

**Dear Friends,**

We're almost there. It's different. It's been taxing. But the last few weeks have also been an opportunity to dig deep inside, to find a reservoir of strength that we may not even have known existed. And now our homes are ready for the sparkle of Seder night.

**What about our hearts?**

Throughout the year, and through the centuries, there has been two aspects of our Yiddishkeit. There is the public and there is the private. There is the collective and there is the personal.

**We're good at the collective, the communal focus.** We have schools and shuls and nesheis and chesed organizations. We have gemachim for everything imaginable, from money to tablescapes. We have bikur cholim organizations. At root, we are connected to all other Yidden. We have one neshamah, and we know that when one neshamah is mischazek, turns up the wattage, so to speak, then all are affected positively. As a nation, we are loved.

**And then there is the personal, private realm.** That's what takes place in our homes and in our hearts. That's what only I know about. It's my private emunah. It's my personal prayer. My struggles. My discouragement and my uplift.

Pesach was a nationwide miracle. It was the salvation of an entire nation. But how was it celebrated? Each family had to eat the korban Pesach in a designated group—a family group, gathered together to recount the miracles, to sing Hashem's praises. The original korban Pesach, eaten in Mitzrayim was a family occasion. And every family rests on each individual. **That's me. That's you.**

In all the strange and bewildering events of the past few weeks, there's been one message that has come through clearly. Now is the time **for the family unit** to take the spotlight. And within that, now is the time **for the individual** to shine.

On leil haSeder, we have the mitzvah of telling over the story of yetzias Mitzrayim. V'higadeta levincha applies, of course, to our children. But it also applies to us. **To me. To you. To our minds and hearts.**

There's been so much talk about homeschooling over the last few weeks. Worksheets and teleconferences: our mechanchim have gone above and beyond to facilitate learning from home. **But the ultimate educator is Hakadosh Baruch Hu**, and it is not just our children who have been homeschooled over the last few weeks. It's us. That learning has not been from a book. Or a worksheet. It hasn't just engaged the mind. It's been an immersive experience.

It's been a month-long tutorial which consisted of fear and tears and laughter and camaraderie. It's been facing the bewilderment and the hard work of making Pesach without any help and with all our plans turned upside down. Of finding emunah, of accepting Hashem's malchus, knowing that **whatever His plan is, we're hanging on for the ride.**

But all along, **it's been a classroom of one.**

The internal work of these weeks has been intensely personal. Incredibly private. It's been the child that is me in the classroom that is being run by Hakadosh Baruch Hu. And while we long to graduate, we can take a moment and see what we have built in ourselves in the last few weeks, and what we are going to be engaged in over Pesach.

A classroom of one is also what takes place on leil haSeder. There are four sons. Echad chacham. Echad rasha. Echad tam. Echad she'eino yode'a lishol. When we look at the wording, we see that it doesn't just list the types of children. Each one is individualized. **Echad. One.** Find the words to tell the chacham, even if you think he doesn't need you. Find the way to reach the rasha, although you may feel like giving up. The simple child—you might think he's content with his simplicity, he doesn't need you. Touch him. Give him over the emunah in a way he'll relate to it. And even the child without questions, he's also an echad. He's also one. He also needs us to coax him open.

**And what about the echad that is me?** Every person is multi-faceted, with strengths and experiences and challenges unique to him or her. And on the inside, there's a part of me that is intellectual, intelligent, wise. There are parts of me which turn my back; tired and weary, I don't want to be inspired, I avoid engaging with my better self. Sometimes, I just want everything to be simple, innocent. I don't want to think, or I feel like I can't. And there are times when I just want to revert to childhood.

Echad. **They're all parts of the one that is me.** And on leil haSeder, each aspect of me is addressed, nurtured, coaxed into being part of this journey that is not just our past, and not just our future. It is a present that is so potent that it can unite all of me. It can reach deep inside and for once, all the many voices are calmed and soothed into silent joy. It can fill me and you and the I that we all seek, with meaning and emunah and purpose.

This year, it's not us who are leading the Seder. It's Hakadosh Baruch Hu. And He's tailored His lesson plan. He's got me in mind. Because right now, the focus is not on the klal, it's on the individual. It's on me, and it's on you. Rachmana liba b'oi. Hashem wants our hearts. **He wants me, little me, to sit here at the Seder** and allow the message and the emunah to echo into the chambers of our hearts and find just the right timbre, just the right note to make my heart sing.

If all of klal Yisrael is a large, breathtaking diamond, Seder night—this year, more than ever before—is the opportunity to shine my individual facet. Because the light that gleams and glints through the prism that is me, is unique and precious.

This year, Hashem is leading our Seder. **And so I am once again the child, eager to listen, asking, immersed in the wonders and the miracles.** It's personal. It's geared to me. It's about the emunah that is blossoming in my heart.

Just as Hashem taught us emunah on the night of yetzias Mitzrayim, may we be zocheh to the ultimate teaching, the geulah sheleimah, which is a full revelation of Hashem. That incredible night of revelation is approaching—and we are

hoping, together, that the redemption we experienced then will once again be manifest. **We are waiting to sing Hallel as true benei chorin, children of freedom.**

Sincerely,

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