

Rav Kook taught that the entire Haggadah centers on the biblical verse “You shall tell your child on that day, ‘Because of what the Eternal did for me when I went free from Egypt’” (Exodus 13:8), which we use to answer the wicked child and the one who does not know how to ask.

Maybe that means that all I have to do to fulfill my obligation to see myself as if I were personally liberated from Egyptian bondage is to say this line.

No way! When I say “what the Eternal did for me,” a robust seder depends on imagining the taskmaster’s lash, the Israelite hope for God’s compassion, and the sweet taste of freedom’s tears of joy on the far side of the Sea.

And yet, I am only imagining the move from degradation to redemption. My freedom to imagine a life of slavery is itself a form of privilege. As we engage the issue of modern slavery, let us constantly be aware of the privilege we bring as well as the power, so that we may take up the right amount of space at the table and no more.

- Rabbi David Spinrad,
The Temple, Atlanta, GA



**“Shroud (On The Other Side),”
by Claudia Cojocaru**

Claudia writes, “The shroud represents freeing people from the imprisonment of their minds and bodies. There is always a shroud covering the essence of truth within.” Claudia’s reflection on her life as a trafficking survivor is on p. 42.

As we begin Maggid, we seek to enter into the experience of slavery and redemption with more than just our heads, but with our hearts and bodies as well.

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Yachatz

Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi z”l taught that the “big matzah” represents the “big lessons,” which we can only take in and digest through the experience of the seder.

When we break the matzah, we traditionally save the bigger piece for the Afikomen. This year, let’s save only the smaller piece.

We obviously haven’t quite grasped the “big lessons” of the seder. If we had, we would not allow slavery in the world today. So, this year, we take the small piece. We commit to earning the big piece by next year.

- Rabbi Debra Orenstein,
Congregation B’nai Israel, Emerson, NJ

When my grandfather broke the middle matzah, a hush fell over our Seder. All the cousins fell silent, concentrated on the navy velvet pouch between our Poppy’s wrinkled hands. Before slipping out to hide the Afikomen, he invited us to touch the pouch. Filled with promise, each of us reached out. As we brushed our fingers against the soft fabric, we simultaneously felt the warmth of our grandfather’s hand on our heads, a gentle touch of confidence for each grandchild. Then he was gone and the silence broken. The background sounds of the Seder would slowly rise in decibel as the adults’ attention turned away, even as the children stayed silent, quietly waiting or gesturing strategy. My grandfather’s return inaugurated the grand search, breaking the pressure of anticipation and unleashing indescribable exuberance.

To me, Passover is about the hopefulness I felt as a child in the moment that my Poppy opened the door and we rushed out to search for the coveted velvet pouch. It is that same hopefulness, those same touches of confidence, and that same exuberance that inspire my belief that change is possible, that we can make an impact on modern slavery in my lifetime.

- Melysa Sperber, Director,
Alliance to End Slavery and
Trafficking