

## The Haggadah: The Messubim, the Four Sons, Vehi Sheamda

Dedicated by Nathan Kirsh in appreciation of the time and effort put forth by the members of Beit Midrash Zichron Dov in learning and teaching Torah

### A. המסובים בבני ברק | Hamesubim B'Bnai Brak

מעשה ברבי אליעזר ורבי יהושע ורבי אלעזר בן-עזריה ורבי עקיבא ורבי טרפון שהיו מסבין בבני-ברק והיו מספרים ביציאת מצרים כל-אותו הלילה, עד שבאו תלמידיהם ואמרו להם רבותינו הגיע זמן קריאת שמע של שחרית. אמר רבי אלעזר בן-עזריה הרי אני בן שבעים שנה ולא זכיתי שתאמר יציאת מצרים בלילות עד שדרשה בן זומא, שנאמר, למען תזכר את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חייך. ימי חייך הימים. כל ימי חייך הלילות. וחכמים אומרים ימי חייך העולם הזה. כל ימי חייך להביא לימות המשיח:

It happened once [on Pesach] that Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarfon were reclining in Bnei Brak and were telling the story of the exodus from Egypt that whole night, until their students came and said to them, "The time of [reciting] the morning Shema has arrived."

Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah said, "Behold I am like a man of seventy years and I have not merited [to understand why] the exodus from Egypt should be said at night until Ben Zoma explicated it, as it is stated (Deuteronomy 16:3), 'In order that you remember the day of your going out from the land of Egypt all the days of your life;' 'the days of your life' [indicates that the remembrance be invoked during] the days, 'all the days of your life' [indicates that the remembrance be invoked also during] the nights." But the Sages say, "'the days of your life' [indicates that the remembrance be invoked in] this world, 'all the days of your life' [indicates that the remembrance be invoked also] in the days of the Messiah."

### B. ארבעת הבנים | The Four Sons

ברוך המקום, ברוך הוא, ברוך שנתן תורה לעמו ישראל, ברוך הוא. כנגד ארבעה בנים דברה תורה: אחד חכם, ואחד רשע, ואחד תם, ואחד שאינו יודע לשאול. חכם מה הוא אומר? מה העדות והחקים והמשפטים אשר צוה ה' אלהינו אתכם. ואף אתה אמור לו כהלכות הפסח: אין מפטירין אחר הפסח אפיקומן: רשע מה הוא אומר? מה העבודה הזאת לכם. לכם – ולא לו. ולפי שהוציא את עצמו מן הכלל כפר בעקרה ואף אתה הקהה את שניו ואמור לו: "בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים". לי ולא-לו. אלו היה שם, לא היה נגאל. תם מה הוא אומר? מה זאת? ואמרת אליו "בחזק יד הוציאנו ה' ממצרים מבית עבדים". ושאינו יודע לשאול – את פתח לו, שנאמר, והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר, בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים.

Blessed be the Place [of all], Blessed be He; Blessed be the One who Gave the Torah to His people Israel, Blessed be He. Corresponding to four sons did the Torah speak; one [who is] wise, one [who is] evil, one who is innocent and one who doesn't know to ask.

**What does the wise [son] say?** "What are these testimonies, statutes and judgments that the Lord our G-d commanded you?" (Deuteronomy 6:20)" And accordingly you will say to him, as per the laws of the Pesach sacrifice, "We may not eat an afikoman [a dessert or other foods eaten after the meal] after [we are finished eating] the Pesach sacrifice (Mishnah Pesachim 10:8)."

**What does the evil [son] say?** "What is this worship to you?" (Exodus 12:26)" 'To you' and not 'to him.' And since he excluded himself from the collective, he denied a principle [of the Jewish faith]. And accordingly, you will blunt his teeth and say to him, "'For the sake of this, did the Lord do [this] for me in my going out of Egypt' (Exodus 13:8)." 'For me' and not 'for him.' If he had been there, he would not have been saved.

**What does the innocent [son] say?** "What is this?" (Exodus 13:14)" And you will say to him, "'With the strength of [His] hand did the Lord take us out from Egypt, from the house of slaves' (Exodus 13:14)."

**And [regarding] the one who doesn't know to ask,** you will open [the conversation] for him. As it is stated (Exodus 13:8), "And you will speak to your son on that day saying, for the sake of this, did the Lord do [this] for me in my going out of Egypt."

