REBBETZIN SHIRA SMILES

Faculty, OU Israel Center



Existential Egg

The egg sits comfortably on the upper left side of the Seder plate, a representation of the *korban Chagigah*, the festival sacrifice offered in the days of the Temple. It carries deep symbolism and conveys a significant message to us on the elevated evening of the Pesach Seder.

In his commentary on the Haggadah, Rav Pincus discusses the profound meaning of the elements found on the Seder plate. He explains that each element reflects different *sfirot*; the shank bone on the upper right side represents chesed, expansiveness and spirituality, expressed through the korban Pesach. The egg, on the upper left side, represents gevurah, containment and limitation. The egg's round shape expresses the idea that everything physical is inherently restricted by its form. The meat of the korban Chagigah was eaten, representing Man's physical nature. Perhaps then, the egg reminds us of the constraints of our physical world, and that infinite, boundless love and kindness really only exist in the spiritual dimension.

Rav Salomon *zt"l*, (*Matnat Chayim*), contemplates the symbolism of the *karpas* eaten at the beginning of the Seder. He sees it as a reminder of how *Am Yisrael* landed in Egypt. The Torah calls Yosef's special coat a ketonet passim, which Rashi (Shemot 37:3), translates as karpas, a fabric made of fine, soft wool. The Egyptian exile began with the brothers convincing Yaakov Avinu that Yosef had been devoured by a wild animal with dipping Yosef's coat into blood. The Exodus from Egypt commenced with a second dipping of blood, that of the hyssop into the blood of the korban Pesach. It is the egg, says Rav Salomon, that intimates the secret of Redemption, unity and connection with one another. It is no coincidence that each year both Seder night and the eve of Tisha B'Av fall out on the same day of the week. If we wish to avoid dipping an egg into ashes to commemorate the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash, we must develop ahavat chinam, love for our brothers and sisters, to merit Geulah.

At the Seder we not only remember the past, but we also yearn for a more complete future. Indeed, each of us can experience a personal redemption on this night. In a fascinating commentary, Targum Yonatan teaches that on the original night of Pesach in Mitzrayim, the Jews were transported on eagle's wings to Har Habayit, the site of the holy Temple, to eat the korban Pesach and were delivered back to Mitzrayim that same night. Rav Wolfson maintains that this happens to all of us on Seder night. We too, in a sense, are transported to eat the afikoman in the makom haMikdash. He notes that although our bodies may not feel this happening, our souls do. We are profoundly affected by the holiness of this night and, in the deepest part

of ourselves, we become transformed.

Rav Laibele Eiger *zt*"l quotes the Ishbitzer Rebbe, of blessed memory, who teaches that this is the egg's message. One cannot tell whether an egg is fertilized or not simply by looking at it from the outside. Only with time can he see this when it hatches. Likewise, we may not see any difference in ourselves after Seder night, however over time, throughout *Sefirat Haomer*, we will be able to notice the contrast.

Our simple egg therefore represents the past, marked by divisiveness in a powerful way. Yet it also reminds us how we can choose to change and be part of the redemptive process as we journey toward an expanded future. Let us take the lessons of *galut* and use them to propel us into a magnificent *geulah* when we will once again eat the festive *chagigah* offering as a united people in G-d's rightful home.





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