



Passover Message from Shmuli Bing, Director, Yemin Orde Youth Village



Dear Friends,

One of the key phrases we say at the beginning of the Haggadah is: "This is the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. All those who are hungry, let them enter and eat. All who are in need, let them come celebrate the Passover."

Ostensibly, this is a key phrase that invites the needy to come to our table. But is it? Does this sentence indeed invite the needy, since the sentence opens with the bread of affliction? What kind of invitation is an invitation to eat the bread of suffering or poverty, which is not necessarily tasty? We would expect the invitation to say: "Come eat at our table. There is tasty food here - enough for everyone."

Rabbi Sachs argues that the bread of affliction is mentioned in two ways in the Bible: The bread that the Israelites ate while in slavery and the bread they ate as they hurried out of Egypt. When they hurried out of Egypt, the bread of affliction became the bread of redemption. And that is the meaning of the phrase in the Haggadah. Same bread but different context.

Rabbi Sachs goes on to argue that when we invite others to join us at the table, we are actually making the transformation of the bread from the bread of affliction to the bread of redemption. On the face of it, this is the same bread, but it is the perception and invitation of the other that changes the bread, and in fact, when we invite the other, we actually turn the bread into the bread of redemption.

It seems to me that this explanation can also be applied to what we do here in Yemin Orde. How to take a permanent reality that resembles the "bread of affliction" and turn it into a "bread of redemption."

The youth who come to Yemin Orde, sometimes without a dream and sometimes with only a vague dream, who have doubts about their future, our role is for them to reach the 12th grade with a clearer dream and an aspiration to reach far. This change happens in their self-perception, in their attitude towards their studies, their family and friends, and to every person in the world. Changing the bread is our daily task and our mission.

On this occasion, I am happy to wish every one of you a happy holiday, with true freedom and great health for you and your children. Thank you very much for your committed partnership.

In appreciation,