

## Lechem Oni

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Shimon Isaacson

The Torah refers to the matzah as *lechem oni* (the bread of affliction). The Gemara explains that it is *lechem she'onim alav dvarim harbeh*, bread over which we say many things. Accordingly, Rabbenu Chananel notes that we recite the hagadah over the matzah. Just as on Shabbat we say *kiddush* on a cup of wine in order to lend formality and significance to the words, the matzot add an aura of importance to the telling of the story of the exodus.

At the seder there are many foods and props

we use to help us get into the mindset of re-experiencing the exile of Egypt. It's not enough to retell the story. We have to feel as if we are living through it. We taste the bitterness of the maror dipped in brick mortar-like *charoset*, point to the shank bone symbolizing the korban pesach, and drink the wine of freedom. The matzot too help us remember how our forefathers rushed out of Egypt and how the dough did not have time to rise.

While the word *oni* in *lechem oni* is pronounced *oni*, the *ktiv* is *ayin nun yud*, which

spells *ani*, a pauper. Just like a poor person cannot always afford a whole loaf of bread, we take the matzah and break it in two.

In *hilchot chametz u'matzah*, the Rambam rules that we do not make a blessing on two whole matzot as we usually do on yom tov because the law of *lechem oni* overrides *lechem mishna*. In practice, we do not follow this opinion. One matzah is broken at *yachatz*, and the two other complete matzot are used for *motzi matzah*.

## Bringing Torah To Life Making Pesach Meaningful #15 – Part III

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller

The last topic to discuss with middle grade kids is the plagues. Show them the pictures in the Hagadah. Talk to them about what happened and help them visualize it in their minds. Emphasize the concept of *midah kneged midah* (Hashem repays a person according to his conduct). When you get to *makkat bechorot* point out the concept of *beni bechori yisrael*. Just like a firstborn son turns his parents into parents, we bring Hashem into the world. Point out that the plagues came from Hashem and that they were supernatural.

With older children and teens, it depends if they are willing to listen to you. At the seder, they may be more open to discussion. So as you are cleaning and preparing for Pesach, try to give them a sense of the *simcha* (happiness) of the holiday. Find a few quite moments as you are preparing for yom tov together to talk to them. Explain that true joy is being part of something larger than yourself. The *simcha* of getting married is moving on to something better and bigger and building something greater. When the Jews left Mitzrayim they grew spiritually. They became a people for whom Divine Providence

and miracles are common.

Older children might ask, "If Hashem sent us to Mitzrayim, what's the big deal that he took us out?" At this point, you should explain the continuum of *galut* (exile) and *geulah* (redemption). You can talk about people who survived the Holocaust and rebuilt their families. Explain that growth involves overcoming your limitations. You have to experience first-hand what you don't want to be in order to know what you do want to be.

Talk about *geulah*. "If you were in Egypt and Moshe came, would you start packing or would you think it wasn't going to happen? If someone told you, Mashiach had arrived, would you believe him?" Often they may answer that they wouldn't believe. Then you have to say, "Life is full of unexpected curves and Hashem can do anything." Share with them surprising occurrences in your own life. Teach your children that all possibilities are in Hashem's hands.

When you talk about the plagues, emphasize how Hashem demonstrates his love through *hashgacha pratit*. Hashem won't perform open

miracles like he did in Mitzrayim because he wants us to attain our sense of faith on our own. Your goal should be to get them to understand that Hashem is there, that he cares and can do anything. It is especially important to teach them to be truly happy to be a part of His nation.

Create an aura of happiness at the seder. Think about what would make your family happy. Encourage your husband to tell stories of the exodus. Invite the children to sing.

I find that Chol Hamoed can easily disintegrate to externals. Let the Pesach spirit flow into the week. At least when you are eating together, mention something about *yetziat mitzrayim*, infuse a bit of *simcha*, sing, help your kids feel Hashem's goodness.

Discuss Hashem's *malchut* (kingship) and try to make your children feel important. Older kids need this desperately. Throughout the year, the feeling of being a link to something bigger than oneself is hard to latch on to. Pesach could be a big *tikun* (rectification) in connecting us to the joy and majesty of being a part of the chosen people.

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## Builder of Her Home: Beyond Self Discovery #2

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller

A man's mission is to bring Torah down from above by struggling. A woman's purpose is to take the Torah and address it to this world. She makes Torah the essence of her life by discovering its sanctity and sweetness, addressing it to her environment. This does not happen spontaneously. It requires work and thought. You must ask yourself, "How am I taking the goodness of Torah and bringing it into my home? Is the way I interact with my children giving them self-worth and a sense of who they are as Jews?"

