

Pesach Matzah Maror

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Source: original

Rabban Gamliel insists that we must say these three things in order to fulfill our obligation on Pesach: *Pesach, Matzah, Maror*. It is surprising that we must say the words. Isn't it enough just to eat them? We must talk them out because these three *mitzvot* convey three fundamental principles in our belief in Hashem. Each of them describes a way in which Hashem is subtle and exact in how He relates to us and provides for us.

'Pesach - For what? To acknowledge that Hashem *pasach* (skipped over) the houses of our ancestors in Egypt.' This represents Hashem's willingness/capacity to act in a precise way toward us. By not giving license to the forces of destruction to act freely during the plague of the first-born sons, Hashem was expressing willingness to give each and every person exactly what he or she needs. And this is essential to appreciating the events in our lives. As Rebbe Nachman says, Hashem sends each of us hints, according to the time, place, and person, about how to come close to Him. If Hashem isn't exact, there are no hints. But if He is, then everything around is calibrated to convey very specific messages to us.

The second statement of faith, *matzah*, corresponds to Hashem's precision in time. 'The dough was not allowed to leaven before the King of Kings, the Holy One Blessed is He, appeared to them and redeemed them.' Now, *matzah* takes 18 minutes to become chometz. That means we started making dough like it would be a normal day, with no sense that today was The Day, and within 18 minutes it became clear that this would be the day of redemption. The situations and challenges that Hashem gives us are not open-ended: It may be that such-and-such an illness, or situation, or suffering is meant to last exactly 7 months, 12 days, 3 hours and 5 minutes before that job offer/chance meeting/ doctor's appointment happens. Hashem is precise in time.

The third foundation of faith - *maror* - reminds us of how the Egyptians embittered our lives in slavery. The goal is to believe that suffering and bitterness are among the tools Hashem uses in order to bring about our full *tikkun*, our full fixing. We might forget this in the midst of our suffering, but as R' Tzvi Meir Zilberberg says, "Every moment of struggle, of confinement and test, whether it concerns our character, our desires, or any matter concerning G-d-service, everything is exactly measured, that it will be precisely oriented toward the benefit, lights and needs of this particular soul, and all the souls dependent upon it—not more and not less."

Eating these three special foods ingrains these levels of belief into our bodies. But saying and discussing them establishes them in the world of conversation, of interaction, and of intellect. By declaring our faith to the world, we let each other know that we want our relationships to be infused with this faith.