

PASSOVER

**& THE SLAVERY OF
PERCEPTION**



ME & MEMES

WHAT IS A MEME?

An **Internet meme** (pron.: [/ˈmi:m/](#) [MEEM](#)) is a concept that spreads from person to person via the Internet. The concept of a meme was defined and described by Richard Dawkins in his 1976 book *The Selfish Gene*, as an attempt to explain the way cultural information spreads; internet memes are a subset of this, specific to the culture and environment of the internet.

A MEME ABOUT ME & HOW PEOPLE UNDERSTAND ME

“What People Think I Do / What I Really Do,” is a series of visual charts depicting a range of preconceptions associated with a particular field of occupation or expertise. Unlike image macro series that are based on singular stereotypes like [Advice Animals](#), this series compares varying impressions about one’s profession held by others, self-image and the often mundane reality of the job.

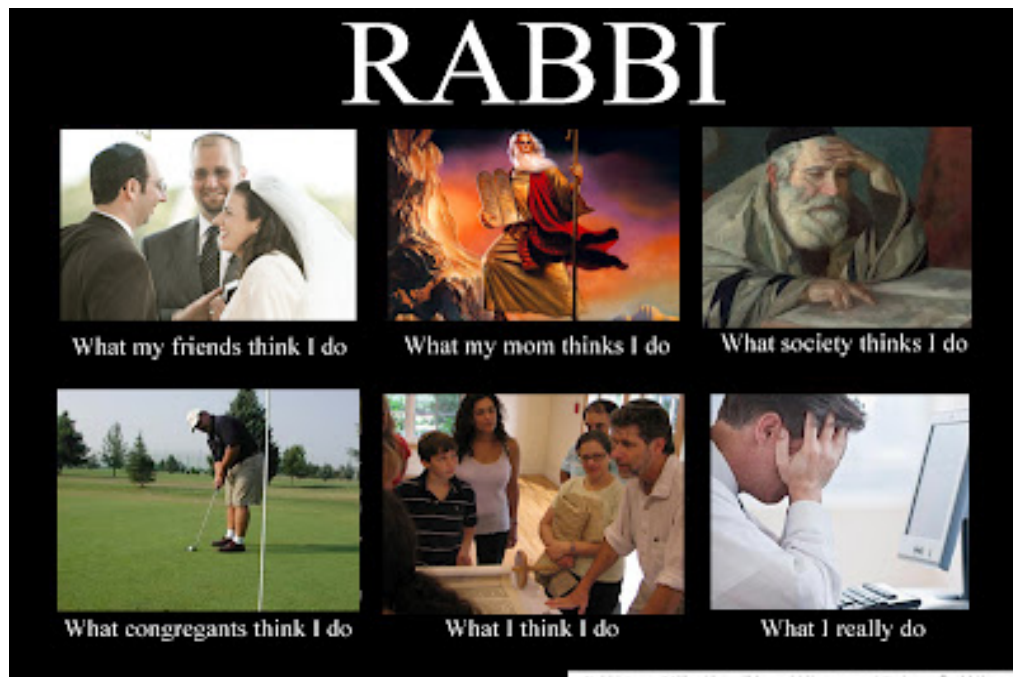
Origin

The “Science Student” instance of the series was first spotted on Facebook February 7th, 2012. The chart summarized various preconceived notions and generalizations that are associated with that field of study.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- ❖ HAVE YOU EVER FELT CONFLICTED IN THE WAY YOU FEEL ABOUT YOURSELF AND THE WAY YOU FEEL PERCEIVED BY OTHERS?
 - ❖ HOW DO YOU THINK DIFFERENT PEOPLE PERCEIVE YOU AND YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES?
 - ❖ HOW MUCH DO YOU THINK A PERSON SHOULD CARE ABOUT HOW OTHER PEOPLE THINK ABOUT THEM?
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PASSOVER & PERCEPTION: THE MINDSET OF A SLAVE

Adapted from Festival of Freedom: Essays on Pesach and the Haggadah by Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik

WHAT IS THE EXPERIENCE OF SLAVERY?