**C. והיא שמעדה | VeHi Sheamda:**

יכול מראש חֲדָשׁ? תלמוד לומר ביום ההוא. אי ביום ההוא יכול מבעוד יום? תלמוד לומר בַּעֲבוּר זֶה – בַּעֲבוּר זֶה לא אִמְרָתִי, אֶלָּא בְּשִׁעָה שְׁנַיִשׁ מִצָּה וּמְרוֹר מִנְחִים לִפְנֵיהֶּ. מִתְחִלָּה עֹבְדֵי עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה הָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וְעַכְשָׁיו קִרְבָּנוּ הַמָּקוֹם לַעֲבֹדָתוֹ, שְׁנֵאמַר: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, כֹּה אָמַר ה' אֱ-לוֹקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: בְּעֶבֶר הִנֵּהר יֵשְׁבוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם מֵעוֹלָם, תִּרְחַ אֲבִי אֲבָרָהָם וְאֲבִי נְחוֹר, וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים. וְאָקַח אֲתֵ-אֲבִיכֶם אֲתֵ-אֲבָרָהָם מֵעֶבֶר הִנֵּהר וְאָלַף אוֹתוֹ בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן, וְאָרְבָּה אֲתֵ-זָרְעוֹ וְאָתָּן לוֹ אֲתֵ-יִצְחָק, וְאָתָּן לִיִצְחָק אֲתֵ-יַעֲקֹב וְאֲתֵ-עֵשָׂו. וְאָתָּן לְעֵשָׂו אֲתֵ-הַר שְׁעִיר לְרִשְׁתּוֹ אֲתוֹ, וַיַּעֲקֹב וּבְנָיו יָרְדוּ מִצְרָיִם. בְּרוּךְ שׁוֹמֵר הַבְּטָחָתוֹ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּרוּךְ הוּא. שְׁהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא חֲשַׁב אֲתֵ-הַקֶּץ, לְעִשׂוֹת כְּמוֹ שְׁאֵמַר לְאֲבָרָהָם אֲבִינוּ בְּבְרִית בֵּין הַבְּתָרִים, שְׁנֵאמַר: וַיֹּאמֶר לְאֲבָרָם, יָדַע תִּדַע כִּי-גַר יִהְיֶה זָרְעֶךָ בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לָהֶם, וַיַּעֲבֹדוּם וְעַנּוּ אֹתָם אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה. וְגַם אֲתֵ-הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲבֹדוּ דָן אֲנִי וְאֲחֵרֵיכֶן יִצְאוּ בְּרַכָּשׁ גָּדוֹל. וְהִיא שְׁעֵמְדָה לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ. שְׁלֵא אֶחָד בְּלָבָד עָמַד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתָנוּ, אֶלָּא שְׁבָכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתָנוּ, וְהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְצִילָנוּ מִיָּדָם.

It could be from Rosh Chodesh [that one would have to discuss the Exodus. However] we learn [otherwise, since] it is stated, "on that day." If it is [written] "on that day," it could be from while it is still day [before the night of the fifteenth of Nissan. However] we learn [otherwise, since] it is stated, "for the sake of this." I didn't say 'for the sake of *this*' except [that it be observed] when [*this*] matsa and *maror* are resting in front of you [meaning, on the night of the fifteenth]. From the beginning, our ancestors were idol worshipers. And now, the Place [of all] has brought us close to His worship, as it is stated (Joshua 24:2-4), "Yehoshua said to the whole people, so said the Lord, G-d of Israel, 'Over the river did your ancestors dwell from always, Terach the father of Avraham and the father of Nachor, and they worshiped other G-ds. And I took your father, Avraham, from over the river and I made him walk in all the land of Canaan and I increased his seed and I gave him Yitschak. And I gave to Yitschak, Ya'akov and Esav; and I gave to Esav, Mount Seir [in order that he] inherit it; and Yaakov and his sons went down to Egypt.'"

Blessed be the One who keeps His promise to Israel, blessed be He; since the Holy One, blessed be He, calculated the end [of the exile,] to do as He said to Avraham, our father, in the Covenant between the Pieces, as it is stated (Genesis 15:13-14), "And He said to Avram, 'you should surely know that your seed will be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and they will enslave them and afflict them four hundred years. And also that nation for which they shall toil will I judge, and afterwards they will go out with much property.'"