Weaving comments into daily conversation such as, "Isn't this a beautiful apple? Let's thank Hashem." Or "Look what *hashgacha pratit* (Divine Providence), she called just when I needed her." Statements like these actualize this idea.

Both a man and a woman have the task of bringing Torah into their home. He accomplishes this through struggle. She does it by melding the physical and the spiritual together.

Chazal say, "*Ish v'isha zachu shechina beinehem*." Man and woman are meant to complete each other. They share two letters, *alef* and *shin*, which spell *aish*, referring to the soul, which is like a flame. Yet they are different. A man has a *yud*, which signifies higher and transcendental things. A woman has a *hey*, which represents two feet on the ground. Marriage is meant to be a partnership with the common goal of creating a Torah home by using the methods that are specific and natural to each of them. The goal of the Torah home is *giluy Shechina*, revealing Hashem through goodness, higher consciousness, and tranquility.

After the sin of the tree of knowledge, struggle became a part of the world. The sin created a seeming contradiction between spirituality and physicality. The home is supposed to be the place to resolve this. The one best suited to do so is the woman.

When she comes home from a hard day of work, she might ask herself, "Where am I here, where's my person? My body is saying coffee or a nap but what's my soul really saying? What do I want to give my children from within me? How will I greet them?" She

could say, "Ok kids here are some treats on the table. Go play with the lego." Sometimes that's all she's capable of doing. But it would be much better if she could think, how can I make my home into a place of self-discovery and joy? So she'll put on her children's favorite CD and give them a snack and sit with them when they eat. She will say a blessing with them and listen to what they really want to tell her.

I was once in the home of the Amshinover Rebbe. He still had young children then. When the boys came home from *cheder* (school), the table was set with food and treats. Their mother was there to welcome them with a smile and a listening ear. When they finished eating, she asked, "Do you want to play or review?" They chose to play but fifteen minutes later they were at the table with open *sefarim* (books).

It's possible to bridge the great gap between heaven and earth. The place to do it is in the Torah home. There must be the energy of the man and the energy of the woman. There must not be the image that one has all of this and one has all of that. There has to be *sheleimut*, wholeness.

For a home to be a *mishkan* it should have inner content. This is actualized through learning and living Torah. A woman may say about her home, "I'm too big for this. My house is small, I have talents, abilities. I want to affect the world." But in truth a woman's home is her place of influence and this in turn can impact and change the face of the Jewish people.

Rivka *imeinu* brought the Divine Presence back into the tent of the *avot* (forefathers). The imprint the *avot* left couldn't have possibly been grounded in this world without the influence of the *imahot* (foremothers). Similarly it says that in the merit of the women in Egypt, the Jews were redeemed. The women in Egypt wanted children because they believed that every child was significant. Used to the severity of their slavery and struggle, the men in Egypt did not see the beauty of life. The women saw this beauty and wanted it to continue.

The power to unify comes from women because they can see the *tzelem elokim* (Divine image) within every person more

readily. If they bring that power into their homes, men will be able to develop this capacity too. *Achdut* (unity) depends on women. The Jewish nation makes Hashem's presence observable in the world by gathering together. When the unifying force is operative, when we bring Hashem into the world, it is similar to a woman giving birth to a child.

There were five curtains on the mishkan that were attached *isha al achota*, each woman to her sister. The mishkan brought Hashem into the collective life of the Jewish people. The woman represents the *koach hamechaber* (connecting force), even in an imperfect state. Maharal says when there is unity in the union of the man and woman, there's a parallel mating between Hashem and Yisrael. When the woman desires to bring forth her husband's *tzelem* (Divine image) and he wants to give, it creates a parallel between Hashem who provides and the Jewish people who desire to receive and build.

The pasuk says, "The wisdom of a woman builds her home." A woman has to approach her goal with inner strength, self-discovery, integration and unification. This requires wisdom and self-knowledge. The Torah says, each woman who had wisdom in her heart would weave and bring what she wove. The woman took the delicate threads and created connection, one thread to the other. Through her strength of connection, a woman enables her family to reach perfection.

A wife and mother express this through meeting the needs of her household and honoring her husband. A wholesome meal, a good word, stability and authority, warmth and encouragement are the building blocks of a healthy home.

Every husband desires respect. A wife's job is to figure out what aspect of her husband deserves recognition and acknowledgement. The place she honors will be the place where he will dedicate his energies.

The Torah is compared to a woman. It's called a living tree. A woman gives life and glory just like the Torah. A woman must constantly flow, make connections, and develop new relationships. Her true purpose is bringing it all together.