שמות פרק יד	Exodus – Shemos Chapter 14
<p>וַיַּפְרֹעַה הַקְּרִיב וַיִּשְׂאוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת עֵינֵיהֶם וַהֲגִיחוּ מִצְרַיִם נֹסַע אַחֲרֵיהֶם וַיִּירָאוּ מְאֹד וַיִּצְעֲקוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל ה'</p>	<p>10 When Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes and saw the Egyptians marching after them; they were very afraid and the children of Israel cried out to God.</p>
<p>יָא וַיֹּאמְרוּ, אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, הַמִּבְּלִי אֵין-קִבְרִים . בְּמִצְרַיִם, לְקַחְתָּנוּ לְמוֹת בְּמִדְבָּר: מַה-זֹּאת עֲשִׂיתָ לָנוּ, לְהוֹצִיאָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם</p>	<p>11 They said to Moshe: “Are there not enough graves in Egypt, that you took us out to the wilderness to die?! Why have you taken us out of Egypt?”</p>
<p>יב הֲלֹא-זֶה הַדְּבָר, אֲשֶׁר הִבְרַנּוּ אֵלֶיךָ בְּמִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר, חַדְל מִמֶּנּוּ, וְנַעֲבֹדָה אֶת-מִצְרַיִם: כִּי טוֹב לָנוּ עֲבֹד אֶת-מִצְרַיִם, מִמָּוְתוֹ בְּמִדְבָּר</p>	<p>12 Isn't this what we told you in Egypt, saying: 'Leave us alone, and we will serve the Egyptians!' - for it is better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.”</p>
<p>יג וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-הָעָם, אֶל-תִּירְאוּ--הֲתִיַּצְבוּ וַרְאוּ אֶת-יְשׁוּעַת יְהוָה, אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה לְכֶם הַיּוֹם: כִּי, אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתֶם אֶת-מִצְרַיִם הַיּוֹם--לֹא תִסְפוּ לִרְאֹתָם עוֹד, עַד-עוֹלָם.</p>	<p>13 Moshe said to the people: “Do not fear! Stand by, and witness God's salvation that He will perform for you today. For although you have seen the Egyptians today, you will not continue to see them any more.”</p>

ספורנו שמות יד: יג	Seforno Shemos 14:13
<p>יש לתמוה איך יירא מחנה גדולה של שש מאות אלף איש מהרודפים אחריהם ולמה לא ילחמו על נפשם ועל בניהם ?</p> <p>התשובה כי המצרים הוי אדונים לישראל וזה הדור היוצא ממצרים למד מנעוריו לסבול עול מצרים ונפשו שפלה. ואיך יוכל עתה להלחם עם אדוניו</p>	<p>Q: It is astonishing that the Jewish people were so frightened by the Egyptians who were pursuing them; there were six hundred thousand Jews but only a few hundred Egyptians, so why didn't they just stand up and fight them to protect themselves and their children?!</p> <p>A: The answer is that the Egyptians were masters over the Jews, who had a slave</p>

	mentality. This was the generation of Jews who had left Egypt, so they had all grown up accustomed to the rulership of Egypt. The Jewish people had downtrodden souls from their years of slavery, and therefore they didn't have the fortitude and initiative to now fight their former masters.
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SLAVE MENTALITY: NO CONFIDENCE & CONSTANT FEAR

RABBI SOLOVEITCHIK ON SLAVERY



A slave is afraid even when the fear is unjustified. He is afraid not only of those who are stronger than he, or of those who have jurisdiction over him; the slave is afraid of contradicting anyone, of antagonizing even a stranger...Indeed, many former inmates in extermination and concentration camps in Europe have told me that they were afraid, not only of the commander of the camp, but of anyone, even a child.

SLAVE MENTALITY: NO SELF DEFINITION AND CREATIVITY

RABBI SOLOVEITCHIK ON SLAVERY

The Slave is a person without options; the possibility of choosing between two alternatives is denied to him. When the Toah described human being in general and the Jew in particular, it speaks of two paths, two ways, two alternatives: blessing and curse, life and death, good and evil.

דברים פרק ל	Deut. - Devarim Chapter 30
טו רֵאָה נָתַתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ הַיּוֹם, אֶת-הַחַיִּים וְאֶת-הַטּוֹב, וְאֶת-הַמָּוֶת, וְאֶת-הָרָע	15 See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.

