



## **V'HI SHE'AMDA - AND IT IS THIS THAT HAS STOOD**

Thanks to the beautiful melody of Yonatan Razel & Yaakov Shweky - we all sing VH'I SHE'AMDA all year round. But the words really come from the Hagada.

"And it is this that that has stood by our fathers and us.

For not one alone has risen up against us to destroy us,

but in all ages did they rise up against us to destroy us.

But the Holy One blessed be He delivered us from their hand."

What is the "This" that has stood by our fathers and us throughout the generations? This refers to the brit ben habetarim - the covenant G-d made with Avraham.

The simple understanding is that although, throughout the generations, there were always powers that rose up against us and wanted to destroy us, God saved us from them. God is the "this" that has stood by us.

But the Shem MiShmuel has another way of interpreting these words. His understanding has become one of my husband's

favorite Divrei Torah. He tells it to everyone who comes to our table, especially people from abroad, and especially those who come from America. I will now share it with you.

He explains that the "this" refers to the words that were said before "they oppressed us and gave us hard labor to do."

The fact that they treated us differently, that they hated us, actually saved us. He explains that anti-Semitism is what saved us. How can something that we all try to fight against - the illogical, baseless hatred of the Jew, be something that is good for us, and saved us? According to the Shem MiShmuel it is good because it prevented our assimilation into the prevailing culture, wherever Jews were living. Even if we wanted to forget that we were Jews, and even if we didn't want to maintain our heritage, we had no choice but to be separate. We remained Jews, because the other nations hated us so much that we couldn't always just fit in. This is definitely a different way of looking at anti-Semitism. This is cultural survival. It is hard to say these words, but according to this interpretation, anti-Semitism in a sense, is a blessing that helps us stay Jewish.

My husband likes to ask people if they know of a big country where Jews lived and there are no Jews anymore and it is not because of anti-Semitism? The answer is China. And what happened to the

Jews there. They assimilated and totally disappeared. The Chinese were accepting of the Jews, the Jews intermarried, and then there were no more Jews in China.

My husband likes to point out that things have been good for the Jews in America for a long time, but with an intermarriage rate of over 72% who knows if the time hasn't come for V'HI SHE'AMDA - and it is this - for the "blessing" of anti-semitism to flare up in yet another part of the world in order to protect God's nation from total extinction.

So when we sing V'HI SHE'AMDA this year at the seder, we should have a prayer that we will not need the "this" of antisemitism to keep us Jewish.

**I LOVE GOING** to the shuk now - you can see and smell all the fresh garlic. So I'm including a simple but useful recipe for roasted garlic. Garlic's pungent aroma is thought to keep people away from each other (keeping even vampires away) making it related to our topic of keeping us away and separate from the other nations. And the roasted garlic is a good spread for matza and is healthier than butter.

## **ROASTED GARLIC**

Peel off the outer layers of the garlic bulb. Cut off the top of the bulb or separate all the cloves from each other. Spray the cloves with a bit of olive oil. Roast in an oven at 200°C for about 30 minutes or till

they are soft. The garlic will soften and can be extracted by squeezing one end of the clove. You can eat the caramelized cloves directly out of the heads, or add them to salads, or guacamole, mash them up and spread on matza, or mix them with white cheese for a dip. Chag kasher v'samei'ach 🙏