

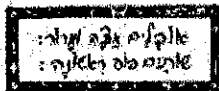
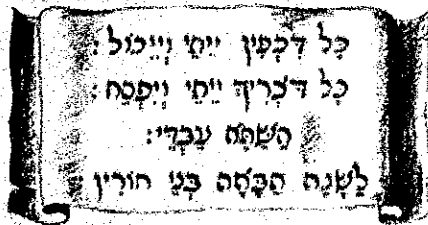


SHALOM HARTMAN INSTITUTE | מכון  
OF NORTH AMERICA | מוסד הרב ש"ך

## Beyond Eating: The Challenge of Speaking Across Differences at Pesach Seder

Rani Jaeger

Rabbinic Beit Midrash  
April 5, 2016



**Rani Jaeger** is a faculty member and research fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute. He also served as Director of the Shalom Hartman Institute School for Teacher Education at the Be'eri program, aimed at pioneering a nationwide model of Jewish education for Israeli high schools. Rani is pursuing his doctorate at Bar-Ilan University in the interdisciplinary program of Culture and Hermeneutics. He was the scholar in residence for a year at Paeideia, the European Institute of Jewish Studies in Stockholm, Sweden. Rani teaches at Tel Aviv University and is one of the founders of Beit Tefilah Israeli, a secular synagogue in the heart of Tel Aviv.

**The Shalom Hartman Institute** is a pluralistic center of research and education deepening and elevating the quality of Jewish life in Israel and North America. Through our work we are redefining the conversation about Judaism in modernity, religious pluralism, Israeli democracy, Israel and world Jewry, and the relationship with other faith communities.

**The Shalom Hartman Institute of North America** enriches the resources, vision, and commitment of the leaders and change agents who shape the future of Jewish life in North America and set the agendas of its educational, religious, and community institutions. Through text study, peer learning, and interdenominational dialogue, the Institute is shaping a future for North American Jewry of intellectual renaissance and renewed inspiration.

One Pennsylvania Plaza, Suite 1606  
New York, NY 10119  
212-268-0300  
info@shalomhartman.org  
www.shalomhartman.org

## **Beyond Eating: The Challenge of Speaking Across Differences at Pesach Seder**

1. No Tension = No Seder p. 1
2. Guidelines from the Sages: Symbols/content, Adults first  
Mishna Pesachim 10:5 p. 1
3. Tensions of Inclusiveness p. 2
4. From History to Memory - MOSES by Achad ha-Am pp. 3-4
5. Tradition vs. Traditionalism - David Hartman, a Guiding Vision  
for Jewish Education in: *a Heart of Many Rooms*, pp. 122 p. 4

1. No Tension=No Seder

2. Guidelines from the Sages: Symbols/content, Adults first

PESAḤIM

CHAPTER 10

MISHNAH 5

רבן גמליאל היה אומר: כל שלא אמר שלשה דברים אלו בפסח, לא יצא ידי חובתו, ואלו הן: פסח, מצה ומרור. פסח — על שום שפסח המקום על פתי אבותינו במצרים. מצה — על שום שנגאלו אבותינו במצרים. מרור — על שום שמררו המצריים את בני אבותינו במצרים. [בכל דור נדור חזב אדם לראות את עצמו קאלו הוא יצא ממצרים, שנאמר (שמות יג. ח): "והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר, בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים." לפיכך אנחנו חייבין להודות. להלל, לשבח, לפאר, לרומם, להדר, לברך, לעלה ולקלס למי שעשה לאבותינו ולנו את כל הנסים האלו: הוציאנו מעבדות לחרות, מיגון לשמחה, ומאכל ליזם טוב, ומאפלה לאור גדול, ומשעבוד לגאלה. ונאמר לפניו הללויה.