The greatness of man – his dignity and his creativity – is expressed in his freedom of will and in his ability to choose. A slave is never confronted with two alternatives. He makes no decisions; someone always does it for him. He has no faith in himself, and he is psychologically unable to cope with situations. A slave is unable to seize initiative; he lacks the urge and the drive to do things, and he cannot intervene in certain situations in order to improve his lot and better himself.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- ❖ CAN YOU THINK OF PERSONAL OR HISTORICAL SITUATIONS WHERE A SLAVE MENTALITY PREVENTED SOMEONE FROM TAKING INITIATIVE AGAINST THEIR MASTER?
 - ❖ HAS THE WAY YOU HAVE BEEN TREATED EVER CHANGED THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT YOURSELF OR YOUR WILLINGNESS TO TAKE CERTAIN ACTIONS OR RISKS?
 - ❖ HOW CAN THE WAY WE TREAT AND THINK ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE CHANGE THE WAY THEY ACT AND THINK ABOUT THEMSELVES?
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PASSOVER & PERCEPTION: THE PATHWAY TO FREEDOM

The Torah says that every generation must retell the story of our freedom from slavery on Passover.

The Talmud (Pesach 116a) mentions two interesting ways in which the retelling of this story on Passover is unique. These approaches will help us understand the concept of true freedom:

#1: THE GOOD AND THE BAD: THE STORY OF INITIATIVE

מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח	The story we tell on Passover should begin with the story of the denigration of the Jewish people and end with their success.
מאי בגנות	Which story of denigration should you start with?
רב אמר מתחלה עובדי עבודה גלולים היו אבותינו	Rav says you should begin with our forefathers who worshipped idols.
[ושמואל] אמר עבדים היינו	Shmuel said you should begin with the story of slavery in Egypt.

what is this discussion *really* about?

Shmuel discusses physical slavery. In the process of physical enslavement and redemption, the Jews were inactive. The Jews did not expect redemption to come immediately. In fact, *matzah* is the symbol of the suddenness of the redemption; their dough did not even have time to rise.

Rav, however, emphasizes the importance of spiritual redemption. It dates back to Abraham and continues on Mount Sinai. The Torah was not imposed upon them; they chose to accept it. The Jew, of his own free will, has chosen God. The Jew must be an active participant in his spiritual redemption.

חכם בנו שואלו ואם אינו חכם אשתו שואלתו	A wise man should have his family ask questions on Passover night.
ואם לאו הוא שואל לעצמו	If he doesn't have family, he should ask questions to himself.
ואפילו שני תלמידי חכמים שיודעין בהלכות הפסח שואלין זה לזה	Even two Rabbis who know everything about Passover should ask questions on Passover night.

At the Seder, we recreate this drama. The form of narration in the Haggadah avails itself of dialogue: one person asks and another answers. It is necessary to dramatize this narration because God reveals Himself to man if and when the latter searches for Him. If one does not inquire, if one expects God to reveal Himself without making an all-out effort to find Him, one will never find God.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER


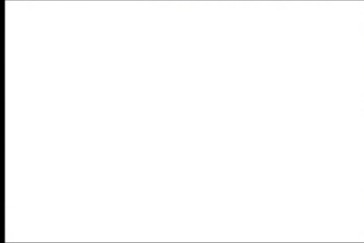
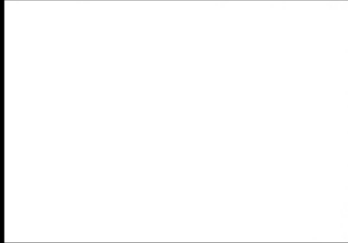
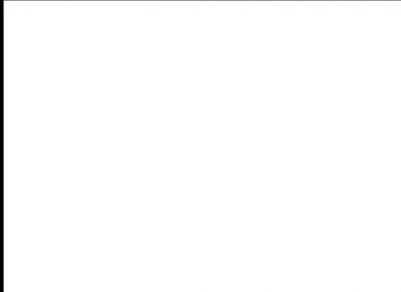

- ❖ WHY IS SEARCHING SUCH AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF FREEDOM?
 - ❖ WHEN DOES FREEDOM REQUIRE BEING PROACTIVE?
 - ❖ HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED A FEELING OF REDEMPTION IN YOUR LIFE? DID SOMEONE ELSE HELP YOU OR YOU CREATED IT ON YOUR OWN?
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Freedom is about living with confidence, and the ability to create a life of your own design.

Slavery is when we are subject to another person's subjugation: whether physical or emotional.

To find true personal freedom, one must search for it.

HOW WOULD YOU FILL IN YOUR PERCEPTION CHART?

		
What my friends think I do.	What my mom thinks I do.	What I think I do.
		
What society thinks I do.	What I really do.	

being true to yourself
is better than
being a liar
just to impress everyone.

