

Sources for Israel M. Sandman's talk 'Experiencing Freedom in All Circumstances'

I. Maharal of Prague, Rabbi Judah Loewe, *Gaburoth Ha-Shem*, Chapter 61, excerpt:

Q: How did the Exodus help us, now that we're enslaved by other governments? What's the difference between Egypt and other governments? A: When Israel left Egypt, they received the Good essentially, such that in and of themselves they are fit to be free on account of their greatness. This greatness is essential to Israel – that they are fit to be free on account of their essential greatness; and an 'accident' (in the philosophical sense of something that is coincidental or non-essential) cannot at all nullify something essential. Indeed, this greatness, that they are essentially free, still inheres in Israel, alongside their enslavement, which is 'accidental'. This is because once the Holy Blessed One brought Israel out of Egypt and made them into free people, and even moreso: into kings ..., this title becomes part of Israel's essence, and the greatness and nobility that inheres herein cannot become nullified in their exile, which is 'accidental'.

II. Lubavitcher Rebbe, Discourse delivered on 11 Nisan, 1981, excerpts:

In every single generation (dor va-dor) a person is obligated to see himself as if he exited Egypt. (Mishna, Pesahim, 10:5; cited in the Passover Haggadah)

The leaving from Egypt is mentioned [every] night. Rabbi Elazar son of Azarya said: Behold, I am like a seventy-year-old, yet I did not merit to [find the biblical source] whence it is derived that the leaving from Egypt is mentioned [every] night, until Ben Zoma expounded it. For it is sated, "... so that you remember the day of your leaving Egypt *all* the days of your life" (Deuteronomy 16:3). "The days of your life" [implies: every] daytime; "*all* the days of your life" [additionally implies every] night". (Mishna, Berakot, 1:5)

In every single generation (dor va-dor) – and every single day – a person is obligated to see himself as if he exited Egypt – today. (Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Lyadi, Tanya, 1:47)

Word 'Egypt' in Hebrew: Mitzrayim / מצרים constraints, → exile.

The word '*dor*' (generation) is related to the word '*dura*' = configuration, line-up, circumstance. Thus, in every circumstance one is obligated to see himself as if he exited Egypt.

- One such circumstance is the soul's embodiment:
 - On the one hand, it is the unfolding of a holy project;
 - Yet it is a descent, plunge, into 'constraints, exile'.
- Any descent is for sake of subsequent working through of issues and arrival at even higher truth.
 - This working-through happens in 3 stages:
 - Struggle
 - Victory: vanquish of opposition
 - True peace: enemy is transformed and joins your side
- We experience a constant rhythm of descent and resolution, such that after resolving one issue, we are confronted by a new circumstance followed by resolution etc.
- Resolution requires entry into the darkness (= 'remembering Exodus at night'), where we will encounter something mysterious, terrible, and heretofore unfathomable.

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- The truth behind the darkness of night is "He [G-d] makes darkness His secret place" (Psalm 18:12). Be descending therein, one reaches a light of such intensity that hitherto one could receive it only as darkness; but now one is able to process its light.

III. Lubavitcher Rebbe, Discourse delivered on 2nd eve of Passover, 1970, excerpts:

Entering into the darkness: the "wise son's" struggle to transcend his need to understand everything on his own terms.

2 options are offered for the order in which to set up one's three matzot for the Seder:

1. Top down: first **Kohen**, then below it **Levi**, and then below it **Yisrael**, forming the acrostic **KLY**.

Applied to one's psyche / inner personal work this means: be a passive receiver (Hebrew: *kaliy* / KLY / כלי = ישראל = לוי, כהן, לוי, ישראל = כלי) of what's totally beyond you.

(2) Bottom up: First **Yisrael**, then above it **Levi**, and then above it **Kohen**, forming the acrostic **YLK**.

Applied to one's psyche / inner personal work this means: start where you are, but actively ascend from step to step (Hebrew: *yelek* / YLK / ילך = כהן, לוי, ישראל, לוי, ישראל = ילך).

The Rebbe points out that in his haggadah, in listing the order of setting up the matzot, the Alter Rebbe, founder of Chabad and author of his Code of Jewish Law and the Tanya, takes the second option. Applied to one's psyche / inner personal work, this corresponds with progression in one's mind-set in relation to G-d, one's motivating drive in life, and one's ability to embrace various types of commandments (mitzvot), as represented in the table below:

stage	Matzah	Type of commandments	Mindset in Relation to G-d	Drive
Ultimate	Kohen (priest)	Decrees (hukkim)	Lives in Suprarational reality	To bring about reconciliation / wholeness / peace – between humans, and between world & G-d
Middle	Levi; ↑ and above it,	Testimonies ('edot)	Mind acknowledges a truth beyond itself (suprarational); accepts G-d's yoke	To help the priest minister
Beginning	Yisrael; ↑ and above it,	Rational (mishpatim)	G-d must make sense to me; 'Measure for measure' (= reciprocity)	To make sense of reality