

CHILDREN

In Every Generation

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Source: A Growing Haggadah

The Maror is a symbol of the bitter lives of our ancestors who were slaves in Egypt. They had to toil as builders and as field workers. Our rabbis teach that each generation experiences the Exodus anew:

B'chol dor vador, chayav adam lirot; lirot et atzmo k'eelu hu; k'eelu hu yatza mee mitzraim.

In each and every generation an individual should look upon him or herself; as if he or she had left Egypt.

Rabbi Meir ben Tzipporah v'Nechemia haLevi teaches:

I ran as fast as I could. The exertion, the pollens and the dust. All these worked together. I could hardly breathe. As if inside my chest. My lungs were two hot deserts. Pressing in. Against the lush green river valley through which my breathing needed to flow.

I awoke and saw my mother before me. "Here, take this," she told me. "Yech, bitter!" "Yes, but it can loosen the congestion, free your breathing." "Must I taste the bitter to feel the freedom?"

"No, but it may take much longer. Perhaps you need to know how bad it can become: the constrictions, and the contractions before any birth can occur...."

We had moved cramped together, fast along the narrow paths to our unknown destination. Our lives increasingly embittered by those who did not understand us. Softly, she said again, "Take it." "Breathe deeply, my dear one," she whispered.

I felt her body move with mine as she continued: "Feel the inflow of YHVH's presence as you inhale with the Heh, yes, stand straight as the Vav, now, slowly with the Heh again allow your body to collapse to the size of the Yod. Again and again, continuously. Allow this Breath of the universe to become your breath.

'Kol haN'shamah t'hallel Yah, Halleluyah!' "Every breathing thing praises God, Praise God!"

"The bitterness will pass and the freedom will begin!"

The Jewish people has known despots throughout its history. But we, in the living memory of some, have lived through the most terrible attempt at annihilation. It is a bitter memory. From this experience we learn to be ever vigilant to enemies, to resist them before they can bring us harm.