



A Word on Torah Study

1. Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (18th century Russia), Tanya 1:5

Now, when an intellect conceives and comprehends a concept with its intellectual faculties, this intellect grasps the concept and encompasses it. This concept is [in turn] grasped, enveloped and en clothed within that intellect which conceived and comprehended it. The mind, for its part, is also clothed in the concept at the time it comprehends and grasps it with the intellect. For example, when a person understands and comprehends, fully and clearly, any halachah (law) in the Mishnah or Gemara, his intellect grasps and encompasses it and, at the same time, is clothed in it. Consequently, as the particular halachah is the wisdom and will of G-d, for it was His will that when, for example, Reuben pleads in one way and Simeon in another, the verdict as between them shall be thus and thus; and even should such a litigation never have occurred, nor would it ever present itself for judgment in connection with such disputes and claims, nevertheless, since it has been the will and wisdom of the Holy One, blessed be He, that in the event of a person pleading this way and the other [litigant] pleading that way, the verdict shall be such and such—now therefore, when a person knows and comprehends with his intellect such a verdict in accordance with the law as it is set out in the Mishnah, Gemara, or Posekim (Codes), he has thus comprehended, grasped and encompassed with his intellect the will and wisdom of the Holy One, blessed be He, Whom no thought can grasp, nor His will and wisdom, except when they are clothed in the laws that have been set out for us. [Simultaneously] the intellect is also clothed in them [the Divine will and wisdom]. This is a wonderful union, like which there is none other, and which has no parallel anywhere in the material world, whereby complete oneness and unity, from every side and angle, could be attained.

Scenes in the Seder: The Educational Philosophy of Stealing the Afikomen

2. Rabbi Ari Yitzchak Shevet, Hamaayan, Snatching Matzot on Seder night: An Educational Perspective <https://www.machonso.org/hamaayan/?gilayon=33&id=1079>

3. Talmud, Pesachim 109a

Rabbi Eliezer says: One grabs matzot on the nights of Passover on account of the children so they ask questions and don't fall asleep.6.

4. Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Leavened and Unleavened Bread 7:3, Translated by R. Francis Nataf

On the first night of *Pesach*, one should introduce some change at the table, so that the children who will notice it may ask, saying: "Why is this night different from all other nights?" And he in turn will reply: "This is what happened." In what manner, for example, should he introduce a change? He may distribute parched grain or nuts to the children; remove the table from its usual place; snatch the unleavened bread from **hand to hand**, and so on.

5. R. Yehonatan haCohen of Lunel (12th Century Provence), Pesachim 109a

One explanation is that the adults [snatch the matzot] from each other and it's a **small demonstration of love of the mitzvah** for the children so they don't ask and they sleep that night. Some explain that we [the adults] snatch it from the children and **play with them**. Alternatively, it means we eat quickly so the small children don't sleep and they recite Hallel with us.

6. Rabbi Shmuel ben Meir (11th century France), Pesachim 109a

It appears to me that "snatching" means removing the bread from the hands of the children so they shouldn't sleep from eating too much

7. Rabbi Yom Tov ben Avraham Asevilli (13th century Spain), Commentary on the Haggadah

The custom of Nachmanides was that when children were in the house and they removed the seder plate, he would tell the waiter: "let's recite grace after meals for we ate so much", so that the children would see and ask. I think

(snatching matzot) means that as they reach to take the matza we snatch it from their hands and say: “you ate a lot!

The Power of Taste

8. Talmud, Pesachim 115b (Davidson Edition Translation)

And Rav Pappa said: A person should not leave bitter herbs in the haroset for a lengthy period of time, lest the sweetness of the spices in the haroset nullify its bitterness. And the bitter herbs require a bitter taste, and they are not bitter when marinated in haroset.

9. Rabbi Yosef Karo (16th Century Israel), Code of Jewish Law: Laws of Passover 475:1

Afterwards, he should take an olive’s worth of maror, and submerge it in charoset. He should not leave it in there too long so that its bitterness should be reduced. **Therefore, he should shake off the charoset from it.**

10. Talmud, Pesachim 115b (Davidson Edition Translation)

Rava said: If one swallowed matza without chewing it, he has fulfilled the obligation to eat matza, as he has consumed it. However, if one swallowed bitter herbs without chewing them, he has not fulfilled his obligation, as he did not taste their bitterness. Furthermore, if one swallowed matza and bitter herbs together, he has fulfilled the obligation of eating matza, but he has not fulfilled the obligation of eating bitter herbs. If one wrapped matza and bitter herbs in a palm net, the thin interlacing of vines that sprouts around a palm tree, and swallowed them, he has not fulfilled his obligation even of eating matza.

11. Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Leavened and Unleavened Bread 6:2, Translated by R. Francis Nataf

[If] one swallowed matsa, he has fulfilled [the obligation. If] he swallowed bitter herbs, he has not fulfilled [it. If] he swallowed matsa and bitter herbs like one (at the same time), he fulfilled matsa; he did not fulfill bitter herbs - as the bitter herbs are like [something] auxiliary to the matsa. [If] he wrapped them in [palm] bast or that which is similar to it and swallowed them, he did not even fulfill matsa.

12. Rabbi Menachem Meiri on Pesachim ibid.

Some disregard this discussion and argue that even someone who swallows matzah since we find through this who chapter that tasting the matzah is required.

Bread of Affliction?

13. Pesach Haggadah, Sefara Edition

This is the bread of destitution that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Anyone who is famished should come and eat, anyone who is in need should come and partake of the Pesach sacrifice. Now we are here, next year we will be in the land of Israel; this year we are slaves, next year we will be free people.

14. Deuteronomy 16:3, JPS Tanakh 1985 translation

You shall not eat anything leavened with it; for seven days thereafter you shall eat unleavened bread, bread of distress—for you departed from the land of Egypt hurriedly—so that you may remember the day of your departure from the land of Egypt as long as you live.

15. Talmud, Pesachim 115b-116a (Davidson Edition Translation)

Shmuel said that the phrase: “The bread of affliction [lehem oni]” (Deuteronomy 16:3) means bread over which one answers [onim] matters, i.e., one recites the Haggadah over matza. That was also taught in a baraita: Lehem oni is bread over which one answers many matters. Alternatively, in the verse, “lehem oni” is actually written without a vav, which means a poor person. Just as it is the manner of a poor person to eat a piece of bread, for lack of a whole loaf, so too, here he should use a piece of matza. Alternatively: Just as the manner of a poor person is that he heats the oven and his wife bakes quickly, before the small amount of wood they have is used up, so too here; when baking matza, he heats the oven and his wife bakes quickly so the dough doesn’t rise. This is why matza is called the poor man’s bread.

16. Rabbi Ovadiah Seforno, Deutoronomy 16:3

Bread which they ate while in a state of **external pressure**, not having time to wait until the dough had risen so that it became leavened. The taskmasters had always **been rushing them**, during their entire stay in Egypt as slave labourers.

17. Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Leavened and Unleavened Bread 6:3-4, Translated by R. Francis Nataf

One only fulfills the obligation of eating matsa if he ate it from one of the five species [of grain], as it is stated (Deutoronomy 16:3), "You shall not eat chamets upon it; for seven days you shall eat matsas upon it": One fulfills his obligation if he eats matsa [from] things that come to being leavened. But he does not fulfill matsa [with] other things - such as rice, millet and legumes - since there is no chamets with them.

One may fulfill his obligation on Passover [with] matsa that was kneaded with fruit juice. But we may not knead it with wine or oil or milk, on account of 'bread of poverty' - as we explained.

18. Maharal, Gevurot Hashem Chapter 51

The explanation of this is that matzah is called "the bread of the poor", which is the opposite of "rich matzah". For when [matzah] has oil, and honey it is called "rich matzah" because these ingredients make the bread rich. A poor person only has himself...and his body. Matzah also only has the dough itself which is composed of water and flour which is the essence of flour. In this regard it is "the bread of the poor".

If it is difficult for you: what does poverty have to do with redemption? They are two opposites! This isn't difficult because poverty represents redemption. Redemption is nothing but the idea of leaving and not being attached to someone else. Not like a slave who doesn't stand on his own and is attached to his master...something which has "poverty" and isn't, but rather stands on its own is connected to redemption.

19. Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Leavened and Unleavened Bread Chapter 8, Tr. R. Francis Nataf

And afterwards he continues with the meal and eats all that he wants to eat and drinks all that he wants to drink. And at the end, he eats [as little as] a kazayit of meat of the Passover sacrifice, and does not taste [anything] after it at all - and at this time, he eats a kazayit of matsa, and does not taste anything after it - in order that it will be the end of his meal **and the taste of the meat of the Passover sacrifice or the matsa will be in his mouth, since eating them is the commandment.**