

# All Who Are Hungry

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The Power of Choice

The Haggadah is asking which of two categories we fall under: Are we here because we are **hungry**, or are we here because we are **needy**?

"Need" is defined as "awareness of a lack."

Freedom is not simply something that's "nice" to have; rather it is a necessary factor to our very being. As much as we need food to exist, we need freedom to live. Just as a man starving in the desert scrambles for even the slightest morsel of food, we should be searching for ideas of personal freedom!

Slavery is not just being ordered around by a guard with a whip. Even a life outside of prison can really be a life of horrendous slavery. Not "knowing" what to do with one's life is just as much slavery as not being "allowed" to do it.

Making poor choices and becoming dependent on desires is another form of slavery. A heroin addict or even a smoker is often a slave to his body's desires. Materialism, too, may be addictive. Many forces pull on a person's body and cloud the desires of the soul. If a person loses sight of what is truly meaningful, he no longer experiences true freedom. "Desire" enslaves as much as any drug.

Imagine that you have no material possessions. Zero. Ask yourself: "Now what is the quality of my life?" This will tell you if your soul is really free from the desires of your body.

Or, as the Haggadah says, ask a more immediate question: "Why am I at the Passover table? Am I hungry and want to get the Haggadah over with so we can get to the meal? If you have ever worked on a very meaningful project that had you so engrossed you completely forgot about eating, then you know what it is like to be aware you need to eat without being hungry. Your body needs food; your car needs gas. But hunger is a desire that controls you.

Or ... are you at the Passover table because you are needy? Do you recognize a lack freedom and therefore wish to participate in the Seder that is a lesson in freedom? Do you feel that your soul is restrained, that life is lacking its luster? Do you ever feel that even though you don't have someone telling you what to do, at the same time you don't know what to do? Do you want to satiate your need for freedom?

Which is it? The answer will tell you whether your body or your soul is in charge! We can let our body pull us so that our drive is to eat, or let our soul take control and strive for freedom. If you come to the Passover table because you are hungry, then you have made the choice of following your body. The point is not to become an aesthetic and starve yourself. Rather, it is an issue of who is in control — your stomach or your soul?

These two choices are in front of you. Make a real choice now. And don't be a hypocrite: If you came for the meal, then skip the Haggadah and go straight to the chicken soup! Or, take the Haggadah seriously as a guide-book to finding freedom. Make a decision!

This choice is not only for Passover. It's a choice we can make every day of our lives. Look to yourself and determine what is driving you, your stomach or your mind. Your eyes or your heart. Does the idea of a meaningful idea get you excited as much as the smell of chocolate cake?

The most important step is to decide. Because the alternative of not choosing is paralysis. Today, many young people find it difficult to choose a spouse, a career, a roommate — and certainly a life direction. "Choosing" is one of life's greatest pleasures. Right or wrong decisions bring success or failure. But for those who make no decisions, there is simply nothing. The Haggadah exhorts us: Start choosing **today**