

GREAT FOR SHARING
AT THE SHABBOS TABLE!



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

YOM TOV
PESACH

בשבועות

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS

USE YOUR IMAGINATION

There are a handful of *Mitzvos* that we are required to do the night of the *Seder*. Most are things that we do with our bodies - examples include eating *Matzah*, drinking four cups of wine, or eating *Maror*. Another *Mitzvah* is repeating over the story of the *Bnei Yisrael* leaving *Mitzrayim*. There is an aspect of this *Mitzvah*, however, that is solely in the mind. The Gemara¹ explains that part of this *Mitzvah* is to view oneself as if they themselves had actually left *Mitzrayim*. The *Rambam*² includes this as part of the *Mitzvah* of the retelling of the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*.

Hidden in this simple law is an amazing lesson that can enhance our approach to difficult challenges. But first, we need to understand what this *Mitzvah* requires of us. How does one 'view oneself as if they left *Mitzrayim*?' It would seem impossible! How can we, free in the modern era, relate to a slave, from a family of slaves, having their first taste of freedom?

And that's not even including the amazing miracles - experiences that showed us, for all to see, Hashem's personal and touching love for each one of us. How can this be required of us, to view ourselves as something that we're not?

The answer is simple, and astounding. If the Torah requires us to do something, it must be possible - which means that our imaginations are adequate tools for the task. Using our imagination, we can truly put ourselves into that magical moment. The smells, the sounds, and the amazing feeling that we must have had when we found out that we are leaving *Mitzrayim*! We can close our eyes, and put ourselves in a situation that we never experienced - but we experience it now.

This insight into the human psyche doesn't just affect *Seder* night. Sometimes we are faced with a tough decision, and we really don't know what to do. Sometimes we are tempted to do something we know that we shouldn't, but we want to anyway!

Using our imagination, we can put ourselves in the scenario where we chose one way or the other. We can think about what it would feel like - if I did that thing that I shouldn't, how would I feel? Happy? Nervous? Disappointed?

Taking a moment to use our amazing imagination can strengthen our decisions, and save us from poor choices.

1 *Pesachim* 116b

2 *Hilchos Chametz U'Matzah* 7:6

**We can close our eyes,
and put ourselves in a
situation that we never
experienced - but we
experience it now.**

Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

What does it mean to 'imagine how a decision would feel?' What does one do to use their imagination to enhance their decision making process?

Before making a decision, we can put ourselves into the situation and see whether or not we would appreciate what we decided to do.

Close your eyes, and think about one of the two choices facing you. Imagine that you went ahead with one of the options. Now think about the decision that you just made. How do you feel about it? Fast forward, in your mind, to an hour later. Do you still feel the same? If different, better or worse?

By doing this regularly, we'll help ourselves make choices that we are happy with, both in the moment, and later on.

It's a good idea to practice this on choices that don't really impact our lives. Do I want to go out for pizza or ice cream? It might seem a bit much to spend time on that sort of decision, but by practicing on low-impact decisions, we'll be ready when we need to be.

You Make a Difference!

Partner with us, as we distribute across the globe, from New York to Israel to Australia!

Please contact us at info@ohr-yisrael.com or 732-451-GROW (4769)

GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT

The weekend had been a great success. The *Bar Mitzvah* went off without a hitch, the *Bar Mitzvah* boy had *Leined* beautifully, and the guests were all happy with the accommodations. The boy's mother, Esther, was speaking with her close friend, Rina, before Rina went back to Baltimore.

"Esther, I have to tell you, everything was really wonderful, and my husband and I really had a very nice time. What a special celebration. I have just one question, though."

"Sure, what can I help you with?"

"Like I said, everything was wonderful, but I noticed that it wasn't simply the decor, the speeches, or the fact that Shmully read from the Torah like a pro. There were so many small things - flowers in my room, a clear schedule for Minyan times and meals, and you even wrote a personal note, and left it on my bed! I know you didn't do the same thing for everybody, but everybody got exactly what they needed. How did you do it?"

Esther smiled. It was nice to be appreciated, and she was happy to share the secret.

"It's really no secret at all. I used my imagination, that's all!" Rina looked confused.

Esther went on, "Shmully is our only child, and we really wanted to have everyone join with us in this celebration. When my husband and I sat down to plan the event, we realized that we would be having guests with very different backgrounds, and very different needs."

"We wanted everyone to be happy. So I used my imagination! I put myself in my guests' place. I imagined what it would be like if I were like the Rennert's, who have three kids, one of which is a three-month-old. I imagined what it would be like for my mother-in-law, who lost her husband a bit over a year ago. By putting myself into other people's shoes, by really thinking like them, I was able to understand what they would appreciate. It takes a little work, but I can assure you, it is well worth the time."

By putting myself into other people's shoes, by really thinking like them, I was able to understand what they would appreciate.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Using our imagination to understand Hashem's reward and punishment is an integral part of learning *Mussar*.¹
- Had Adam *HaRishon* used his imagination to truly understand the effects of his sin, he would not have done the *Aveirah*.²

¹ *Ohr Yisrael* Chap. 9

² *Chidushei HaLev Bereishis* 3:7