**1.Ha Lachma D’Anya** Why not say “K’Lachma”, this isn’t really Matzah from Egypt-it’s from Brooklyn! The **Dubna Maggid in his commentary Emes L’Yaakov** explains with an analogy. A poor peddler travels from town and town, and sells a little here and a little there. He finally finds a town that buys his wares en masse. He goes from rags to riches. Yet, every year on the day he first came to that town he wears the old garments to remember where they came from. His business goes south, and he’s a pauper again. To motivate him, his family says to him “you never forgot where you came from, every year you wore those rags to remind you. “ You built yourself up again once, you can do it again.

It’s the same for the Jewish people, we went from rags to riches during Yetzia’as Mitzrayim. Every year we remember our slavery, even during our periods of tremendous success. This helps remind us that even if things go south, we can build ourselves back up just like we did in the past. Just as the peddler wore his old clothes once a year to remember what that felt like, we relive slavery and exodus to remember what that feels like. So this IS the bread of affliction. We look at ourselves as being slaves in the present, which will help us deal with the hard times.

**2.Ha Lachma D’Anya** Why start in Aramaic and then transition to Hebrew? Aramaic is Hashem being hidden, it’s not fully Lashon HaKodesh. Angels don’t understand Aramaic. That represents the slavery period. Then we transition to freedom, represented by Hebrew. But wait, isn’t the second half of the paragraph a combination of Hebrew and Aramaic? **Rav Yisrael from Koznitz in his Perush the Gevurat Yisrael** says the message is not to look at Geulah as a cure all. Even after Geulah, things will still be complicated. Life will still be a combination of Hebrew and Aramaic, we still need to work on ourselves.

**3.Beitzah:** Why a roasted egg? **The Vilna Gaon** explains that it is a Zecheir to the Karban Pesach. We can’t serve roasted meat at the Seder since it will seem like we are trying to recreate the Karban Pesach, which we can’t have without the Beis HaMikdash. The closest thing to meat that isn’t actually meat is an egg-it’s from an animal, becomes an animal, and yet it’s Parve. So it is the best representation of the Karban. This could be why many have the Minhag to eat the Beitzah at the start of the meal.

**4.Beitzah: HaRav Strulowitz (ok, that’s me)** explains that an egg is a unique self sufficient entity. It nourishes and maintains itself; it only requires external heat to help it grow. This serves as a metaphor to the Jews’ relationship to Hashem in Egypt. We seemed to be alone and abandoned, living on our own with no help from Hashem. However, Hashem was with us the entire time, looking after us, “providing us heat”. The chick seems alone until it hatches, then the hen takes care of the chick from the moment it’s born. When we were ready to hatch, to leave Egypt, Hashem was there to feed us, protect us and teach us.

**5.Karpas/Maror:** Why does the beracha of Borei Peri HaAdama we say for Karpas apply to the Maror later in the Seder? Why is this different than the 4 cups of wine? We make a beracha on each cup-shouldn’t the first Kiddush apply to all of the rest of the cups? **Rav Shlomo Zalman Orbach** explains that the Karpas and Maror are unique in and of themselves. The birchat hanehenin is merely a technical point, we need to make a Borei Peri HaAdama before we eat them. But we drink wine all of the time, what makes these cups any different? How do we distinguish it from any other cups of wine? Making a separate beracha on each cup designates clearly that they are being done for the Mitzvah of the 4 cups.

**6.Yachatz:** Why is Yachatz before Maggid? **Rav Shlomo Zalman Orbach** answers that for any other Shabbos or Yom Tov meal we say HaMotzih and eat the meal right after Kiddush. At the Seder we have a long hefsek (gap). By doing Yachatz before Maggid and then starting Maggid by talking about Matzah, we are starting the meal before Maggid and then connecting it to Maggid right away. This isn’t a hefsek, it’s a part of the meal!

**7.Mah Nishtanah** The **Kol Bo** says the custom is to say Mah Nishtanah, Ha Lachma D’anya and Avadim Hayinu should all be said in the native tongue so everyone at the Seder understands.

**8.Avadim Hayinu:** “Even if we were all Chachamim”-what’s the message?

**Abarbanel** says it applies to any generation:

1. Hashem can save us miraculously from any circumstance
2. This led to us taking control of Eretz Yisrael
3. Led to us receiving the Torah

We shouldn’t look at the Seder as an intellectual pursuit, it is experiential. This isn’t just history or learning, it’s a renewed commitment to the things that define the Jewish people.

