

Dear Levitan Family,

I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones in good health and spirits.

The primary theme of Seder night is our children, והגדת לבנך. Many of the Minhagim and activities that we do are meant to engage, inspire and encourage our children to ask questions. We are then expected to provide clear and heartwarming answers.

This year, many of us find ourselves in an unusual place. Instead of being guests and participants at a Seder, we now have to lead the actual Seder. We need to set the tone, encourage our children to ask questions and hopefully have some answers as well.

This concern was expressed to me by many of you and it was that burning desire that I sensed, along with the patience and encouragement of my wife and children, that I embarked on this time consuming project.

We begin the Haggadah with a paragraph not in Hebrew but in Aramaic. *Ha Lachma Anya*, this is the bread of affliction/poor man's bread etc. It is not sourced in Chazal and the language is puzzling. The Chasam Sofer (Haggadah-Chad Gadya) suggests that this paragraph was authored the first year after the destruction of the Bais HaMikdash. The first year that Klal Yisroel sat down to a Seder WITHOUT a Karbon Pesach. And these moving words were deliberately said in Aramaic to convey the pain. The Matzah as we know, represents both slavery and freedom. However, this year, the Yid in Galus told his children at the Seder, it is *Lachma Anya*, it symbolizes only slavery and exile. Last year with the Karbon Pesach, only those that were invited were allowed to partake. This year, sadly it is *Kol Dichfin*, anyone that is hungry can join. But, he continued with words of hope, *Hashaatah Hachah*, this year we are here in Galus and lacking the centerpiece of Pesach, but next year we will be free and back home in Yerushalayim.

This timeless pep talk should be our anthem of hope as well. And while we all may feel somewhat displaced this year, perhaps we can channel some of those feelings to the ultimate misplacement of being in Galus, and Daven that we too will be able to celebrate Pesach properly.

לשנה הבאה בירושלים!

Wishing you and your families a חג כשר ושמח



Rabbi & Mrs. Ari Levitan

ערב פסח תש"פ