Rabban Gamliel used to say, Whoever has not said these three things on Pesah has not fulfilled his obligation and they are: *Pesah*, *matzah*, and bitter herb. *Pesah* — because the Omnipresent passed over the houses of our ancestors in Egypt. *Matzah* — because our ancestors were redeemed in Egypt. Bitter herb — because the Egyptians embittered the lives of our ancestors in Egypt. [In every generation a man must regard himself as if he had come out of Egypt, as it is written, "And you shall tell your son on that day, saying, 'It is because of that which the Lord did for me when I went out of Egypt'" (Ex. 13:8). Therefore we are obliged to give thanks, to praise, to laud, to glorify, to exalt, to honor, to bless, to extol, elevate and acclaim Him who performed all these miracles for our fathers and for us; He brought us forth from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to joy, and from mourning to festivity, and from darkness to a great light, and from servitude to redemption. So let us say before Him, *Halleluyah*.

### 3. Tensions of Inclusiveness

**פגוד** העורר

אֲרֵבֶעֶדָה בָּנִים דְּבִרְיָה תוֹרָה

אָחֵד	הַחֵם
וְאֶחָד	רָשָׁע
וְאֶחָד	תָּם
וְאֶחָד שְׂאִינוּ יוֹדְעֵי לִשְׂאֵל	

**החם** העורר

מִזֶּה הוּא אֲחֵד ?

מִזֶּה הַחֵם ?

וְאֵיךְ אֵשֶׁת אֶחָד לִי? קְהֵלֵבוֹת הַחֵם

אֵיךְ מַשְׁפִּירִין אֶחָד הַחֵם אֶסְתִּיקָן

**רשע** העורר

מִזֶּה הוּא אֲחֵד ?

מִזֶּה הַחֵם הַחֵם הַחֵם לֵב לֵב לֵב

וְלִמֵּי שְׂחֻצִיָּא אֲדִירָעָבוּ מִן הַחֵם

כִּפֵּר בְּעֵשֶׂר

וְאֵיךְ אֵשֶׁת הַחֵם אֲדִירָעָבוּ וְאֶחָד לִי

בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה יי לִי בְּצִוְיֵי הַחֵם

לִי וְלֵא לִי

אֵלֶּיךָ הָיָה שֵׁם לֹא הָיָה בְּנֶפֶשׁ

**תם** העורר

מִזֶּה הוּא אֲחֵד ?

מִזֶּה הַחֵם ?

וְאֶתְרֵם אֵלֶיךָ

בְּרֵחַק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ יי מִבְּרָצִים מִבֵּית אֲבֹתֵינוּ

**ושאינו יודע לשאל** העורר

אֵיךְ קָרָח לִי

שְׂמֵחָה

וְהַזְדִּית לְבָנֶיךָ בְּיוֹם הַזֵּה לְאָמֶר

בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה יי לִי בְּצִוְיֵי הַחֵם

וְהַזְדִּית לְבָנֶיךָ יְכוּל מִן אֵשׁ הַדֶּשֶׁת ?

וְלִמֵּד לְיָמֶיךָ בְּיוֹם הַזֵּה

אֵי בְּיוֹם הַזֵּה יְכוּל מִן אֵשׁ הַדֶּשֶׁת ?

וְלִמֵּד לְיָמֶיךָ בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה

בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה לֹא אֶתְרֵם

אֵלֶּיךָ בְּשִׂמְחָה שֵׁשׁ מֵעַד וּבְרֹדֶךָ בְּרָצִים לְפָנֶיךָ

60

The Torah speaks of four children: One is wise, one is wicked, one is simple and one does not know how to ask...

**The wicked one, what does he say?** "What is this service to you?!" He says 'to you,' but not to him! By thus excluding himself from the community, he has denied that which is fundamental. You, therefore, blunt his teeth and say to him: "It is because of this that the Lord did for me when I left Egypt"; 'for me' - but not for him! If he had been there, he would not have been redeemed!"

**4. From History to Memory - MOSES by Achad ha-Am (Translated by Leon Simon), 1904**

A. THE influence of great men on the history of the human race is a subject of much discussion among philosophers. Some maintain that the great men create history, and the masses are nothing more than the material on which they work. Others assert that the masses are the moving force, and the great men of every age are only inevitable products of that age and its conditions. Such discussions make one reflect on the tendency of philosophers to shut their eyes to what lies in front of them, and to seek by roundabout paths what is really so near. Surely, it is obvious that the real great men of history, the men, that is, who have become forces in the life of humanity, are not actual, concrete persons who existed in a certain age.