And it is this that has stood for our ancestors and for us; since it is not [only] one [person or nation] that has stood [against] us to destroy us, but rather in each generation, they stand [against] us to destroy us, but the Holy One, blessed be He, rescues us from their hand.

**1. הגדה של פסח, עבדים היינו | Avadim Hayinu:**

וְאִפְּלוּ בְּלָנוּ חֲכָמִים בְּלָנוּ נְבוֹנִים בְּלָנוּ זְקֵנִים בְּלָנוּ יוֹדְעִים אֶת הַתּוֹרָה מִצָּה עָלֵינוּ לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם. וְכָל הַמְרַבֵּה לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם הָרִי זֶה מְשֻׁבַּח.

And And even if we were all sages, all discerning, all elders, all knowledgeable about the Torah, it would be a commandment upon us to tell the story of the exodus from Egypt. And anyone who adds [and spends extra time] in telling the story of the exodus from Egypt, behold he is praiseworthy.

**2. תוספתא פסחים י', יב | Tosefta Psachim 10, 12:**

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

It happened once on Pesach that Rabban Gamliel and the elders were reclining in the house of *Bitos* in the city of *Lod*, while engaging in the Halachot of Pesach all night long. When morning arrived, they all stopped and went to the academy.

**3. גמרא ברכות מ"ו: | Brachot 46b:**

כיצד סדר הסבה? ... בזמן שהן שלש מטות – גדול מסב בראש, שני לו למעלה הימנו, שלישי לו למטה הימנו.

What is the order of reclining?... When there are three couches, the greatest of the three reclines in the middle divan, the one second to him in importance reclines on the couch to his right, and the one third to him in importance reclines on the couch to his left.



**4. גמרא ברכות כז: | Talmud Brachot 27b:**

תנו רבנן: מעשה בתלמיד אחד נשאל לפני רבי יהושע, אמר לו: תפלת ערבית רשות או חובה? אמר ליה: רשות. בא לפני רבן גמליאל, אמר לו: תפלת ערבית רשות או חובה? אמר לו: חובה. אמר לו: והלא רבי יהושע אמר לי רשות. אמר לו: המתן עד שיבנסו בעלי תריסין לבית המדרש. כשנבנסו בעלי תריסין, עמד השואל ושאל: תפלת ערבית רשות או חובה? אמר לו רבן גמליאל: חובה. אמר להם רבן גמליאל לחכמים: כלום יש אדם שחולק בדבר זה? אמר ליה רבי יהושע: לאו. אמר לו: והלא משמך אמרו לי רשות! אמר ליה: יהושע, עמוד על רגליך ועידו בך! עמד רבי יהושע על רגליו ואמר: אלמלא אני חי והוא מת, יכול החי להכחיש את המת. ועכשיו נשני חי והוא חי, היאך יכול החי להכחיש את החי? הנה רבן גמליאל יושב ודורש, ורבי יהושע עומד על רגליו. עד שרננו כל העם ואמרו לחוצפית התורגמן: עמוד! ועמד. אמרו: עד כמה צעריה וניזיל? בראש השנה אשתקד צעריה, בבכורות במעשה דרבי צדוק צעריה, הקא נמי צעריה! תא ונעבדיה! מאן נוקים ליה? נוקמיה לרבי יהושע? בעל מעשה הוא; נוקמיה לרבי עקיבא? דילמא עביש ליה, דלית ליה זכות אבות; אלא נוקמיה לרבי אלעזר בן עזריה, דהוא חכם, והוא עשיר, והוא עשירי לעזרא.

The Sages taught: There was an incident involving a student, who came before Rabbi Yehoshua. The student said to him: Is the evening prayer optional or obligatory? Rabbi Yehoshua said to him: Optional. The same student came before Rabban Gamliel and said to him: Is the evening prayer optional or obligatory? Rabban Gamliel said to him: Obligatory. The student said to Rabban Gamliel: But didn't Rabbi Yehoshua tell me that the evening prayer is optional? Rabban Gamliel said to the student: Wait until the "masters of the shields," a reference to the Torah scholars who battle in the war of Torah, enter the study hall, at which point we will discuss this issue.

