



CONGREGATION AGUDATH ACHIM
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Pesach – Up Close and Personal

Tonight, as we are celebrating our Sedarim, practicing social distancing and good hand washing, as a one or two person Seder, remember to pray for hope. In the first half of the Seder we read of four sons. Much has been written about each son, the wise, the wicked, the simple, and the one who knows not what to ask.

The differences from a short glance are easy. We look at wise and equivocate it with good. We look at wicked and it matches up to sinister. The simple son is often portrayed as foolish. The one who knows not what to ask comes across as one going through the motions.

It is the simple son who I'd like to address. Many years ago, I was preparing an inscription for a headstone which said, "Ish Tam Ve'Yashar" (A simple and upright man). A person complained to me, how could I write, "Ish Tam" (a simple man). The person complaining was equivocating this with the simple son of Passover misconstrued as "the fool".

It is by Ya'akov Avinu (Jacob) where he is described as "Ish Tam Yosheiv Ohalim", a simple man who sat in tents. Our sages tell us Ya'akov sat and "simply" learned the ways of G-d. "Simple isn't so simple" as the saying goes.

The simple son looks at the world differently. I am proud to say of my oldest son, that at one time on his Facebook status he wrote, "Just a simple guy doing simple things". When one is happy with themselves life is simple. Let me be clear, simple is not easy, simple is understanding who and where you are. Simple is the Seder for one or two and making it meaningful.

Chag Sameach

Rabbi Nathan W. Langer