**9.Rav Elazar ben Azaryah:** Why mention his age and that he was “like 70 years old”? How does his age, or the age he looked like, impact how he understands Yamim and Leilot?

The **Divrei Shaul** answers that he was so gifted that not only was he the Nasih at 18, but Hashem created a miracle so he could get the post. Imagine the ego he must have! That wasn’t the way R’Elazar ben Azaryah thought. He admits and is memorialized as having not understood an essential idea of the Seder-so too we shouldn’t think we understand the Seder and can’t learn from anyone else. We need to enter the Seder with an open mind and ready to learn new things.

**10.Rav Elazar ben Azaryah:** All other Chagim the major Mitzvot are during the day, the Seder is the only one at night. **Rav Yisrael Salanter** Seder about turning night into day, we never know what the future holds.

**11.Aino Yodei Lishol:** Why is the answer for the Aino Yodei Lishol the same as that of the Rasha? **Rav Avraham Yafin of Navordok** explains that the Rasha isn’t an Apikores, he believes in Hahem but doesn’t understand the purpose of all of these Mitzvos. He is “spiritual but not religious”. He believes Hashem took us out of Egypt, but what good does the Seder and all of these Mitzvot accomplish?

The lesson is about the importance of Mitzvot-faith is not enough. The Jews in Egypt lacked faith-so Hashem began to give them Mitzvot while still in Egypt-Rosh Chodesh, Karban Pesach, etc. The Aino Yodeia Lishol is a young child, who we teach Mitzvot even before they understand their purpose. So in the future, when they have a crises of faith, they’ll have the Mitzvot to fall back on. The message is the same to the Rasha-Mitzvot are an essential part of keeping our connection to Judaism and our faith in Hashem.

**12.Yachol Mi Rosh Chodesh**: What is the “Ze” in “Ba’avur Ze?” **Abarbanel** says “ze” is gematria 12. This refers to the 12 Mitzvot of the Seder: 4 cups, chroset, karpas, 2x washing hands, matazah, maror and korech (2 mitzvot)

**13.Mitchila Ovdei Avodah Zarah**: Why do we begin with such negativity-that we can trace our forefathers back to idolaters? Rav Mordechai Minsker, a student of **Rav Chaim of Volozhin, explains in the Zichron Avraham**, with a Mashal. Let’s say you have two patients that have the same illness. The Doctor treating charges one of them double. Why, he asks, we have the same disease? He answers because you have a family history of the disease, and you’ve had it yourself. We needed the miracles in Egypt to **convince** us to leave, and we should never become too arrogant as a people because we were once idol worshippers, we can, and have, regressed. We don’t have a perfect history.

**14.Ten Plagues**: What the meaning of Rebbi Yehuda’s famous acronym?

**Ephod Bad** (**Rav Binyamin David Rabinowitch from Warsaw-d.1885)** explains:

1. Detzach was showing Hashem was in the world. Dam showed the Nile was not a G-d, frogs come from Nile to reiterate that, and the Kinnim couldn’t be replicated by Paroah’s magicians, showed it was clearly the work of Hashem.
2. Adash- Punishment. Arov means confusion, just as the Egyptians forces people to do work not appropriate for them Hashem broke them psychologically with wild animals . Dever , the animals that died live in the field, where Jews were forced to work, Shchin, the boils, looked like dried plaster on their bodies.
3. B’Echav- Geulah. Barad killed their crops which made the Egyptians desparate to let the Jews leave, Arbeh was a famine , further devastating them(and to remind them of Yosef-and that the Jews did not deserve to be slaves in the first place), Choshech was to find gold and silver and Makas Bechoros was to force them to give us that wealth.

**15.Dayeinu:** The **Rogachaver** explains that we would appreciate a person who helped us out. Let’s say there was a person who paid for our tuition in our youth, then helped tutor us so we got into a good college, then paid our college tuition, then helped us study for the LSAT’s, then paid for law school, then helped us get our first job, then directed a bunch of cases our way, then introduced us to our future wife, then bought us a house, etc. How would we look at that person? Why don’t we look at Hashem the same way? Dayeinu is the same message, helping remind us of all the things Hashem did for us.