There is not a single great man in history of whom the popular fancy has not drawn a picture entirely different from the actual man; and it is this imaginary conception, created by the masses to suit their needs and their inclinations, that is the real great man, exerting an influence which abides in some cases for thousands of years this, and not the concrete original, who lived a short space in the actual world, and was never seen by the masses in his true likeness.

B. And so it is when learned scholars burrow in the dust of ancient books and manuscripts, in order to raise the great men of history from the grave in their true shapes; believing the while that they are sacrificing their eyesight for the sake of "historical truth".

It is borne in on me that these scholars have a tendency to overestimate the value of their discoveries, and will not appreciate the simple fact that not every archaeological truth is also an historical truth. Historical truth is that, and that alone, which reveals the forces that go to mold the social life of humankind.

Every man who leaves a perceptible mark on that life, though he may be a purely imaginary figure, is a real historical force; his existence is an historical truth.

And on the other hand, every man who has left no impress on the general course of life, be his concrete existence at a particular time never so indisputable, is only one of the million: and the truth contained in the statement that such an one existed is a merely literal truth, which makes absolutely no difference, and is therefore, in the historical sense, no truth at all.

Goethe's Werther, for instance, was a pure fiction; but his influence on that generation was so immense as to cause a large number of suicides: and therefore he is, in the historical sense much more truly a real person than this or that actual German of the same period, who lived an actual concrete life, and died, and was forgotten, and became as though he had never been.

C. Hence I do not grow enthusiastic when the drag-net of scholarship hauls up some new "truth" about a great man of the past; when it is proved by the most convincing evidence that some national hero, who lives on in the hearts of his people, and influences their development, never

existed, or was something absolutely unlike the popular picture of him. On such occasions I tell myself : all this is very fine and very good, and certainly this "truth" will erase or alter a paragraph of a chapter in the book of *archaeology* but it will not make *history* erase the name of its hero, or change its attitude towards him, because real history has no concern with so-and-so who is dead, and who was never seen in that form by the nation at large, but only by antiquarians ; its concern is only with the living hero, whose image is graven in the hearts of men, who has become a force in human life. And what cares history whether this force was at one time a walking and talking biped, or whether it was never anything but a creature of the imagination, labelled with the name of some concrete man? In either case history is certain about his existence, because history feels his effects.

D.And so when I read the Haggadah on the eve of Passover, and the spirit of Moses the son of Amram, that supremest of heroes, who stands like a pillar of light on the threshold of our history, hovers before me and lifts me out of this nether world, I am quite oblivious of all the doubts and questions propounded by non- Jewish critics. I care not whether this man Moses really existed; whether his life and his activity really corresponded to our traditional account of him; whether he was really the savior of Israel and gave his people the Law in the form in which it is preserved among us; and so forth. I have one short and simple answer for all these conundrums. This Moses, I say, this man of old time, whose existence and character you are trying to elucidate, matters to nobody but scholars like you. We have another Moses of our own, whose image has been enshrined in the hearts of the Jewish people for generations, and whose influence on our national life has never ceased from ancient times till the present day. The existence of this Moses, as an historical fact, depends in no way on your investigations. For even if you succeeded in demonstrating conclusively that the man Moses never existed, or that he was not such a man as we supposed, you would not thereby detract one jot from the historical reality of the ideal Moses the Moses who has been our leader not only for forty years in the wilderness of Sinai, but for thousands of years in all the wildernesses in which we have wandered since the Exodus.

And it is not only the existence of this Moses that is clear and indisputable to me. His character is equally plain, and is not liable to be altered by any archaeological discovery. This ideal I reason has been created in the spirit of the Jewish people; and the creator creates in his own image...

## **5. Tradition vs. Traditionalism - David Hartman, a Guiding Vision for Jewish Education in: *a Heart of Many Rooms*, pp. 122**

Jewish education must empower students to feel part of the interpretive community that constitutes Torah. The empowerment of people to take part in the discussion; to feel intellectually free to become engaged and argue with the tradition, must take precedence over issues of authority and obedience if Jewish education is to renew the discussion that has defined Judaism for the past two thousand years. The paradoxical dialectic of this system is to create the student who is at once totally claimed and totally free.