When the masters of the shields entered, the questioner stood before everyone present and asked: Is the evening prayer optional or obligatory? Rabban Gamliel said to him: Obligatory. In order to ascertain whether or not Rabbi Yehoshua still maintained his opinion, Rabban Gamliel said to the Sages: Is there any person who disputes this matter? Rabbi Yehoshua said to him: No, no one disagrees. In deference to the Nasi, he did not wish to argue with him publicly (Tziyyun LeNefesh Hayya). Rabban Gamliel said to Rabbi Yehoshua: But was it not in your name that they told me that the evening prayer is optional? Rabban Gamliel said to Rabbi Yehoshua: Yehoshua, stand on your feet and they will testify against you. Rabbi Yehoshua stood on his feet and said: If I were alive and the student were dead, the living can contradict the dead, and I could deny issuing that ruling. Now that I am alive and he is alive, how can the living contradict the living? I have no choice but to admit that I said it.

In the meantime, Rabban Gamliel, as the Nasi, was sitting and lecturing, and Rabbi Yehoshua all the while was standing on his feet, because Rabban Gamliel did not instruct him to sit. He remained standing in deference to the Nasi. This continued for some time, until it aroused great resentment against Rabban Gamliel, and all of the people assembled began murmuring and said to Hutzpita the disseminator: Stop conveying Rabban Gamliel's lecture. And he stopped.

The Gemara relates that in their murmuring they said: How long will Rabban Gamliel continue afflicting him? Last year on Rosh HaShana, he afflicted him; Rabban Gamliel ordered Rabbi Yehoshua to come to him carrying his staff and bag, on the day on which Yom Kippur occurred, according to Rabbi Yehoshua's calculations. Regarding the firstborn, in the incident involving the question of Rabbi Tzadok, he afflicted him just as he did now, and forced him to remain standing as punishment for his failure to defend his differing opinion. Here too, he is afflicting him. Let us remove him from his position as Nasi.

It was so agreed, but the question arose: Who shall we establish in his place? Shall we establish Rabbi Yehoshua in his place? The Sages rejected that option because Rabbi Yehoshua was party to the incident for which Rabban Gamliel was deposed. Appointing him would be extremely upsetting for Rabban Gamliel. Shall we establish Rabbi Akiva in his place? The Sages rejected that option because Rabbi Akiva, who descended from a family of converts, would be vulnerable. Perhaps due to Rabban Gamliel's resentment he would cause him to be divinely punished as he lacks the merit of his ancestors to protect him.

**Rather, suggested the Sages, let us establish Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya in his place, his outstanding characteristics set him apart from the other candidates. He is wise, rich, and a tenth generation descendant of Ezra.**

### 5. הרב זקס, הגדה של פסח, ע"מ 28 | 28: Rabbi Sacks on the Haggadah, 28

בזמננו, ממש כמו במצרים, ההכנות לפסח מתחילות הרבה לפני היום עצמו. לכאורה אפשר היה להתחיל לספר את הסיפור מהרגע שבו מתחילות ההכנות. אבל התורה קובעת כלל בסיסי בדבר הנחלת ערכים לדור הבא: ספר את הסיפור בשעה שאתה עושה את המעשה, "בשעה שפסח, מצה ומרור מונחים לפניך". ערכים הם דבר נתפס, לא נלמד. הם מועברים באמצעות מעשים ולא דווקא באמצעות מילים. לכן יש לספר את סיפור יציאת מצרים בשעה שאנחנו חיים אותו מחדש. לחיות את הסיפור – זוהי הדרך הטובה ביותר להבטיח שהוא ימשיך לחיות בתודעתנו של ילד.

In our time, just like in Egypt, Pesach's preparations begin well before the festival itself. Seemingly one could start telling the story of the Exodus from the moment when preparations begin. But the Torah determines a basic rule of values for the next generation: tell the story as you do the act, "while Pesach, matzah and Marror are placed before you." Values are learned by actions, not only stories. They are transmitted through deeds and not necessarily through words. Therefore, the story of the Exodus must be told as we re-live it. Living the story - this is the best way to ensure that it will continue to live in the next generations.

