positions: One may sweep between the couches [without concern for evening out imperfections in the ground], one may set up *mugmar* [perfuming spices burned in a flame] on Yom Tov [and it is called *ochel nefesh*], and one may prepare a *g'di mekulas* [goat in the style of the korban pesach] on Pesach night. And the Sages prohibited.

## 7. Rambam, Introduction to his Haggadah

נוסח ההגדה שנהגו בה ישראל בזמן הגלות כך הוא...

This is the text of the Haggadah which Israel has customarily used during the exile...

## Approach 4: Halachic Debate (Rabbi Simcha Mordechai Ziskind Broyde, *Haggadah Sam Derech*)

### 8. Rambam, Sefer haMitzvot Aseh 157

והמצוה הקנ"ז היא שצונו לספר ביציאת מצרים בליל חמשה עשר בניסן בתחלת הלילה כפי צחות לשון המספר. וכל מה שיוסיף במאמר ויאריך הדברים בהגדלת מה שעשה לנו ד' ומה שעשו עמנו המצרים...

The 157<sup>th</sup> commandment is that we were instructed to tell of the departure from Egypt on the night of the fifteenth of Nisan, at the start of the night, according to the speaker's capabilities. All that one adds to the telling, extending the discussion elevating what Gd did to us and what the Egyptians did to us...

### 9. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Chametz uMatzah 7:1

מצות עשה של תורה לספר בנסים ונפלאות שנעשו לאבותינו במצרים בליל חמשה עשר בניסן...

Biblically, we are instructed to speak of the miracles and wonders performed for our ancestors in Egypt, on the night of the fifteenth of Nisan...

### 10. Talmud Yerushalmi, Pesachim 10:4

טיפש מה אומר? [שמות יג:יד] "מה זאת". אף את למדו הלכות הפסח שאין מפטירין אחר הפסח אפיקומן, שלא יהא עומד מחבורה זו ונכנס לחבורה אחרת.

What does the foolish one say? "What is this?" (Shemot 13:14) You shall also teach him the laws of the Pesach, that we don't eat dessert after the Pesach, lest he leave this group and enter another group.