**16.Dayeinu:** “Hashem gave us the wealth of the Egyptians”-Is that a miracle, wasn’t that payment for the work we actually did? **The Shach** (Poland 1621-1662) explains that it was no accident the Egyptians had so much wealth to give us. In the time of Yosef, why was there a famine worldwide, if Hashem had simply created a famine in Israel and an excess in Egypt and that would have forced Yaakov and his family to Egypt. Hashem wanted the world to be forced to spend money in Egypt and boost their economy, thus giving them the wealth they would eventually give the Jewish people when they left Egypt. It was a miracle they had so much wealth to give us.

**17.Rabban Gamliel…Pesach, Matzah and Maror:** Why is Maror last, shouldn’t it be first? Shouldn’t we start with bitterness and then transition to freedom? The **Nodeh B’Yehudah** explains that Hashem tells Avraham we’ll be in Egypt for 400 years and were only there for 210. Two approaches in the Midrashim to explain the discrepancy:

1. 210 years were so harsh it was akin to 400 years
2. Hashem took us out early, and we needed to make up the other 190 years later in history.

Which one is it? If it’s #2, then that changes how we view Jewish history. Could we still have a debt to pay? We end with Maror to say that #1 is the reason. The bitterness of the slavery, the Maror, was the cause of us leaving, the “cause of the freedom”. So we end with Maror, because that’s what really brought about the freedom.

**18.Rabban Gamliel…Pesach, Matzah and Maror:** How did we do a Karban Pesach in Egypt, there was no Mishkan, Beis HaMikdash or Mizbeach? The **Ketones Passim** explains that Hashem saved us, Ani v’lo Malach, Hashem and not an angel. Hashem was with us directly, so we had enough Kedusha to do the Karban Pesach. A reminder that our Seder has just as much value and Kedushah as the one in Yerushalayim with the Karban Pesach. As long as Hashem is with us, our Seder can have the full Kedusha.

**19.Korach: Divrei Shaul (Rav Yosef Shaul Ha**[**Levi**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Levites) **Nathansohn** **(1808–1875)-Galicia)** explains that the Gemara in Pesachim 115a says that according to Hillel the Amorah we shouldn’t do Korach because “Ain Mitzvot Mevatlot Zo et Zo), the taste of the Matzah should not temper that of the Maror. Why doesn’t Hillel the Tannah hold of this concept?

In Maseches Beitzah, Hillel holds that if you see a good piece of meat you should eat it that day, as opposed to Shammai who holds you should keep it for Shabbos. According to Hillel, every Mitzvah, every day, is special. As we say in Pirkei Avos “don’t say a small Mitzvah is more important than a large Mitzvah, because, we don’t know the value of each Mitzvah”. So too here, each Mitzvah has inherent value so we would never say that one Mitzvah can overpower or nullify another Mitzvah.

**20.Shefosh Chamachtcha: Rav Yechiel Heller** (died 1862), the Av Beit Din of Sulvak, Poland says in his Perush the “Ohr Yesharim” that Chazal teaches us that the children of Nevuzradan converted, as did the grandchildren of Haman, and the descendants of Sisra, and the grandchildren of Nevudchadnezar begged Hashem to be allowed to become part of the Jewish people. That’s what “Pursue them with wrath and destroy them from the Heavens of Hashem” means. Hashem doesn’t just destroy our enemies physically, he destroys them spiritually. Their descendants become subsumed within the destiny of the Jewish people.

**21.Four Cups of Wine:** Why wine and not another drink? Rav Shlomo Zalman Orbach explains that wine breaks the rule of diminishing returns, the more the drink, the more you enjoy it. Just as each stage of Geulah was better and better.

**22. Chad Gadya:** The **Vilna Gaon** says that Chad Gadya being mentioned twice is reminiscent of the the two goats Yaakov prepared to feed Yitzchak. One represented the Chaggigah, one the Korban Pesach. All berachot come from that moment. Plus, two goats of the Yom Kippur service. One for forgiveness, one to quiet the Yetzer Harah.

**23**. **Chad Gadya:** **Alshich** says the soul is represented by the goat. Goats eat less than any other domesticated animal. By de-emphasizing our physical needs and desires we can feed our soul. “Our father” bought us for two Zuzim. The father is Hashem, he bought our soul for two Zuzim, meaning he took our soul from Shamayim and brought it to earth. Our soul was moved “zaz” to this world. Now look at all of the trouble our Neshama can get into.