### 6. בראשית רבה לח, יג | 13: Bereshit Rabbah, 38

תָּרַח עֹבֵד צִלְמִים הָיָה, חַד זְמַן נָפִיק לְאַתֵּר, הוֹשִׁיב לְאַבְרָהָם מוֹכֵר תַּחְתָּיו. הָיָה אֵתִי בַר אֵינֶשׁ בְּעֵי דִיזְבֹן, וְהָיָה אָמַר לֵה בַר כְּמָה שְׁנֵין אֵת, וְהָיָה אָמַר לֵיה בַר חֲמִשִּׁין אוֹ שְׁתֵּין, וְהָיָה אָמַר לֵיה וַי לֵיה לְהָהוּא גְבָרָא דְהָיָה בַר שְׁתֵּין וּבְעֵי לְמַסְגָּד לְבַר יוֹמֵי, וְהָיָה מִתְבַּיֵּשׁ וְהוֹלֵךְ לוֹ. חַד זְמַן אֵתָא חַד אֶתְתָּא טַעִינָא בִידָהּ חֲדָא פִינְךָ דְסִלְתָּ, אֶמְרָה לֵיה הָא לָךְ קֶרֶב קְדָמִיהוֹן, קָם נְסִיב בּוֹקֶלְסָא בִידֵיהּ, וְתַבְרִינֹן לְכִלְהוֹן פְּסִילֵיא, וְיֵהֵב בּוֹקֶלְסָא בִידָא דְרַבָּה דְהָיָה בִינֵיהוֹן.  
(כִּינֵן דְאַתָּא אָבוּהּ אָמַר לֵיה מֵאן עָבִיד לְהוֹן כְּדִין, אָמַר לֵיה מַה נְכַפּוֹר מִינְךָ אֶתְתָּא חֲדָא אֶתְתָּא טַעִינָא לֵה חֲדָא פִינְךָ דְסִלְתָּ, וְאַמְרַת לִי הָא לָךְ קֶרֶב קְדָמִיהוֹן, קְרִיבָתְךָ לְקְדָמִיהוֹן הָיָה דִין אָמַר אָנָּא אֵיבּוֹל קְדָמָי, וְדִין אָמַר אָנָּא אֵיבּוֹל קְדָמָי, קָם הִדִּין רַבָּה דְהָיָה בִינֵיהוֹן נְסִיב בּוֹקֶלְסָא וְתַבְרִינֹן. אָמַר לֵיה מַה אֶתָּה מְפָלָה בִי, וְיַדְעִין אֵינֹן. אָמַר לֵיה וְלֹא יִשְׁמַעוּ אֶזְנֵיךָ מַה שְׁפִיךְ אוֹמֵר. נְסִיבֵיהּ וּמְסָרִיהּ לְנִמְרוֹד. אָמַר לֵיה נְסִיב לְנִמְרוֹד, אָמַר לֵיה אֶבְרָהָם וְנְסִיב לְמִנְיָ דְמִטְפִּין נִוְרָא. אָמַר לֵיה נְסִיב לְנִמְרוֹד נְסִיב לְמִנְיָ, אָמַר לֵיה אִם בְּן נְסִיב לְעִנְיָ דְטַעִין מִנְיָ. אָמַר לֵיה נְסִיב לְעִנְיָ. אָמַר לֵיה אִם בְּן נְסִיב לְרוּחָא דְמִבְדַּר עִנְיָ. אָמַר לֵיה נְסִיב לְרוּחָא. אָמַר לֵיה וְנְסִיב לְבַר אֵינְשָׁא דְסָבִיל רוּחָא. אָמַר לֵיה מְלִין אֶתְּ מִשְׁתַּעִי, אֵינִי אֵינִי מִשְׁתַּחֲוֵי אֶלָּא לְאוּר, הָרִי אֵינִי מִשְׁלִיבְךָ בְּתוֹכוֹ, וְיִבּוֹא אֶלּוֹהֵי שְׁאֵתָהּ מִשְׁתַּחֲוֵי לוֹ וְיַצִּילֵךְ הִימְנוּ. הָיָה תַמְן הָרִן קָאִים פְּלוּג, אָמַר מַה נְפִשְׁךָ אִם נְצַח אֶבְרָהָם אָנָּא אָמַר מִן דְאַבְרָהָם אָנָּא וְאִם נְצַח נְמִרוֹד אָנָּא אָמַר דְנִמְרוֹד אָנָּא. כִּינֵן שְׁנִיבְךָ אֶבְרָהָם לְכַבְּשֵׁן הָאֵשׁ וְנִצַּל, אָמַר לֵיה דְמֵאן אֵתָּ, אָמַר לְהוֹן מִן דְאַבְרָהָם אָנָּא, נְטִלוּהוּ וְהַשְׁלִיכוּהוּ לְאוּר וְנִחְמְרוּ בְּנֵי מַעִין, וְיַצֵּא וּמַת עַל פְּנֵי תַרְח אָבִיו, הָדָא הוּא דְכְּתִיב: וַיִּמַת הָרִן עַל פְּנֵי תַרְח וְגו'.)

