

First Fruits

by: Rabbi Jeremy Rosen

In the declaration on bringing the first fruits to be dedicated at the Tabernacle or Temple, one says "My father was a wandering Aramean." It is true that the Midrash interprets it differently, to suggest that Laban the Aramean tried to kill our father Jacob." This is clearly homiletics, not the literal translation.

In the Pesah Hagadah, this quote is taken as one of two answers to the "Four Questions" of why we keep the Passover Seder meal. The first is that we were once slaves and now we celebrate our freedom with the Seder to remind us that we should use our freedom beneficially. The second is once we were Arameans, idol worshipers, we have now been gifted with monotheistic value system and it is this that we celebrate on Pesah. The material and the spiritual reasons for our survival and continuity.