On Learning Aggadah

1. The preachers of Haggadah say, If you want to know He who spoke and created the world, learn Haggadah for this way you will know He who spoke and created the world and will cling to his ways.

2. R. Isaac ben Pinhas says: Anyone who has midrash but has no halakha has not tasted wisdom. Anyone who has halakha but not midrash has not tasted fear of sin. He used to say: Anyone who has midrash and not halakha is like a strong man without weapons. Anyone who has halakha without midrash is like a weakling with weapons. If he has both he is like a strong man with weapons.

3. R. Nahman and R. Isaac were sitting at a meal and R. Nahman said to R. Isaac: Let the Master expound something. He replied: Thus said R. Johanan: One should not converse at meals lest the windpipe acts before the gullet and his life will thereby be endangered. After they ended the meal he added: Thus said R. Johanan: Jacob our patriarch is not dead. He [R. Nahman] objected: Was it then for nought that he was bewailed and embalmed and buried?

4. Haggadah is any explanation found in the Talmud on any matter that is not a commandment. This is Haggadah and you should only accept from it that which makes sense. You should know that all the Rabbis have established as halakha in the area of commandments is from Moshe Rabenu who received it from the Almighty and you may not add to it or take away from it. But that which they have explained regarding verses, each person says what he thinks and as he sees it. We learn from them whatever makes sense in our minds and the rest we do not rely on them.