**Class # 24 –Reality TV versus the Hagadah**

Sponsored in memory of Alice Toby Barbanel Z”l

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# Brandon Elder Auditions With Original Song About His Mom Called "Gone" - American Idol 2018 on ABC  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGnXZN7BN1w>

1. Why do singing competitions - like American idol/The Voice/X-factor - have a backstory?  Why isn’t the singing enough!
2. What is compelling about Brandon’s story?
3. What was the arc of his life?

Rambam, Laws of Chametz and Matzah, Ch. 7:4

One must begin [the narrative describing our ancestors'] base [roots] and conclude with [their] praise. What does this imply? One begins relating how originally, in the age of Terach, our ancestors denied [God's existence] and strayed after vanity, pursuing idol worship. One concludes with the true faith: how the Omnipresent has drawn us close to Him, separated us from the gentiles, and drawn us near to His Oneness.

Similarly, one begins by stating that we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and [describing] all the evil done to us, and concludes with the miracles and wonders that were wrought upon us, and our freedom This [implies] that one should extrapolate [the passage beginning] from “…An Aramean sought to destroy my ancestor…” [Deuteronomy 26:5]

until one concludes the entire passage. Whoever adds and extends his extrapolation of this passage is praiseworthy.

1. Why do we have structure the story of the Exodus in a specific way at all?
2. How is the Hagadah the same as a reality TV show and how is it different?
3. What does it tell us about the goal of the Seder?
4. What are the two dimensions of the narrative describing our ancestors'] base [roots] and concluding with [their] praise?
5. Why do we go back all the way to Avraham’s father? Why not go back to Adam Harishon?
6. What is the role of Human endeavor and freedom and Divine action and redemption?
7. Were the Jews passive or active in their redemption?

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| **Go forth and learn** what Laban the Aramean wanted to do to our father Jacob. Pharaoh had issued a decree against the male children only, but Laban wanted to uproot everyone - as it is said: "The Aramean wished to destroy my father; and he went down to Egypt and sojourned there, few in number; and he became there a nation - great and mighty and numerous."  **"And he went down to Egypt"** forced by Divine decree. "And he sojourned there" - this teaches that our father Jacob did not go down to Egypt to settle, but only to live there temporarily. Thus it is said, "They said to Pharaoh, We have come to sojourn in the land, for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks because the hunger is severe in the land of Canaan; and now, please, let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen."  **"Few in number"** as it is said: "Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons, and now, the L-rd, your G‑d, has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven."  **"And he became there a nation"** this teaches that Israel was distinctive there.  **"Great, mighty,"** as it is said: "And the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, and multiplied and became very, very mighty, and the land became filled with them."  **"And numerous,"** as it is said: "I passed over you and saw you wallowing in your bloods, and I said to you `By your blood you shall live,' and I said to you `By your blood you shall live!' I caused you to thrive like the plants of the field, and you increased and grew and became very beautiful your bosom fashioned and your hair grown long, but you were naked and bare." |
| https://www.chabad.org/holidays/Passover/images/haggadah2_1.jpg"**The Egyptians treated us badly** and they made us suffer, and they put hard work upon us."  **"The Egyptians treated us badly,"** as it is said: Come, let us act cunningly with [the people] lest they multiply and, if there should be a war against us, they will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the land."  **"And they made us suffer,"** as it is said: "They set taskmasters over [the people of Israel] to make them suffer with their burdens, and they built storage cities for Pharaoh, Pitom and Ramses." |
| **"And they put hard work upon us,"** as it is said: "The Egyptians made the children of Israel work with rigor. And they made their lives bitter with hard work, with mortar and with bricks and all manner of service in the field, all their work which they made them work with rigor."  **And we cried out to the L-rd, the G‑d of our fathers,** and the L-rd heard our voice and saw our suffering, our labor and our oppression.  **"And we cried out to the L-rd, the G‑d of our fathers,"** as it is said: "During that long period, the king of Egypt died; and the children of Israel groaned because of the servitude, and they cried out. And their cry for help from their servitude rose up to G‑d."  **"And the L-rd heard our voice"** as it said: "And G‑d heard their groaning, and G‑d remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." |
| **"And he saw our suffering,"** this refers to the separation of husband and wife, as it is said: "G‑d saw the children of Israel and G‑d took note."  **"Our labor,"** this refers to the "children," as it is said: "Every boy that is born, you shall throw into the river and every girl you shall keep alive."  https://www.chabad.org/holidays/Passover/images/haggadah2.jpg**"And our oppression,"** this refers to the pressure, as it is said: "I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them."  **"The L-rd took as out of Egypt** with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with a great manifestation, and with signs and wonders."  **"The L-rd took us out of Egypt,"** not through an angel, not through a seraph and not through a messenger. The Holy One, blessed be He, did it in His glory by Himself!  **Thus it is said:** "In that night I will pass through the land of Egypt, and I will smite every first-born in the land of Egypt, from man to beast, and I will carry out judgments against all the gods of Egypt, I the L-rd." |
| **"I will pass through the land of Egypt,"** I and not an angel;  **"And I will smite every first-born in the land of Egypt,"** I and not a seraph;  **"And I will carry out judgments against all the gods of Egypt,"** I and not a messenger;  **"I- the L-rd,"** it is I, and none other!  **"With a strong hand,"** this refers to the dever (pestilence) as it is said: "Behold, the hand of the L-rd will be upon your livestock in the field, upon the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the herds and the flocks, a very severe pestilence."  **"And with an outstretched arm,"** this refers to the sword, as it is said: "His sword was drawn, in his hand, stretched out over Jerusalem."  **"And with a great manifestation,"** this refers to the revelation of the Shechinah (Divine Presence), as it is said: "Has any G‑d ever tried to take for himself a nation from the midst of another nation, with trials, signs and wonders, with war and with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with great manifestations, like all that the L-rd your G‑d, did for you in Egypt before your eyes!"  **"And with signs,"** this refers to the staff, as it is said: "Take into your hand this staff with which you shall perform the signs."  **"And wonders,"** this refers to the blood, as it is said: "And I shall show wonders in heaven and on earth. |