Terach was a manufacturer of idols. He once went away somewhere and left Abraham to sell them in his place. A man came in and wished to buy one. "How old are you?" Abraham asked the man. "Fifty years

old," he said. "Woe to such a man, who is fifty years old and would worship a day old object!" Avraham said. On another occasion a woman came in with a plateful of flour and requested him, "Take this and offer it to them." So he took a stick and broke them, and put the stick in the hand of the largest. (When his father returned he demanded, "What have you done to them?" "I cannot conceal it from you. A woman came with a plateful of fine meal and requested me to offer it to them. One claimed, 'I must eat first,' while another claimed, 'I must eat first.' Thereupon, the largest arose, took the stick and broke them." "Why do you make sport of me? Have they any knowledge?" Terach said. "Should not your ears hear what your mouth has said?" Avraham said. Thereupon Terach seized him and delivered him to Nimrod. "Let us worship fire," Nimrod said. "Let us rather worship water which quenches fire," Avraham said. "Let us worship water," Nimrod said. "Let us rather worship the clouds which bear the water," Avraham said. "Let us then worship the clouds," Nimrod said. "Let us worship the wind which disperses the clouds," Avraham said. "Let us worship the wind," Nimrod said. "Let us worship human beings which can stand up to the wind," Avraham said. "You are just bandying words, and we will worship nothing but the fire. Behold, I will cast you into it, and let your God whom you adore come and save you from it!" Nimrod said. Now Haran was standing there undecided. "If Avraham is victorious, I will say that I am of Avraham's belief, while if Nimrod is victorious, I will say that I am on Nimrod's side," he thought. When Avraham descended into the fiery furnace and was saved, Nimrod asked him, "Of whose belief are you?" "Of Abraham's," he replied. Thereupon he seized him and cast him into the fire; his innards were scorched and he died in the presence of his father. Hence it is written, "And Haran died in the presence of his father Terach.")

**7. הרב משה ירס, בית מדרש זכרון דב, חוברת פסח תשפ"א | Rabbi Dr. Moshe Yeres, Seder Companion 5781**  
 The Slonimer Rebbe explains that Galut, exile, is not a punishment. It's not characterized by Egyptian taskmasters beating helpless Hebrew slaves or marauding Cossacks pillaging Jewish shtetlach. Rather, Galut means the world exists with the hiddenness of hester panim, where the Almighty's presence is not clearly visible, miracles are rare, the Sea does not normally split, and we experience events which challenge our sense of justice. The bondage and injustice we experience are simply the effects of a world without Hashem's visible presence. Galut is the default state of Jewish people in this world. Our job is to work to find the Almighty's hidden presence and make it visible.

**The Wicked (Shmot)**

**Commandment:**  
...Go, pick out lambs for your families, and slaughter the passover offering.

**The Son's Question:**  
And when your children ask you, 'What do you mean by this rite?'

**The Father's Answer:**  
you shall say, 'It is the passover sacrifice to Hashem, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when smiting the Egyptians, but saved our houses.' ...

**The Innocent (Shmot)**

**Commandment:**  
You shall set apart for Hashem every first issue of the womb: every male firstling that your cattle drop shall be Hashem's.

**The Son's Question:**  
And when, in time to come, a child of yours asks you, saying, 'What does this mean?'

**The Father's Answer:**  
... When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, Hashem slew every male firstborn in the land of Egypt... Therefore I sacrifice to Hashem every first male issue

**The One Who Doesn't Know How to Ask**

**Commandment:**  
Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a festival of Hashem.

**The Son's Question:**

**The Father's Answer:**  
...And you shall explain to your child on that day, 'It is because of what Hashem did for me when I went free from Egypt.'

**The Wise (Dvarim 6)**

**Commandment:**

**The Son's Question:**  
When, in time to come, your children ask you, "What mean the decrees, laws, and rules that our G-d Hashem has enjoined upon you?"

**The Father's Answer:**  
you shall say to your children, "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and Hashem freed us from Egypt with a mighty hand. Hashem wrought before our eyes marvelous and destructive signs and portents in Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his household; and us G-d freed from there, in order to take us and give us the land promised on oath to our fathers. Then Hashem commanded us to observe all these laws, to revere our G-d Hashem, for our lasting good and for our survival, as is now the case. It will be therefore to our merit before our G-d Hashem to observe faithfully this whole Instruction, as G-d has