



Jewish Calendar III Redemption Through Faith Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller

Our notion of *seder* (order) has to do with aesthetics and convenience. Hashem's idea of *seder* is lifting us from a state of exile to a state of redemption. The Maharal explains that redemption is about reaching self perfection. On Pesach we were redeemed both from slavery to the Egyptians and bondage to ourselves. Our own will can be enslaving. We often don't know who we want to be, what our goals are, and which path to take to get there. On Pesach we can attain spiritual redemption through self actualization on Hashem's terms. On this night we can discover who we truly are and who we can become through the fourteen steps or *simanim* of the Seder.

We start with **Kadesh** where we sanctify the Seder night with wine, a symbol of the secret self. The self that is inaccessible and hidden needs to become the predominant voice for us to merit redemption. We continue with **Urchatz**, washing our hands, symbolizing our desire to be a *n'ki kapaim*-one whose hands are clean of dishonest gain, and who is learned in the art of precision in serving Hashem. Hands symbolize fine motor action. In halacha, one cannot mean well, one must do well. For **Karpas**, we dip a vegetable in salt water. Vegetables are simple food and require very little preparation. When one makes a bracha, one uplifts both oneself and the food by defining something that is ordinary as holy. This signifies that no

matter how distant one feels from Hashem, one can still elevate oneself and come back to Him. Salt water represents tears and torment, teaching us that our suffering sanctifies us. For **Yachatz**, we break the middle matzah into two uneven pieces. The key to redemption is a broken heart. The smaller and more humble we are, the more sensitive we are to the pain of others, and to the anguish of Galut HaShechina, and the more open and real our prayers are. We put one piece of matza back and hide the other piece of matzah for afikomen. This symbolizes that our lives are divided into two, part one is this world, and part two is the world to come. In this world, time passes swiftly and we cannot hold on to the joy of our deeds nor to its spiritual connection. In the world to come, the hidden world, it will all be there like a feast for us to enjoy forever. **Magid**, the central part of the Hagadah comes next. Who we are is expressed and developed by what we say. The more we talk about redemption, the closer we bring ourselves to that state. We move on to **Rachtzah** and **Motzi Matzah**. Matzot symbolize the Avot and wine is about the Imahot. In Jewish Law, drinks are a *tafel*-subordinate to food. Similarly, the Imahot accompanied the Avot. They were one persona. The main property of wine is its ability to bring out the inner self. The Avot stood for *emet*-truth and the Imahot symbolized our *emunah*-faith. Although *emunah* comes from a higher place than *emet*, *emunah* needs to be contained in a vessel of *emet*. Our need to

believe and have faith has to be channeled through truth otherwise we can come to *emunah tefelah*-false faith. The Talmud says, women were given nine measures of speech. They are more connected to the physical world and therefore have a greater need to make sense of it by talking about it and uplifting it. Speaking about redemption is an important aspect of *emunah*. **Maror** entails taking bitter herbs. Bitterness means rejection and our rejection of non-Jewish ideals and philosophy brings the redemption closer. **Korech** is a sandwich of Matzah-redemption and Maror-slavery. Exile is a part of redemption, discovering one's true identity necessitates knowing what one is not. In **Shulchun Orech**, the Jews in the time of the Temple partook of the sacrificial lamb, a submissive animal. Our task is to subjugate our will before the will of Hashem. **Tzafun** is the hidden essence of the Seder, the *geulah* yet to come. **Barech** means blessing. On Pesach, the vaults of heaven are open. Our most fervent prayer should be to connect with Hashem. **Hallel** and **Nirtza** bring this holy and emotionally laden night to a close. **Nirtza** is song. The difference between speech and song is that speech creates a fine border around reality while song lifts one beyond that. Song is the voice of *emunah*. Many have the custom to recite Shir Hashirim after the seder. The Song of Songs bears our souls aloft to the level of supernatural faith which is ultimately what redemption is all about.