

Guide to the Inner Haggadah – The Spiritual Dimension

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1. Spirituality involves internalizing teachings to produce reflection and transformation within the realm of the soul.
2. Passover represents inner life freedom from restraints that hinder us from becoming who we should be and doing what we are meant to do.
3. The following insights are derived from my engagement with the Haggadah marked by an openness to texts and words that evoked a spiritual response. This is not a commentary on the entire Haggadah but rather a report of one individual's spiritual experience with it.

Kiddush

- a. **Baruch ata Adonai** – YHVH, You, are the Source of Blessing
 - a. “YHVH (pronounced as Adonai), The Cause of Being” – A meditation on the experience of pure being flowing through us.
 - b. “Atah – You” – A meditation on the direct experience of God, the divine Thou in the I-Thou moment.
 - c. “Barukh – The Source of Blessing” – A meditation on the I-Thou encounter with the Cause of Being transforming into pure Being, experienced as blessing flowing through us.
- b. **Kideshanu be mitzvotahv** – “Who has brought sanctity into our lives by giving us Divine Commandments.” Reflecting on commandments as spiritual or moral obligations responding to the question of what one ought to do with the experience of divine blessing.
- c. **Pe-sach** – The Rabbi's interpretation breaks down Pesach into "Pe Sach" meaning "the mouth speaks." The mouth must speak words of truth. Unconscious narratives shape and limit our lives. The story we tell can enslave or liberate us. This idea is connected to the notion of the exile of the word - Galut ha-dibbur.

My Four Questions

- i) What are my essential goals as a human being? To have thriving relationships with loved ones and to act righteously. Goals become purposeful when we encounter resistance to fulfilling the existential drives of love and conscience.

- ii) What is stopping me from achieving my existential goals? What forms of resistance exist? What form does the Yetzer Ha'ra take?
- iii) Where is the pain and sorrow? What underlying pain and sorrow do I carry that infiltrates every area of my inner life?
- iv) How will I address the pain, sorrow, and resistance to human thriving?

**I have lived with restraints on my full being,
and I dedicate myself to breaking free from these restraints.**

Four Sons

- 1) Wise: Seeks to learn everything about following spiritual drives toward love, conscience, and other worthwhile goals emerging from the soul.
- 2) Rebellious: “I have to get out of here.” Refuses to live life devoid of full being. Leave or change the current conditions and find a place where he can thrive.
- 3) Simple: Embraces a beginner's mind, awe, and wonder.
- 4) Silent: Recognizes no need for language to describe moments of awe and wonder, experiencing pure flow in the presence of truth and beauty

Arami Oved Avi – My father was an Ever-Perishing Highlander –

My mediation:

Jacob fled from his family, his brother wanting to murder him, his having to deceive his father by following the guidance that his mother received from the divine, to deprive Esau of the birthright and bestow it upon Jacob.

Jacob fled to Aram – the Highlands. As Jacob herded his sheep through the Highlands, he meditated on the pain, sorrow, trauma, and complexities of the family he grew up in. Jacob saw himself as a Highlander, an Ever-Perishing Highlander (Arami Oved), perishing from the pain in his soul.

When he came back to Canaan, people asked, “What are you?” He replied, “I’m not a Canaanite. I’m a Highlander, an Ever-Perishing Highlander.”

His “Ever Perishing” continued with the death of his wife Rachel, the report that Rachel’s son Yosef was devoured by a wild beast and Rachel’s beloved son Benjamin being held hostage by Pharaoh.

The three symbols of Passover

Pesach – the mouth must tell narratives that guide us toward human thriving.

Matzah – we eat the bread of purity to remind us to bring purity to our in our lives.

Maror – we are reminded that life is filled with bitterness, pain and suffering, and we find meaning in life by living out our spiritual values through this adversity.

In generation, every person must see the self as having personally come out of Egypt.

The struggle to break the restraints on living thriving lives, fulfilling the spiritual drives from our soul, is an ongoing struggle.